



## St Joseph's Parish, Gerrards Cross Risk Assessment Guidance

### Planning and review

Planning, with consultation, will help ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk in any activity that either takes place on or away from church premises. Before any activity takes place, the organisers or leaders should:

- have a clear sense of why the activity is taking place, its purpose and aims;
- have a clear sense of the form it will take and its schedule;
- have considered and have a plan for meeting the diverse needs of participants in terms of age, competence, maturity, behaviour, medical needs and any additional needs;
- consult with stakeholders e.g. participants, families and others involved in the event, incorporating suggestions where appropriate.

After the activity, understanding what was successful and what could have been better is a key part of learning that can be used to inform future planning. Evaluation activities should include everybody that was involved in the activity.

### Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments are an integral part of creating safe environments. A risk assessment is a written evaluation of what might cause harm to people and the steps being taken to prevent harm. When planning activities, a risk assessment for the activity should be completed and brought to the attention of all leaders, who should also be made aware of their areas of responsibility, relevant health and safety procedures and safeguarding procedures. If off-site, the risk assessment should travel with the group.

Risk Assessments should be completed by somebody with understanding of the activity and the potential risks that may occur. This should be done during the planning stage of an activity or event, and approved by the event leader. This list is not exhaustive but a risk assessment should address the:

- type of activity;
- venue/premises – health and safety; fire safety, evacuation procedure;
- Arriving and departing the venue
- equipment;
- transport;
- participants (Children & Adults);
- staffing and ratios;
- procedures;
- health and medical needs; questions to ask include:
  - are the first aid facilities and training adequate and appropriate for the activity?
  - are arrangements in place for those with additional needs?
  - are arrangements in place for those with medical needs, including those needing to take regular medication, and those who have irregular sleep behaviours (such as sleepwalking)?
  - are arrangements in place for those with allergies or phobias, and those who suffer from travel sickness?
  - are arrangements in place for those with additional dietary needs and requirements?
- financial risk;
- contingency and emergency planning.

In the absence of a diocesan or congregational risk assessment form, templates and further information can be obtained from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>

Risk assessments for regular or ongoing activities should be reviewed and updated in accordance with diocesan, congregational or organisational policy and procedure. In the absence of local policy and procedure, it is good practice to review and update risk assessments on an annual basis to ensure that they are up-to-date.

Environmental factors must be considered throughout the risk assessment such as whether the activity takes place indoors or outdoors, the time of day, the time of year, the weather, and other natural phenomena.

Any activities in or near water need to be particularly risk assessed and consider the competence of group leaders and other responsible adults. Ratios should be higher for these activities and at least one qualified lifesaver should be present during these activities.

Specialist activities (e.g. abseiling, swimming, canoeing etc.) must always take place under the supervision of suitably qualified staff and must be explored in the risk assessment. The provider is responsible for the safe running of an activity whilst the group leader and other activity leaders retain responsibility for the children, young people and adults during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff.

For further information about carrying out a risk assessment, visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>.

Template for Risk Assessment is a separate document.

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