

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.

Here's how we try to keep members safe:

GB has a full child protection policy in place which includes guidance for leaders and churches on:

- recruitment of suitable volunteers, including criminal background checks;
- systems for reporting concerns about the safety or well being of young people;
- a code of conduct for leaders; and
- general safety procedures;
- camps and outings;
- use of photographs and video images;
- a fair play policy; and
- anti-bullying guidelines.

We also offer training and information to volunteers on child protection issues and recommended good, safe practice.

Full details of the policy are available on request from GBHQ or from our website www.gbni.co.uk

Each GB company is part of a local church/mission that will also have a child protection policy. These policies will largely agree and leaders generally follow both. However, Church procedures must be followed for recruiting leaders and reporting concerns.



Some frequently asked questions

How are leaders chosen?

All leaders working in GB companies are appointed by local churches. Guidelines are followed for recruitment of individuals suitable to work with young people. In recent years, that has included criminal background checks for new leaders 18+.

What training do leaders get?

All new officers and sub-officers attend training coordinated by GBNI Headquarters (GBHQ), including child protection awareness training. Leaders who want to arrange an overnight trip for girls are required to attend camp training with the aim of planning safe and happy camps. Many churches also offer training to leaders in general youth work issues, including child protection.

Do I have to fill in any forms?

Children and young people can only take part in 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. Parental consent forms are issued at the start of the GB year and additional forms will be issued throughout the year relating to special events or activities eg. an outing.

Who should fill in the consent forms?

Only adults with legal parental responsibility for a child can sign consent forms for that child.

According to The Children (NI) Order 1995 the natural mother always has parental responsibility. The child's natural father gains parental responsibility: i) If married to mother at time of birth or subsequently marries her; ii) Through an Agreement witnessed by solicitor or a Parental Responsibility Order; or iii) Post 15 April 2002 if they jointly register the baby's birth.

What the arrangements when girls are being taken on outings or residential?

You should be informed of arrangements in advance including when and where children are



going, collection arrangements, what transport is to be used and who is in charge of the group. For camps you should get a full itinerary. Your consent should be requested and any outing or overnight stay.

Are leaders able to help young children with toileting?

With your permission, yes. Most children are able to manage toileting independently before they start GB but if help is needed please talk to a leader about it.

Who should I talk to if my daughter has particular needs or disability?

Please arrange to have a chat with the Captain to discuss any particular needs your child has. It is important that you give as much information as you can about the nature of your daughter's needs and how best to meet those needs. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your daughter's needs so that she can be included in GB activities safely.

What happens if my daughter is unwell or has an accident at GB?

If your child is unwell at GB leaders will try to contact you so you can collect her. Minor accidents may be dealt with by a first aider and you will be notified when you collect your child. If medical assistance is required, leaders will try to contact you or the 2nd named contact you have provided for emergencies.

What are the rules about taking photographs?

GB has clear rules for leaders about taking and using photographs or video images of children. Your permission will be sought and your wishes respected. We will also respect the feelings of individual girls if they do not wish to appear in photographs.

At events such as parents nights or competitions it is appreciated if parents can 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.

What should I do if I'm worried about bullying?

We believe that all kinds of bullying are wrong and we have an anti-bullying policy to guide and inform members. If your child feels she is being bullied, the child and/or parent should talk to a leader.

Who should I talk to if I have 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, who is usually the Minister of the Church.

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.

Please don't feel embarrassed to talk to a GB leader about any concerns you have.

Agencies that offer help and support

Childline

T: 0800 1111 (help for teenagers and children)
www.childline.org.uk

Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre

www.ceop.gov.uk

Kidscape (bullying advice & child safety)

www.kidscape.org.uk

NSPCC

T: 0808 800 5000 (helpline for adults worried about a child)
www.nspcc.org.uk

Think u Know (internet safety)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

UrZone - Advice site for kids/teenagers

www.urzone.com