



SCRIPTURE  
UNION IRELAND

# Child Protection Policy Guidelines & Procedures

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## INTRODUCTION

Scripture Union is an interdenominational and international Christian movement, which seeks to work with children, young people and families. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we produce and update Policies, Guidelines and Procedures to ensure that all involved in this ministry have as a primary concern the care, welfare and protection of children and young people. The Aims of Scripture Union are a good place to start when setting out the Policy of the Movement in Child Protection.

*“Working with the Churches, Scripture Union aims*

*(a) To make God’s Good News known to children, young people and families, and*

*(b) To encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer*

*so that they may come to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in Christian maturity and become committed church members and servants of a world in need. “*

(See Appendix for Aims, Beliefs and Working principles of Scripture Union Republic of Ireland)

In the Republic of Ireland, we seek to fulfill these internationally agreed Aims through programmes of camps, holiday clubs, schools groups, training and resource provision. In everything, our concern is the full welfare of the children and young people we are privileged to meet, and that is why this document is so important.

I therefore require that all involved in this ministry must read and put into practice these Guidelines and Procedures. It is our intention that every part of Scripture Union’s work in the Republic of Ireland will be informed by the principles and practice outlined in this document. I commend it to staff and volunteers alike, with the prayer that as we make the Good News known, that all participants in a Scripture Union activity will experience the love and care of God.



Jim Donnan  
(General Director)  
Scripture Union Republic of Ireland

**January 2018**

# TERMINOLOGY

A number of terms are used throughout this document as follows:

**General Director** – The full time Chief Executive of Scripture Union Republic of Ireland.

**Designated Liaison Person** – A delegated SU staff member or volunteer officer authorised by Scripture Union to act as its representative in dealing with allegations of abuse and in referring such issues to external agencies.

**Vetting Officer** – A delegated SU staff member or volunteer authorised by Scripture Union to carry out checking and vetting procedures in regard to all volunteer applications.

**SU or Scripture Union** – Scripture Union Republic of Ireland.

**SU or Scripture Union Office** – Unit 4 Idea House, Killarney Road Business Park, Bray, Co Wicklow.

**SU Activities** - Scripture Union activities include programmes for residential holiday activities and camps for a range of age groups and abilities, children's missions or holiday clubs, family ministries, work in schools, training activities, youth work, systematic Bible reading programmes, school retreats and groups held at Ovoca Manor

**Team Leader/Volunteer** – The person or persons approved by Scripture Union to take overall responsibility for the event, group or activity, and who is vetted through SU's procedures to be a Team Leader. A Team Leader may be a volunteer or a Scripture Union staff member.

**Volunteer** – Any person vetted through SU's procedures to be a member of a team and reporting to the Team Leader.

**SU Council** – The governing and policy-making body of Scripture Union Republic of Ireland.

**Centre Manager Team Leader** – the person in charge of the running of Ovoca Manor. A Scripture Union staff member.

**NEWB** - National Educational Welfare Board

**DH & C** – The Department of Health and Children Republic of Ireland.

**A&E** – Accident and Emergency Unit of a hospital.

**Disclosure Report Form** – A confidential form to be used in reporting by a volunteer or Team Leader all allegations of abuse during or outside an SU activity. **This form should be completed by the Team Leader a.s.a.p. and forwarded to the Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co Wicklow**

**Designated Liaison Person Response Form** – A confidential form used by the Designated Officer in dealing with an allegation of abuse

**Incident Form** – A form for reporting any incident but not an allegation of abuse requiring the attention of SU. **This form should be completed by the Team Leader a.s.a.p. and forwarded to the Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca Co Wicklow**

## **Scripture Union Republic of Ireland's Child Protection Policy Statement**

***“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these’ Matthew 19: 14 (NIV)***

1. Reflecting our aim to follow Biblical principles and recognising the value that Jesus gives to children, we in Scripture Union Republic of Ireland, seek to ensure the physical, emotional and spiritual well being and development of each child and young person in all our work with them. Within this context Scripture Union is committed to the protection of children and young people from all forms of abuse.
2. For the purposes of this policy Scripture Union Republic of Ireland accepts the working definitions of abuse detailed in *“Our Duty to Care” – The Principle and good practice for the protection of children and young people.*(Department of Health and Children booklet -- Section Five)
3. In line with the advice from *“Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children”* (DH&C 1999 Section 6.7.2) Scripture Union Republic of Ireland will ensure that a *Designated Officer* is appointed. The *Designated Officer* will refer all incidents of concern, disclosures or allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities and take responsibility for coordinating adherence to SU procedures should the disclosure of abuse or incidents of such abuse occur.
4. In order to promote best practice, Scripture Union Republic of Ireland has adopted and agrees with the definition of a child from the *Child Care Act, 1991* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* as being a person under 18.

**In order to carry out the above Policy, we in Scripture Union Republic of Ireland endeavour to:**

1. Ensure that in all matters relating to decisions regarding children and young persons who may or may not have been abused, the child or young person's welfare will be the paramount consideration.
2. Ensure that all SU staff and volunteers are made aware of and have accepted SU's policy and procedures on child protection prior to undertaking direct work with children or young people.
3. Have fully developed child protection procedures for the prevention of and responding to incidents or disclosures of abuse. (These will be reviewed regularly in the light of legislative and practice developments.)
4. Follow carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
5. Provide context-appropriate training to enable volunteers and staff to acquire knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, and SU's child protection policy and procedures. This will be at a level consistent with the responsibility held by each individual.
6. Report allegations of child abuse to the relevant Health Board.

7. Assist and co-operate fully with any Health or Police investigation or enquiries into any allegation of abuse involving staff, volunteers, children or young people involved with SU
8. Keep all information and written documentation concerning an investigation or enquiry confidential, in *a secure place* and sharing information only on a “need to know” basis.
9. Support staff and volunteers and any other involved parties during the process of any child protection investigation or inquiry as appropriate in each circumstance.
10. Make available on request our Child Protection Policy Guidelines and Procedures to parents of children involved in Scripture Union Activities.
11. This Policy is due to be reviewed in January 2021

# SECTION 1

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

(The following is taken from the “Our Duty to Care” (DH&C) booklet Section 5.)

**“Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes the child harm”.**

**There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one type of abuse.**

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. For children with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

## SECTION 2

# GUIDELINES FOR SU STAFF AND TEAM LEADERS

### CHILD PROTECTION AT SCRIPTURE UNION ACTIVITIES

Working on SU camps, holiday clubs and activities brings us into close contact with children and young people. They may speak to us of their fears and concerns. This will involve us being prepared to listen. As relationship develops, many children and young people will look upon you and the team as people to be trusted and may share with you or other team member aspects of their home life, including problems they are experiencing (e.g. fears and concerns, issues about bereavement, divorce, separation or bullying.)

On rare occasions more serious matters may arise and these may constitute a threat to a child's or young person's safety. While involved with Scripture Union as a volunteer you represent both SU and the wider church. It is therefore crucial that any situations of abuse or suspected abuse are properly handled. We all have a responsibility to act where a young person may be at risk of abuse.

**Parents have the primary responsibility for the care of their children.** Leaders at camps and events have a responsibility to be aware of and to show concern for children and families experiencing difficulties.

## WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

There are four main types of abuse. The following list includes some of the signs and symptoms:

1. **Physical Abuse** occurs when a carer deliberately inflicts an injury on a child.  
Symptoms may include:
  - Unexplained, recurrent injuries or burns
  - Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
  - Self-destructive tendencies
  - Fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched
  
2. **Neglect** occurs when a child, over a period of time, does not have his or her needs met. All children need love protection, security, food, warmth, education and physical care.  
Symptoms may include:
  - Constant hunger
  - Constant tiredness
  - Inadequate clothing
  - Poor personal hygiene
  
3. **Emotional Abuse** occurs when a child is verbally ill treated or made to feel unloved.  
Symptoms may include:
  - Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
  - Continual belittling of oneself
  - Over-reaction to mistakes

- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain
- Neurotic behaviour

4. **Sexual Abuse** occurs when an older child or adult uses a child for its own sexual gratification. Symptoms may include:

- Sexual knowledge, behaviour or use of language inappropriate for the child's age
- Regression to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking
- Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses or anorexia
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating

## What can SU staff, team leaders and volunteers do to protect themselves against allegations of abuse?

1. Staff Workers and Team Leaders should be familiar with and follow the guidelines given in 'Our Duty to Care' produced by the Department of Health and Children. Staff Workers and Team Leaders of residential activities should also be familiar with and follow the guidelines and procedures contained in this SU document which provides you with instructions on what actions you are required to take in these situations.
2. It is the policy of Scripture Union that no Staff Worker or Team Leader and no volunteer should ever be alone with children in isolation from others, other than in an emergency, unless this is absolutely necessary and the arrangements have been approved in advance by Scripture Union.
3.
  - a). On a residential activity at Ovoca Manor, sleeping accommodation for the Team Leader and volunteers will be separate from that used by the children and young people, but within easy reach. Separate sleeping accommodation will be provided for males and females. This will be supervised to ensure it is adhered to.
  - b). On a residential activity outside of Ovoca Manor, sleeping accommodation for the Team Leader and volunteers should, where possible, be separate from that used by the children and young people, but within easy reach. Where dormitory arrangements make this impossible, or when under canvas, there should be at least two adults with each group. Separate sleeping accommodation should be provided for males and females. This will be supervised to ensure it is adhered to.
4. No Team Leader or volunteer should be accepted on an SU team without completing the necessary forms and providing the necessary references (**Appendix 4**) and undergoing the vetting procedures as outlined in (**Appendix 4**)
5. All Team Leaders and volunteers should receive child protection training provided by Scripture Union. Each Team Leader and volunteer should be familiar with the contents of the Scripture Union Child Protection Policy, Guidelines and Procedures. Team Leaders should also give consideration to how these guidelines apply specifically in their own situation and communicate this clearly to the volunteers on their team.
6. Have a copy of the '*Scripture Union Child Protection Policy Guidelines and Procedures*' document available to be read.

## How might child abuse come to your notice?

This booklet deals with two separate ways in which a Team Leader may be aware of abuse:

- (a) An allegation made about a volunteer **during** an SU activity
- (b) A disclosure by a young person of alleged abuse which has occurred/is occurring **outside** the SU activity

## How Should The SU Staff, Team Leader Or Volunteer Respond?

### (A) Disclosure of abuse allegedly carried out by a volunteer during a Scripture Union Activity

Scripture Union Republic of Ireland has a well-established reputation for providing safe, caring activities for children and young people. Over its many years of operation SU has enjoyed the trust of parents and guardians in respect of the care of their children and young people. Each year hundreds of Christian volunteers are involved in this task. Systems to assess their suitability have been established, including obtaining confidential references.

At an SU activity all SU staff, team leaders and volunteers in respect of physical contact should exercise caution with children and young people. It is the responsibility of SU staff and team leaders to advise volunteers, for example at a pre-event briefing, of appropriate forms of interaction with children. For the purposes of these procedures abuse includes any inappropriate or sexualised physical contact; or other actions deemed to be an abuse of trust or power, which impact on the child's welfare.

### Step-by-Step Procedures

1. **Be calm and sensitive** to the specific situation. (There are no guidelines to fit every circumstance.)
2. **If the child has suffered a physical injury seek medical assistance** straight away. The care of the child is of first priority. Assess the child's physical condition carefully.
3. **The volunteer must be removed** immediately from contact with the child and others attending the event. Arrangements should be made for another volunteer to sit with the individual both ensuring that the individual does not have contact with any young people and to offer support during the interim period. Should the Team Leader know that a serious incident has occurred; arrangements should be made for the volunteer to leave the event location immediately.
4. Having secured the welfare and safety of the child and removed the volunteer at the centre of the allegation the Team Leader should, as a matter of urgency, **Contact the Designated Liaison Person and/ or The General Director.**

5. If it is agreed that the Team Leader should investigate the matter more fully by **talking with the child** concerned it is vitally important that he/she does so with at least one witness. Remember:
- (i) Do not ask leading questions or put words into the mouth of the child.
  - (ii) Under no circumstances collude in keeping the matter “**a secret**” between you and the child – explain that you have a responsibility to protect them and others.
  - (iii) Reassure him/her that the information will be treated as confidential.
  - (iv) It is important from the outset that you are open and honest.
  - (v) Information should not be communicated to any external persons, other than the General Director and the Designated Liaison Person
  - (vi) Make arrangement for the child to be cared for by another volunteer.
6. **Ensure that a written record is made using the DISCLOSURE REPORT FORM (see Appendix 1).** This may be needed at some future date. Any written record should be treated in the strictest confidence, written within **6 hours** of the event and very carefully looked after. This record should include details of the child (name, date of birth, address), of the concerns (disclosures, signs or concerns of abuse) of the person to whom the concerns became apparent, and of the date and place. This record should then be posted, as soon as is practicable; to the Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co. Wicklow and should be marked ‘*Strictly Confidential*’. Disclosure Report Forms (**See Appendix 1**) are available for this purpose from SU headquarters and you will receive a supply of these.
7. The General Director or the Designated Liaison Person may either travel to your location or arrange for another identified person to do so. The function of this visit will not be to speak to the child or young person, but to discuss the matter more fully with you and possibly the volunteer, to offer support and to co-ordinate any further action which might include other agencies.
8. In the unlikely event that external agencies are involved during the course of the event or activity, the Designated Liaison Person or the General Director, in consultation with you, will agree as to how this is to be handled. Any discussion with parents will be considered by the General Director or the Designated Liaison Person and if relevant, outside agencies.

## (B) Disclosure By A Young Person Of Alleged Abuse That Has Happened Outside Of A Scripture Union Activity

Children are best protected in a culture of good child-care where they are valued, cared for and provided with boundaries, yet suitable opportunities to explore and develop. The focus of Team Leaders should therefore be on promoting the welfare of children. Concerns about a child should be dealt with promptly and without over-reaction. Scripture Union is aware of potential difficulties and implications of any revealed situations and these procedures are designed to offer a measured response and provide appropriate support.

You as a Staff Member or Team Leader need to be prepared for dealing with a situation where abuse is suspected or has occurred. You are the key link between the team of volunteers, the child and the SU head office.

Children will often ask an adult to promise confidentiality before disclosing abuse. To them, this usually means they want you to promise not to tell anyone else. You must **NEVER** promise this, or to keep secrets, as the Team Leader you are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are also aware of this. SU recognises that children are entitled to expect privacy as well as protection.

### Step-by-Step Procedures

1. **Be calm and sensitive** to the specific situation. (There are no guidelines to fit every circumstance.) You may be experiencing a combination of shock, confusion and upset but it is very significant that the child felt able to tell you or a volunteer something so very personal.
2. **Take time** to allow the volunteer (if that is the case) to relate exactly what has been said and in what context, and what is the basis of the concern is.
3. **Check thoroughly** how the volunteer (if that is the case) handled the situation and what commitments have been made. Ensure the volunteer made the child aware that the information may be passed on to a further authority.
4. **Contact the General Director or the Designated Liaison Person** for guidance. Discuss with them the information you already have. Do not speak to the child yourself at this stage.
5. If it is agreed that the Team Leader should investigate the matter more fully by **talking with the child** concerned it is vitally important that he/she does so with at least one witness.
 

**Remember:**

  1. Do not ask leading questions or put words into the mouth of the child.
  2. Under no circumstances collude in keeping the matter “a secret” between you and the child – explain that you have a responsibility to protect them.
  3. Reassure him/her that the information will be treated as confidential.
  4. It is important from the outset that you are open and honest.
  5. Information should not be communicated to any external persons, other than the Designated Liaison Person and the General Director.
6. **Make arrangements** for the child to be cared for and encourage him/her to join in normal activities as much as possible with the volunteer monitoring welfare.

7. **Encourage** the child not to talk to others about what he/she has shared in confidence.
8. As soon as the interview with the volunteer (if that is the case) is over **complete the Disclosure Report Form (Appendix 1)**. This may be needed at some future date. Any written record should be treated in the strictest confidence and very carefully looked after. This record should include details of the child (name, date of birth, address), of the concerns (disclosures, signs or concerns of abuse) of the person to whom the concerns became apparent, and of the date and place. This form should then be posted, as soon as is practicable; to the Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co.Wicklow and should be marked '*Strictly Confidential*'. Disclosure Report Forms (See Appendix 1) are available for this purpose from SU headquarters and you will receive a supply of these.

## SECTION 3

### GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

#### CHILD PROTECTION AT SU CAMPS, HOLIDAY CLUBS, SCHOOLS AND YOUTH WORK & EVENTS

Scripture Union is fully committed to the welfare of the children and young people involved in our activities. Volunteers are expected to do all they can to protect those in their care from abuse. They are also expected to behave in such a way that no possible allegation of abuse can be made against any of them. The following are some guidelines.

1. You should treat children, and encourage them to treat each other, with dignity and respect at all times. You should never allow inappropriate language or behaviour to go unchallenged.
2. You should never be alone with children in isolation from others, other than in an emergency, without the approval of the Team Leader. Meetings with individual children should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other volunteers informed of the meeting.
3. You should never take children alone in a car on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents and of the Team Leader and you should be accompanied by another volunteer. An exception may be made in an emergency situation.
4. You should avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. There may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as when providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child. In all such cases, physical contact should take place only with the consent of the child and care should be taken to ensure that it does not take place in any way that might be considered indecent or might be misconstrued.

In extreme cases, it may be necessary to restrain a child physically to prevent injury or damage to property. In such circumstances, along with another volunteer to act as a witness, no more than the minimum necessary restraint should be used.

5. You should never meet or communicate with children outside organised activities without the knowledge and consent of the child's parents and of the Team Leader.
6. You should respect the children's right to privacy. Do not invade their privacy, for example, when they are changing, showering or using the toilet. Be sensitive to children who may be shy about communal changing or showering and make allowances for them.
7. **You should never:**
  - Engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, other than sports activities which are properly organised and supervised
  - Engage in sexually provocative games or activities
  - Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun
  - Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary for you to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parents and of the Team Leader. In an emergency situation that requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed.

In such situations it is important to ensure that you are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion. If possible, another volunteer of the same gender as the child should be present. Avoid any close/intimate physical contact with the child.

8. You should avoid any situation that may be open to misinterpretation. If there is any situation with which you are uncomfortable, you should consult your Team Leader about it.
9. It is not the role of volunteers to seek for and to identify symptoms of abuse. Nevertheless it is vital that no child in need of help is ignored.

If you have any concerns about a child being abused, or if any such disclosures are made to you, you must report these immediately to the Team Leader or, in exceptional circumstances, either to the Designated Liaison Person or the General Director. See Section 15 for contact details.

If a child discloses to you that he / she has been abused in any way adhere to the following guidelines.

If you have any further questions or concerns relating to Child Protection, please speak to your Team Leader or the Designated Liaison Person or the General Director.

DO	DO NOT
<p><b>Stay calm.</b></p> <p><b>Listen</b> and hear.</p> <p><b>Give</b> the child time to say what he/she wants.</p> <p><b>Reassure</b> the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling.</p> <p><b>Record</b> in writing what was said as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Report</b> to your Team Leader who must report to the General Director or Designated Liaison Person</p> <p><b>Complete</b> the Disclosure report form in consultation with your Team Leader</p> <p><b>Maintain</b> confidentiality at all times</p> <p><b>Continue</b> your relationship with the child as normally as possible</p>	<p><b>Panic.</b></p> <p><b>Ask</b> leading questions.</p> <p><b>Promise</b> to keep secrets.</p> <p><b>Inquire</b> into the details of the abuse.</p> <p><b>Make</b> a child repeat the story unnecessarily.</p> <p><b>Make</b> any physical examination of the child.</p> <p><b>Refer</b> to the matter again unless the child initiates the discussion</p> <p><b>Pursue</b> the matter any further</p>

## SECTION 4

### Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures For Designated Liaison Person & General Director

Even where there is only a suspicion, the welfare of the child and SU's reputation require that any matter be taken very seriously. Caution should be exercised when taking into account the subjective views of the Team Leader and the volunteers.

#### **(A) Allegation Made About A Volunteer During An SU Activity**

During the call from the Team Leader:

1. Ensure the Team Leader or volunteer has recorded all relevant details carefully, using the Disclosure Report Form **(Appendix 1)**
2. Ask him/her to post this to 'The Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co Wicklow' as quickly as possible, marked 'Strictly Confidential'
3. While obtaining the facts record them carefully using the Designated Liaison Person Report Form **(Appendix 2)**
4. The care of the child must be a priority and medical assistance must be obtained immediately where necessary. Advise the Team Leader that the child should not wash off any evidence or cover any physical signs of the abuse before the A&E staff deal with the injury.
5. Agree with the Team Leader a strategy for handling the situation and decide on the interim location and status of the alleged perpetrator.
6. Assess whether at this stage you or a delegated representative should travel to the location of the incident.
7. Agree further contact with the Team Leader.

Following the call from the Team Leader:

1. Review the facts carefully and objectively review the actions and decisions just taken.
2. Contact the child's parents or guardians, where appropriate. Advise them that their child has been involved in an incident, ensuring that it is clear that these are only allegations at this stage and that appropriate action has been taken. Advise them on the emotional and physical state of their child.
3. Avoid exposing the identity of the volunteer.

## **IF THE MATTER IS TO BE TAKEN FURTHER**

4. If in doubt contact the Duty Social Worker at Tusla to advise as to how to proceed.
5. Refer the information to Tusla, which covers the geographical location of the event. Provide all details, including a contact person/number for the event and advise if the alleged perpetrator remains on site. (the Designated Liaison Person should have a list of important telephone numbers)
6. It is assumed that Tusla will, if considered necessary, refer the case to the Garda Siochana.

## **(B) Disclosure of alleged abuse having occurred outside the SU event**

### During the call from the Team Leader

1. Ensure the Team Leader or volunteer has recorded all relevant details carefully on the Disclosure Form. Ask him/her to post this to you as quickly as possible marked 'Strictly Confidential'.
2. While obtaining the facts record them carefully using the Designated Liaison Person Report Form (Appendix 2)
3. The emotional and physical state of the child is of utmost importance. Consider the views of the child and discuss with the Team Leader if he/she needs any additional support they may require to handle the situation.
4. Contact the child's parents or guardians, *unless you consider so doing might be putting the child at risk*. Advise them that their child has been involved in an incident, ensuring it is clear that these are only allegations at this stage and that appropriate action has been taken. Advise them on the emotional and physical state of their child.
5. Provide support for the volunteer who received the disclosure and check with the Team Leader if he/she or the volunteer needs to talk again with the child for further details.
6. Agree further contact with the Team Leader if required.

### Following the call from the Team Leader

1. Review the facts carefully and objectively review the actions and decisions just taken.
2. The Designated Liaison Person must contact the General Director and if necessary seek further advice from the Duty Social Worker at Tusla.

If the matter is to be taken further:

1. If in doubt contact the Duty Social Worker at Tusla to advise as to how to proceed.
2. Contact Tusla. Provide all details, including a contact person/number for the event and advise if the alleged perpetrator remains on site. (the Designated Liaison Person should have a list of important telephone numbers).
3. It is assumed that Tusla will, if considered necessary, refer the case to the Garda Siochana.

## Section 5

# CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT SELECTION and VETTING of SU STAFF MEMBERS, TEAM LEADERS and VOLUNTEERS

1. The recruitment and selection of Team Leaders for all SU Camps and Holiday Clubs is a matter for the SU Camps Manager. The selected Team Leaders must be approved by the General Director and where possible by the SU Council.
2. The recruitment and selection of schools and retreat work volunteers is a matter for the relevant staff ministry managers and the General Director.
3. All Scripture Union volunteers and Team Leaders are required to complete an online application form at [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) giving details about themselves and their faith journey. **(see Appendix 4)**
4. All volunteers and Team Leaders must provide, on their application form, the names of two referees, one of whom can comment on their faith journey. **(see Appendix 4)**
5. All volunteers and Team Leaders must be Garda vetted by Scripture Union. Volunteers and Team Leaders from overseas or who have been living in Ireland or Northern Ireland for less than 2 years must provide additional police checks. **(See Appendix 4)**
6. The Vetting Officer must process the Garda vetting forms from volunteers and Team Leaders, check the application and reference forms and where necessary contact the referees for any further clarification or information.
7. The Vetting Officer will mark a volunteer or Team Leader as 'approved' once all the necessary steps have been completed (application form completed, references received and satisfactory Garda Vetting disclosure received).
8. If the Vetting Officer is in doubt about the suitability of a potential volunteer or Team Leader, he/she will bring it to the attention of the relevant SU staff members, the Team Leader (if appropriate) and the General Director.
9. The final decision to reject a volunteer or Team Leader is a matter for the General Director and he/she is not obliged to provide a reason for this decision.
10. In certain circumstances a refused application may be reviewed by the Vetting Officer after one year and a recommendation made to the General Director who will decide in the matter.

11. It is the responsibility of the SU staff ministry managers to ensure that all volunteers are 'approved' volunteers prior to any Scripture Union event.
12. The recruitment and appointment of all SU staff must be approved by the SU Council.
13. All SU staff who, during the course of their work, will have direct contact with children and young people will be required as a condition of employment to permit SU to carry out Garda Vetting prior to employment. In addition, any staff from overseas or who have been resident in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland for under two years will be required to provide additional background checks.
14. Scripture Union requires that Garda Vetting be completed again after three years. All Team Leaders, volunteers and relevant SU staff members will be required to go through the Garda vetting procedures every three years.

## Section 6

### Scripture Union's (SU) Social Networking Policy

It is important to note, that these guidelines will be beneficial in protecting not only our children and young people but also the many volunteers and more importantly, you as Team Leaders.

We would expect that all staff, Team Leaders and volunteers to keep their own personal Social Networking platforms with integrity, showing a lifestyle beyond reproach and practicing safe internet usage.

Teenage abuse is a growing concern; this is when older children abuse younger children or even their peers. It is very important that this is stopped as soon as it is discovered for the sake of both the victim and the abuser, for whom it could become a dangerous habit. The sooner you take action, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop and that the child will recover from their experiences.

#### Media and Children

In an increasingly complex world, the opportunities for child abuse are growing. Cyber bullying is very much on the increase and we have to be diligent in pursuing a standard of excellence to prevent such things from happening.

Both you as a leader, and your volunteers who care for children, need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse on Scripture Union Activities through the misuse of video, pictures and all forms of internet messaging. While the good use of such media can be beneficial, we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people.

#### Do's and Don'ts

1. When setting up a Social Network Platform for an SU activity it must be done in consultation with a member of SU Staff.
2. Specific camp pages must be "group" or "fan" pages. They cannot be personal sites.
3. Parental permission, via handwritten signature, must be obtained before taking any picture of a child/group of children. Each booking form has a tick box for this information. Please check every individual booking form.
4. Apart from the Team Leader's details, all volunteers' personal emails or postal addresses and phone numbers must not be divulged. Identity theft is paramount and a very real issue.
5. Youth workers are increasingly communicating with children/young people using email and text messaging. You as a volunteer must not give your number or details to any of the campers U18 years of age. Nor should you take theirs.
6. Do not 'add' or 'follow' any Under 18's on any Social Networking Platform. Under 18's, even if you know them, are still children, so unless you have parental permission you must NOT add or follow them. If they are a family friend, still get permission from the parent.
7. Do not add people you do not know. They can get onto other people's pages through your own and get young people's information.
8. Never include images or videos of children on your own Social Networking Platforms whilst on an SU Activity.

## Photographs

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches & parachurches must be very careful in their use of photographs, videos and webcams of clearly identifiable people. There are several issues to be aware of:

1. Parental permission (verbal or written) should be obtained from all people who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded. Parental permission is required for all under 18's.
2. Children and young people should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email or postal addresses and phone numbers.
3. Obtain a written and specific consent from parents/guardians or carers before using photographs on a website/advertising flyer/brochure.
4. Photographs of under 18's are to be only used publicly by Scripture Union. (with permission)
5. Carefully consider the location and pose.
6. Do not insist that the child participates.

## Personal Devices

With the increased use of personal devices, leaders and young people need to be aware of appropriate and inappropriate use.

Text and video bullying are on the rise in this country. Gossip and bullying via text can happen very quickly. This is why it may be a good idea to have rules about the use of personal devices on any given SU activity.

Leaders should also be aware of issues surrounding personal devices that can take photos, the use of camcorders etc., and they may wish to use the guidelines in relation to both the internet and photograph usage when formulating policy for your SU activity.

You should never allow a child to use one of your personal devices. Only in an emergency can a concession be made and only the device of the Team Leader of that SU activity should be used, where possible.

This is a policy that Scripture Union takes very seriously and wishes for all SU staff, Team Leaders, volunteers and youth workers to adhere to the rules and regulations therein.

## Section 7

### Guidelines for Scripture Union Camps

Scripture Union Camps adhere to the guidelines set out in Sections 2 and 3 of this document (Guidelines for SU Staff Workers and Team Leaders and Guidelines for Volunteers)

A Scripture Union camp is run by a Team Leader and a team of volunteers. The Team leader may be a volunteer or a SU staff member. All volunteers will only be accepted on a team after completion of the necessary volunteer application form, references and undergoing the vetting process as outlined in Section 5 and Appendix 4

Bullying is not tolerated on SU activities and SU camps adhere to the SU anti-bullying policy. (Section 14)

It is the responsibility of the Team Leader and SU Staff to ensure that all volunteers fully read and agree to adhere to Scripture Union's Child Protection Policy, Guidelines and Procedures document and sign a Declaration Form.

The Team Leader is responsible to ensure that a record is kept of all participants' attendance at their camp with the names, addresses and parent/guardian contact details as well as Parental Consent forms. These should be passed to the Camps Department as soon as camp is over.

The Team leader on camps should ensure that a daily team meeting is organised to allow any points of concern to be raised.

The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that in the event of an incident (not an allegation of abuse) at camp an Incident Report (see Appendix 3) form is completed and returned immediately after camp to the SU office

Where possible, Campers should not use the same bathrooms on the bedroom floors as the Team Leader and volunteers. In Ovoca Manor there should be enough bathrooms available to have assigned Team Leader/ volunteer and assigned camper bathrooms on bedroom floors. The toilets located on the main floor and basement are available for use for all.

If a Team Leader or volunteer needs to enter a child's bedroom they should knock first and announce who they are and wait confirmation of entry from the children. Team Leaders and volunteers should only go into a child's room when necessary and if possible there should always be another volunteer present. If another volunteer is not present the door should be left open.

All campers under 18 should have a signed parental/guardian consent form indicating that "In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above-named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner. In the event of a medical emergency, the Team Leader or a volunteer will endeavour to contact you as soon as possible using the contact telephone numbers given."

In the instance a child needs to return home early from camp, parents should ensure that they are able to collect their child or arrange for the child to be collected as soon as possible. If a child is thought to have a vomiting bug they will be sent home immediately in order to contain the spread of the illness.

Junior Leaders must be aged 16 or 17 and undergo the same volunteer application process as all SU volunteers. Junior leaders should not be on camps where campers are the same age as them and they are still classed as children for adult:child ratios as outlined by the HSE.

Junior leaders are classed as minors and therefore should only ever co-lead a group or activity with an adult leader.

## Section 8

# Guidelines Concerning Ovoca Manor Residences, Guests and Staff

### Staff Houses/Guests

Staff are permitted to have guests in their staff houses.

Staff houses are

- i. Woodview and Orchardview semi-detached houses between the Manor house and the sports hall
- ii. Annexe
- iii. Flat within the Manor building
- iv. Static caravan beside the sports hall

Staff planning to have guests staying (overnight) must inform the Centre Manager Team Leader. Should there be a group staying onsite the staff member who is on duty should also be informed.

It is not necessary to inform the Centre Manager Team Leader & duty manager for day visitors.

Guests should not enter the following areas unaccompanied by a staff member when there is a group using the site.

- i. The Manor House
- ii. Densmore Lodge
- iii. Sports hall
- iv. Campsite facilities (at campsite)
- v. Workshop (below annexe)

Guests should not enter the high ropes area at any time without staff supervision

Guests are free to be on the grounds of Ovoca Manor once their activity does not interfere with any group using the site.

Staff are expected to notify their guests of behavioural expectations in line with Scripture Union's Child Protection Policy.

### **Staff/Visitor I.D.**

Staff are to be recognisable at all times when a group is on site.

- i. Core staff must wear either an Ovoca Manor branded uniform or a name badge which will be supplied by the Ovoca Manor Centre Manager.
- ii. Casual staff such as cleaners & Ovoca Manor volunteers must wear a lanyard with staff clearly visible when a group is on site. These will be supplied by their line manager.
- iii. Freelance instructors must wear an appropriate form of identification based on the activity they are instructing, The activities manager is responsible for defining and providing appropriate identification.

A board with images/roles & names of core staff members is placed in a prominent area in the Manor & Densmore lodge so these staff are easily recognisable to groups.

## **Section 9**

# **Guidelines for Scripture Union School Retreats Held in Ovoca Manor**

### **Retreat leaders**

- All leaders on retreat must be Garda vetted and have completed the Scripture Union volunteer application process
- All leaders will have had child protection training and will have experience with working with the appropriate age group.

### **Retreat leaders conduct**

- Retreat leaders will not allow themselves to be in a situation which could be misconstrued by anyone
- Retreat leaders will not engage in any unnecessary physical contact with students.
- Retreat leaders will always speak respectfully to students and not engage in any 'banter' which might be offensive, hurtful, or otherwise unnecessary.

### **Necessary information needed from Schools (Day Retreat)**

This information is collected so as to create a safe, organised and well-facilitated retreat. The actions here are taken both to protect and inform Ovoca Manor and the schools themselves. This ensures the safety of the child is of utmost importance to the retreat program. This information is ideally received in advance.

- Numbers of students there on day of retreat
- Names of students
- Medical info for general safety of students (Ideally received one week in advance but must be on day of arrival)
- Dietary/Allergy info (A week in advance)
- Arrival and Departure (Received in advance)
- Names of teaching staff attending
- Any necessary additional information in regard of students coming

### **Necessary info needed from Schools (Overnight retreat)**

Information necessary for an overnight retreat is imperative for the protection of students, staff and teachers. This ensures the safety of all while creating a fun, organised and well run event. This means that all students and teachers are accounted for, knowledge necessary for cooking and for accommodation are properly in order and that specific needs of students are met and placed at the forefront. It also provides Ovoca Manor with the valuable information needed to safely facilitate the retreat.

- Number of students (Received in advance)
- List of names of students (Received in advance)

- Room number students and teachers are staying in (Received in advance)
- Medical information of students (Ideally received in advance but must be on day of arrival)
- Dietary/Allergy info (Received in advance)
- Arrival and Departure (Received in advance)
- Name of teaching staff attending (Received in advance)
- Any necessary additional information in regards of students coming (On arrival or in advance)

All students at Scripture Union retreats held in Ovoca Manor must adhere to the Scripture Union anti-bullying policy (Section 14)

## Section 10

# Guidelines for Scripture Union School Retreats Held Outside of Ovoca Manor

### Requirements from School

- The school should provide information about students i.e. numbers attending, behavioural concerns, physical and mental limitations, and any other particular information about the group
- The school should provide information about first aid availability and location.
- The school will provide a contact teacher for the day who can advise on all this. The teacher will also be available for any discipline issue which goes beyond the retreat team's remit.
- The school is responsible for the transport, supervision and any additional needs of the students
- The school must provide an adult to be present in a supervisory capacity at all times on the retreat.

### Retreat leaders

- All leaders on retreat must be Garda vetted and have completed Scripture Union's volunteer application process
- All leaders will have had child protection training and will have experience with working with the appropriate age group.

### Retreat leaders conduct

- Retreat leaders will not allow themselves to be in a situation which could be misconstrued by anyone
- Retreat leaders will not engage in any unnecessary physical contact with students.
- Retreat leaders will always speak respectfully to students and not engage in any 'banter' which might be offensive, hurtful, or otherwise unnecessary.

### Bullying

- No bullying whatsoever will be tolerated during retreats.
- Students found to be engaging in any form of bullying will be removed from the retreat and sent to the contact teacher.
- All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously by the retreat team and investigated immediately.

### First aid

- Retreat teams will always have at least one trained first aider, however the ultimate responsibility for first aid lies with the school.
- The retreat will carry out an initial assessment and then refer to the school's designated first aider

### **Requirements from the school**

In addition to the above requirements

- The school will advise on the use of the facility i.e. rooms to be used, location of materials needed for retreat, the use of projectors and other such items.
- The school should inform the retreat team of the arrangements for students getting home after the retreat.

## Section 11

### Guidelines regarding First Aid at Scripture Union Activities

#### At Ovoca Manor:

#### Responsibilities:

**Groups** are to bring their own first aid kits and shall have a dedicated first aider(s) with available means of transport to definitive medical care (doctors, hospitals etc.). If additional support is needed or if there is an emergency, Ovoca Manor staff and Instructors are to be available to manage a scenario and/or administer first aid.

**Ovoca Manor** staff and Instructors are the first authority in administering first aid when they are leading activities, programmes or in other leadership roles. They also are to be available to manage a scenario and/or administer first aid if needed or in an emergency.

**Duty Manager** is a shared responsibility by the OM staff. When a group is on site the nominated manager is to monitor the duty managers phone at all times and to be available to manage a scenario or administer first aid should the need arise.

**Activities Manager** is to be responsible for the stocking and managing of the Ovoca Manor first aid kits & AED + Cardiac Arrest Kit.

**Camps Manager** is to be responsible for the stocking and managing of the SU Camps first aid kit.

#### Staff & First Aid:

Due to the remote location of Ovoca Manor we must make sure that adequate first aid is available. We are to ensure:

- All freelance & full-time staff hold valid first aid certificates relevant to their role. Instructors must hold a minimum of the Remote Emergency Care Level 2 or equivalent. Other staff may hold an Occupational First Aid Qualification or higher.
- AED training will be undertaken by the core staff (managers, coordinators, team leaders, office administrators).
- That a first aider is on site and available when the facilities are occupied.

**First Aid Kits:** Are available in the following locations:

1. All activity staff (freelancers & casual workers) are to carry waterproof first aid kits when working with a group with the exception being when an instructor is operating solely on the linear high-ropes course as there is a large first aid kit there.
2. Larger first aid kits are to be stored in the following locations:
  - An accessible location in the Office
  - The bushcraft knife bag

- The high-ropes shed next to the linear course
- The SU camps store room

### **Administering First Aid**

- All leaders should ensure they have a means of getting help in an emergency.
- No team member should ever be alone with a child in isolation from others, other than in an emergency (and only if necessary) or if the arrangements have been approved in advance by Scripture Union.
- Once first aid is administered an incident report form must be filled out soon afterwards and handed to the activities manager.
- First Aid kits must be restocked and checked following an incident.

### **Transport**

If transport is needed to definitive medical care:

- Private groups should have & use their own transport.
- During a school retreat an OM staff member with a valid first aid qualification with a teacher will transport and accompany a student to hospital.
- During a SU camp, 2 volunteers either comprising of OM's Staff **or** Camp volunteers will transport the child
- In an emergency or if necessary an OM staff member with an additional adult will provide transport for a private group or SU group.

*No volunteer or staff member should ever be alone with a child in isolation from others, other than in an emergency (and only if necessary) or if the arrangements have been approved in advance by Scripture Union.*

### **Contacts & Response**

- Emergency Contact list is to be made available to groups & staff, with additional advice such as the hospitals that provide a children's emergency department.
- Duty Manager's Phone to be monitored at all times when there is a group on site.
- List of First Aid Qualified persons is to be recorded in the staff qualifications folder.
- Emergency action plan is to be put in place and staff are to undertake training in the implementation of this annually.

**Minimisation of risk & accidents:** the following measures are to be followed to ensure the safe delivery of activities and programmes:

- Risk assessments must be completed & available to staff and volunteers for all Ovoca Activities (Indoors & Outdoors). They are to detail the steps taken to minimise the risk or remove the risk altogether.
- Standard operating procedures are in place for all adventure activities. Instructors are to read and implement these procedures to ensure the safe operation of adventure activities.
- All staff, instructors, volunteers etc. must be Garda Vetted.
- Staff are to be trained in Child Protection.
- Instructors are to be provided with and adhere to Scripture Union's child protection policy.
- "Near miss recording" is continually undertaken by activity staff, and it is to be reviewed frequently by the activities manager. The aim is to spot a pattern or hazard and eliminate it before someone gets hurt. It is also useful in developing accurate risk assessments and amending standard operating procedures.

## **Outside Ovoca Manor**

### **Camps**

All camps are to bring their own first aid kits and shall have a dedicated first aider(s) with available means of transport to definitive medical care (doctors, hospitals etc.)

### **Retreats in school**

The school is responsible for the first aid care of their students

### **Retreats outside of school premises**

All schools are to bring their own first aid kits and shall have a dedicated first aider(s) with available means of transport to definitive medical care (doctors, hospitals etc.).

## Section 12

### Fire procedures in Ovoca Manor and Densmore Lodge

All our fire detection systems and first intervention tools (extinguishers) are contracted and checked by:

Fire Sentry Systems LTD  
Guardian Fire and Security  
Unit 1, Woodbine Business Park  
New Ross Co Wexford

On arrival, each group is given the Duty manager's telephone number (087 0549078)

**Before the first meeting, a safety talk is given to each group staying overnight. This talk includes:**

- The obligation for the group leaders to call the Duty Manager in case of fire alarm.
- The obligation for everyone to evacuate the building in all cases and as soon as possible (day or night) in an orderly manner when the siren sounds.
- The importance of not taking any belongings when exiting the building other than shoes and weatherproof clothing.
- The importance of not going back inside the building for any reasons.
- The fact that in all cases, a fire alarm is not over until an all clear is given by the Manor staff.
- The meeting points:  
Manor: End of car park near playground  
Densmore: Top of Densmore Lodge driveway
- Asking the guests to look at the emergency exit posters in their room (Manor).
- For the group leaders: The importance to ensure that all their members are accounted for at all time.

**Duty manager tasks:**

The Duty Manager (DM) should have the duty phone on him/her at all time.

**In case of fire alarm:**

- The DM will be called through the duty phone and will attend the building affected without delay.
- The DM will check the Fire Panel, then go to the zone affected and check the area.
- In case of containable fire, the DM will start to battle the fire with extinguishers.
- In case of out of control fire, the DM will call the fire brigade A.S.A.P.
- In case of false alarm, the DM will call an all clear and reset the fire panel

Each member of staff should be adequately trained to deal with fire alarms and to use the fire extinguishers. A training session will be organised once a year.

These procedures will be checked and reviewed on an annual basis

## Section 13

# Aims, Beliefs and Working Principles of Scripture Union

## Aims

Working with the churches, Scripture Union aims

- a. to make God's news known to children, young people and families  
and

- b. to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer.

So that they may come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in Christian Maturity and become both committed church members and servants of a world in need.

*Scripture Union pursues these aims through a variety of ministries around the world in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ in reliance on the Holy Spirit.*

## Activities

Scripture Union activities include programmes for systematic Bible Reading, children's missions or holiday clubs, families ministries, residential holiday activities and camps, work in schools, training activities, youth work, the publishing and distribution of Christian literature and audio-visuals and residential groups and school retreats at Ovoca Manor.

## Statement of Belief

As the Scripture Union family throughout the world, we accept and proclaim the historic truths of the Christian faith, including the following:

### a) God and the human race

We hold that that the Lord our God is one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that he fulfils his sovereign purposes - in creation, revelation, redemption, judgement, and the coming of his kingdom- by calling out from the world a people united to himself and to each other in love.

We acknowledge that though God made us in his own likeness and image, conferring on us dignity and worth and enabling us to respond to him, we now are members of a fallen race; we have sinned and come short of his glory.

We believe that the Father has shown us his holy love in giving Jesus Christ, his only Son, for us, while through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to his wrath and condemnation; and has shown his grace by putting sinners right with himself when they place their trust in his Son.

We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God; as truly human, born of the virgin Mary; as Servant, sinless, full of grace and truth; as only Mediator and Saviour, dying on the cross in our place, representing us to God, redeeming us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin; as Victor over Satan and all his forces, rising from death with a glorious body, being taken up to be with his Father, one day returning personally in glory and judgement to establish his kingdom.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement; who makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that they must now turn

to Christ in repentance, and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ; who through the new birth makes us partake in the life of the risen Christ, and who is present within all believers, illuminating their minds to grasp the truth of Scripture, producing in them his fruit, granting to them his gifts, and empowering them for service in the world.

### **b) The Scriptures**

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are God-breathed, since their writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; hence are fully trustworthy in all that they affirm; and are our highest authority for faith and life.

### **c) The Church and its Mission**

We recognise the Church as the body of Christ held together and growing up in him; both as a total fellowship throughout the world, and as the local congregation in which believers gather.

We acknowledge the commission of Christ to proclaim the Good News to all people, making them disciples, and teaching them to obey him; and we acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbours, resulting in service to the church and society, in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows, in proclaiming liberty from every kind of oppression; and in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world, until he comes again.

*The Scripture Union International Council at Harare, Zimbabwe adopted this statement in May 1985.*

## **Working Principles**

We seek to exercise the ministries God has given us in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and in reliance on the Holy Spirit. We therefore aim to follow Biblical principles in all that we do and to emphasize the vital importance of prayer.

We approach our work in the following ways:

### **1 Evangelism and Teaching**

- a. We are committed to teaching basic Christian truths as an essential part of evangelism.
- b. We aim to express God's Good News to children, young people and families, not only in words, but also by building caring relationships with them.
- c. We make every effort to communicate the Gospel in contemporary language and in ways appropriate to the context.
- d. We emphasise that faith should always lead to action and to growth in Christian character and service.
- e. We acknowledge that the Gospel has inescapable social dimensions and therefore it involves us in service to others and a concern for social justice. In view of our specific aims, we have a special responsibility for children and young people who are poor, deprived or exploited.
- f. We encourage children to follow Christ in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and background, taking special account of their home and family situation and level of maturity.
- g. We believe that the new birth is a profound supernatural experience, brought about by the Holy Spirit. So we invite people to respond to what He is doing in their lives and guard against calling for superficial responses.

- h. We are committed to working in ways that reflect our beliefs, in appropriate cooperation with organisations and institutions, such as schools, that welcome us.

## **2 Bible Ministries**

- a. In encouraging people to meet God through the Bible, we emphasize the significance of the Bible as a whole.
- b. We encourage people to read it so that they come to repentance, faith, obedience to God and worship.
- c. We prepare systematic programmes and materials for children, young people and adults, appropriate to their age and situation.
- d. We are committed to Bible reading which is thoughtful, prayerful and regular and which enables the reader to respond to the message of the whole Bible rather than to isolated passages. We are concerned to interpret the text in a way, which enables people, in their contemporary situations, to hear for themselves the message of the Bible from its original context.

## **3 Churches**

- a. We recognise our part in God's worldwide family and seek ways of working positively with a variety of churches.
- b. We encourage people who come to faith through our ministries to take part in the life of a local church fellowship

## **4 Equality and Unity**

- a. We believe that all human beings are of equal worth in the sight of God and that all those who put their faith in Christ are one in Him.
- b. We are therefore committed to exercising our ministries without discrimination as to race, colour, gender, language or social position.
- b. We recognise that Scripture Union worldwide is a family of national movements in which resources can be shared in a responsible way on a basis of trust.
- c. We express our Christian commitment in varied and creative ways since we are drawn from diverse backgrounds.

## **5 Volunteers and Staff**

- a. We work with a relatively small number of staff that recruit, motivate, train, equip and support a larger number of volunteers with whom they work in partnership.
- b. We believe that the Holy Spirit confers gifts of leadership on Christians of all nations without discrimination. So we encourage national leadership of Scripture Union movements, while recognising the contribution of those from other countries.
- c. We, as staff and volunteers, from a variety of backgrounds, are united in our commitment to the aims, beliefs and working principles of Scripture Union.
- d. We agree that, while we are involved in Scripture Union activities, we will handle controversial issues, such as baptism, spiritual gifts and church order, in ways that promote harmony.

## **6 Biblical Standards**

- a. We aim to follow Biblical principles in all that we do. This includes, for example, our administration, our publicity and the way we care for our staff and volunteers.
- b. We seek to honour God in carrying out our ministries, by combining prayerful reliance on him with the use of the best available means, maintaining the highest standards possible.

- c. We believe in praying for financial support, in dependence on God, and telling the Christian public of our needs, without distorting the truth or using undue pressure.

# Section 14

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Full Compliance

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, Scripture Union has **adopted the following anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the organisation's overall code of behaviour.

### Key Principles of Best Practice

Scripture Union recognizes the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- **A positive culture and climate which:**

is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;

encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;

promotes respectful relationships, empathy and resilience across the retreats and camps;

Effective leadership and team-wide approach

A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)

Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying while on camps, retreats and weekends;

Effective supervision and monitoring of young people and children

Support for staff

On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

### Introduction

The aim of Scripture Unions activities is to create a safe, fun and inclusive environment for children and young people to learn about faith. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of learning. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of young people, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

This policy will include a comprehensive set of procedures in how to address bullying and how to solve the issue. It will look at the definition and types of bullying. The impact and indicators of bullying behaviour associated with bullying and key principles of best practice. The following pages will address this further.

## Definition and Types of Bullying

### Definition

- In the context of these procedures, bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.
- The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:
  - Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;
  - Cyber-bullying;
  - Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging do not fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the SU's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a child or young person.

### Types

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion** and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored.
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.
- **Name-calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats

## Impacts & Indicators of Bullying Behaviour

### Impacts

- Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is

happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.

- Children and young people who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied.
- There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Children and young people who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression.

### **Indicators**

- Indicators of bullying may include anxiety, unexplained changes in behaviour, distress, unexplained bruising or cuts, damage to clothes or personal property, missing possessions and a reluctance to say what may be troubling the child or young person in question.

### **Who is Responsible For Doing What**

The Team Leader or Staff member who is in charge of the Scripture Union activity is responsible for investigating and dealing with bullying.

Volunteers should report any suspected bullying to the Team Leader or Staff Member in charge.

The Team Leader or Staff Member in charge will investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour at SU activities.

### **Our Education and Prevention Strategies**

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by Scripture Union are as follows:

### **Our Child-Friendly Version of the ISPCC Shield Statements**

- Bullying can happen, anywhere.
  - We at Scripture Union have thought about this. We have a plan to limit and stop bullying.
  - We do what we say in our plan. We work together to stop bullying.
  - We at Scripture Union love and appreciate that we're all different and equal.
  - 5. We all keep our eyes and ears open for bullying and we take action to stop it.
  - 6. We all keep learning how best to respond to bullying.
  - 7. We look for the good in everyone. We aim to build each other up and never knock anyone down.
  - 8. Any child attending a Scripture Union activity can talk to a trusted adult at Scripture Union about their feelings and worries. Adults will listen to and support every child.
9. All children and young people, including bystanders can report any bullying behaviour to any adult at Scripture Union.

## **Our Procedures Regarding Bullying Behaviour**

- a. As failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or a deterioration of bullying, the Staff and Team encourage children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior. This can be with any staff member or team member. This is a “telling community” .
- b. An Incident of bullying will be noted and recorded by the Staff Member or Team Leader.
- c. The Incident will be investigated – what, who, when, where, why?
- d. An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practical, the relationships.
- e. The Staff and Team Leaders will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and as to how it can be resolved.
- f. If a group is involved, they will be met both individually and as a group.
- h. Children/Young People who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- i. Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it, if necessary, with the Staff member / Team Leader with a view to solving the problem. If the bullying continues, arrangements may be made for the child or children responsible to leave the Scripture Union activity.
- j. The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Action taken will be recorded.

### **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

Scripture Union confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible on SU activities.

## Section 15

### **COLLABORATIVE EVENTS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

Scripture Union will ensure that it only works with organisations which have their own Child Protection Policy and are responsible for the recruitment and management of their own staff/volunteers, including meeting the legal requirements of Garda Vetting.

In the case of a collaborative event, Scripture Union may ask to view other organisations' Child Protection Policies.

Scripture Union is only responsible for the recruitment and vetting process of their own staff and volunteers.

In the event of a collaborative residential event, Scripture Union reserves the right to ask other organisations for confirmation of the Garda Vetting of their staff members and volunteers.

## Section 16

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**SCRIPTURE UNION IRELAND HEAD OFFICE:**

4 Idea House, Killarney Road Business Park, Bray, Co Wicklow: Phone: 01-2869098

**GENERAL DIRECTOR:**

Jim Donnan: (087-6859945).

**DESIGNATED LIASON PERSON:**

Mairead Wynne: Ovoca Manor (0402-35369) mobile (086-8776733).

**VETTING OFFICER:**

Liana Forsyth: (01-2869098)

**TUSLA:**

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

[info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)

(01 – 7718500)

# Appendix 1 DISCLOSURE REPORT FORM

The volunteer (unless under 18 years age –see note below) or Team Leader must use this form to record details of any suspicions of abuse you may have or any disclosures of abuse, which may have been made to you by a child during a Scripture Union event.

**Complete This Form And If Necessary Contact The Designated Liaison Person For Advice On 0402-35369 or 086-8776733**

**N.B. All Forms Must Be Returned ASAP To The Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co Wicklow Marked ‘Strictly Confidential’**

Name of volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of this report \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Camp/Mission Leader(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ D. O. B. \_\_\_\_\_

Age of child \_\_\_\_\_ MALE  FEMALE

Quiet time group \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the basis of your concern (e.g., observation of marks, behaviour, language and / or verbal disclosure to you or someone else). Include times and dates of any specific incidents where possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has the child been spoken to?                      Yes    ·    No    ·

If so, what was said? (**Record exactly in words used by child or young person**)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Have the parents been spoken to?                      Yes     ·     No     ·

If so, what was said?

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Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?    Yes     ·     No     ·

If so, record details:

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Action taken by team leader or small group leader:

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**NOTE:** This form **must not** be completed by a person **under 18 years**. If the allegation was made to a volunteer under 18 years state the name of the person that this information was taken by. Also if it is the case that the person to whom the allegation was made is under 18 years the Designated Liason Person should inform the volunteer’s parents of the process being followed.

**IF PERSON TO WHOM ALLEGATION WAS MADE IS UNDER 18 YEARS STATE:**

HIS/HER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILS OF PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TEL NO \_\_\_\_\_

NATURE AND EXTENT OF CONTACT WITH CHILD. \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Volunteer)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Team Leader)

## Appendix 2

### STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

## DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON REPORT FORM

### The Initial Call Received

Date & Time	
Event/Camp Name	
Team Leader Name & Contact Details	
Volunteer	
Volunteer	

### 1: Young Person's Details

Name	
Address	
Age/D.O.B	
Male or Female	
Parent's Name and contact details	

### 2: Nature of disclosure/allegation (in words used by young person)

### 3: Discuss with the Team Leader and note the following issues

<p>Disclosure/allegation <b><u>made to:</u></b></p>	
<p>Who is the allegation <b><u>about?</u></b></p>	
<p><b>Details:</b></p> <p>Time of disclosure/allegation</p> <p>Group or 1-to-1</p> <p>Others present</p>	
<p><b>Context:</b></p> <p>What led up to the disclosure/allegation, in what context was it made?</p>	
<p>What was said to the young person by volunteer receiving disclosure/allegation?</p>	

<p>What was said to the young person about how the information would be handled?</p>	
<p>What views (if any) did the young person express about how the information should be dealt with? (and to whom were these expressed?)</p>	
<p>Does the young person require medical care?</p> <p>If yes, details of injuries:</p>	<p><b>[YES] [NO]</b></p> <p><b><u>Important Note:</u></b> <b>Any practitioner must be advised of the allegation prior to medical treatment</b></p>
<p>Details of any additional action taken or discussion which has taken place at the event.</p> <p>(for example, has the young person been spoken to by anyone other than the original volunteer who received the disclosure?)</p>	

Who else at the event is aware of the disclosure/allegation?	
In what context?	

**4: Other relevant information (identify source)**

Information	Source

**5: If an allegation is made about a Volunteer:**

What is the current Status/Location of Volunteer?	
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<p>Return contact agreement:</p> <p>Who? When? How?</p>	
<p>Arrangements for dealing with young person meantime</p>	
<p>Other relevant Matters from call</p>	



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

NAME (Block Capitals) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3

### INCIDENT REPORT FORM SCRIPTURE UNION – REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INCIDENT REPORT</b> <b>(Not An Allegation Of Abuse)</b></p>
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NAME OF EVENT \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF EVENT \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM LEADER/S \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD/S:  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TEL NO \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED:**

(child/s names, ages, nature of incident, leaders or volunteers involvement etc – use a separate sheet if necessary.  
Please give names of all children and leaders involved with incident.)

**DESCRIBE WHAT ACTION WAS TAKEN:**

(by both children and volunteers and any medical attention; if the parents were contacted or what follow up took place etc.)

**WHO WITNESSED INCIDENT:**

(volunteers, children & contact details)

**WHO WAS THE INCIDENT REPORTED TO:**

(Wardens; SU Office; parents/guardians, Doctor)

**WAS MEDICAL ATTENTION GIVEN AND BY WHOM:**

(name of nurse or doctor and detail any medical attention or medication given etc.)

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4

### Scripture Union Garda Vetting and Volunteer Application Process

Currently, all Scripture Union volunteers are required to complete an online application form giving details about themselves and their faith journey. Each applicant must also provide details of two referees and be Garda Vetted by Scripture Union.

#### **References:**

Each applicant must provide details of two referees, at least one of whom can comment on their faith journey. A standard Scripture Union template reference is sent by email to each referee to complete.

Scripture Union reserves the right to request further references at their discretion.

#### **The Garda Vetting Process:**

Garda Vetting is a vital part of the application process. It is a two-stage process.

##### **Stage 1**

Each applicant must firstly complete an NVB1 Garda Vetting application form.

This form is available to be downloaded and printed from our website or else can be emailed directly to the applicant.

Detailed guidelines are issued with the NVB 1 form.

Applicants fill in the form by hand and post it back to the Scripture Union Bray office.

Applicants who are Over 18 must also include photocopies of documents which

- i) Verify their identity and
- ii) Provide proof of their current address

Each document is awarded a score by the Vetting Bureau and the documents provided must total at least 100 points collectively for the form to be advanced to the next stage.

For example, an applicant could provide a photocopy of their passport (80 points) and bank statement with current address (35 points) to meet the above criteria.

The photocopies to be sent to Scripture Union must be **endorsed/certified** by a member of the Scripture Union staff or Scripture Union Council. Alternatively, the photocopies can be endorsed/certified by a member of An Garda Síochana at any Garda station or by the school that the volunteer attends.

Endorsement or certification of photocopies is simply presenting the original document and the photocopy of the document to one of the people mentioned in the above paragraph and asking them to sign and date the photocopy to be sent to Scripture Union.

Applicants who are **Under 18** must provide the completed NVB 1 form along with **one** form of identity verification. This could be a photocopy of a birth certificate, a passport or a letter from their school principal. Photocopies must be endorsed/ certified as described above.

The parent or guardian of an applicant aged **Under 18** must complete an **NVB 3** form, giving their consent for the Garda Vetting to take place. The **NVB 3** form is available on our website or can be emailed to the applicant.

Children aged Under 16 cannot be Garda Vetted.

The date of consent provided by an applicant on an NVB 1 form has a life span of six months. We can process an NVB 1 form up to five months after it is signed by the applicant as we need to allow a few weeks for the form to reach the Garda Vetting Bureau and be processed.

## **Stage 2**

Scripture Union staff receive the NVB 1, identity verification, proof of address (and NVB 3 form if required) in the post, process the details and pass the relevant information onto the National Youth Council.

The National Youth Council pass on the applicant's details to the Garda Vetting Bureau.

The Garda Vetting Bureau issue an email to the applicant with a detailed online form to complete, including all the addresses they have lived at since they were born. This online form expires after 30 days and the process must begin again if the online form is not completed.

The Garda Vetting Bureau then issue a disclosure to the National Youth Council who pass it onto Scripture Union. The applicant also receives a disclosure by email at the same time.

Please note that it can take up to six weeks, from the date of the application being processed, for the Garda Vetting Disclosure to be issued.

### **Volunteers from outside of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland:**

Scripture Union requires applicants residing outside of the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland to provide a current police check or 'safe to work with children' check from their country of residence, in addition to the regular Garda Vetting process.

### **Volunteers living in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland for under 2 years:**

Scripture Union reserves the right to ask applicants residing in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland for under two years for evidence of background checks or 'safe to work with children' checks from previous countries of residence, in addition to the regular Garda Vetting process.

### **Expiry of Garda Vetting:**

Garda Vetting will expire after three years and Scripture Union requires all volunteers to repeat the Garda vetting process to continue volunteering at Scripture Union events.

### **Garda Vetting Forms:**

**NVB1 and NVB3 Garda Vetting Invitation Forms, along with guidelines, are available to download from the Scripture Union website [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie)**