

Chapter 15: Codes of behaviour

Aim of the chapter

- i. To outline Codes of Behaviour
- ii. To describe actions on a breach of a code
- iii. To describe the management of complaints with regard to safeguarding
- iv. To outline an anti-bullying approach and statement

Context

Codes of Behaviour provide protection for everyone, including children and young people.

It is important that everyone involved has guidelines on what is expected, and what is not acceptable, with respect to their behaviour.

The Codes of Behaviour will create supportive environments to provide a child-centred approach for the children involved in PCI ministries.

The Codes of Behaviour will help to provide rules for the leaders, parents and children to agree to and abide by.

Codes of Behaviour are based on a child-centred approach and promote openness and transparency at all times.

Strengths

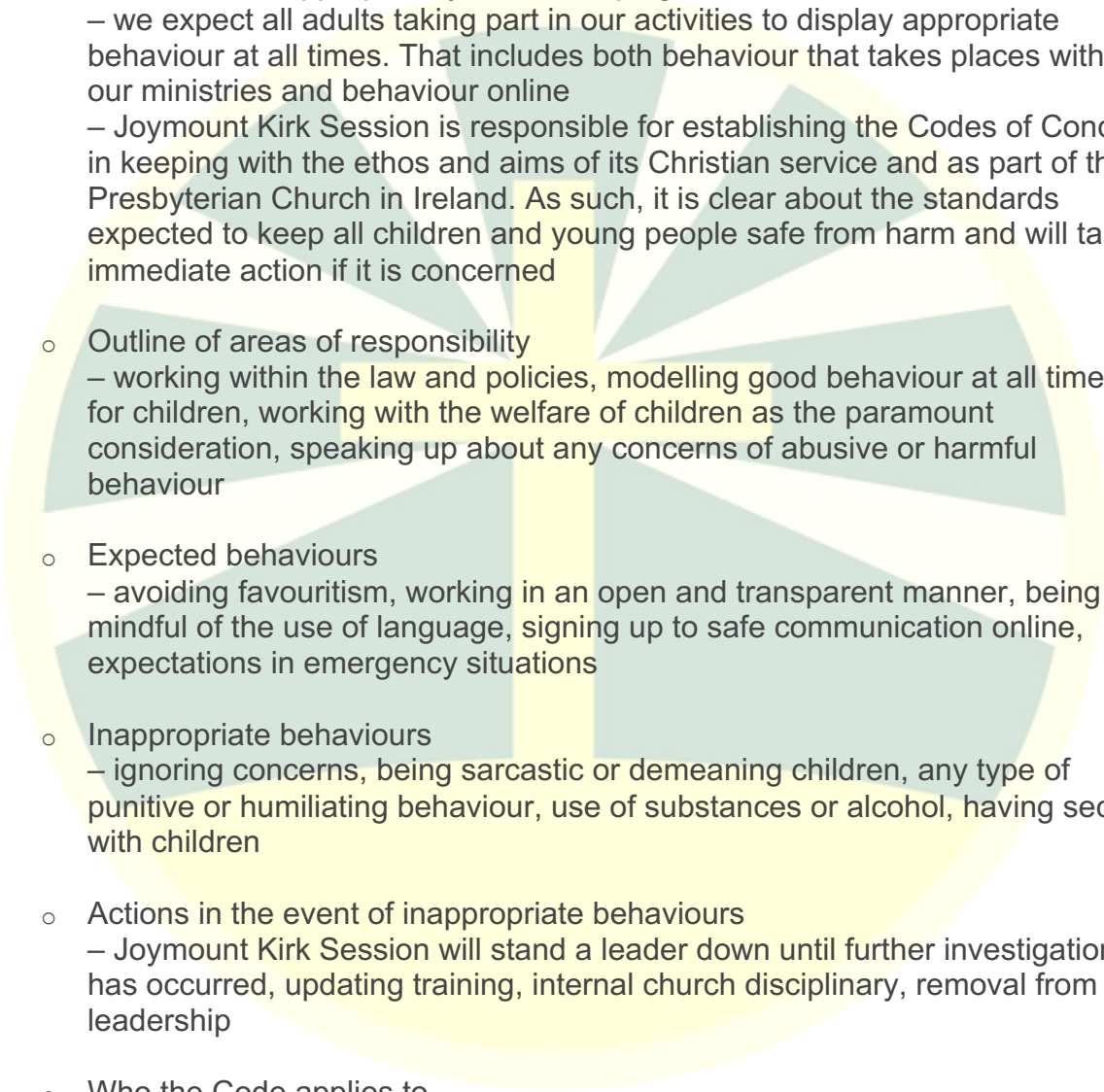
Our strengths include:

- The value we place on children and young people
- How we welcome and include children from many different backgrounds and who have different characteristics
- How each activity or organisation focuses on understanding of babies', children's and young people's specific needs
- How we already communicate with children and young people and ask them what they think
- The contact that we already have with our local community
- The leadership that we already have in place; their faith, values and commitment
- The commitment to training for any staff and volunteers
- The strength of our recruitment processes for our staff and volunteers

Codes of Behaviour

This is Joymount Presbyterian Church's Code of Behaviour for **the leaders** of all our children's/youth organisations.

This includes but is not limited to:

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- Our overarching statement
 - leaders occupy a position of trust in our church community; we expect all leaders to act appropriately and in keeping with that trust
 - we expect all adults taking part in our activities to display appropriate behaviour at all times. That includes both behaviour that takes places within our ministries and behaviour online
 - Joymount Kirk Session is responsible for establishing the Codes of Conduct in keeping with the ethos and aims of its Christian service and as part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As such, it is clear about the standards expected to keep all children and young people safe from harm and will take immediate action if it is concerned
 - Outline of areas of responsibility
 - working within the law and policies, modelling good behaviour at all times for children, working with the welfare of children as the paramount consideration, speaking up about any concerns of abusive or harmful behaviour
 - Expected behaviours
 - avoiding favouritism, working in an open and transparent manner, being mindful of the use of language, signing up to safe communication online, expectations in emergency situations
 - Inappropriate behaviours
 - ignoring concerns, being sarcastic or demeaning children, any type of punitive or humiliating behaviour, use of substances or alcohol, having secrets with children
 - Actions in the event of inappropriate behaviours
 - Joymount Kirk Session will stand a leader down until further investigation has occurred, updating training, internal church disciplinary, removal from leadership
 - Who the Code applies to
 - this code applies to all organisations with children/young people who operate within Joymount Presbyterian Church, noting that it includes senior leaders and Elders helping at an organisation, that reputation and length of membership in a church do not exclude individuals

We have this Code of Behaviour in place **for the children and young people** attending organisations as participants.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Why we have a code in place for the children/young people
- Simple lists of do's and don'ts
- Role of parents and guardians, including communication with them
- What happens for children and young people if they breach the Codes of Behaviour, including who is responsible for helping children and young people understand this
- How we communicate this Code to our children and young people, and their families

Complaints about safeguarding practices

Joymount Presbyterian Church must make clear the processes for all individuals attending if there is a concern or complaint anyone needs to raise with regard to safeguarding practices.

The body responsible for all safeguarding issues, including complaints, is Joymount Kirk Session.

It is best to receive the complaints in writing, but not necessary. Once received by any member of Joymount Kirk Session the complaint should be recorded, dated and signed.

Individuals often make contact via the Minister or Clerk of Session. This can also often occur through the Designated Person. The Designated Person needs to be identifiable within the church community.

Joymount Kirk Session should make clear its arrangements for the management of such complaints.

Individuals may use the word 'complaint' but be referring to a safeguarding issue that needs escalated.

Safeguarding complaints may involve elements of risk of harm and should be assessed carefully. Advice can be taken from the central PCI Safeguarding Team.

Anti-bullying policy

This is Joymount Presbyterian Church's anti-bullying policy statement, which sets out our commitment to preventing and responding to bullying.

Joymount Presbyterian Church Anti-Bullying Statement

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

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

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This work appears in many forms, including through Sunday worship and a wide 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.

Joymount Presbyterian Church also has a Code of Behaviour for children, young people and leaders, and this should also be consulted.

What is bullying type of behaviour?

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 online (see also Chapter 11)

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying type behaviour when, after clarifying facts and perceptions, TRIP is confirmed:

T - When behaviour is **TARGETED** at a specific person or group of people.

R - When the behaviour is **REPEATED** over time.

I - When the behaviour is deliberately **INTENDED** to cause harm.

P - When the behaviour causes **PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL** and/or **PHYSICAL** harm.

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Legal frameworks

This statement has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks 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 underpins all our work.

Joymount 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 faith community 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.
- all adults associated with the Joymount Presbyterian Church have responsibilities to protect children from harm and prevent harm as far as possible; this includes the harm that comes from bullying

This includes children who not part of our denomination, but interact with our mission and ministries in any way

Joymount Presbyterian Church will seek to prevent bullying by:

- providing guidelines for our congregation to ensure that we have a written policy and procedure in place for the management of instances of bullying
- providing guidelines for our congregation to ensure that we have developed a Code of Behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in their local congregation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of activities
- Joymount Kirk Session will keep safeguarding on their agenda for all meetings, and ensure they address the issues and complexity of bullying in their discussions

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

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- 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 in for as long as is necessary
- considers the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour, often also a child
- considers Joymount Presbyterian Church as a whole, and the impact upon families, organisations and ministries
- all incidents will be recorded and handled as confidentially as possible

Inclusion

Joymount Presbyterian Church 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: Voice of children and young people

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

Chapter 2: Recognising abuse

Chapter 3: Responding and reporting

Chapter 10: The voice of children and young people

Chapter 11: Online safety

CHAPTER END