

Good Practice Guidelines When Working With 0-18s

These good practice guidelines are primarily concerned with enabling adults and children to flourish within the life of the Church. Full details are in the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) “Safe To Grow” book (chapter 13) which is available from the church office or online: [Safe to Grow](#). Christchurch Baptist Church has adopted this code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with 0-18s [“child(ren)”]. All children and volunteers, whatever their age, gender, sexual orientation, racial background, culture or disabilities should always be treated with respect and dignity. The safety and welfare of children must be a priority.

Our Responsibilities...

We are responsible for treating all children with respect and dignity by:

- Using age appropriate language and tone of voice;
- Being aware of body language and the affect this is having on the individual child;
- Listening well to children, being careful not to assume we know what a child is thinking or feeling. Listening to what is spoken and how it is said, observing body language to more deeply understand what is being said.
- As far as possible, a worker should not be alone with a child(ren) where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open or two groups working in the same room.
- In a conversation with an individual child, especially where privacy and confidentiality are important, make sure that another adult is within sight of the conversation.
- Be aware that physical contact can be easily be misconstrued*.

**It is advisable to avoid physical contact altogether with children in your care. However, it is argued that this policy can at times prevent the development of nurturing relationships with children. Leaders and workers should be encouraged to discuss any concerns arising regarding this. Ask yourself the question, “For whose benefit is this taking place, and, is the action appropriate for the (st)age of the child?”*

We must ensure that we do not engage in any of the following during the course of our work, always respecting a child’s personal space:

- Invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting;
- Rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- Making sarcastic or sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even if in ‘fun’;
- Inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form (e.g. adult-initiated hugging);
- Scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child;
- Physical punishment of any sort.

Working One-To-One...

Most children's ministry takes place within a group setting, however there are times when one-to-one work with a child is a necessary part of a programme. One-to-one work must be practised safely, appropriately and within agreed guidelines as described in our Mentoring Policy.

It might be appropriate to meet with a child in a one-to-one situation:

- At the end of a group event whilst others are clearing up;
- During a group session, in a side room with the door open with others knowing that the meeting is taking place;
- At a coffee shop after school with consent from parents/carers and within agreed time periods.
- Never invite a child to your home alone. It is acceptable to invite a group if appropriate adult-child ratios are maintained. Parents/carers must know where the child is and what time they should return home/be collected.

Keeping Records...

- Parental consent and medical forms must be signed by parents/carers for activities on and off church premises. This information should be readily available to group leaders in line with our [Data Protection Policy](#).
- Specific consent must be sought for any activities where additional information is necessary and/or the risk factors of the activity require it.
- An attendance register must be made and archived for each session in line with our [Data Protection Policy](#).

Communication with Parents/Carers...

- Group leaders are responsible for ensuring good two-way communication with parents/carers.
- Parents/carers must be signposted to the [Church's Safeguarding Policy](#) on a regular basis.
- Parents/carers must regularly be given written information about who is caring for their child and how to contact them, especially for special events/activities.
- Under normal circumstances, volunteers' personal phones and numbers should not be used.
- Only a known parent/carer (or other nominated person) is permitted to collect children from sessions.

Unaccompanied Children & Children Attending Without Their Own Parent/Carer...

When children attend any church activity unaccompanied by their own parent/carer, with or without the prior knowledge of their parents/carers, we will:

- Welcome the child (or children) and try to establish their name, age, address and telephone number.

- Record their visit in a register including details of the responsible adult (if not their parent/carer) they may have attended with. If attending unaccompanied, this should also be recorded in the register.
- If unaccompanied, ask the child if a parent/carer or responsible adult is aware of where they are. Where possible, phone and make contact, recording details of the conversation.
- Without interrogating the child, find out as soon as possible whether they have any specific needs (e.g. medication, allergies, etc.) so that we can respond appropriately in an emergency.
- Give the child (or email the parent where possible) a Parental Consent & Medical Form, explaining it needs to be completed and returned on or before a future visit.
- When it's not possible to obtain a Parental Consent & Medical Form, dependent upon the (st)age of the child, they may still be welcomed and registered. Staff and volunteers will need to exercise their discretion and/or seek the advice of a Safeguarding Trustee or Minister if unsure about the appropriateness of welcoming a child without a Parental Consent & Medical Form. Parent contact details should sensitively and occasionally be sought repeatedly.

Taking Photographs...

- Children must not have their photograph or video image taken unless with their prior consent and that of their parent/carer.
- Separate consent must be sought if an image is to be used for publicity.
- One appropriate adult photographer should be nominated to take images by the group leader who remains responsible for implementing the above bullet points.

Electronic Communication (mobile phones, email, social media etc.)...

There are specific dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance. Electronic communication is often extremely informal, which can be misunderstood. Consequently, workers can easily cross appropriate boundaries in their relationships with children. Some adults who are intent on harming children choose to use electronic communication as a way to meet and 'groom' children.

- Contact with children by electronic communication should be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter/conversation. Any electronic communication with children (e.g. on social-media sites) should be kept in the public domain - never use private messaging or non-public forums.
- Where a child initiates electronic communication with a worker:
 - Conversations should be saved as graphical screenshots and copied to another responsible adult for the purpose of accountability;
 - A record must be kept of when communication happened and who was involved;
 - The worker must avoid the use of questions and cease communication at the earliest opportunity, following up conversations as appropriate by another non-electronic means.

Transport / Travel...

- Parents/carers should give permission for their child(ren) to be given transport and should be informed at what time to expect their child(ren) home.
- Two adults should be present in the car when transporting a child(ren).
- If a child is travelling alone in a car with a worker, the child should be asked to sit in the back seat.
- Workers must not spend unnecessary time alone in a vehicle with a child (e.g. long conversations in the car outside church premises or home) and unnecessary diversions (e.g. stopping off at shops, etc.) should be avoided.
- Workers must avoid being alone in a car with a child who is particularly vulnerable. Consider for example the age, stage, gender and/or additional needs of the child.
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover; that the vehicle being used is road worthy; and that legal requirements are adhered to (e.g. use of child seats, seatbelts, etc.).

Working Ratios...

Make sure that there is a suitable ratio of adults to children. For example, think about how you will manage if someone has a serious accident. When working with children the following recommended minimum ratios of workers to children apply:

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8 – 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

This does not take into account special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratios. In calculating the ratios of workers to children, young leaders who are under the age of 18 years should be counted as one of the children, not one of the workers.

The BUGB's publication "[Safe to Grow](#)" gives further advice about ratios for activities involving an overnight stay. Leaders should refer to this when necessary. "Safe to Grow" is available from the church office or online: [Safe to Grow](#).

How to Report a Concern...

In the event of a specific concern raised by a child or about a child, follow the flow chart overleaf, then go to our website www.christchurchbaptist.org.uk/safeguarding-reporting to report your concerns to our Safeguarding Trustee.

Should you have a specific concern over a volunteer or staff member, you must make our Safeguarding Trustee aware by reporting your concerns via our website www.christchurchbaptist.org.uk/safeguarding-reporting.

Child Safeguarding Concern/Incident Reporting Flow Chart

