

Good Practice Guidelines

Insurance Most existing parish insurance covers indoor activities for children and youth.

PCCs need a record of any other activities that may take place and it must be checked that insurance cover is adequate.

Volunteers (particularly those under the age of 18) should never work unsupervised and should be given clear guidance and support.

Communication Clergy, the PCC and parents should be clearly informed of all the activities in which children and young people may take part on church premises or through the church in any way.

Finance If money is collected, account of this should be given to the PCC.

Good Practice in Children's Ministry Children's Ministry volunteers should:

- ✓ be committed, enthusiastic Christians who are excited about growing in their own faith;
- ✓ have a love for children, patience and a sense of humour;
- ✓ be prepared to attend training in addition to Child Protection training;
- ✓ be familiar with the diocesan and church Safeguarding Children policies and procedures and committed to the good practice included in them;
- ✓ consider the different ways children develop, and how this affects the kinds of activities they can do;
- ✓ think about how the Children's Ministry team works and how they contribute to it;
- ✓ recognise the different factors that affect decisions when planning activities with children;
- ✓ be aware of the variety of ways that people can pray;
- ✓ appreciate the different kinds of writing in the Bible and the different ways they can be used with children.

Participation in the Bishop's Certificate in Children's Ministry (Level 1) will enable volunteers to explore many of these elements of good practice in children's ministry.

Adult / Child Ratios Guidance recommends the following ratio of leaders to children according to their age:

For 0 to 2 years - 1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years - 1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)

For 3 to 8 years - 1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)

For over 8s - 1 leader for the first 8 children followed by 1:12 (i.e. 32 children would require 3 leaders)

Toilet facilities The ideal is 1 toilet and 1 hand basin per 10 children

Warm and clean Group areas should be warm, adequately lit and ventilated. High standards of cleanliness should be maintained.

Special Needs Be able and willing to accommodate children with special needs. Be aware of access to your building and toilet facilities. Agree and record needs and procedures for specific children with their parents/carers.

Entrances and exits should be well lit and easily accessible

Registration Where activities take place for more than 2 hours in any one day, or if a holiday club runs for more than 6 days a year, registration of the provision with Ofsted is required (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

More than one leader There should always be more than one adult leader (over 18) for any group. If possible have at least one male and one female leader if the group is mixed.

Time alone Minimise time alone with any child or young person.

If it is vital to be isolated with an individual ensure that another leader is informed of where you will be and why. If possible remain in the view of another leader.

Try never to be behind a closed door but if necessary tell someone that you are there.

Administration Keep an up-to-date register and record of children, their parents and contact phone numbers, addresses and medical consent form, attendance and other specific information (such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, allergies and medication etc.)

Touch is an important part of human relationships: for example, it can be necessary to stop a young child from hurting herself or himself; it can also be a natural way of responding to someone in distress.

However, everyone working with children should be sensitive to what is appropriate and inappropriate physical contact, both in general terms, and in relation to a specific individual.

Leaders need to be conscious of situations in which their actions, however well intentioned, could be misconstrued by others or be harmful.

Good practice with children and young people Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity; watch language, tone of voice and where you put your body.

Do not:

- ✗ invade the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting;
- ✗ engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- ✗ make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in fun
- ✗ engage in inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- ✗ scapegoat, ridicule, or reject a child or young person
- ✗ control and discipline children using physical punishment
- ✗ let youngsters involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature
- ✗ invite a child or young person to your home alone: invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the home. Make sure the parents know where the child is.
- ✗ share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if you take a group away.

Good practice with colleagues If you see another member of staff acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Casual visitors i.e. those who have not been authorised by the Church as leaders or helpers, should not have access to children without the presence of an adult who is deemed to be responsible for the group.

Health and Safety

- ✓ All leaders should know the location of the nearest telephone.
- ✓ Adults must be aware of the safety / fire procedure. A fire drill should be carried out regularly. Fire extinguishers should be available and regularly checked.
- ✓ Children with infectious illnesses must not attend.
- ✓ No smoking should be permitted near the areas children will be in.
- ✓ Children should submit a health form before an activity. Take health forms when going off-site.
- ✓ Accidents should be recorded with a note of any action taken and signed by the leader involved.
- ✓ A first aid kit should always be available and its location must be well known.
- ✓ No medication should be administered without written parental consent.
- ✓ One leader should ideally be a first-aider.
- ✓ A responsible adult should make sure that the premises are open in good time.

Transport If at all possible do not give lifts to children and young people on their own other than for short journeys. If they are alone ask them to sit in the back seat. Check that insurance covers the vehicle and passengers. Seat belts must be worn and Department of Transport guidance followed (consult www.dft.gov.uk/think).