To magnify Christ by making disciples in Clare and beyond

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Purpose and Scope of this Policy Statement

Clare Presbyterian Church works with children and families as part of its day-to-day ministry and mission.

This work appears in many forms, including through Sunday worship and a range of additional focused children and youth activities, involving all ages and stages of children and young people.

This statement aims to provide people with the guidance to:

- prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our church or take part in our activities
- make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- provide information to all staff, volunteers, leaders, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying

This statement applies to all connected with our ministries and should be shared with all leaders at all levels of the church, with families, and with children and young people in age-appropriate ways.

Our church has also adopted a Code of Behaviour for children and young people and a Code of Behaviour for leaders, and these should also be consulted.

What is Bullying?

At its most basic, bullying is any behaviour that seeks to harm, intimidate or coerce someone perceived as vulnerable. *(Oxford English Dictionary)*

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is usually but not limited to:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- can be carried out online (see also Chapter 11 of our Safeguarding Children Procedures)

Legal Frameworks

This statement has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seek to protect children in the NI; that is, mainly *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*, DOH and SBNI Policies and Procedures. It is also based on human rights legislation and good practice guidance that underpin all our work.

Clare Presbyterian Church believes that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- bullying is a form of abuse
- children and young people are precious in God's eyes and adults in their church have a responsibility to protect them from all harm
- bullying causes real distress and affects a child's health and development
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. This includes children who are not part of our church but interact with our mission and ministries in any way
- all adults associated with our church have responsibilities to protect children from harm and prevent harm as far as possible; this includes the harm that comes from bullying

Clare Presbyterian Church Will Seek to Prevent Bullying by:

- abiding by our written policy and procedure in place for the management of instances of bullying
- abiding by our Code of Behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our congregation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of activities
- having safeguarding on the agenda for all Kirk Session meetings and addressing the issues and complexity of bullying in our discussions
- abiding by the safeguarding training delivered by PCI

Responding to Bullying

Our response to incidents of bullying:

- will be focused on the needs of the person being bullied, and ensuring immediate protection from harm when required
- if no immediate protection is required the next consideration will be the need to prevent any future occurrences of bullying
- a plan needs to be drawn up to address any incident of bullying and how all parties will engage to resolve and restore the situation
- a review of this plan should be scheduled for as long as is necessary

- considers the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour, often also a child
- considers our congregation as a whole and the impact upon families and ministries
- all incidents will be recorded and handled as confidentially as possible

Inclusion

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity and include all children and young people in our ministries.

See also Chapter 10 of our Safeguarding Children Procedures.

We will therefore be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- welcoming new members to our children's and youth activities
- working closely with families of children and young people to understand life experiences for our children and young people
- seeking out and listening to the views of children and young people

Related Policies and Procedures

PCI Safeguarding Children (NI) Chapter 2: Recognising Abuse

PCI Safeguarding Children (NI) Chapter 3: Responding and Reporting

PCI Safeguarding Children (NI) Chapter 10: The Voice of Children and Young People

PCI Safeguarding Children (NI) Chapter 11: Online Safety

Approved by the Kirk Session at its meeting on 11 May 2026.

Policy End