



Code of Safer Working Practices with Children and Young People

Promoting Safer Practice

Safer working practice is critical to good safeguarding. Church officers will respect all children and young people and promote their well-being. The Church will create and maintain environments that:

- are safer for all
- promote well-being
- prevent abuse
- create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church.

The Church will challenge any abuse of power within church communities by ensuring church officers adhere to safe working practice.

You should:

- be aware of and understand the local safeguarding policy
- treat all children and young people fairly and without prejudice, discrimination or favouritism
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and faith and challenge behaviour that demonstrates discrimination and/or prejudice
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- always aim to work with or within sight and hearing of another adult
- ensure that another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet (toilet breaks should be organised for young children)
- ensure that children and young people know who they can contact if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern. They should be made aware of organisations that can provide support.
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but this should not involve physical comfort e.g. cuddles.

- advise children, young people and their parent/carers/guardians in advance if any activity requires physical contact and provide an opportunity to opt out or agree alternative activities.
- administer any necessary first aid with others around
- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed via any medium. (This should be from the parent, carer or guardian and the young person if 13 years or over. Images should not be taken or stored on personal devices).
- record any incidents that concern you or make you feel uncomfortable and give the information to your group leader in the first instance. Although you must also contact the church, circuit or district safeguarding officer immediately if you believe you have acted in a way that others may have interpreted as inappropriate or if a child has acted inappropriately towards you. Records must be signed and dated.
- always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding officer.

You should not:

- initiate physical contact and if this is initiated by the child, do not pull away abruptly but do so gently so physical contact is for the minimum amount of time
- invade a child's privacy whilst they are washing or using the toilet
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive in the presence of or to a child, even as a joke
- touch a child inappropriately or forcefully
- scapegoat, ridicule, reject or ignore a child, group or adult
- allow abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying)
- show favouritism to any one child or group

- allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is clearly physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own
- smoke any substance, vape or consume alcohol in the presence of children or when responsible for them
- provide personal contact details to a child or young person such as mobile number, email or social media contact
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- arrange social occasions (this includes online activity) with children or invite them to your home outside organised group occasions (other than with the consent of parent, carers or guardians and where at least one other adult is present)
- allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- allow strangers and those who are not authorised to give children lifts.

Appropriate dress

You should dress appropriately when working with children and not wear anything revealing or that is not practical for carrying out the tasks as part of your role.

Receiving gifts

There may be occasions when children give you gifts. It is polite to accept a gift but your group leader should be informed. As a general rule, expensive gifts should not be accepted. For further guidance on procedures for safer working practices when managing activities for children, please refer to the main Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for The Methodist Church.