

Code of Conduct and Practice for Church Members working with Children and Young People



This code of practice is taken from Protecting All God's Children (2010) and provides a guide to good conduct for people working with children and young people. It should be read and adopted by everyone working in this context in church related activities

Guidance is taken from the Carlisle Diocesan Safeguarding Policy

<http://www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/our-diocese/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy.html>

**Terminology
used in this
code:**

THE WORD
'CHILD' REFERS
TO ANY CHILD OR
YOUNG PERSON
UNDER THE AGE
OF 18

The term 'group leader' is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group or activity, who is answerable to the Parochial Church Council.

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4. Responding to child protection concerns

Useful contacts

If you have concerns about a child who is connected with St James or are worried about the behaviour of an employee or volunteer working with children please contact

Simon Bickersteth,
Priest-in-Charge,
01228 319830

simon@stjamescarlisle.org.uk

St James Parish
Safeguarding Officer for
children:

Michelle Graham
01228 381957

safeguarding.children@stjamescarlisle.org.uk

If you feel a child is at immediate risk contact:

Cumbria County
Council Children's
Services

0333 240 1727

Guidelines for individual workers

You should:

- treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful;
- always aim to work within sight of another adult. There should always be two adults leading a group, preferably reflecting the genders of the children present;
- ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet; usually children should not be accompanied to the toilet but should be appropriately independent (depending on their age)
- ensure that toilet breaks are organised for young children;
- ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern;
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around;
- if any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand;
- administer any necessary First Aid with others around;
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored
- record any concerning incidents and give the information to your group Leader and or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Sign and date the record;
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding co-ordinator

You should not:

- Invade an individual's privacy whilst washing and toileting.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favoritism to any one individual or group.
- Allow an individual to involve you in excessive attention seeking.
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults that may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.
- Allow strangers to give children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group, lifts.
- Befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.
- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity).
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people.
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include adult family members/carers) outside organised group occasions

Touch

Church-sponsored groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people. Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate.



The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- Always ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church officer.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention)

In addition:

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Ensure that church officers at all levels must take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be encouraged to challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported

Extra Responsibilities of Group Leaders:

- ensure any health and safety requirements are adhered to;
- undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept;
- keep an attendance register of children and leaders, and consent forms up to date and securely stored;
- have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present;
- create space for children to talk – either formally or informally;
- Liaise with the PCC and with Parish Safeguarding Officer over good practice for safeguarding;
- always inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the diocesan safeguarding adviser

E-safety



Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.

When using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.

Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site.

Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting. In practice, your phone or computer will keep an electronic log so it is important that this is kept safely

The Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook contains useful advice on the use of Social Media in section 12

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Parish%20Safeguarding%20Handbook%20October%202018%20PROOF.pdf>

See also:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk for advice from CEOP and the police

www.ccpas.co.uk for information from an independent Churches Child Protection Advisory Service

Guidelines for good practice for church sponsored activities for children and young people

Registration



A registration form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address,
- Date of birth,
- Parents contact details,
- Medical information including allergies
- Any special needs including activities that the child is unable to take part in.
- Consent for emergency medical treatment,
- Consent for photographs and videos if relevant.
- Separate consent should be obtained for one-off events and activities, for example swimming, and also for outings, weekends away, etc.

All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely.

An attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings

Special needs

Welcome children and young people who have different (special) needs to a group. Physical access may be important for some, but remember that for many, communication access, information and the ability to join in activities are key to inclusion. Ask a parent or carer about how best to meet a child's needs but then take an active role in including the child; this is not solely the responsibility of the child's parents. Organise furniture and fittings to reflect needs, creating smaller areas for people with autism, or other signalling for people who have visual impairment, for example; include people with learning difficulties by planning the activity slightly differently. If premises are being altered, take the opportunity to consider physical access, communication access and social access; advice is available. Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

Consent

Consent needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. It can be from the child or young person if he or she has sufficient age and understanding in relation to the specific issue. So, for example, while parental consent is always required for a group residential holiday, a teenager would usually be able to consent to the photos from the holiday being displayed in church. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity.

Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for (unaccompanied) children's groups are given below:

0–2 yrs 1 adult for every 3 children i.e. 1:3

2–3 yrs 1 adult for every 4 children i.e. 1:4

4–8 yrs 1 adult for every 6 children i.e. 1:6

9– 12 yrs 1 adult for every 8 children ie 1:8

13– 18 yrs 1 adult for every 10 children ie 1:10



More help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

- Each group should have at least two adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female;
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity;
- No person under the age of 18 years should be left in charge of a group of children of any age;
- Young people aged 16 and 17 years may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult leader, who is responsible for ensuring that good practice and the safeguarding children procedures are followed;
- Recruit all regular leaders of activities with children according to the Safer Recruiting Procedures as contained in Church of England safeguarding policies
- Parents or carers who are not regular leaders in the church (ie not DBS vetted) can assist with occasional activities such as holiday workshops, but should always work in the company of two nominated and known leaders, and be responsible to an appointed leader;
- 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 and helpers a copy of the relevant sections of the safeguarding children policy and procedures, and offer them support and training in their role
- Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker.
- Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.
- All groups should undertake a health and safety risk assessment

Venue

- Meeting places should be warm, clean and free of clutter;
- Electric sockets will need to be covered if there are small children;
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities;
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity;
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired;
- Packed lunches should be stored appropriately, including being refrigerated if possible. Drinks should always be available;
- Groups must have access to a phone
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises;
- A fire drill should be carried out regularly;
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths;
- A First Aid kit should be available
- An accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children).
- The Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers should be displayed

Dropping-off and collection of children

- 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
- For all children, 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 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;

Use of home venues

Generally speaking, it is advisable for activities for children and young people to 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 is subject to the parish's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

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



Unaccompanied children

It may happen that children begin attending church services or church activities without their parents' or carers' knowledge. The following procedure is recommended, (with appropriate sensitivity to the age of the child(ren) – obviously late teenagers will require a different approach!

- Welcome the child(ren) and try to establish whether their parents are aware of where they are;
- Try to discover when they are due home and encourage them to keep to that arrangement;
- Depending on the age and competence of the child, ring the parents or ask the young person to ring to gain the parents' consent to the child remaining;
- Complete a registration form as far as possible;
- Make sure an adult recruited for work with children takes care of the child – this is particularly important during public worship where unknown adults may attend and attempt to befriend the child;
- Give the child written information about the church service or activity to take home, including contact details;
- If the child comes regularly, endeavour to establish contact with the parents or carers;
- Never take the child on outings or transport them or without their parents' or carers' permission

When taking children offsite:

- The church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.
- Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parent/s and consent forms received in advance of the activity taking place.
- Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in the church.
- Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the incumbent and/or Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by PCC insurance.
- A leader must be designated to take responsibility for First Aid

Parents should be informed if their children are to be transported by car or in another vehicle.

Transport – minibuses, coaches and cars, and ensure they are complying with the requirements See:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/WhatCanYouDriveAndYourObligations/DG_4022498

If youth leaders arrange to meet young people in coffee shops etc., a record should be kept of when the event occurred and in what circumstances

Residential trips will need extra care. Further advice is available from www.ccpas.co.uk

Transporting children on behalf of the church

Private car

- Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior written consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity.
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.
- All cars that carry children should be driven in compliance with the law, both regarding roadworthy condition, insurance and being driven safely.
- All children must wear suitable seat belts and, when appropriate, booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional children should not be carried.
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- Ideally there should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency, a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

Drivers

- All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years.
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the parish safeguarding coordinator.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children for the church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness

Minibus or coach

- Workers and helpers should sit among the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored
- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive. NB Schools, and their insurance, usually require drivers of minibuses with their pupils in, to take a special minibus test: this is because it is one of the more risky situations children are exposed to: this should warn us to be extra careful! Further information is available at:
- http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/WhatCanYouDriveAndYourObligations/DG_4022498
- All passengers should wear seat belts



Responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own.

Always tell your group leader and Parish Safeguarding Officer, unless the concern is about them or someone close to them.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser MUST be contacted. He can advise you on how to respond.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is:

Charles Proctor Tel: 07458 016884 E mail: safeguarding.adviser@carlisle-diocese.org.uk

Be familiar with and refer to section 7 of the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook “Responding Promptly to Every Safeguarding Concern or Allegation”.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Parish%20Safeguarding%20Handbook%20October%202018%20PROOF.pdf>

If you feel a child is at immediate risk contact:

Cumbria County Council Children's Services: 0333 240 1727

Further information and a copy of the St James Safeguarding policy for can be found in the safeguarding section of our website:

<https://www.stjamescarlisle.org.uk/resources/>