

# Loreto Sisters

## Guidance on Risk / Hazard Assessment for Children

The following is the guidance from the NBSCCC on Risk / Hazard Assessment. Please read this guidance and complete the attached form prior to the commencement of any Loreto activity involving children.

### **Introduction:**

Risk/ hazard assessment is an important part of working with children. It assists with managing both health and safety issues, and the welfare of children. Part 2, Article 11 of the Children First Act 2015 requires all services who work with children to have a child safeguarding statement. The core component of this statement is risk assessment. This should focus on any risks of harm to a child that could occur while availing of or in attendance in your service. As adults we assess hazards throughout our lives, but when working with children it is important to consider potential hazards that may lead to risk to children and to the adults who work with them.

Consideration of how to control or manage risks is critical. It is important to identify acceptable levels of risk, as it may not be possible to eliminate all risk, however every effort must be made to mitigate against its adverse effects. If you do not feel equipped to identify or address a risk locally consult with the Safeguarding Committee. Whilst this guidance is concerned primarily with risks associated with failure to follow effective safeguarding practice, it must be understood alongside the health and safety regulation and policy of the Loreto Sisters.

Whilst the focus on risk assessment should be on groups of children with whom you are working, as opposed to the physical venue, if a problem with the venue is discovered during the course of assessing (e.g. broken glass, electrical cabling) this needs to be raised with the appropriate authority in charge of health and safety for the Loreto Sisters.

### **What does the term 'risk' mean:**

A risk is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons. In the Republic of Ireland 'risk' in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of harm to children as defined in the *Children First Act (2015)* – (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or (b) the sexual abuse of a child whether by a single act, omission or circumstance or by a series or combination acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.

In Northern Ireland Co-Operating to Safeguard Children defines 'harm' as *ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse, forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical and / or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.*

In the context of the Loreto Sisters this may include the following examples:

- failure to comply with effective safeguarding practice, such as lack of supervision ratios or consent.
- medical hazards, such as failure to take medication, or inappropriate intimate care practice.
- physical hazards, such as dangerous electrical cabling, or proximity to water.

### **Assessing risks:**

For each activity that involves ministry with children, those involved in leading the ministry should meet with the local community leader and any relevant safeguarding personnel and complete the following steps:

- 1) Identify the hazards: look for hazards in the nature of the activity, and in the place where you are holding the activity. Areas to be considered include:
  - Have all staff and volunteers been recruited properly? (including vetting, reference checks etc).
  - Have all staff and volunteers been trained in safeguarding and in working with children?
  - Does everyone understand their role?
  - Does everyone know what to do if they are concerned about a child?

- Have appropriate supervision ratios been put in place??
- Have children and their carers been informed of rules for the activity and given their consent to participate?
- Have practical considerations been assessed for risk – e.g., where are toilets, washing and changing facilities?
- What security measures have been considered – e.g. access to the venue by non- participants?
- Will ICT be used in the activity? Who has access and how is it monitored?
- Has consideration been given to the safe collection of children after the activity?
- Has everyone been briefed on the content of the risk assessment and what policies to follow in the event that a concern is identified?
- Does everyone know who the DLP is and how to contact them? It may be helpful to consider these risks in stages of the activity, for example, what are the risks in advance of the activity, on arrival, during the activity and after

2) Identify the controls that need to be put in place to limit the risk.

3) Identify who is responsible for managing the risk and the correct implementation of the associated procedures. This should include those directly responsible for the children’s ministry and those with specific responsibilities for child safeguarding with the Loreto Sisters.

4) These steps should be used to complete the risk assessment form. **The leaders of each local activity involving children’s ministry are required to identify risks and procedures relevant to its own situation.** Some examples are given in the following template. Given the similarities that exist across certain activities, whatever the location, it is likely that these examples may be appropriate to many situations. **However, it is important that those completing a risk assessment keep the focus on their own situation and even where identified risks are the same, consider whether the needed controls may differ based on the local context of the activity.** The risk assessment must be available to all. Leaders of activities with children must have a copy and be aware of its contents.

### **Reviews:**

Risk should be periodically reviewed, especially in circumstances when a venue changes, a new activity takes place or the members of the group change. If no new risks are present, **a review of the risk assessment should take place at least annually.**

## Risk / Hazard Assessment Form

This form will be held in accordance with the data protection policy of the Loreto Sisters. The data entered will be used only for the purposes indicated on the form. This hazard assessment is part of the child safeguarding statement which can be accessed on [www.loreto.ie](http://www.loreto.ie)

- This risk assessment seeks to identify any potential for harm, as defined in the Children First Act 2015/Co-operating to Safeguard Children in Northern Ireland to a child while participating in activities organised by or on behalf of the Loreto Sisters and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage identified risks.
- It will be reviewed at least annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a new risk identified or any other relevant change.
- ‘Risk’ in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of harm to children as defined in the Children First Act (2015)/Co-operating to Safeguard Children in Northern Ireland.

## Loreto Sisters Risk / Hazard

Name of activity: .....

Duration of activity: .....

Date of risk assessment: .....

Person completing the risk assessment (block letters): .....

Role of person completing the risk assessment: .....

Identified Risk	Control Procedure in place to Manage Risk	Action by Whom	Action by When	Done Y/N
Risk of harm from leaders/volunteers.	Safe recruitment procedures. Vetting. Codes of behaviour for leaders/volunteers. Training on all aspects of safeguarding.	Local community leader.  Local community leader to ensure activity leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training for position.	Prior to starting in position.	Yes  No
Inadequate supervision may result in harm to children from adults, other children and environmental factors.	Adequate supervision in accordance with supervision guidelines. Adults and children to be aware of Codes of Behaviour. Attendance register to be completed on all occasions. Training for personnel – full day or information session as appropriate.  Knowledge of accident/incident policy and procedures. Knowledge of Health and Safety Policy. First Aid Provision accessible during activity.	Leader of activity.  Local community leader to ensure activity leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training for position.  Leader of activity.	Prior to start of activity and during activity.  Prior to start of activity.  Prior to start of activity and during activity.	Yes  No

Identified Risk	Control Procedure in place to Manage Risk	Action by Whom	Action by When	Done Y/N
Absence of parental/child consent for participation.	Joint Parent/Guardian and Child Consent Form to be completed.	Leader of activity.	Prior to start of the activity.	Yes No
Absence of parental/child consent for media purposes.	Media Permission Form to be completed. Adherence to guidelines on technology, photography, texting and email, CCTV and webcam usage by both leaders/volunteers and children.	Leader of activity.	Prior to start of the activity.	Yes No
ICT. Access to use of ICT (info & communication technology)  Possibility of inappropriate content online, cyber bullying.	Children not allowed to use phones or other ICT applications while participating in an activity.  Parental consent for any use of ICT equipment.  Adherence to Computer Policy and Internet Guidelines.	Leader of activity.	Prior to start of activity and during activity.	Yes No
Access to activity by non - participants and/or shared facilities.	Adequate supervision including guidance on 1:1 contact with children. Adherence to recruitment procedure. Adherence to Code of behaviour for leaders/volunteers and children. Adherence to anti-bullying policy. Use of Complaints Procedure as required.	Leader of activity and volunteers.	Prior to start of activity and during activity.	Yes No
Behaviour of participants.	Adherence to Code of Behaviour for Children. Adherence to Anti- bullying policy. Appropriate supervision ratios in place.  Training of leaders and volunteers.	Leader of activity.  Local community leader to ensure activity leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training for position.	Prior to start of activity and during activity.	Yes No

Identified Risk	Control Procedure in place to Manage Risk	Action by Whom	Action by When	Done Y/N
Inadequate communication.	Children and parents/guardians knowing who to speak to – information leaflet provided regarding concerns or complaints and reporting abuse.  Adult personnel provided with training on reporting general concerns and reporting allegations or concerns re abuse.	Leader of activity  Local community leader to ensure activity leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training for position.	Prior to start of the activity.	Yes  No
Non recognition of indicators of abuse by leaders/volunteers and lack of familiarity with responsibilities and procedures for reporting child protection concerns.	Training in place and relevant training delivered to relevant leaders and volunteers, including indicators of abuse, reporting procedure.  Training in place re record keeping.	Local community leader to ensure activity leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training for position.	Prior to start of the activity.	Yes  No
Data protection breaches.	Training re record keeping and storage of records.	Local community leader to ensure activity leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training for position.	Training prior to start of activity. On -going adherence during activity.	Yes  No
Other risks identified at local level.				Yes  No

