

Safeguarding children and adults at risk

Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare Movement



Revised October 2021

Good Practice Guidelines

The Focolare Movement has policies in line with national standards for maintaining a safe environment for children and adults at risk. This means that all activities are organised with regard to the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of all concerned so that avoidable risks are anticipated and minimised and that all relationships are built on positive values.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- ❖ Focolare safeguarding policy
- ❖ Appropriate use of media

<https://www.focolare.org/gb/safeguarding/>

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What is safeguarding?

Every human being has a value and dignity which we acknowledge as coming directly from God's creation in his own image and likeness. We believe therefore that all people should be valued, supported and protected from harm.

In the Focolare this is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults.

It is because we hold a variety of day and residential meetings for young people and adults that we need to take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for all which promotes and supports their wellbeing. This will include carefully selecting and appointing those who work with children, young people or adults at risk and responding robustly where concerns arise.

The main Government guidance setting out duties and responsibilities for all agencies and organisations who work with Children and Families are 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' which was published by the Department for Education (2018) and the 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland' (2014). These provide guidance under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and are updated on a regular basis.

They refer directly to Faith Communities and sets out the responsibilities and expectations of all churches and faith communities in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The 'Care Act 2014' sets out the law relating to safeguarding adults, together with guidance issued by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Who is a child?

The term 'child' is used in this policy to include all children and young people up to the age of 18.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children are growing up with safe and effective care
- Enabling children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection

Refers to the activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

Adult at risk

An adult is defined as 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' when they are in receipt of a 'regulated activity' in relation to vulnerable adults.

It is important to recognise however that any adult can be subject to abuse and that they do not have to be defined as 'vulnerable.' Any adult could be subjected to domestic abuse; financial abuse; physical, emotional, sexual abuse etc.

Where these incidents of abuse are substantiated, they should be dealt with as a criminal matter (e.g. sexual assault).

What is abuse?

'Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by another person or persons'.

'Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to or exploitation of the person subjected to it.' ('No Secrets', Department of Health 2000).

Significant harm

'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;

'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

'Health' means physical or mental health; and

'Ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Types of abuse

Children: types of abuse¹

- **Bullying and cyberbullying:** includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Cyberbullying/online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.
- **Child trafficking:** is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for a range of reasons, eg: sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic labour, forced slavery, crimes.
- **Criminal exploitation and gangs:** manipulation and coercion into committing crimes by a peer group, street gangs or organisational criminal gangs.

¹ Source: NSPCC (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>).

- [CSE child sexual exploitation](#): involves being given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities.
- [Domestic Abuse](#): harm caused by seeing or hearing ill-treatment of others, especially in the home. It includes any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can also happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites. It can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended.
- [Emotional/ psychological abuse](#): involves the persistent emotional mistreatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. It can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. It is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.
- [Female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#): is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names.
- [Grooming](#): when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them through eg; sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking. . Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.
- [Neglect](#): the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child or young person might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care, putting them in danger. It can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. There are four types of neglect: **physical** (basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe); **educational** (a parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education); **emotional** (a child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need, eg; through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them); **medical** (a child isn't given proper health care, including dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations). It's important to be aware of the [signs of neglect](#).
- [Non-recent abuse](#): sometimes called historical abuse, is when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18. Sometimes adults who were abused in childhood blame themselves or are made to feel it's their fault. But this is never the case: there's no excuse for abuse. The abused might have known they were abused for a very long time or only recently learnt or understood what had happened. Whether it was once or hundreds of times, a year or 70 years ago, whatever the circumstances, there's support to help. It's never too late.

- [Online abuse](#) – see **E-safety section below**. Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming, live-streaming sites. Children can be at risk from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.
- [Physical abuse](#): when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It may include hitting, shaking, kicking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, biting or scratching, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- [Sexual abuse](#): involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical **contact**, including penetrative e.g. rape or oral sex or non-penetrative acts. They may include **non-contact** activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images and photos, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. It is important to be aware of the [signs of sexual abuse](#). We are becoming increasingly aware of the offence of viewing or downloading abusive images of children from the Internet. This is not a 'victimless' crime but is both evidence of abuse taking place and is a criminal offence. It should be referred on in all cases.

Adults: types of abuse²

- [Discriminatory abuse](#) (including Hate crime): any of the following based on a [protected characteristic](#): unequal treatment; verbal abuse or inappropriate use of language; denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader; harassment or deliberate exclusion; denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice; substandard service provision.
- [Domestic abuse](#): can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse relating to emotional or psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or financial abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
- [Emotional/psychological abuse](#): includes enforced social isolation; removing mobility or communication aids; intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance;

² Source: SCIE, identified in the April 2021 Care and support statutory guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>) and SCIE [Types and indicators of abuse: Safeguarding adults | SCIE](#)

preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs or expressing their choice and opinion; failure to respect privacy; preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities; intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse; addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way; using threats of harm or abandonment; cyber bullying.

- [Financial/material abuse](#): can involve: theft; fraud; false representation; exploitation of a person's money or assets; preventing someone accessing their own money, benefits or assets or putting undue pressure on them with regard to their money, benefits or assets; inappropriate managing of their affairs.
- [Modern slavery](#): can involve; human trafficking; forced labour; domestic servitude; sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography; debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to.
- [Neglect](#): failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care; providing care in a way that the person dislikes; failure to administer medication as prescribed; refusal of access to visitors; not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs; not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs; ignoring or isolating the person; preventing the person from making their own decisions or having access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc; failure to ensure privacy and dignity.
- [Organisational/institutional abuse](#): the long list of descriptors includes: inappropriate behaviour towards people; isolating individuals; poor care; poor management; misuse of medication; not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs; failure to respond to abuse or complaints appropriately.
- [Physical abuse](#): any action intended to physically harm another person, eg: assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, rough handling, scalding and burning, physical punishments, inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint, making someone purposefully uncomfortable, involuntary isolation or confinement, misuse of medication, forcible feeding or withholding food.
- [Self-neglect](#): lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety through neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings; inability to avoid self-harm; failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs; inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs.
- [Sexual](#): rape, attempted rape or sexual assault; inappropriate touch anywhere; non-consensual masturbation or sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth; any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to; inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment; sexual photography or forced use of

pornography or witnessing of sexual acts; indecent exposure.

- [Spiritual abuse](#)³ (comes under other types of abuse in the SCIE): while there is currently no agreed, precise definition or the language that should be used to define the experience, it covers coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include: manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or using the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context." (Oakley, 2013 in Oakley & Kinmond, 2013 p21).

E-Safety: Children exposed to abuse through digital media

E-Safety is the generic term that refers to raising awareness about how children, young people and adults can protect themselves when using digital technology and in the online environment

Internet abuse relates to four main areas of abuse to children:

- Abusive images of children (although these are not confined to the internet)
- A child or young person being groomed for the purpose of sexual abuse
- Exposure to pornographic images and other offensive material via the internet and
- The use of the internet, and in particular social media sites, to engage children in extremist ideologies.

Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as an easy way to access children and young people for sexual abuse. In addition, radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children and young people into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity: this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

Internet abuse may also include **cyber-bullying** or online bullying (**see Bullying**). This is when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the Internet and/or mobile devices. It is essentially behaviour between children, although it is possible for one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another young person.

Sexting describes the use of technology to generate indecent images or videos of a sexual nature made by children under the age of 18 of other children. The content can vary, from text messages

³ [Spiritual Abuse \(thirtyoneeight.org\)](#); see also page 22 of [Type of Abuse Reference Document September 2018 - PROOF COPY.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

to images of partial nudity to sexual images or video. These images are then shared between young people and/or adults and with people they may not even know. Young people are not always aware that their actions are illegal and the increasing use of smart phones has made the practice much more common place.

Indicators

Often issues involving child abuse come to light through an accidental discovery of images on a computer or other device and can seem to emerge 'out of the blue' from an otherwise trusted and non-suspicious individual. This in itself can make accepting the fact of the abuse difficult for those who know and may have trusted that individual. Partners, colleagues and friends often find it very difficult to believe and may require support.

The initial indicators of child abuse are likely to be changes in behaviour and mood of the child victim. Clearly such changes can also be attributed to many innocent events in a child's life and cannot be regarded as diagnostic. However, changes to a child's circle of friends or a noticeable change in attitude towards the use of computer or phone could have their origin in abusive behaviour. Similarly, a change in their friends or not wanting to be alone with a particular person may be a sign that something is upsetting them.

Children often show us rather than tell us that something is upsetting them. There may be many reasons for changes in their behaviour, but if we notice a combination of worrying signs it may be time to call for help or advice.

Protection and action to be taken

Where there is suspected or actual evidence of anyone accessing or creating indecent images of children, or there are concerns about a child being groomed, exposed to pornographic material or contacted by someone inappropriately, via the Internet or other ICT tools like a mobile phone, referrals should be made to the Focolare Safeguarding Officer(s), who will report to the Police and to Children's Social Care.

The Serious Crime Act (2015) has introduced an offence of 'sexual communication with a child'. This applies to an adult, who communicates with a child and where the communication is sexual or, if it is intended to elicit from the child a communication, which is sexual and the adult reasonably believes the child to be under 16 years of age. The Act also amended the Sex Offences Act 2003 so it is now an offence for an adult to arrange to meet with someone under 16 having communicated with them on just one occasion, previously it was on at least two occasions.

Due to the nature of this type of abuse and the possibility of the destruction of evidence, **the referrer should first discuss their concerns with the Focolare Safeguarding Officer(s) and they with the Police and Children's Social Care before raising the matter with the family.**

This will enable a joint decision to be made about informing the family and ensuring that the child's welfare is safeguarded.

Appropriate use of media

Principle

The internet, mobile phones, social networking and other interactive services have transformed the way in which we live. The new technologies offer tremendous opportunities to reach, communicate, evangelise and engage with those involved in the Focolare Movement and those in our communities who may have an interest in the church and the wider society.

The Focolare Movement is keen to promote the safe, and responsible, use of communication and interactive communication technologies within all their activities.

More detailed information can be found in the **Focolare Appropriate use of Media policy** (<https://www.focolare.org/gb/safeguarding/>).

Guidelines for good practice when working with children and young people

Adult to child ratios when supervising or working with children

It is important that all Focolare activities have sufficient adult staff and volunteers in place to ensure the safety of children – and that these adults are suitable to undertake these tasks. They would usually have been safely recruited, including the relevant safeguarding checks, and properly trained, including safeguarding training.

A minimum of two adults should always be present.

No person under the age of 18 should be left in charge of children of any age.

When a parent attends a children's activity and remains in the presence of their own child(ren) throughout, the responsibility for the supervision of their own child(ren) remains with the parent.

For unattended children the level of supervision provided needs to be appropriate to the needs of the children involved in the activity. This could vary depending on:

- age (see table below)
- gender (wherever possible mixed gender groups should be reflected in the adult supervisors)
- ethnicity (wherever possible mixed ethnic groups should be reflected in the adult supervisors)
- behaviour
- abilities within your group/any medical or other special needs
- nature and length of activities
- requirements of location

The recommended minimum ratios of adults to children are shown in the table below⁴:

Supervising Adults (minimum)	Age of Children	Maximum Number of Children	Ratio
2	0-2 years	6	1:3
2	2-3 years	8	1:4
2	3-8 years	12	1:6
2	Over 8 years	16	1:8

⁴ These are based on Ofsted¹ EYFS guidelines for organised children's activities and do not necessarily account for the supervision of children with additional needs. Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in the UK. <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/about-us> .

Applying ratio - some scenarios

Example 1: At the Mariapolis the young gen4 are using a large room for a morning together. There are 32 children in attendance (15 aged 2-3 years and 17 aged 3-5 years). The minimum number of adults required is 7.

Example 2: The gen3 weekend has 15 participants aged 13-17 years. The minimum number of adults required is 2.

Example 3: A local community has organised a get together in the park and the children and young people will have separate activities from their parents. The meeting has 24 children in attendance (5 aged 2-3 years, 7 aged 3-8 years and 12 aged over 8 years). The minimum number of adults required is 6.

Example 4: The supervised play area at the Mariapolis has 18 children in attendance (12 aged 0-2 years and 6 aged 2-3 years). The minimum number of adults required would be 2 as the supervision requirement is met by the parent(s) attending with their child(ren).

Planning the programme

- Careful planning of activities is important. Make sure that:
 - all helpers are aware of the details of the programme, the timings and each person's role
 - any children with special needs are known, adjustments are made for them in agreement with them and their parents and any extra help identified.
- Ensure that any premises used are safe. Make sure you have carried out a risk assessment of the space you are using and any activities you will be undertaking. See Appendix 4 (Venue Safety Checklist and Activity Risk Assessment templates).
- Ensure all leaders/helpers have had appropriate training, including the procedure to be used in cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

During the programme

- Always follow the Code of Conduct for Adult Leaders and Helpers (See Appendix 1).
- No group of children under the age of 16 should be left unattended.
- Keep a list of all the children who are attending meetings, making sure you check that all children remain within the group. (See Appendix 5 for Event Register template)
- Leaders/helpers need to think and act carefully to avoid situations which could lead to

embarrassment, accusations or temptations. An example of 'danger' is one leader/worker and one young person being together 'in private' – whether that be in counselling, or on a residential weekend, or driving someone home in a car.

- Make sure that everyone knows where the toilets are, and that for toddlers and younger children the appropriate supervision is given. It may be good to plan a comfort break for younger children. Encourage children to be independent and make sure there are always two helpers if children need assistance.
- Inform parents/carers in advance if you are planning any activity outside of the normal meeting place. If this is not possible, ensure that someone knows where the group is if working away from the usual meeting place. Leave a note in the room stating where you are in case any parent may look for their child.

Administering medication and special needs⁵

- Where possible and applicable, young people should be able to self-administer their medication and maintain responsibility for taking their medication at the appropriate frequency and dosage. Leaders may supervise the self-administration in agreement with the parents/carers.
- Where a young person is unable to self-administer, a needs assessment should be undertaken to establish safe and practicable measures to enable the individual's participation in the programme. All reasonable adjustments should be made where possible. This assessment should be made well in advance of the programme to provide opportunity for measures to be put in place. Parents/carers should be included in the assessment, as well as the young person's doctor if necessary.
- Medicines should be stored securely using lockable boxes, cupboards or fridges. It is important that access is limited to the individual who has been prescribed the medication and nominated adults only.
- Where adult leaders may be required to administer medicines, leaders should seek help and/or training from parents/carers for their use. Appropriate training may constitute little more than a short briefing, the reading of manufacturer instructions or a note from a parent/guardian or doctor. A demonstration of how an inhaler or adrenaline auto-injector (i.e. EpiPen) is used would also be helpful⁶.

⁵ Source: National Youth Agency (NYA) Guidance, supporting Youth Work Delivery (<https://nya.org.uk/skills/safeguarding-and-risk-management-hub/> - <https://backend.nya2.joltrouter.net/wp-content/uploads/C10-NYA-Safeguarding-Hub-Medication-storage-supervision-and-consent.pdf>

⁶ from the above NYA Guidance: "Government guidance for the use of emergency inhalers and adrenaline auto-injectors in schools is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-emergency-adrenaline-auto-injectors-in-schools>. Whilst this guidance is written specifically for schools, the principles of management and administration may be applied to other youth sector provision and may be referred to as useful guidance."

- Leaders should keep a record of all medicines administered to individuals, stating what, how and how much was administered, when and by whom. Any side effects should also be recorded. Written records are an important means of protection both for leaders and young people, and can provide evidence of agreed procedures being followed.
- Commonly used medication such as paracetamol, throat lozenges, plasters and relief for insect bites may be carried by the adults during a residential or a trip. Leaders should check the Parental Consent Form for the trip before administering any of these medications, to make sure that parents/carers have given their permission and the child is not allergic.
- If a child/young person becomes ill during an event or trip where first aid is not sufficient to treat the problem, parents or other emergency contacts listed on the Consent Form form should be contacted straight away or after the emergency services to call for assistance.
- Administering first aid should be done in the presence of others and without removing the clothing of a child or young person unless necessary. A record should be kept of any accident/incident occurred during Focolare activities and stored securely along with other Safeguarding documents.
- Where an individual has specific healthcare needs, the leaders should understand what may constitute an emergency and what to do, including ensuring that all relevant leaders are aware of emergency symptoms and procedures.

Activities involving travel

- Avoid being on your own with children in the car, make sure another adult comes with you. When this is not possible, ask the young person to seat on the rear of the vehicle.
- Please note: when traveling in a car or minibus, children under the age of 12 should always by law travel in the rear of the vehicle with the appropriate child seats.
- The number of children in any motor vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts, and these should always be fastened.
- Ensure that where minibuses and/or private cars are used there is adequate insurance and any necessary permits.
- Please ensure that at least one person in the group has a mobile phone and remember to check network coverage. If necessary, be aware of where the nearest telephone is for emergencies.

Code of behaviour for adult leaders and helpers

Do's & Don'ts

You must:

- ✓ Operate within the Focolare Movement's principles, guidance and procedures. See Focolare Safeguarding Policy (<https://www.focolare.org/gb/safeguarding/>).
- ✓ Treat all children, young people and adults at risk equally and with respect.
- ✓ Engage and interact appropriately with children, young people and adults at risk.
- ✓ Respect a child, young person's or adults at risk right to personal privacy.
- ✓ Challenge unacceptable behaviour and provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow - an environment which allows bullying, inappropriate shouting or any form of discrimination is unacceptable.
- ✓ Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children, young people and adults at risk e.g. maintain appropriate boundaries.
- ✓ Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children, young people and adults at risk, and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust. This rule should apply to all such behaviours including those which would not constitute an illegal act.

You must not:

- Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, maltreat or exploit any child, young person or adults at risk.
- Discuss topics or use vocabulary with children, young people and adults at risk which could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents or another adult.
- Arrange an overnight trip with a child, young person or adults at risk without ensuring that another approved person will be present and parental consent has been given.
- Take a chance when common sense suggests another more prudent approach.

Good relationships principles

Children and adults should always be treated with respect and consideration. Those working with the young and vulnerable should portray at all times a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, courtesy, tact and maturity.

Physical Contact – Respectful Touch

Touching is an essential part of life and necessary for:

- Basic care
- Showing love and reassurance
- Praise and communication

It should be safe, appropriate and not overdone. It should be remembered that touch can be perceived as a sign of warmth and friendliness or as a sign of dominance.

Touch should always be related to the recipient in terms of:

- Their needs at the time
- Limited duration
- Appropriateness given age, stage of development, gender, disability and culture.

All people have the right to decide how much or how little physical contact they have with others. Except in exceptional circumstances, such as when they are in need of immediate medical attention, their wishes should always be respected.

Good practice

- It may be appropriate to hold and comfort a distressed child but be aware how this contact may be interpreted by the child.
- Everything should be in public. A hug or a touch in a group or openly, visible to others is very different from that done behind closed doors or in an unobservable place.
- Physical contact is an essential element of some activities (sports, music, dance etc). All those involved in such activities should practice safe touch, asking permission, explaining and defining the reason for the physical contact.
- When ground rules for activities or events are being discussed, event leaders or those supervising activities should introduce the idea of safe touch.
- Providing care for those with additional needs or disabilities may require levels of physical contact. In some circumstances consultation with the individual, their parents, carers etc is essential to fully understand the requirements and abilities of the person being cared for.
- Children and adult with additional needs may require higher levels of personal support in such areas as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding and mobility. Special arrangements may have to be made in these circumstances and agreed and supported by the individual, their parents, carers, care workers etc.

As far as possible support the person in their own care. Always avoid doing things for them if they are able to do it alone or for themselves. If they are able to help, this should be encouraged.

Where the person is dependent upon your help, try and offer choices.

- In a group, team members, as part of good practice, should monitor one another in relation to physical contact. They should be able to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood or uncomfortable for a child, young person or adult;
- If an adult engages in inappropriate touch with a child, young person or adult, this must be challenged. If there are any concerns about an adult's contact then this must be reported to the Safeguarding Officers for advice.

NB: Any activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually inappropriate must be avoided at all times. Care should also be taken to only touch on "safe" parts of the body.

Managing challenging behaviour

An integral part of the way love and care for others is shown, is the way we cope with disruptive or difficult behaviour.

Children, young people and adults need to feel safe and be prevented from harming themselves or others, or getting into situations where this may happen. The first step to creating an environment where people feel safe and therefore cared for is to establish clear expectations and boundaries for all concerned.

Where possible, i.e. when age and ability permit, event leaders and participants will together agree on what expectations they can reasonably have of each other and what will happen if these expectations are not honoured.

Good practice

- Event/activity leaders set and maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries;
- Expectations regarding behaviour are explained, discussed and negotiated between leaders and participants to develop an ethos of care and control within activities;
- Each individual's circumstances are taken into account in deciding measures to be taken in responding to them in relation to what is appropriate touch and any physical restraint;
- Positive behaviour will be rewarded.

Sanctions

Sanctions must always be the final resort after instruction and problem solving.

Under no circumstances is physical chastisement acceptable.

- Sanctions to be utilised by event/activity leaders should be explored and agreed prior to the event/activity taking place;
- Any sanction must be proportionate to the misbehaviour and only about the issues in hand. Do not bring up previous incidents to confuse the issue;
- Any sanction should be for a short period of time;
- No sanction is an end in itself and should assist the individual in understanding how they should be behaving.

It is the behaviour not the person that is not welcome.

Anti-bullying policy⁷

Objectives of this policy

- Bullying will not be tolerated;
- All adults involved in the activity/event as well as children and young people should have an understanding of what bullying is;
- All adults involved in the activity/event must know this policy on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported;
- All children/young people and parents should know what the policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises;
- Children, young people and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children and young people so they can develop in a caring and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in any Focolare activity. If bullying does occur, all children and young people should be able to tell the group leaders or somebody else within the group and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the group leaders.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional (being unfriendly)
- Physical (pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use or threat of violence including via emails or text messaging)
- Racist (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments)
- Homophobic (because of, or focusing on the issue of sexual orientation)
- Verbal (name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing including via emails or text messaging)

⁷ Adapted from Creating a Safe Environment, CSAS, which can found at <https://www.csas.uk.net/safeguarding-resources/> .

- Related to a person's impairment or disability may include name calling or ridiculing
- Directed at an adult as well as a child or young person

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children and young people need to learn different ways of behaving.

We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should consider the possibility that the child may be bullied. Further information can be obtained from Kidscape (<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>).

Prevention

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to the group
- Making up role-plays
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Procedures

- Report bullying to event or activity leaders or organisers as appropriate.
- In cases of serious or persistent bullying, the incidents will be recorded by event or activity leaders or organisers and reported to the Focolare Safeguarding Officers.
- In serious or persistent cases parents will be informed and asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If it is thought that an offence has been committed, contact the police, as well as informing the Focolare Safeguarding Officer(s).
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and all bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bullies change their behaviour.

What to do if a child tells you they are being abused⁸

Receive

- Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
- Listen quietly and actively, giving your undivided attention.
- Allow silences when needed.
- Do not show shock or disbelieve but take what is said seriously.

Reassure

- Stay calm, no judgements, empathise.
- Never make a promise that you can keep what a child has said a secret.
- Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you.

React

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether you need to refer this matter, but don't interrogate for full details.
- Don't ask leading questions – keep the open questions e.g. 'is there anything else you want to say?'
- Ask questions only to seek clarity if required; TED is a useful tool to use to ensure questions remain open:

T E D

Tell me... Explain about Describe when, where

- Do not criticize the perpetrator; the pupil may have affection for him/her.
- Explain what you will do next – inform designated safeguarding lead, keep in contact.

Record

- If possible, make brief notes about what they are telling you at the time.
- Keep these notes, however rough they are.

⁸ Source: Oxfordshire Diocesan Schools Trust child protection and Safeguarding policy template.

- If you are unable to make notes at the time, write down what was said as soon as you can.
- Note the time, date and place along with what actions or behaviours, statements or conversations heard which have given rise to the concerns. All reports should be signed with times and dates noted of when reports are given to the Safeguarding Officer(s).
- Try to record what was said by the child/young person rather than your interpretation of what they are telling you. For example, if a child has called a body part by an unfamiliar name, this should be written phonetically. Make a note of any accompanying non-verbal behaviour and how the information was imparted recreating the 'voice of the child' on the page.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable nonverbal behaviour.
- Be mindful of the time the allegation is received. Whilst the child is at the Focolare meeting/event they are safe, but assessment may be needed involving other agencies to ascertain whether it is safe for the child to return home. So, a verbal report to the Safeguarding Officer(s) should be made rather than delay this for a written report.
- In the event of peer-on-peer abuse, adults should be mindful of the language they use when reporting the events. Avoid terms such as "perpetrator" and "victim" as both children may be vulnerable and to require support. Rather use child/young person 1 and child/young person 2.
- If records are kept electronically the security of these needs to be reviewed regularly. Child protection records should be kept in a locked cabinet. **Delete your electronic record(s) once you are informed that the Safeguarding Officer(s) have stored them in a secure place.**

Report

- Report the incident to the Focolare Safeguarding Officer(s) and do not tell any other adults or children what you have been told.

Appendices

- 1. Focolare Adults Leaders and Helpers Code of Conduct**
- 2. Focolare Events Code of Conduct**
- 3. Note for young people 16-17 yrs. old at Focolare event, Mariapolis**
- 4. Risk Assessment (including Checklist for Venue and Activity Risk Assessment Template)**
- 5. Event Register**

1. Focolare adults leaders and helpers code of conduct⁹

Focolare Gen Assistants, Adult Leaders and Helpers are committed to being positive role models and building the confidence of children and young people that they are working with.

Leaders and helpers are expected to:

Promote wellbeing

- Ensure the safety of all children and young people by ensuring group sessions are safely planned and effectively supervised;
- Foster teamwork and co-operation between everybody, promoting trust and mutual respect;
- Discourage and stop rough or dangerous play, bullying, inappropriate language or other inappropriate behaviour;
- Treat all children and young people fairly and not show favouritism;
- Be positive, approachable and offer praise to promote the objectives of the group always;
- Listen sensitively and encourage communication between adults and children or young people;
- Respond to concerns and allegations promptly and appropriately in line with Focolare Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines for Helpers

Promote autonomy and dignity

- Ensure the rights and responsibilities of children and young people are enforced;
- Promote the full participation and involvement of all children and young people, recognizing and addressing the additional needs of some children and young people e.g. disability;
- Constructively challenge all discrimination and encourage children and young people to not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, ability, social class, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity;
- Respect, promote and support the right of children and young people to make their own choices and decisions, provided this does not threaten the rights, safety and legitimate interests of others;
- Respect the right of children and young people to personal privacy;
- Encourage children and young people to take responsibility for their own self-care as far as

⁹ Adapted from CSAS resources: <https://www.csas.uk.net/safeguarding-resources/> .

possible e.g. assistance with toileting and dressing;

- Respect and listen to the opinions of children and young people
- Encourage children and young people to point out behaviours or attitudes that they do not like;
- Encourage children and young people to take responsibility for their own conduct;
- Ensure that sanctions do not humiliate or harm a child or young person;
- Administer first aid in the presence of others and without removing the clothing of a child or young person unless necessary.

Boundaries and power

- Establish appropriate boundaries between pastoral care and personal lives in relationships with other leaders, helpers, children and young people;
- Not abuse the position of trust for personal benefit e.g. financial gain, sexual gratification;
- Be conscious of explicit and implicit power vested in the role of group leader, supervisor of adult helper;
- Acknowledge the limitations of time, experience, skill and competence – know where and how to ask for support when needed;
- Deal with differences in opinion with respect;
- Work to people's strengths, and never bully, abuse, manipulate or denigrate.

Personal conduct

- Provide an example you wish others to follow;
- Work in a way that is honest, reliable and transparent, never seeking to deceive or manipulate;
- Refrain from using blasphemous, violent, discriminatory, or offensive language and behaviour;
- Refrain from smoking, vaping, consuming alcohol or using drugs;
- Seek help to address issues such as addictions to alcohol, prescribed medicine, other substances, gambling, and so on where these matters affect the adult's role;
- Not engage in any form of sexual relations (including verbal banter, flirtation, using one's gaze to signal attraction, etc.) with children, young people, young helpers or adults for whom you have a supervisory or supportive role.

Any breaches of the Code of Conduct will be addressed by the group leader. More serious or persistent breaches may result in formal action being taken to address the concerns. All concerns or allegations in relation to the abuse of a child or adult at risk will be dealt with using the Focolare Safeguarding policy and procedures in relation to the management of allegations and concerns.

I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it.

Signature of Leader/Helper: _____

Print name Leader/Helper: _____

Date: _____

2. Focolare events code of conduct

- Everyone is expected to be courteous and to act in a way that will ensure a safe and supportive environment for all.
- Everyone is expected to respect and care for each other and each other's property.
- Your participation in the activity or programme is an important part of you being in the group.
- You are asked to respect all areas of the place you are visiting e.g. not to drop litter, not to cause damage etc. Any non-accidental damage will be charged to the group.
- It is everyone's responsibility that the law on under-aged drinking is followed and this will be strictly enforced amongst all those taking part in the event.
- Anyone over the age of 18 consuming alcohol is asked to do so responsibly.
- On any outing or group activity leaders will give instructions which are intended for the guidance, health, safety and wellbeing of you and the whole group – everyone is asked to listen carefully to them and ensure all participants in the group are informed of them.
- This Code of Conduct is for your health, safety and wellbeing and that of all present – it is therefore very important.
- Anyone breaking this code or behaving in an unacceptable manner will be asked to leave.

3. Note for young people 16-17 years old at Focolare event, Mariapolis

The following example is taken from a more detailed Focolare policy for unaccompanied 16 – 17-year-old young people attending residential events

We allow **16 – 17-year-olds**, who are known to us, to take part in all events and to stay at single sex accommodation as part of the group attending the Mariapolis [or name of other event]. This is on condition that the young people and their parents/guardians agree on the “Code of Conduct” set out by the adults responsible for the accommodation and all aspects of the trip/event. This “Code of Conduct” has to be signed by the parents/guardians and also the young people to ensure that the parents/guardians are informed about the nature of the accommodation and events taking place during the Mariapolis and that the young people who participate in the activities, adhere to the code of conduct and do not undertake any activity that might be of risk to themselves or others.

The arrangements are outlined below:

The young people are expected to take part in the activities organised by the Mariapolis and any organised for the age group 16+.

During the Mariapolis, the group leaders will be in charge of the young people. The leader will take all reasonable care **but** they may not be *constantly* supervised. The young person should not absent himself/herself from any activity without the agreement of the group leaders.

4.a Safety checklist for venue

Group

Venue

Entrance	
Is it accessible to everyone? YES/NO	If not, give details
Is it clear where parents wait to collect their children?	
Exits	
Where are the fire exits?	
Are the fire exits unlocked and clear of obstructions? YES/NO	If not, give details
Fire	
Is there a fire alarm? YES/NO	Where is it?
If not, is there a signal? YES/NO	What is it?
Have you found the extinguishers?	
Do you know how to use an extinguisher? YES/NO	If not, who does?
Where is the assembly point?	
Other issues?	

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Meeting space	
Are there any danger areas? For example	
Hot Radiators	YES/NO
Low windows	YES/NO
Sashes from windows hanging down ?	YES/NO
Stairs/steps	YES/NO
Other (please specify)	
Can chairs and tables be stacked out of the way?	YES/NO
Other issues	
Kitchen	
Have you checked how hot is the tap water?	
Are there any hazards to the children of the age range in your care? YES/NO	If so, what?
Other issues?	
Open Spaces	
Are there or do you need boundaries? Are they clear?	
Are there any no-go areas? YES/NO	If so, where
Are there any major roads near the meeting place if so how will they be managed safely?	
Other issues?	

Name

Signature

Date

If, after you have carried out the safety check, you have concerns about the building or the area, contact the risk assessment lead.

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4.b Activity risk assessment form

Activity:
Location:
Assessment carried out by:

Date:

Date:

Risk Matrix¹⁰

Likelihood \ Severity	Severity	Slight Harm Superficial injuries, minor cuts/grazes and bruises	Harmful Minor fractures, ill health leading to temporary disability	Extremely harmful Multiple injuries, major fractures, fatalities
	Unlikely (rarely happens)	Low	Low	Medium
Likely (often happens)	Low	Medium	High	
Very likely (nearly always happens)	Medium	High	High	

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	How is the risk controlled – what you are already doing to mitigate it	Likelihood/Severity	Any further measure necessary?	Actioned by	Comments
<i>Covid infection</i>	<i>All participants or anyone else in the vicinity, by not observing distancing or by sharing equipment.</i>	<i>Activity is outdoor. In the invitation: leaflet Covid restrictions. to be followed at all times</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Assign area to a group. Explain rules at arrival. For the organisers: clean equipment before/after activity or during if necessary. Having hand gel at entrance to use before / after the activity.</i>	<i>Claudia</i>	<i>Print out rules; hand gel to bring.</i>

¹⁰ Adapted with permission from Girlguiding risk assessment form (<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/safeguarding-and-risk/managing-risk/risk-management-for-activities-and-events/>)

5. Event register

Register for Focolare Events and On-Line Meetings

Group>	Date	
Planned Content (brief outline)		
ADULTS	DBS	
Moderator/Coordinator	1	Yes / No
Other Adults	2	Yes / No
	3	Yes / No
	4	Yes / No
Names of under 18	Parental Consent Form	
1	Yes / No	
2	Yes / No	
3	Yes / No	
4	Yes / No	
5	Yes / No	
6	Yes / No	

Unresolved Issues	Action Taken

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