

THE GIRLS' BRIGADE SCOTLAND

Child and Adult Protection Policy

Responsibilities

Girls' Brigade Scotland will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children and adults by providing opportunities for them to take part in Brigade programmes safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and adults.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its adult leaders to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
- Require adult leaders to adopt and abide by the Brigade's Child and Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of abuse in line with the Brigade's Policy and Procedures [as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures].
- Review and evaluate the Brigade's Policy and Procedures on a regular basis.

Principles

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children have a lot to gain from participation in the Girls' Brigade programme. Their natural sense of fun and spontaneity can blossom in a positive environment created by Brigade. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. The Brigade Policy and Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse, as per the Girls' Brigade regulations, and the responsibility of the Church, Social Work and the Police to conduct, where appropriate a joint investigation in cooperation with Girls' Brigade.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Personal data are processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

The procedures noted below should be used by any Parent, Guardian or Leader if they are of the opinion that inappropriate behaviour or action has been taken in respect of any member within the Girls' Brigade Company by an adult leader or helper. These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Girls' Brigade Scotland Child and Adult Protection Policy.

- The first point of referral should be to the Captain, unless the complaint pertains to them, in which case the Chaplain of the Company should be contacted.
- The role of the Captain or Chaplain is to listen and acknowledge that a complaint is made. It is **not** the role of the Captain or Chaplain to investigate, pass comment or make a judgement on any of the individuals involved.
- The Captain or Chaplain should make a written note with full details of the complaint on the day on which this was made and pass this note, together with copies of any written correspondence to the Child Protection Coordinator or person appointed for this purpose within the Church who will then take the appropriate action. At this stage the Church, via the Chaplain or Child Protection Coordinator should advise Girls' Brigade Scotland that a problem has arisen. Girls' Brigade Scotland's role at this time, along with the Church, will be to ensure that there is adequate staffing and support for the staff of the Company.
- The Child Protection Coordinator, or their equivalent, will then take the appropriate action by referring this to the Child Protection Panel, or their equivalent, within the Church. The Coordinator will then establish telephone contact with the appropriate authorities, namely the Police and Social Work Department to seek their advice. Girls' Brigade Scotland should be informed, as a courtesy, that this action has been taken.
- The Child Protection Coordinator, or their equivalent, will then follow the advice of the authorities, taking the advice given by them. The authorities will also advise as to who will inform the leader affected by the complaint and their responsibility for any further action taken. **No** action should be taken by any other member of the Company or Church at this stage. Again, Girls' Brigade should be informed what has been decided.
- Where action under the Disciplinary Code is required, this is the responsibility of the Kirk Session, or other equivalent court of the Church. At this time, Girls' Brigade Scotland would be asked to become involved with the Kirk Session, or their equivalent, to ensure that appropriate action be taken, as advised by the authorities. In the case of Church of Scotland Companies, this process should be undertaken in conjunction with the Safeguarding Office and a referral to the List, if required, would be undertaken on a joint basis by the Church and Girls' Brigade Scotland.
- If the Child Protection Coordinator, or their equivalent, has been advised by the Police and Social Work Department that no further action requires to be taken there may still be grounds for the local Child Protection Panel, or their equivalent, to follow up the issue with the individual concerned. This may come in the form of a discussion, further training or offering support to the person to equip them for their continuing work with young people, in conjunction with Girls' Brigade Scotland.