



St Andrew's, Alresford
St Anne and St Laurence, Elmstead Market
St Mary Magdalen, Frating with Thorrington

Code of conduct for working with children and young people

This code is for all volunteers and employees of the parochial church councils (PCCs) within the Tenpenny Villages Benefice, who work with children and young people. The purpose of the code of conduct is to clarify the conduct and behaviour that is expected in this area of work and enable volunteers and employees to engage and interact appropriately with the children and young people in their care.

Conduct and Behaviour

You should:

Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.

Treat all children equally – do not show favouritism.

Respect the confidentiality of children and young people but be clear about the limits of confidentiality. i.e. if a child discloses abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect) this must be passed on to the appropriate authority following the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.

Inform the Parish Safeguarding Representative or Rector if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Show respect for the views of children and young people. Where they differ from your own, do not impose your personal views on them, e.g. with respect to homosexuality or transgender issues. Allow all children and young people a safe space to talk about their views in such a way that they do not feel isolated or judged. If you are asked about your own views, please emphasise that they are your personal view and do so in a respectful manner. If you feel unsure or uncomfortable about how to handle such a conversation, please speak to your group leader.

Make sure that rules for the conduct of each group is drawn up with the children/young people at the beginning of the school year and that the rules and consequences are understood in each group. These rules will include respect for each other and for property, obeying requests from an adult helper and use of appropriate language.

Reinforce the rules of behaviour for children's groups and youth groups in the church and provide an example of good conduct.

Challenge unacceptable behaviour and apply sanctions consistently, asking for support if you need it. If a child repeatedly breaks the rules during a session then their parent will be contacted by telephone and asked to reinforce the necessity for good behaviour with their child. If no improvement is seen in subsequent sessions then a meeting will be requested with the parent and a two week ban initiated. On returning

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to the group they will be accompanied by the parent and will both apologise and agree the code of behaviour before re-admittance.

Normally, work with or within sight of another adult, do not work alone.

If you are the only adult in the room then make sure that doors are kept open at all times and that a second adult is nearby.

When engaged in an individual conversation, there must be another adult nearby and where possible, be visible without compromising privacy e.g. vision panel in doors if practicable.

Be aware you are in a relationship of trust. For this reason any romantic/sexual relationship with a young person who is over the age of consent but part of a church group/activity is strictly forbidden.

Ensure that visitors are always accompanied by a known person.

Check consent forms before photos are taken of activities etc in groups and delete photos from computers once images have been used. No photos will be used of children or young people on social media.

Feel able to ask for support should you need it. This is not a sign of weakness.

You should not:

Use offensive language.

Smoke whilst working with children or young people.

Consume drugs or alcohol prior to or during working with children and young people.

Invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting. Ensure that where a child needs assistance to use the toilet a parent or carer is available to take them.

Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse a child or young person.

Engage in rough physical play with children, be aware that this can be misconstrued by those who observe it.

Initiate physical contact with a child or adult. Any necessary contact e.g. for comfort should be initiated by the child and the response appropriate to the child's needs and not the needs of the adult.

Permit verbally abusive peer activity eg ridiculing, bullying.

Form a romantic relationship with any child or young person.

Offer lifts to children or young people on their own or your own.

Invite a child or young person to your home alone.

Arrange social meetings with children or young people outside organised group activities.

Impose your personal views on children or young people.

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Health and Safety

Employees and volunteers should follow the Benefice Health and Safety Policy and particularly undertake to:-

Ensure that a written risk assessment has been completed for activities undertaken with children and young people.

Ensure that consent forms are obtained for every child attending groups and activities or one off events organised by any of the churches in the Tenpenny Villages Benefice. These should be updated annually at the beginning of the school year to ensure that the information held about children is current.

All children year 4 and under must be collected by a parent or nominated adult. If a different adult is collecting them then their name must be written up on the board by the door. Children in year 5 and above MAY walk home by themselves as long as this is indicated on their consent form. This may be different for when it is light or dark at the end of the session.

Ensure that a register is kept of all children and young people's groups that meet regularly. For one off events a list of children attending should be kept.

Ensure that Diocesan recommended staffing levels are maintained during meetings and group activities.

Administer any necessary First Aid with others around and record any accidents in the Accident book.

Be aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

Transporting children on behalf of the church

Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers

All cars that carry children on behalf of the church should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use.

All cars that carry children or young people should have a valid MOT and should be serviced regularly.

All children and adults in the car must wear seatbelts. Legislation on suitable car seats should be followed.

The driver should be accompanied by a non-driving adult escort. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

Gifts

Gifts to children or young people will be at the discretion of the group leader and will be given to the whole group publicly and should be appropriate. No personal gift of money should be given or accepted.

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If a child or young person gives an inappropriate or excessive gift to an adult leader this should be discussed with the rector and then with the child's parents. Where gifts are given from the parents at, say, Christmas, these should be shared wherever possible.

In all cases no giving or receiving of gifts should happen in secret.

Social Media

Adults working with children and young people must comply with the benefice social media policy.

Policy reviewed and agreed July 2023