

**BELFAST CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**貝爾法斯特華人基督教會**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**V2.0 – Draft 6**

**11<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**REVISION HISTORY**

Date	Version	Details
6/8/2004	1	Document drawn up by Paul Coulter. Approved by Church Council.
21/2/2015	1.1	Interim Update by Wai Kuen Mo. Approved by Church Council.
12/9/2016	2.0 Draft 5	A complete rewrite by the Team consisting of Sherman Tait, Simon Au and Wai Kuen Mo
11/1/2017	2.0 Draft 6	Amendments by Wai Kuen Mo

## USEFUL CONTACTS

**Designated Child Protection Officer:** 1. ?

**Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer:** 2. ?  
(if any)

**Belfast Health & Social Care Trust:** Greater Belfast Gateway Team  
110 Saintfield Road  
BELFAST  
BT8 6HD  
Tel: 028 9050 7000

**PSNI Child Abuse Investigation Units:** Child Abuse Investigation Unit  
Belfast Public Protection Unit  
280 Antrim Road  
Belfast  
BT15 5AA  
Tel: 028 9065 0222 (or 101)

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## INTRODUCTION

At Belfast Chinese Christian Church (BCCC), our aim is to create and promote a safe environment for children and leaders. Children attending Youth and Children events of the BCCC should enjoy the activities with optimum physical safety and free from the threat of abuse. Also, leaders and helpers approved by Church Leadership to work with children should enjoy serving confidently within the guidelines set out in this policy, and with advice and support from the Church Leadership.

## AIMS

The aims of our child protection policy are to:

- Create and promote a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff;
- Provide clear guidance to all volunteers, helpers, leaders and staff who work with children and young people up to 18 years of age, in matters relating to child protection;
- Promote the highest standards of child protection practice; and,
- Protect leaders and staff from false allegations.

## CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Board of Trustees	The BCCC Board of Trustees
Church Leadership	BCCC Trustees, Elders and Committee Members
Organisation	A particular ministry of the BCCC targeting a particular age group, ie. Youth Group, Sunday School, Chinese School and other young people and children groups.
Leader	Anyone 18 years old or over who is engaged in work or voluntary activity which involves regular contact with children or young persons.
Helper	Person aged 15 and over, but under 18 years old, who assists in an Organisation.
Child	A child is a person under 18 years old. Where either children or young people are mentioned in this document, both are intended.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The BCCC has a legal duty of care to all children who participate in our church activities and provide a safe environment for them as best we can.

This policy statement is aimed at providing a safe environment where children may enjoy social contact, personal and spiritual development and where they, and the leaders and helpers working with them, will be kept safe. Leaders and helpers appointed by the Church Leadership for each Organisation should be secure in the knowledge that they have the full support of the Church Leadership.

### **Adoption of This Child Protection Policy**

The Church Leadership has adopted and implemented this Child Protection Policy. This Child Protection Policy is largely based on the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's child protection guidelines, *Taking Care 2*.

#### **1. Leadership**

The following procedures must be followed for the appointment of leaders who are 18 years and over:

1. All leaders will be required to complete an application form for leaders.
2. The application form includes the BCCC vetting process according to legislation and good practice.
3. Applicants will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions.
4. Applicants will be required to provide two references by persons who are not relatives.
5. The Church Leadership will appoint up to two interviewers to meet informally with the applicant. At the interview the child protection policy will be provided and explained.
6. A letter of approval will be sent to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

All confidential records e.g. applications and references will be stored securely. The Register of Leaders will be completed annually by each leader in charge.

#### **2. Training**

The Designated Child Protection Officer, the Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer (if any), and all Leaders and helpers who work with children must attend the following training before they can start their duties:-

1. Child Protection Training (*followed by refresher training every 3 years thereafter*)
2. BCCC Child Protection Policy Training

The Church Leadership shall have the discretion of extending the 3 years' time limit, by a reasonable amount, for attending the refresher Child Protection Training if such training was not readily available at the due time.

Additionally, the Designated Child Protection Officer, and the Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer (if any), must also attend training specific to the role of Designated Child Protection Officer.

### 3. Reporting of Concerns

A concern about a child may refer to an incident when a child has shown signs of abuse or there has been a disclosure of abuse by the child or another person. A concern may also refer to inappropriate or difficult behaviour that an adult has shown towards a child. In the event of a concern that involves alleged or suspected child abuse a Report of Concern form must be completed and passed to the Designated Child Protection Officer or to the Board of Trustees as soon as possible.

#### What to do and what not to do if a child discloses to you:

Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm</li> <li>• Listen</li> <li>• Give time for the child to say what they want</li> <li>• Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling</li> <li>• Write down what was said to you or what you observed as soon as possible</li> <li>• Write down the exact words that the child used</li> <li>• Use the Report of Concern form</li> <li>• Ensure that the Designated Child Protection Officer is informed without delay</li> </ul>
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not panic</li> <li>• Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily</li> <li>• Do not promise to keep secrets</li> <li>• Do not investigate</li> <li>• Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone</li> </ul>

#### The Reporting Process:

1.	If a child is in danger or a criminal offence has taken place, then PSNI or Social Services must be informed immediately. Do not delay this by having a meeting. Remember that the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies. If there is disagreement on whether or not to refer a concern to a child protection agency, any individual, as a concerned citizen, can still make a referral.
2.	In all situations where a disclosure has been made, it is extremely important to record the details accurately using the Report of Concern Form, whether or not a referral to statutory agencies is made. This information will be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about it.
3.	The person who has the concern should tell the leader in charge.
4.	The leader-in-charge should inform the Designated Child Protection Officer or a member of the Board of Trustees.
5.	The Designated Child Protection Officer should meet with member(s) of the Board of Trustees as soon as possible, consider all the information available and decide to whom, if anyone, it needs to be reported. If for any reason it is not possible to speak to a member of the Board of Trustees or if an allegation concerns a member of the Board of Trustees or member of his/her family, the Designated Child Protection Officer should consult with another member of the Board of Trustees as soon as possible.
6.	Consideration should be given by the Board of Trustees to offering support to the leader or other person who made the initial report.
7.	In the congregational context, information should be restricted to the Designated Child Protection Officer and the Board of Trustees.

#### **4. Designated Person**

The Church Leadership has appointed the following as Designated Child Protection Officer and Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer:

Designated Child Protection Officer: ?

Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer (if any): ?

The Designated Child Protection Officer will give advice and support to each Organisation and to the Church Leadership on matters concerning the welfare of children and young people. The Church Leadership will keep organisational leaders updated with the name of the Designated Child Protection Officer. Any matter brought to the attention of a Designated Child Protection Officer will be treated in strict confidence. Information will be divulged only where there is a legitimate need to know. In situations where the Designated Child Protection Officer is not available, the Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer shall take on the roles and responsibilities of the Designated Child Protection Officer.

#### **5. Parental Consent Forms**

Organisation leaders must ensure that they have home contact numbers, parental consent and medical information regarding the children in each Organisation with which they are working. Special consent forms will be issued for any 'off the premises' activity and residential programmes.

#### **6. Good Standard of Practice**

All Organisations' leaders are expected to comply with good standards of practice as detailed in this Child Protection Policy. The BCCC shall also use *Taking Care 2* as a guide for good practice.

#### **7. Health and Safety**

Creating a safe environment for everyone is the responsibility not only of the leader-in-charge, but also of every leader and helper. Adequate supervision should be provided at all times. The leader-in-charge should have:

- Access to a phone in case of emergency (make sure there is adequate mobile phone reception if there is no landline on church premises).
- Accident report forms readily available.
- Contact details for all children and young people.
- Knowledge of how many people are present at each event (in case of an evacuation).

A Risk Assessment form should therefore be completed for each Organisation as well as for any outings or occasional events. Leaders will be informed of fire and first aid procedures. Annual Risk Assessment forms must be completed and given to the Secretary.



## 8. Working Together

It is important that all Leaders, helpers, children and parents know the boundaries and rules of the Organisation.

### Code of Behaviour for Leaders and Helpers:

Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of your position and responsibility as a leader towards individuals in your care</li> <li>• Plan activities ensuring adequate supervision</li> <li>• Listen and believe</li> <li>• Keep an incident/accident book for your group</li> <li>• Follow the recommended reporting procedure</li> <li>• Avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer</li> </ul>
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend an excessive amount of time alone with children away from others</li> <li>• Take children to your home without the child's parents and the leader of the organisation or other responsible person knowing</li> <li>• Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form</li> <li>• Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged</li> <li>• Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child, even in fun</li> <li>• Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded</li> <li>• Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves</li> <li>• Engage in rough or inappropriate behaviour</li> <li>• Rely solely on their reputation to protect themselves</li> </ul>

### Code of Conduct for Children:

Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect our leaders and helpers</li> <li>• Respect the views and feelings of other members</li> <li>• Respect the right of every member to express their views</li> <li>• Respect the right of every member to be heard/listened to</li> <li>• Respect leaders' and helpers' and other members' personal privacy and property</li> <li>• Take care of equipment and property</li> </ul>
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not engage in any of the following activities or behaviour:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Consumption of alcohol, the use of drugs and smoking during activities, whether within the confines of the BCCC building or otherwise.</li> <li>2) Physical abuse of other members, leaders and helpers.</li> <li>3) Verbal abuse including "put-downs" of other members and leaders and helpers, either directly or electronically e.g. mobile phones, social networks etc.</li> <li>4) Destruction or damage of property or equipment</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

## 9. Recommended Ratios

All organisations must abide by the recommended ratios of children to leaders. In determining the ratios of staff to children, organisation leaders should bear in mind that there should be a minimum of at least 2 leaders, or 1 leader plus 1 helper present at all times. There should be a gender mix of leaders with a mixed gender group of children or young people.

Helpers (aged 15 and over, but still under 18) should not be left alone in a supervisory capacity with children. They may, however, be counted in the ratios as long as other adult leaders are present and in charge.

<b>Ratios for indoor activities</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
0–2 years	1 Leader to 3 Children
2–3 years	1 Leader to 4 Children
3–7 years	1 Leader to 8 Children
8 years +	1 Leader to 10 Children/young people

<b>Ratios for outdoor activities</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
0–2 years	1 Leader to 3 Children
2–3 years	1 Leader to 4 Children
3–7 years	1 Leader to 6 Children
8–13 years	2 Leaders to 15 Children/young people (preferably one of each gender) One additional leader for every 8 extra children, or part thereof.
13 years +	2 Leaders to 20 Children/young people (preferably one of each gender) One additional leader for every 10 extra children, or part thereof.

## 10. Transport

When planning an outing, leaders of organisations must exercise discretion as to who the drivers of the vehicles will be. Drivers who are leaders within organisations with an “R” plate should not be responsible for taking children in their car.

Leaders should avoid transporting a child on their own. If a situation does occur when a leader has to transport a child alone, they should ensure that other leaders know this is happening and that the child is in the back seat. If possible, parents should be made aware that their child will be in the car on their own with a leader.

When carrying children in cars, the driver must make sure they use child restraints for each child carried, or adult seatbelts appropriately. Child restraints are rearward-facing baby seats, forward-facing child seats, booster seats and booster cushions. It is legally the driver’s responsibility to ensure that seatbelts are worn for all passengers under the age of 14. Children under 12 and below 4’5” (135cm) must use a booster cushion seat.

Leaders who accompany children in minibuses/coaches/boats/trains etc. should, where possible, be dispersed in the vehicle. For example, there should be at least one adult travelling in the back of a minibus and preferably near the exit points of the vehicle. Their group members must be in sight of a leader at all times.

## 11. Technology

**PHOTOGRAPHS** - The following guidelines should be adhered to

- Verbal or written permission should be obtained of all the people who will appear in a photograph or video image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- It should be made clear why that person's image is being used, what use you will make of it, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- Children and young people should not be identified by name or other personal details.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- Carefully consider location and pose.
- Do not insist that a child participates.
- Written consent should be obtained from parents or carers before using photographs on a website (this can be included on the general consent form).

**MOBILE PHONES** - The following guidelines should be adhered to:-

- Parental permission should be sought if the leader in this role will be contacting children via mobile phone.
- A method of accountability should be arranged (e.g. copies of texts could also be sent to the minister or parents).
- If a leader has a child's phone number it should only be used for the purposes it has been given (the leader should not share this information with other church members).
- It is recommended that an employed youth worker has a separate phone for work purposes rather than using their personal phone for contacting young people.

**CHURCH WEBSITE** - When designing or developing a church or youth website or internet pages please remember the following:-

- Parental/carer consent must be obtained before using any pictures of a child/group of children are used. If possible photographs of individual children should be avoided.
- Names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses should not be given.
- Leaders should be aware that by advertising dates and times of events online, there is the possibility that other people, who would not have otherwise heard of an event, may target the event or turn up without warning

**INTERNET** - Leaders should think carefully before adding a child or young person in the organisation in which they are leaders, as a friend or follower on a social networking site. As a general rule leaders should not be adding or accepting friend requests from young people under the age of 18 to their personal accounts. Communication on social networking sites should be through public forums and not private messaging. If organisations wish to use Facebook or other forms of social networking they should set up a private Facebook page or the equivalent which is only accessible by request or invitation.

If a leader is concerned about something that a young person communicates to him or her via the internet, he or she should encourage the child to talk to a suitable adult about it or arrange to meet with the child (within the usual child protection parameters).

## **12. Residential and Outing**

### **Residential Centre – Key Questions to Ask:**

- Does the centre have adequate insurance cover for your group and the planned activities, and will BCCC church insurance be adequate?
- What are the rules and regulations of the centre?
- What arrangements does the centre have in case of an emergency (e.g. GP contact)?
- Is there adequate accommodation, including separate accommodation for males and females?

### **Parental Consent – Parental/Carer consent must be obtained.**

The Parents/Carers must be aware of the following:

- The programme/activities their child will be expected/encouraged to participate in
- The level of supervision during free time/shopping trips in town areas
- Names and contact details of leaders/helpers accompanying the group
- Contact details for the centre
- Expectation of children/young people while they are away, and consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- Advice on appropriate clothing and other items which the child/young person may need whilst away, and how much pocket money would be sufficient.

### **Child – Must have parental/carer consent to participate in the residential or outing.**

Each Child:

- Should be fully informed of the nature of the programme and what is expected of them
- Should never be forced to participate in any activity with which they are uncomfortable
- Should be involved in drawing up rules and a contract of behaviour and be made aware of sanctions should they fail to comply

**Risk Assessment** – A risk assessment form should be completed for each outing, and residential activity.

**Contact Details** – The names and contact details of all young people and leaders attending a residential/camp etc. will be left with the Designated Child Protection Officer or a nominated person in the congregation. The Designated Child Protection Officer should be notified of who the nominated person is, including their contact details.

### **13. First Aid**

Leaders should be aware of any medical conditions that children have and any medication they are currently taking. This information should be provided on parental consent forms. Leaders must ensure that this information, along with contact details for parents/carers, is easily accessible to them at all organised events in the church, and also when on outings, residential programmes and camps.

- A first aid kit should always be available on church premises and at planned events away from the church.
- The first aid kit should be stocked with the appropriate in-date items and one person should be responsible for replacing items, especially if used by various organisations within the church.
- Medication should never be given without written consent from parents or doctors; it should be clearly marked and be kept out of reach of children.
- Each organisation should have at least one nominated and adequately trained first aider.
- All leaders should be aware who the first aiders are and alert them in the event of an injury or accident.
- Once first aid has been administered, an accident form should be completed and leaders should make every effort to communicate with parents/carers what has happened and any treatment that been given.
- If a child needs taken to hospital leaders should make every effort to contact parents/carers as soon as possible.

### **14. Working with Children who have Special Needs**

Talk with parents or carers to find out about the specific needs of a child, and how they normally are at home and at school. Assume nothing and don't be afraid to ask. Some children with special needs may require one-to-one help in a group or organisation – an extra leader may be needed for this responsibility.

A personal care plan can be drawn up by parents/carers to advise leaders on how to best meet the needs of the child. Leaders can complete a personal care log to record how the needs of the child were met each time they attend an Organisation's event.

## **15. Anti-Bullying Policy**

All kinds of bullying are wrong and should not be tolerated within the BCCC. BCCC should be a safe and welcoming place for all children and young people.

**Bullying is “Deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated often over a period of time”**

### **What forms does it take?**

- Bullying can be name-calling or teasing.
- Bullying is often physical; victims are pushed, punched, kicked and hit.
- Victims can be forced to do things they don't want to do, are left out of games or ignored by others.
- Cyber bullying is when bullies contact their victims via text messaging or via the Internet.

### **Why is it important to respond to Bullying?**

- Bullying hurts.
- Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.
- Individuals who are bullying need to learn to stop.
- BCCC has a responsibility to respond effectively to bullying issues.

### **Preventative Measures**

- Leaders should encourage children to befriend others who are alone within the group.
- Bullying should be discussed openly within the group and through activities.
- Young people should regularly be encouraged to talk to leaders about anything that is bothering them.

### **What will happen if bullying occurs?**

- 1) Attempt reconciliation by getting the parties together to talk; it may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- 2) If bullying continues or it is serious, leaders should meet with the parent and child(ren) who is/are being bullied.
- 3) Leaders should also meet with the child(ren) who is bullying and their parent(s).
- 4) If serious, bullying should be reported to the Designated Child Protection Officer as a child protection issue.
- 5) Leaders should consider appropriate consequences for the bully and make sure these are carried through.
- 6) Keep the situation under review.

## 16. Data Protection

Leaders of organisations should be aware that they must be careful when handling personal data belonging to children and leaders, e.g. names, phone numbers, addresses and medical information. Data must only be held which is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held. Leaders must ensure that personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up to date. Organisations must also do what they can to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to personal data and must hold data for no longer than necessary.

### Where should forms be kept?

- All consent forms, accident forms or any information on children or leaders should be kept in a confidential but accessible location.
- All consent forms, accident forms or any information on children or leaders should not be kept in a person's own home for long periods of time.
- Leaders must ensure that they have easy access to relevant data such as children's contact details and medical information when the organisation is meeting.
- Incident/accident forms should also be held securely on church premises.

### Who should have access to information on children and leaders?

- Information about children and young people should be on a need-to-know basis.
- The exception to this is medical information where it is important that all leaders in a supervisory role are aware of conditions that children have.
- Information about leaders and children should not be given to any external party but only used for the purpose for which it was given.

### How long should records on children and leaders be kept?

- Consent forms (basic information such as name, date of birth, address) should be kept for up to six years after the child has left the organisation. Thereafter it should either be destroyed (i.e. shredded or burnt) or given back to the child or parent.
- The same applies to information about leaders – it is retained for up to six years after they have left their position.
- Incident/accident forms and the register of all leaders should be kept indefinitely.

## 17. Implementation and Review

The Church Leadership is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, and will review it every three years.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Committee Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Board of Trustees Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Child Protection Officer)