



1.3G GUIDANCE ON ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

For the vast majority of youth work, engagement with young people should be planned. Young people should not be on their own with a youth worker. In the event of an emergency or an extremely reactive situation, the youth worker should take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the young person and their own safety. All actions taken should be recorded and reported to their supervisor or equivalent.

Church personnel should be aware of the dangers which may arise from one-to-one meetings with individual children. In a reactive situation, e.g. where a child/young person requests a one-to-one meeting without warning or where a child/young person needs to be removed from a group, another member of church personnel must be informed of this. Such meetings should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people. Where possible, another adult should be present or nearby during the meeting. A record should be kept of these meetings including names, dates, times, location, reason for the meeting and outcome.

When children/young people seek advice on an individual basis, the primary role of church personnel is to listen to the child/young person and refer them to qualified and competent sources of advice/counselling.

If one-to-one working is part of a planned structured piece of work, it should be noted that this type of work carries significantly increased risk to both the child and the adult. Additional risk must be addressed. The programme/activity should have a clear rationale, evidence base, aims, methodology, evaluation mechanism and accompanying work plan, which includes:

- A comprehensive recruitment process, including competencies, interviews, references, Access NI/Garda Vetting etc. (where appropriate), must be implemented **(Guidance 1.1B)**.
- A comprehensive training programme must be delivered, at diocesan level, to church personnel involved **(Guidance 1.5B)**.
- A formal supervision structure must be in place, with clarity as to who is responsible for this work.
- Supervision should be delivered by adequately trained personnel, to support this work and address any issues which may arise.
- Parents/carers must be fully informed as to the nature and purpose of this work and must give written consent **(1.3C Template 1)**.
- Any work in this regard must be risk assessed (with documentary evidence provided) in relation to the risk of abuse **(1.3A Template 1)**.
- Additionally, any work in this regard must be formally approved by the Bishop of the relevant Diocese.
- Evidence of approval by the relevant insurers must also be provided.