

Safeguarding Children – a code of good practice

YOU MUST

- Treat everyone with respect & dignity
- Provide an example you wish others to follow
- Plan activities which involve more than one other person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Have separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and young people
- Provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Avoid physical horseplay such as wrestling or tickling
- Use only appropriate physical contact, considering the situation, whose benefit it is for and how that contact may be received.
- Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues, such as bullying bereavement, abuse or personal development
- If there is an unavoidable need to be alone with a child/young person, (eg because he/she needs first aid or is distressed), always leave the door open and tell another leader where you will be and for what purpose.

YOU MUST NOT

- Permit abusive youth peer activities (eg initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying)
- Have any inappropriate verbal or physical contact with young people or make suggestive remarks or gestures
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on just your good name to protect you
- Be alone on the church premises with a child, group of children or young people

Abuse of Trust:

All relationships between children, young people and their leaders are described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in who the child or young person has placed a degree of trust. In any relationship they are not of equal partners and there is a potential for the trust to be abused by the leader who is in a position of power over the child or young person. It is not appropriate for any leader to have a romantic or sexual relationship with any child or young person under the age of eighteen.

Recommended ratios:

Age range	Recommended ratios for indoor activities	Recommended ratios for outdoor activities
0 – 2 years	1:3	1:3
3 years	1:4	1:4
4 – 7 years	1:8	1:6
8 – 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

Working One to One:

Most church youth work takes place within a group setting however there are times when one to one work with a young person (secondary school age) is necessary. Anyone working in this way on a regular basis must be formally recognised as someone who has the trust of the church to work one to one with young people.

This worker must;

Maintain a log sheet recording who, when & where workers and young people have met.

Make notes after each meeting recording the essence of the conversation, advice given or recommendations made and what agreed. All this information should be securely stored and the young person informed they have a right to see any records kept on them.

Be accountable to a minister, the Children & Family's worker or a fellow youth worker for these appointments.

Maintain professional distance and set the boundaries for confidentiality.

Choose an appropriate venue in a public place in view of another adult eg a coffee shop.

Offering Transport:

Parents should give permission for their child to be given transport and know when they are to expect their child home. An adult travelling alone with a child or young person must ask them to sit in the back.

Electronic Communication:

Electronic communication (eg mobile phones, email, social networking sites etc) can be used as a means of communication with children & young people by contracted workers however the following principles need to be followed:

Parents & carers, and children & young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.

Direct electronic communication with primary school age children is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Electronic communication should be for information giving purposes only.

Any communication with a young person in need or at a time of crisis must be logged stating when they communicated and who was involved and text file saved if possible.

Text language should be avoided when communicating by mobile phone so to avoid any ambiguity.

Workers must not retain images of children & young people on their mobile phones.

Leaders should be careful when sharing social media with young people. They should consider having a social networking site solely for youth work (for young people and other youth leaders) separate from their own personal site. All communications should be transparent and open to scrutiny. Leaders need to be aware that children & young people could view photos and other communications of other people linked to that site.

Parental Consent:

When children and young people in the care of church organisations there needs to be:

Parental (or guardian) consent

Information about who to contact in the case of emergency

Key information that might impact on their wellbeing

The standard church consent form also details specific areas (eg taking the child off premises for activities, use of photographs etc). Any activity not listed on this form or any other used must be specifically consented for.

Health & Safety:

The church takes separate responsibility for the implementation of Health & Safety policies to protect all users of the building. Leaders need to be aware of any Health & Safety risks attached to their activity and may need to complete a risk assessment to identify potential hazards, to assess risk and plan how to control or minimise any risk.