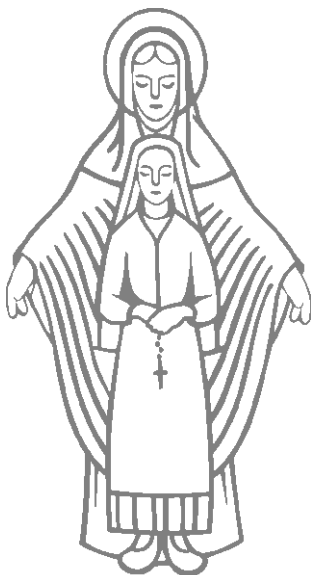


The Irish Pilgrimage Trust



Code of Practice

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1: The Trust Vision Statement

- a We are a Christian community and a pilgrim people journeying with Mary, the first disciple.^{1,2}
- b We are called to act with justice always, to love tenderly those we meet, to serve one another in friendship, and to walk humbly with God.³
- c We value and cherish all people as they are, irrespective of race, sex, ability, religion, or social status.⁴
- d We strive to establish this spirituality of communion⁵ with the people with whom we work – staff, volunteers and pilgrims.

2: The Trust Mission Statement ⁶

This is our vision, the vision of The Trust, and we will affirm it as trustees, staff, officers, leaders and volunteers in the following ways:

- a We affirm our special relationship with Lourdes through our pilgrimages;
- b We will welcome people to share our pilgrim journey as volunteers, supporters, and benefactors;
- c We will invite pilgrims to travel with The Trust on a spiritual journey with a loving family of friends, where all individuals are valued and cherished as they are. Whereas we cannot bring all people on pilgrimage, we will give preference to young people who are disadvantaged, ill, disabled or marginalized;⁷
- d We will work closely with our sister organisation HCPT and we will support the international spread of the vision / organisation, particularly to Romania, Slovakia and Croatia;
- e We will encourage other groups and organisations to share our vision by welcoming them to Kilcuan, our home in Clarenbridge;
- f We will welcome volunteers on our biennial sponsored cycle to Lourdes;
- g We will be open to new ways to share our vision with others.

¹ “Mary, the First Disciple” – theme for Easter 2003 pilgrimage to Lourdes.

² From trustees' seminar, May 2003.

³ Based on prophet Micah 6:8.

⁴ From Mission Statement developed by group leaders and trustees in 1998.

⁵ From **Novo Millennio Ineunte** – “*At the beginning of a new millennium*” – John Paul II.

⁶ A Mission Statement evolves with time, this is the version approved by the Board of Trustees in 2004.

⁷ From Mission Statement developed by group leaders and trustees in 1998.

3: Legal Structure

- a IHCPT – The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is the legal name of “The Trust” and is a registered charity (charity number 5992) established in 1972.
- b The Trust was incorporated under the Charities Act (1973) in 1974.
- c The registered offices of The Trust are at Kilcuan, Clarenbridge, Co Galway.
- d The Trust is under the patronage of the Irish Hierarchy.

4: Organisational Structure

- a Overall control of The Trust, lies with the members of the Board of Trustees. They are drawn from all regions and meet regularly to determine policy and to progress the vision and mission of The Trust.
- b The Trust is an all-Ireland organisation and comprises seven regions.
 - i. Each region elects a regional chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, chaplain, nurse and PRO.
 - ii. The regional committee is responsible for the promotion of The Trust in the local area, the distribution of application forms, the selection of young pilgrims for The Trust activities, and local fund-raising.
- c The organisational unit of the Trust is the group. Each group is led by a group leader and includes a nurse, a chaplain and volunteer carers.
- d In 1998 The Trust opened a holiday-respite home, Kilcuan, in Clarenbridge, Co Galway. The site was a generous gift from the Brothers of Charity. The house can accommodate up to thirty guests and is specially designed to provide facilities for people with special needs. Kilcuan is administered by The Trust and is available all year round to groups of adults or young people with similar objectives and ethos to The Trust.
- e The registered offices of The Trust are at Kilcuan. The administration of The Trust and the management of Kilcuan are co-ordinated from this headquarters.

5: Protection Policy

- a The Trust is committed to the spiritual and physical care and protection of all those in its care: young people, adults and carers.
- b In developing its protection procedures The Trust has drawn on the official guidelines issued by relevant government departments in the Irish Republic, Northern Ireland, Great Britain and France, as well as the policies and guidelines of voluntary organisations with similar objectives.
- c All members of The Trust are required to accept and comply completely with the protection procedures.

- d The Trust will make every effort to ensure that all our members are:
 - i. Vetted before being accepted by The Trust;
 - ii. Of good standing in their community;
 - iii. Willing to share in the serious responsibility of care.
- e The group leader will be an experienced member of The Trust, appointed following nomination and interview. The group leader agrees to attend meetings and seminars organised by the Trust to prepare them for their role.
- f Before being accepted as a carer with The Trust every person must:
 - i. Complete a volunteer carer's form and provide two written references as to the applicant's suitability to work⁸ with young or vulnerable people.
 - ii. Sign a declaration that he/she is not at present, nor ever has been the subject of criminal or professional investigation;
 - iii. Undertake to inform the National Co-ordinator of The Trust if he/she becomes aware that he/she is the subject of criminal or professional investigation; The National Co-ordinator will in turn inform the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
 - iv. Be familiar with and agree to work within the terms of this Code of Practice so as to maintain the high standards of care and safety The Trust requires.
- g Trust activities are, in general, group activities. It is Trust policy that, unless absolutely necessary, a single adult carer will never be alone with a young person where they are unsupervised or cannot be observed by others.
- h Every group must ensure the safety, dignity and right to privacy of all group members.
 - i. A carer and a young person will not share a twin-bedded room.
 - ii. A three-bedded room must be used where a young person needs the presence of an adult.
 - iii. Bedroom doors are never locked except when all occupants are out of the room.
 - iv. At least two adult carers will assist with toileting, bathing or dressing, when this is required.
- i Every group and each carer in performing their work, will:
 - i. Have regard to the wishes of parents and guardians;
 - ii. Provide a safe and caring environment for each young person so that all may obtain maximum benefit from their time with The Trust;
 - iii. Give due consideration to the wishes of the young person, bearing in mind primarily their best interests, while reflecting their needs and experience.

⁸ It is The Trust policy that all references are checked by a senior member of the organization.

- j In the interests of the overall safety and welfare of all group members, the following rules apply:
 - i. Young people will not leave the group, hotel or activity area unless accompanied by carers;
 - ii. Smoking and the consumption of alcohol are forbidden, unless the person is over 18 years of age;
 - iii. Smoking is forbidden in all transport, accommodation or enclosed spaces used by the group, in France and Ireland;
 - iv. No group member may possess or use illegal substances.

6: Protection Protocol for Vulnerable People

- a All members of the Trust must be aware of issues of sexual abuse of vulnerable people. Our procedures and protocols are for the mutual protection of our pilgrims and their carers. Carers must be aware of how to respond if a young person in our care reports abuse. Carers must also be aware of their duty to report any concerns that they might have regarding the management or care of any vulnerable person with the Trust.
- b Child sexual abuse is the involvement of dependant, developmentally immature children and young people in sexual activities:
 - i. Which they cannot fully comprehend;
 - ii. To which they cannot give informed consent;
 - iii. Which violate the cultural and social standards;
 - iv. Which are against the law.
- c Group leaders must be careful in their selection of volunteer carers.
- d Volunteer carers must, at all times, be vigilant to avoid situations that might compromise a young person, himself or herself or another person.
- e **Disclosure of sexual abuse:**

The Trust personnel should have a basic understanding of how to react to disclosure of sexual abuse. The Trust carer may be the one individual that a young person has chosen to trust with sensitive information. This special relationship and trust is an important part of healing, and it is essential that the young person does not feel rejected or disbelieved because of anything they say.
- f Carers must also understand that they do not have the expertise to deal with this type of situation. Statutory regulations stipulate which professional bodies must be made aware of allegations of child sexual abuse. Therefore The Trust carers should not promise to “keep a secret”, nor should they make promises of continued contact which they cannot honour. These young people have frequently had their trust in adults shattered in the past and we must not add to this history.

- g The Trust has two responsibilities in this situation:
- i. The safety of the young person concerned;
 - ii. The protection of other young people from the alleged perpetrator identified by us or to us.
- h While these principles are paramount, the right of a person over 18 years to make an informed decision appropriate to their development and age must be considered.
- i **Suspicion of abuse while outside care of The Trust:**
A member of the Trust who has reasonable ground to suspect a young pilgrim has been sexually abused outside their involvement with The Trust must report their suspicions to the Trust protection officer / Trust doctor/Trust chairperson or Trust National Co-ordinator. *[This is a requirement of French, Irish and Northern Ireland law.]* Under no circumstances should they attempt to resolve the matter on their own.
- i. Such suspicion may be aroused by:
 - (a) Specific disclosure by a child / young person;
 - (b) Hints or innuendo about sexual behaviour;
 - (c) Precocious sexual behaviour;
 - (d) Detailed or age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour;
 - (e) Excessive fear of adults or very aggressive behaviour;
 - (f) Excessive attachment to adults;
 - (g) Excessive fear of being alone / settling at night;
 - (h) Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities involving the removal of clothing (e.g.: bathing).
 - ii. The Trust doctor / Trust protection officer, on return home, will notify:
 - (a) The family doctor or the specialist caring for the young person;
 - (b) The Director of Community Care/ Medical Officer of Health/ Senior Social Worker of the relevant health authority as indicated by statutory regulations;
 - (c) The parents or guardians of the young person, unless inappropriate.
- j **Suspicion of abuse while in care of The Trust:**
Any member of the Trust who has reasonable grounds to suspect a vulnerable person has been sexually abused while in the care of The Trust must report their suspicions to a “competent authority”. Under no circumstances should they attempt to resolve the matter on their own. As a rule, this “competent authority” will be the Trust protection officer/Trust doctor/Trust chairperson or Trust National Co-ordinator. *[This is a requirement of French, Irish and Northern Ireland law.]*

- i. The member will make a statement to the Trust protection officer / Trust doctor who will document the statement.
- ii. The family of the young person will be notified as soon as possible and their permission sought for the doctor to interview the young person.
- iii. The Trust doctor will interview the child / young person in the presence of the group leader / group nurse / a “friend” chosen by the young person concerned. The interview will be documented.
- iv. The Trust protection officer / doctor will inform the alleged perpetrator – who will have the option to have a friend / witness present – of the allegation.⁹
- v. It is Trust policy that a person against whom an allegation is made should be transferred from the group, without judgment as to the truth of the allegation and without prejudice. The alleged perpetrator should have no further contact with young people, particularly with the alleged victim, until the matter has been fully investigated and resolved¹⁰.
- vi. In any case of alleged penetration, which may not necessarily be mentioned at the time of initial disclosure, a medical examination is required as soon as possible. This should be performed by a paediatrician or under the supervision of a paediatrician in a recognised paediatric unit.¹¹
- vii. As soon as is practical, the parents/guardians of the child/young person involved must be informed candidly of the alleged incident. The regional trustee, or a person delegated by the Trust chairperson, should inform the parents.
- viii. The Trust doctor / Trust protection officer will notify:
 - (a) The family doctor or the specialist caring for the young person;
 - (b) The Director of Community Care/ Medical Officer of Health/ Senior Social Worker of the relevant Health authority as indicated by statutory regulations;
 - (c) The police, if necessary.¹²

⁹ It is important to understand that many allegations are spurious, or result from misinterpretation of an innocent act. It is essential to protect the child / young person, but it is also important that the Trust protect the good name of an innocent accused.

¹⁰ In practice, arrangements will be made for the alleged perpetrator to return home

¹¹ Should this happen in France, during the pilgrimage to Lourdes, this would inevitably result in the involvement of the French authorities.

¹² Any decision to prosecute an alleged perpetrator lies with the Director of Public Prosecutions or, in Northern Ireland, the Crown Prosecution Service, after consultation with the statutory bodies listed above.

- ix. The Trust and all its officers, staff and members, will co-operate fully with any subsequent inquiry by the appropriate statutory authorities
- x. The Trust will endeavour to provide pastoral support during the inquiry process within the constraints of legal obligations.

k Suspension, without prejudice during determination:

All Trust officers, group leaders, and volunteer carers who have an allegation of sexual abuse or assault made against them (whether in connection with a Trust activity or totally independent of the organisation) should:

- i. Inform the National Co-ordinator of the Trust of the allegation; The National Co-ordinator will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- ii. Withdraw from all Trust activity – administrative, fund-raising or group activity – until resolution of the problem.

Such withdrawal should be voluntary but, where necessary, the trustees will suspend, without prejudice, a volunteer from involvement with Trust activity.

7: The Trustees – Role and Responsibilities

- a. The overall control of The Trust is vested in a Board of Trustees, and its members are solely responsible in law for the management and administration of the charity.
- b. All members of the Trust are eligible to be elected as a Trustee. Appointment will be through co-option to the Board as a result of a vacancy as they arise.
- c. The Trust will ensure to the best of its ability that all applications are treated equally and are in line with the Vision Statement.
- d. Trustees are charged:
 - i. To act with honesty and integrity, and to fulfil legal responsibilities imposed by the Companies Acts, other statutes, and common law;
 - ii. To be familiar with and understand the terms, obligations and conditions of the Trust instruments (i.e.: deed, schemes and memoranda);
 - iii. To manage prudently Trust funds and assets;
 - iv. To maintain proper records;
 - v. To apply Trust funds and assets as specified by the Trust deed or instrument;
 - vi. Not to profit from holding a position on the board;
 - vii. Not to delegate responsibilities that are properly those of the board;

- viii. To represent collectively the vision of the Trust and to communicate this to the staff, the regions and group leaders using all appropriate means;
- ix. Corporately, to employ staff and be responsible for the activities of the staff;
- x. To be responsible for the governance and direction of the Trust but not undertake the operational management of the Trust, this properly being the responsibility of the staff;
- xi. To evaluate collectively the performance of the board, individual board members and staff;¹³
- xii. To take all practicable steps to ensure appropriate standards of care to meet the needs of the young people are set, reviewed, and implemented, and that these standards and their review are documented;
- xiii. To be supportive of fellow trustees, regional officers, group leaders, carers, staff and other supporters by ensuring that they are well informed about the Trust and its development, by encouraging them to contribute to that process, and acknowledging and thanking them for their contribution;
- xiv. To ensure the Code of Practice is reviewed every two years and updated as required;
- xv. To encourage follow up and continuing contact with those who have travelled with us;
- xvi. To facilitate the full involvement of all board members in all decision-making.
- xvii. To complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Programme.¹⁴

8: The Regional Chairperson – Role and Responsibilities

- a The Regional Chairperson is responsible to the board for all aspects of the management of the Region. He / she may serve as chairperson for a maximum of five consecutive years.
- b To be appointed as a Regional Chairperson, a person must:
 - i. Have at least two years' experience as a Regional Officer;
 - ii. Be nominated at a regional meeting and the nomination approved by the region and recorded in the Minutes of the Regional Meeting;

¹³ The chairperson and / or the vice-chairperson will evaluate board members annually shortly before the annual general meeting. The board will monitor the performance of officers, group leaders and carers. The National Co-ordinator will be appraised / evaluated annually by the chairperson and / or vice-chairperson at a mutually agreed time. At that meeting, the mechanism for evaluating other staff will be agreed.

¹⁴ The Carer's Training Programme is also available in paper based form.

- iii. Be interviewed by a trustee as to their experience, commitment and suitability;
 - iv. Be approved by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the regional committee. A record of this to be entered into the Minutes of the Board of Trustees AGM;
 - v. Receive a letter of appointment from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- c The Regional Chairperson, on accepting his/her appointment will commit to:
- i. Attend bi-annual national chairpersons/group leaders meetings
 - ii. Chair all regional meetings and encourage other group members to attend
 - iii. Ensure that the Region is represented at all national meetings;
 - iv. Participate in regional activities;
 - v. Fundraise and promote the Trust;
 - vi. Liaise with Trust HQ;
 - vii. Arrange Regional meetings, to include selection, seminars on appropriate topics for the development of the skills of all carers.
 - viii. Ensure continuity of Regional Officers; vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, chaplain, nurse and PRO.
 - ix. Complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Programme.

9: The Group Leader – Role and Responsibilities

- a The group leader is responsible to the board for all aspects of the management of the group in Ireland and on pilgrimage abroad. He / she may serve as leader of a particular group for a maximum of five consecutive years.
- b To be appointed as a group leader, a person must:
- i. Have at least two years' experience as a carer with The Trust;
 - ii. Be nominated at a regional meeting and the nomination approved by the region and recorded in the Minutes of the Regional Meeting;
 - iii. Be interviewed by the regional chair and a trustee as to their experience, commitment and suitability;
 - iv. Be approved by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the regional committee and the interview panel. A record of this to be entered into the Minutes of the Board of Trustees AGM;
 - v. Receive a letter of appointment from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- c The group leader, on accepting his/her appointment will commit to:
- i. Attend bi-annual national group leaders meetings
 - ii. Endeavour to attend all regional meetings and encourage other group members to attend
 - iii. Ensure that the group is represented at all regional meetings;

- iv. Participate in regional activities;
 - v. Fundraise and promote the Trust;
 - vi. Liaise with Trust HQ;
 - vii. Arrange group meetings, to include a pre-Lourdes meeting for carers, young people and their parents/guardians subject to geographical considerations;
 - viii. Lead the planning of the group's programme of activities.
 - ix. Complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Programme.
- d The group leader will ensure:
- i. The suitability of those invited and selected to be carers;
 - ii. There is full participation by all group members – carers and guests;
 - iii. That all young people in the group and their parents / guardians are visited before the pilgrimage by the group Leader, Group Nurse and other carers as necessary;
 - iv. That all carers, young people and their parents / guardians are familiar with the Trust's protection policies as outlined in this document;
 - v. That sufficient carers with manual handling training are recruited to cater adequately for the needs of the group;
 - vi. That the group nurse is familiar with any medical or nursing requirements of group members;
 - vii. That every effort is made to meet the medical and social needs of the guests / pilgrims in the group;
 - viii. That all guests / pilgrims / young people in the group are receiving proper care and that carers observe best practice at all times.
 - ix. That a pre-Lourdes meeting is held for all carers, young people and their parents/guardians.

10: The Voluntary Carer – Role and Responsibilities

- a The primary concern of the Trust volunteer is the care, welfare and safety of the young people / guests.
- b Volunteer carers undertake to:
 - i. Care at all times for the young people / guests in their group;
 - ii. Respect the dignity, confidentiality and privacy of all group members;
 - iii. Support and promote the ethos of The Trust in Lourdes, Kilcuan and in the region;
 - iv. Visit the young people before pilgrimage as arranged with the group leader;
 - v. Attend group and regional meetings, including manual handling training courses;

- vi. Participate in fund-raising activities;
- vii. Accept the authority of the group leader;
- viii. Conduct himself / herself in an appropriate manner at all times.
- ix. Keep any socialising to a moderate level such that it must never interfere with the effective running of the group
- x. Complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Program.
- xi. Not to post blogs, diaries, photos or any other material on any internet web site such as Bebo or YouTube without the permission of the National Co-ordinator.
- xii. Ensure that they complete the online carers course if and as required by the Trust.
- xiii. Provide full support to the administrative function of the Trust by completing all forms as required by due dates.
- xiv. Participate fully with the vetting procedures as adopted by the Trust and as required by the relevant jurisdiction.
- xv. Protect themselves by having a full awareness of protection documentation laid down by the Trust.
- xvi. Promote and encourage full participation within their group.
- xvii. Be aware of disclosure protocol and proper channels of communication.
- xviii. Have full respect for all pilgrims regardless of ethnic, social or religious background.
- xix. Represent the Trust at any events associated with the Trust in a manner befitting of the organization.
- xx. Offer support to the group leader throughout the year.
- xxi. Share their giftedness within their group and region.

11: Youth Groups and Student Helpers

- a. The Trust values highly the involvement of students in its caring for young people with special needs either during the week in Lourdes or during respite care at Kilcuan.
- b. All students and student groups must operate within the following rules:
 - i. Students must be in 5th Year in school and at least 16 years of age.
 - ii. The Student programme may operate under two separate models:
 - (a) Students come from the same school and are selected through an interview process. The students stay together in their own hotel and are allocated to groups during the day. The school participates for two years and then another school in the region is offered the opportunity.
 - (b) Students are selected by the individual group from a local school within their region. These students stay full time with the group in the group hotel. The region has a student coordinator.

- iii. Student Leaders to include a minimum of 2 adults with a Chaplain if necessary, minimum student/staff ratio to be 6:1.
- iv. Subject to group requirements the students should attend the Penitential Service as a Youth Group followed by a reflective time at the Grotto.
- v. Subject to group requirements students should attend any specific student meetings as arranged.
- vi. Group leaders should be encouraged to explain as much as possible about the Young People's special needs to help the students better understand what they might be expected to do.
- vii. Students to be fully briefed by the Regional Representative and later by the Group Leaders on what their responsibilities will be.
- viii. Students must complete and sign a Code of Conduct form. In the event of any breach of these rules the student will be reprimanded.
- ix. Group Leaders and all helpers must accept responsibility for the students while with their group either full time or just during the day. They must not under any circumstance allow the students to drink if under 18.
- x. The Student Leaders are responsible for the students from the time they return to their hotel until when they leave the next morning for their respective groups.
- xi. The setting of curfews is the responsibility of the Youth Leaders, however it is expected that all students would be in their hotel by 11:30pm unless they are out for a specific reason and are fully supervised at all times by the Youth Leaders.
- xii. Students are encouraged to fund raise for the Trust with all proceeds being lodged via the Regional Treasurer. No fund raising should be used to subsidise the cost of fares.
- xiii. Students must show respect at all times to the other members of the group, carers and young people alike. No inappropriate behaviour or language will be tolerated. Student carers must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.
- xiv. Students carers must complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Programme.

12: The Group Chaplain – Role and Responsibilities

- a It is the policy of The Trust that each group should have a chaplain. The chaplain is a carer who has particular responsibility for the spiritual and pastoral welfare of all members of the group. The Chaplain should be fully aware of the Ethos of the Trust.
- b Whereas The Trust endeavors to include ordained ministers as chaplain, the Trust may invite a suitable lay person to take on this role and to complete a suitable course for lay chaplains.

- c Ordained ministers will be in good standing in their diocese or religious congregation.
- d Group chaplains are primarily volunteer carers; they will subscribe to the ethos, rules, and procedures of the Trust as enshrined in this document.
- e A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey; the chaplain will encourage and assist all group members to derive the full benefits of this journey. It is a privileged spiritual and pastoral opportunity.
- f The chaplain should work with the group leader and all group members to plan and prepare a spiritual programme for the week of pilgrimage. The programme should be tailored to meet the specific spiritual needs of the group members, especially those of the young people. The chaplain should delegate some of these functions to competent group members.
- g The group spiritual programme will include, if possible and suitable, celebration of the Eucharist, service of Reconciliation, Sacrament of the Sick and the Rosary. In Lourdes, the group, bearing in mind the understanding and physical ability of the young pilgrims, should be encouraged to participate in all aspects of the traditional Lourdes programme such as the Baths, the Stations, visits to the Grotto, the Eucharistic and Marian processions. All groups are encouraged to attend the The Trust National Mass and the The Trust/HCPT Benefactors Mass.
- h The chaplain also has a very important pastoral role. The atmosphere of the pilgrimage or the group may lead some pilgrims to seek an opportunity to share their life experiences. The chaplain should be sensitive to this and be available to each member.
- i The chaplain for the Lourdes pilgrimage is encouraged to meet with group members and their families before departure.
- j The chaplain should be familiar with the Trust child protection policies and the various responsibilities in the event that a pilgrim might reveal an experience of abuse.
- k The chaplain or lay chaplain undertakes to complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Program.

13: The Group Nurse – Role and Responsibilities

- a It is the policy of The Trust that each group should have its own group nurse. Where this is not possible, a nurse from another group is assigned to care for that group.
- b All group nurses must comply and adhere to the protocol for the Trust nurses (see Appendix B).
- c To be appointed as group nurse, a person must:
 - i. Complete an application form for group nurses, available from any group leader or HQ;
 - ii. Certify that they are currently on the live register and to quote their PIN number;

- iii. Furnish a copy of their current Live Registration Certificate with An Bord Altranais or the Nursing and Midwifery Council;
 - iv. Be qualified in at least one of the following disciplines: RGN, RM, RPN, RSCN or RNID;
 - v. Agree to adhere to this Code of Practice.
- d Nurses with RNID qualifications are assigned to groups specialising in learning disability.
- e The group nurse will:
- i. Maintain the highest standards of professionalism and best practice;
 - ii. Visit all young people in their group before the pilgrimage and, in discussion with the young person and his / her carers, will familiarise themselves with their medical and nursing needs;
 - iii. Liaise with the group leader so as to be informed of any updated medical information concerning the young people in their care;
 - iv. Be familiar with the drugs and medication that will be used by group members;
 - v. Ensure that volunteer carers in their group are aware of the need to care for the young people in a safe, appropriate and dignified manner;
 - vi. Be responsible for the safe storage and administration of all medication.
- f The group nurse will keep accurate records:
- i. Drug Card – recording drug prescriptions and administration;
 - ii. Medical Card – recording doctor’s notes;
 - iii. Nurse’s Notes;
 - iv. Incident Forms – recording any unusual incidents such as accidents, drug errors.
- g As soon as possible after the pilgrimage, the original copies of the Drug Card, Medical Card and Nurse’s Notes should be returned to HQ for filing. A copy of the Medical Record Card should be given to the parents / guardians of a young person to be forwarded to the family doctor.
- h All medication must be prescribed by a doctor, but the group nurse may administer the following medication without prescription, and as per manufacturer’s instructions:
- i. A simple honey and lemon linctus for cough;
 - ii. Paracetamol, Calpol, Calpol 6+, Paralink (except to clients taking carbamazepine or Tegretol) for fever or pain;
 - iii. Ibuprofen (Nurofen, Brufen) to patients taking carbamazepine for fever or pain.
- i The group nurse should take an emergency first aid kit whenever the group leaves their hotel / accommodation¹⁵.

¹⁵ The regional treasurer will assist with the provision of necessary supplies for the group’s emergency first-aid kit.

- j All copies of the application forms should be destroyed after the pilgrimage.
- k The group nurse undertakes to complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Program.

14: The Group Doctor – Role and Responsibilities

- a Although several doctors accompany the pilgrimage, it is not possible to have a doctor in each group. However, there is sufficient numbers to provide suitable medical cover for all pilgrims. A doctor will be on duty at all times¹⁶.
- b Doctors who travel with The Trust are primarily volunteer carers, and they will subscribe to the ethos, rules, and procedures of the Trust as enshrined in this document. They will maintain the highest standards of professionalism and best practice.
- c Group doctors must:
 - i. Be currently registered and in good standing with the Irish Medical Council, or the UK General Medical Council;
 - ii. Certify that they are currently registered and supply their registration number;
 - iii. Certify that they have professional Medical Indemnity Insurance which will cover their work with The Trust.
- d The group doctor will be given access to the requisite medical information concerning the young people for whom they will care.
- e The group doctor will:
 - i. Keep accurate records (Medical Record Card);
 - ii. Ensure, where necessary, that carers are providing the appropriate care to the young people;
 - iii. Continue to provide medical supervision for each patient who comes under their care until the problem is resolved, or the patient is transferred to the care of another doctor, or returns home.
- f The group doctor undertakes to complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Program.

15: Staff – Role and Responsibilities

- a The Trust professional staff are employed to:
 - i. Ensure the smooth and efficient administration of the organisation;
 - ii. Further develop the Trust by communicating, promoting, and marketing our mission, services and facilities to the public;
 - iii. Promote the vision of the Trust.

¹⁶ The medical services of the pilgrimage are organised jointly between The Trust and our sister organization HCPT. We gratefully have access to the HCPT Pharmacy and Nursing supplies at the Hotel Solitude.

- b The Trust staff are required to:
 - i. Be familiar with all policies, procedures and protocols of The Trust;
 - ii. Be familiar with the office equipment and its operation;
 - iii. Develop and maintain an efficient and clear method of record keeping;
 - iv. Answer queries, requests and complaints in a professional manner.
 - v. Complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Program.
- c Staff will deal with the public, other employees and volunteers at all times in a professional, warm, welcoming and friendly manner.
- d Staff will:
 - i. Promote Trust policy as determined by the Board of Trustees;
 - ii. Support and assist members of the board in their work for the Trust;
 - iii. Report to the board as required;
 - iv. Establish a good working relationship with the regional officers and group leaders so as to support and assist them in their work for the Trust;
 - v. Establish and maintain a good working relationship with our sister organisation HCPT, its governors, staff and volunteers.
- e Staff members will ensure that all reasonable care is taken for the health and safety of themselves, other employees, visitors and other persons on the premises of the Trust.
- f Staff members will:
 - i. Report and, where possible, act on incidents of accident or damage;
 - ii. Ensure that all materials and equipment are safely stored;
 - iii. Be familiar with the Health and Safety Statement for Kilcuan and the offices of the Trust.

16: Medical Matters

Cross Infection Policy

- a All body fluids and blood spills must be treated as potentially hazardous.
- b Gloves and apron should be used when dealing with body fluids or performing nursing duties. They should be disposed of after single patient use.
- c Klorsept 87 will be supplied to all groups and used according to manufacturer's instructions for disinfection purposes.

- d Clinical waste (e.g.: body fluids, blood bandages) should be double bagged before disposal¹⁷.
- e Sharps must be disposed of in appropriate sharps (yellow) bins.

Accidental Inoculation (Needle stick) Injury

- a An accidental inoculation, also known as a “needle stick injury” may be due to:
 - i. A cut or skin penetration caused by any needle, instrument or equipment contaminated with blood, blood components, or body fluids;
 - ii. Splashing of blood or body fluids into the eyes or mouth;
 - iii. Contamination of broken skin with blood or body fluids;
 - iv. Human bites or scratches which puncture the skin.
- b In case of accidental inoculation injury, the following are appropriate first aid measures:
 - i. Encourage bleeding of the puncture wound, bites and other contaminated injury where the skin is broken;
 - ii. Do not suck the wound, but encourage bleeding by gravity effect and gentle massage;
 - iii. Wash the area thoroughly with soap and running water – do not use a nailbrush;
 - iv. Apply tincture of iodine to the wound;
 - v. Wash eye with clean running water;
 - vi. Rinse mouth thoroughly with clean water.
- c Accidental inoculation injuries should be reported to the Trust doctor immediately.
- d The Trust doctor will:
 - i. Advise and inform the injured personnel of the risks and treatment options;
 - ii. Assess the hepatitis B, C and HIV status of the “donor” personnel;
 - iii. Possibly arrange for collection of blood, (with informed consent) from “donor”;
 - iv. Arrange for the preservation of blood from recipient for storage as “serum post inoculation injury”;
 - v. Complete an Incident Form.

¹⁷ Some Lourdes hotels offer a disposal service for guests. Otherwise, clinical waste may be deposited at the medical centre on the Esplanade. The management of Kilcuan / Hosanna House will arrange the disposal of clinical waste for resident groups.

17: Confidentiality

- a The Trust is committed to keeping information concerning members, volunteers, clients and the Trust secure, and using such information only as appropriate. We maintain sensitive information regarding applicants for Lourdes or Kilcuan because it helps us to serve them better. At the same time, trust is the foundation of our relationship with our guests in Lourdes or Kilcuan. Applicants have the right to expect that we treat their information with the utmost respect, integrity and care.
- b All applicants to The Trust must complete an application form and supply the required medical information.
- c Medical and personal information is used to prepare adequately for the particular medical and nursing requirements of each individual. It is not used to exclude an individual from participating in an The Trust group.
- d The records and forms used by The Trust are the property of the organisation and must not be shown or distributed without prior official approval of the board.
- e We must safeguard, according to strict standards of security and confidentiality, any information that is acquired in the course of our work.
- f We will permit only authorised The Trust personnel to have access to information.
- g We will not reveal The Trust information to any external organisation unless previously approved by the board, or if required by law.
- h When we hire or employ other organisations to provide support services, we will require them to conform to our privacy standards.
- i We will endeavour to keep the organisation's files complete, secure and accurate.

18: Selection Procedures – Easter Pilgrimage and Friendship Weeks

- a The Trust invites young people to join our annual Easter pilgrimage to Lourdes or one of our Friendship Weeks in Kilcuan. Each year the number of applications exceeds the number of places available. It is therefore necessary to have a selection process.
- b The guiding principle in selection is that young people with the greatest need should be given priority.
- c Preference will be given to young people with physical or intellectual disability, illness, social or emotional needs . The following definitions apply:
 - i. “Stand-by”. A person is on “stand-by” when they are considered eligible to travel but at the time of selection there are no available places. In the event of a cancellation, those on the “stand-by” list

- will be offered a place on the pilgrimage. If not selected for the current year they are guaranteed a place the following year.
- ii. “Deferred”. A person is “deferred” when they are considered eligible to travel but not until the following year. At the following years selection meeting those “deferred” from the previous year will be considered before new applications.
- d Applicants will be further prioritized in the following order:
- i. Those who have applied in previous years, were placed on “stand-by”, but did not travel;
 - ii. Those who applied in previous years, but were “deferred”;
 - iii. Those who have never been to Lourdes or on holiday in Kilcuan;
 - iv. Those whose health is deteriorating such that a distant future visit might be unlikely;
 - v. Those who have a serious illness, disability or disadvantage;
 - vi. Those who express a personal interest in travelling;
 - vii. Those for whom a respite break would be beneficial for themselves or their family or carers.
- e Applicants will not be excluded or discriminated against on the grounds of social or financial status, religion, nationality, racial or ethnic origin.
- f The Easter pilgrimage to Lourdes invites applicants from the following age categories:
- i. **0-8** years of age on the date of pilgrimage, accompanied by a parent in one of the Family groups;
 - ii. **9-18** years old on the date of the pilgrimage for young people with a physical disability;
 - iii. **11-21** years old on the date of the pilgrimage for young people with an intellectual disability;
 - iv. **19-25** years old on the date of the pilgrimage and with an illness or physical disability in one of the “Jet Set” groups.
 - v. **22-30** years old on the date of the pilgrimage and with an intellectual disability in one of the “Jet Set” groups.
- Applicants outside these age ranges will require permission to travel from the trustees.
- g All applicants must complete the relevant official application form and return this to HQ on, or before, the indicated final date for receiving applications.
- h The application form contains a Medical Section, which must be completed in full by the applicant’s doctor.
- i Completion of an application form does not guarantee selection.
- j Applicants who have been to Lourdes with The Trust in the previous four years will require special permission from the trustees to travel.
- k Completed application forms returned to HQ will be acknowledged by receipt. They will be sent to the regional chairperson after the agreed closing date..

- l For the Easter pilgrimage, each region will appoint a selection committee which will include the regional chairperson, the group leader of each of the groups in the region, the regional applications coordinator(s), a nurse, a doctor and such others as the region decides.
- m Applicants will be assigned to one of five categories:
- i. **A1.** Selected for inclusion in next pilgrimage;
 - ii. **A2.** Selected for inclusion in next pilgrimage subject to trustee approval;
 - iii. **B.** Stand-by for inclusion in next pilgrimage (and guaranteed a place the following year if not included);
 - iv. **C.** Deferred for consideration next year; the reason must be documented and all deferrals will require a new form prior to next year's selection meeting.
 - v. **D.** Not accepted because application does not meet our inclusion criteria.
- n Applicants should not be deferred because of lack of background information. It is the responsibility of the selection committee to gather the information required to make a decision on selection. If this information cannot be made available for the current year, a definite plan should be drawn up to establish the required detail for the next selection meeting.
- o Group leaders should recruit volunteers with the necessary skills to cater for their selected young pilgrims, rather than select young people who might fit with their particular group.
- p The region will hold its selection meeting on, or before, a date determined by the trustees. It will notify headquarters of its selections as soon as possible following the selection meeting.
- q HQ will notify all applicants of their status as soon as possible following the regional selection meeting.
- r It is the policy of the Trust that applicants are not accompanied by parents or their own carers with the exception of young children travelling in the Family groups. In special circumstances (e.g. terminal illness), an accompanying parent or family member may be considered, but permission must be obtained from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Trust doctor. Such persons must comply with The Trust regulations as indicated in this Code of Practice.
- s The permission of the Board of Trustees is required where:
- i. An applicant does not meet the age criteria;
 - ii. An applicant has been to Lourdes with The Trust in the previous four years;
 - iii. An applicant, other than a member of a Family group, wishes to have an accompanying parent or family member.

- t Where the regional selection committee wishes to select a young person who does not meet the selection criteria, it should send a covering letter explaining the circumstances of its decision to HQ. The Chairperson of the board will make a decision on such applications expeditiously and notify the decision to HQ.
- u The Board of Trustees reserves the right to make final judgement on all matters pertaining to selection.
- v No individual, other than group volunteer carers and invited (selected) guests, may join in The Trust pilgrimage without the prior consent of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Such persons must comply with The Trust regulations as indicated in this Code of Practice¹⁸.

19: Hosanna House Pilgrimage

- a The Trust organises a pilgrimage to Hosanna House, in Bartrès, near Lourdes, each June. There are two groups of approximately forty five pilgrims each.
- b Each group is led by a group leader and includes a nurse, a chaplain, and a number of carers. At least one doctor travels with the Hosanna House pilgrimage.
- c Hosanna House carers must complete the UK CBR reference checking procedures before becoming eligible to travel as carers.
- d Applications are welcomed from people of all ages, with or without a disability. Application forms are available from HQ. All copies of application forms must be destroyed on return from Lourdes.
- e A selection meeting will be held and priority given to those who have not been on a Hosanna House pilgrimage previously.
- f Hosanna House carers must complete a UK police check.

20: Finance

- a The trustees are legally accountable for all monies raised in the name of the Trust.
- b The financial year of The Trust runs from 1 June to 31 May the following year. The national treasurers produce annual accounts that are fully audited, in conformity with legislation.
- c The Trust undertakes to pay for the fares, accommodation, and all other expenses of the young people it brings on pilgrimage. It obtains most of this money through fund-raising.
- d Each region is expected to raise sufficient funds to cover all the young people coming from that region.

¹⁸ Only personnel who have completed the selection, induction, screening and registration processes of The Trust should be included in group activities.

- e The board will designate national bank accounts for the receipt of funds and regional officers and group leaders will be notified accordingly.
- f Each region may have only one bank account. The region must implement the following procedures:
 - i. Elect a suitable person as regional treasurer;
 - ii. Lodge immediately into the regional account all funds raised in the region;
 - iii. A limit of €2000 may be kept in the regional account at any particular time;
 - iv. All monies in excess of €2000 are to be transferred immediately to the designated national account;
 - v. Only the regional treasurer, chairperson, or secretary may sign cheques drawn on the regional account;
 - vi. There must be two signatures on any cheque, and blank cheques must not be signed in advance by one signatory;
 - vii. Respond promptly to any queries from the national treasurers, and implement immediately any instructions they may give.
 - viii. Forward a regional financial report to the national treasurers twice a year – on 30 June and 31 December.
- g A region may incur reasonable costs to cover local administration. All payments for such costs are made from the regional account and must be supported by receipts.
- h Group leaders, and especially the leaders of national Family or Jet Set groups, may reclaim out-of-pocket expenses supported by receipts from the regional treasurer.

Travel expenses and exceptional overnight expenses will be paid at current civil service rates.
- i The regional officers must be notified in advance of any fund-raising event. The regional officers, in turn, must notify HQ of any planned fund-raising events.
- j The Trust cannot indemnify any fund-raising event involving swimming or water sports or any other dangerous activity.
- k The counting and handling of money from a fund-raising event must be done by at least two of the organisers.
- l It is trust policy to issue a receipt for all monies received.
- m Regional treasurers will keep an accurate up-to-date account of all transactions.

Each September the national treasurers will meet with regional treasurers to review regional accounts, fund-raising and financial policy. At this meeting the national treasurers will issue an Income and Expenditure statement, approved by the Board of Trustees, for the previous year-end.
- n Appendix C provides general guidelines on income and expenses.

21: Guidelines for Carers of Young People with Special Needs

- a The dignity and right to privacy of the young person must be respected at all times, especially while in the bathroom or bedroom area.
- b Offer choice, particularly with regard to food, drinks and clothing.
- c Respect the individuality of the young person and allow their personality to shine through.
- d Maintain the high level of progress and training that has already been achieved through the work of family and care workers.
- e Identify the level of assistance a particular pilgrim may require.
- f Permit the young person to do as much for himself / herself as possible, even if this takes time.
- g Involve young people in decisions regarding their pilgrimage.
- h Involve young people in all conversations, taking time to listen to their points of view or response.
- i Be aware of non-verbal communication, body language and facial expressions.
- j Respect the integrity of the young person, especially their right to grow and develop. Do not “baby” them inappropriately by, for example, cuddling, kissing, talking down.
- k Give positive reinforcement – praise every small step in the right direction.
- l Carers should be familiar with the young person’s preferences as regards diet, eating habits, special aids or apparatus.
- m Carers should be aware of any allergies or food intolerances.
- n Carers must understand to the best of their knowledge the disability of the young person and how this may affect them on pilgrimage.
- o Explain to the young people that posting any images of the pilgrimage on any web site is only allowed with the permission of the National Co-ordinator.
- p Appendix A provides more detailed notes for voluntary carers.

Appendix A

NOTES FOR VOLUNTARY CARERS

THE TRUST, WHAT IS IT?

In 1954, a young English doctor, Michael Strode, brought a small group of young people with disabilities to Lourdes. The trip was so successful that over successive years the numbers travelling increased. In 1956 HCPT was founded and grew steadily.

In 1972, Anthea O'Grady who had experienced HCPT in the UK returned to Ireland and together with her husband Bill started an independent Irish organisation. From that first group of 14 young people and 14 carers in 1972, The Trust has enlarged and expanded. Each Easter Sunday we have flights to Lourdes from Dublin, Cork, Shannon, Knock and Belfast. These planes carry over a thousand pilgrims divided into 43 groups – each group consisting of about 11 young people and an equal number of adult volunteer companions. These groups spend the week staying in one of the excellent hotels in Lourdes.

The young people are selected on the basis of most need and they are issued with their invitation to travel at Christmas. Over the following months the group leader, the group nurse and some of the carers call to introduce themselves and answer any questions. Just before Easter the group have a get-together where the young people meet each other and their carers. It is an opportunity to allay last minute anxieties.

On Easter Sunday morning the Irish airports buzz with the excitement of our groups as they prepare to board the flights to Lourdes. During the week these young people have an experience of friendship, faith and fun. We hope that all pilgrims will grow through their shared experience.

For the past twenty years The Trust has also run summer holiday camps for young people with a disability. When we found difficulty in finding suitable accommodation for these camps, the idea of building our own holiday house was conceived. Kilcuan became a possibility when we were offered a site by the Brothers of Charity in Clarenbridge, Co Galway. This is a thirty-bedded house, designed with the needs of people with a disability in mind. Kilcuan is used by The Trust groups, but is also available to any other group with similar ethos and aims.

In 1998 Brian Cowen TD, then Minister of Health and Children, formally opened Kilcuan and in 2003 we were honoured by a visit from the President of Ireland, Mrs Mary McAleese.

The Trust is a registered charity (number 5992), and is under the patronage of the Irish Hierarchy. Bishop Dermot O'Mahony is President of The Trust. In 2000, the national headquarters of The Trust moved to Kilcuan.

WHY A PILGRIMAGE? WHY LOURDES?

Our Lady told St Bernadette that she wanted the people to come to Lourdes on pilgrimage. The Trust is enabling young people, particularly those with special needs, to answer Our Lady's call. The pilgrimage experience can have an immensely beneficial effect on the young people and the carers. The pilgrimage offers security and friendship to the young people and provides an opportunity for spiritual and social growth. This experience of renewal is why many pilgrims return repeatedly to Lourdes.

In Kilcuan we aim to provide an experience of pilgrimage without the need to travel too far. Bishop Dermot O'Mahony has spoken of our pilgrimage experience as being one of inclusivity and potentiality. He described the heart of the pilgrim being opened so that each one learns to love and recognise the gifts in each other. We recognise that each person has many hidden talents just waiting to emerge. We strive to make sure that no one is isolated or excluded.

THE GROUP SYSTEM

Approximately 1000 pilgrims, young and adult, travel on the Trust pilgrimage to Lourdes. Each young person is placed in a group that will best respond to her/his requirements: spiritual, social, and medical. Each group takes young people with illness, physical disability, learning difficulty, or social or emotional deprivation. There are a few specialist groups (1) Jet Set; for young adults with physical disability or learning difficulty requiring more expert care, and (2) Family Groups for young children with very serious illnesses.

Group leaders are all experienced Trust members. Each group includes a registered practising nurse and a chaplain. Several doctors also travel on the pilgrimage and are available at all times. (See 'Medical Matters' below.)

The group system means that each young pilgrim can receive whatever individual care and attention she/he may need. Strong links are often formed among the group members, which continue long after the pilgrimage.

GROUP CARERS

Most carers are recruited by the group leader. To fulfil our duty of care to the young people we bring to Lourdes or Kilcuan, The Trust must be satisfied that all its volunteers, whether new or experienced, are suitable and trustworthy. Each carer is required, each year, to complete a volunteer carer's form and to give details of previous experience with young people. Each new carer must provide two written references, one of which must be from a person independent of the Trust. All carers, including chaplains, nurses, doctors and students are volunteers and all pay their own fares.

ACCOMMODATION

All The Trust pilgrims to Lourdes are accommodated in hotels and not in the pilgrim hospitals. Many of our young pilgrims have experience of institutions and so we try to provide a more normal environment. They can discover the joys of French cuisine and make full use of the hotel facilities for get-togethers, games, and sing-songs.

Kilcuan is built and finished to the standards of a first-class hotel, but is as relaxed and comfortable as home.

LOURDES PROGRAMME

The group leader arranges the daily programme. Group liturgy is the focal point of the day, bringing together all members of the group. All pilgrims are expected to participate fully in the Mass and the other group liturgies organised during the week. The group will go to the Grotto, the Baths, the Stations of the Cross, and participate in the afternoon Blessed Sacrament Procession and the evening Torchlight Procession. There are also visits to the *cachôt* (a former prison cell that was 'home' to St Bernadette and her family at the time of the Apparitions), the fort, the museum, and the town centre.

There are two special "big" Masses during the week: one for all The Trust pilgrims, the second for all pilgrims from Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, the USA, Slovakia, Romania, Croatia and the West Indies.

The pilgrimage programme is intense and the days are long, but it is not all hard work. There are opportunities to relax, to experience French cafes, and to shop. The group can visit the forest and the village of Bartrès (where St Bernadette spent her formative years).

Most groups take a day excursion to Gavarnie, a village high in the Pyrenees, where group members can relax and enjoy a picnic, donkey rides and impromptu football games. Other excursions include day trips to Pont d'Espagne, Biarritz, St. Jean de Luz, the Zoo, the Aquarium or a visit to the Pic du Jer, 1,000 feet above Lourdes with fantastic views across the surrounding countryside.

COSTS

The Trust covers all the pilgrimage costs of the young people – travel, accommodation, insurance, transport, medical requirements. Members, parents and families of the young people, clubs and parishes hold fund-raising events throughout the year. Any contributions from parents are welcomed but are not solicited nor expected. Each member of The Trust is expected to participate in fund-raising, as it is essential for the continued work of the Trust.

HOW YOU CAN ASSIST

PRAY for the success of the Trust and all its activities.

LEARN as much as you can about the Trust before becoming involved. Look at the Trust videos. Visit as many of the young people in your group as you can. Read about Lourdes and St Bernadette. Make every effort to attend meetings and seminars in your area.

INVOLVE yourself as much as possible with your group, and the pilgrimage as a whole. The pilgrimage, whether in Lourdes or Kilcuan, is a spiritual journey. For one week your only job and only responsibility is to care for the young people. Their needs and welfare are paramount. Give them the full benefit of your care, attention and talents.

SUPPORT the Trust in its work after your week with us. **TRY** to maintain contact with the young people.

GUIDELINES

You are constantly in the company of the young people. They will be watching and looking up to you, so you must set a good example at all times. The reputation of the pilgrimage will be judged by the conduct of its members. The following guidelines promote respect and consideration for all your fellow group members and pilgrims.

Relaxation is necessary. Any socialising should be considerate of others and appropriate to a pilgrimage. It must never be noisy.

Sleep is important for everyone, young people and carers. The days are long, exhilarating and tiring. To be able to give of your best, get whatever rest you can.

Drink only if you are over 18 and only in moderation. No alcohol must be given to anyone under the age of 18. Excess causes offence and is selfish. It reduces your effectiveness and puts more work on the shoulders of others.

Smoking is anti-social and objectionable to many non-smokers. It is dangerous to asthmatics and those with respiratory ailments. There are strict laws in France governing smoking in hotels, cafes, restaurants and other public places. *It is a criminal offence, in France and Ireland, to smoke on flights or buses.*

Kilcuan is a totally smoke-free building. Please think before smoking. Better still, try to give it up for the week.

Mobile Phones / Camera phones. The use of these phones by young people is strongly discouraged due to the high risk of inappropriate photographs being taken. Groups should use the digital cameras provided or use cameras/phones owned by the carers. Parents/guardians should use the contact numbers provided by the group leaders.

MEDICAL MATTERS

Most people with disabilities are not invalids and should not be treated as such. The week with The Trust can provide a completely new experience for the young people. They may find it difficult to adapt to the different routine, diet, climate and altitude (an important factor - Lourdes is over 1,350 feet above sea level, Gavarnie nearly 5,000 feet).

Trust your group leader and group nurse will give you basic medical information about each young person.

THIS INFORMATION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. YOU MUST NEVER DISCUSS A YOUNG PERSON IN THE PRESENCE OF A PERSON NOT ENTITLED TO THAT INFORMATION, OR IN THE HEARING OF ANOTHER YOUNG PILGRIM. (See 'Care and Vigilance' below.)

The **Group Nurse** has a vitally important role and is responsible for the day-to-day medical care of the group.

A **Doctor** is assigned to every pilgrim, and doctors are always available on the planes and during excursions.

There is a 24 hour emergency medical service available for all Trust pilgrims in Lourdes. In Kilcuan medical cover is available 24 hours a day.

THE YOUNG PERSON WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The most important people on the pilgrimage are the young people with special needs. The job of the helper is to provide for their special requirements. The young person her/himself is best qualified to explain their needs (e.g.: dressing). Consult her/him - you could save the young person a lot of discomfort and frustration and yourself a lot of time and bother.

A young person must be encouraged to do whatever she/he is accustomed to doing at home, no matter how slow or laborious. It might have taken the young person a very long time to learn what might seem a very simple procedure. You may in fact do the young person a disservice by 'helping'.

Many people with a physical disability (e.g.: cerebral palsy) have normal intelligence. Many who have a learning disability (mental handicap) have a lot of understanding. Always be sensitive and respectful when talking to, or near any of the young people. Avoid talking above or about them. Remember the need for confidentiality.

CARE AND VIGILANCE

The Trust seeks as much information as it considers necessary about each young person it brings to Lourdes, including information on behaviour and background. Careful consideration is given to all the available information when choosing the most suitable group for a young person. You must treat as confidential any

information your group leader gives you. Take care that nothing you say or do could be open to misinterpretation. Your group leader will discuss with you the Trust's Protection Policy and Code of Practice. Use your common sense and take sensible precautions to avoid possibly compromising yourself.

Most activities are undertaken as a group. Avoid situations where you might be alone with a young person and where others cannot see you. Never enter alone a young person's bedroom. Be especially careful when bathing or toileting a young person.

ILLNESSES AND DISABILITIES

At your group's pre-pilgrimage meeting do not hesitate to ask your group leader, nurse or doctor about the particular illnesses or disabilities in your group. The following are general points.

Blood - Because of the dangers of AIDS and hepatitis B or C, it must be assumed that all blood and body fluids are contaminated. Disposable gloves (available from your nurse) must be worn when dealing with any body fluids.

Rest – The young people should get regular and adequate rest. Do not allow them to get overtired. Certain illnesses (e.g.: asthma, epilepsy) can be exacerbated by fatigue. The altitude may also induce fatigue.

Asthma – Can be brought on by feathers and dust. Foam pillows and polyester duvets may be required.

Epilepsy – Young people with epilepsy may get a seizure at any time, and may fall. Avoid situations where a seizure might be dangerous. Be very careful of stairs and near open fires. Flashing lights, sunlight or glare can induce a seizure.

Traffic – Lourdes streets are narrow, hilly and winding. Be particularly careful if you are with any deaf young person. Remember the French drive on the 'wrong' side of the road. Traffic on Irish roads is just as dangerous, so take great care on a day trip from Kilcuan.

Physical Assistance – Young people who require assistance must be treated with great sensitivity and respect. You must be always conscious of their dignity and do nothing that would compromise it. You must respect their privacy. This applies particularly when lifting a young person (especially on/off buses and planes), or assisting them in dressing, bathing, washing, or going to the toilet. Always ask the young person's permission, ask how best you might assist, and explain what you wish to do.

Only people who have been trained in manual handling should undertake to lift someone.

Fragile Bones – These young people require very gentle handling as they can easily fracture a bone.

Wheelchair Users – Many have poor or absent sensation in their limbs. They may injure a limb and not be aware of it. When pushing a wheelchair, watch out for trailing feet. Many wheelchair users become cold very easily; make sure they are always warm and comfortable before setting off and check during the excursion. If possible, they should be strapped in.

IF YOU HAVE NOT PUSHED A WHEELCHAIR BEFORE, ASK YOUR GROUP LEADER, OR ANOTHER EXPERIENCED CARER, TO SHOW YOU HOW. (There are tricks for e.g. mounting and descending steps.)

Diabetes – Insulin is needed to control the blood sugar. The different routine (diet, weather, altitude, increased physical activity) can bring on a ‘hypo’ caused by low blood sugar. The warning signs are confusion, disorientation, ‘odd’ behaviour. Give a sweet or sweetened drink immediately. Call group nurse or doctor.

Loss of Consciousness – Any young person who becomes unconscious should be placed on their side, in the semi-prone position, with the head extended. Ask your nurse to demonstrate. Call for medical attention.

Cancer – There are many young pilgrims on treatment for cancer, and for them an infection with chickenpox or measles could be fatal. Notify any rash to the doctor immediately. Suspected cases of chickenpox or measles must be reported to Medical HQ immediately.

Deafness – This can be a particularly lonely handicap. Make sure any deaf young people do not feel left out. Many can lip-read, so make sure that they are facing the speaker in good light. Speak clearly and slowly, using a simple vocabulary. If in difficulty, write a message. Hearing aids should be turned off on aircraft. Be particularly careful on the streets, as the deaf people cannot hear traffic.

Dogs – To be avoided by everyone because of the threat of bites (and rabies in France).

Medicines – Only the group nurse may keep and dispense medication. Only a doctor may change a prescription. Never offer any medication (prescribed or non-prescription) to a young person.

ABUSE

In the security of the group, many young people open up and share their life story. A young person may tell you of some previous abusive experience. Listen sympathetically. Do not promise secrecy. You must inform the group leader immediately. Similarly, should you notice any incident or behaviour that gives reasonable cause for concern, you must report it immediately to the group leader. Professional advice is available.

INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

In the event of any unusual incident or accident, no matter how minor, you must report it immediately to your group leader, nurse or doctor. If an accident does occur:

- Tend to the person's needs.
- If alone with the person, stop any member of the Trust you may meet and ask them to assist.

AN INCIDENT FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY THE GROUP LEADER AND HANDED IN IMMEDIATELY TO The Trust HQ.

MANUAL HANDLING - HINTS

Should only be performed by people adequately trained in manual handling. (The Trust organises training courses and details are available from your group leader.)

- Get assistance if needed – do not overdo it.
- Ask the young person how she/he is usually lifted.
- Before lifting, squat down to the appropriate level, and then rise, keeping your back straight, and feet firmly placed, so maintaining your balance.
- Lift using your legs rather than your back muscles.
- Do not twist or bend the spine while taking the strain.
- When turning, move your feet - do not swivel your spine.
- Avoid sudden or jerky movements when taking the strain, so do not cough, sneeze, or laugh, when lifting/carrying.
- If carrying luggage, balance the loads.
- Do not 'grin and bear it'. Backache will not go away if you ignore it.

YOUR HEALTH

You can expect normal aches and pains, but please remember that the primary concern of the nurses and doctors is the care of the young people. If you have a medical condition, notify your group leader *before* Lourdes / Kilcuan.

PROBLEMS

If, at any time, you are worried about a young person, do not understand something, feel you are having difficulty dealing with a young person or problem, do not let it drag on.

Talk to your group leader – he / she is responsible for matters concerning the group. Your local trustee is always available to you and will be very happy to assist.

REGISTERED OFFICES:

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Appendix B

PROTOCOL FOR TRUST GROUP NURSES

1. The highest standards of professional care and best practice must be upheld.
2. The Group Nurse must be on the current live register of either an Bord Altranais or Nursing/Midwifery Council, and must be either an RGN, RM, RPN, RSCN or RNID. (RNID's, if not dual qualified, may only practice in a specialised group for learning disability.)
3. All nurses who practice with The Trust, whether the designated Group Nurse or not, must complete the relevant Application Form for Group Nurses. This form will be available from the Group Leader and should be returned to him/her who will in turn forward it to HQ. With this form the nurse must return a photocopy of their current registration certificate as this ensures cover by our insurers.
4. The Group Nurse must visit all young people in their group before the pilgrimage and confirm that all medical information supplied on the Application Form is current and accurate. A new Group Nurse should make their initial visit with the Group Leader.
5. It is Trust policy that only the Trust Doctor should make requests for further medical information from the family doctor or specialist of a young person on pilgrimage with The Trust.
6. Before departure, the Group Leader should pass on any updated information concerning the medical condition or medications of the young people in their care to their Group Nurse.
7. Before departure, the Group Nurse must become familiar with all drugs that will be used in their group. The Group Nurse must be familiar with the Trust Code of Practice and must undertake to complete the Trust's on-line Carer's Training Programme.
8. The Group Nurse is responsible for all medication which she should collect from a family member before departure. All the groups medication should be stored in a locked container (e.g. holdall, suitcase) and kept in a room which is not accessible to young pilgrims.
9. The Group Nurse should administer all medication (with the exception of
 - Asthmatics or diabetics on regular self medication
 - Jet Set pilgrims on regular self medication
 - Family Group members where the parent usually takes charge of medication).

Any error in drug administration must be reported and an Incident Form completed.

If young people self medicate, written permission must be obtained from the parents/guardians.

10. Any unusual incidents must be immediately reported to the Group Leader. An Incident Form must be completed and this should be lodged with HQ, the Trust Doctor or the Hon. Secretary while still in Lourdes.
11. All personal and medical information concerning any pilgrim is strictly confidential and should only be released to carers on a strict "need to know" basis.
12. The medical condition of volunteer carers is information confidential to the individual themselves and the Trust Doctor. The Trust Doctor will inform the Group Leader and Group Nurse only if necessary and with the volunteers consent.
13. The Group Nurse should ensure that all young people in their group are treated in a safe, sensitive and competent way by the volunteer carers. The dignity of the young pilgrim must always be respected.
14. A doctor must administer the first dose of any intravenous drug. The Group Nurse may administer subsequent doses provided that the appropriate theoretical instruction and clinical practice in the administration of IV medical preparations has been received. The Group Nurse must be satisfied with their competence and be aware of their potential accountability.
15. All bodily fluids and blood spills must be treated as hazardous. Gloves and apron should be worn when carrying out nursing duties and disposed after single patient use. Klorsept 87 should be used as per manufacturers instructions for decontamination purposes.
16. Clinical waste should be double bagged prior to disposal. Sharps must be disposed in appropriate bins provided in Lourdes Hotels or at The Trust H.Q. or at HCPT H.Q.
17. The Group Nurse should take an emergency Medical First Aid Kit whenever the group leaves the hotel.
18. The Group Doctor should be contacted if the medical condition of any young pilgrim or carer causes concern. In case of urgency, any HCPT doctor, the Trust Doctor or Medical HQ at Hotel Solitude may be contacted. In general, the first doctor consulted will remain responsible until the issue is resolved or until the patient is transferred to the care of another doctor.

19. Only changes in medical condition, medication or unusual occurrences require to be recorded in the Care Plan. A visiting doctor should make consultation notes in the Medical Record Card.
20. The original copies of the Care Plan, and Medical Record Card should be returned to HQ for filing following the pilgrimage. A copy of the Medical Record Card (which already contains a carbon copy) should be given to the parents/guardians of a young person to be forwarded to the appropriate family doctor.
21. All copies of the Application Forms should be destroyed following the pilgrimage.
22. If a Group experiences an outbreak of Winter Vomiting, the following precautions should be put in place:
 - Isolate the affected.
 - Gloves and aprons to be worn.
 - Dispose of all infected material by double bagging.
 - Use Alginate bags for infected bed linen and towels.
 - Use Klorsept 87 solution to decontaminate wash hand basins, taps, toilet handles and door handles.
 - Thorough washing of hands and drying with paper towels (after patient contact)
23. Care Plans must be completed for every young person irrespective of their medical status.
24. A letter of authority will be sent to every group nurse prior to the pilgrimage to allow them carry group medication and first aid kits.

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>25 All medication must be prescribed by a doctor, but the Group Nurse may dispense the following to group members without prescription:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● A simple honey and lemon linctus – dosage as per manufacturers instructions● Paracetamol, Calpol, Calpol 6+, Paralink – dosage as per manufacturers instructions but not to patients taking Carbamazepine (Tegretol).● Ibuprofen (Neurofen, Brufen) – dosage as per manufacturers instructions to patients taking Carbamazepine (Tegretol). |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Date:

Signed: _____
Trust Chief Medical Officer

Appendix C

GENERAL GUIDELINES ON INCOME AND EXPENSES

1. All income received must be acknowledged by either issuing a receipt to the donor or by writing a letter. Each group should have a member responsible for ensuring the operation of this.
2. Cash received from Fund raising events such as Church Gate Collections must be counted by two people. A statement, signed by **two** people, must be submitted to the Regional Treasurer detailing the amount received and the date counted/lodged. All cash must be lodged to the Regional Account **without** delay.
3. **Without exception** all revenue must be lodged without deduction and expenses paid from regional bank account. All expenses are to be pre approved by 2 officers of the Trust i.e. regional officers and trustees. Normal expenses of the region would be considered to be:
 - a. Regional meetings
 - b. Busses
 - c. Pocket money
 - d. Stationery and postage
 - e. Group clothing

NO COMMITMENT FOR EXPENDITURE SHOULD BE GIVEN WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL

If a group receives sponsorship in kind, it needs to be noted on 6 monthly returns and acknowledgements need to follow point 1 above.

4. National co-ordinator should be informed annually after regional AGM's of bank account signatories for regional bank account.
5. Funds received from the sale of Christmas cards should be segregated from other Regional funds and separately transferred to Account number 46961183 sort code 936391.
6. There should be regular transfer of funds from the Regional Account to the National Account so that the Regional Account balance is kept to a minimum. At various times by prior notice the National Treasurer will direct debit the accounts e.g. at fare payment times. We need to ensure that we have funds available for flights/hotels etc.
7. Regional Treasurers must keep proper books and records that clearly show all sources of income and details of all expenditure fully supported by invoices and/or paid receipts. See attached format.

8. Group Leaders must submit invoices and receipts when requesting a reclaim of expenses incurred on essential supplies for the Group. Travel and subsistence expenses must be submitted on expense sheet supplied.
9. For Groups travelling to Lourdes, “pocket money” is advanced to cover Group expenses for the week. Where possible, receipts or a record should be retained by the Group Leader in support of these expenses.
10. Please ensure that all events are notified to the National Co-ordinator in advance. This is not optional; it is a requirement of our insurance cover.
11. It is Trust policy that there should only be one account in each region.
12. Regional Treasurers are asked to file a twice-yearly report to the National Treasurer for 6 monthly periods ending November and May each year to be submitted by the middle of the following month. We would be obliged if this deadline could be met as we need to collate accounts by January and July of each year. These reports and other records of the Region are subject to audit by the Trust auditors and regular examination by the National Treasurer. It would be expected that we would review one region annually to ensure that we are complying with regulations.
13. The Trust policy on re-imburement for motor and subsistence expenses is set out below. Claims must be made on expense forms.
14. It is expected that regional treasurers meetings will be held twice yearly at national meetings. We would be obliged if you would arrange for either yourself or an assistant treasurer to attend. We are now in control of an organisation generating almost 1.5 million of funds and this requires careful management and control. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

MOTOR AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES POLICY

Motor Expenses

1. Where Group Leaders and other Officers use their private cars for Trust business, re-imburement in respect of allowable motoring expenses can be made by way of a flat-rate allowance per kilometre.
2. The allowance per kilometre scheme acceptable for tax purposes is the Civil Service rates as set out in the table below:

Rates per kilometre (1 mile = 1.609 Kilometres)

	Motor Cars		
Official Motor Travel in a calendar year	Up to 1,200 cc	1,201 cc to 1,500 cc	1,501 cc And over
Up to 6,437 km	52.16 cent	61.66 cent	78.32 cent
6,437 km and over	27.08 cent	30.96 cent	36.65 cent

3. All mileage claims should be submitted to the Regional Treasurer on the expenses form to include the following details:
 - a. Name
 - b. Date of journey
 - c. Reason for journey
 - d. Distance travelled and rate claimed
 - e. Amount claimed

See sample form attached.

4. All claims are to be signed by claimant and by Regional Treasurer or Chairman.
5. **All claimants should be aware that the Irish Pilgrimage Trust is a Charity and that the above rates for re-imburement are a maximum and consideration should be given to claiming a lower amount.**
6. Claiming mileage expenses will, in general, apply when Officers travel to/from Kilcuan for the bi-annual meetings or when travelling to visit young people selected to travel to Lourdes.

Subsistence Expenses

1. Where Group Leaders and other Officers perform duties for the Trust while away from their normal place of work, allowable subsistence can be reimbursed on the basis of acceptable flat-rate allowances or actual expenses which have been vouched with receipts.
2. The subsistence allowance scheme acceptable for tax purposes is the Civil Service rates as set out in the table overleaf:

Night Allowance	Day Allowances	
	10 hours or more	5 hours but less than 10 hours
€	€	€
132.18*	41.55	16.95

* Class B Civil Service rate for absences up to 14 nights

3. All subsistence claims should be submitted to the Regional Treasurer on the form supplied to include the following details:
 - a. Name
 - b. Date of journey and duration of absence
 - c. Reason for journey
 - d. Location involved and rate claimed
 - e. Amount claimed
4. All claims are to be signed by claimant and by Regional Treasurer or Chairman.
5. **All claimants should be aware that the Irish Pilgrimage Trust is a Charity and that the above rates for re-imbursment are a maximum and consideration should be given to claiming a lower amount.**
6. Claiming subsistence expenses will, in general, only apply when accommodation is not other wise provided by the Trust.



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