

GOSPEL HALL DAMOLLY ROAD, NEWRY

‘CODE OF PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’

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INTRODUCTION

Children mattered to the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19 v 14). Throughout His ministry He placed a very high value and dignity upon them (Matthew 18 v 2). He also acknowledged the vulnerable position of children (Matthew 18 v 10). Both the Old and the New Testaments encourage the welfare, development and protection of children (Deuteronomy 6 v 7 and Ephesians 6 v 4).

This 'Code' has been introduced to establish a number of principles of good practice for working with Children and Young People in connection with the Assembly which meets in the Gospel Hall, Damolly Road, Newry.

There are several reasons why a set of principles needs to be established.

- a. There is a spiritual and moral obligation to provide the highest possible standard of care for the children who are entrusted to us.
- b. There is a legal obligation placed on individuals and organizations that accept children into their care to keep them safe. This is an international and national requirement. The U.N. Convention on the Rights of Children stipulates that 'Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm'. The Children (NI) Order 1995 and Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults [NI] Order 2003 [POCVA] also safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and the principle that those working with children should work in partnership with parents. Anyone working directly with children is engaged in regulated activity.
- c. There is also an obligation to the workers and teachers, who so generously give of their time to work amongst the children and young people, to minimize as far as possible the risk of being subjected to unfounded allegations.
- d. Untold harm will be done to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Assembly testimony should harm come to children under care. The Assemblies would not be immune from the problems of trusted adults misusing their position. By using these guidelines each member will be raising standards of care and assuring their protection in the event of false allegations.
- e. The absence of a 'Code' could mean that an insurance company may refuse indemnity and failure to implement good practice is likely to become a major factor in a Court deciding on legal liability.
- f. It is the responsibility of the overseeing brethren to ensure that there is adequate insurance to cover personal accident public liability etc. The insurance must cover all activities associated with children's work.

For the purposes of this document a child or young person is a person under 18 years of age.

Matthew 10 v 16 "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

CHILD PROTECTION – POLICY STATEMENT

The primary objective of Bible Explorers and other activities with children and young people is to teach the truth of the Word of God.

The Assembly of Christians which meets in the Gospel Hall, Damolly Road, Newry, is committed to safeguarding the well being of children and young people, showing them respect and understanding at all times.

The Assembly is fully committed to providing a safe and positive environment where children are valued in every respect as God intended.

The Assembly will adopt child protection guidelines through a 'Code of Practice for working with Children and Young People' in accordance with statutory guidance.

The Assembly will share information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involve children and parents appropriately.

The Assembly will ensure the proper selection of workers and teachers. This will include, where appropriate, criminal records checks carried out by Access NI to ensure that unsuitable people do not work with children.

The overseeing brethren will have overall responsibility for Bible Explorers. They will appoint a Bible Explorers' Superintendent and Child Safeguarding Coordinators

The overseeing brethren will be available for support and advice.

This Policy document will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Matthew 18 v 10 "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approval, implementing and reviewing policy

The brethren with responsibility for approving the policy are:

Alan Finney
Cecil Rogers
John Rogers
Bertie Rogers

The brethren with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy are:

Alan Finney
Cecil Rogers

Superintendent

The superintendent's role is to oversee Bible Explorers.

Name of Superintendent

Alan Finney

Child Safeguarding Coordinator [CSC]

The role of the Child Safeguarding Coordinators is primarily to provide consultation advice and support to the overseeing brethren and teachers/workers and to act as a contact with the statutory agencies. One or more of them, as appropriate, should be informed of any accident or incident involving children while in care of the assembly members.

Name of CSCs

Alan Finney
Grace Finney
Irene Rogers

RAISING AWARENESS

Newry Assembly workers and teachers will be given a copy of the Code of Practice for working with Children and Young People.

The workers/teachers attended a safeguarding training event held on the evening of 16 September 2022

Ephesians 5 v 15 – 17 "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

SELECTION OF TEACHERS AND WORKERS

The role of the teachers/workers is to teach the children the word of God in an environment that is safe.

Normally people who seek fellowship in the Assembly are interviewed by the overseeing brethren and are received to the fellowship with the approval of the whole Assembly (Acts 15 v 4). Reception to the fellowship is dependent upon a godly life and adherence to New Testament Church teaching. The same conditions apply to people received from other Assemblies.

The constitution of an assembly is such that there are no appointed officials or positions. However there are recognized overseeing brethren, who will appoint a Bible Explorers' Superintendent, Teachers, Workers and Child Safeguarding Coordinators.

Each member of the Assembly has a responsibility to ensure that unsuitable persons are prevented from working with children. Concerns should be reported to overseeing brethren.

2 Timothy 2 v 15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

RULES OF BEHAVIOUR

One of the major safeguards to the work among children and young people in the assembly is that it is very open and public. A number of adults are usually present (see sections on Transport Policy and Dealing with Abuse).

All children regardless of their background and any disability must be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. Special caution should be exercised in dealing with difficult children and those with special needs.

Teachers/workers are expected to set a good example and to work together for the safety and benefit of the children.

Teachers/workers must never use physical punishment or discipline out of anger.

It is good practice that a worker/teacher is not alone with a child in the hall. Should a child take ill, need help at the toilet, or is rowdy and has to be directed to leave the main hall due to unacceptable behaviour two adults should normally be involved.

When children/young people start arriving at the hall they should normally be supervised by two workers/teachers preferably one male and one female.

Physical horseplay such as running, climbing on seats, wrestling, tickling and touching of any form is inappropriate. This conduct should be discouraged.

Teachers/workers must not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child – even in fun.

Teachers/workers must never form a relationship with a child/young person which is a breach of trust

Threatening, provocative, degrading, bullying or violent behaviour and/or bad language must not be allowed. Prejudice of sectarianism, sexism or racism must not be tolerated.

Care needs to be taken when giving prizes. They should only be given for a good reason.

All children should be encouraged to take part but none should be forced to do so.

Nothing of a personal nature should be done for a child/young person that he/she can do for himself/herself.

Teachers/workers should be mindful of how and where they touch a child – the child must feel comfortable with the contact.

Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing concern and care. However, it is only appropriate if it is meeting the need of the child.

Physical contact of a comforting nature should only ever take place with the consent of the child.

Allegations made by a child must be addressed.

Permission should be obtained from parents/guardians before taking pictures/images and they should be told what they will be used for. Special caution is required when communicating with them using mobile phones and computers.

Bible Explorers is suitable for primary school children and older. Younger children should be accompanied by an adult.

Teachers/workers who do not follow the rules of behaviour and policy may not be permitted to be involved in Bible Explorers

1 Corinthians 14 v 40 "Let all things be done decently and in order."

TRANSPORT POLICY

Children should not be transported without the consent of their Parents/Guardians. Verbal consent may be appropriate initially but the 'Parent/Guardian Consent Form Appendix 1 should be completed as soon as possible.

Those who have responsibility to transport children to the Hall must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy, fit for purpose and have adequate passenger liability insurance.

All who use vehicles should be aware that failure to wear seat belts, overcrowding or speeding might invalidate insurance.

Workers/teachers should ideally plan their lifts so that they do not transport a single child/young person. Where this situation arises the child/young person should preferably be placed on the rear seat. If multiple lifts have been planned then a number of children/young people should be collected at a single location prior to lifting an individual if that is practical. The reverse order should apply on the return journey. There will be occasions when a child/young person will have to be transported on their own because of where the child lives.

It is the responsibility of the people transporting children/young people to the Hall to ensure that they are returned to the pick-up point. It is best practice to leave them home. When children cross the road ensure the passage is safe.

If for any reason someone involved in transportation is unable to do so only approved drivers will act as substitute.

BUSES

Should buses be used two adults (excluding the bus driver) should normally supervise the children/young people.

Romans 1 v 10 "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God."

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS

Details of all incidents/accidents occurring in the Hall, car park or during traveling to or from the Hall should be recorded on an Accident and Incident form Appendix 3. The names of the witnesses who observed the incident should be recorded etc. The parent/guardian should be informed in person or by telephone of the incident/accident and any action taken as soon as possible.

All incidents/accidents should be reported to the overseeing brethren, the Superintendent and the Child Safeguarding Coordinators.

A group of disruptive children should be separated as soon as possible by workers/teachers sitting among them.

Where a child is disrupting others, he/she should be asked to move to another seat. If after being moved a child/young person continues to be disruptive, he/she should be asked to leave the main Hall. At least two workers/teachers should accompany this person to the foyer and remain there until an appropriate lift home can be arranged. This removal should normally be recorded in the Incident and Accident Record Form Appendix 3.

A child who will not respond to a request to improve their behaviour, move or leave the Hall, and continues to be disruptive can be moved with the minimum of force possible. A clear verbal warning must be given of the intention to move the child/young person if he/she continues to be disruptive and make sure that two other workers/teachers hear the warning. This removal should normally be recorded on an accident and incident form. It is of course possible that the child/young person may respond to another adult.

Where a child/young person has to be restrained to prevent them injuring themselves or other persons an accident and incident form should also be completed.

If a child is physically restrained for any reason other than the safety of that child or another child then that action may be interpreted as assault.

Should a very young child be disruptive or become upset it may be appropriate for a worker/teacher to nurse that child. The best practice is to leave this to a female.

THE OVERRIDING PRINCIPLE IN ALL THESE MATTERS IS THE USE OF MINIMUM FORCE.
Proverbs 2 v 6 "For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

If a child or parent/guardian has a general complaint they should direct the complaint to a teacher/worker or the Superintendent. The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with in a timely and appropriate way. They should be informed as soon as possible of the decision and the action, if any, that will be taken. An Accident and Incident Form Appendix 3 should be completed and given to the Superintendent.

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

A worker/teacher who becomes aware of (via the child/young person or a third person), or is suspicious of child abuse including abuse by another worker/teacher MUST NOT investigate the incident but immediately report the matter to a CSC. The CSC will be responsible for liaison with the Social Services, or the police or the NSPCC and seek appropriate advice.

If a child/young person tells a teacher/worker about personal abuse the following action must be taken:

- a. Do not promise the child/young person confidentiality. The child/young person must be informed that others may have to know. Ask the child/young person if another adult (preferably a CSC) could be present during the discussion.
- b. Listen carefully to what the child/young person has to say rather than question him/her directly.
- c. Offer the child/young person assurance without making any promises and take what the child/young person says seriously.
- d. Never stop a child/young person who is freely recalling significant events.
- e. Do not question or interrogate the child/young person.
- f. Do not over react.
- g. Explain to the child what you have to do:
 - (i) make a record on form Appendix 3
 - (ii) tell a CSC who will liaise with the appropriate authorities.
- h. Record the discussions accurately as soon as possible after the event even if it is information that is not understood or is personally difficult to record. This information is important and must be recorded.

- i. A CSC, if not already informed, should be told so that the Social Services, the police and/or NSPCC can be informed.
- j. If a worker/teacher has handled the matter by him/herself, because the allegation is against a CSC that person should make contact with the appropriate authorities listed above.
- k. In all these matters confidentiality is absolutely essential. Only those who need to know should have access to the information. There are situations where confidentiality needs to be broken e.g. if there is a concern that a child/young person is in danger.
- l. All action taken and details of discussions with a CSC, social services, police and NSPCC must be recorded within 24 hours. Appendix 3.

Where a worker/teacher has harmed a child or placed a child at risk that person will not be allowed to work with children. A CSC will make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority where appropriate.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

Good information sharing is essential in safeguarding children and young people. To ensure that children are safeguarded a good communication system is required. A child/young person must not be brought to any Meeting without the consent of the Parents/Guardians.

Parent/Guardians should be given a copy of the 'Parent/Guardian Information and Consent Form' Appendix 1 which includes details of the times of the Meetings and the availability of our Child Protection Policy on request or on our website. Parents/Guardians should be asked to complete and return the Parent/Guardians Consent Form Appendix 1. See the paragraph on General Data Protection Regulation and record keeping below.

It is important to establish and maintain contact with Parents/Guardians of the children who come to the Hall.

The Parent/Guardian consent relates to the attendance of a child or young person at Bible Explorers in either Newry or Bessbrook Gospel Hall and transportation to and from Newry or Bessbrook Gospel Hall or other venues.

It is not good practice for teachers/workers to take a child or young person to his/her own home or to some other social event. The very strong advice is to avoid such action. The Assembly cannot be held responsible.

MISCELLANEOUS GENERAL SAFETY ISSUES

A first aid kit is located in the kitchen. A number of the workers/teachers can give basic first aid.
The premises should meet health and safety standards.
Risk assessments should be carried out where appropriate. [Appendix 4]
A list of emergency numbers is given below.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION [GDPR]

The privacy and right of control of Parents/Guardians personal data and their children's personal data is respected. The personal data collected is that recorded on the consent form. See Appendix 1.

Personal data shared with us is used

- 1 To communicate with Parents/Guardians.
- 2 To provide care
- 3 For administration purposes

Personal data is kept safe and will only be shared when necessary e.g. the Statutory Authorities. Information is not rented or sold to anyone. Parents/Guardians have the right to access their and their children's data and make changes to the data if it is incorrect.

RECORD KEEPING

The following records will be maintained:

- a. **ATTENDANCE REGISTER**
Stating the names and all dates of pupils' and workers'/teachers' attendance. Also any visiting speaker.
- b. **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT/COMPLAINTS/ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE RECORD APPENDIX 3**
This will be the permanent record of all significant incidents occurring whether in the Hall, car park or during transportation. Completion of the Accident and Incident form is self-explanatory. The record may become a court exhibit hence accurate completion is essential.
- c. **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM APPENDIX 1**
Parent/Guardian consent for a child/young person to attend Bible Explorers.
- d. **WORKER/TEACHER REGISTER APPENDIX 2**
Containing the names of all who have responsibility for work or contact with the children/young people.

The Superintendent will have overall responsibility for record keeping.

Consent forms and names and addresses of children attending (i.e. roll) should be retained for 5 years after the child has left the children's meeting. Records relating to complaints and referrals to the Statutory Authorities should be retained indefinitely. All records must be held securely.

ALL DOCUMENTS AND FORMS, INCLUDING A COPY OF THE 'CODE OF PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE', WILL BE KEPT UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE OVERSEEING BRETHREN.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police Public Protection Unit	101
Social Services Gateway Team	0800 783 7745
Social Services Out of Hours	0800 197 9995
NSPCC	0808 800 5000

Checked 1 September 2026

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1



I give permission for _____
to attend Bessbrook/Newry Gospel Hall

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Home Tel: _____ Mobile Tel: _____

Relevant Medical Information: _____

This information is required by law under The Children (NI) order. It assures us that you know where your child is and that in the case of an emergency we can contact you as soon as possible. We require your consent to the above named, in the event of any requirement, to receive immediate first aid and/or professional medical attention where necessary, in the interest of the health and welfare of the child. You can be assured that all the information given will be treated confidentially, securely and for the purpose intended in accordance with GDPR. Our Child Protection Policy is available on request. I give permission for the above named being transported by car where appropriate. I consent to all of the above,

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____

For further details please contact: Alan Finney 07849498849
Emma - 07523977888 | Sharon - 07895276284

APPENDIX 2

REGISTER OF TEACHERS AND WORKERS

Name	Emailed	Date

APPENDIX 3

Accident and Incident Report Form

This form should be completed immediately after any accident, complaint or significant incident. It should also be completed following an allegation or suspicion of child abuse. The worker/teacher should discuss with the Superintendent and/or the Child Safeguarding Coordinator what follow up action is necessary.

Day, date and time of the incident

Names, addresses and ages of those involved in the incident

Where did this incident take place?

Who witnessed the incident? (names, addresses, telephone numbers, and ages if under 16)

Describe the accident/incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given)

In cases of allegations or suspicions of child abuse describe the sequence of events/actual words used/observations.

The Superintendent and a Child Safeguarding Coordinator must be informed immediately.

What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident?

Are the premises still safe for the children and workers/teachers to use? Yes/No

Who else do you need to inform?

Have they been informed? Yes/No

If so, when and by whom?

Signature of the Superintendent at time of accident/incident

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Form seen by: _____

(e.g. Overseers, Child Safeguarding Coordinator)

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Revised September 2026

Date: ____/____/____

APPENDIX 4

Risk Assessment Form

Risk Assessment Form Risk assessment for : _____ Address _____ Postcode _____ Assessment by (print name) : _____ Assessment date: _____ Signed _____ _____						
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Significant Hazard	Potential injury	People at risk	Existing controls	Action needed	Priority	Review date

