



Taking Care in GB

Information for Parents

Girls' Brigade is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so that they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

While your daughter is at Girls' Brigade we will do our best to ensure that she can enjoy all the activities in a safe environment. This leaflet explains our child protection policy and the procedures we have put in place to help us reach the standards we have set.

Here's how we endeavour to take care of children and young people in GB:

GB Companies follow the child protection policies of their church

Girls' Brigade NI Ltd (GBNI) and local churches work in partnership to provide a safe and fun programme for local company members. GB Companies are operated by local Churches/Missions and each Church/Mission has its own child protection policy. In the vast majority of cases, it is the policy of the local Church/Mission that applies to its GB Company.

Those policies will include measures to recruit suitable people to work as leaders in the company; systems for reporting concerns about the safety or well being of young people; guidelines for leaders to follow in terms of their conduct with young people; and general safety procedures.

Full details of the policy being followed in each Church are available on request from the local Church. Ask your Company Captain for further information.

GBNI Headquarters offers help and support to Company leaders

GBNI Ltd offers child protection awareness training and information to all our leaders and helpers. Leaders can access support and information through their local District and through staff at our Head Office.

Parental Consent

Children and young people can only undertake activities at GB with the consent of an adult with legal responsibility. Parents/carers will be asked to give consent annually, either using a multi-purpose consent form for various church activities or one specific to GB.

Who has legal responsibility? The Children (NI) Order 1995 explains that the child's natural mother always has parental responsibility and that the natural father gains parental responsibility if he falls into one of these categories:

- If married to mother at time of birth or subsequently marries her
- Through an Agreement witnessed by solicitor or a Parental Responsibility Order.
- Post 15 April 2002 if they jointly register the baby's birth.

Guidelines for activities & outings

We have produced good practice guidelines for leaders for the protection of children and young people involved in Girls' Brigade camps and outings. In addition, we offer training for leaders to help them prepare for leading safe and happy camps.

If any outings or camps are organised by the Company your daughter attends, you will be informed of the arrangements in advance and your consent will be requested.

You should note that at District or centrally organised events, the child protection policy of GBNI Ltd applies.

Photograph guidelines

As part of our commitment to keeping children safe, we have issued guidelines to Company, District and NI personnel regarding publishing images and the use of videos and cameras at events. Parental permission should be obtained to use an image of a young person for example in a local paper or in a GBNI publication. We will also respect the feelings of individual girls if they do not wish to appear in photographs.

Parental consent is often sought at the start of the year along with a general consent form but additional forms may be issued throughout the year relating to specific events or activities.

At events such as displays, District competitions or sporting events we realise that many parents like to take photographs or video footage of their children daughter for personal use. However, we do ask that you are sensitive to this issue and the concerns of other parents. Please keep photography to a minimum during performances and follow any guidance offered by the person-in-charge. Inappropriate or intrusive photography will not be permitted.

In some cases, the concerns of parents or other factors may require leaders-in-charge to forbid photography. In all cases, cameras or other photographic equipment (including video recorders/camera phones) are not permitted in toilets or areas where children are getting changed for activities.

Anti-bullying policy

Girls' Brigade believes that:

- All kinds of bullying are wrong, no matter what excuses are given for it;
- All kinds of bullying can be harmful to the way children grow and learn;
- The bullied person and the bully should be helped;
- Dealing well with bullying helps children to get along with other people and so prepares them for life as grown ups.

We want everyone to have fun at Girls' Brigade and bullying is not acceptable behaviour. Bullying can be physical or emotional and can take many forms. If your child feels she is being bullied, she should tell a leader. A full anti-bullying policy has been circulated to all Companies to help leaders deal with this issue.

How children and parents/carers can voice their concerns

If you or your child have any worries about something that has happened at GB you should speak to the Officer responsible for her section or speak to the Captain. If you still have concerns you should contact the Company Chaplain.

At District or centrally run GB event (eg a competition in the District or a NI-wide event) information will be provided regarding the person-in-charge and who to contact with concerns.