



7. OUR SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

All adults involved in children's activities and/or activities with/for vulnerable adults should

- have been safely recruited,
- possess a positive DBS check,
- have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training.

Our church has a **Code of Conduct** for all those working with children and/or adults at risk, so that everyone is shown the respect that is due to them:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Be aware of the power imbalance within pastoral relationships and the potential for abuse of trust.
- Be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.
- Avoid behaviour that suggests favouritism or gives the impression of a special relationship.
- Use age and ability appropriate language and tone of voice.
- Encourage adults receiving pastoral ministry to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.
- **Listen** well to everyone. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or adult at risk is thinking or feeling. **Listen** to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the individual's body language to better understand what is being said.
- Be aware of your own body language and the effect it may have on a child or adult at risk.
- Be aware of any physical contact you may have with a child or adult at risk and record it when necessary. For instance, if it is necessary to stop a fight, administer First Aid, hug someone in distress, or protect yourself or others from danger.
- Never engage in sexual activity with someone with whom you have a pastoral relationship.
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or adult at risk, even in 'fun'.
- Do not scapegoat, belittle, ridicule or reject a child or adult at risk.
- Do not permit abusive peer activities e.g. ridiculing or bullying
- Do not allow an individual to involve you in excessive attention seeking
- Do not take part in any pastoral activity of any sort whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.



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- Do not allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults that may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.
- Do not allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.
- Do not befriend on social media children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.
- Do not take photographs of church activities on personal phones or cameras without formal consent, as this means that images are stored on personal devices and may then be shared without appropriate permission.

- **Recognise the limits of your own abilities and competencies** and seek further help when working with situations beyond your expertise or role.

- **Keep a record** of any significant incidents or concerns, including the names of all those present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights or arguments broken up, allegations made, etc. All workers who witnessed the incident, overheard it or responded in any way should record the details and sign and date the form.

- **Lone Working.** Avoid lone working.
 - No one should normally work alone in the church. At least two people should be present before external doors are opened.
 - Avoid working alone with children, young people or adults at risk, instead work as part of a team of at least 2 adults. If there are insufficient leaders for groups:
 - Internal doors should be left open.
 - groups should be combined, or planned activities rearranged.
 - If a child or adult at risk wants to talk on a one-to-one basis you should make sure that:
 - You hold the conversation privately, but in a corner of a room where other people are present.
 - You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
 - If a group leader should find themselves on their own with children or adults at risk, they should:
 - Assess the risk of sending the child or adult at risk home.
 - Phone another team member and let them know the situation.
 - Request help from and train additional leaders as soon as possible.
 - Politely make others working alone or running an activity aware of your presence when you enter the church.



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- **Acceptable Touch** Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. However, it should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church officer.

The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested as part of our code of conduct:

- Always ask permission
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.

In addition:

- You may allow the people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You may allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage the individuals you support from touching your face. Consider offering your hand instead.
- You should discourage the children you support from sitting on your lap. Offer to sit side by side instead.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed. They may be unable to tolerate it.
- Church officers at all levels must take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

Ministry of Deliverance: Should it happen that concern is expressed that a child, young person or adult is troubled by or possessed by evil spirits or demons and that this may account for behavioural issues in the individual or be considered to justify harsh treatment by the family, guardians, friends or carers and/or a request is made for deliverance ministry, the Safeguarding Team must be informed and the DSA contacted.