**The Archdiocese of Birmingham**

**Safeguarding Check list for Youth Groups**

If you already have a youth group or if you are considering setting one up we strongly advise that you speak to the Youth Worker for your area (you can find out who this is and lots more by visiting the Birmingham Catholic Youth Service website). You should also make contact with the Parish Safeguarding Representative (their name should be displayed on a poster at the back of the Church. If you are unsure please contact the Archdiocese of Birmingham Safeguarding Team).

Key Points:

* Adults must never allow themselves to be isolated with children with whom they are brought into contact because of their role in the Church; they must always be within sight or sound of another adult. This also means that if you intend to give lifts to children to or from the youth group there must be a second adult in the car.
* Everyone working in a youth group must go through recruitment checks including a Disclosure & Barring Service check before they work directly with groups of children. If you have helpers who are under the age of 18 they must be supervised by an adult and cannot be included in the number of adults. If you have someone with additional needs who helps, then that person must go through the same processes as all other adult helpers.
* The minimum ratio of workers to children is one adult for 10 to 15 children between 8 and 11 and one adult to every 15 to 20 children aged over 11. There must never be less than two adults present and you must make sure there are enough people present to keep everyone safe.
* Youth leaders should always work together as a team ensuring that appropriate policies are in place and that they are actually used. Difficulties should be shared and a plan arrived at to manage them. It is essential to make sure that no one is left alone in a difficult or compromising situation.
* Any physical contact should be age appropriate and at the instigation of the child. If any unusual contact occurs make a record of the circumstances and who witnessed what happened.
* If the behaviour of an adult in your group causes you concern, please contact the Safeguarding Team at once to talk through the issues. If a child could be put at risk unless the adult is challenged you should take appropriate action, make an immediate record and then contact the Safeguarding Team.
* If a situation arises where you know or believe a child to be at immediate risk of harm, call the Police but please let the Safeguarding Team know what has happened.
* If a child tells you that they are or have been subject to abuse: keep calm and reassure the child; do not ask questions but listen to what they want to say; explain that you will pass the information on to someone who can help; tell them that although this cannot be kept secret that the information will be confidential and only shared with those who must be informed. When you know that the child is safe, immediately make a short factual note: say what you were told, what the circumstances were and who else was present. Keep this note even if you make a more complete report later. Contact the Safeguarding Team at once or if there is an immediate risk call the Police.
* It is possible that you may notice physical marks or bruises on areas of a child’s body which are not normally areas a child would have a common injury or that you may be concerned about neglect. Please contact the Safeguarding Team if this happens.
* Always ensure that you have the written consent of a parent or carer for a child to be involved in your group [use the standard forms provided]; that you have agreed arrangements in place for the child going home and that you have an accessible record of who to contact in an emergency.
* Written consent must be obtained if photographs or videos of anyone under 18 are to be made public. Care must always be taken over children taking photographs too as these can be shared via electronic means.
* It is important not to confuse personal methods of communication with those for the youth group i.e. ensure the parents are aware that information may be sent to their child’s email account and that they agree to this. Do not accept children as friends on Facebook etc.
* Records containing personal information must be regarded as confidential and should be stored safely on Church premises.
* Make sure that the activities you intend to engage in are covered by insurance, that the rooms to be used are suitable and that, where necessary that a risk assessment has been carried out.
* If you or someone you know is troubled by abuse and feels that it would help to talk please contact us on the mobile number given below. This number can be given to anyone who may want to use it.

Work with young people is a very important part of the Church’s mission. These notes are intended to help you and to keep everyone safe. Although it is relatively unlikely that something will go wrong it is important to keep these key points in mind and to refresh yourself about them from time to time so that you will always know what to do.

If it would help to talk something through with the Safeguarding Team or if you are unable to contact your Parish Safeguarding Representative, please call us in the office on: 0121 230 6240

Or email us on: safeguarding@rc-birmingham.org