



Guidelines for Youth Work

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1. INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES AND THE AIMS OF OUR YOUTH WORK

- 1.1. Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”* (Matthew 19:14). He also had a severe warning for anyone who *“...causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin...”* (Matthew 18:6). As Christians, we are to be *“...as wise as serpents [snakes] and harmless as doves”* (Matthew 10:16 NKJV). In a fallen world, we are to seek to reach children for Jesus Christ, openly and with responsibility, seeking to *“...commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”* (2 Corinthians 4:2).
- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines on how Coley Park Baptist Church (the “Church”) may best organise and run groups, clubs and activities for its children and young people, caring for and respecting each child that might come. The desire is that these guidelines should provide a helpful framework within which there is suitable flexibility. The relevant parts of these Guidelines apply to the crèche and the parent & toddlers group.
- 1.3. **In our youth work our overall aim is to provide a church environment for children and young people that is fun and free from harm - one in which they can hear a clear explanation of Christianity and make an informed response.**

In each group we aim to have:

- **A committed and enthusiastic team** – men and women whose lives clearly reflect their Christian commitment, who depend on the power of the Holy Spirit, care deeply for the young people and each other, and who work well together with a unity of purpose;
- **A concern and vision for reaching out to young people today** who have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ. Praying and working for spiritual growth in the lives of the young people in the group, aiming to see them become involved members in Church;
- **A creative and interesting Bible teaching programme**, enabling young people to grow in a saving knowledge of Jesus and become strong disciples in today’s world. In accordance with 2 Timothy 3:15-17: the Bible is taught as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, together with its message that salvation is received only by faith in Jesus Christ; the Bible is followed because it teaches all we need to know about the Christian faith and life;
- **A lively and varied programme of activities**, relevant to the young people’s interests, including, as applicable, games, special activities, outings and weekends away and holidays (which can be with other organisations such as Crusaders), and;
- **A loving and caring environment** in which young people find real friendship, feel accepted and secure.

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- 1.4. These guidelines seek to set out the way we work together, highlighting good practice that should be followed and apply from the time the young person arrives at the Church activity until they leave. They specifically cover:
 - the organisation of our youth work and the appointment of leaders and helpers (Section 2);
 - general good practice (Section 3);
 - the organisation of events taking place off the Church premises (“off-site”) (Section 4);
 - discipline (Section 5), and;
 - what to do if abuse is suspected or revealed (Section 6).
- 1.5. The terms “children” or “young people” are used interchangeably, and are collectively referred to as “youth work”.
- 1.6. This document includes some sample forms (Appendices 1, 2, 4 and 5) that should be used for the activities that a group or club undertakes.
- 1.7. In preparing these guidelines, we have referred to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Church’s (FIEC’s) “Child Protection in the Church”, the Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service booklet “Protecting Children and Appointing Children’s Workers”, parts of the Baptist Denomination “Safe to Grow” and some Crusaders literature.
- 1.8. “Elders” means the Church Leadership Team which may comprise of Elders (Leaders), or an Elder and Deacon(s) (Assistant Leaders), or just Deacons, whichever exists in the Church at the current time.

2. ORGANISATION OF OUR YOUTH WORK AND THE APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS AND HELPERS

- 2.1. Each distinct group or club will have a mixture of leaders and helpers:
- the Leaders will be those who, collectively, run the group - preparing programmes, choosing themes and teaching material, etc.;
 - amongst the Leaders there will be a Group Co-ordinator who will co-ordinate the group's team meetings and activities, act as the overall Leader-in-charge of each event (or he/she shall designate one of the other Leaders as the Leader-in-charge), and be the main contact point for that group with the Elders and the wider Church;
 - helpers will provide assistance, either in a short-term / occasional or long-term (regular) capacity – that is Long Term Helpers or Short Term Helpers, so;
 - each group will have youth workers comprising: a Group Co-ordinator, other Leader(s) and possibly Long-term Helper(s) and/or Short Term Helper(s). However, these titles do not mean that there is a hierarchy of rank, importance or superiority within each group. For as Jesus said *“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...”* (Matthew 20: 25-28a). So each group's workers are a team who are to work together, serving, helping and encouraging one another, including making suggestions to one another, in a loving way, on how to be better youth workers or improve the group – *“as iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another”* (Proverbs 27:17) and be *“speaking the truth in love”* (Ephesians 4:15), whilst always being those who *“first take the plank out of your own eye”* (Matthew 7:3-5), and;
 - To avoid any confusion, please note that “leaders” in the Registration Form at Appendix 2 means any Leaders or Helpers.
- 2.2. The Elders of the Church are responsible for the oversight of all the youth work. They will appoint an Elder or suitable Deacon or suitable person to be the Youth Work Co-ordinator who will function as the main point of contact between the Church leadership and all the youth work, and who will take day-to-day interest in, and provide support for, the various leaders and helpers.
- 2.3. The establishment of any new group or activity (including deciding its objectives, age-banding and timing) will be discussed with the Youth Work Co-ordinator and agreed by the Elders, in consultation with the Church. A Fact Sheet will be prepared annually for each recognised group or activity, outlining the objectives, age-banding, timing, Leaders and Long-term Helpers (see Appendix 4). Any change of objectives or other key issues that a Group Co-ordinator thinks are necessary will be discussed with the Youth Work Co-ordinator and agreed by the Elders, in consultation with the Church, as necessary. In the event of there needing to be an exception to the way a group runs (for instance,

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permitting a child to be in a group above or below their age band), this shall be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Youth Work Co-ordinator .

- 2.4. The appointment (and removal) of all youth work Leaders and Long-term Helpers will be decided by the Elders and the Youth Work Co-ordinator in discussion with the respective Group Co-ordinator (who will normally provide the initial recommendation).
- 2.5. All youth work Leaders and Long-term Helpers should be Church members (or be in the formal process of becoming a member) and must complete the Disclosure Application Form for the Disclosure and Barring Service (this is to check for criminal records and is done via a nominated lead recruiter [normally the Youth Work Co-ordinator or Administrator]).
- 2.6. The process for appointing Leaders and Long-term Helpers is as follows:
 - Step 1: the Group Co-ordinator makes an initial recommendation to the Youth Work Co-ordinator;
 - Step 2: the Youth Work Co-ordinator and Elders discuss the recommendation;
 - Step 3: Is there a problem?
 - Yes: the Youth Work Co-ordinator discusses the Elders' decision with the Group Co-ordinator and takes action as appropriate.
 - No: See Step 4.
 - Step 4: If the proposed leader or helper has a DBS disclosure and has registered with the update service, then this certificate should be checked by the lead recruiter to ensure it is at the correct level and is current.
 - Step 5: If they do not have a disclosure that can be used, then they will need to apply for a disclosure certificate before working with children in an unsupervised capacity.
 - Step 6: Is there a problem arising from Step 4 or 5?
 - Yes: The nominated Church Leader will discuss this with the prospective Leader or Long-term Helper, and the other Elders, as appropriate;
 - No: the Youth Work Co-ordinator notifies the Elders and the Group Co-ordinator, and the prospective Leader or Long-term Helper that the appointment can proceed.
- 2.7. Each new Leader or Long-term Helper will have a trial period of 4 months in which he

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or she and their respective Group Co-ordinator can assess their suitability for that particular work. At the end of the 4 months there will be an informal discussion with the Youth Work Co-ordinator (and the respective Group Co-ordinator, as appropriate) to review how things have gone. If there are no concerns raised, then the appointment will continue.

- 2.8. An up-to-date list of the Leaders and Long-term Helpers in the various groups will be maintained by the Youth Work Co-ordinator.
- 2.9. Group Co-ordinators are at liberty to bring in occasional (or short-term) helpers, who are Church members, to assist with a specific event or activity under their responsibility. Regular attendees of the Church may also be occasional (or short-term) helpers subject to the agreement of the Youth Work Co-ordinator in discussion with the Elders, on a case-by-case basis. All such helpers will ideally have a DBS certificate. If they do not then they cannot teach or supervise children without an adult who does have a disclosure present.
- 2.10. The Youth Work Co-ordinator with the Elders, may decide or agree that other Christian believers can assist with the youth work (for instance during a Holiday Bible Club or to do a talk) providing that these believers are in sympathy with the beliefs and practices of the Church and are commended by the leadership of their church. Similarly to 2.9 they should have a DBS certificate and if not they should not be left solely in charge of children.
- 2.11. As we are all disciples and, therefore, *learners*, informal and formal training is to be encouraged. Group Co-ordinators are particularly encouraged to share difficulties (as well as joys!) with the Youth Work Co-ordinator.

3. GENERAL GOOD PRACTICE INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR ACCIDENTS

- 3.1. The FIEC publication 'Child Protection in the Church' presents an A to Z of good, wholesome, practical Bible teaching on the care and management of children, based on Ephesians 4:17-6:20, which we would commend. The A to Z is reproduced here in full, with FIEC's permission, except that (s) and (w) have been changed.
- (a) Be clear about the behaviour you will accept and what rules are laid down, and apply them consistently (4:25).
 - (b) Ensure that all workers are carefully checked and approved, and that they accept all the principles which you will be applying. Any vetting system will need to be clearly understood by all who work with children and young people, whatever their involvement (5:5-7). It may be better not to attempt some activities rather than to use inappropriate people, or those whom you have not had time to 'prove'. God provides the people for the work he wants us to do.
 - (c) Respect the rights and responsibilities of parents, and always consult them about changes you make in what you are doing. Make sure that you have their permission for their children to go on trips and to participate in activities which are outside your normal programme. When the children first come you should ensure that the parents are made aware of the normal pattern of activity (in 6:1-3 we are reminded that the primary responsibility for children lies with parents).
 - (d) Build strong relationships with the parents of the children who regularly attend your activities. Take an interest in their lives, the children, and the wider family beyond the link created by the particular activity which the children attend (5:15-17).
 - (e) All your workers should avoid personal self-assertiveness and boasting, thus ensuring that children are given examples of humble godliness which will be a great contrast to the arrogance of the society around them (5:21).
 - (f) In all the attitudes you show, promote principles of generosity, kindness and gratitude (4:28; 4:32; 5:4).
 - (g) In maintaining discipline and control make sure that there are no displays of bad temper and loss of control. It is always wise to have more than one person with any group in which discipline needs to be enforced. Mutual support and reinforcement are extremely valuable (4:26).
 - (h) Encourage all workers to apply themselves to building good relationships with all the children and young people, and show a spirit of forgiveness at all times (4:26). It is very important to stress to workers that they should not show favouritism to any child, especially one from a difficult, or deprived, home.

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- (i) Make sure that all your workers relate well together and avoid the slightest hint of the development of any factions or cliques. Never allow public disagreements and arguments between workers (4:26; 31).
- (j) When there is a problem with a child or young person, ensure that once it has been resolved there is no continued resentment or grudge against that child by any worker. Show particular concern for any child with whom there has been a serious problem so that the child's rehabilitation back into the group can be accomplished as quickly and easily as possible (4:32).
- (k) Always be truthful and open with the children and young people. Any kind of deception is destructive of trust. If there is something which they cannot be told, tell them that this is the case. Promote this same high level of trust among all your workers, as this standard will then rub off on the children (4:25).
- (l) Encourage all workers to be honest and open with each other, without becoming over-familiar (4:25).
- (m) In all conversations avoid the kind of flippancy, triviality and stupidity which demeans the task you are about and can degrade the message you want to bring (4:29). Be careful of the type of humour which can devalue or discredit something that is good. In public leadership be joyous without being silly.
- (n) Avoid being dragged into conversation about subjects which are plainly unhelpful and of no value. This does not mean that you take no interest in the less-than-stimulating things which some children and young people discuss. You must take an interest in what interests them, but use conversations as an opportunity to point their minds and hearts to issues of greater value (4:29). This is to some extent a matter of personal judgement, but the goal must always be to build trust and strong relationships, and then to demonstrate the superior value of conversation that points to Christ and eternal things.
- (o) Try to be positive, constructive and cheerful in the way you speak and in what you talk about. Show in your conversations how it is possible to be God-centred and, at the same time, good fun and nice to be with (5:19-20).
- (p) Avoid sexual innuendo, and reference to subjects which may have sexual connotations. Here again, humour must be carefully watched. Be ultra-cautious about how you relate to those of the opposite sex, especially with young teenagers. There is no biblical warrant for what is sometimes called 'being broad-minded' (5:3-4).
- (q) Discourage all workers, and even the youngsters themselves, from unnecessary touching and cuddling. Comfort must be given if a child falls and is hurt. If a young person is distressed then appropriate consolation should not be withheld. But great care must be taken in these areas (5:3).

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- (r) Discourage workers from building 'special relationships' with individual children or young people, especially if they are from deprived backgrounds, or appear to be particularly vulnerable (5:3). 'Special relationships' are dangerous, and can be fertile ground both for real incidents and for false accusations.
- (s) Physical contact should be appropriate to age, for instance children under 5 may need to sit on knee and be reassured. However do not engage in questionable shows of affection that could easily be misinterpreted in a suspicious age and avoid being left alone with a child when having physical contact. (5:3-4).
- (t) Discourage children and young people from behaviour of an overtly sexual nature, or which could be misinterpreted by others (5:3-4). Establishing this principle in their minds may well prevent serious problems arising in relationships between children and young people, and will also help young people indirectly – even sub-consciously – for the setting of the ground rules for the conduct of their everyday relationships with each other.
- (u) Make clear rules about transport arrangements and about being alone with one or two children. In general being alone with one or two children in any private place, whether a building or a closed room, can be unwise, and should be avoided. Even when listening to distressed young people it may be preferable to have a second person present. At least make sure that you, and what you are doing, can be seen by someone else (5:3-4).
- (v) In your teaching and discussions with young people be prepared, when appropriate, to disown unrighteous practices and values. That may include careful commenting on entertainment, music and magazines (5:11-14).
- (w) There are some particularly sensitive areas to consider. The toilet treatment of the very young, or of children or young people with disabilities, must be handled carefully. A general rule would be to insist that children must be able to use the toilet themselves. However, if that is not possible, then agree with parents that they are happy for an adult to accompany their child to the toilet and assist as needed. Any adult doing this must hold a DBS certificate that includes a check for regulated activities. Outside these arrangements, adults should not accompany children to the toilet. The number of children permitted to use a toilet at any one time should be fixed in such a way as to protect children. Meticulous care and wisdom is needed in establishing and carrying out agreed arrangements.
- (x) If you run camps or take children away overnight to other venues or centres, careful attention must be given to sleeping arrangements. Arranging for an adult to be alone in a room with children overnight is no longer advisable (5:3).
- (y) In exercising discipline, avoid physical contact unless you have to restrain a child or young person. Even then exercise great care, and endeavour to have a second responsible person present to support you (5:15-17).
- (z) Let prayer overarch all you do (6:19-20).

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3.2. We would also echo their concluding remarks – “...the overriding principle is that biblical wisdom should control all our dealings with children. A thorough knowledge of the teaching of the Scriptures in these practical areas of life will be much more valuable than any written procedures or policies.”

3.3. To all of the above, we would add the following:

✓ A safe building should be provided, including a well-lit access.

✓ The following minimum Youth worker to young person ratio is recommended by The Children Act (1989), however each group meeting usually needs a minimum of two Youth workers:

- 0-2 years of age: a ratio of 1 Youth worker per three children;
- 2-3 years of age: a ratio of 1 Youth worker per four children;
- 3-8 years of age: a ratio of 1 Youth worker per eight children;
- >8 years of age: a ratio of 1 Youth worker per eight children for the first eight, followed by 1 Youth worker for every subsequent 12 children. (For swimming (>8 years of age), the ratio shall be 1 Youth worker per 3 children, plus one Youth worker at the poolside.)

✓ Helpers should be aged 16 and over. A helper younger than 16 may attend but cannot be counted in the Youth worker / children ratios.

✓ In a mixed group, try and make sure there are at least one male and one female Youth worker.

✗ Do not give lifts to children on their own other than for short journeys. If they are alone, you may want to ask them to sit in the rear of the vehicle.

✗ A husband and wife should not regularly work just on their own.

✓ Any Group with just one adult shall usually keep the door ajar or be clearly visible through a window.

Procedures for accidents

3.4. In the event of an accident the following procedures apply. Each group/activity coordinator (or person in charge if the coordinator is absent) is the “appointed person” who will take responsibility in the event of an incident requiring first aid. (The

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“appointed person” does not have to have first-aid qualifications, and does not have to be the person administering any first aid treatment given. Neither are there any legal restrictions governing who can give first-aid. However, the “appointed person” is the person to whom incidents must be reported, and who decides what action is necessary following an incident, such as whether an ambulance should be called, or relatives / emergency contact contacted.) The Youth worker with the greatest first aid knowledge should do what can be reasonably done for the child including using the first aid box.

(a) *For minor accidents (e.g. cut, graze, bump, etc.):*

- Apply suitable first aid;
- If needed, have the child “sit out” from activities. If the child is younger it may be necessary to contact the parent/guardian and ask for the child to be collected early, and;
- Advise the parent/guardian what happened

(b) *For more serious accidents (e.g. a broken limb)*

- Help the child as appropriate;
- Immediately contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact, if different (their phone numbers are given on the child’s registration form), and ask the person contacted to immediately take the child to hospital. If this is not possible, or no one can be contacted, then take the child to hospital (or call 999 and get an ambulance, if needed) and one of the Youth workers must accompany the child to the hospital and take the child’s registration form with him/her. At the hospital keep phoning the parent/guardian and the emergency contact (if different) to ask him/her to come and take over from you. If this does not happen in time then the Youth worker will need to sign any hospital consent form(s), and;
- It would be good to visit the child and family at a suitable time after the child returns from hospital, or visit the child in hospital if they are there for more than a few days.

(c) *For very serious accidents (e.g. choking or asthma attack)*

- Then procedure as 3.4 b above.

For off-site activities the event and location(s) should be reviewed before the event to minimise the risks of accidents and for b) and c) above, it is likely that a Youth worker will need to take or accompany the child to hospital and meet the parent/guardian or emergency contact (if different) at the hospital.

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All accidents, including action taken, must be recorded in the Accident Book (which is kept with the first aid box). Afterwards review what happened so the risk of a similar accident occurring again is minimised.

All accidents that result in the child going to the hospital are to be reported to the Church's insurer via the Youth Work Co-ordinator.

Good practice with colleagues

- 3.5. If you see another Youth worker acting in ways which might be inappropriate or misconstrued, speak to your Group Co-ordinator or the Youth Work Co-ordinator about your concerns, who will then follow this through. Leaders should always encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all youth workers to be comfortable enough to discuss such issues.

Dealing with suggestions or complaints

- 3.6. Any parental complaints about an aspect of the youth work will be treated seriously by the Church. In the first instance, the parent will be given the opportunity to make and discuss their complaint with the respective Group Co-ordinator. If this does not prove satisfactory or if the complaint is of a serious nature, the matter will be referred to the Youth Work Co-ordinator.
- 3.7. In a similar vein, we will want to show ourselves open to the many good suggestions for improving aspects of our work that parents or guardians may be able to make.

Christ-like love in practice

- 3.8. Let us conclude this section on good practice by reminding one another that we want to welcome and practically care for the young people (and their families) we are privileged to have, as Christ has loved us. We want them to know *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).
- 3.9. If possible and appropriate, we should also use the registration details to follow up those who do not attend a group for 4 meetings by, phoning or writing to them, or their family or preferably, by visiting them or their family. (This does not apply in the event of illness or other good reasons for being away.) For six months, we should send programmes and invitations to special events to young people who have stopped coming.
- 3.10. Furthermore, we will encourage young people to transfer to the next available youth group by:
 - giving them details of the next group;

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- Leaders from the next group meeting them whilst they are in their existing group and inviting them to join the next group;
- giving or sending them the forthcoming programme of the next group;
- continuing to send them programme(s) and invitations to any special events for six months from their transfer date (when they do not transfer), and;
- giving any other appropriate encouragement.

In other words, we desire to reach and keep young people because of our love for them in practice.

4. OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES INCLUDING REGISTRATION AND CONSENT

- 4.1. In addition to the good practice guidelines outlined in Section 3, the following should apply to any off-site activity.
- 4.2. Before any off-site activity begins, parents or guardians should be notified, usually via a general information letter and an appropriately worded consent form. This should clearly indicate who the Leader-in-charge of the event would be. However, off-site events at a Church Member's house, like a BBQ, do not need consent forms if they are advised in the Programme.
- 4.3. The consent form should be signed and dated by the parent/guardian. No young person is allowed to take part in an off-site activity without first obtaining the written consent of the parent/guardian. A specimen off-site activity form is given in Appendix 1.
- 4.4. Where medical data has already been obtained as part of a child's registration for a group or activity, a simple consent form will be used, otherwise a medical data sheet should be filled in. This data should be updated yearly. A specimen registration form is included in Appendix 2. Do not give out any tablets, drugs or medicines other than those prescribed and/or advised by the parent/guardian. The initial registration form must be completed within the first two visits to a group, otherwise the child cannot continue to come to the group until a completed form is returned. If suitable a child can go home and bring back a completed form or it may be necessary to post a form to the parent/guardian.
- 4.5. Completed registration and consent forms should be taken to the event by the Leader-in-charge.
- 4.6. A first aid kit and a mobile phone should be taken to any off-site activity. The mobile phone is to enable the Emergency Services and parent/guardian to be contacted in the event of an accident. The registration forms give permission for the Leader-in-charge or their replacement/nominee to authorise any necessary medical treatments should the parent/guardian not be contactable. For a weekend away, camp or similar activity, it is advisable to have a first-aider in your team.
- 4.7. If a young person is lost during, or absconds from, an off-site activity and cannot be found the parent/guardian should be informed. The Leader-in-charge is responsible for considering the need to contact the local police, after speaking if possible, to the parents/guardian of the missing young person. If it becomes necessary for the group to delay its departure, the parents/guardians of the other young people should be contacted. For an outing it may be necessary to return the group to the Church before the missing individual can be found, whilst leaving one Youth worker there until the person is found, or the parent/guardian and/or the police take over the search. This will be done at the discretion of the Leader-in-charge of the event. The parent/guardian should be informed that this is happening.

5. DISCIPLINE

5.1. Discipline is an inevitable part of youth work. We are encouraged to view discipline positively (*“For what son is not disciplined by his father?”* Hebrews 12:7). It is an opportunity to show care and encouragement and provide clear boundaries for future growth.

5.2. We need to always:

- take into account that we are working with children not with mature adults (so do not be unrealistic on what is expected); and
- bear in mind the individual child’s background and character (for instance distinguish between lively character and bad behaviour).

In other words discipline is required for more serious incidents. Specifically, where there is:

- disruptive or abusive language or action;
- a persistently negative attitude (expressed through such things as mood, body language, words or actions) including persisting in not doing what is asked;
- blasphemy, sexism or racism;
- violent or threatening language or behaviour including bullying, and;
- immoral or illegal behaviour.

5.3. In such cases, the following discipline or sanctions may be used as appropriate (although not all of the sanctions will be suitable to all of the clubs or activities, the group must be told about the sanctions before they are used and when a sanction is applied the reasons for using it must be given to the child[ren]):

- *verbal warnings and time-out*: these give time for the child to cool down. Challenge the child to change, explain clearly the consequences (should their action persist) and encourage them in their strengths. The suggested duration of a time-out is five minutes, or longer if needed (until the child cools down), and have the child sit down away from the other children.
- *reduced use of tuck facility or other rewards*.
- *ban from the rest of the event or the next event*: the option to use the ban should

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be decided by the Leader-in-charge of the event. This is not a usual sanction as it is only to be used for persistently bad behaviour over a period of time or a serious disciplinary offence. In the event of a child being sent home, a Leader must check if their parent/guardian is at home and the parent/guardian should be asked to collect them. If the child cannot be collected, and there are sufficient Youth workers and transportation, two Youth workers should accompany the child home. The child will not be allowed to leave unattended and, if necessary, another Church member will be contacted to help. The reasons for the ban must be explained to the parent/guardian. Where there is no parent/guardian at home, the child must be kept until the activity ends. On a Sunday morning, if their parent/guardian is in the Church service, then the child can be returned to them in the following way so as to minimise disruption of the service. Take the child to the foyer and ask a steward to ask the parent/guardian to go to the foyer. Explain the situation to the parent/guardian, leave the child with them and ask them to sit together at the back of the Church (or they may choose to stay together in the foyer). If a ban is used, the Youth Work Co-ordinator must be advised.

- *Longer-term ban*: this is a last resort and is best done by also meeting with the parent/guardian to explain the reasons for the ban – it may be helpful for the Youth Work Co-ordinator to attend this meeting. The decision to use this option should be taken only after discussion with the Youth work Co-ordinator.

With respect to bans, the Youth Work Co-ordinator and, if possible, the parent/guardian are to be involved in discussing a ban (after the incident) so that the potential for misunderstanding is minimised and opportunities are given to help the various people involved. A secondary aim would be to obtain parental backing for our handling of the situation.

5.4. When discipline in a residential setting (e.g. on a camp or a weekend away) requires sending a child home, such a decision should be taken by the Leader-in-charge of the event and should be reserved for only the most serious of cases. The process for such action would be as follows:

- where possible, the Leader-in-charge consults with the Youth Work Co-ordinator;
- the Leader-in-charge sits down with the child involved and explains the reasons why the action is being taken;
- the Leader-in-charge phones the parent/guardian and asks them to come and pick up the child, and;
- the Leader-in-charge and the Youth Work Co-ordinator meet with the parent/guardian following the event.

5.5. Some additional points to bear in mind:

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- do praise and reward good behaviour as well as discipline bad behaviour;
- you should discipline out of love and not anger so, where possible, someone else should apply the more serious sanctions if a particular youth worker has become frustrated and emotionally involved;
- be consistent in discipline, ensuring that you carry out what you say and that all youth workers treat all the young people graciously, fairly, and respectfully;
- avoid the use of physical contact. The only exception to this should be when a child is deemed to be a danger either to themselves or to others. In these rare cases, minimum restraining force should be used;
- it is important that all disciplinary incidents are recorded, including fights (on or off the premises) or constant throwaway sexual comments. This is in case allegations are made many years later. Records should be kept of all incidents or bans and passed to the Youth Work Co-ordinator to be securely retained. Appendix 5 contains a template for reporting incidents and any subsequent action;
- it is worth asking the question, 'Is it the child who was at fault or was it that the event was not suited to the children?' – the best way to maintain discipline is to ensure that what you do is interesting, enjoyable and stimulating. A happy and involved child is less likely to require correction, and;
- in applying the above guidelines, be *consistent, insistent and persistent*.

6. SUSPICION AND DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

- 6.1. Child abuse is a real problem and churches should not consider themselves immune to it. This section provides guidance on how to detect potential abuse and indicates the actions that should be taken. The person causing the abuse may be completely outside the Church circle, or youth worker or someone else from Church may be involved.

What is meant by abuse?

- 6.2. Four types of abuse are generally recognised:
- *physical* – where children’s bodies are hurt or injured;
 - *emotional* – where children don’t receive love and affection, where they may be frightened by threats and taunts or where they are given responsibility beyond their years;
 - *sexual* – where adults will use children and young people to satisfy sexual desires. Other children and young people can also be abusers, and;
 - *neglect* – where adults persistently fail to care for children and protect them from danger, leading to serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

How to detect abuse

- 6.3. There are no hard and fast rules, so do not jump to conclusions. Some of the following may indicate abuse:
- *physical* – unexplained or hidden injuries or lack of medical attention;
 - *emotional* – reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden underachievement, attention-seeking, running away, stealing or lying;
 - *sexual* – preoccupation with sexual matters, evident in words, play, drawings or being sexually provocative with adults. Disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed-wetting, secretive relationships with adults or children. Tummy pains with no apparent cause.
 - *neglect* – looking ill-cared-for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive or having lingering injuries or health problems.

What to do if abuse is suspected

- 6.4. If you suspect that abuse is taking place, you must take the following steps:

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- do not delay;
- do not start to investigate;
- inform the Youth Work Co-ordinator, who, in discussion with the Elders, will be responsible for taking any appropriate action (including what to share with the respective Group Co-ordinator), and;
- do not talk to anyone else about your suspicions.

What to do if a child says that they are being abused

6.5. If a child tells you that they are being abused, remember the following:

- keep calm;
- look at the child directly;
- listen carefully to what the child says without prompting or asking leading questions;
- be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell;
- never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen. If a child says something that concerns you in the middle of an activity and with other children present, it may be desirable to have a 1:1 conversation with the child to find out more. This should be out of the hearing of others, but must be in the sight of other adults.
- let the child know what will happen next. Explain the need to let someone else know and that there is a legal responsibility to report it to someone in authority, which might include Police, Social Services, etc. It is illegal to promise confidentiality as you have a duty under law to report abuse. The child may tell you it is a secret and not to tell anyone but you must not promise not to tell anyone and make it clear that you may have to tell someone else;
- it may be necessary to refer the matter immediately to the Social Services or the Police to prevent a young person returning home if it is considered that they would be at serious risk of further abuse or if they are afraid to return home. Out-of-hours contact numbers are given in Appendix 3. Where possible, contact the Youth Work Co-ordinator or the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS, see Appendix 3) first in order to discuss the appropriate course of action;
- as soon as possible afterwards, make hand-written notes of exactly what the child said

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and the date and time. A record should also be made of what happened that led the child to make the declaration. Appendix 5 can be used for these purposes. These should be passed to the Youth Work Co-ordinator and securely retained;

- in the case of suspected abuse, discuss the matter with the Youth Work Co-ordinator and CCPAS before taking any official action via the Statutory Authorities. If the disclosure is not one considered to need immediate intervention, the youth coordinator or elders may decide to inform the Child Protection Officers at the child's school of the incident, as they may well have a fuller knowledge of the child and the child's circumstances.
- never contact the alleged perpetrator or associates for fear of "tipping them off". Do not investigate the matter yourself. Do not contact the parent/guardian. Any of these actions could lead to confrontation and ruin any subsequent investigation;
- if the alleged perpetrator has a role in the Church, speak to Social Services and Police before taking action. However, provide close supervision of that individual in the interim since suspension may cause them to become suspicious and destroy evidence;
- the number of people involved should be limited to a strict 'need-to-know' basis;
- keep a note of any discussions with Social Services or the Police, confirm them in writing and give the Church copy to the Youth Work Co-ordinator, and;
- in the event of the Police being contacted, inform the Church insurers.

What would happen if an allegation were made against a youth worker?

- 6.6. At this point we are bound by law. Unless our own investigations show that the allegation was obviously a lie (for instance someone else can independently verify this), we would need to report it to the authorities and would not be able to talk to the Youth worker about it first. We would seek to support and help the youth worker.
- 6.7. At the end of the day, the only protection for people involved in the Church's youth work is to operate within a framework of good practice, in such a way as to make any allegation unsustainable.

APPENDIX 1 – OFF-SITE ACTIVITY FORM

If all the registration details have been gathered for each child (see Appendix 2), then a simple statement of permission will suffice (such as the one below), and should be taken to the event, with the appropriate registration details attached.

(Activity's name) Consent Form

I give my permission for(name) to be involved in the Coley Park Baptist Church (Activity name) outing to (venue) on (date).

I understand that the outing will be properly supervised by adults aged 18 and over.

Signed (Parent/Guardian*):

Date:

*delete as appropriate

APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE REGISTRATION FORM

Dear Parent/Guardian,

If you are happy for your child to participate in our activities, please complete and sign this form, so that we can make their stay a safe and comfortable one.

Your signature means that, if it becomes necessary for your child to receive emergency medical treatment and we are unable to contact you, you give your consent to any treatment advised by the medical authorities as necessary — and one of the leaders will sign any document required by the hospital authorities.

[We feel that it is important that children at the Club obey any rules or instructions given by the leaders. We would appreciate your help in ensuring your child's co-operation when with us. As leaders, we reserve the right to send your child home early, if necessary.]

[Group/Club Leaders names]

[Group/Club name]

Child's name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Telephone number:

Additional contact (for emergencies) – phone number, name and relationship:

Please give details of any medical conditions, allergies or special needs that you think we should be aware of:

Your Signature:

Your Name:

Date:



APPENDIX 3 – USEFUL CONTACTS REGARDING ABUSE

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Childline (for Children): | 0800 1111 |
| National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (for Adults): | 0800 800 5000 |
| Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS): (24 hours – outside office hours is via the phone number given on their answer phone) | 0845 120 4550 |
| Police (24 hours) | 101 |
| Reading Social Services – Children's services (office hours): | 0118 937 3641 |

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APPENDIX 4 – GROUP FACT SHEET

Name of activity:

Objectives:

Age-banding:

Timing:

Group Co-ordinator:

Group Leaders:

Long-term helpers:

Date prepared:

Date to be reviewed:

APPENDIX 5 – INCIDENT REPORTING AND ACTION FORM

This form should be used to report any significant incident that occurred during a Church youth activity. Once completed, it should be passed to the Youth Work Co-ordinator. A record of any subsequent action should also be noted.

Please describe what happened, who was involved and what was done.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Action taken: