



Irish Province of
CARMELITES

Code of Behaviour for Adults

A code of behaviour is a clear and concise guide to what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice when working with children. It is an essential part of the safeguarding procedures of any church body that has ministry with children. Adults working with children have a duty of care to children. All Carmelite church personnel who work with children should sign a code of behaviour agreement form to indicate that they have read the code and agree to follow.

It is very important that all friars, staff and volunteers working in the Carmelite Order are clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children. It is also important to involve children and parents/guardians in the process of developing a code of behaviour. When considering what sorts of behaviour are appropriate in dealing with children, it is important to bear in mind the impact of an adult's behaviour on a child. For this reason, a key aspect of any code of behaviour is the creation of an environment where it is safe for children to ask questions and express their concerns, confident in the knowledge that what they say will be heard, taken seriously and their concerns acted upon. A code of behaviour should contain:

- Positive statements indicating what sorts of behaviours are appropriate, for example, listening.
- Prohibitions indicating behaviours that are never acceptable, for example, hitting a child.
- Good practice guidelines that indicate what is generally acceptable or unacceptable, but that also allow for exceptions, for example in a medical emergency; taking a child in your car without a second member of staff/adult if no other adult is available.

Where it becomes necessary to depart from the code of behaviour, the reasons for doing so should be carefully recorded, and steps should be taken to avoid the recurrence of such a situation in the future.

Code of Behaviour for adults working with children

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Treat all children equally.
- Model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children with whom they come into contact.
- Be aware of the child safeguarding statement and child safeguarding policy and procedures of the Carmelite Order.
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety.
- Develop a culture where children have permission to tell and to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have.
- Respect each child's boundaries and support them to develop their own understanding and sense of their rights.
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children in their care.
- Work in open environments.
- Help children to know what to do if they have a problem.

Adults must:

- Treat children in a manner that fully respects their dignity and rights.
- Display an example of good conduct at all times.
- Respect each child's boundaries, avoiding unnecessary physical contact.
- Help children develop an awareness and understanding of their own right to protection and a respect for the rights of others.
- Encourage positive behaviour in children.

- Avoid spending time alone with a child. Should circumstances arise where this is unavoidable, inform another responsible adult and keep a note of what took place and why.
- Provide children with information on how and from whom they can seek help if they have a concern.
- Be visible to others if working alone with a child.
- Challenge and report behaviour that is abusive or potentially abusive.
- Report colleagues who breach the code of behaviour.
- Develop a culture where children are encouraged to talk openly about their contacts with staff and others.
- Avoid permitting children to remain on Carmelite property unless there are at least two adults present.
- Abide by the 'Guidelines on the safe use of Technology, Internet and Social Media' (see pg. 34).

Adults must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children.
- Develop sexual relationships with children.
- Develop relationships with children and that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Watch or supervise a child undressing, or assist a child undressing e.g. in swimming pools or on international Pilgrimages, such as Lourdes baths
- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in any way that is intended to intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Engage in discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or political views.
- Consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children.
- Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children.
- Offer alcohol, tobacco or non-prescriptive drugs to children.
- Take children to your own home or a place where they will be alone with you.

Guidance on maintaining adequate Supervision Ratios

In planning a trip or activity, it is critically important to consider how many adults are needed to supervise children in order to ensure the children's safety. Below is the minimum recommended adult to child supervision ratios which is dependent on the age and number of children. Note, the number of adults to children may be increased if children have specific needs or requirements and depending on the type and duration of the activity.

At a minimum, two adults are required for each activity. The minimum following ratios should be applied.

- zero to one year = one adult to three children
- one to two years = one adult to five children
- two to three years = one adult to six children
- three to six years = one adult to eight children
- seven to twelve years = one adult to eight children
- thirteen to eighteen years = one adult to ten children

If it is an overnight activity, additional staff should be considered. An appropriate gender balance should be maintained.

Guidance on One-to-One Contact with Children

In general, church activities should not involve one-to-one contact, and should usually be supervised by at least two adults, as outlined in the ratios above. However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur:

1. In a reactive situation, for example, when a child requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning, or where a child has had to be removed from a group as part of a code of behaviour.
2. As part of a planned and structured piece of work, for example, one-to-one music tuition. The points below provide some guidance in relation to those situations.

Reactive situations

- If you need to talk to a child alone, make every effort to do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- If this is not possible, make every effort to meet in a room with visual access, or with door open, or in a room/area where other people are nearby.
- You should advise another adult/colleague that such a meeting is taking place and the reason for it.
- Maintain a record of the meeting, including names, dates, times, location, reason for the meeting and outcome and store the record appropriately and securely.
- Inform your manager/colleague or Prior that this meeting took place and how it was managed.
- Never engage in a one-to-one meeting with an individual child where you are on your own in a building.

Planned and structured pieces of work

- One-to-one meetings should take place at an appropriate time, for example, not late at night and in an appropriate venue. They must be prearranged with the full knowledge and consent of parents and manager/colleague.
- The activity should have a clear rationale and aims for involving one-to-one work.
- Parents/guardians must be fully informed as to the nature and purpose of this work and must give their written consent for their child to participate.

Use of the Code of Behaviour

- The code should be used in training to discuss the expectation of church personnel's conduct. Induction training for all new church personnel must include the code of behaviour.
- Managers/Priors have a responsibility to supervise and support church personnel to ensure the code is being adhered to.
- There should be an explicit declaration in the code of behaviour about church personnel's responsibility to report breaches in the code of behaviour.
- The code will only be useful if implemented. Managers/Priors need to respond appropriately to breaches of the code.

Breaches of the Codes of Behaviour

All church personnel must report all breaches of the code of behaviour to the Prior/manager or Designated Liaison Person in the Safeguarding Office. Priors/Managers must listen and respond to reports of breaches in the code. The Carmelite code of behaviour for church personnel provides clearly identified boundaries regarding acceptable and unacceptable practice. This enables priors/managers to address issues of poor practice, should they arise and where appropriate take disciplinary action. If breaches in the code of behaviour give rise to a child safeguarding concern, they must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person in the Carmelite Safeguarding Office. Priors/Managers dealing with breaches of the code must keep a record of the action taken and store this securely in the personnel file of the individual.

If a person breaches the code of behaviour, the following actions should take place:

- Discussion with and support for the adult.

- If the breach involves a child, the child’s parents should be informed.
- If appropriate, the adult should apologise to the child/adult.
- Consideration of attendance at supplementary training.
- Monitoring and reviewing the adult’s behaviour through informal and formal supervision.
- If there is a child safeguarding concern, this must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person.
- In more serious cases, suspension or exclusion may be considered.

Guidance on Boundary Violations

This document outlines the codes of behaviour for adult-to-child interactions which should be adhered to at all times. Those ministering with children must be aware of the boundaries, parameters and limits of these relationships. Inappropriate behaviour that does not meet the threshold of abuse must always be taken seriously and addressed. **All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person and the statutory authorities.**

The following table describes behaviours under a number of headings where children’s boundaries are considered to be violated by an adult.

Area	Boundary Violating behaviour by an adult involving children
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses inappropriate language around children and young people. Comments on a child’s appearance (positively or negatively). • Has sexual conversations with children and young people. • Uses discriminatory language about a child. • Has ‘pet names’ for children. • Humiliates a child. • Shares sexual jokes with children. • Uses obscene gestures or language when addressing children. • Sends texts or messages of a personal nature using digital media. • Shares inappropriate images with children. • Sharing inappropriate personal details with children. • Photographing, videoing or audio recording children when not authorised to do so. • Using personal electronic equipment to communicate with children, when it has been advised against communicating with children in this way. • Sharing personal internet sites with children. • Creating or using personal chat-rooms with children.
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical contact/touch with a child which is unnecessary, prolonged or makes the child feel uncomfortable. • Physically punishing a child. • Physical restraint of a child, unless in rare circumstance, for example where an adult has to restrain a child to stop them running into traffic, diving into shallow water, hurting themselves or in a medical emergency.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting a child on their own. • Inviting a child to Church personnel’s home or other location where the child will be on their own. • Entering toilet, changing room or shower which are occupied by children and where supervision is not appropriate. • Tutoring a child in a location which is inappropriate and where there is a lack of transparency and lack of consent from parents or guardians.
Gifts/Favours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting an individual child for special attention. • Giving gifts or money to a child. • Singling a child out for special duties or responsibilities.

Some concerning behaviours may be considered 'pre-offending behaviours' or constitute 'grooming'. Abuse may not have occurred yet, so it is important that the behavior is addressed by an appropriate adult immediately. **If you are unsure whether the behaviour constitutes abuse or a child safeguarding concern, consult the DLP or the statutory authorities.**

Action steps in relation to Boundary Violations

- Think about what is making you uncomfortable, then write it down
- Discuss your concerns with the DLP and/or the Provincial
- Agree with the DLP and/or Provincial how to address the matter and who is the most appropriate person to do this.

The appropriate person addressing the concern with the adult should:

- Choose a private time and place where they can talk to the adult without interruption.
- They must not accuse or jump to conclusions, but do ask direct questions.
- Describe what they saw or heard, and how they feel about it.
- Express concern for all involved.
- Emphasis appropriate boundaries and encourage behavioural change in the adult.
- Encourage the adult to seek help.
- Maintain a record of all meetings and conversations with the adult.
- Keep the Provincial and DLP updated and informed of action taken.

Depending on the outcome of the above action:

- a formal meeting may be arranged with the adult to discuss the boundary violations (this meeting should be between the adult and the Provincial and/or the DLP).
- a record of the meeting and its outcome should be maintained.
- a written reminder should be issued by the Provincial to the adult to follow the Carmelite code of behaviour.
- if required, appropriate training should be provided to the adult to ensure that the violation is not repeated.
- if the behaviour reoccurs, disciplinary action involving the adult should be considered.

Rights of person accused of boundary violation

- An individual accused of a boundary violation has a right to know the detail of what boundary is alleged to have been breached by them.
- If they accept that the breach occurred, they have a right to be given the opportunity to correct the behaviour through support from the Provincial.
- At any meetings with the Provincial the adult should be given the opportunity to be accompanied and supported by a colleague or friend of their choice.
- If training, therapy or counselling for the adult is considered helpful, this may be provided by the Carmelite Order, where deemed appropriate.
- If the boundary violation leads to disciplinary action, the adult should be advised of their rights to access canon and civil law advice.