

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN CHURCH

Our rules for children's groups

- Always respect others
- Be kind to and look out for each other
- Always try to be helpful
- Listen to each other and give everyone a chance to talk
- Always let others enjoy the activities
- To have fun as we learn

I want to take photographs of the children or video them?

You must have written parental permission before you photograph or video children. The permission should state why you want to take photographs / make a video recording and what you intend to do with them / it, e.g. where they / it will be displayed / shown. Photographs and videos will only be used for the following:

Publicity	Information	Fundraising	Sharing of events
Portfolio evidence	Assessment evidence	Monitoring	

Any other use must be checked with the safeguarding officer.

Photographs of individual children and young people should not be displayed on the internet or on notice boards

Photos and videos must not be given to anyone else without permission from the chair.

Everyone should be aware of the risks attached to the use of mobile phone photos and images and should be prepared to challenge if they feel these are being used inappropriately. (see Diocesan guidelines – God's children our diocese 4.8 p.13)

* All adults working with children and young people must have been interviewed by the Vicar and had the necessary CRB checks carried out.

NOTE

You should never leave a group of children or young people unattended. If you are the only adult in a room, send an older child or two children together for help rather than leaving the rest of the group. If you are meeting in the Church Hall rather than the Church, send the children into another group meeting in the Church Hall.

Computer and Internet Use

If you are using computers and the internet with children and young people then you need to:

Ensure firewalls, parental controls and any other appropriate software are on all internet access and updated regularly.

Ensure that when children and young people are using the internet there will be an adult present in the room who will regularly check for unsuitable materials being viewed and close down such use. This would include items of a sexual and violent nature.

Ensure software is age appropriate and not contain sex or violence. Any software brought in by children and young people can only be used with permission of the worker in charge.

Inform Workers they are not permitted to access the internet for their personal use.

Ensure the worker in charge is responsible for checking which sites are visited on a monthly basis, and take appropriate action to prevent acceptable access.

Ensure that all access to chat rooms is forbidden, this includes MSN.

Ensure that workers know that accessing pornography is forbidden and that they will have committed gross misconduct.

Remember – young people are very clever at finding unsuitable sites.

If you intend to start a social

networking site then you should get advice from the Safeguarding and child protection coordinator.

Guidelines for working with children at All Saints

- Put aside enough time to pray and plan thoroughly for the group you are going to lead
- Be yourself - the children and young people will respect you for being genuine
- Be enthusiastic - the children and young people will respond to your enthusiasm
- Allow the children and young people to explore the Christian faith, with the freedom to raise questions and doubts
- Aim to facilitate group activities so that all children have the opportunity to take part.
- Listen to the children and young people and make them feel what they say is important and valued.
- Be accepting of all the children and young people , regardless of their stage of faith
- All children and young people should feel valued, regardless of the contributions they make to the group
- All children and young people should feel included, regardless of any physical or learning disability, or their ethnicity or gender
- Allow children and young people to express themselves and to be creative, remembering that children and young people learn in different ways
- Make sure everyone in the group knows each other and repeat introductions whenever necessary. In particular children should know who all the adults in the group are and what their role is.

- Other than parents, no adults except the volunteers leading the children's groups should have access to the children or young people during the session.
- Volunteers leading a children's group are responsible for the children or young people until they return to their parent or carer after the session finishes. However, children attending Pre-School Praise are the responsibility of their parent or carer at all times. Volunteers leading this group are not responsible for the children and should advise new parents of this.
- Leaders should always have at least one other adult present in every session.
- All volunteers working with children and young people should be given, should read and should implement the 'Guidelines For Working With Children' and the 'All Saints Child Protection Policy'.
- All volunteers working with children and young people should be interviewed by the Vicar and be CRB checked within 4 weeks of volunteering.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that any new volunteers in their group are given a copy of the 'Guidelines For Working with Children' and the 'All Saints Child Protection Policy' The group leader must also refer them to the Curate for CRB forms, to the Vicar for a child protection interview and ensure they are supervised until checks are complete.
- The group leader should maintain a register of all children, young people and adults present at every session.
- The group leader is responsible for maintaining up to date contact details and basic medical and allergy information about each child and young person for use in an emergency, together with the Incident and Accident Books for their group.

What do I do If?

A child wants to go to the toilet during the session?

Pre-School Praise children should be accompanied by a parent or carer. All children under 7 must be accompanied by an adult*. Children in groups meeting within the Church Hall should be accompanied by an adult* if the Church Hall doors are unlocked or if other groups are using rooms within the hall. If the group has sole use of the hall and the doors are locked, children aged 7 and over can go to the toilet unaccompanied. Children under 7 should still be accompanied by an adult*. Children in groups meeting within the Church should be returned to their parent or carer who should accompany them across the car park to the toilets. If there is no parent or carer present in Church the child should be accompanied to the toilets by an adult*.

A child feels ill?

Allow the child to sit quietly for a few minutes. If they continue to feel ill, alert the child's parent or carer. If they are not present in Church, they should be contacted as soon as possible and asked to return to collect their child. Give First Aid treatment as appropriate and record the date, time and details in the Accident Book.

If there is a fight?

Treat fights seriously and act quickly - they can easily escalate if not dealt with.

First, make sure the other children and young people in the room are safely moved away from the fight. The parents or carers of the children involved should be alerted immediately. Try to stop the fight, but do not attempt to stand between the children or physically restrain them. Children and young people who have been fighting should be removed by their parent or carer for the remainder of the session (or be supervised by an adult* if they are not present).

After the session the children or young people should be spoken to individually to find the cause of the fight and all attempts should be made to reconcile the children or young people before they leave. The group leader should be informed and details of the fight and action taken recorded in the Incident Book

If there is a fight, do not put yourself at risk, but there is a duty of care to protect children and young people from hurling themselves or others.

A child goes missing?

Alert the parent / carer immediately and inform the group leader and the Vicar

A child is upset and wants a parent?

Try to reassure the child or young person and involve them in the session. If they continue to be upset, ask a parent or carer to join the child or young person in the group for a time, to try and settle the child. If the child or young person still does not settle, the parent or carer should remove the child or young person from the session to avoid disrupting the other children or young people. After the session discuss with the parent / carer the best way of settling the child or young person in future sessions. If the parent or carer is not present in Church, they should be contacted as soon as possible and asked to return to stay with their child.

A child breaks one of the rules?

Children are allowed 3 warnings for rule breaking during a session. After 3 warnings one of the child's parents or carers should be asked to be responsible for them for the remainder of the session, either within the group or outside of the group. If no parent or carer is present either in the Church or Church Hall, the child should be removed from the group and supervised on a one to one basis by an adult* until a parent or carer has been contacted and returns to Church.

If a child breaks one of the rules, tell them calmly but firmly which rule they have broken and why and let them know that they are only allowed 2 further warnings if they continue to break the rules. Repeat this if the child breaks a rule a second time. If a child breaks a rule a third time a parent or carer (or an adult* if no parent or carer is present) should be asked to take over the responsibility for that child for the rest of the session.

Wait until the end of the session before speaking to the parent or carer and child about the child's behaviour, to avoid disrupting the rest of the group. Inform the group leader and record the behaviour and action taken in the Incident Book.

There is an accident during the session in which one of the children or young person is hurt?

If the accident is minor, deal with it appropriately, and let a parent or carer know at the end of the session.

If the accident requires first aid treatment, alert the parent or carer immediately and deal with it appropriately.

Inform the group leader and record the details, date, time and place of the accident in the accident book which should be signed by the adult* dealing with the accident and the parent or carer.

There is an accident during the session in which one of the adults is hurt?

If the adult is no longer able to continue with the session, send an older child into Church or into another group in the Church Hall to get another adult to come and help. Record the accident in the Accident Book.

Protecting ourselves

The following simple rules are examples of how we can protect ourselves in a way which will also keep children and young people safe:

- If a child or young person makes allegations against you such as 'you're always picking on me' or 'you hit me', keep a record of this. Remember to include dates and times. If possible, get another adult to witness the allegation.
- If a child or young person touches you in an inappropriate way, record this and make sure another adult knows, such as the person in charge of the group. However, don't make the child or young person feel guilty about this. Make it clear that this is unacceptable behaviour but in a way which does not humiliate the child or young person.
- Do not place yourself in a situation where you are spending long periods of time with one child or young person on your own.
- Never take a child or young person to your home alone.

- Do not go into a toilet alone with a child or young person . Pre-school children should be taken to the toilet by a parent / carer.
- If you need to be alone with a child or young person for any reason, tell someone where you are going, why and how long you will be.
- Set clear boundaries, using the 'Rules For Children's Groups' as a guide. At least once every 'school year' ask the children and young people to write their own code of behaviour based on the rules and display these during sessions.
- Children and young people should be reminded to adhere to the rules by gentle reasoning and firm reminders.
- Children and young people should be kept free from physical aggression and/or verbal threats including threats of, or actual corporal punishment by adults or children and young people . This includes any volunteers' own children during church activities.
- During a session, children should be given 3 warnings for rule-breaking, after which a child's parent / carer should be asked to supervise their child for the remainder of the session.
- Whenever possible the doors to the Church Hall should always be kept locked during sessions to prevent strangers from entering, and children and young people from wandering into the car park alone.
- If the Church Hall doors need to remain open children should not be allowed to leave the room the group is accompanied by an adult.
- All Children under 7 MUST be accompanied by an adult.

Health & Safety

- Each volunteer should know where the Fire Exits and Fire Extinguishers are in each room they are using.
- Fire Exits should be kept clear at all times.
- In the event of a fire all children and young people and adults should leave all their belongings and evacuate the building immediately in an orderly fashion and meet in the graveyard at the front of church, within the church boundary.
- The group leader should check the children and young people against the register as soon as possible to ensure everyone is present and safe.
- The Fire Brigade should be called as soon as possible.
- Ensure that there are no hazards within the room that children and young people could fall over, pull on top of themselves or injure themselves with.

- If using the Church Hall, children and young people should not be allowed into the kitchen area.
- In the Church Hall children and young people should not be allowed to leave the room they are using unsupervised unless the Church Hall doors are locked.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to challenge any adults that they do not know and verify their identity (by reference to the group leader) before allowing them to remain in the same room as children or young people. Any strangers should be asked to leave immediately.

- All equipment should be assessed for its safety and suitability to be used by children and young people and should be age appropriate.
- Children and young people should be supervised when using equipment at all times.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure all volunteers are trained to use equipment.
- Ensure that children and young people know which equipment they are allowed to use by themselves and which they need to ask an adult to help them with.
- Make sure you have appropriate adult to child ratios:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children
3-5 years	1 adult to 5 children
5-7 years	1 adult to 6 children
8-11 years	1 adult to 8 children

Our aims for children and young people's groups

To provide a safe environment for all children and young people, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or ability, in which they are valued and feel confident to ask for help and support

To enable children and young people to explore and develop their understanding of the Christian faith in ways that are relevant, accessible and creative.

To support children and young people in their faith journey, encouraging them to respond to God, grow in relationship with Jesus and to help them learn what it is to be a disciple of Christ today.

To provide a caring climate where children and young people are encouraged to build friendships and are nurtured within the church regardless of their level of faith.

To ensure that all those who work with children and young people do so within accepted good practice guidelines. It is the requirement of the leaders to ensure everybody is aware of these.

- Never do anything of a personal nature for a child which they can do for themselves
- Be aware of how and when you touch children. Remember to respect a child's wishes about any comfort you wish to give. The child may not appreciate your 'get well' hug. Never pat a child on the bottom or allow them to sit astride your lap.
- Never promise a child or young person total confidentiality.
- Do not kiss a child or young person on the mouth and be careful of extended hugs.
- However, children and young people do have a right to confidentiality unless a child protection issue is involved. Ensure you have read and understood the Church's Child Protection Policy in respect of confidentiality and reporting procedures. Only share information with, or talk through any concerns you have about a child or young person, with either your group leader or the Vicar. If, in exceptional circumstances you need to share information with someone else, make sure they understand it is confidential.
- Record any concerns and incidents in connection with a child or young person, noting the date, time and place. Such records are confidential, should be kept securely and shared only with the group leader or Vicar
- Never give any medication to a child or young person without the written permission of a parent or carer. Such permission should include the exact dosage and time to be administered. Always get another adult to witness you giving the medication and countersign the record of the date, time and dosage given in the Incident Book.