



## Guidance on Church Property and Hire for Private Functions

Individual adults (parents/guardians/family members) approaching the parish priest to use Church property for a private function do not meet the requirement for vetting by the Church authority.

All parishes are insured to cover one-off private events, and it is the sole responsibility of the parents/guardians to organise and supervise all children attending. As such, they are not required to confirm in writing that they have a safeguarding policy or appropriate insurance.

However, as a matter of good practice, each parish priest should ensure that key health and safety measures are covered prior to agreeing the property for use. For example,

it would be good practice to draw up an agreement with a potential user (e.g. in the case of a child's private birthday party), highlighting the terms and conditions for the use of the Church property, which should include:

- That the parish will ensure the property is safe to use, including how accidents resulting from the condition of the property should be reported;
- That the Parish is not responsible for the organisation, supervision or conduct of the children or adults involved in the event;
- That the safeguarding policy of the Church body does not apply to the private party, and, as such, all safeguards are the responsibility of the organiser of the event and not the Parish.

### **What is excluded as part of this guidance**

This guidance is specifically for events that involve children, and is not designed for non-child-related events. Additionally, this guidance does not cover the following situations:

- Ministry with children that is organised by the Church body as part of sacramental celebrations (for example a Communion/Confirmation celebration involving a number of children). In these situations, the responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Church body;

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- Use of Church property for other parish-related or community-related activities such as funeral receptions and other such activities, which fall outside the remit of safeguarding children;
- Schools using Church property for sacramental celebrations. In these situations it is advisable that the school and the Parish agree who is responsible for safeguarding using Guidance.