

Foreword

Child Evangelism Fellowship® of Ireland (CEF®) is committed to reaching out to children and to teaching them the message of salvation as contained in the Bible, the Word of God. We also seek to promote the general welfare, health and full development of every child, recognising the privilege and responsibility this brings to all involved in our organisation.

In today's society child abuse and child abuse accusations are occurring frequently. This is a sad fact of life. It is also a fact that amongst Christian people, as in the wider society, children can be hurt. So in our various ministries we cannot be satisfied until we are sure we have done all in our power to protect them from harm of all kinds, and to protect our workers and volunteer helpers from false accusations, hence the production of this Child Protection Policy.

We in CEF realise that this publication is necessary, because in these days of social change and shifting moral values, parents entrust their children to us for nurture, safe care and wise leadership. It is imperative that there are guidelines and procedures in place that will provide peace of mind to parents, children and workers. This publication does not call into question the integrity of our children's and youth workers. It is produced in response to the recommendations of our Government and to our desire to provide EVANGELISM WITH CARE.

All workers, volunteer leaders and helpers are required to read this Policy Statement and complete the enclosed Declaration Form and Confidential Questionnaire. Your Declaration Form and Confidential Questionnaire should be returned to the Child Evangelism Fellowship full-time worker from whom you received it. No person will be authorised to lead or help at any Child Evangelism Fellowship activity without completing and responding satisfactorily to these forms. It is regretful that we have to take such steps in these days but we are sure that it is the best and wisest approach for all concerned.

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Introduction

In the world in which we now live, the expression "Suffer the little children" takes on a new, ominous meaning. In Northern Ireland there are approximately 90 cases of child abuse reported **every week**, and it is suspected that two-thirds of all abuse cases go unreported.

This is a worldwide problem and the United Nations issued a Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the UK government signed in December 1991. In November 1996 the Children (NI) Order 1995 came into being enshrining in law many of the principles of the convention.

UN Convention on the rights of the child

The UN Convention is "a set of minimum standards - the bottom line - in protecting children's rights. It is a binding international treaty, which the British government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the Convention" (Our Duty to Care Factsheet 1).

According to the Convention, children have rights relating to:

- Reasonable standards of living;
- Protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation;
- Protection for those cared for away from home and for those with a disability;
- Being able to use their own language, enjoy their own culture, and practice their own religion;
- The protection of the environment in which they live.

Children (NI) Order 1995

The Children (NI) Order 1995 deals with the care, upbringing, and protection of children. It brings most of the public and private laws relating to children into one place. It has five underlying principles, which have clear implications for all involved in work with children and young people.

The key principles are:

- **Paramountcy** - The welfare of the child **must always be** the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her;
- **Parental responsibility** - Parents have responsibilities to their children rather than rights over them;
- **Prevention** - This is about preventing situations arising where children are unnecessarily separated from their families. It is also about the State providing services to keep children safely within their families and to promote their health or welfare;
- **Partnership** – This encourages us to work in partnership with parents and other agencies, as the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met;
- **Protection** – This places a 'duty of care' on all who work with children to report child protection concerns to the appropriate agencies.

In the light of this legislation, it is prudent of us as a fellowship to be seen to be doing everything we can to ensure the protection of the children with whom we come into contact. In so doing, we will be giving parents confidence in our ministries, knowing that, if it is at all possible, their children will be protected from harm while in our care.

This document attempts to set out clear guidelines and procedures for all Full-Time Workers and volunteers. It includes a Code of Behaviour that every worker and volunteer must follow, not only to protect the child, but also to protect themselves from allegations of abuse. God's word reminds us to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt 10:16). May we so be, for the sake of the children.

Definitions

- Child - any person under the age of **18** years old;
- Local Director/Full-time worker – someone working with CEF in a full-time capacity;
- Volunteer – Good News Club teacher, Five Day Club/Holiday Bible Club/Seasonal Club team member, Junior Youth Challenge leader or Camp Counsellor;
- Event - Any of the ministries within the fellowship. This may be any of the above or any other activity organised by the local CEF committee.

Child Protection Policy Statement

CEF of Ireland believes that all children and young people should enjoy CEF facilities, clubs and activities without fear of harm. CEF, with the assistance of all full-time and volunteer staff, will take every appropriate step to ensure the safety and well being of children and young people with whom we work, regardless of class, race or creed.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers;
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff, and volunteers;
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Code of Behaviour

General principles

In all CEF's activities, workers should give children appropriate time to express their opinions. All children should be valued and respected as individuals and workers should be available to listen to the children whenever necessary. Workers are encouraged to praise children for good behaviour and show consistency in their approach to each child. Workers should encourage the children to participate in all the activities, which are available, (particularly in a residential setting), and their achievements should be recognised.

Guidelines for the protection of children and staff/volunteers

It doesn't make sense to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents, and someone in charge of the event.
- Contact children via mobile phones or the Internet without parental consent. Workers should not normally make their mobile phone numbers or email addresses available to the children.

We should **never**...

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay - apart from structured sports activities;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Make **unnecessary** physical contact with children;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child - even in fun;
- Let allegations a child makes go without being addressed and recorded;
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.

Bullying is not acceptable in any way. Consult the Staff/Volunteer leaflet for guidance on dealing with Any incidence of bullying.

Physical contact with children

- Be mindful of how and where you touch a child - the child must feel comfortable with the contact;
- There may be contact during sports or games, but remember your size and strength, and so restrict your involvement for the safety of the children;
- Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing your concern and care. However, *it is only appropriate if it is meeting the need of the child*;

Physical contact should only ever take place with the consent of the child.

Meeting with individual children for counselling/guidance

- Meeting with individual children should take place as openly as possible;
- If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other team members informed of the meeting;
- If counselling/guidance is taking place other than at a CEF event, then the worker/volunteer should:
 - Agree an appointment date and time;
 - Agree venue;
 - Gain consent from, and confirm all details with the appropriate full-time worker;
 - Gain consent from parents;
 - Where possible ensure there is someone else on the premises for the duration of the counselling/guidance session.

Contact with children outside of CEF events

- Children can visit friends at the homes of workers/volunteers with the parental consent of both sets of parents;
- Informal contact with children/young people must only be with the full knowledge and consent of parents and Local Director. It is the responsibility of the adults concerned to agree date, time and venue; to inform parents and gain their consent;
- All other contact/informal meetings with children within the homes of Local Directors/volunteers should be discouraged at all times.

Personal relationships

Workers involved in relationships with other workers or older members, should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within the ministry or put children in a potentially harmful situation.

Supervision

- **Children should never be left unsupervised while in our care.**
- Leaders in charge must be satisfied that those workers and adults who accompany group parties are fully competent to do so;
- Children will always be safer when supervised by two or more **adults**;
- When only two adults are present in the room, *as far as possible* they should be one male and one female;
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision;
- Dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed;
- In a "meeting" situation, a **minimum** ratio of 1 adult to 8 children should be aimed at, and on outings this ratio should be increased to a **minimum** of 1 adult to 5 children.

The standard recommended ratios are:

0-2 years 1 member of staff to 3 children

2-3 years 1 member of staff to 4 children

3-7 years 1 member of staff to 8 children

8 and over 2 members of staff (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children. There should be one additional staff member for every 10 extra children and/or young people;

- Workers should know at all times where children are and what they are doing.

Supervision of children on journeys/outings/trips

- The organisers of journeys/visits should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the children who are involved in the project;
- Organisers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children for the **whole time** they are away from home;
- Young people should not be left to their own devices, for example, in a town for the evening or on shopping expeditions. However parental consent may be sought for older teens to have less direct supervision as long as they stay in groups;.
- All children should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times;
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to weather conditions, then organisers should have a number of alternative activities planned;
- Organisers should obtain, in writing, parental consent to children joining an organised trip;
- Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children will be engaged and the supervision ratios.

In public with children

- Think of how you appear in public when dealing with children;
- The safety of the child is paramount at all times;
- Do not go into the toilets alone with the children; if at all possible have another adult present;
- Do not shout at or roughly handle a child;
- Parental permission **must** be obtained from the person(s) who have parental responsibility, before taking a child to any place other than the usual venue.

Parental responsibility

The following defines what is meant by parental responsibility:

- The natural mother **always** has parental responsibility (except where an adoption order is made);
- The natural father if married to the mother before the birth of the child, if he subsequently marries the mother, or if he has jointly registered the birth of the child also has parental responsibility;
- Other members of the family may have parental responsibility if they have been granted it by the courts.

NB – Failure, by any full time member of staff or volunteer, to adhere to this code of behaviour, may result in disciplinary procedures being applied.

Sharing Information

... with children and young people

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have a *Right to Information*, especially any information that would make life better and safer for them. At all CEF events, children/young people should be informed:

- Of the rules and regulations of the event they are attending, and of our expectations of them, including how they behave towards other individuals;
- Of the fire safety procedures of the venue at which the event is held;
- Of the facilities that are available for their use at the venue, e.g. toilets, tuck-shop;
- About how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints, and anxieties.

This information will usually be given at the commencement of the event by the person in charge.

... with parents

Parents are responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible and caring organisation.

They should be aware of the nature of relationships with adults with whom their children form friendships.

To support this, we should:

- Publicise information about our events e.g. visit homes re Good News Clubs/Five Day Clubs; hold a parents information evening regarding camp; and consent forms distributed to be signed by the parents.
- Make them aware of our child protection policy;
- Make them aware of whom they should contact if they have concerns or complaints;
- Inform them of the Code of Behaviour for Workers and volunteers involved in the ministry of the fellowship.

... with workers and volunteers

Good information will enable staff and volunteers to know how to deal with emergencies and child protection issues. It will also enable them to pass concerns to the appropriate person within the fellowship.

Therefore, **all** workers will undergo training in child protection policy and procedures, and this training will be updated at regular intervals.

... with other bodies

When working with other church groups e.g. in Holiday Bible Clubs, and visits to the residential centres at Kilkeel and Rosstown, discussions will decide whose child protection policy will be in operation. If the church has a policy and CEF are assisting them with their HBC then CEF workers will operate under the church policy. In the absence of a church policy then the CEF policy will be operational and volunteers from the church concerned will complete the relevant child protection forms. The same

principle applies to the residential centres. Copies of the Fellowship's Child Protection Policy are available on request.

Manner of sharing information

When sharing information, we will be sensitive to the level of understanding, maturity, and responsibility of the people with whom we are sharing. For example, the sharing of policy and procedures with children will be done in a manner appropriate to their age. Our staff are aware that there are limits to the confidentiality issue eg. If a child discloses abuse then we must pass that information on to the relevant authorities.

This information is secured safely at both local and national levels and only those who need to know have access to it.

Designated Person

The designated person (DP) is the individual within the fellowship to whom all concerns and disclosures should be brought. The DP may be contacted at any time for advice/guidance. The DP may then discuss the concern/suspicion/allegation with Social Services, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. It is not necessary for the DP to hear any disclosure first-hand. This eliminates the need for the child to recount a traumatic experience more than once.

Checking concerns

If something gives you cause for concern, there are some things you can do to check your concern:

- Ask the child – If the child has an injury you could ask, “What happened to you?” or if the child is upset, simply asking, “What’s wrong?” is enough to give the child an opportunity to open up;
- Ask other workers – other workers may have insight into the situation that will immediately put your mind at ease. If not, they may have noticed something that will reinforce your concern;
- Ask the parents – when leaving the child home, or when the parent comes to collect the child, it is possible to ask quite informally, “I noticed she wasn’t her usual bubbly self tonight. Is she alright?” Doing so will give the parent an opportunity to put your mind at ease. The problem might simply be that the child’s pet hamster has died. The parent’s response will guide you as to what to do next.

Remember – **do not investigate**. Your responsibility lies in reporting concerns to the relevant person, who will then deal with the matter appropriately.

Reporting procedure - concerns

If you have concerns about a child:

- Fill in a "Record of allegations or suspicions of abuse" form (Form I) - try to include as much detail as possible - document the reasons for your concern, e.g. bruising, lethargy, sexual conversation inappropriate to the age of the child, etc. This form is available from the local director;
- Send the form to the DP who will contact you to clarify anything they don’t understand;
- Quietly monitor the situation and report any further developments to the DP, making sure these developments are recorded;
- Do not discuss your concerns openly with other workers unless you think they may be able to shed some light on the situation. Be discreet!

Reporting procedure – disclosures

If a child comes to you and begins to disclose abuse, these are the guidelines, which should be followed:

DO	DON'T
Stay calm	Panic
Listen and hear – give time to the child to say what he wants	Ask leading questions eg “Did your Dad...?”
Reassure that he has done the right thing in telling	Promise to keep secrets
Record in writing what was said as soon as possible (Form available from fulltime worker)	Inquire into details of the abuse
Report sent on to DP	Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily

Some further help

- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after it has taken place, *even if it is information you do not understand fully, or like writing down*. **It is important** - stick with it! (Form I - "Reporting Allegations of Abuse");
- *Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours;*
- Remember - information must only ever be passed on on a "**need-to-know**" basis. All concerns and disclosures need to remain as confidential as possible;
- If the DP is not available, please contact one of the others listed at the back of the document.

The Designated Person is David Jackson. See back of policy or Staff & volunteer Leaflet for contact details.

The telephone no. for the Police Public Protection Units is 028 90650222. The Gateway Team number And Out of Hours Duty Social Worker will depend on the area that the child comes from. Consult the Telephone directory under Health trusts for the number.

Recruitment and Selection

It is the intention of the fellowship to operate proper recruitment and selection procedures for all who apply to work in a full-time or voluntary capacity. This will help screen out those who are not suitable. Sample forms referred to can be found at the back of this document. Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ireland is a registered body with AccessNI reference no 8000003304. All staff and volunteers are vetted and confirm their identity using AccessNi checks.

The recruitment and selection procedures are as follows:

Full-Time Workers

- a. Job Description. The prospective Full-Time worker will be given a description of the role he/she will be expected to fulfil.
- b. Confidential Questionnaire. The applicant will complete this form along with a signed statement of faith. (Forms A and C)
- c. Declaration Form. The applicant will sign this form (Form B) confirming that he/she has never been convicted of an offence in connection with children. The names and addresses of two referees must be provided.
- d. Interview. An interviewing committee will interview the applicant and will outline the fellowship's Child Protection Procedures.
- e. Identification. The applicant will be asked to provide some evidence that he is who he claims to be. A long birth certificate or National Insurance Number is required as these are the forms of identification, which are most difficult to forge.
- f. References. Written and oral references will be taken.
- g. An AccessNI check will be carried out on the preferred applicant to ensure that there is no reason why the individual selected should not work with children

After successfully completing this process the applicant may be accepted as a candidate and subject to satisfactory reports he may be offered a position within the fellowship.

Volunteers

The following steps will be followed in recruiting volunteers.

- a. Job Description. The prospective volunteer will be given a description of the role he is expected to fulfil.
- b. Forms Completion. The applicant will complete the Confidential Questionnaire, the Declaration Form and the Statement of Faith. (Forms A, B and C)
- c. Interview. The Local Director or Committee members will meet with the applicant. Discussion should be based on the job description and Child Protection Procedures.
- d. The applicant's identification will be checked and references will be taken.
- e. An AccessNI check will be carried out on the preferred applicant to ensure that there is no reason why the individual selected should not work with children

- f. The Local Director and the Local Committee will decide on the suitability of the applicant to the role.
- g. The successful applicant will commence the specified ministry with the fellowship on a six-month probationary period after which the situation will be reviewed.

NB: ALL VOLUNTEERS GOING TO WORK WITH CEF MISSIONARIES NEED TO GO THROUGH THE SAME PROCEDURE. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MISSIONARY TO CONTACT THE NATIONAL/GENERAL DIRECTOR WITH THE DETAILS OF THIS VOLUNTEER AND THE DESIGNATED PERSON WILL ENSURE THE NECESSARY CHECKS ARE COMPLETED.

Supervision, Support and Training

Volunteering and working with children is both worthwhile and fulfilling, but also challenging.

Once recruited all staff and volunteers will be well informed, trained, supervised, and supported, so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm, or can be misunderstood.

Induction

As newcomers, all staff and volunteers will be made aware of the tasks they will be performing. They will be given training with regards teaching children, and induction training in child protection policy and procedures and Code of Behaviour. For Good News Club teachers and JYC leaders, this could take place at the GNC workshop or Teacher Training Class at the beginning of the year by either the Local Director or the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Trial period

The development and suitability of all new staff/volunteers will be reviewed no later than six months after taking up the position.

Supervision and support

It is the Local Director's responsibility to supervise and support all the volunteers in his area and to keep them up-to-date with child protection issues and with other policies as they arise.

Volunteers should feel free to approach the person in charge in order to share anxieties, concerns, or worries, especially about the work in which they are involved. This includes any concerns of a practical nature - transport, health and safety, programme, etc

Supervision and support will take the form of regular visits eg to the volunteer's Good News Club and other informal discussions as the need arises.

At these visits important issues can be addressed and training needs identified. Training needs will include the development of a worker's particular gift either "on-the-job" or through organised training.

It is the responsibility of the National Directors in conjunction with the Executive Committee and the Designated Person to supervise and support the Local Directors. The National Directors/General Directors will meet with the Local Directors at least once per year to discuss important matters with them and to evaluate the work in the Local Director's area. Any child protection issues will be discussed with the Child Protection Co-ordinators who will advise the Local Director with respect to these matters or make the necessary referral to the Statutory Agencies.

Training

Training is a continual process, which begins at the stage of induction, and will include:

- Raising awareness in child protection
- Health and safety
- Particular skills training

- All staff and volunteers will undergo further Child Protection Training within 6 months of commencing.

Principles of Good Practice

Ministry guidelines

The following are some practical guidelines for each of our ministries:

Good News Club[®]s and Junior Youth Challenges

Local Directors

They should carefully follow the selection procedure. They should visit each of the Good News Clubs at least once in six months, and be in contact with the teacher of the GNC/JYC throughout the year. With Church based GNCs/JYCs it should be determined under whose policy the event is operating. The regular teacher training class can be used to inform teachers about any Child Protection matters.

Teacher

The Local Director is available to help you. If you are bringing an outside speaker to the club, or bringing new helpers to the club you should consult the Local Director first.

The teacher is to make the children aware that they are available to help them, and how the children and leaders are to behave in club, and what the children are to do in event of a fire.

The teacher and helpers are expected to follow the CEF Code of Behaviour. This is in place to protect both you and the children.

When transporting children to a club or other event, the teacher/helpers should check their motor insurance cover, avoid overcrowding a car, and try to avoid being alone with a child in a car.

5-Day Club[®]s

The area should be visited beforehand, informing parents of your intentions. Always hold the meeting and counsel children in the open where parents can see you. Children should be made aware of the availability of the leaders to help them and the behaviour expected of them. Always hold the club in a place where leaders and children will be safe. If this is a Church organised outreach, determine whose policy and insurance will be in operation.

Holiday Bible Clubs

Invitations with consent forms should be distributed, explaining the time and place of the HBC. It is important that the programme is well organised and that the children are well supervised. Adequate helpers are required. A ratio of 1 adult to 8 children is reasonable but it would be better to have a lower ratio e.g. 1:6.

The leaders are to make the children aware that they are available to help them, and how the children and leaders are to behave in club. If children come to be counselled this should be done as openly as possible.

An attendance register and an accident/incident book should be kept. It would be advisable to have a first aid kit available and Fire Safety precautions should be drawn to the attention of the children at the beginning of the club.

Shows

In this ministry it is advisable to wait outside until several children gather and the caravan door should remain open. It is better to work in pairs. The children should have their rights and expected behaviour explained to them. Again always carry a first aid kit and accident/incident book in the caravan, and explain the fire drill procedure.

Teaching Children Effectively™ Training Courses

We want to avoid anyone using this qualification to gain access to children. This qualification is declaring the students' ability to teach and not their suitability to teach. It is recommended that all students complete the declaration form and the two references be followed up before the commencement of the course.

Seasonal Clubs

The recruitment procedure for volunteers should be followed and the host/hostess should be visited soon after the event to discover how the club went.

Residentials

A parents meeting should be held to discuss all aspects of the residential programme and medical/consent forms should be given out.

The recruitment procedures for all counsellors should be closely followed.

All counsellors should endeavour to attend a preparation meeting when individual responsibilities will be allocated and training in Child Protection procedures will be given.

When running a residential, it is important that:

- Supervision is adequate at **all** times, including any free time children may have, and that all activities have been well planned;
- Children and counsellors are aware of the Fire Safety procedures and a Fire Drill is carried out;
- The children are aware of their rights and the behaviour expected of them;
- If a child is being counselled individually this should be done as openly as possible;
- An incident/accident book should be kept at the residential and returned to the National Office as soon as the residential is over;
- A First Aid Kit should be carried at all times.

Children must be told their rights

Children must be told of their rights, especially in relation to their involvement with CEF. The following are the rights, which we should share in our clubs:

- You have the right to be safe and so we ask you to obey the rules, which are there for your safety;
- You have the right to be protected from any harm. Please tell me if you feel, or have been, threatened or abused. I will listen and try to do something about it;
- You have the right to healthcare; therefore we need to know if you suffer from any illnesses. Parents should inform leaders on the relevant information form;

- You have the right to enjoy and practice your own religion, but as you know during our Club/Camp you are expected to listen to Christian views. You have the right afterwards to discuss what you have heard with your teacher without fear of prejudice;
- You have the right to be treated with dignity but you are expected to behave in a respectful way and to treat others in the same way with dignity and respect;
- You have the right to express your opinions. We would encourage you to do so at a time, which is suitable to all involved. This can easily be arranged with your teacher/leader.

What is child abuse?

The following are the definitions for Child Abuse as found in the Children (NI) Order 1995 guidelines “Co-operating to protect children”:

Physical Abuse: Is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering;

Emotional Abuse: Is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;

Sexual Abuse: This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical activities or non-contact activities such as forcing the child to view pornography;

Neglect: Is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve failing to provide adequate foods, shelter, clothing, and medical care;

Bullying: Is not in itself a form of abuse, but a child who is bullied may be suffering any of the types of abuse defined above. It takes many forms but the main types are:

- Physical (eg hitting, kicking, theft);
- Verbal (eg sectarian/racist remarks, name calling);
- Indirect (eg spreading rumours);
- Texting (eg through mobile phones).

The damage inflicted by bullying, can frequently be underestimated.

Procedure for dealing with an allegation against a full-time worker or volunteer

In the event of an allegation against a Full-Time Worker or Volunteer the following procedures will be followed:

Suspension

The first priority must be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. After consultation with Social Services or police, the worker/volunteer should be informed of the nature of the allegation and should be suspended from their position. They will have the opportunity to respond to the allegation and their response should be recorded along with the record of the incident. The Designated Person or the National/General Director may carry out this action. The statutory authorities will decide whether the report indicates that significant harm has occurred and whether further legal action will be instigated.

Report to statutory authorities

A report will be forwarded to Social Services or the police, including the worker's/volunteer's response to the allegation, according to the standard procedures.

Inform parents/carers

Parents/carers should be informed immediately, after taking advice from statutory authorities as to how this might best be done. It is very important to maintain close links with the statutory authorities in order to ensure that no actions taken by the organisation might undermine any formal investigations.

Support for worker/volunteer

While recognising that the safety of children and young people is of paramount importance, it is equally important to support workers and volunteers against whom allegations have been made. Support needs to be provided appropriately in consultation with statutory services.

Internal disciplinary procedures

CEF will also carry out its own disciplinary procedures. The fellowship will have to make decisions and take appropriate action based on facts as presented. If the outcome of these procedures is dismissal from the position, DHSS&PS should be informed so that the person's name can be considered for the PECS register.

Making children aware of self protection

We can advise children on how to protect themselves. The Kidscape programme as quoted on Factsheet 4 of "Our Duty to Care" gives a list of things which children can be taught without making them fearful or mistrustful of normal everyday affection.

The training involves teaching children how:

- To be safe that no one should ever try to take away this basic right;
- To say NO if anyone, even someone they know, tries to touch them in a way, which frightens or confuses them;
- To cope with bullies to ignore them if possible, to get help and to always tell an adult;
- To tell that adults will believe them and need to know about problems to be able to help;
- To not keep secrets that some secrets should never be kept and that no one, even someone they know, should ever ask them to keep a kiss, hug or touch of any kind a secret;
- To yell that it is okay to yell even in quiet places if they think they are in danger from someone who might harm them. Also they are taught how to yell – really loudly in case of emergency;
- To run and get away whenever they think they are in danger – how to recognise and deal with approaches from strangers including tricks and bribes;
- To have a code a word or sign with parents, which will always be a signal, in an emergency, that means they can trust what they are being told and the person telling them.

Contacts

CEF contacts

If you have any queries regarding the policy, or if you are in any way unsure as to what action to take in a given situation, please contact one of the following workers:

CEF Child Protection Co-ordinator: Mr David Jackson – 028 9058 1037
or 07770 531114

Alternatively: Mrs Ruth Jackson 02890 730927 /07769
774412

Mr Henry Berry – 028 9079 6937

If you are unable to contact any of these, please telephone the National Office on 028 9073 2263, to obtain help in contacting one of the above.

These workers will endeavour to clarify the Policy or advise which professional/external agency should be contacted.

Useful contacts

Volunteer Development Agency

– Our Duty to Care

129 Ormeau Road
BELFAST BT7 1SH
Tel: 028 9023 6100

Child Care NI

Unit 9
40 Montgomery Road
BELFAST BT6 9HL
Tel: 028 9040 1290

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline
24 hours, call free
Tel: 0800 800500

Childline (NI)

PO Box 111
BELFAST BT1 7DZ
Tel: 028 9032 7773
Freephone: 0800 1111

Kidscape

12 Buckingham Palace Road
LONDON SUW 9TR

CEF does not necessarily agree with all the activities of the above organisations.