

## **Activities in Christ Church with children and adults who may be vulnerable**

### **Except where indicated all paragraphs refer to recommended arrangements for children and adults who may be vulnerable**

This guidance applies to all churches' activities with children or adults who may be vulnerable – for instance, Children's Church, crèche, holiday clubs, youth groups, during worship on Sunday mornings, on outings, in groups and when visiting at home. It applies as much to Sunday morning 'in house' activities as to activities which run in and for the local community. It is designed to protect children and adults who may be vulnerable, as well as our leaders.

#### **1 Respect and Choice (adults and young people)**

- Ask about personal preferences, forms of address, how much help might be needed
- Ensure his or her individuality - e.g. always use their name
- Give the same respect as to others
- Respect differences – e.g. in appearance, ideas, personalities, ability
- Do not assume or withhold physical contact – ask first
- Have a proper conversation using appropriate language – e.g. ask about interests.
- Recognise the choices adults who may be vulnerable make, even if they may appear risky
- Give adults who may be vulnerable the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances
- Consult with the vulnerable adult about who s/he wishes to be included in decisions affecting his or her life
- Offer assistance in such a way as to maximise a person's independence
- Give adults who may be vulnerable a choice about where they sit, and what activities they participate in
- Ensure that there is clear access to all areas which are available to members of the congregation - e.g. where coffee is served, where meetings are held.

#### **Language and visual resources**

- Always use positive language when referring to disability, age and mental health
- Consult with individual adults who may be vulnerable to identify their specific needs
- Use proper sign language for deaf people and those with learning disabilities, as appropriate

- Install a loop system
- Have available service books and sheets in large print
- Use suitable font size and colours on all printed material
- Ensure that everyone has access to presentations etc., by offering a clear 'sight line'
- Make information on notice boards accessible – take into account height, words, images and size.

## 2 Leadership of Activities

- Always have at least two leaders and right gender mix, no matter how small the group. Recruit all regular leaders of activities with children and adults who may be vulnerable according to the Diocesan Safe Recruitment Procedures including taking up references and obtaining the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure
- Ensure all leaders are aware of the health and safety issues relating to the activity, including procedures for fire and first aid
- Give regular leaders a copy of the relevant sections of the parish safeguarding policy and procedures, and offer them support and training in their role.

### Children and Young People

- Try to ensure the leaders' genders reflect the group, i.e. endeavour to have at least one male leader if there are boys present, and at least one female leader if there are girls present
- Ensure at least two leaders (preferably unrelated) are present from before the first child arrives until after the last child leaves
- Ensure no person under the age of 18 years should be left in charge of a group of children of any age
- Ensure young people aged 16 and 17 years helping with groups are supervised by an adult leader, who is responsible for ensuring that good practice and the safeguarding children procedures are followed
- Enable parents or carers or other adults who are not regular leaders in the church to assist with occasional activities such as holiday workshops, but always in the company of a nominated and known leader, and responsible to an appointed leader
- Maintain the minimum required staffing levels for children's groups. More staff may be required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

### Staffing levels (Children)

0-2 yrs	1 person for every 3 children	1 : 3
2 – 4 yrs	1 person for every 4 children	1 : 4
4 – 11 yrs	1 person for every 8 children	1 : 8
Over 11 yrs	1 person for every 10 children	1 : 10

### **3 Administration for activities**

**The Incumbent** should ensure that all confidential records about leaders, and confidential records relating to allegations of abuse against members of the congregation, and specific concerns about children or young people, are stored in a locked filing cabinet, with access limited to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Incumbent

#### **Children's/Adults Work Leaders**

Always:-

- Annually complete a consent form for everyday activities for every child or young person or vulnerable adult attending each specific activity with a form which includes their name, address, date of birth, contact number for their parent or carer, consent to the activity, medical information, any special needs including activities that the child is unable to take part in, consent for emergency medical treatment and consent for photographs and videos if relevant.
- Store forms together in a confidential place, available for leaders of the activity throughout each session
- Keep an attendance register for each activity of every child, young person or adult who may be vulnerable and leader in attendance at each session
- Ensure a phone is available throughout each activity for emergencies; this may be a mobile phone
- Ensure all accidents are recorded using the accident reporting forms which will always be accessible on the premises and give to the Operations Manager as soon as possible
- check the building regularly for accessibility – doors, steps, toilets, sight lines, lighting, acoustics, colours of walls, doors, paintwork and report any defects or concerns to the Operations Manager

### **4 Running of activities (Children and Young People)**

#### **Leaders and Church Workers:**

Always:-

- Ensure children are in sight of an adult leader at all times
- Check areas of the building out of sight, e.g. toilets, regularly during sessions
- Accompany young children to the toilet. Children should have access to toilets without having to be in contact with other users of the premises
- Parents or carers must be clearly informed of the place and time of meeting; and, if the meeting is off-site, when children will return
- Ensure the activities are appropriate and safe for the age range
- Enable children to be consulted in the programme planning if possible
- Consider setting ground rules agreed by the group for participating in activities
- Ensure films shown in a group activity are not be rated higher than the age of the youngest child in the group (e.g. 12 or 12A only to children of 12 or over).

## **Parents and Carers Responsibilities**

- For children over 11, it is the parents' or carers' responsibility to make arrangements with their child for collection or travelling home independently
- If a leader has concerns about the collection arrangements for a child over 11, they should address these directly with the parents or carers
- In the event of a child not collected as arranged, the parent or carer should be contacted by phone and asked to collect the child. If contact with the parent is not possible, two leaders should wait with the child until contact with parent or carer has been established. Only in exceptional circumstances should the child be escorted home. If a child appears to have been abandoned, statutory services must be contacted
- Leaders and Children's workers do need to be clear about what behaviour is acceptable – and what is not – from children and young people.

## **5 Sleeping on church premises (Children)**

Churches sometimes arrange sleep-overs for children, or church premises may be used, for example, during pilgrimages or missions.

- When part of the activity is for children to remain together as a group, separate sleeping areas must be organised for girls and boys
- If possible separate washing and toileting should be provided, or different times for washing arranged, to ensure privacy
- The required ratio of adult leaders should be followed, including a gender balance
- Children under the age of 18 must not be left alone overnight
- Ensure a rota of awake adults during the night or at least until all the youngsters have settled down.
- There should be two separate routes out from the sleeping accommodation
- It must be possible to open all external doors. They should not be locked.
- All exit routes should be clearly marked
- All internal doors should be kept closed at night to prevent the spread of smoke or fire
- Portable fires should be placed in safe positions and turned off at night
- All adults should have access to a torch and a telephone
- There should be no smoking anywhere on the premises
- A list of those present should be hung up near the main exit door. Everyone should know where outside to assemble and a roll call completed
- Anyone discovering a fire should raise the alarm by shouting FIRE
- The fire service should be called to all fires. Use the 999 facility
- Make sure that cars do not block the exits or access for emergency vehicles
- Adults should know where to locate firefighting equipment and how it is operated. This equipment should only be used if safe to do so.

## **6 Taking children off the premises**

If children are to be taken off church premises for any reason **Leaders** should always:

- Obtain written permission from parents, guardians or PCC. This permission may be granted for a given period of time, e.g. a term
- Ensure a named person at 'home base' for each activity holds the registration details for all children and leaders who are away from church premises, and is available by phone throughout the period of absence in case of emergencies. This person should have the itinerary and be aware of the plans, including estimated time of arrival at the destination, and estimated time of return
- Carry with them the registration and consent forms for all children in the group
- Carry mobile phones, and have readily accessible on their phone the contact details of other leaders of the group, and the named person at 'home base'
- Ensure a first aid kit is carried
- Ensure parents are informed if their children are to be transported by car or in another vehicle. Persons transporting children by car should be given a copy of "Transport – minibuses, coaches and cars" and ensure they are complying with the requirements and have completed the Transport Undertaking
  
- If a journey is interrupted by a stop when the child, young person or adult leaves the vehicle a role call must be taken before the journey is resumed.
- If youth leaders arrange to meet young people in coffee shops etc., ensure a record is kept of when the event occurred and in what circumstances

## **7 Publicising activities**

- Keep parents, children and young people, adults who may be vulnerable fully informed of the programme of activities, including the venue, times and contact details for leaders, and make them aware of the ground rules for belonging
- Advertise the Parish Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy and Procedures in summary on the church premises, and have it available for parents or carers on request
- Publicise the name and contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (this can be through a central contact point), with a clear process for how concerns should be raised.

## **8 Use of home venues (Children and Young People)**

Activities for children will usually take place on church premises. In the event of leaders using their own homes for church activities, any activity which includes children under 18 years when their parents are not present will be subject to the Parish's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

- Rooms will be checked for physical hazards, and be hygienic
- Bedrooms will not be used in any circumstances
- Two adults (preferably unrelated) will be present from before the first child arrives until after the last one leaves.

## **9 Working with disruptive children**

If a child or young person is being disruptive:

- Ask him or her to stop
- Speak to the child to establish the cause(s) of upset
- Inform the child that s/he will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues
- Consider at every stage calling the child's parent or carer
- Warn the child that if s/he continues to be disruptive, this may result in longer term exclusion from the group or activity
- Where possible, have a team strategy for handling disruption, such as engaging leaders of other groups taking place at the same time in management of situations
- If a child is harming him/herself, another person or property, then escort other children away from the area where the disruption is occurring
- At the same time, another worker should ask the child to stop
- If the request is ignored, warn him/her that you may call for additional help (e.g. the police) if they do not stop
- If they do not stop, call the police or other appropriate professional help
- In exceptional circumstances, you may need to restrain the child to prevent them harming themselves, others or the property whilst you wait for the police
- Ensure that the parent/carer of both the child, and any other child affected by the disruption (especially a victim) are informed of the incident, as soon as possible after it has taken place
- Record the event as soon as possible after the incident, and inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent.
- After the incident, consider with the Parish Safeguarding Officer what longer term sanctions are appropriate regarding this child, and what safeguarding steps regarding others in the group may be needed.