

Safe Behaviour – Good Practice

Ruddington Baptist Church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect due to them, and to help protect workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwarranted suspicion.

“Good practice is not a straitjacket, designed to stop workers doing things! Much of what is presented as good practice is good practice irrespective of safeguarding issues.” These are the standards we want because we strive to do the very best for children and young people.”

Showing respect to each other in the way we talk and interact should be second nature within our Christian community:

- ✓ Using age-appropriate language and tone of voice.
- ✓ Being aware of the effect we may have on a child/young person.
- ✓ Listening well, without assuming that we know what others think, or are going to say.
- ✗ Avoiding sexually provocative games, or games with excessive rough physical contact between leaders and young people.
- ✗ Not ridiculing or belittling a young person, nor making sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
- ✓ Exercising discipline using non-physical means (unless restraining in order to protect themselves or another person).
- ✗ Not responding to excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

Workers should *never* normally plan to be alone with children and young people. This raises the vulnerability of everyone concerned, and increases the opportunities for both abuse and for false allegations.

Our Promise

- ✓ We will never plan to be alone on church premises (Hub or YPC), or in RBC-organised activities, with children or young people.
- ✓ At the YPC and the Hub, we will leave doors open and work in open-plan spaces wherever there are insufficient leaders to have two for each group.
- ✓ We will always have two leaders present before young people arrive for cell groups and associated events, and until the last young person has left at the end of the evening.
- ✓ We will avoid inviting a child or young person to our home if we are the only adult present, and will make sure that parents know where their children are and when they should return home.

When we find ourselves in an unplanned situation where we are alone with children or young people, we will:

- ✓ Assess the risks of sending them home against the risk and vulnerability of being alone with them.
- ✓ Contact the Designated Person (Ruth) to report the situation.

Transport

Giving lifts to children and young people is one of the areas where life can become a little blurred, especially if you are also a family friend, godparent or relative of the child, as well as a member of the Junior church/youth team!

If parents make informal private arrangements to transport their own children to events, then the following procedures don't need to be followed.

However, to avoid confusion, it is recommended that any youth or children's leader giving a lift to children/young people (other than your own children) to a church-associated activity should follow RBC procedures for transport below.

- ✓ Most children and young people live within walking distance of church activities, and so offering lifts should be reserved for exceptional situations.
- ✓ Parents should give permission for their child to be given transport, and should be informed at what time to expect their child home.
- ✓ We will drive the children/young people straight home, and avoid long conversations in the car e.g. outside the home.
- ✓ We will avoid being alone in a car with a child or young person who is particularly vulnerable, e.g. because their behaviour is difficult to manage, or a child with a crush on a leader.

PS. Do you know that your car insurance policy may not automatically cover you for volunteer work? Some insurers cover under social, domestic and pleasure; some offer separate cover without an additional premium, but others require cover to be upgraded.

Please make sure that you have adequate cover!

Abuse of Trust

Relationships between children and young people and their leaders take many forms, but all can be described as relationships of trust. The relationship is not one of equal partners, and leaders have a responsibility not to abuse the trust placed in them. We are expected to have a policy to set out the boundaries of such relationships, which are intended to protect young people.

- ✗ It is always unacceptable for a leader to enter into a sexual relationship with a young person.
- ✗ Any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between a person in a position of trust and individuals in their care should be avoided, and any sexual or romantic relationship within a relationship of trust is unacceptable.
 - ✗ It is therefore unacceptable for a leader to form a romantic relationship with a young person with whom they have a relationship of trust.
 - ✗ A romantic relationship between a young leader (e.g. aged 19) with a 17 year old member of the group would still lead to confusion of the roles of leader and romantic partner, and so in this situations, the young leader should cease either the relationship of trust, or the romantic relationship.

- ✓ It would be helpful, when appointing young leaders, to leave a gap of at least one peer group. So a young person (of any age) being given leadership would be placed in a cell group at least one age group below.