

## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

(please write in your local numbers)

### LOCAL AGENCIES

Police (all non-emergency enquiries)	
Local Police Child/Family Protection Unit	
Local Council Children's Services/Social Care	
Local Emergency Social Work Team	
Local General Hospital	

CHILDLINE	0800 1111
PARENTLINE PLUS	0808 800 222

### DISTRICT CONTACTS

Role	Name	Phone
District Safeguarding Officer	Graham Kay	07704 037011

### CHURCH and CIRCUIT CONTACTS

Role	Name	Phone
Superintendent minister		
Minister		
Group Leader/organiser		
Church safeguarding Coordinator		
Circuit Safeguarding Coordinator		

The **Methodist Church**  
**Bolton & Rochdale District**  
**Cumbria District Lancashire District**

# WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES



## Code of Safer Working Practice

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Terminology used in this Code:

- The word 'child' refers to any child or young person under the age of 18.
- The term 'group leader' is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group or activity, who is answerable to the Church Council/Circuit meeting.

For guidance and good practice support resources and free downloadable forms for work with children, visit: [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk)

- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

### Minibus/Coach

- Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored
- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive

## E-Safety

- Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
- If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site.
- Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.

## Transporting children on behalf of the church

### Drivers

- All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years. A copy should be provided to the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the church/circuit safeguarding representative.
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children for the church.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

### Private Car

- Children & young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity.
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church sponsored activities. A copy of the insurance policy should be shown to the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- All cars that carry children should be in a roadworthy condition.
- All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts additional children should not be carried.

## 1. Guidelines for Individual Workers

### You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect & dignity.
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand.
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed.
- Record any incidents of concern and give the information to your Group Leader. Sign and date the record.
- Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding representative.

### You should not:

- Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see above) should be initiated by the child.
- Invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun.
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one child or group.

- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of children.
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young people.
- Share sleeping accommodation with children.
- Invite a child to your home alone.
- Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions.
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Allow strangers to give children lifts

### Touch

Church sponsored groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. All volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult.

Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming her/himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Church or Circuit Safeguarding Representative.

All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

## 2. Additional guidelines for group leaders

In addition to the above the group leader should:

- Ensure any health & safety requirements are adhered to
- Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept
- Keep register and consent forms up to date

Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, First Aid Kit and fire precautions should be checked and a Health and Safety Check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards:

### Venue

- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Electric sockets should be covered.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.
- Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Water [and cups] should always be available.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. The contents of the First Aid Kit should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.
- All staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged have some First Aid knowledge and the church or circuit should encourage access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders should be compiled and kept available.
- All accidents should be recorded in an Accident Book.

All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely

Any group that includes children who are under 6 years old and that meets regularly for more than 2 hours in any one day or for more than 14 days a year must register their group. Please contact your local branch of OFSTED for advice.

### Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below: More help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

0-2 yrs	1 person for every 3 children	1 : 3
2 – 3 yrs	1 person for every 4 children	1 : 4
3 – 8 yrs	1 person for every 8 children	1 : 8
Over 8 yrs	1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children	

- Each group should have at least 2 adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.
- Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping, should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.
- Adults who assist on one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process.

### Safe Environment

Display both the *Childline* telephone number in a prominent place where children & young people can see it and the *Parentline Plus* number for parents.

- Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present
- Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally
- Liaise with safeguarding representative over good practice for safeguarding.
- Always inform the safeguarding representative of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. The safeguarding representative will liaise with the district safeguarding coordinator.
- Liaise with the church council/circuit meeting.

## 3. Responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own. Always tell your group leader and/ or safeguarding representative. Agree between you *who* will take *what* action and *when*.

If you are not sure if child abuse is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, then again you should contact your group leader or safeguarding representative. The Local Authority Children's Services Duty Officer can also be a source of advice.

Always make notes about a possible child protection incident or disclosure as accurately as possible, as soon as possible. These should cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the child's words exactly where possible. Try if possible to note from the register the child's full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to sign the record and add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording.

Ensure all notes are kept in a safe place.

If a child asks to talk in confidence **do not** promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young person who is at risk to the statutory agencies. Always explain that you may have to get other people to help.

- Stay calm.
- Listen to the child attentively.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Allow the child to talk but do not press for information or ask leading questions.

- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell.
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told and why.
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand.
- Reassure the child that he or she will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come.

#### Imminent risk

- If you encounter a child in a situation where the child is in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure the safety of the child. Seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Children's Services.
- If a child needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, should be kept fully informed.

#### What to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused

- Agree with your group leader or safeguarding representative, who will make the referral.
- Make an immediate telephone referral to the Local Authority Children's Services. Make it clear from the first point of contact that you are making a child protection referral.
- Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family e.g. the child's name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP (if known).
- Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form (sometimes available on the Local Authority web site) or letter. If there is no acknowledgement within 48 hours, chase it.
- Remember that the child & family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral unless this would put the welfare of the child or another person at further risk. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a referral. The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.
- Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team.
- Say if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.

- For out of hours referrals, call the Emergency Social Work Team or where urgent, the police.

## 4. Good practice guidelines for church sponsored activities for children and young people

### Special needs

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent. If premises are being designed or refurbished, take the opportunity to anticipate the possible special needs of future children and adults; advice is available.

Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

### Consent

Consent needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. It can be from the child/young person if he/she has sufficient age and understanding in relation to the specific issue. So for example, whilst parental consent is always required for a group residential holiday, a teenager would usually be able to consent to the photos from the holiday being displayed in church. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity.

### Registration

A Registration Form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs including activities which the child is unable to take part in
- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant

Separate consent should be obtained for one off events and activities e.g. swimming and also for outings, weekends away, etc.