



Кноскадон
Dominican
Camp

Policies and Procedures
on
Child Protection

(June 2003)



Knockadoon Dominican Camp,
Ballymacoda, Co. Cork.

June 2003.

In view of the changes and developments in the laws and guidelines concerning child care, protection and welfare the Management and Trustees of Knockadoon Dominican Camp have decided to review its Policies and Procedures on Child Protection to ensure they are in accordance with current legislation and practices.

The following policy is the reviewed statement of Knockadoon Dominican Camp on child protection and welfare. This policy replaces and supersedes all and any policy issued by the Camp to date in relation to the children staying on and/or using the Camp.

Fr. Joe Bulman O.P.

*On behalf of
the management & trustees
of Knockadoon Dominican Camp.*

Child Protection Policy Statement

Knockadoon is a Christian / Dominican Camp, whose facilities are for people to learn, to grow in their faith and human development, this being done in the setting of a holiday atmosphere.

As it is under the care of the Irish Dominicans the policies, uses and rules of the Camp must reflect the values held dear to the Dominican Order, that is the values of the Gospels. With this in mind, and considering the long-standing traditions of the Camp, the following is the Child Protection & Safety Policy for Knockadoon Dominican Camp, and all persons, groups and organisations using these facilities must abide by it.

Knockadoon Camp is to be a place where:

*everyone's dignity is respected;
all people are treated equally and fairly;
and the values of the Gospels are fostered.*

As such

"We the owners, management and staff of Knockadoon Dominican Camp are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children who come to this Camp on holiday or on courses. All staff and volunteers should, at all times show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of all children and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the morals and principles of the Christian way of life and the Dominican Order".

These Policies and Procedures are drawn up in accordance with the Child Protection Act of 1991, the Child Protection Procedures of the Irish Catholic Bishops and the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (*Children First*).

For the purpose of this policy a "minor / child" is (as in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Ireland, the rulings of the European Court and the Conventions of the United Nations) a person under 18 years.

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1) DEFINITION OF POSITIONS AND ROLES ON CAMP...

In the normal day-to-day functioning of the Camp, many people have different roles and responsibility. The following is a general breakdown of the Camp personnel and structures.

a) Prior Provincial & Provincial Council:

The ultimate responsibility for Knockadoon Dominican Camp rests in the person of the Prior Provincial and the members of the Provincial Council of the Irish Dominican Province.

b) Knockadoon Committee:

The Knockadoon Committee is an advisory body to the Camp Director, confirmed by the Prior Provincial, which is made up of people with substantial experience of the nature, purpose and function of Knockadoon Camp.

c) Camp Director

The Camp Director is the person designated by the Prior Provincial with the responsibility for the normal running of the Camp. It is his duty to ensure the upkeep of the fabric of the Camp, the smooth running of the Camp, the organisation of the Camp Staff, to co-ordinate with groups using the Camp and to ensure that the rules and policies of the Camp are upheld by everyone using or visiting the Camp. The Camp Director is responsible for the safety and welfare of all children entrusted into his care and all persons on Camp, and as such, all persons on Camp are directly answerable to the Camp Director.

d) Senior Leader

The term 'Senior Leader' applies to the person who is responsible for the group using the Camp at any time. It is the role of the Senior Leader to organise and supervise the activity of the leaders in his/her charge. In conjunction with the Camp Director, it is the responsibility of the Senior Leader to ensure that the rules and policies of the Camp are upheld in so far as they fall with his/her duties. The Senior Leader is responsible for the safety and welfare of the campers entrusted into his/her care and the day-to-day organisation of the group's activities.

e) Camp Staff

The role of the camp staff, under the direction of the Camp Director, includes the provision meals, the upkeep of the Camp, the carrying out the daily functions required for the running of the Camp.

f) Leaders

The role of the Leader, under the direction of the Senior Leader, includes the supervision of the campers in a manner compliant with the rules and policies of the Camp, the carrying out the daily functions required for the well-being and safety of the campers and the goals of the group of which they are part.

g) Campers

The term camper applies to a person who comes to the Camp for the purpose of a particular group, e.g. holiday, education, etc. The camper (u18yrs) is entrusted into the care of the Camp Director and the Senior Leader by their parent/guardian for the particular time on Camp. Though normally under the age of 18 years, they may be older, but anyone who does not fall into the categories of Staff, Leader or Visitor

h) Visitors

A visitor to the Camp is someone who is not normally part of the daily function of the Camp or the group using the Camp. Irrespective of their length of stay, it would not be normal for them to assume the role of any of the Staff or Leader unless the Camp Director or Senior Leader deems the person to be suitable for these duties and they are aware of the Camp's rules and policies.

2) DESIGNATED PERSON/S FOR KNOCKADOON CAMP...

Any concerns that abuse of a child is taking place (whether during the stay of the Camp or as may be disclosed by a child having taken place elsewhere) must be reported immediately to the designated persons on Camp. This applies to all groups, either held under the auspices of the Camp or organised and/or run by an independent group/organisation. *(See Section 8 for the steps to be used in that situation).*

For the purposes of Knockadoon Camp, in accordance with the Child Protection Act, 1991, the designated person is:

The Camp Director, f.t.b.

or if the Camp Director is absent and for some reason the absence of the Camp Director is considered to be an unreasonable time to delay then,

The Assistant Camp Director, f.t.b.

All persons are obliged to comply with this protocol and to make it known to all leaders in their charge.

3) CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF AND LEADERS...

In order to assure a high level of safety, the persons responsible for each group and their helpers *{known from here on as Leaders}* are to be obeyed at all times by the course participants. All participants must be supervised at all times.

All persons responsible for each group and their helpers must be responsible adults and at least 18 years of age.

In order that the whereabouts of campers will always be known no one should change their designated room / bunkhouse without permission of the Senior Leader.

Leaders should be sensitive to the risks involved in contact sports or other activities and should be conscious of the age and size of those involved in the activity.

While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.

Leaders should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of a child.

Leaders are to be aware of the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of their time with one child.

Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to a leader of their choice. This leader must in turn report the matter to the senior leader of the group.

Leaders are not to be in a situation where they are on their own with a child.

No leader is to be left on their own to supervise the bunkhouses by night.

No child should sleep anywhere but in their designated room, and should never be in the room on their own.

No child should for any reason sleep overnight in the leaders' room.

In a case of the child being sick or soiling themselves two leaders must be present with them at all times.

Photography is prohibited in the bunkhouses. Photographs taken on the Camp, or in connection with the work of the Camp, where children are involved cannot be used publicly without the express permission of the Camp management and the permission of the child's parent/guardian.

Leaders are to always have the permission of the senior leader before leaving the Camp with a group.

Everyone involved in the Camp should respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.

Remember that as individual leaders everyone has a legal responsibility to protect and promote children's rights and safety by:

- Treating them with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Making time to listen, to talk and to get to know the children
- Making sure that children know the camp rules

- Helping children to be safe, happy and have as much fun as possible
- Enabling children to regard their bodies as their own property
- Giving written information about the Camp to parents / guardians
- Respecting children's privacy in the bathroom and their own rooms
- Always responding to complaints or allegations
- Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs
- Knowing the principles and practices of child protection.

4) RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE FOR LEADERS & STAFF...

All groups involving children proposing to use Knockadoon Dominican Camp must insure the highest possible level of satisfaction with those who apply to work with the group and are required to ensure that they are made fully aware of these Policies and Procedures and willing to abide by them.

All applicants will be required to make a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with children and declaring any past criminal convictions or pending case involving children or illegal drugs.

All new applicants may be expected to provide the names of two referees.

All applicants will be required to provide some form of identification, which gives full name, address and date of birth.

A clear definition of the roles of the personnel on Camp must be made known to all involved. The primary duty of the leader is to care for the children on Camp. They and they alone are to have direct involvement with the children. The role of the Camp staff is to provide the services for the smooth running of the Camp and as such enable the leaders to carry out their duties. On NO occasion should a members of the Camp Staff carry out any duties properly designated as those of a Leader.

5) TRAINING AND INDUCTION FOR LEADERS...

All leaders must be 18 years or older.

In such cases where under 18 year olds are incorporated into the group with the view of being trained as leaders, the title 'leader' is not to be used by them nor are they to be entrusted with the duties of a leader. They shall be supervised at all times by a leader. Their position and the limitations of their role must be made clear to all involved.

All leaders both new and experienced should be given an induction session prior to the beginning of their time on the Camp as to the mission of the Camp and the goals of the group.

All leaders will be supervised by the Senior Leader and given support throughout the time in which they are on the camp.

6) VISITORS TO THE CAMP (RESIDENTIAL OR CASUAL)...

Any and All visitors must make themselves known to the Camp Director or the Senior Leader upon entering the Camp.

Any and All visitors must be escorted around the Camp as the need arises while children are on the premises.

Any and All visitors proposing to reside over night on the Camp must have the permission of the Camp Director and be made aware of the Camp Policy. Visitors' access to particular areas of the Camp, e.g. residential bunkhouses, should be limited and controlled.

It is the prerogative of the Camp Director to decide on the appropriateness of a visitor.

Visitors with any criminal convictions or pending case involving children or the sale and/or distribution of illegal drugs should not be permitted on the Camp at any time.

Suppliers, traders and repair/maintenance personnel must be accompanied as the need arises while children are on the premises.

7) CHILD ABUSE / CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS...

Child Abuse is generally described under four headings:

Neglect:

The persistent or severe neglect of a child, whether wilful or unintentional, which results in serious impairment of the child's health, development or welfare.

Physical Abuse:

Physical injury to a child, including poisoning, where it is known or suspected that the injury was deliberately inflicted, i.e.

- Shaking
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Suffocation
- Munchausen' Syndrome by Proxy
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child. It occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, i.e.

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming.
- Emotional unavailability by the child's carer.
- Inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of a child.
- Under and over protection of a child.
- Failure to show interest in, or provide appropriate opportunities for, a child's cognitive and emotional development.
- Use of unreasonable and over harsh disciplinary measures.
- Exposure to domestic and/or gratuitous violence.

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. i.e.

- Exposure of sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child.

- The intentional touching of a child's body by a person or an object for the purpose of arousal or gratification.
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of the child in the act.
- Sexual intercourse with a child ~ whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- Sexual exploitation of a child.
- Consensual sexual activity between an adult and a child under 17years. *(it should be noted that for the purpose of criminal law the age of consent for sexual activity is 17 years old. This means, for example, that sexual activity between a 16 year old and a person of 17 years or older is illegal. Sexual activity is defined as any physical contact for the purpose of arousal or gratification. Although it may not be regarded as constituting child sexual abuse the possibility of such a prosecution rests with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions).*

Other Abusive Behaviour Toward Children:

Apart from the four general headings listed other abusive behaviour can occur in different serious forms, and leaders should be ware of their existence. Some of these may arise simply from bad practice or through a lack of awareness.

- Bullying of a child.
- Abusive language or gestures.
- Name calling.
- Making reference to some physical characteristics, manner of dress, or family background.
- Blatantly favouring some children to the exclusion of others.
- Rejecting a child because of some family circumstances.
- Constant criticism making the child feel bitter and resentful, giving rise to a poor self image and consequent withdrawn or disruptive behaviour.

8) PROCEDURE FOR THE REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE / CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS...

Any concerns that abuse of a child is taking place (whether during the stay of the Camp or as may be disclosed by a child having taken place elsewhere) must be reported immediately. The following are the steps to be used in that situation:

- Report the concern to the Senior Leader of the group.
- The Senior Leader will then report this to the Camp Director.
- The Camp Director will contact the Prior Provincial of the Irish Dominican Province, who in turn will notify the relevant authorities.
- It is important that it is explained to the child that what they tell you is not a secret and that you must tell the Senior Leader. A leader should never promise to 'keep a secret'.
- The leader must make a clear and accurate written report of all that child had to say.
- The child should not be interviewed or questioned in detail by anyone other than the Health Board's Director of Community Care {or the duty Social Officer if the Director is not available}.
- Reporting the allegation to the parents is the responsibility of the Health Board.
- All involved in the allegations must treat the situation with the utmost sensitivity and in the strictest confidentiality.

Where there is concern about a leader on the team or an allegation made, if any leader is alleged to have abused or mistreated a child on the holiday, then in the interest of the child in question that leader will be removed from ALL contact with the children, until the Senior Leader AND the Camp Director AND Prior Provincial of the Irish Dominican Province are sure that the concern or alleged incident has no basis.

If it is felt that there is reason for concern or evidence of the allegation then the above steps will be taken and the leader in question will be removed from the camp.

Should the Prior Provincial of the Irish Dominican Province feel that there is reason for concern or evidence of the allegation, then he shall, in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Ireland, report the matter to the relevant authorities.

In such situations, the Camp's responsibility to protect the safety and welfare of the children in their care is paramount, however the good name and rights of the leader must also be protected until a conclusion is reached.

In such circumstances where there is indisputable evidence that a case of abuse has occurred on the Camp, the Camp Director will immediately contact An Gardaí Síochána so that they can begin their investigation {Child Protection Act 1991.3.}.

From the Children's Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (*Children First*), the following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from a child that he/she was abused
- A statement from a person who witnessed the abuse
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
- A symptom, which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or neglect.
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective signs of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion.

9) THE RECORD...

As soon as possible after the disclosure the following should be written down:

- Where and when the disclosure took place and the background to how the disclosure came about.
- Relationship of the reporter to the child making the disclosure.
- What the child said using their words as much as possible.
- How the child behaved while talking about the events.
- The feelings expressed by the child.
- Any signs of physical injury should be described.
- Relevant dates and times, etc. given by the child.

The record should be as factual as possible and personal opinions or interpretations of what has happened should be avoided. In order to be as accurate as possible no one other than the person who heard the allegation should be involved in writing the report.

The record should be signed and dated by the reporter and witnessed by the Camp Director or the Senior Leader.

10) THOSE INVOLVED IN THE REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE ...

Child Abuse is a difficult subject and it is understandable that people may at times be reluctant to acknowledge its existence. However, it must always be remembered that early reporting of a suspected case of child abuse will reduce the possibility of further serious harm occurring in the future.

The *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998* provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated persons** or any member of An Garda Síochána. Should any civil case be taken against a person for reporting an alleged case of child abuse, the plaintiff who took the action will have to prove that the reporter had not acted 'reasonably and in good faith' but out of malice or some other motive other than the welfare and safety of the child.

** In accordance with the powers granted to the Minister of Health and Children under Section 2 subsection (2) of the Act, the Minister has appointed as designated officers the following persons falling within the categories of the Health Board:

- Social Workers,
- Child Care Workers,
- Public Health Nurses,
- Hospital Consultants,
- Psychiatrists,
- Hospital Doctors,
- Community Welfare Officers,
- Psychologists,
- Health Education Officers,
- Substance Abuse Counsellors
- Care Assistants.

In Conclusion...

This is the Child Protection Policy of Knockadoon Dominican Camp, which applies to all persons, groups or organisations (religious or otherwise) staying on the Camp and/or using its facilities.

The fundamental purpose or mission for the existence of Knockadoon Camp is first and foremost a place for people to learn, to grow in their faith and human development, this being done in the setting of a holiday atmosphere where they will feel secure and safe. Whereas it is the hope of all involved in the management and running of the Camp that everyone staying in Knockadoon Camp experiences the Camp as such place, the main beneficiaries must always be the campers.

Your compliance with this policy and assisting us in the fulfilment of the mission of Knockadoon Dominican Camp it is greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Joe Bulman OP." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name below it.

Fr. J. Bulman OP.
Camp Director.