

Muckamore Presbyterian Church

Residential Trips Policy (Children & Young People)

June 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all residential trips organised by Muckamore Presbyterian Church are carried out in a manner that safeguards and promotes the welfare of all children and young people.

The church recognises its duty of care to provide a safe environment in which children and young people can grow, participate and engage in activities without unnecessary risk. This policy sets out the expectations for leaders and volunteers to ensure that all residential experiences are well-planned, appropriately supervised, and conducted in line with Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) safeguarding principles.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All residential activities, including overnight stays, weekends, camps, and church-arranged sleepovers
- All children and young people under 18 years of age participating in such activities
- All leaders, volunteers, helpers, and junior leaders involved in organising or supervising residential trips

3. Safeguarding Principles

All residential activities must be conducted in accordance with the following safeguarding principles:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount
- All reasonable steps must be taken to minimise risk of harm
- Activities must be organised in a way that supports safe participation, inclusion, and learning
- Leaders must act with transparency, accountability, and integrity at all times
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and all concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon

4. Planning and Preparation

All residential trips must be planned well in advance and must include:

- A clearly defined programme of activities, location, and travel arrangements
- Completion of a detailed and specific risk assessment, identifying potential hazards, evaluating risks, and outlining control measures
- Confirmation that the chosen venue:
 - Is suitable for children and young people
 - Meets appropriate health and safety standards
 - Has adequate insurance cover

The Leader in Charge must:

- Inform the church’s Designated Person of the residential trip in advance
- Ensure that the church’s insurers are notified where required
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully understood by all leaders

No residential trip should proceed unless all planning, risk assessment and safeguarding arrangements are complete and deemed satisfactory.

5. Staffing and Supervision

Appropriate supervision is critical to safeguarding children and young people.

- Leader-to-child ratios must be robust and appropriate, see PCI guidance below they should take into account:
 - Age of participants
 - Nature of activities
 - Additional needs of individuals

Ratio indoors	
4-7 years	1 leader to 8 children
8 – 13 years	1 leader to 10 children
14 years and over	2 leaders to 20 children

Ratio outdoors	
4-7 years	2 leaders to 12 children
8 – 13 years	2 leaders to 15 children
14 years and over	2 leaders to 20 children

- A minimum of two leaders must always be present, regardless of group size
- Mixed groups should, where possible, be supervised by both male and female leaders
- Leaders must:
 - Have been safely recruited, vetted, and trained in accordance with church safeguarding procedures
 - Always know where children are and what they are doing
 - Not allow children or young people to be left unattended or unsupervised

Junior Leaders (Aged 16–17)

- Are considered children under safeguarding legislation
- May assist in activities and be counted in ratios for the purpose of staffing and supervision.
- Must never be left unsupervised or in sole charge of a group

- Must receive appropriate supervision, guidance and support

6. Sleeping Arrangements

Sleeping arrangements must be clearly planned and communicated in advance.

The following principles must be applied:

- Children and young people must be accommodated in a way that respects their age, gender, and privacy
- Leaders must ensure appropriate supervision is maintained throughout overnight periods
- Adults (18 years and over) must not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people
- Particular care must be taken where groups include individuals both under and over 18 years of age:
 - Eighteen-year-olds are legally adults
 - They must not share sleeping accommodation with children
 - Arrangements must avoid singling out individuals

Leaders must ensure that:

- Children feel safe and secure
- Boundaries regarding privacy and personal space are respected

7. Consent and Information

It is essential that appropriate written parental/guardian consent is obtained prior to each trip.

- No child or young person may attend without a fully completed and signed consent form

Consent forms must include:

- Emergency contact details
- Medical information, including:
 - Allergies
 - Medical conditions
 - Medications
 - Additional needs
- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photography (where applicable)

Leaders must:

- Ensure that all consent forms are readily accessible during the trip
- Be familiar with the needs of each child

- Respect and act upon any specific parental instructions

8. Health, Safety and First Aid

The health and safety of all participants must be actively managed throughout the trip.

- At least one leader must be trained in First Aid
- A fully stocked and up to date First Aid kit must be available
- Any equipment or facilities used must be safe and appropriate

In the event of an accident or incident:

- Leaders must deal with the immediate risk of harm first
- Appropriate care must be administered
- Parents/guardians must be informed as soon as practicably possible
- A written incident or accident report form must be completed

If there is any doubt regarding a medical issue:

- Emergency services must be contacted immediately

9. Behaviour and Boundaries

All participants must be expected to behave in a manner that ensures:

- Their own safety
- The safety and wellbeing of others

Leaders must:

- Always maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Ensure physical contact is:
 - Minimal
 - Appropriate
 - Clearly in the child's best interest

Leaders must not:

- Be alone with a child or young person where possible
- Engage in behaviour that could be misinterpreted

Dangerous, inappropriate, or unsafe behaviour must not be permitted.

10. Communication

With Young People

- Communication must be:
 - Purposeful, transparent, and appropriate

- Related to the organisation of the trip
- Leaders must not:
 - Engage in exclusive or private communication
 - Give the impression that they can keep secrets

With Parents/Carers

- Parents must be:
 - Fully informed of all arrangements prior to the trip
 - Notified of any accidents, incidents, or concerns
- Significant issues should be communicated:
 - Directly to parents
 - Ideally with two leaders present

11. Photography and Media

- Permission must be obtained for photographs via consent forms
- Images should:
 - Be appropriate and respectful
 - Avoid identifying children by name

Particular care must be taken to protect:

- Children in foster or adoptive situations
- Families where there are safeguarding concerns

Children must never be forced to participate in photographs.

12. Risk Management

A written risk assessment (see exemplar template) must be completed for each residential trip and must include:

- Identification of hazards
- Assessment of potential risks
- Control measures to minimise risk

Risk assessments are living documents and must be:

- Reviewed regularly
- Updated where necessary

If any risk cannot be sufficiently managed:

- The activity must not proceed

13. Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concern must be:

- Taken seriously

- Responded to immediately

Leaders must:

- Report concerns to the Leader in Charge
- Ensure that the concern is shared with the church's Designated Person

Leaders must:

- Never promise confidentiality
- Record concerns clearly, accurately and promptly

14. Insurance and External Venues

Where external venues or providers are used:

- The Leader in Charge must ensure:
 - Adequate insurance is in place
 - Safeguarding procedures are understood

Where multiple organisations are involved:

- Responsibilities for safeguarding must be clearly defined

15. Policy Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Kirk Session and/or safeguarding team
- Updated in line with Presbyterian Church in Ireland safeguarding guidance

Date of authorisation by Kirk Session

This policy was adopted by the Kirk Session at a meeting on _____ Tuesday 16th June 2026 _____



Signature: _____ (Moderator)



Signature: _____ (Clerk of Session)