

Children and Young People – Good Practice Guidelines for the Church of St Cross, Clayton

Definitions

The Church of England defines a 'child' as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. In the *Parish Safeguarding Handbook* (Church House Publishing; revised August 2019) the expression 'children' is taken to mean children and young people throughout where 'young people' means any individuals aged 14 to 17 years. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offender's institution does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989. These St Cross guidelines therefore relate to 'children and young people' from birth until their 18th birthday.

The term 'church officer' is used for anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid (also from the *Parish Safeguarding Handbook*).

General

Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity; watch language, tone of voice and body language.

Do not:

- invade the privacy of children when they are toileting;
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in fun;
- engage in inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form;
- scapegoat, ridicule, or reject a child or young person;
- control and discipline children using physical punishment;
- let youngsters involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature;
- invite a child or young person to your home alone: ensure that someone else is in the home and make sure the parents know where the child is.

Time alone

Minimise time alone with any child or young person. If it is vital to be isolated with an individual ensure that another responsible adult is informed of where you will be and why. If possible remain in the view of another responsible adult. Try never to be behind a closed door but if necessary tell someone that you are there.

Touch

Touch is an important part of human relationships: for example, it can be necessary to stop a young child from hurting herself or himself; it can also be a natural way of responding to someone in distress. However, everyone working with children should be sensitive to what is appropriate and inappropriate physical contact, both in general terms, and in relation to a specific individual. Adults need to be conscious of situations in which their actions, however well intentioned, could be misconstrued by others or be harmful.

Good practice with colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them, the Rector or the Child Protection Coordinator about your concerns. Church officers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all church members to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Transport

If at all possible do not give lifts to children and young people on their own other than for short journeys. If they are alone ask them to sit in the back seat. Check that insurance covers the vehicle and passengers. Seat belts must be worn and Department of Transport guidance followed (consult www.dft.gov.uk/think).

Communication

Clergy, the PCC and parents should be clearly informed of all the activities in which children and young people may take part on church premises or through the church in any way.

Sunday School

Any person undertaking a role as Sunday School Teacher or Helper must:

- undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks;
- provide at least one independent reference;
- undertake diocesan Safeguarding training;
- know the St Cross guidelines and undertake to follow them.

Our church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people and to providing supervision.

Note

These guidelines can be reviewed and amended at any time. Any amendment will be brought to the attention of the PCC.