



## **Safeguarding Procedures for Hub Community Church meeting at United Reformed Church**

### **Introduction**

These safeguarding guidelines should be read in conjunction with Basingstoke Community Churches Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at risk. The original policy gives basic guidance on safeguarding children within all churches but these procedures are specific to the youth & children's work at Hub Community Church meeting at the United Reformed Church (URC) in Basingstoke.

The document is broken down into sub-sections for each age group covering main areas to be aware of when leading or helping in each group; they cover:

- Adult-child ratio
- Toileting
- Behaviour
- Signing children in and out (this will be fully covered in the first section under 'General Safeguarding for all age groups')
- Training

The guidelines are written with clear boundaries and guidance for all leaders/helpers to adhere to and should be read by everyone who helps out in youth & children's work. A working agreement should be signed by all adult helpers and kept in a Safeguarding file accessible to everyone and reviewed annually. It is designed to, primarily, safeguard children but also acts as a safeguard to the adult helpers to protect them from the risk of allegation and ensures that everyone is kept safe during the children's work on a Sunday afternoon.

### **General Safeguarding for all age groups (up to children in academic Year 9 or age 14 years)**

1. A first aid kit should be available with a list of qualified first aiders to ensure all adult helpers know who to get support from should there be a need for first aid with any of the children.
2. All helpers should know the escape route from their room should there be a fire alarm sounding. It is the responsibility of the leaders to ensure that the register is collected on the way out and they lead the children to the designated meeting point to ensure all the children are out of the building. Once the leader of each group has established that all children are out safely, the children can then be checked out to their parent(s)/carer(s).
3. A consent form (available at the Welcome table) should be signed by the parent(s)/carer(s) giving basic details of their child's age, any additional needs (including any forms of physical and/or learning disability), health needs, special dietary requirements and agreement for their child to have a drink/snack within the group. These forms are to be completed by parents and handed to the group

leader at the beginning of the group session. This should be updated when required and when a child moves up to the next group. Any visitors to the church will also be required to complete a form prior to their child staying with the group and hand in to the leader of the group at the start of the children's session.

4. Where there are special learning needs, allergies, health conditions that are life threatening or may require immediate treatment or attention then these will be indicated in a red box on the consent form to highlight these needs to leaders and helpers in the group and provide any necessary information on the course of action to take.
5. Each group's consent forms will be stored in a separate file and put in a lockable box. Members of the children's team will keep the keys to the box and bring them each Sunday. Consent forms for each group will be placed in each room prior to the service beginning.
6. If a child has a learning disability that requires a specific care plan to be followed then this should be made available to all leaders/helpers to follow and provide consistency for the child. If 1:1 support is required this needs to be in addition to the helpers/leaders for that session.

It is the responsibility of the group leaders and helpers to ensure that they are familiar with the needs of the children in their care, to ensure they can all be met within the group setting. If the main carer for that child needs to be called then leaders and helpers are able to do so.

### **General Safeguarding for all children up to academic Year 6 (or up to age 11 years)**

#### Signing children in and out of their groups

- A full register for each group will be available at the start of each children's group for parents to sign their children in. Parent(s)/Carer(s) will need to sign by their child's name for the given date and take their child's number card (also colour coded for the group that they attend), that will be available alongside the register.
- Completed consent forms should be handed to the group leader or helper. If a parent has not filled in a consent form then spare forms will be in the group room and will need to be completed by the parent at the start of the session.
- At the end of the group a parent(s)/carer(s) must take the number card for their child to the relevant group and hand the card to the adult leader/helper to have their child released. (If parent(s)/carer(s) wish for someone else to collect their child then they must give that person the number card). **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WITHOUT A NUMBER CARD.**
- Children will not be permitted back in the room once they have been released to their parent (s)/carer(s); to enable the leaders/helpers to ensure that every child has been released in a safe manner.

### Visitors to the church

- Any visitors with children who will be attending one of the groups will need to complete a consent form for each child, available at the welcome desk or in each group and this needs to be taken to the group at the start of the session and handed to the helpers or leader.
- Visitors will sign alongside members and take the corresponding number card. At the end of the group a parent(s)/carer(s) visitor will return their number card to collect their child in line with the procedure for regular members. (If parent/carer/visitor wish for someone else to collect their child then they must give that person the numbered visitor card. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WITHOUT THE NUMBERED CARD THAT MATCHES THE NUMBER ALONGSIDE THEIR CHILD'S NAME.**

### **General Safeguarding for children in academic years 7 – 9 (aged between 11 years – 14 years)**

#### Signing children in and out of their group

- Children in this age group will be able to sign themselves in and out of the group so there will be no number cards for this age group.
- At the end of the group, the children in this age group should sign themselves out before leaving the room.
- If there are visitors for this age group then the parent(s)/carer(s) will need to complete a consent form and hand this to the leader at the start of the group. They do not need to collect their child if they are satisfied their child can sign themselves out.

### **Safeguarding specific to the age groups**

#### Supervision of children (adult – child ratios)

Below are listed the age groups and the ratios that are set in the Safeguarding policy for all Basingstoke Community Churches (these are in line with current NSPCC guidelines).

	Ages of the children	Adult – child ratio
Sparklers	0- 4 years old	1:3
Rockets	School Years R – 2 (4 years – 7 years old)	1:8
Fire Crackers	School Years 3 & 4 (7 years – 9 years old)	1:8
Ignite	School Years 5 & 6 (9 years – 11 years old)	1:10
Fusion	School Years 7 – 9 (11 years – 14 years old)	1:10

No one under the age of 16 can be left in charge of a group of children and the children should not be left alone.

## **Sparklers (Age 0-4 years)**

### Toileting

- In general, nappies should only be changed by a parent/carer unless parental permission is given to a known person. If a parent has given permission to another adult to change the nappy, this should be indicated on the register. No one should change a child's nappy without being given prior permission from the parent/carer.
- When a child is being toilet-trained it is their parent(s)/carer(s) responsibility to ensure that this task is continued throughout the children's group on a Sunday afternoon. Should the child need to go to the toilet during the morning they must be supported by a parent/carer.

### Behaviour

- If a child becomes upset and will not settle or the child's behaviour is a distraction for the whole group, then the parent/carer will need to be called back to settle their child.

### Signing in and out

- As outlined above; parent(s)/carer(s) will sign in their child in at the start of the group and take a number card. This card must be given to the leader/helper when collecting their child.
- Leaders/helpers must not release a child to anyone without the numbered card being given over.

## **Rockets (School Years R-2)**

### Toileting

- Children are to be escorted to the toilets by a leader.
- In order to protect both leader and child, no child should be left alone by themselves with a leader at any time. So either one leader and two children or two leaders to one child.

## **Firecrackers (School Years 3-4) and Ignite (School Years 5-6)**

### Toileting

- Leaders may ask the child if they know where the toilets are and whether they are confident to go unaccompanied. If you are confident they are, then allow the child to go but ensure you ask them to inform you that they are back. Furthermore, ensure that at least one leader/helper is aware and awaiting their return.
- Should the child not return two leaders/helpers should go together to check.
- If the child needs to be accompanied, then two leaders/helpers should supervise or if more than one child then only one leader/helper needed.
- All leaders/helpers must remain in the corridor to wait for the children to finish and be escorted back to their group.

- If the leader needs to enter the toilet they should be supported by another adult, if one of the individual cubicles, then the door should be left ajar so that conversation can be heard and support offered as needed.

### **Rockets, Firecrackers and Ignite (School years R-6)**

#### Behaviour

- A child with additional needs should be given 1:1 support when necessary. If 1:1 support is needed throughout the group then this will require prior identification on the consent form, filled in by parents, so the appropriate provision can be made.
- Any unsafe or difficult to manage behaviour or where a child is upset for any reason, particularly where this is distracting for the whole group, parent(s)/carer(s) will be required to attend to them. The parent/carers will be collected from the main hall to attend to the situation.
- Additional adult support may be required in an emergency - a helper from another group or children's leader or helper from the congregation could be called upon as necessary.
- No child should be left in a room by themselves with a leader at any time (unless they are the parent/carers), there should always be 2 adults present.

#### Signing in and out

- As outlined above; parent(s)/carer(s) will sign in their child at the start of the group and collect a numbered visitor card. This card must be given to the leader/helper when collecting their child.
- Leaders/helpers must not release a child to anyone without the name/numbered visitor card being given over.

### **Fusion**

#### Toileting

- Children can take themselves to and from the toilet without requiring any support.
- However if the leader judges it necessary, any child displaying inappropriate behaviour could be accompanied to the toilet.

#### Behaviour

- Parents are to be informed of any difficulties throughout the morning and the Children's and Youth Pastor (Rhoda Lawes) to be informed of any difficulties throughout the morning. Where further support for child or parent is identified then a discussion with the parents and referral to the pastoral team may be made.
- Mobile phones are to be kept in bags/pockets unless using a Bible App (Bibles in the group box should be encourage to be used as a preference).
- If a child becomes physically aggressive, they should be escorted out of the room by 2 leaders and encouraged to calm down. If this is not possible then 1 leader will need to collect the parent/carers from the main hall and the other children removed from the room for their own safety, leaving 2 adults with the child displaying aggressive behaviours to ensure they do not harm themselves.

- Additional adult support may be required in an emergency - a helper from another group or children's leader or helper from the congregation could be called upon as necessary.
- To ensure safety of child and leader no child should be left in a room by themselves with a leader at any time (unless they are the parent), there should always be 2 adults present.

### **Pastoral**

- If a child is requesting specific prayer, then the parents should be made aware or involved as appropriate.
- If a child discloses anything of concern during the session or as part of a 1-1 conversation, then this should be shared with the safeguarding lead. (The Welcome team can inform you who is available) Please ensure this happens on the same Sunday as the disclosure is made.

### **Training**

- All children's group **leaders** should attend the relevant safeguarding training every 3 years. This is compulsory for all leaders and helpers.
- The 'in house' Basingstoke Community Churches safeguarding training is advisable for both helpers and leaders.
- Further training run by the Children's team for both leaders and helpers should be attended when appropriate and may cover topics such as using the online resources, fire procedures, first aid support etc.

All leaders and helpers of the groups are to read these Safeguarding Procedures alongside the Basingstoke Community Churches Safeguarding Policy in full and sign to agree to adhere to the policy. The agreement signing sheet should be kept in a file alongside the policy documents and reviewed at least annually. The file should be accessible to anyone who wishes to view it so personal information should be kept to names only.

### **In cases of emergency:**

Although every effort will be made to follow this procedure at all times, we do understand that sometimes there might be an emergency during which alternate arrangements may need to be made. Examples of such circumstances might be: a leader or helper unexpectedly being absent, a medical emergency, equipment failure, a child running out of the room in which they are supposed to be, a child exhibiting behaviour which may cause a danger to other children in the group, an environmental problem with the designated group room, as well as other unpredictable events. In such circumstances, the correct procedure would be to open the door to the group in which the emergency has occurred and seek help from an adjacent group or from the Welcome Team. One adult should stand in the doorway with the door open, one adult should go to seek help, leaving the third adult to deal with the emergency either within the room, or without if necessary.