

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE FRAMEWORK



Policy on a Page

No.1

A Vision for Children

Our *Vision for Children* is a statement of values and ways of thinking that underpin all the aspects of our work in the spheres of church, school and home. It is a vision of acceptance and welcome that resonates through the life and message of Jesus Christ, focused on the children and young people themselves. It seeks to ask questions about how we value each individual as they present in the 'now', with openness to possibilities and opportunities to hear their stories.

This Vision is entitled '*Seeing the Child*'.

Seeing the Child translates into three themes:

The community with the child

Formation takes place within safe spaces, where individuals' needs and differences are valued; thus the community or family should be a place of love, of building peace in relationships, of sanctuary. It will offer both **formation** and **protection** – and you can tell the strength of a community by the way it treats those who are most vulnerable. This may be expressed as intergenerational *Whole Church* or the wider school community, and all leaders, ministers and staff are included. In this community, children and young people will encounter the idea that God loves them.

We are all called to care and tend so that all can flourish.

The child as Fellow Pilgrim

We have to find a real passion to see children and young people become equal and integral members of our community and worshipping life. We engage in ministry **with** them, not **to** them, and recognise their innate spirituality. We understand that they can enhance our spiritual journey as much as we can enhance theirs; an encounter together may reveal the divine beyond our experience, or draw us to the divine, where each may flourish in Christ.

The Learning Child

Children thrive in a space for learning that encourages listening and asking questions, not the passive transmission of a canon of knowledge. Here we find a sense of belonging, a thirst for discovering the 'what else' and each one's God-given gifting. Schools can be signs and expressions of fullness of life; our whole school philosophy declares that every child is known as a child of God, a spiritual, embodied being with all the grandeur and wonder that entails.

In community, as a fellow pilgrim and as a lifelong learner, we seek to give our children and young people the opportunity to grow through their experience of God's love. As we 'see the child' together, we share the understanding and experience of drawing deeply on the unfolding journey of the people of God.

A question for church schools:

What spaces, practices and policies have you established or planned to create a 'place of sanctuary'?

A question for churches:

What is your best guess of the experience of a child walking into your church?

A question for all:

What opportunities do generations have to interact in your community?

What more could you do?