

Diocesan Safeguarding and Inclusion Protocol 2017

Good Practice Guidelines for Working with Children and Adults at Risk

A. Running Activities and Events

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Across Guildford diocese, churches are engaging in excellent children’s work and youth activities, as well as running drop-ins, lunch-clubs, food banks and street pastors, reaching out to some of the more vulnerable members of our society. Our aim is to provide a warm, nurturing environment for all and requires all clergy and lay people to maintain the highest professional standards in their work and relationships with them. It is essential to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard and include children, young people and adults in order that they can participate fully in any and all pastoral, social and other PCC endorsed activities, safe from harm and abuse.

We thank you for the many ways in which the churches in Guildford diocese reach out to and work in our communities and for the transformative effect this has in the lives of others. Safeguarding and inclusion underpins our diocesan vision and all twelve transformation goals in Transforming Church Transforming Lives. These Good Practice Guidelines complement the Church of England safeguarding policies and practice guidance. They are to guide and support you in your role and for you to develop best practice in all your parish activities. If you identify a situation you believe is not covered in this protocol or you are unsure how to proceed you must consult the diocesan Safeguarding Team.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Introduction

The following procedures apply whenever children and young people under the age of 18 take part in church organised events and activities. These include:

- One-off events or regular meetings specifically for children and young people in the parish, i.e. Sunday School, Youth Group, Mother and Toddler, etc.
- Day trips or outings which are non-residential
- Residential Events
- Any mixed aged activities or events including choir practice, bell-ringing, music groups, etc.

2. Leadership

One person must be the designated Group Leader for every activity or event.

Young people under 18 years are welcome and encouraged to assist with events and activities; however, they must not be left in charge of a group of children of any age, and should always be supervised by an adult leader, who is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed.

For Group Leaders aged 18—21 years we recommend that there is at least a four year age gap between them and the children they are supervising.

Parents and carers can assist with occasional activities such as holiday workshops, but they must always be supervised, and be responsible to an appointed leader. If they become part of a regular rota, they must be properly appointed through the normal safer recruitment process (Safer Recruitment Guidance 2016)

3. Supervision

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running activities and events for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to participants. This will minimise any risks to children, enhance the benefits they draw from the activity or event, reassure carers, and provide some protection to those responsible for providing the activity, should concerns or incidents arise.

You need to clarify whether the children or adults at risk in the activity remain under the supervision of the parents or carers at all times during the session (as for example in Messy Church for children) or whether they are looked after at times by a member of the activity team. This will determine risk assessment, supervision, ratios, recruitment and eligibility for DBS checks.

In the planning of activities, key factors to consider when implementing appropriate supervision levels include:

- Age and gender of children/young people
- Children with special needs
- Nature of the activity and venue

4. Supervision Ratios

The minimum required staffing levels for children’s groups are given below. At all times there must always be a minimum of two adults present, and one of these must be the designated Group Leader. It is also recommended that a gender balance is maintained where possible. It should be noted that any young helper under the age of 18 should not be included in these supervision ratios. A risk assessment may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision and staffing for a particular activity, however the following guidelines are considered a minimum requirement for any activity:

Supervising Adults (One must be Designated Leader)	Age of children	Maximum number of children	Ratio
2 minimum	0-2 years	6	1:3
2 minimum	2-3 years	8	1:4
2 minimum	3-8 years	16	1:8
2 minimum	8 years +	20	1:10

5. Young Helpers

The minimum age for a young helper is 13 years. Young people often assist as helpers in activities; such helpers must be the responsibility of and supervised by a named adult in the group who has been safely recruited. DBS checks will not usually be required and cannot be completed for children under 16. It is the Diocesan policy that young persons under the age of 18 should not be asked to take formal responsibility for work with vulnerable groups including children and they should always be supervised and supported by a named adult. Young helpers should never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. It is best practice to have at least a 4 year age gap between the young helper and the children with whom they are working.

When the young helper reaches the age of 18 and take on a leadership role or move into a position which has significant or unsupervised contact with children, young people, and adults who may be vulnerable, they will be required to be DBS checked at this time.

6. Training

It is important that all those working with children and young people and adults at risk, including young helpers, understand and follow the safeguarding policy and procedures. All are required to report allegations or concerns about possible abuse with their designated supervisor, safeguarding officer, incumbent or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Diocesan Safeguarding Training is provided for all those working in a relevant role following the House of Bishops' Practice Guidance.¹ All those working children and young people and/or adults should attend relevant safeguarding training as required. You can find further information on training requirements at <http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding-inclusion/safeguarding-training>.

7. Administration

Group Leaders should keep an attendance register of every child and adult attending each activity, event, or outing. Visitors to any activity session should be recorded and identified as such. For all church activities and events, the person with parental responsibility for each child or young person under 18 will be required to complete and sign the following documentation before their child/ren take part:

- Registration Record for Activities Form
- Photo Consent Form

Before every outing, day trip or residential events, parents/carers must give their further written consent, and under no circumstances should a child be included in the pursuit without first obtaining written permission from their parent/carer. The Parent Consent and Medical Information Form and the Photo Consent Form can be found in the Resources Section on the website at <http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/about/safeguarding-inclusion/safeguarding-resources>

¹ House of Bishops' Learning and Development Guidance 2017.

All of these forms should be stored in a confidential place, but always be available for the Group leader/s of the activity to refer to if necessary.

It is good practice for activity groups to keep a Log Book for all activities for children and young people and adults at risk. Workers should record in there any unusual events, observations or conversations. The record should be factual and using the words of the child or adult concerned. Written observations are valuable if leaders have to deal with challenging behaviour where a child or adult subsequently makes an allegation of assault. Similarly a child who repeatedly makes casual comments of a sexual nature towards those in role may later allege abuse. Records of previous examples of the behaviour help the situation to be seen as a whole and in context. It is also helpful to record incidents of physical and verbal aggression. The Log Book can protect children, adults and those in role and are vital part of gathering information and evidence.

An Incident Form should always be completed to records any incident of a concerning nature. In the event of an accident the child (subject to age), the parent or carer should be asked to read and sign the accident form. Adults at risk or their carers should also be asked to read and sign the accident/incident form as appropriate. It may be appropriate to read the form out to the adult but this should only be done with their agreement.

Information about allegations or concerns over abuse should not be disclosed or shown to parents.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer should have an up-date list of all paid and voluntary workers in the church who have regular, direct contact with children and ensure that the safer recruitment procedures, including supervision, support and training have been followed for each of them.

8. Ofsted Registration

Churches who provide child care on their premises are classed as ‘childcare providers on non-domestic premises’ and may be required to register to care for children with Ofsted. However, there are a series of exemptions which may cover the activities of church-run holiday and after-school clubs for children.

Registration is the responsibility of the organisation providing the child care. This may be the church or an individual or organisation who is a tenant of the church. The process can take up to six months after submission of the application, and will involve checks and reference requests, and a visit to the premises. There is also a cost for registration. For further information visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted> or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

9. Practical Considerations

The Group Leader should have overall responsibility for the planning, supervision and conduct of the event or activity, and should ensure that:

- All adult helpers have been adequately vetted, and safely recruited.
- The activity, event and transport arrangements are covered by insurance. This should include public liability.
- The appropriate parental approval and consent has been obtained and all relevant documentation has been completed

- Parents and carers have been clearly informed of the arrangements of the activity/event in order that children can be collected
- The appropriate adult/child ratios are in place, so that children are adequately supervised at all times
- There is a phone available for emergencies
- All adults are aware of the health and safety issues relating to the activity/event, including procedures for first aid and fire.

10. Mixed Age Groups

One of the positive things that the church can offer is a place where young and old, children and adults can be together, including worship and learning about the faith together. Children have the opportunity to get to know adults in a shared activity e.g. singing, making music, serving, bell ringing, study groups.

Experience has shown that mixed age groups are vulnerable to infiltration by people seeking to harm children. The opportunity for regular informal contact can enable an offender or potential offender to gain the trust of a child or young person enabling them to move on to offend. The following good practice should be followed to ensure that children and young people are suitably protected when involved in a mixed age group activity:

- Mixed age activities must have designated leaders who have been appointed in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Guidance 2016.
- Organists, Choir Leaders, Tower Captains and bell ringing trainers should always be appointed as children's leaders if there are or likely to be children for whom they are responsible. Further guidance on bell ringing safeguarding protocols can be found at http://cdn.cofeguildford.org.uk/docs/default-source/about/safeguarding-policy-page/bellringing_safeguarding_protocols.pdf?sfvrsn=0.
- There must always be a minimum of two designated children's leaders/chaperones present when children or young people are being taught, or during rehearsals
- Parents must sign a consent form which sets out the arrangements for the activity
- Safety must be the top priority in the bell tower or organ loft. Those responsible should be aware of the insurance requirements for the activity.

11. Late Collection of Children

Parents/carers should be made aware that it is not the church's responsibility to transport children home on behalf of parents who have been delayed. It is recommended that parents are provided with a staff/volunteer contact number in order that they can phone if there is a likelihood of a late collection. In cases of late collection, the Group Leader should:

- Attempt to contact the child's parent/carer on the contact number/s provided in the Registration/Consent Form
- Use the emergency contact name/number if necessary
- Wait with the child/young person, with other staff/volunteers or parents present if at all possible.

- NOT take the child home or to any other location without the permission of the parent or carer
- NOT send the child home with another person without the permission of the parent or carer.

There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency or where not giving a lift may place a child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Representative and parent/carer. If the child appears to have been abandoned, statutory services must be contacted.

12. Unaccompanied Children

Children may begin attending church services or church activities without their parents' or carers' knowledge. In this event, the following is recommended:-

- Welcome the child/ren and try and establish whether their parents are aware of where they are
- Depending on the age and competence of the child, ring the parents, or ask the young person to ring, to gain their consent to allow the child to remain
- Complete a Registration Form as far as possible
- Make sure an adult who has been safely recruited for work with children takes care of the child – this is particularly important during public worship where unknown adults may attend and attempt to befriend the child
- Give the child written information about the church service or activity to take home with a Registration Form
- If the child comes regularly, endeavour to establish contact with the parents or carers
- Never take the child on outings or transport them without their parents/carers permission.

13. Use of Home Venues

No child or young person should be invited into the home of an adult who works or volunteers with them unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and the PCC. It is advisable that activities for children and young people take place on church premises. In the event of leaders using their own homes for church activities, any activity which includes children under the age of 18, where their parents are not present, is subject to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Furthermore:

- Rooms should be checked for physical hazards and be hygienic
- Bedrooms should not be used in any circumstances
- Two adults (preferably unrelated) should be present from before the first child arrives until after the last one leaves
- Ensure that you are aware of any allergies the child has, including pets, and that the home is safe for the child to be.

14. Holidays, Residential Trips and Overnight Events

No child under the age of 8 years can be taken away on Residential activities without his or her parent or guardian.

A detailed description of the holiday or trip should be presented to the PCC so that permission may be given, and the event covered by parish insurance.

The Group Leader is responsible for preparing the programme of activities, and should have researched or visited the venue in advance to check for suitability, including insurance, food and hygiene, first aid, accommodation and fire precautions. Written confirmation of the premises Employers and Public Liability insurances should also be obtained.

In addition, a risk assessment (See Resources section on Health and Safety) for all activities connected with the event should be carried out in advance, and on arrival to ensure that the environment is safe for all parties present. There must also be a suitably qualified first-aider on site at all times.

Both the Group Leader and a designated person 'at home' must have a list of all the children and adults present, including emergency contact details. The Group Leader must report all serious incidents to the designated person 'at home' who can act as the intermediary between the group, the church and parents.

The Group Leader should hold a pre-event meeting with parents/carers in order that they have full information about the trip before giving consent.

15. Accommodation

- Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities which are private to them.
- Mixed groups must have adults of both genders involved.
- Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the children/young people.
- Children must not be left alone overnight.
- There should be a rota of awake adults during the night at least until all the young people have settled down.

A. ADULTS AT RISK²

The following guidelines apply whenever adults who may be vulnerable take part in church organised events and activities. These include:

- **During worship**

² Section 6 Clergy and Disciplinary Measure 2016 defines vulnerable adult as “a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise..”

- **Day trips or outings which are non-residential**
- **Holidays and Residential Events**
- **Home or Pastoral Visiting/Home Communion**

1. Leadership and Supervision

One person must be designated Group Leader for every activity or event. It is the Group Leader's responsibility to clarify with the worker or volunteer their roles and responsibilities regarding their relationships with vulnerable adults with whom they may be in contact. Regular supervision for staff and volunteers will ensure their work is monitored and also offers the opportunity for them to raise any issues.

For specific activities or groups for adults at risk a minimum of two adults must always be present. One of these should be the designated Group Leader, however a risk assessment may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision and staffing for a particular activity.

All regular leaders and helpers of activities with adults at risk should be safely recruited in accordance with national practice guidance.

2. Practical Considerations

Parishes are encouraged to create an environment where all are encouraged to participate and contribute. The Group Leader should have overall responsibility for the planning, supervision and conduct of the event or activity, and should ensure that:

- The activity, event and transport arrangements are covered by insurance. This should include public liability
- The vulnerable adults and/or their carers are consulted in order to identify their specific needs, and how these can best be met
- Vulnerable adults are informed about the aims and objectives of any trips or activities and the dates, duration and details of venue and travel arrangements
- Vulnerable adults are given choices about where they sit, and what activities they participate in, and offered assistance in such a way as to maximise their independence
- Vulnerable adults are given a chance to do things that other people might take for granted
- Vulnerable adults are given the best quality of support and protection
- The needs of carers are taken into consideration, and they are offered breaks and practical assistance if feasible.

3. Holidays, Residential Trips and Overnight Events

There should be sufficient staff to make the holiday safe and enjoyable, and always a minimum of two leaders on the trip. Careful consideration should be given to:

- The appropriateness of the venue/accommodation
- Length of journey and mode of transport

- Proximity to any necessary support facilities (i.e. hospitals, doctors, etc.
- Advice should be sought if a person has complex health needs, and agreements made in advance for administering medication and care plans for the duration of the holiday.

4. Home Visiting (including Residential homes)

There are some church activities where home visits are an integral part of the work. In these circumstances it is essential that the following safeguards are put in place to protect both the vulnerable adult and the worker/volunteer.

Wherever possible, workers should avoid lone working with a vulnerable adult.

A risk assessment should be undertaken before visiting someone in their own home and if there are any concerns or risks, careful consideration should be given as to whether the visit is absolutely necessary, and whether another adult should be present. Please refer to the Lone Working protocol in the Resources section of the website.

- The worker/volunteer should always carry a mobile phone on a home visit, and ensure that someone else within the activity/group knows about the arrangement, including times and location
- Don't call unannounced – call by arrangement, if appropriate telephoning the person just before you go
- Carry identification, or a note of introduction from your church at all times
- Rather than give out personal information, give those you visit a central contact point within the church
- Be clear about boundaries – keep to agreed limits on how much time you will spend with someone and how often you visit
- Be clear about what behaviour is acceptable – and what is not – from the vulnerable adult In the event of any problems, seek advice from the Parish Safeguarding Representative and/or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- Make a record of your visit including any possible vulnerabilities or concerns and share these with your supervisor

For further information about Lone Working and template record sheets please refer to the Lone Working protocol under the Policy and Resources sections on the website.

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