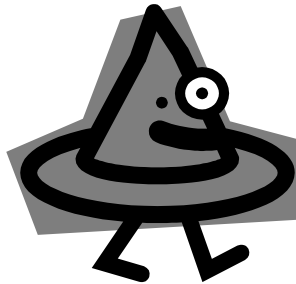


## **Youth Ministry Health and Safety Guide**

This shortened pack with advice for youth leaders about health and safety regulations is intended to be readily available to all involved in Youth Ministry throughout the Diocese of Northampton. It is a shortened version of the full Youth Ministry Welfare Manual, which is available in every parish. Furthermore, it also complements the developing Diocesan Welfare Manual. If you have any queries or questions about what is contained in this pack, please consult the fuller Youth Ministry Welfare Manual and don't hesitate to get in touch with the Northampton Youth Ministry Office.

All those involved in youth ministry throughout the diocese want the best for our young people. A healthy policy on both Child Protection and Health and Safety ensures that we can use the best of our ability to stop any situations occurring where any harm can come to our young people.



As leaders of youth ministry, we also need to protect ourselves from any dangers involved in the running of our youth groups and programmes. It is reassuring for both ourselves and our young people to know that we are working within the legal boundaries and the accepted standards of good practice.

This policy has the intention to encourage safety within youth ministry – for our young people and for our youth leaders.

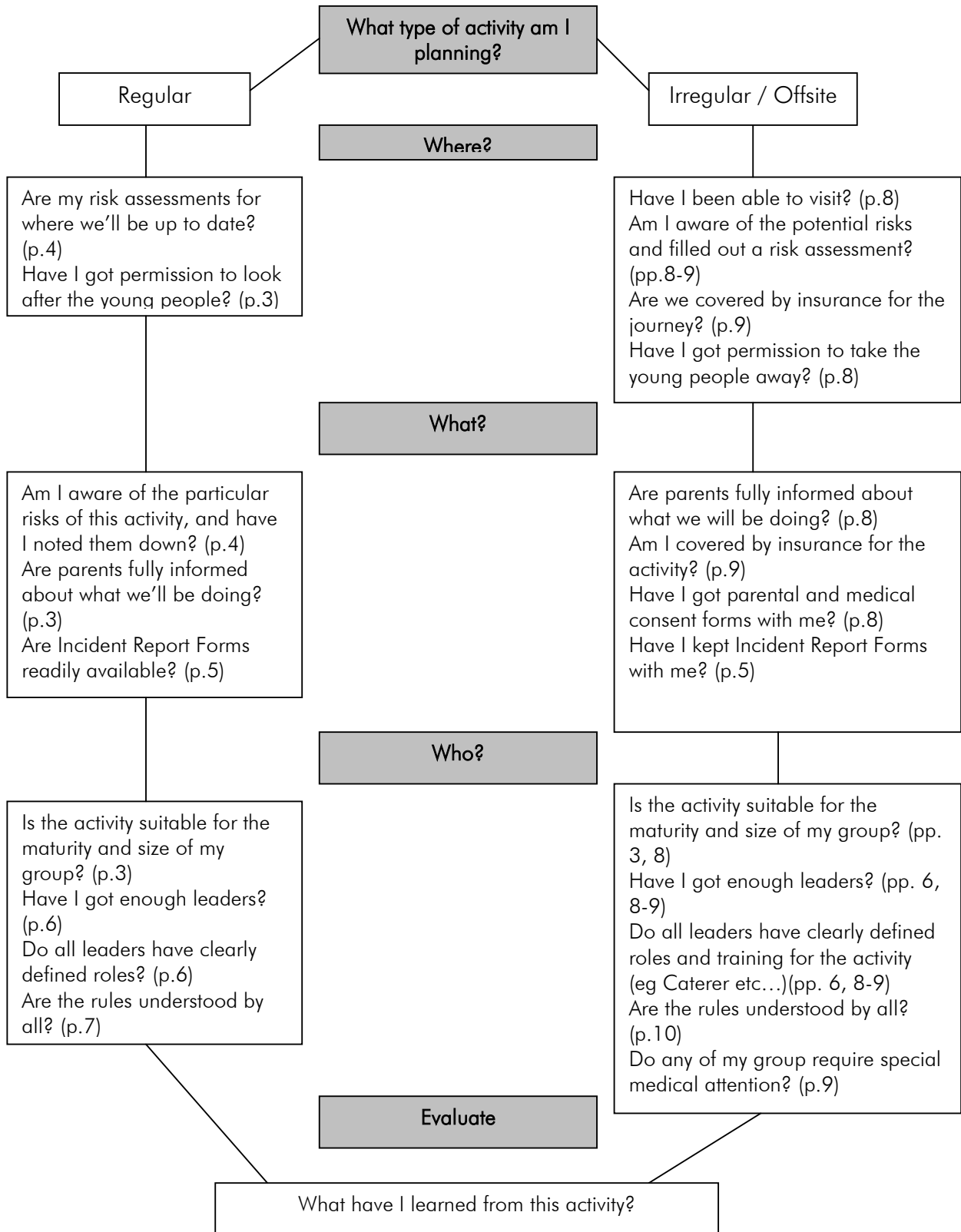
Remember that you are not in this alone. It is never wrong to ask for help – either from those on your team, or from the Northampton Youth Ministry Office.

In the Catholic tradition, we are not used to approaching our pastoral work with such a closely-defined legal approach. It is becoming increasingly obvious, though, that this is an area in which we have much to learn. Please be encouraged not to feel overwhelmed by these guidelines, but simply try to incorporate them little by little into your strategy of youth ministry. Indeed, you are already doing most of what is mentioned below, but perhaps you will also recognise some missing areas?

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## Planning for The Welfare of your Young People



## Planning

- Health and Safety is about *anticipation* of the dangers found in any context where people share a space. Within the context of young people, the dangers and hazards are quite often more numerous than in other situations. As a result of this, planning your youth ministry becomes even more crucial.
- Although planning ahead may seem fruitless at the time (especially when you have no real clue about how the group's activities will develop), it saves a lot of heartache further down the line. Collecting a range of information at the beginning of a term or year will help you to be prepared if and when incidents and problems occur.
- Furthermore, forward planning and appropriate notification of parents/carers helps to foster trust within your community. It allows you to involve those who care for your young people full time, and demonstrates that you have a willingness to be accountable to them.
- When you are planning the term's activities, think about all the areas mentioned in this pack for each session. That way you will know that your premises are safe, you have all the right permissions, and that you will have enough helpers for the different activities.

## Week-to Week Youth Ministry

### Parental Consent Forms

The purpose of a parental consent form is to acknowledge that those responsible for your young people have given you permission to look after their child. Without a parental consent form, you could be in danger of supervising the young person without the parent's knowledge or consent. If, in this case, anything untoward were to happen to the young person, you (or your employer, or your parish) could find that potential legal problems are increased.

#### **What do they do?**

- They **DO NOT**:
  - Give you parental responsibility for the young person.
  - Allow you to discipline the young person with any means necessary.
  - Remove the responsibility of those who do have parental responsibility.
- They **DO**:
  - Give you permission to look after the young person for an allotted period of time.
  - Demonstrate that you are in a position of trust, and should act accordingly.
  - Mean that you should have a 'duty of care' to act as a careful parent would towards the young person.

#### **How should a typical consent form look?**

See the sample form and guide in the Appendix on pages 17 and 18.

#### **What is 'duty of care'?**

You will see that you do not ever have parental responsibility for the young person you are looking after. Instead, acting 'in place of a parent' means that you have this '**duty of care**' to act as a careful parent would towards the young person.

## Duty of Care – the Role of the Youth Leader

'Duty of Care' means that you are expected to act as a careful parent would towards the young person.

Acting as a careful parent would towards your young people, you have a legal obligation to check that the environment that you are bringing your young people into is, within reason, safe.

If it is not a safe environment, you should be able to demonstrate that you have done your utmost to ***make the environment safe***. This means filling in Risk Assessment forms, and making sure that you have adequate insurance cover. Of course, you are only anticipating what is reasonably to be expected – there is no way of planning for an earthquake or a tiger that's escaped from the local zoo!

### **Risk Assessments**

- A risk assessment should follow the pattern of the sheets on pages 19 and 20 in the Appendix.
- You should use these at the beginning of using a new location for your youth ministry.
- Take a survey of the premises or environment and consider what the potential hazardous situations are.

*For example, are you using any candles or naked flames in your environment?*

- Then consider what the likelihood of any accident occurring is (use a scale 1-3).
- Consider also the scale of damage that could happen if an accident did occur (again, use a scale 1-3).
- From these, you can work out the risk factor of any situation by multiplying the likelihood with the scale of damage.

*Risk Factor = the likelihood of something happening x the scale of damage if it did happen*

- Now think about what you can do to minimize the risk of any accident.

*For example, you could make sure that all candles are surrounded by non-flammable material or are out of the way of people and flammable objects.*

- Then reconsider the risk, and hopefully the risk factor should decrease.
- Each parish should have a Parish Health and Safety Officer. It is part of their aim to sort out any hazards that pose a threat to the life of the parish. Report any situations that you are concerned about to them or your Parish Priest.
- If the risk factor is still very high, perhaps you should reconsider the environment or doing the activity?

### **Insurance**

- All parish activities are covered by the diocesan insurance policy.
- If you have any questions about insurance, you can direct them to the Catholic Church Insurance Association, 2 Prebendal Court, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8EY – tel. 01296 422030, fax - 01296 428049. If you should need further advice, please contact the Youth Ministry Office.

- Before trying any adventurous activities, make sure that the diocesan policy covers you. This particularly applies to trips away from your normal base, and trips abroad. Unfortunately, the insurance policy may not be valid if there has been no risk assessment undertaken.

### Accident / Incident report forms

- Prepare these at the beginning of a year, and keep them available in case of an injury or incident (for example, a friendly scrap that got out of hand!)
- See page 21 for the different questions that you need to ask on the form.
- Make sure that a form is filled in when any incident occurs, in order to safeguard both you and your young person and prevent future disputes. This form should always be seen by the parent or guardian of the young person.
- Make sure the form is clearly signed and dated.

### Medical Situations

- Normally speaking, you should have no need to ask for medical consent from those responsible for your young people. This is not the case for trips or one-off activities (see p.8)
- However, because of the nature of your ministry, there will be situations that demand a medical response from time to time.
- Make sure that there is always a First Aid kit on the premises where you are meeting. The Diocesan Welfare Manual states that it is an obligation of the Parish to make sure that this First Aid kit is complete. On page 22, the recommended contents of a First Aid kit is described.
- If your group is a sizeable number (say, 40 or more young people), it is recommended that there is an adult present who has basic first-aid training. **Note:** a First Aider is a legal term for a person who has undergone the 4 day Health & Safety at Work course. These courses are run regularly – please contact your local authority for details of upcoming courses.
- If the medical situation is not serious, your line of duty is to ‘act as a responsible parent’. Thus, you should wash a cut or provide an ice-pack for a bruise – always in the view of other people. Fill in an accident form, and **make sure that those with parental responsibility know about the incident.** Note: you should not use plasters with antiseptic strips, or ANY medicative substances whilst administering care to young people – no pills, potions, medicines or lotions! If you should need to, you must consult the parents of the young person.
- If the medical situation is serious, your first instinct should be to provide care for the young person. This may involve calling for an ambulance or a doctor. Secondly, you should ring the emergency contact number on your parental consent form, and make sure that an adult with parental responsibility knows about the situation.

**NEVER try to administer care beyond your capabilities**

- If those with parental responsibility and the secondary person are unreachable, arrange to accompany the young person to hospital, or to see the doctor. This may involve asking somebody to help supervise the group in your absence.
- Make sure you take emergency contact numbers with you, so that you can contact those with parental responsibility as soon as possible. Also on these forms should be details of any medical problems (for example, any allergies to specific medicines.)
- Keep trying to get in contact with those with parental responsibility. If a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the doctors may well need to make a decision. If the young person is aged 16 or over, or is under 16 but has a mature understanding of the medical implications, they can consent to any medical treatment themselves. If this cannot be demonstrated, the doctors will advise you about what will happen.
- Your duty of care means that you should make sure that the young person is still aware that you are around to help, especially if s/he is disorientated.

## Fire Hazards

- While performing the insurance and risk-assessment necessities for your group, it is also worth taking note of any fire practices that apply to your environment.
- Know where the fire-exits and extinguishers are, and make sure that your young people know.
- Try to perform a drill every so often, so that you are prepared in the eventuality of fire.

## Adequate Supervision

As a youth leader, your responsibility to act as a careful parent extends to those who are also leading your group. As such, forming a team with clearly defined roles is invaluable. Some roles that you may want to consider are:

1. **Leader** – in charge of planning, and seen to be leader in front of your young people.
2. **Administrator** – in charge of documentation and informing those with parental responsibility etc...
3. **First-Aider** – especially necessary with large groups, but any team should ALL know where the first-aid kit is kept.
4. **Caterer** – necessary if a main element of your group's activities involve food. Somebody with a Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene can monitor safety in the kitchen.

This is also a great opportunity to involve those in your parish more in your youth ministry. If you would like catering for a one-off event, or an administrator, this could allow people to be involved without necessarily committing to turn up weekly.

- Providing adequate supervision for your young people goes hand in hand with having a duty to care for them.
- Remember to bear in mind the people who are staffing your group. You might wish to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each of your team while defining roles.
- Remember also to keep a gender balance where dealing with mixed groups of young people, and to keep all leaders involved and up-to-date with your child protection commitments.
- Further information about child protection issues can be obtained either from your parish Child Protection Rep, or from the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.
- For recommended staffing levels, please see page 23.

## Rules and Rule-Breaking

### Legal Issues and Violence

- As mentioned above, a parental consent form does not give you permission to discipline a young person by any means available (ie physical or emotional punishment).
- There may arise certain occasions when a young person is using violent or threatening behaviour towards the leaders of the group or towards other members of the group. In this instance, you have every legal right to defend yourself, or those who are being attacked, and in fact should try, within reason, to protect any young person being attacked.
- Make it clear that any serious violent behaviour against staff or other young people will not be tolerated, and, in extreme circumstances, legal proceedings may follow.

### Legal Issues and Teenage Kicks

The legal issues of sex, drugs and controlled substances can be of major concern to youth ministry leaders. As with all areas of work with your youth group, however, flexibility backed up by a firm strategy is the best way forward.

- For all these issues, there is very little that you can do to prevent any abuse outside of your youth ministry situation. It is not your responsibility to report to the police any hearsay, rumour or alleged offence.
- It is, however, your responsibility to ensure that illegal activities do not happen in your youth group with your permission or 'blind eye'.

*For example, you will not be involved if a member of your group is in a sexual relationship with an under-age female. However, if you suspect this to be the case, and do not take steps to prevent this happening whilst your young people are gathered together, you could be liable for promoting the relationship.*

*Similarly, if drug abuse is happening at your group with your knowledge while your young people are with you, you could be held liable.*

- Make sure that your young people know that you have a responsibility to report any illegal behaviour happening at the group to the police.
- For abuse of controlled substances (drinking and smoking in the main), it is useful to remember that it is not illegal for young people under 16 to smoke or for young people under 18 to drink, but merely to buy these substances. Certainly, a healthy policy would tackle these issues with your young people, but to ban any abuse of controlled substances may lead to more problems than it solves.
- Similarly, to ban all relationships between members of the opposite sex (as is sometimes done) not only promotes an air of secrecy in the group, but could also damage your young peoples' perceptions about gender and sexuality.

## Taking trips away from your normal meeting place

Taking trips away from your normal environment can be an enormously rewarding part of your youth ministry. They can allow your young people to open up in new ways, and bond a group together at the beginning of a year, or consolidate a group at the end of a year. There are, however, many safety regulations that come in to play when taking a trip outside your regular environment. These should not stop you from being bold enough to travel away with your young people.

### Planning Ahead

- For trips outside of your normal context, the situation with regard to planning ahead becomes slightly problematic. Although it is even more necessary to plan in anticipation, it very well may often be the case that no trip to a site (especially abroad) can be scheduled or afforded.
- Our recommendation is that, where possible, you should go and visit an outward-bound centre or retreat centre before taking your group. If travelling too far away, or going abroad, try your best to get thorough recommendations from other youth leaders or from the Northampton Youth Ministry Office's website and forum ([www.nymo.org](http://www.nymo.org)).
- When taking a trip to an outward-bound or retreat centre, it is absolutely necessary that you communicate fully to the staff there about facilities and staffing regulations. The supplementary sheet lists some of the questions that you will need to ask when travelling away residentially.
- When planning a trip, make sure that parents are at least sent a comprehensive letter about the trip. Even better would be to have a meeting with parents, so that they can raise any worries or concerns.

### Parental Consent and Medical Consent

- Unlike regular activities, all activities away from the normal scheme of your group require a special parental consent form, including a section concerning medical consent – see pages 25 to 28.
- For trips within the UK, the parental consent of only one person with parental responsibility is required. Trips abroad need the consent of all those with parental responsibility, except in extreme circumstances. If in doubt, contact the Diocesan Youth Ministry Office.
- It is useful to remember that a form offering medical consent in case of an emergency can scare some parents. Make sure that you reassure them that this will only be used if they **cannot be contacted immediately in an emergency situation**.
- As mentioned on page 17, if your group take regular, normal activities outside of your environment (for example, to the park or indoor sports halls etc), you can insert a clause into your overall parental consent form acknowledging this, and cut out needless paperwork. This **does not cover swimming, watersports or more adventurous activities**.
- As with all consent forms, they are **no good stuck back at home** when you are away – keep them in a leader's file, which is accessible and can come with you on the trip! This file should, however, be kept locked away, so that the forms can't be accessed by unauthorized people.

### Duty of Care

- Make sure that you are aware of your responsibilities when taking trips away. It is even more important to have defined roles for your team – for example, a 'non-swimmer' who can sit with those who cannot swim because of a verucca!

- If you are taking a trip to a retreat centre or outward-bound centre, very often the statutory risk assessments and legal details will be covered by the centre themselves – but **make sure you ask before leaving**.
- Similarly, if you are taking a trip to a retreat or outward-bound centre, you will need to discuss with the centre as to how much the duty of care lies in their hands. Some will be quite happy to take your young people off your hands - others will want extra supervision on your behalf. The standard ratios for supervision are provided on the supplementary sheet.
- Risk Assessments, such as those on pages 19 and 20, may once again need filling in before using a new environment. **Note:** for regular trips to a leisure centre or more adventurous locality, you need only fill these in once, but make sure you keep them up to date.
- Please note that every adult who goes with you on a residential trip must have had their CRB check (see p.13)

### Insurance

- Insurance policies will need to be checked with reference to any outward-bound or activity based trips. It very well may be the case that the Diocesan Insurance Policy will cover your activity for no extra charge, but you may need to notify them beforehand by phone. The telephone number of the Catholic Church Insurance Association is 01296 422030. Obviously, if planning a trip abroad, you will need to investigate adequate travel insurance. An Insurance Company that specialises in Christian youth groups is Christian Camping International – see details on p. 31.
- Very often, the issue of transportation to a venue is a major insurance minefield. Simple precautions to take are to decide whether you wish to use leaders' private transport or hire an outside company. In general, paid youth ministers should be covered by Class 1 Business Insurance, whilst unpaid volunteers should be fine with their ordinary Social, Domestic and Pleasure Insurance. **However, you must check this with your own insurance company.** If you use an outside company, check that they hold responsibility for insurance – if not, you could be partly liable if an accident were to happen. If hiring a minibus, all seats occupied by young people must be forward-facing with seat belts. If hiring a coach, this is a strong recommendation.
- As part of your insurance agreement, you should make sure that you have accident / incident report forms with you on your trip, ready to be completed in case of any accident and claim after the event.

### Medical Situations

- It is always best to know the location of the nearest hospital to your intended environment. This is especially important if you are heading to a remote area.
- If travelling abroad, it will be necessary for you to arrange medical insurance, or European Community exemption forms (E111's).
- When consulting parents about the proposed trip, try and make sure that you ask them to let you know if they are going away themselves. If possible, they could leave you a contact number at their destination.

### Cooking

- If you are heading for a venue that is self-catering, try to make sure that you plan food wisely. This might include discussing a menu with your young people, and avoiding taking any perishable food items on long journeys.
- The person co-ordinating any cooking should hold a Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene.
- If you are heading for a venue that is catered, make sure that you let the centre know any dietary requirements of your young people.

### Rules and Rule-Breaking

- You may need to consider sitting down with your young people and their parents before any residential trip away to discuss boundaries and rules.
- Legal issues concerning rules come to the fore when you are trying to establish a discipline code. Although it is tempting to say that all misbehaviour will cost the young person a trip back home, you must then consider that an adult must accompany them home. What will this do for your staffing ratios? Similarly, asking young people not to smoke for 2 hours each week is not a hard task, but asking the same bitter smoker to go without for a whole week may be considered unreasonable. Plan ahead for these eventualities.
- It is also recommended that any relationships should be acknowledged healthily in a residential situation. An anti-relationship approach may lead to deviousness and secrecy on the part of your young people, perhaps causing more problems than you are stopping.
- It is, of course, completely unacceptable, however, to have mixed-sex sleeping quarters or not to monitor any 'night-time traffic'!
- Above all, try to enjoy yourselves. It is often left unsaid that group members often bond most while on a trip by seeing how far to push the boundaries. This, while being potentially hazardous, is a natural process of learning social limits. Accept the fact that you might not get your full 8 hours of sleep (certainly on the first night), but try not to over-react to bad behaviour, remembering that for many of our young people this may be their first time away from home or a great chance to escape a difficult family situation.

## Good Practice for work with young people

*The following are brief guidelines to good practice in child protection. During the coming years, national guidelines will be issued and developed in response to the practical needs of young people and those that minister to them. Any queries regarding diocesan and national policy should be addressed to Virginia Bird, whose details are available on the 'useful information' sheet (p....).*

**The key thing to remember in any situation is that physical and emotional contact between an adult and a child should reflect the child's needs and not the adult's.**

- When working with a group of young people, always try to remain in a public and accessible space. This is especially important if you find yourself in a position when you are alone with a child. And this is why it is important to have more than one leader for any group, even if it is a small group.

*Tip: If you do end up alone with a young person, try to keep a door open, so that you are visible to people walking past, or alternatively try to make sure that you are positioned in front of a window. Ideally, if a young person wants to chat discreetly, suggest that you sit in a corner of a room with others around, or go for a little walk in plain view of everybody.*

*Tip: If you end up without another leader for some reason, ask another parent or guardian (or even the parish priest!) to stay with you for the duration of the session. Perhaps think at the beginning of a term about who you might call on in times like this, and forewarn them.*

- Make sure that you have enough leaders to look after your group (see the 'supervision' guidelines on p.23) When planning for the term, consider the gender of your young people, their age and the nature of the activities that you will be undertaking as well as the maturity of the young people you are looking after.
- Continued communication with the parents of your group, as well as amongst the team will help to sort out any misunderstanding or inappropriate behaviour before it becomes a bigger issue. Policies, information and requirements should be clearly set out in letters to parents.
- Young people are entitled to feel safe in your care. As a result of this, you should consider creating an anti-bullying policy, and make sure that any disruptive behaviour is addressed as soon as possible.
- Transport can become problematic when you are looking after young people. Good practice suggests that you should really try hard not to be on your own with a young person, even in your car. If you hire a minibus, whoever is driving shouldn't also be in charge of 'keeping order' – somebody else should sit in the back. If hiring a coach, try to spread the leaders out, so that different areas are supervised.

*Tip: If you do end up having to take some young people home on your own, make sure that they are sitting in the rear seats, rather than alongside you. If you have to have somebody sitting in the passenger seat, make sure that they get dropped off first.*

*Tip: if it is necessary for leaders to share bathrooms with young people, make sure that you make a concerted effort to wash at different times, perhaps during free-time or before you do a morning wake-up call.*

*Tip: be aware that residential activities can often provide a space for young people to 'open up' emotionally. Make sure that all leaders are aware of your rules about confidentiality and physical contact before leaving for the trip.*

- If you are going on a residential trip, think carefully about sleeping arrangements, medical arrangements and all the other things mentioned on pp 8-10. Clearly, no adults should be sharing sleeping or washing facilities with young people.
- Familiarise yourself with the procedure in recruiting new volunteers. Your parish child protection representative will have details of this. Make sure that any permanent leaders or leaders who are accompanying you on a residential trip are only appointed once they have had a Criminal Records Bureau check.
- In all the work that you do, ensure that all leaders have clearly defined roles, so that everybody is clear about knowing what to do. Liaise with all your leaders regularly, so that any issues can be talked about openly, and try to develop overall leadership potential in others... This will mean that someone should be ready to replace you fairly soon!

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

**Abuse can be perpetrated in many different forms. Although we mostly hear in the media about sexual abuse, it is far more frequent that young people you encounter might be victims of neglect, physical abuse or emotional abuse. These forms of abuse are equally intolerable and cases where you reasonably suspect these to be taking place should be acted upon with the same amount of care and sensitivity.**

- There are many indicators that might lead you to suspect that abuse is taking place. Don't jump to conclusions, but also don't overlook repeated patterns of behaviour or physical evidence that might indicate abuse.
- NEVER promise that you will keep something confidential to a young person. If they ask you to, you must let them know that there are some things which you cannot keep secret. If this means that they won't confide in you, then at least they are making an informed decision.
- If you suspect that abuse is taking place, you can ring Childline or local social services either anonymously or giving your name to report your suspicions. If a young person informs you that abuse is taking place, make a note of the facts of your conversation and offer either to support them in reporting the case, or be prepared to report it yourself.
- If you fear for the immediate safety of a young person, you can call the duty social worker, who will make a decision about taking immediate action. Be prepared for the fact that immediate action may not take place, in view of it harming the chance of an effective prosecution.

*Tip: Always be prepared to give factual details in any case of suspected abuse. This may involve writing down a conversation after it has occurred, and is still fresh in your mind, or consulting attendance registers to get addresses and dates of birth etc...*

**NEVER discuss the alleged abuse with other people except for social workers or your child protection representative or officer, who you can ask for guidance.**

**NEVER try to resolve the situation on your own, especially by confronting the alleged perpetrator, no matter how angry or upset you are. This may affect the young person's safety, and may also prevent an effective prosecution.**

**ALWAYS remember that despite the immense pain or hurt of an exposed abuse situation, the exposure can prevent further abuse and the restitution involved should begin to help heal the situation in the long run.**

## THE CRB PROCESS

- Since January 2003, the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales has begun to use Criminal Records Bureau checks for all its paid and volunteer workers. This process is developing constantly, and it is hoped that by 2006, all those working with young people in the context of church ministry will have obtained a CRB disclosure.
- Each parish has a child protection representative, who should be familiar with the CRB process. In simple steps, it involves:
  - Understanding your job roles and description in your work with young people
  - Applying for a form to complete from the Criminal Records Bureau
  - Completing the form to the best of your knowledge
  - Producing identification for your local parish representative, who will confirm your identity
  - Sending your form to Virginia Bird, the Diocesan Child Protection Officer, who will then process the form through the national database and forward it to the CRB
  - Your confirmation should be back with you approximately 3 weeks after Virginia has received it
  - CRB checks should be renewed every 3 years. As the process evolves, it will become necessary for everybody to be checked independently for their volunteer work, even if they are already in possession of a professional check for teaching/social work etc...

**CAUTION: CRB checks are a positive (albeit bureaucratic) process in guarding young people's welfare. However, we must not rely on these checks to weed out those who wish to harm young people. The best way to safeguard our groups and communities is to build a climate of good practice, by following simple procedures and creating an atmosphere of openness and accountability.**

## Appendix I – useful forms and information

*These forms can be photocopied and used in your parish or group*

## Weekly Meeting Parental Consent

The purpose of a parental consent form is to acknowledge that those responsible for your young people have given you permission to look after their child. Without a parental consent form, you could be in danger of supervising the young person without the parent's knowledge or consent. If, in this case, anything untoward were to happen to the young person, you could be held doubly responsible.

A Parental Consent Form is also a good opportunity to find out about any learning, behavioural or medical difficulties the young people you are ministering to have. Naturally, it is very important that you emphasise to the parents of your young people that all information is regarded as confidential, and keep them in a locked drawer / file.

A consent form should contain the following information:

- Parish
- Group
- Full name
- Address
- Details of any regular medication or medical problems
- Name of person with Parental Responsibility
- Daytime telephone number
- Evening telephone number
- Mobile telephone number
- Name of additional contact
- Telephone numbers for additional contact
  
- I give permission for...  
To take part in the normal, supervised activities of this group, running from .... until....
- I understand that a separate permission will be sought for off site activities
- Signature of person with Parental Responsibility
- Date

Note: If, as a regular activity, you are often going to the park or a leisure centre, you may wish to specify this on the form, adding a clause such as:

'I give permission for ... to take part in the normal, supervised activities of this group (including visits to the park/leisure centre), running from ... until ...'

and

'I understand that a separate permission will be sought for irregular off site activities'

**However**, this does not cover activities such as swimming or adventurous pursuits (such as indoor climbing etc)



**Risk Assessment Form (sample)**

Potential Hazard	Likelihood (1-3)	Severity of Damage (1-3)	Risk (Likelihood x Severity)	Action taken to minimize the risk	Comments
High stack of chairs toppling over	3	1	3	Chairs stacked only 6 high	Must make sure this is done at the beginning of the session every week!
Candles setting fire to young person's clothing	2	3	6	Make sure young people stay far enough away from the candles, and keep candles positioned upright	Reminds me that I need to double check fire extinguishers!
Fire Exit is blocked by a table	1	3	3	Make sure the tables are away from the fire exits	Must make sure this is done at the beginning of the session each week - find out who's in the hall before us, and ask them not to move the tables into that position!

Risk Assessment completed by:

Date:

**Risk Assessment Form**

Potential Hazard	Likelihood (1-3)	Severity of Damage (1-3)	Risk (Likelihood x Severity)	Action taken to minimize the risk	Comments

Risk Assessment completed by:

Date:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton  
Accident & Incident Report Form

Parish :

Group :

Day, Date and Time of the Incident :

**Those involved**

Full name(s) and Age(s) of those involved:

**Those in Charge**

Who was responsible for the group?

Which other leaders were involved?

Describe the Accident / Incident :

Was any first aid administered?

If so, by whom?

Details of first aid or other action :

Any further actions or implications :

Signature of group leader:

Date :

Signature of person with Parental Responsibility :

Date :

## First Aid

All premises used by young people should have a First Aid kit. Its contents should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and, if possible, First Aid training. Below are the recommendations for a standard first aid kit for use with your young people in case of accidents. The contents of any First Aid kit should be regularly checked for expiry dates.

- 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
- 2 sterile eye pads
- 4 individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile)
- 6 safety pins
- 6 medium sized (approx 12cm x 12cm) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings
- 2 large (approx 18cm x 18cm) sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings
- 1 pair of disposable gloves
- An Accident Report Book.

A First Aid kit should not contain any medication of any type. No adult should give any medication to a young person unless authorised by their parent / carer.

## HIV/AIDS

Good hygiene should ALWAYS be practised. Disposable latex gloves and a disposable apron should always be used when dealing with broken skin, body fluids and faeces.

Confidentiality regarding a young person's HIV status should always be maintained.

## Roles and Recommended Staffing Levels

1. Leader – in charge of planning, and seen to be leader in front of your young people.
2. Administrator – in charge of documentation and informing those with parental responsibility etc...
3. First-Aider – especially necessary with large groups, but any team ALL should know where the first-aid kit is kept.
4. Caterer – necessary if a primary outworking of your group's activities involve food. Somebody with a Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene can monitor safety in the kitchen.

Remember to bear in mind the people who are staffing your group. You might wish to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each of your team while defining roles. Remember also to keep a gender balance where dealing with mixed groups of young people, and to keep all leaders involved and up-to-date with your child protection commitments.

The staffing-level requirements for childcare groups provide a yardstick of good practice and it is recommended they be followed if at all possible. There should always be a minimum of two adult leaders, with a gender balance (if the group is mixed), no matter how many children there are (this will ensure, for example, that you never get left by yourself with a child waiting to be picked up after a trip out).

For **children under 8**, and for those with **special needs or disabilities**, there should be 2 adults for up to 12 young people, and one additional adult for every extra 6 young people.

**8-11 indoor and normal-risk outdoor activities** (eg. bowling, museum), 2 adults for up to 20 young people, 1 additional adult for every extra 10 young people (or part of 10).

**12+, indoor activities and normal-risk outdoor activities**, 2 adults for up to 30 young people, 1 additional adult for an extra 15 or part thereof.

**Foreign trips and higher-risk outdoor activities** (swimming & water sports, residential trips, rambling, climbing etc) for all age groups 8+, 2 adults for up to 20 young people, 1 additional adult for an extra 10 or part thereof.

## Planning Ahead for Trips

The Children's Legal Centre recommends that you ask the following questions of the staff at any centre where you will be staying. The list is not exhaustive, and some of it may not apply to your group. Remember also to check out issues of insurance, risk assessments and supervision of your young people.

You should ensure:

- The manager of the accommodation has asked for assurances that the staff have been checked as suitable for working with young people.
- There is adequate provision for the storage of clothes, rucksacks, luggage and other outdoor equipment and the safekeeping of valuables.
- Centres have adequate and safe heating and ventilation.
- There are separate male and female sleeping areas and bathroom facilities for mixed groups.
- All bedroom and bathroom windows have opaque blinds or curtains.
- Sleeping areas are adequately lit.
- A separate room is available for the storage of special clothing and equipment and there is provision for drying clothes.
- There is adequate provision for sick / infirm participants, and those with special educational needs.
- There are washbasins (with hot and cold water) with a mirror for every 10 participants, close to the sleeping areas.
- There is one bath / shower (with hot and cold water) for every 15 people, and one toilet for every 10 people, close to the sleeping areas.
- Fire regulations are fully observed and a fire safety policy is in place. The fire alarm should be audible throughout the accommodation.
- Balconies are stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe etc.
- Security arrangements are in force to stop unauthorised visitors and, where possible, young people are not sleeping in ground floor rooms.
- There are locks on doors which work.
- The spiritual needs of your group can be catered for (for example, quiet space to hold a Mass or liturgy).

## Parental and Medical Consent.

### Residential trips

When asking for medical consent, you should look to ask for the following medical details from the parents of your young people:

- a) allergies
- b) medication, dosage, self-medicated?
- c) Contagious diseases in the last 4 weeks
- d) Other recent illnesses
- e) Toileting difficulties?
- f) Night time tendencies (ie sleepwalking)
- g) Travel sickness
- h) Swimming ability
- i) Anything they can't participate in
- j) Dietary requirements
- k) Religious or cultural requirements
- l) Name and address of family GP
- m) Any other info which the organiser should know
- n) Home telephone number and address
- o) Alternative contact telephone number and address.

See over for a two page sample of a parental consent form for trips away from your normal group setting.

### Non-Residential trips

On page 24 is an example of a permission form to take your group swimming. It is still necessary to obtain medical consent, seeing as the risk of an accident is much higher.

However, there is no need to obtain information about sleeping patterns or other such medical information, seeing as it is a non-residential trip. It is still well worth investigating where the nearest hospital is, and is essential that you bring the medical consent forms with you for your activity.

**Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton Parental and Medical  
Consent Form**

**Parish :**

**Group :**

**Event :**

**Date :**

**Please Note : All information is for our records only and will be treated as STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**Member's Details**

Full Name :

Date of Birth :

Address :

Group Leader's name :

Please note that the medical consent signed for below will only be exercised in emergency circumstances when the parent and additional contact are unreachable

**Parent's Details**

Full Name :

Daytime Telephone Number :

Evening Telephone Number (if different) :

Mobile :

Additional Contact's Name :

Relationship to the Member :

Additional Contact's Telephone Numbers :

I, the parent/guardian, give permission for  
to take part in the activity mentioned above.

I confirm that he/she is in good health, does/does not suffer from diabetes, and does/does not suffer from epilepsy (delete where appropriate).

- I will inform the activity organisers if he/she comes into contact with any infectious diseases up to 4 weeks before the activity.
- I understand that I will be contacted in the event of my son/daughter being taken ill or injured during the period of the above event, and that my consent will be requested for any treatment deemed necessary by the appropriate medical authorities.
- In the event that I am not able to be contacted and to the extent that a surgical operation or injection becomes necessary, I authorise the above mentioned group leader to sign on my behalf any forms of consent requested by the medical authorities, provided the delay required to obtain my own signature might be considered likely to endanger his/her health or safety.

Signed :

Date :

✘Please now fill in the sheet overleaf about your child's medical details✘

(Residential Trip)

**Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton**  
**Medical and Essential Information Form**

Parish :

Group :

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL : for our records only**

Surname :

Name :

Date of Birth :

Age :

Contact Telephone Number :

<p>Does your child have any medical condition?</p> <p>Does your child have any regular medication or medical treatment? (name / dosage / purpose / self-administered?)</p> <p>Does your child have any allergies? (medication / food etc?)</p>	<p>Name and contact details of your child's GP :</p>
<p>Are there any activities (such as swimming) that your child cannot participate in?</p> <p>Is there any other information which we may need to know?</p>	<p>Any specific dietary requirements?</p> <p>Any toileting or night-time difficulties that we should be aware of?</p> <p>Any travel sickness? Will you be giving them tablets?</p>

Please note that we are pleased to discuss any elements of this activity that you may have concerns about. If you wish to discuss this form further, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us!

Signed :

Parent / Guardian

Date :

(Swimming etc...)

**Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton Parental and Medical  
Consent Form**

**Parish :**  
**Event :**

**Group :**  
**Date :**

**Please Note : All information is for our records only and will be treated as STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**Member's Details**

Full Name :

Date of Birth :

Address :

Group Leader's name :

Please note that the medical consent signed for below will only be exercised in emergency circumstances when the parent and additional contact are unreachable

**Parent's Details**

Full Name :

Daytime Telephone Number :

Evening Telephone Number (if different) :

Mobile :

Additional Contact's Name :

Relationship to the Member :

Additional Contact's Telephone Numbers :

I, the parent/guardian, give permission for  
to take part in the activity mentioned above.

I confirm that he/she is in good health, does/does not suffer from diabetes, and does/does not suffer from epilepsy (delete where appropriate).

I confirm that he/she can swim without the need for buoyancy aids. (delete where appropriate)

- I understand that I will be contacted in the event of my son/daughter being taken ill or injured during the period of the above event, and that my consent will be requested for any treatment deemed necessary by the appropriate medical authorities.
- In the event that I am not able to be contacted and to the extent that a surgical operation or injection becomes necessary, I authorise the above mentioned group leader to sign on my behalf any forms of consent requested by the medical authorities, provided the delay required to obtain my own signature might be considered likely to endanger his/her health or safety.

Signed :

Date :

## Appendix II – useful contacts

*These pages are for reference, and will need updating as you develop contacts.*

## Useful Contacts and Further Resources

### Parish

Your Parish Child Protection Rep and Health and Safety Officer details are available from your Parish Priest. For details of local Fire Officers, services etc, please speak to your Parish Rep / Officer.

### Diocesan

#### **Venus Garcia-George**

Northampton Youth Ministry Office,  
Ker Anna Centre,  
Aylesbury Road,  
Princes Risborough,  
HP27 0JN  
e: [matt@nymo.org](mailto:matt@nymo.org)  
w: [www.nymo.org](http://www.nymo.org)  
t: 01844 273337

#### **Virginia Bird,**

Diocesan Child Protection Officer,  
1 Manhattan Drive,  
Cambridge,  
CB4 1JL  
e: [virginia.bird@virgin.net](mailto:virginia.bird@virgin.net)  
t: 01223 306600

### National Advisory Bodies

#### **The Children's Legal Centre,**

University of Essex,  
Wivenhoe Park,  
Colchester,  
Essex,  
CO4 3SQ  
e: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)  
w: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)  
t: 01206 872466

#### **The Health and Safety Executive**

HSE Infoline,  
Caerphilly Business Park,  
Caerphilly,  
CF83 3GG  
e: [hseinformationservices@natbrit.com](mailto:hseinformationservices@natbrit.com)  
w: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)  
t: 08701 545500

### **Child Protection in Sport Unit**

w: [www.sportprotects.org.uk](http://www.sportprotects.org.uk)

*click on 'sports organisations', which contains useful checklists about taking trips*

### Insurance

#### **Diocesan Insurers:**

Catholic Church Insurance Association,  
2 Prebendal Court,  
Oxford Road,  
Aylesbury,  
HP19 8EY  
w: [www.ccia.org.uk](http://www.ccia.org.uk)  
t: 01296 422030  
f: 01296 428049

#### **Specialist Insurers:**

Christian Camping International,  
2 Leon House,  
Queensway,  
Bletchley,  
Milton Keynes,  
MK2 2SS  
e: [office@cci.org.uk](mailto:office@cci.org.uk)  
w: [www.cci.org.uk](http://www.cci.org.uk)  
t: 01908 641641