

How to – Guidelines for Safer Working Practices

These Guidelines for Safer Working Practices express our commitment to demonstrating God's love by placing the highest priority on the safety of those to whom we minister. It sets out what we expect from anyone who performs any role in our churches or church bodies, whether ordained or lay, paid or voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding in all we do. Creating environments in which everyone is safe and can thrive is essential to our purpose as God's Church.

Upholding the Guidelines

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of these guidelines to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Cathedral Safeguarding Lead or Officer (CSL/CSO) or Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST). Staff and volunteers who breach these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Church of England's Safeguarding Code of Practices, including being asked to leave or being removed from their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral made to the relevant statutory agency. In an emergency, always call 999.

All Those Working on Behalf of the Parish with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Must:

- Treat every person with respect and dignity.
- Respect people's rights to personal privacy but understand the duty to report safeguarding concerns and allegations.
- Ensure that their language, tone of voice and body language are respectful.
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a safeguarding concern.
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult and/or the behaviour of another worker to their activity leader and/or the Safeguarding Lead for their context (PSO, CSL/CSO, DST). All written records should be factual, signed, dated and stored securely. In an emergency, always call 999.

- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored. Separate guidance on photography is being produced.

In Addition, Those Working with Children and Young People Must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if you are leaving the activity/group, for example, to take a child to the toilet, where that is age or developmentally appropriate, so that no children are left unsupervised.
- Respond warmly to a child or young person who needs comforting in a way that is age and/or developmentally appropriate, but make sure there are other adults around. Where possible, ensure that physical contact is in response to the child or young person initiating it and keep hands visible to others. Always provide a verbal explanation or request, for example “You seem upset - is it ok if I/would you like me to put my arm around your shoulder/give you a hug”, bearing in mind any age, developmental or other factors which may prevent a child or young person giving consent.
- Ensure that parents, children and young people understand there may be activities where physical contact is involved (e.g. tag, bulldog, games that involve holding hands, wheelbarrow races etc.) This can be achieved through annual activity participation consent forms.
- Be mindful of the Social Media guidelines (*being produced*) regarding being friends with children, young people, as well as adults who may be vulnerable on social media.
- If completing a home visit to a child or young person, ensure a parent/carer is present in the home and if in a separate room to that adult the door must

remain open. Where possible, home visits should be conducted by two team members rather than lone working.

All Those Working on Behalf of the Church with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Must Not:

- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual, irrespective of their age.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group.
- Permit abusive peer-to-peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group.
- Allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention seeking, whether physical, verbal or via technology.
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Visitors to children's, young people's or vulnerable adults groups or activities should always be accompanied by a person who has been safely recruited.
- Allow anyone who is not a safely recruited worker or volunteer to give lifts to children, young people and vulnerable adults in the group.
- Taking photographs on personal phones or cameras is not permitted. A cheap smart phone or tablet should be purchased for this purpose.

In Addition, for Children and Young People, Must Not:

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own. The exceptions being an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the child or young person should sit in the back seat and your decision must be recorded and shared with the Group Leader at the earliest opportunity. This is not to be confused with the situation where an existing agreement is in place to drop off multiple children, as inevitably there will be one child left at the end. Legislation around child seats, safety, business insurance etc must be adhered to. (Link to transport template which will cover safety)
- Smoke, vape, drink alcohol, or take recreational drugs in the presence of children and young people, or attend any activities smelling strongly of such. An exception to this may be when there is alcohol as part of a social situation with family members/carers present, eg a parish party, or a church service, eg Holy Communion. Prescribed medication should be taken in private wherever possible. If with young people for an extended period, such as days out or residentials, then smoking and/or vaping should be done away from the sight of the children and young people, which requires enough supervision to maintain safe working ratios (see Appendix 1).
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions. This applies to church approved events only, not private events such as birthday parties.

Acceptable Touch:

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by everyone, including children, young people and vulnerable adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working or volunteering should be initiated by the person being worked with themselves, and kept to the minimum. We need to recognise and understand that everyone's interpretation of touch might be different based on previous experience, what may seem innocent or innocuous to one can remind another of an abusive relationship or situation. Please always bear this in mind and always follow the guidelines below:

- Always ask permission before you touch someone.
- Be mindful of your body position when interacting with someone. This does not just mean in a sexual manner, but for example a very tall person speaking to a much smaller person could come across as intimidating.
- Allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive, bearing in mind that people will have different interpretations of what that might be.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs.

- Touch should be age and developmentally appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, not the worker.

In addition:

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with mobility and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching you anywhere you do not feel comfortable, eg face, arms, legs, hair.
- You should not allow people you support to sit on your lap, unless this would be age and/or developmentally appropriate and in public.

Appendix 1

There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios that are not in the education or early years sectors, the following has been taken from best practice guidance produced by the NSPCC: [Recommended adult to child ratios for working with children | NSPCC Learning](#)

- **Under 2 years** - one adult to three children.
- **2 - 3 years** - one adult to four children.
- **4 - 8 years** - one adult to six children.
- **9 - 12 years** - one adult to eight children.
- **13 - 18 years** - one adult to ten children.

Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum. It is recommended to have at least two adults present, even with smaller groups.

If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

Children who have special educational needs, additional needs and disabilities

If you are working with children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or additional needs, more supervision may be needed than the minimum ratios above.

You should carry out a risk assessment for each activity to help you decide on supervision ratios. This should take account of children and young people's behaviour, ability and mobility. As far as possible, include input from children and young people and their parents and carers in risk assessments to ensure children's needs are met.

Toilet ratios

Adults who haven't previously volunteered and haven't had the required safer recruitment processes shouldn't be left alone with children or take them to the toilet unaccompanied.

In larger groups of children, encourage groups to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult while the other adult(s) supervises the remaining children and keep a head count.

First aid ratios

We recommend that at least one adult is trained in first aid.

If running one-off events, you will need to carry out a first-aid and medical risk assessment. Many organisations provide medical services but ensure the organisation you select is competent, trained in first aid and able to cope with the demands of your event.

Travelling ratios

When travelling with children and young people the recommended adult to child ratio can vary depending on:

- Size of the group.
- Age of the children, their behaviours and needs.
- Size of the vehicle that you are travelling in.

If you are travelling in a vehicle it is recommended that there is one adult driving and one adult supervising the children. Larger groups and vehicles will require more adults to ensure adequate supervision.

