
A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR OUR MINISTRY AMONGST CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Christ Church, Surbiton Hill

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Introduction

Dear Volunteer,

We have an amazing privilege and opportunity to work with children and young people. My hope is that this guide will be a resource to you in your ministry. I would love to see every child have the chance to choose a life and friendship with God. We have the opportunity to play a key part in their faith journey and to see them grow in their faith and love for God.

Thank you so much for being willing to serve the children and young people at Christ Church. Our purpose is to journey with children and young people as they discover God's love for them, become disciples of Jesus Christ and develop a relationship with him through the Holy Spirit. Thank you so much for being a part of the journey.

Safety is one of our key values in our work with children and young people, and one particular aspect of that is Safeguarding. At Christ Church, we adhere to the Church of England's 'Promoting a safer church' policy statement on safeguarding. All of our procedures are to be found in the Southwark Diocese document 'A Safe Church'. This document serves as a best practice guide and should have all the information you need to carry out your role. For matters concerning safeguarding, please use the guidance provided in the documents mentioned above.

Thank you for your commitment to help keep our children and young people safe. Once you have received this letter and document, you will be asked to sign an agreement to abide by these guidelines.

I look forward to ministering to the children and young people alongside you. May you work with the strength, gifts and energy that God has given to you.

Steve Weston

Children's & Youth Pastor

Our Vision for Children & Young People



Christ Church exists to glorify God by being a Jesus-loving, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled, servant-hearted family, living and telling the good news of Jesus in Surbiton and the World.

Purpose: Journeying with children and young people as they discover God's love for them, become disciples of Jesus Christ and develop a relationship with him through the Holy Spirit.

Values: At Christ Church we believe that God loves everyone: all ages, all backgrounds, all situations. We will strive to ensure that all of our children and young people find a safe place to belong and engage with God. Here are six Key Values that underpin our ministry with children and young people.

- **The Bible:** We believe that the Bible is God's Living Word. We believe that it helps us in life and will therefore teach what the Bible says. From the youngest to the eldest, we will learn from the Bible as we explore and experience Biblical truths
- **Worship and Prayer:** Our whole lives should be led in worship of God. We provide regular opportunities for our children and young people to worship God and encourage them to pray, too. We will support them so that they feel able to worship outside of group times and into their daily lives.
- **Community:** We want to build genuine community with our children and young people through authentic relationships. We care about and value them and will share an interest in things that are important to them. We will create environments where they are able to grow in relationship with one another.
- **Fun:** We want children and young people to enjoy their time at church. We will be creative, engaging and relevant in all that we do. We will play silly games, tell funny jokes, meet crazy characters and have a great time exploring God's Word and learning more about him.
- **Working with Parents/Carers:** We recognise that parents and carers need to be a part of this community, and we will partner with them as we disciple our children and young people. We will provide resources to enable parents/carers to journey together at home.
- **Safety:** We make sure that children & young people are safe. We ensure safe environments for groups/events as well as DBS checks for all volunteers and staff. We have annual safeguarding training and adhere to 'A Safe Church', the Diocese of Southwark safeguarding document.

Objectives: At Christ Church, we want our children and young people to

- Grow in knowledge of God and his purposes.
- Understand that God's purposes include a plan for their lives.
- Grow in character and be transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.
- Be so in love with Jesus that they can't help but talk about Him with their friends and family.
- Develop generous hearts so that they can be a blessing to God and to his Church.
- Be inspired by the stories they hear from the Bible and their peers so that they dedicate their lives to living boldly for God.

Structures & Roles

Children's & Youth Pastor: responsible for all the work in the church connected with children/young people. They meet regularly with the Team Leader to ensure the smooth running of each ministry.

Team Leader: responsible for ensuring that the ministry they serve runs well. They do this by encouraging both Group Leaders and Group Helpers in their roles, as well as ensuring the group has it all needs to thrive.

Group Leader: plan and run sessions and give feedback to their Team Leader.

Group Helper: support the role of the Group Leader. This may involve things like photocopying, helping children to use scissors or even finding a passage in the Bible.

Young Leader: assist and get alongside the children. They are not to be included in the ratios as an adult. Young Leaders are those aged 11-17 wishing to help with the younger children's groups. Their role will be discussed with the children's/youth pastor.

Safeguarding at Christ Church

Christ Church has adopted the '[Promoting a safer church](#)' document, the safeguarding policy statement for the church of England. Christ Church adheres to the procedures within '[A Safe Church](#)', the Diocese of Southwark Safeguarding document, which are both legal documents. Please note that this best practice guide provides guidance on Best Practice in our work at Christ Church. It is not a legal document and only provides guidance. This guide will be reviewed annually.

All children and young people, whatever their age, gender, racial background, culture, or disability, should have the opportunity to grow up safe from harm. In response to this, Christ Church has established a set of good and safe behaviour guidelines which ensure:

- that we adhere to Church of England and Diocese of Southwark Safeguarding guidelines, policy and procedure
- that we model positive patterns of Christian behaviour to children and young people
- the protection of workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwanted suspicion

Our expectations for all those in a position of trust

Christ Church holds the following expectations for those in a position of trust:

- all church workers must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the church; this includes both while on duty and also when off duty
- they must read and comply with this Best Practice Guide
- they will be seen as role models by the must not, in their work or private life, engage in activities which could bring the church, or their role within it, into disrepute
- they must seek advice immediately if they encounter a child or vulnerable adult who may have been harmed (including self-harm) or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate
- they must not expose themselves or others to material which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European or international law.
- they must inform the relevant church authorities promptly should any convictions, court orders or allegations of misconduct arise.
- they should attend safeguarding training when in positions of leadership with young people.

In the event of your receiving an allegation or complaint of inappropriate behaviour please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer. For more details, please see section 6 of the ['A Safe Church'](#) document.

It is contrary to the policy of the Church of England for those in a position of trust, including priests and youth workers among others, to have sexual or inappropriate personal relationships with those for whom they are responsible. A breach of this is likely to be considered as a disciplinary offence. It will be referred as appropriate to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and in some cases it may also constitute a criminal offence. Anyone found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence of this kind is likely to be dismissed and referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible barring.

Safe Behaviour Guidelines

All those working within any of the children's and young peoples' groups should be aware of the following.

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- Watch your own language, tone of voice and body language
- Ensure all communications with and about children are appropriate in their tone.
- Work within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet.
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around.
- If trained, administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
- Respond to any incidents and complete incident report form (see Appendix 2)

You should not:

- Use physical punishment to discipline children – this is illegal
- Invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Play rough or sexually provocative games, be sexually suggestive about or to a child or young person even in fun, touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject any child, young person or group.
- Show favouritism to any one child, young person 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
- Invite a child to your home alone.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Allow strangers to give children lifts. Always ensure parent/carer has given permission.
- Behave in work or in your private life in a way which would bring your role or the church into disrepute.

Allegations and Complaints

In the event of a concern about a vulnerable person, complaint or allegation against a Church Officer or member of paid staff a PSO should be contacted directly within 24 hours of the complaint and a Disclosure of Concern form should be completed – see link below. Team leaders or clergy then can be contacted by the PSO as appropriate to discuss next steps as required and appropriate and should do this in a timely way.

Where necessary the PSO can access advice from the diocese or report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer if a paid worker is involved in the allegation and it is appropriate/ necessary.

For more detailed steps around managing allegations and concerns please see Section 6 of the 'A Safe Church' -Diocese of Southwark document -[ASC Section 6 Allegations and concerns.pdf \(anglican.org\)](#)

Other Considerations

Below you will find information that may be of help in your role within the youth and children's ministry at Christ Church.

Recruiting Volunteers

All volunteers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children. An enhanced DBS check is required for all volunteers. References will be documented and held by the church, and safeguarding training will be undertaken.

Ratios

There should always be a minimum of two adults present for any children's or youth groups or events. The church will consider best practice ratio guidelines when planning and delivering sessions to ensure safe practice is followed. Where possible, if the children are a mixed group (male and female) then there should be at least one male and at least one female worker too. Young Leaders (below the age of 18) do not count as adults and therefore need to be taken into consideration regarding ratios.

Aged 0 - 2 years	1 adult to 3 children
Aged 2 - 3 years	1 adult to 4 children
Aged 3 - 8 years	1 adult to 8 children
Aged 8+	1 adult for the first children, 1 adult for every further 12

Registration

It is the duty of the group leader to ensure that a register is taken. If there is a need to evacuate the building, the group leader must keep the children together (with the assistance of any helpers) and check that everyone is accounted for. When leaving the building for activities in the garden, regular headcounts are encouraged.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment must be carried out for each group/activity/event. Main risk assessments are available from the church office, as well as blank risk assessments which can be completed for other activities/groups/events. These must be named, dated and signed and then submitted to the children's/youth pastor for discussion. Contact the Church Office for more information.

Health and Safety

- All children's and youth activities are to be assessed in conjunction with the church's health and safety policy.
- The group leader is responsible for ensuring that the room is safe for the activities each week.
- In addition, for one off activities, i.e., those different from the week-by-week sessions, a separate risk assessment form must be completed, signed, dated and given to the Children's Pastor.
- The person responsible for the event and all volunteers need to be made aware beforehand of any child or young person who has chronic or recurring medical conditions as well as any allergies.
- When handling food, volunteers must ensure they follow basic food hygiene at all times.
- Children and young people must not be given access to church premises unless responsible adults are present.
- If in doubt of potential risks associated with different church rooms, please see risk assessments (contact Church Office).

Fire Procedure

If there is a fire, raise the alarm. As you leave the room, check that everyone is out and place the 'Room Clear' poster on the door, ensure the door is closed. The Group Leader must take the group register with them and evacuate the building via the closest and safest exit. Walk with the children/young people down to the end of Christ Church Road and check that all children are accounted for. The children are to remain in your care until being handed over to the care of parents/carers with permission of the Children's/Youth Pastor. Once children are safely with their parents/carers please note on the register who has gone back with parents.

First Aid

During all activities there is a named first aider available to deal with any injuries. This person should have a relevant and up to date qualification and be familiar with the location of the first aid box provided (one just inside the church on the window ledge to the right, one in the church office). When you become aware of an injury:

- stay calm! Assess the situation and make sure others are safe.
- contact the first aider or a doctor from the congregation.
- wait for the appointed first aider to assist with the injury
- notify the Children's/Youth Pastor
- never move someone who appears to be badly injured unless absolutely essential for safety reasons
- for any injuries seek assistance to stop people crowding round
- be ready to call an ambulance/ parent/ guardian where necessary

Health/Allergies

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform the church if their child has an allergy or any other health concerns. We will also be notified if the child/parent carries any medication. All relevant details will be shared with the group leaders and helpers on a need-to-know basis.

Children who have any medical/health needs and/or allergies have their names highlighted on the group registers in yellow. Please do make sure to consult this information before giving snacks or doing a craft which may have an adverse effect on a child/young person. If in doubt, always talk with children's/youth pastor and/or the parent/carer.

All off site activities

It may be appropriate to increase ratio levels for outings, trips and overnight activities. Parental consent must be given for the specific activity and may be more detailed than the usual consent (e.g. may require more emergency contacts or clearer instructions regarding their medical care)

All off-site activities need to be agreed first with the Children's/Youth Pastor and the PCC. A full risk assessment must be completed (available from Church Office).

Photo/Video

Photo and video must not be taken on personal devices. All photo and video taken at events/groups/activities must be stored safely in the church office. Consent must be given by parents to share images of their children. Children's names must never be written alongside their pictures. Please consult the group register for information on who we cannot share pictures of.

Incident Record

All incidents must be recorded on an Incident Report form (Appendix 2). Copies of these forms are kept with the registers. The form should be completed for each child and each incident. The form must be photocopied, one given to the parent/carer (when child collected), the other retained by the church. These are to be stored by the Children's Pastor.

Contacts

Feel free to contact the following people should you have any questions or queries.

Christ Church Office	(for general enquiries)	020 8390 7215
Rev. John Shepherd	Vicar	john.shepherd@ccsurbiton.org
Steve Weston	Children's & Youth Pastor	steve.weston@ccsurbiton.org
Keith Mason	Parish Safeguarding Officer	safeguarding@ccsurbiton.org
Pamela Chisholm	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor	020 7939 9423 (office hours) 07982 279713 (out of hours)
Childline	For information, advice and support	0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk
Achieving for Children	Kingston Council	020 8547 5008 (office hours) 020 8770 5000 (out of hours)

For further information and a full list of policy and procedures relating to safeguarding, please see: [Diocesan policies and procedures - The Diocese of Southwark \(anglican.org\)](#)

Appendix 1 - Incident Report Form (page 1 of 1)

This form is to be completed by an adult witness whenever a medical incident occurs. The completed form should be given to the parents/guardians of the child or young person, and a copy needs to be filed away for future reference (securely).

General information

Name of child/young person: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Names of parent/carer: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Incident Details

Date of incident: _____ Time of incident: _____

Name of group/activity: _____ Adults present: _____

Description of incident

1. Describe the incident. What was the person doing when the incident happened? How did the incident happen? Was there an injury? If so, what area of the person's body was injured?

2. How did the person respond after the incident?

3. Was first aid given or some other action taken? Yes / No (circle). If yes, by whom & what was given?

4. Follow up actions:

Your Details

Name of person completing form: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____