

Preventative Guidance for Youth Leaders and Members

General

- **DO** treat all children with respect and dignity befitting their age.
- **DO** provide an example you would wish young people to follow.
- **DO** encourage children to be independent with personal hygiene and self-care routines.
- **DO** be alert to the issue of bullying and deal with it promptly and sympathetically.
- **DO** remember that caution is required in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bereavement, bullying, abuse, etc.
- **DO** consider carefully arrangements for residential holidays, camps, weekend studies and whether adults should share sleeping accommodation with children. This should be avoided if at all possible, but may be appropriate with very young children, say for parents, or if the activity is based on a youth hostel where single sex sleeping is customary.
- **DO** remember that another person can misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- **DO NOT** use physical discipline at any time.
- **DO NOT** engage in any inappropriate physical contact.
- **DO NOT** let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking, crushes or inappropriate language or behaviour.
- **DO NOT** show favouritism.
- **DO NOT** invite a child or young person into your home alone nor visit them alone.

1. Conversations with Children

1.1

Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia should try to avoid having conversations with children in private. Where this is necessary, the conversation should, if possible, take place in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area likely to be visited by other people, and another adult should be aware that this is taking place.

1.2

Children showing signs of distress or anxiety in a one-to-one situation should be treated sensitively. If possible another adult should be summoned or an offer made to the child to return to a more open situation such as returning to the group.

2. Physical Contact with Children

2.1

There are occasions when physical contact with a child may be proper or necessary, for example to administer first aid. Touching may also be appropriate where a child or young

person is being congratulated or praised, or where the child or young person is in distress and needs comforting.

2.2

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or because they have been abused. Physical contact with children becomes increasingly open to question as they reach and go through adolescence. Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

2.3

Any apparently sexualised behaviour exhibited by younger children should be discouraged in a sensitive, low-key but non-reinforcing manner, e.g. by tone of voice, facial expression and physical distance. Such behaviour may be indicative of abuse and should be discussed with the DSL.

2.4

Reasonable force is permissible only if it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a child:

- a) Committing any offence (or, for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older child)
- b) Causing personal injury to any person (including the child themselves)
- c) Causing damage to the property of any person.

Under no circumstances should any Youth Leader or member of the ecclesia use any physical discipline with any child engaged in activities arranged on behalf of the ecclesia. Following any incident where a child has been distressed or restrained, or where unusual physical contact has occurred, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

3. Other Guidance

3.1 General

- The welfare of the child should be paramount at all times
- It is the responsibility of all Youth Leaders or members of the ecclesia to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children
- Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia are responsible for their own actions
- Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way
- Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia should be visible and open in their practice and, when possible, work with children in an open and visible setting
- Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia should ensure that another adult knows where they are and what they are doing when they are engaged in activities with the children
- Youth Leaders and members of the ecclesia should ensure that if anything does go wrong they inform the DSL as soon as possible

3.2 Procedures

3.2.1

- Throughout and after any youth or ecclesial activity at least two Youth Leaders or members of the ecclesia must be present until
 - a) All children up to the end of school Year 6 have been taken home or handed into the care of a parent/guardian and
 - b) All children of school Year 7 and above have left the Hall or other location of the activity.
- There must be an adequate adult-to-child ratio for all youth activities. This would normally be 1-to-8 for children aged over 5.
- Registers of attendance must be kept for all regular youth activities.
- Youth Leaders or members of the ecclesia must not arrange to meet alone with a child.
- Programmes for regular youth activities must be provided for all children attending and their parents/guardians.
- A child must not be allowed to attend youth activities without a General Consent Form completed by his or her parent/guardian. (Appendix 16) General Consent Forms are confidential and must be kept in a secure place at the Hall and only be made available to Youth Leaders.
- Details of activities to be held away from the Hall must be provided for parents/guardians in advance together with a Specific Consent Form. The details must include the date, time, venue, mode of travel, cost and contact details of a Youth Leader for the duration of the event. A child will not be allowed to take part in such an activity without a completed Specific Consent Form.
- For special events, swimming, ice-skating, orienteering, mountain trekking, canoeing or any other adventure type activity it is essential to obtain specific consent in writing and check that the Public Liability Insurance provides adequate cover for higher risk activities.
- When children are transported to, from or during youth activities in vehicles driven by Youth Leaders or members of the ecclesia then the driver must ensure that the vehicle has a valid MOT certificate (if applicable), that it is roadworthy, that the driver holds a valid full driving licence for that class of vehicle and is suitably insured. Seat belts must be worn by all passengers, with appropriate booster seats used when needed by young children. The number of passengers must not exceed the number of seats or seat belts available.

Youth Leaders or members of the ecclesia should not normally carry a child to, from or during a youth activity alone in a vehicle but where this is unavoidable the child must be seated in the rear of the vehicle and the child's parents/guardians must be made aware of this arrangement. Wherever possible another Youth Leader or member of the ecclesia should occupy the front passenger seat. Drivers must aim to drive safely at all times.

- Prescribed medicines and non-prescription medicines such as paracetamol are not to be administered to children by Youth Leaders or members of the ecclesia. Emergency medication such as EpiPens or JEXTS must only be administered by a Youth Leader or

member of the ecclesia who is qualified to do so and if the written consent of a parent/guardian for the administration of such medication has been received.

3.3 Safety, risk management and related matters

3.3.1

- The Hall, its equipment and environment are to be checked regularly to help ensure the health and safety of all its users including children, especially with regard to fire safety, hygiene and security risks.
- Risk assessments are to be completed for youth activities.
- Emergency evacuation procedures must be explained to the children and an emergency evacuation practice held at least annually for each regular youth activity. Emergency evacuation signs must be clearly displayed and the routes kept clear. Firefighting equipment is available but should only be used by an adult who is competent to do so. The safe evacuation of the building should be the immediate priority.
- Names of those trained to administer First Aid are displayed in the Hall. Records must be maintained of any First Aid administered and of any accidents or incidents and parents/guardians must be informed. The First Aid cupboard in the kitchen at the Hall is stocked with First Aid equipment. A First Aid kit must be taken on all youth activities away from the Hall.
- A telephone is available at the Hall.
- Public liability and legal expenses insurance must be maintained by the ecclesia and reviewed annually.