

Practice guidelines for working safely with children and young people

We use the following practice guidelines:

- Parents/responsible adults (RAs) will complete an Information and Consent Form for each of their children attending children's meeting, to be retained and made accessible to volunteers.
- Parents/RAs are asked to tell volunteers about any particular needs or sensitivities of their child.
- Parents/RAs remain responsible for their own children at all times until they are taken into the care of those responsible for children's meeting and from the end of the children's session. At other events, children remain the parent/RA's responsibility, unless specific arrangements are made.
- Parents/RAs of younger children are encouraged to remain with them for as long as is necessary.
- Parents/RAs are expected to remain available to assist with their children if required throughout children's meeting. If a child becomes difficult to manage so that the safety of that child or other children becomes a concern, or so that the continued shared enjoyment of the activities becomes problematic for other children, the parent/RA of that child may be asked to take over responsibility and remove the child or assist in the children's meeting.
- Young people may attend either Meeting for Worship or the children's meeting without a parent or responsible adult being on the premises, where all relevant permissions and contact details have previously been obtained.
- Where photographs or video are taken, Image Use Consent forms will be used.
- Accidents and Incidents will be recorded on the Accident / incident form, and where appropriate in the Local Meeting's accident book.

All Age Worship

All Age Worship is a Meeting for Worship which is designed to include children and young people and adults, often involving activities such as art, craft, music, storytelling, and small group discussions. Such meetings can be organised and led by any member or attender who is interested in doing so, with no need for a separate DBS check, provided that all children and young people stay in the same room as the adults, usually including their parents.

Supervision

- Each group of children will be supervised on all occasions by at least two volunteers who have been safely appointed and have a current enhanced DBS

check. The children will always be within sight or sound of a volunteer. Further adults may provide additional support.

- If, despite always planning for two volunteers, a second is not available on the day, the most appropriate of the following options may be chosen, depending on the context and risk assessment:
 - Using another adult who is known and trusted
 - Joining groups together in the same room
 - Keeping a door open between two rooms
 - Bringing the children into the same room as adult activities
 - Cancelling the activity
 - Considering allowing the group to run with one safely appointed volunteer with a current enhanced DBS check but only if other adults are available in the same building nearby for emergencies, and only in exceptional circumstances, not routinely.
- So far as is practicable, we will follow the recommended ratios of volunteers to children/young people:
 - one volunteer for every three children under two years old
 - one volunteer for every four children aged two years old
 - one volunteer for every eight children aged three to eight years old.

Consideration will be given to the age mix and maturity of the children, and to the type of activity, for example, a short walk along a road would need more supervision than when the time is all spent in a field or garden.

- If children are taken out of the premises by volunteers, prior permission will be obtained from all parents/RAs of children present and there will always be a minimum of two volunteers. Children's Activity and Day Visit forms will be obtained from parents/RAs.
- Any trips outside the meeting and particularly overnight stays will be appropriately risk assessed.
- For longer/residential events, specific boundaries will be negotiated with young people regarding legal and illegal substance use, and sexual activity. Young people not keeping to these boundaries and rules may be asked to leave the event and their parent/RAs will be informed of the reason for this action.
- Children will leave the group only with volunteers or their own parents/RAs.
- Children will not have unsupervised access to outside areas, kitchens, cookers or any cupboards storing hazardous materials including matches.

Conduct

- Everyone who works with children and young people is expected to abide by our Code of Conduct.
- Adults who meet children or young people through their Local Meetings should have no direct contact with the children or young people concerned unless:
 - For children under 16, the parents are made aware of all such contacts and given an opportunity to decide whether and to what extent such contact should take place and to be present or copied into all communications.
 - For young people aged 16 and 17, the parents are aware of the existence of the communications and are agreeable to the communications taking place.
- It is unacceptable for those working with children and young people, and therefore in a position of trust, to abuse that trust by engaging in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Personal Care

This is any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Such activities can include: toileting; feeding; oral care; washing; changing clothes; first aid and medical assistance; supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care. Parents have a responsibility to advise the people responsible for their child of any particular needs relating to their child, and include it on the General Information and Consent form. Only in an emergency would volunteers undertake any aspect of intimate care outside of what is normal that has not been agreed by the parents. Such acts of personal care should be reported to the person responsible for the occasion and parents at the earliest possible time and recorded on an incident form.

When providing personal care, volunteers will:

- Involve the child in the intimate care, always avoiding doing things for the child if they are able to do it for themselves.
- Be aware of their own limitations, only carrying out activities they understand and feel competent with, and never doing something unless they are sure how to do it but asking, if in doubt.
- Be aware and responsive to the child's reactions, always checking their practice by involving and talking to the child such as, 'can you wash there?'
- Report any concerns they may have. If they observe any unusual markings, discolouration or swelling or if a child is accidentally hurt during intimate care, misunderstands or misinterprets something, they will reassure the child, ensure their safety and report the incident to the Safeguarding Coordinator.