

Guidance on Codes of Behaviour for Adults

The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced personnel is a vital aspect of the Church's child safeguarding policy. However, in order to maintain a high level of child protection awareness and safe care, codes of behaviour are equally important.

A code of behaviour is a clear and concise guide to what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice when working with children. It is an essential part of the safeguarding procedures of any Church body that has ministry with children. Adults working with children have a duty of care to children. Church personnel who work with children should sign a code of behaviour (if it is not contained in the overall safeguarding policy) to indicate that they have seen the code and agree to follow it in full, from commencement of their work within the Church.

It is very important that everyone in the Church body is clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children. It is also important to involve children and parents/ guardians in the process of developing a code of behaviour.

When considering what sorts of behaviour are appropriate in dealing with children, it is important to bear in mind that the intentions of adults are less important than the impact of their behaviours on children. For this reason, a key aspect of any code of behaviour is the creation of an environment where it is safe for children to ask questions and express their concerns, confident in the knowledge that what they say will be heard, taken seriously and acted upon.

In general, codes of behaviour should contain:

Positive statements indicating what sorts of behaviours are appropriate, e.g. listening;

An awareness of the scope of bullying and how to cope with the problem, as it may occur in any group context;

Prohibitions indicating behaviours that are never acceptable, e.g. hitting a child;

Good practice guidelines that indicate what is generally acceptable or unacceptable, but that also allow for exceptions, e.g. in a medical emergency; taking a child in your car without a second member of staff/adult if there is no one else around.

Where it becomes necessary to depart from the code of behaviour, the reasons for doing so should be carefully recorded, and steps should be taken to avoid the recurrence of such a situation in the future.



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A Sample template: Code of Behaviour for Adults

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity
- Treat all children equally
- Model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children they come into contact with
- Be aware of the Church's child protection and child safeguarding policy
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety
- Develop a culture where children have permission to tell and to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have
- Respect each child's boundaries and support them to develop their own understanding and sense of their rights
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children in their care
- Work in open environments
- Help children to know what they can do if they have a problem.

Adults must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children
- Develop sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse



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- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves
- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in any way that is intended to intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- Engage in discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or political views
- Consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children/young people.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Take children away or to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you
- Involve children in one-to-one contact; activities should usually be supervised by at least two adults. However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur:
 - I. In a reactive situation, for example when a young person requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning, or where a young person has had to be removed from a group as part of a code of behaviour.
 - II. As part of a planned structured piece of work (for example one-to-one music tuition).