

## **Activities with children and young people**

- These recommendations apply to all churches' activities with children or young people – for instance, Sunday School, crèches, holiday clubs, youth clubs
- They apply as much to Sunday morning 'in house' activities as to activities which you run in and for the local community
- They are designed to protect the children in your care, as well as your leaders.

### **Leadership**

- Always have at least two leaders, no matter how small the group. Small groups with single leaders may meet in adjoining rooms with an open door between. If a child or young person is being interviewed alone, have another adult nearby
- Try to ensure the leaders' genders reflect the group, i.e. endeavour to have at least one male leader if there are boys present, and at least one female leader if there are girls present
- At least two leaders (preferably unrelated) need to be present from before the first child arrives until after the last child leaves
- No person under the age of 18 years should be left in charge of a group of children of any age
- Young people aged 16 and 17 years may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult leader, who is responsible for ensuring that good practice and the safeguarding children procedures are followed
- Recruit all regular leaders of activities with children according to the 'Selecting, recruiting and supporting staff' procedures - including taking up references and obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau enhanced disclosure
- Parents or carers who are not regular leaders in the church can assist with occasional activities such as holiday workshops, but should always work in the company of two nominated and known leaders, and be responsible to an appointed leader
- Ensure all leaders are aware of the health and safety issues relating to the activity, including procedures for fire and first aid
- Give regular leaders a copy of the relevant sections of the safeguarding children policy and procedures, and offer them support and training in their role.

### **Staffing levels**

These are the minimum required staffing levels for children's groups. More staff may be

required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

**For every age group, always a minimum of two leaders.**

0-2 years 1 person for every 3 children

2-3 years 1 person for every 4 children

3-8 years 1 person for every 8 children

Over 8 years 1 person for the first 8 children and then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children.

**Administration for activities**

- The Safeguarding Officer should make and update annually a list of all paid staff and voluntary workers in the church who have regular, direct contact with children, and ensure that full recruitment procedures have been followed for each of them
- Leaders should register every child or young person attending each specific activity with a form which includes their name, address, date of birth, contact number for their parent and carer and consent to the activity. Store the forms together in a confidential place, and always have them available for leaders of the activity throughout each session
- Leaders should keep an attendance register for each activity of every child and leader in attendance at each session
- There should always be a phone throughout each activity for emergencies; this may be a mobile phone
- All confidential records about leaders, and confidential records relating to allegations of abuse against members of the congregation, and specific concerns about children or young people, should be stored in a locked filing cabinet, with access limited to the Safeguarding Officer and the Incumbent
- Record all accidents in the Accident Book, which should always be accessible on the premises.

**Running of activities**

- Ensure children and young people are in sight of an adult leader at all times
- Check areas of the building out of sight, e.g. toilets, regularly during sessions
- Accompany young children to the toilet. Children and young people should

have access to toilets without having to be in contact with other users of the premises

- As a general principle, parents or carers of children under 11 are responsible for taking and collecting their children to an activity for which they have registered
- Parents or carers must be clearly informed of the place and time of meeting; and, if the meeting is off-site, when children will return
- For children over 11, it is the parents' or carers' responsibility to make arrangements with their child for collection or travelling home independently
- If a leader has concerns about the collection arrangements for a child over 11, they should address these directly with the parents or carers
- In the event of a child not collected as arranged, the parent or carer should be contacted by phone and asked to collect the child. If contact with the parent is not possible, two leaders should wait with the child until contact with parent or carer has been established. Only in exceptional circumstances should the child be escorted home. If a child appears to have been abandoned, statutory services must be contacted
- Be clear about what behaviour is acceptable – and what is not – from children and young people.

### **Programme of activities**

- Ensure the activities are appropriate and safe for the age range
- Enable children to be consulted in the programme planning if possible
- Consider setting ground rules agreed by the group for participating in activities
- Films shown in a group activity must not be rated higher than the age of the youngest child in the group (e.g. 12 or 12A only to children of 12 or over).

### **Taking children off the premises**

- If children are to be taken off church premises for any reason, obtain written permission from parents or guardians. This permission may be granted for a given period of time, e.g. a term
- A named person at 'home base' for each activity should hold the registration details for all children, young people and leaders who are away from church premises, and be available by phone throughout the period of absence in case of emergencies. This person should have the itinerary and be aware of the plans,

including estimated time of arrival at the destination, and estimated time of return

- Leaders of the group should carry with them the registration and consent forms for all children in the group
- Leaders should each carry mobile phones, and have readily accessible on their phone the contact details of other leaders of the group, and the named person at 'home base'
- A first aid kit should be carried
- Parents should be informed if their children are to be transported by car or in another vehicle. Persons transporting children by car should be given a copy of section 4, Transport – minibuses, coaches and cars, and ensure they are complying with the requirements
- If youth leaders arrange to meet young people in coffee shops etc., a record should be kept of when the event occurred and in what circumstances
- For residential trips, see section 4, Holidays and residential trips.

#### **Publicity of activities**

- Keep parents, children and young people fully informed in writing of the programme of activities, including the venue, times and contact details for leaders, and make them aware of the ground rules for belonging
- Advertise the parish Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures in summary on the church premises, and have it available for parents or carers on request
- Publicise the name and contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (this can be through a central contact point), with a clear process for how concerns should be raised.

#### **Unaccompanied children**

Children may begin attending church services or church activities without their parents' or carers' knowledge. The following procedure is recommended:

- Welcome the child(ren) and try to establish whether their parents are aware of where they are
- Try to discover when they are due home and encourage them to keep to that arrangement
- Depending on the age and competence of the child, ring the parents or ask the young person to ring to gain the parents' consent to the child remaining

- Complete a registration form as far as possible
- Make sure an adult 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, including contact details
- 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' or carers' permission.

### **Use of home venues**

Generally speaking, it is advisable for activities for children and young people to take place on church premises. In the event of leaders using their own homes for church activities, any activity which includes children under 18 years when their parents are not present is subject to the parish's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

- 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.