

Crofts End Church Children's Work / Practice Guidelines

(Any reference to 'child' refers to a child or young person under 18)

General

- All children and young people should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Respect personal privacy
- Be available to listen, but also be ready to refer a situation or problem to the child protection co-ordinators
- Be sensitive to needs, likes and dislikes
- Avoid questionable activity eg. rough/sexually provocative games and inappropriate language
- Follow guidelines relating to physical contact (*see 'Physical contact'*)
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour
- Report all allegations/ suspicions of abuse.¹

Church Procedures for reporting abuse

(refer to flow chart)

- Accept what you hear without passing judgement
- Don't promise confidentiality
- Don't ask questions
- Tell the child what you are going to do
- Contact Child Protection Co-ordinators
- As soon as possible write careful notes of what was said using the child's actual words and then sign, date and pass your notes to the Child Protection Co-ordinator¹

In an emergency (if a child is at imminent risk of significant harm) if the Child Protection Co-ordinator cannot be reached contact police or Children's Social Services direct. Inform Child Protection Co-ordinator of the action you have taken.

Responding to allegations

If you receive a complaint or allegation about any adult or about yourself

- Immediately tell either of the Child Protection Co-ordinators, or the Pastor if neither are available.
- Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or were told (include dates, times etc)
- Sign date and pass your notes to the Child Protection Co-ordinator
- Try to ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise

Remember, listen and pass on. You must not investigate.

Any information that is disclosed must be kept confidential and must not be disclosed to any other party except to those named above.

Supervision

These are the required staffing ratios for children's groups

Adult to Children

2 yrs & under	1 : 3
3 years	1 : 4
4 to 8 years	1 : 8

¹ From 'Safe and Secure' published by CCPAS

Over 8 years

Suggested levels are two adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an additional leader for every 10 children.²

Keeping Records

A register of children or young people attending a club or activity should be maintained, together with a register of helpers. This should include a record of arrival and departure times, particularly relevant if the child is not attending the whole session. Make a note of other people in the building (e.g. maintenance person, visiting speaker etc) and any other events taking place at the same time.

The register should also contain up to date information on parents' contact numbers and any relevant medical information on the children or young people.²

Any accident or incident which occurs will also be recorded within the register.

Parents must sign a consent form before children or young people are taken off site for activities and the Child Protection Co-ordinator must be informed.

Physical contact

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.²

Home Visits

No children's worker or church representative should visit a child at home. If you think it is necessary, contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator for advice.

Transporting Children

Where practicable, transport by church workers is to be discouraged, however where this cannot be avoided the following guidelines should be followed

- Only those who have gone through the church recruitment procedures for workers should transport children.

² 'Guidance to Churches 2007' published by CCPAS

- All drivers should have read the child protection policy of the church and agree to abide by it.
- Written parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the leadership of the church.
- The driver should hold a full driving licence, have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child.
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist children stay in the same groups on the out-going and return journey. This will avoid the confusion over whether a child has been transported home or at worst left behind.
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult or watch that they go into the house.
- Regulations governing the use of child restraints came into force on 18th September 2006. From that date all children carried as passengers in cars are subject to the following rules:
 - ✓ Children under three years of age must have the correct child restraint. (Exceptions: taxis and private hire vehicles)
 - ✓ All children between the ages of three and before they have reached twelve years of age, unless the child is over 135 cms in height, must use the correct child restraint. (Exceptions: where a child travels in a taxi, or private hire vehicle, over a short distance in an unexpected necessity, where two child restraints are already fitted preventing a third from being fitted.)
 - ✓ Children over 135 cms in height or aged 12 or 13 must wear adult seat belts if fitted.
 - ✓ Passengers over 14 years of age must wear adult seat belts where fitted (it is the passengers responsibility and not the drivers for ensuring this).
- If you intend to use a minibus, separate guidance should be sought.²
- Where possible children will be seated in the rear of the vehicle only.

Appointment process

Those seeking to work with children in any capacity will be subject to interview by the Child Protection Co-ordinator and one other leadership team member. An application form should be filled out providing details of referees. New recruits will be required to comply with the Criminal Records Bureau procedures. All appointments will be on a “negotiated” trial probationary period and this to be confirmed in a letter which also contains specific times and dates relating to the trial period.