Knockbracken Congregational Church

Draft

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

August 2026

Introduction

Knockbracken Congregational Church is committed to providing, in a Christian environment, the highest possible care for children and young people, and to safeguard their welfare by protecting them from harm.

Definition of a Child

In Northern Ireland, the primary legal definition of a child is any person under the age of 18 according to the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

According to the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, which the UK government signed in December 1991, 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 has five underlying principles, which have clear implications for all involved in work with children and young people.

1. **Paramountcy** - The welfare of the child **must always be** the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her.
2. **Parental responsibility** - Parents have responsibilities to their children rather than rights over them.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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 church 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 endeavours to set out clear guidelines and procedures for all leaders and workers in Knockbracken Congregational Church. It includes a Code of Behaviour that every leader and worker 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.

Child Protection Policy Statement

We in Knockbracken Congregational Church believe that all the children and young people entrusted to our care should enjoy the facilities, meetings and activities provided by us without fear of harm. We wish to ensure that all children participate in a safe and enjoyable environment in which they feel valued. The Knockbracken Congregational Church leadership, with the assistance of all their children's/youth workers, 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 leaders and workers
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, leaders, and workers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Following carefully the procedures for the appointment of leaders and workers
- Providing effective management for leaders and workers through supervision, support, and training
- Ensuring that safety procedures are adhered to

Our policy applies to all our leaders and workers. We accept and recognise our responsibilities for child protection. We are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures and practice at regular intervals, at least every 3 years.

Code of Behaviour

This code of behaviour is to be put into practice at all times by our leaders and workers and is to be remembered even at sensitive times e.g. when dealing with bullying, abuse or bereavement.

General Principles

In all Knockbracken Congregational Church'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, and their achievements should be recognised.

Workers should always work openly with children and take responsible precautions to ensure that they are not left alone with a child completely unobserved. Remember you cannot rely upon your good name to protect you.

All workers are expected to be good examples to the children and to work together with Knockbracken Congregational Church's leadership and co-workers for the safety and benefit of the children.

Workers should ensure that activities are carefully planned in advance and that children are adequately supervised at all times.

Knockbracken Congregational Church does not permit the consumption of alcohol, or the misuse of drugs/substances or the wilful destruction of property at any of its activities.

Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Leaders/Workers

In order to reduce likely situations for abuse of children, and to help protect leaders/workers from false accusations, it is necessary that all leaders/workers recognise that it does not 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.
- Take children to your home.

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 made by a child go without being addressed and recorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves
- Form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust
- Use physical punishment or discipline out of anger

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, or the parent for working within the Mums and Toddlers .

Protecting children from harming themselves

- Sometimes restraint may need to be applied to a child in order to protect him/her from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. It should never be used to inflict pain or as a general means of control.
- The proper use of restraint requires skill and judgement. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. Leaders should never try to restrain a young person on their own. Another leader may act as an assistant or as a witness.
- Remember that restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Following an incident when restraint has been used, a report should be inserted in the Accident/Incident Report book.

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 leaders/workers informed of the meeting
- Ensure there is another leader/worker on the premises for the duration of the counselling/guidance session.
- If counselling/guidance is taking place other than at a Knockbracken Congregational Church event, then it may be advisable to not go alone. The leader/worker should agree an appointment date, time and venue, confirm all details with the appropriate leader-in-charge and gain parental consent.

Personal relationships

Leaders/workers involved in relationships with other leaders/workers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within the ministry or put children in a potentially harmful situation.

Guidelines for the Supervision of children/young people

- Children should **never** be left unsupervised while in our care.
- Leaders-in-charge must be satisfied that those workers who supervise children and young people are fully competent to do so.
- Bus drivers should not be left to supervise children.
- 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.
- Workers should know at all times where children are and what they are doing.

- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision;
- Dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed.
- Young people (those under 18 years of age) who are helping leaders should not be left alone in a supervisory capacity with children.
- 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 adult/child ratios are:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children
3-7 years	1 adult to 8 children
8 years and over	2 adult (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children.

There should be one additional adult for every 10 extra children and/or young people.

The ratio of workers to children with disabilities is dependent upon the needs of the individual child.

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 for children joining an organised trip.

Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, and the activities in which the children will be engaged.

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 has(have) parental responsibility, before taking a child to any place other than the usual venue.

Guidelines on Bullying

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Knockbracken Congregational Church, whether it is emotional, physical, racist, sexual, verbal, or cyber.

If bullying does occur, all children should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the leader-in-charge. The needs of the victim of bullying are paramount.

Incidents of bullying must be investigated and recorded. Bullying must be stopped quickly.

In serious cases parents should be informed and suspension of the bully (bullies) will be considered.

An attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour and genuinely apologise. If possible, the children will be reconciled.

After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not occur.

Guidelines about Modern Technology

A blanket ban on mobile phones is not necessary as mobiles may be useful in emergencies but their use should not be such that it compromises the leader/worker's ability to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision of children.

Contacting children and young people by phone, text or email should not be undertaken without parental consent. Workers should not normally make their mobile phone numbers or email addresses available to the children.

The use of obscene images or language on mobile phones is not tolerated in Knockbracken Congregational Church meetings or activities and will result in confiscation of the mobile phone and parents being informed.

Photographs, videos or other images of children should not be taken without the consent of the parents and children. The purpose for which these images will be used should be made clear. Knockbracken Congregational Church will take all steps to ensure that these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended.

Photographs, videos and other images of children will not be displayed on the internet without parental consent. Group photographs should be used in preference to individual photographs and avoid naming the children.

The Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 introduced a number of new offences including Up-skirting, Downblousing and Cyber-Flashing which may carry a custodial sentence.

Guidelines on Special Needs

Knockbracken Congregational Church has a Christian duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children and young people of all abilities.

Leaders and workers need to be aware that children and young people who have a disability can be at a greater risk of abuse. Also, the definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities.

Children with disabilities and learning difficulties are welcome at Knockbracken Congregational Church. We will work in partnership with the child, parents and any professionals to establish how the child can be included.

Workers should be made aware of the child's special needs and how to deal with them.

Higher worker ratios may be required if the child has additional needs or behavioural problems.

Expectations from Children and Young People

1. Respect the authority of the leaders/ workers.
2. Respect the views and feelings of other children/ young people at the meetings and activities.
3. Respect that all children/ young people in attendance have the right to express their views and to be heard.
4. The following behaviours are deemed unacceptable at any of Knockbracken Congregational Church's meetings or activities:
    - The consumption of alcohol, smoking, or the misuse of drugs/substances
    - The wilful destruction of property
    - The physical or verbal abuse of any of the leaders, workers, or other children/young people.

All leaders/ workers should be given a copy of Knockbracken Congregational Church's Code of Behaviour and it should be available upon request. Leaders need to be consistent when implementing the Code of Behaviour.

Abuse of position of trust

The Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 extends the scope of the current Abuse of Position of Trust legislation to include the non- statutory settings of sport and religion. The aim of the abuse of trust provision is to protect young people in particular situations where there is a dependency on an adult, which is often combined with an element of vulnerability on the part of the young person.

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 Knockbracken Congregational Church 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.
- 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 in the local paper and by visiting homes in the area
- Make them aware that we have a child protection policy.
- Make them aware of whom they should contact if they have concerns or complaints.

… with workers

Good information will enable workers 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 Church.

Therefore, **all** workers will undergo training in child protection policy and procedures, and this training will be updated at regular intervals, at least every 3 years.

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.

Gaining Essential Confidential Information

The Knockbracken Congregational Church seeks to ensure the protection of children and young people by gathering the following basic information:

- Knowing who has parental responsibility for all children
- Having a record of the name, address and contact number for all parents/carers for use in emergency situations.

- Making sure we have information about any health issues, medication, learning difficulties that affect the children/young people attending the Knockbracken Congregational Church meetings or activities.
- Obtaining parental consent for all activities and for the taking of photographs.

Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of Knockbracken Congregational Church to only communicate information of a confidential nature on a 'need to know' basis.

Personal and sensitive details which parents have confided about their children or family situations will not be talked about or passed on to others without their consent.

All leaders, workers and children/young people must be aware that there are some situations in which confidentiality needs to be broken, specifically, if you are concerned that a person is in danger, either to themselves or from someone else, or if you suspect that an offence may have been committed.

Storage of Personal Data

The gathering and storage of personal data for Knockbracken Congregational Church meetings and activities is to be in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.

This essential personal information about children attending Knockbracken Congregational Church meetings/activities is to be stored securely but be readily available for use in emergencies.

Accident/Incident Reports

The accident/incident report book/forms are to be used to record details of accidents, injuries and minor incidents. Details of persons involved, what happened, witnesses, place and date should be recorded.

Procedures for Reporting Concerns

Designated Person

The Designated Person (DP) is the individual within Knockbracken Congregational Church to whom all concerns and disclosures should be brought. The Designated Person may be contacted at any time for advice/guidance. The Designated Person for Knockbracken Congregational Church is Sharon McWhirter and the Deputy Designated Person is Lyn Mewha.

The Designated Person may then discuss the concern/suspicion/allegation with Social Services (Gateway), and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. It is not necessary for the Designated Person to hear any disclosure first-hand. This eliminates the need for the child to recount a traumatic experience more than once.

What is Child Abuse?

The following are the definitions for Child Abuse as found in "Co-operating to Safeguard children and Young People" October 2024

Physical Abuse: is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Emotional Abuse: is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse

Exploitation: is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Ill-treatment of another or abusive behaviour directed at another means that a child could be harmed by virtue of witnessing the ill-treatment or domestic abuse of another person. However, it is not necessary for the child to have witnessed such treatment or behaviour or, indeed, to have been present when it happened. Abusive Behaviour is behaviour that falls within section 2 of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021.

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 (hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing)
- Racist (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments)
- Cyber (via mobile phones, email, websites)
- Emotional (excluding, being unfriendly)

The damage inflicted by bullying, can frequently be underestimated.

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 for Concerns

It is not appropriate to record details of alleged or suspected child abuse in the accident/incident report book, so if you have concerns about a child:

- Fill in a *Record of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse* Form - 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 leader-in-charge or the Designated Person, and is found within the appendices of this document.
- Give the form to the Designated Person who will contact you to clarify anything they don't understand
- Quietly monitor the situation and report any further developments to the Designated Person, 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 for Disclosures

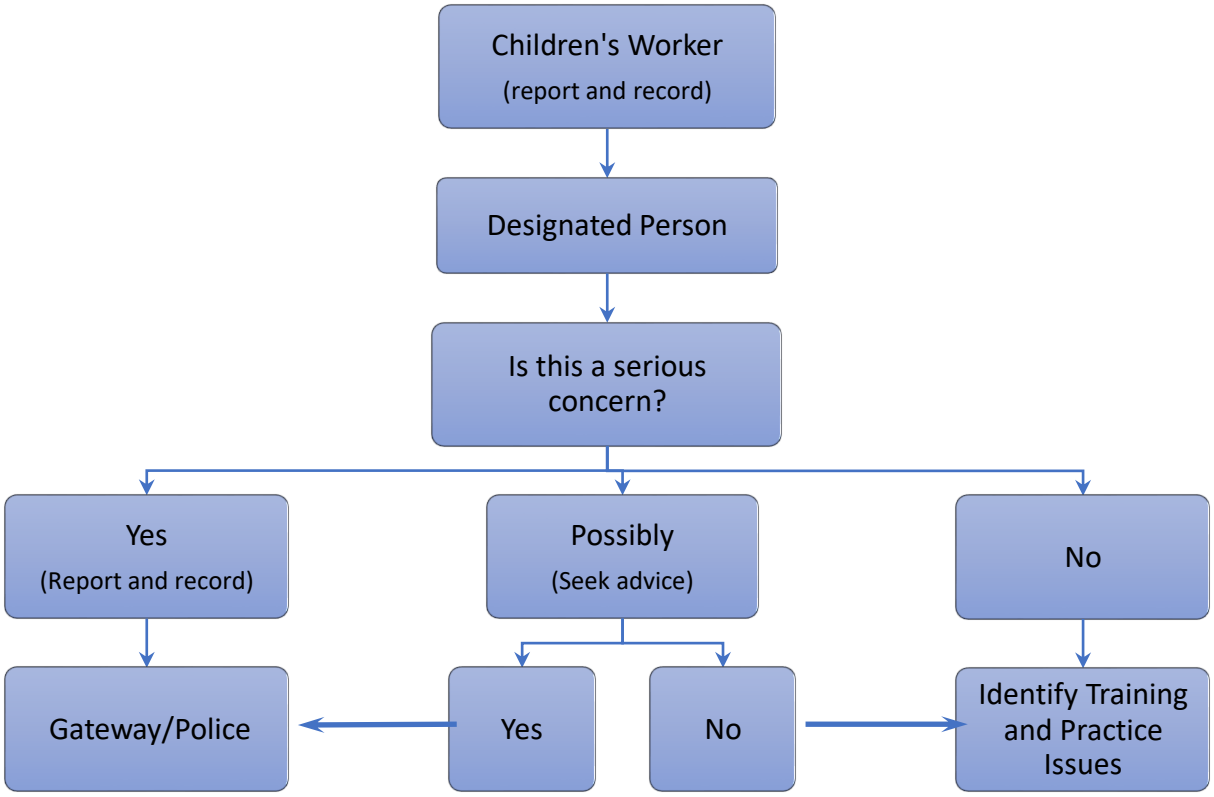
If a child comes to you and begins to disclose abuse, these are the guidelines, which should be followed:

DO	DON'T
Stay calm	Don't panic
Listen and hear – give the child time to say what he/she wants	Don't ask leading questions e.g. "Did your Dad...?"
Reassure that he/she has done nothing wrong	Don't promise to keep secrets
Record in writing what was said as soon as possible (Form available from leader-in-charge or Designated Person)	Don't inquire into details of abuse
Report sent to Designated Person	Don't 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! *(Record of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse Form)*.
- Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.
- Remember information must only ever be passed on a "**need-to-know**" basis. All concerns and disclosures need to remain as confidential as possible.
- If the Designated Person is not available, please contact one of the deputies named at the back.

Flowchart for Reporting Concern about a Child



Procedure for dealing with an Allegation against a Leader/worker

In the event of an allegation against a leader or other worker the following procedures will be followed:

- Fill in a *Record of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse* Form and give it to the Designated Person as soon as possible. The Designated Person will inform the Churches Leadership.
- The Churches leadership should inform the leader/worker of the nature of the allegation, provide him/her with opportunity to respond to the allegation and fully record his/her response.
- To ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk, the leader/worker should be suspended from their position **after** consultation with the relevant statutory authorities.
- Parents/carers should be informed immediately, after taking advice from statutory authorities as to how this might best be done.
- Forward the report and worker's response to statutory authorities as soon as possible.

The statutory authorities will decide whether the report indicates that significant harm has occurred and whether further legal action will be instigated.

It is very important to maintain close links with the statutory authorities in order to ensure that no actions taken by Knockbracken Congregational Church might undermine any formal investigations.

While the safety of the children is of paramount importance, the alleged perpetrator should be shown appropriate Christian love and support. Support needs to be provided appropriately in consultation with statutory services.

If Knockbracken Congregational Church Leadership dismiss a leader/worker as unsuitable to work with children, they should inform the Disclosure and Barring Service so that the person's name can be considered for the Barring List from Working with Children.

Allegations against the Designated Person

If an allegation is made against the Designated Person, the leaders of the church should be informed. *The Record of Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse Form* should be **given directly to the Churches Leadership** as soon as possible. The leadership of Knockbracken Congregational Church will deal with the allegation according to the procedure outlined above.

Appointment of Workers

The Knockbracken Congregational Church Leadership are responsible for the appointment of all leaders and workers who work with children and young people in their various ministries. They hold the right to request references for persons previously unknown to Knockbracken Congregational Church.

To help prevent unsuitable persons from working with children and young people in Knockbracken Congregational Church, it is recommended that the following steps are followed:

1. The potential worker is given an *Application Form* to fill in and has the nature of the work explained to them.
2. If the Leadership considers the person suitable, they ask the Designated Person to arrange for a disclosure check to be undertaken for the individual.
3. The Knockbracken Congregational Church is using Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) as an umbrella organisation to request disclosure checks for all potential leaders/workers. CEF will inform the Knockbracken Congregational Church's Designated Person on the status of any disclosure checks.
4. From January 2026 all new leaders/workers must have their disclosure check completed before commencing work among children and young people in Knockbracken Congregational Church.

From January 2026 all new workers should complete an application form. It is good practice for the Designated person to have a list of all current workers.

Checks with Access NI

Access NI is the organisation in Northern Ireland that processes the police record checks, providing criminal history information. An enhanced check with barred lists checks is necessary for all persons who work in regulated activity with children and adults at risk of harm. In Knockbracken Congregational Church this applies to:

- Mums and Toddlers Leader and Volunteers

Access NI checks are to be carried out for all leaders and workers aged 16 or over, with rechecks being carried out every 3 years

As Trustees of Knockbracken Congregational Church, enhanced checks (without barred lists checks) are required for:

- The Minister
- Elders
- Deacons

Supervision, Support and Training

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

Once appointed all leaders and workers 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.

Training

As newcomers, workers will be made aware of the tasks they will be performing and Knockbracken Congregational Church's child protection policy and procedures and Code of Behaviour.

Training is a continual process and will include:

- Raising awareness in child protection
- Health and safety
- Particular skills training with regards teaching children

Knockbracken Congregational Church will be working closely with the CEF Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the training of their leaders and workers.

Supervision and Support of Workers

It is the Designated Persons responsibility to support workers and the Designated Person should keep them up-to-date with child protection issues and with other policies as they arise.

Workers 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, e.g. to the Sunday School 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.

Principles of Good Practice

Ministry Guidelines

The following are some practical guidelines for ministries within a church:

Mums and Toddlers

The leader in charge is to make those in attendance aware of what to do in the event of a fire.

The leaders/workers are expected to follow Knockbracken Congregational Church's Code of Behaviour. This is in place to protect both you and the children.

Ensure that an accident/incident book is available at each session. Keep register of attendance. A nominated adult worker should take responsibility for this.

Sunday School

The teacher/leader in charge is to make the children aware that the teachers/workers are available to help them, and how the children and teachers/workers are to behave in Sunday School/Children's Hour, and what the children are to do in event of a fire.

The teachers/workers are expected to follow Knockbracken Congregational Church's Code of Behaviour. This is in place to protect both you and the children.

Ensure that parental consent forms, and an accident/incident report book are available in every meeting and activity. Keep register of attendance. A nominated adult teacher/leader should take responsibility for this.

When transporting children to a meeting or other event, the drivers should check their motor insurance cover, avoid overcrowding a car, and avoid being alone with a child in a car.

Junior helpers can be most beneficial in the meetings to help with tasks like giving out sweets and tokens, but they should never be left alone to supervise children or take children to the toilet.

Transportation

All youth work will involve transporting young people at some stage, whether this is to and from a meeting, other activity or residential.

Leaders in charge must exercise discretion as to who is permitted to drive cars or mini-buses. The following should be considered at all times:

- Insurance cover must be adequate and up to date. Be aware of the limitations of third party insurance.
- The driver needs to be sufficiently aware of his/her responsibility towards the passengers.
- Speed limits should never be exceeded.
- The driver needs to know what to do in the event of breakdown or accident.

In addition, leaders/workers should observe the guidelines below which will help ensure protection for both them and the young people.

Private cars

- Seat belts should be worn by each passenger in a private car at all times and booster seats used for children under 12 years of age.

- Avoid transporting a child or young person on your own. Try to ensure that another worker or other children/young people are with you. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other workers know this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.

Mini-buses/ buses/ coaches

- There should only be one child per seat on all mini-buses, buses and coaches with seat belts. But three seated children under 14 years of age may be allowed on two seats where there are no belts.
- Seat belts should be worn when provided on the bus. Leaders/workers should try to persuade children to do so for their own safety. A single seat belt must not be used by more than one child, nor should a belt be placed around a child who is on an adult's lap.
- There should be at least two adults supervising children on the bus, preferably of mixed gender and not relatives.
- Ensure that the person driving the minibus has the appropriate licence to do so and there is the necessary insurance.

Children must be told their rights

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

- 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 us if you feel, or have been, threatened or abused. We 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 practice your own religion, but as you know during all our meetings and activities 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.

Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Sharon McWhirter

Deputy – Lyn Mewha

Church Leadership

Minister	Rev Calvin Coulter
Elder	Mr Paul Wright
Deacons	Mr Donald Little (Treasurer)
	Mr Ian Mewha (Secretary)
	Mr Warren McWhirter

Useful Contact Numbers

Police PPU	101	
Gateway	02890 507000 out of Hours	028 9504999
Volunteer Now	028 90232020	
Children in Northern Ireland	028 90401290	
NSPCC	0808 800 5000	

Policy Date	
Approved by	
Next review	September 2029

Appendices

A. *Volunteer Applications Form*
B. *Declaration Form*
C. *Volunteer Reference Form* to be completed by a person giving a reference for a new worker.
D. *Record of Allegations of Abuse or Suspicions Form* is available from the Designated Person and is to be completed when there is an allegation against a worker or a suspicion of abuse of a child. Give completed form to the Designated Person.
E. *Accident/ Incident Record Form* to be completed when an accident/incident occurs although accidents would normally be recorded in the accident report book. Give completed form to the Designated Person.
F. *Children's Information Form*. To be completed by child's parents and returned to activity leader.

FORM A

Knockbracken Congregational Church

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

*Please complete this form using **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Thank you.*

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name ……

Address ……

…… Postcode …… Phone No ……

Date of Birth: …… Surnames:……

If resident at this address for less than two years please give previous address and church.

Address ……

…… Postcode …… Phone No ……

Have you any illness, which might affect your work with young people? YES/NO

If so, give details ……

Give a brief account of your testimony on a separate page.

Why do you want to work with children or young people? ……

……

……

Describe any experience you have had working with children or young people.

……

……

Describe any other voluntary work experience you have had.

……

……

What training have you had? ……

……

Signed …… Date ……

FORM B

Knockbracken Congregational Church

DECLARATION FORM

*Please complete this form using **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Thank you.*

You will understand the great responsibility involved in working with children and young people, and the need to ensure their safety. We therefore ask you to sign the following declaration.

I declare that I have not been involved in any activity, which would abuse a child, either physically, emotionally or sexually.

I will not neglect my duty to care for the children or young people.

Signed: ……..

You are required to give a personal disclosure of any criminal offence or any pending offence. This disclosure may not bar you from involvement with Knockbracken Congregational Church
Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or a Bound Over Order? YES/NO

If yes, please give details:

……
……
……
Signed: …… Date: ……

(All convictions must be disclosed, as the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, 1986 does not apply)

Please give two names of referees, who have known you for at least two years and are not related to you.

Name: ……..

Address: ……..

……

Postcode: ……

Telephone No: ……

Name: ……..

Address: ……..

……

Postcode: ……

Telephone No: ……

FORM C

Knockbracken Congregational Church Church

VOLUNTEER REFERENCE FORM

*Please complete this form using **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Thank you.*

…… has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer, and has given your name as a referee. This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people.

Yes/No

If you have answered 'Yes' we will contact you in confidence.

All the information contained on the form will remain absolutely confidential, and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor should he/she be offered a volunteer position. We would appreciate you being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? ……

In what capacity? ……

What attributes does this person have that would make him/her a suitable volunteer?

……

How would you describe his/her personality? ……

Please rate this person on the following (Please tick one).

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self Motivation					
Christian Conduct					
Commitment					
Teachability					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Name of Referee: ……

Signature: …… Date: ……

FORM D

Knockbracken Congregational Church

RECORD OF ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

*Please complete this form using **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Thank you.*

PERSONAL DETAILS OF CHILD

Name of child: ……..… Age: ……..

Address of child: ……..

Any special factors: ……..

……..

Parent's name(s): ……

Home address: ……

Telephone No: ……(home) …….. (work)

PERSON MAKING THE REPORT

Name of staff member/volunteer: ……..

I am reporting own concerns/I am passing on someone else's concerns (delete as appropriate).

Please record details of specific incidents, which have prompted your concern (include any physical, behavioural or indirect signs with dates and times etc):

……
……

Has the child received any medical attention? If so, give details:
……
……
Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
……
……
Have person(s) with parental responsibility been contacted? Yes/No

Give details of information given:
……
……

Record any details of person(s) against whom the allegation has been made:

……

……

Who else has been consulted? Record who and when:

……

……..

Signed: …….. Date: ……..

FORM E

Knockbracken Congregational Church

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT FORM

ACTIVITY:_____

Name and address of young person involved:

_____

_____

Date and Time of Accident/Incident:_____

Location of Accident/Incident:_____

Detailed description of what happened:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Nature of any injury: _____

Any treatment given:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Names and addresses of witnesses:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Follow up procedures taken(Name of hospital, doctor, treatment etc):

_____

Entry made in accident book: signed_____ **Date and Time:**_____

Parents Informed: Signed_____ **Date and Time:**_____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

FORM F

Knockbracken Congregational Church

CHILDREN'S INFORMATION FORM

Name:……. Date of Birth…….

Address:…….

Postcode:…… Home Phone No:…….
Mobile No.:……..

If unavailable another emergency contact:

Name:…… Phone No:……
Relationship to the child:……

Details of any known medical conditions, allergies etc (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) and medication being
……
……
……

Any other special needs, or requirements that it would be helpful for the leaders to know
……
……

I give permission for my child to attend Knockbracken Congregational Church Sunday school/Children's meeting

I give/ do not permission for my child to be transported in either a private car or other transport provided by the Church

I give/ do not give permission for photographs of my child being taken at the above events and being used in a parents evening.

I give permission in the event of illness or accident for my child to be treated by a nominated first aider or by a qualified medical practitioner. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

Name:……

Signature (Adult with parental responsibility):……

Date:……