To magnify Christ by making disciples in Clare and beyond

Safeguarding Children Policy

i. Policy Statement

Clare Presbyterian Church believes that everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and to keep them safe.

Clare Presbyterian Church believes that children should never experience abuse of any kind.

Clare Presbyterian Church is committed to safeguarding all children and protecting them from harm.

It is the policy of Clare Presbyterian Church to safeguard all children and young people interacting with its ministry in any form.

This includes actively protecting children from all forms of harm or abuse.

The church demonstrates and achieves this by providing this policy and accompanying procedures, for all involved in youth and children's work and any form of children or youth ministry within the church, to ensure that children and young people enjoy their engagement with our church, free from the threat of abuse and in a safe environment.

ii. Biblical basis for Safeguarding

Clare Presbyterian Church determines first and foremost that we have a biblical imperative for safeguarding.

Safeguarding is imperative for our church and a central component to our mission; when we do it well, we are proclaiming the excellencies of our Lord Jesus.

It is therefore our duty to use the Bible as our reference point. There we find guidance in how to safeguard others, not only as part of our legal and ethical duty but also as who we are at heart.

For example:

- love our neighbour as ourselves, (Lev 19:18 / Luke 10:27 / Gal 5:13-15)
- treat others as we would want to be treated (Matt 7:12)
- meet the needs of others (Romans 15:1-2 / Philippians 2:3-4)

- seek justice and correct oppression (Psalm 89:14 / Isaiah 1:17 / Micah 6:8)
- protect the weak and those in need (Psalm 82:3-4 / Matt 18:10)

iii. Legal Context

This policy and accompanying procedures have been developed with the following legislation and guidance documents considered, which all seek to protect and safeguard children;

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, October 2024
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

iv. Core Principles

Clare Presbyterian Church engages with children and young people in our community and welcomes those from households where there is no Presbyterian or other denominational connection.

The welfare of any child is paramount, no matter how brief their engagement with our church or small the organisation they attend.

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all forms of harm or abuse.

We recognise some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, communication needs, disabilities, adverse environments and other issues.

The voices of children and young people are crucial to our learning and development as a safe church and we seek to always improve our engagement with them.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, highlights the following key principles:

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount
- The voice of the child or young person should be heard
- Parents should be supported and families helped to stay together
- Children should be safe from harm at all times, including when a parent is not meeting their needs
- Partnership with statutory services is required to ensure effective safeguarding
- Prevention and our role therein should be a focus for all organisations working with children
- Responses to issues should be proportionate and decision making should be well informed

Clare Presbyterian Church will therefore:

1. Ensure that we have a Designated Person
2. Maintain robust procedures for the recruitment, checking and monitoring of staff and volunteers working with children and young people
3. Ensure that anyone engaging with children and young people through the church will be trained at least once every three years in how to recognise, respond to and report abuse as well as understand their role in the prevention of abuse

4. Ensure that the church has clear processes for the reporting of abuse and the risk of harm, both externally to statutory services and internally through a clearly identified chain of responsibility
5. Ensure that identified risks to children and young people are assessed and managed
6. Ensure that any person of risk engaged in our ministries (for example those with a history of serious offending behaviour) is safely managed, monitored and supported
7. Ensure that we have a timely, effective and sensitive approach to managing non-recent abuse disclosures
8. Ensure that children and young people from other countries are protected and cared for while engaging in our ministries and missions
9. Ensure we have appropriate and actual methods for children and young people to voice their opinions and concerns, and be listened and responded to
10. Ensure we have safe and confidential methods for managing information

This Policy will be executed in our church through a series of Procedures.

This Policy is displayed on our premises and will be displayed on our website.

Provision of alternative formats, when necessary, for example, large print or easy read versions, can be accessed by contacting the Designated Person.

v. Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Kirk Session. If there is a legislative change that requires the Policy to be updated or reviewed within that time period, the Kirk Session will ensure that this update or review takes place, in accordance with advice from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI).

Accompanying Procedures will be reviewed at least every two years by the Kirk Session, as well as at any point there are legislative/good practice updates required, in accordance with advice from PCI. Procedural changes will be approved by the Kirk Session.

It is the responsibility of the Kirk Session to ensure changes are communicated in a timely and effective manner to the congregation.

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

Policy End

Procedures commence