

## Code of Conduct

for work with children  
and young people

*This code of conduct supports the Co-Mission Churches Trust Safeguarding Policy. This document covers areas of safe practice in relation to work with children & young people. All workers, whether paid staff members or volunteers, are expected to sign and adhere to the standards of safe practice outlined within this document. These guidelines have been established with advice from Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) and reflect current best practice.*

### GROUPS COVERED BY THIS CODE INCLUDE

Sunday school classes (reception to year 6)

Pathfinder/CYFA etc. youth groups (including evening socials)

Dangerous club

Crèche and pre-school age groups

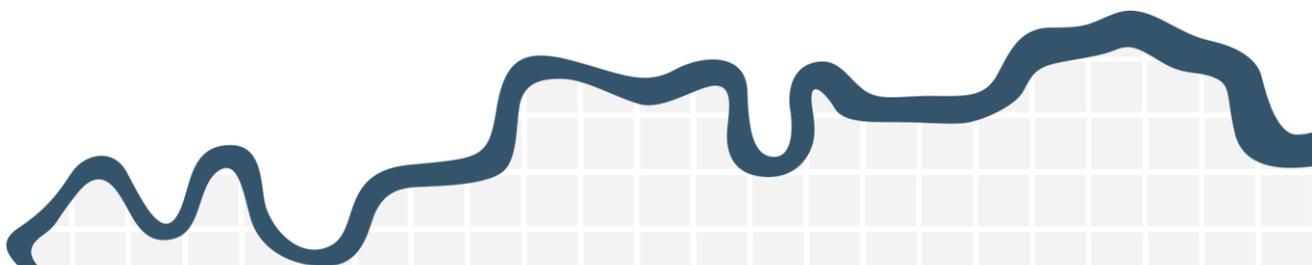
*Groups not governed by this code are crèches within daytime Bible study groups, where childcare is arranged privately by parents attending the group, who remain responsible for their own children*

### WITHIN THIS CODE OF CONDUCT:

1. The supervision of children's activities
2. Managing toileting in preschool classes
3. Behaviour management
4. Guidelines on touch
5. Youth: Mentoring and Communications policy for Youth Leaders
6. Youth: Solvents and Illegal Substances
7. Youth: Tobacco and Alcohol

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## 1. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

### CHILD/ADULT RATIOS

Attempts will be made wherever possible to keep to the following ratio of adults to children, using as a guide the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8's:

Child's Age	Adult : Child ratio
0 to 2 years	1:3
2 to 3 years	1:4
4 to 8 years	1:6

- No adult will be a lone worker with a group of children, except as part of a church's youth mentoring or discipleship programme. (See Section 5)
- Where possible the gender of the adults should reflect that of the group: i.e. at least one man if boys are present and one woman if girls are present.
- If for any reason a worker is alone with a child, they should ensure that there is a second adult nearby or there are other workers or groups nearby. Workers will leave doors open when seeing a child individually.
- No person under 18 years of age will be left in charge of any children of any age. Children or young people attending a group will not be left alone at any time.
- A register of children or young people attending each group or activity should be kept, and a register of helpers.
- A record should be kept of any unusual activity or comments by members, recording what leaders witnessed (e.g. throwaway sexual comments, or particularly difficult behaviour). The purpose of this is to protect both children and workers. Such records must be passed to the Coordinator to be kept in a secure place. These records must be kept indefinitely.
- Any incidents such as fights including what action was taken by the leaders should be recorded on the accident/incident sheets to be kept with the registers. Spare copies of these sheets can be obtained from the Coordinator. Completed forms must be filed in a secure place.
- Any accidents or injuries should also be recorded on the accident/incident sheets. Parents and older children should be asked to sign the sheet.
- When transporting children ensure that it is with the knowledge of the team/leadership and that parental approval has been attained. All drivers must have a valid driving licence, valid insurance and must ensure that seat belt laws are complied with. If it is necessary to transport a child on their own (which should only be in exceptional circumstances) they should travel in the back of the car.

## YOUNG LEADERS

We are keen to support young people (in Year 11 onwards) in learning about ministry through involvement with children's work in the church. At the same time, we recognise that young leaders must not be exposed to unreasonable levels of responsibility or risk.

With this in mind, young leaders who are in Year 11 or above will not be placed in a role that will require them to complete a DBS check. They cannot be counted into the worker-child ratios. They will however be asked to sign the online Safe Practice Code of Conduct for Work with Young People and be given ThirtyOne:Eight's 'Worker's Pocket Guide' (dealing with disclosures of abuse).

Young leaders will be supported at all times in their roles by adult leaders.

## TODDLER GROUPS

During toddler group sessions run on Co-Mission premises, parents or carers are entirely responsible at all times for the children in their care.

Any concerns about children attending these groups should be referred to the Coordinator.

## CMCT BABYSITTING ARRANGEMENTS

If babysitting services are offered to parents by any of our Churches, e.g. for a Christianity Explored course, then the babysitters will need to have successfully completed an Enhanced DBS certificate to work with children, from the Disclosure and Barring Service.



## 2. MANAGING TOILETING WITHIN PRE-SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Within our Churches, we are clear that for crèche-age children, leaders do not provide intimate care, such as nappy changes.

In crèche, if a child requires a nappy change, leaders contact the parent/carer (via text message) who then come to the child and provide the necessary care.

Once children move into Sunday school the procedures around providing intimate care need to be just as consistent across the entire team of leaders. Leaders need to be operating to clear guidelines in this area both to safeguard the children and protect themselves.

The following guidelines have been established with advice from ThirtyOne:Eight & reflect current best practice.

### CHILDREN AGED UNDER 3 YEARS:

- The approach to managing toileting in children under 3 years will be consistent with that of crèche.
- Leaders will not provide intimate care to these children.
- Children who are not fully toilet trained should therefore attend Sunday school wearing a nappy/pull up.
- If a child in this age group requires a nappy change or to go to the toilet, a parent/carer will be contacted (via text message) and should then come and assist with taking their child to the toilet as necessary.

### CHILDREN AGED 3 & 4 YEARS:

- Any help with toileting in children aged 3 and 4 years should be provided with the knowledge and agreement of the child's parents/carers.
- When taking children to the toilet, leaders should always consider the dignity of the child and ensure that as much privacy as possible is given.
- Children should be encouraged to use their own toilet cubicle.
- Leaders should avoid doing things for the child that the child is able to do for themselves.

If a parent/carer prefers to assist their own child with toileting, they should advise the group leaders of their preference. Leaders should then contact the child's parent/carer (via text message) as necessary.



## 3. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Discipline is a team issue.

- Each member of the team has a part to play.
- Agree roles and responsibilities.
- Identify each other's strengths.
- Be consistent, loving and predictable (the same behaviour produces the same consequences).
- When disciplining a child over poor behaviour, do not do so in a way that humiliates and do not do so one to one behind closed doors.
- Never use physical discipline.

Discipline is a planning issue.

- Be aware that a poor lesson can result in poor behaviour, because the children are bored and frustrated. It does not follow that poor behaviour is always caused by a poor lesson.

Discipline is a gospel issue

- We work in a context of continual conversation with parents. We want to be speaking to parents about their children, irrespective of their child's behaviour. This acknowledges that we only teach because they have commissioned us to teach their children the Bible for an hour a week.
- Poor discipline prevents others from hearing God speak. That should be motivation enough to act.
- Seek to encourage with positive affirmation both the whole class and individuals, publicly and privately, whenever possible.
- Offer the child a way out by them changing their behaviour
- Model forgiveness

### MANAGING POOR BEHAVIOUR

1. Explain to the child how their behaviour is falling below the standards you expect.
2. Warn the child that if behaviour continues to be poor, they will be asked to sit out from the class for a period of time.
3. The child should be sat in timeout for the duration of an activity or game. They may not participate in any way while they are there. They are expected to listen. Parents must be informed if this happens, as soon after the lesson as possible.
4. Warn the child that if after re-joining the class, the behaviour continues to be poor, they will be return to timeout for a longer period of time.
5. If the behaviour makes it difficult to continue the lesson, then one teacher needs to collect a parent from Church to remove the child. Explain the reasons for this as a final warning, before you take this action. Alternatively one teacher should take the child to the children's work coordinator to talk privately to the child in an open place.
6. Exclusion from children's work for a week would be appropriate for continued disruption of the class.



## 4. GUIDELINES ON TOUCH FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN

- Keep everything public.
- A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. The team should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood.

## 5. YOUTH 1:1 MENTORING AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### 5.1 One to One Mentoring / Pastoral Care

If a worker is working with young people as part of a church mentoring and/or discipleship programme (for example, reading the Bible one to one with a young person of the same gender as part of the church's youth work) or as part of a pastoral care team:

- The parents of the young people involved are required to provide their agreement (by letter or by email) that the one to one meetings may take place.
  - One to one meetings should only be held in agreed places (for example in church or in cafes), and should be in view of other people.
  - A one to one meeting should have an agreed start and end time and the young person's parents should be notified that a meeting is taking place and where it is being held.
  - A basic record should be kept of dates of one to one meetings and any text messages or emails.
  - Appropriate boundaries should be put in place in regard to times and demand, i.e. not phoning or texting late at night, etc.
  - A written record should be kept of issues/decisions discussed at meetings.
  - In the event of any pastoral concerns a leader may have about an individual member, a leader should take the issue to the parents or church leaders.
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## 5.2 Communications Policy

This policy seeks to clarify and set the boundaries for communication between the youth leaders and members at our Churches. All communication between youth leaders and members occurs on a strictly same sex basis – i.e. male leaders to male members and female leaders to female members (except where mass communication e.g. group emails/ Facebook messages sent out).

The context for all communication with members is that parents are responsible for their children rather than the youth leaders. At the beginning of each term a letter is sent to all parents explaining dates of events and parental consent is requested. All communication in this policy is assumed to be between leaders and members only.

To prevent relationships being misunderstood by a member or an outsider, leaders will not send more than five texts, emails or Facebook messages to one individual in any given week. All communication between leaders and members is to occur between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm. In circumstances where leaders are texted or contacted by members outside of these times, the leader will not reply until the following morning except in cases of emergency. The only exception would be in the evening of a youth event (for example a social, which may not finish until 10pm) where communication asking for practical details can be replied to.

In all communication, leaders are encouraged to be above reproach and exercise wisdom to protect both themselves and the members from accusation or incrimination of any kind. Rather than hinder communication, this policy is intended to encourage youth leaders to communicate appropriately.

The table below outlines the current methods of communication:

	GROUPS FOR AGES 11–14	GROUPS FOR AGES 15–18
Text Messaging/ WhatsApp	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to confirm details of attendance at social events and meeting one to one with members.</li> <li>Occasionally used to send birthday messages, encourage with Bible verses. Same gender only.</li> <li>Not used for conversations or discussions of any nature.</li> <li>If using WhatsApp, use group messaging where possible.</li> </ul>
Mobile Phone Calls	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used only to confirm expected attendance at an event or a one to one meeting.</li> <li>e.g. if leaders and members are at a venue waiting for another member's arrival, the leader may call to ask where they are.</li> <li>Not used for any other communication or personal/ pastoral work.</li> </ul>
Landlines	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to confirm attendance at events or arrange meeting for one to ones where member does not have a mobile phone.</li> </ul>
Facebook	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook group created to communicate details of events, confirm details of and attendance at events</li> </ul>



	GROUPS FOR AGES 11–14	GROUPS FOR AGES 15–18
	Leaders are asked not to be Facebook friends with members of the pathfinder group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only group members are allowed to be members of the Facebook group. The youth leader is the sole administrator of the group. The Facebook group is closed meaning that no-one outside the group has access to information or communication contained within the group.</li> <li>• Leaders will occasionally communicate via personal message on Facebook or via the members Facebook wall to confirm details of meeting for one to ones or to encourage with Bible verses etc. Same gender only.</li> <li>• Leaders and members are often friends on Facebook which gives members access to the whole of the leader's Facebook profile. The leader has to be above reproach in their Facebook behaviour. The member will have access to some content of the leader's other Facebook friends.</li> <li>• Facebook communication has proven to be the best form of communication with members and allows insight into one another's lives.</li> </ul>
Twitter	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Twitter accounts are generally not used by teenagers. However, where deemed beneficial, Twitter may be used as further aid for communicating information to members midweek.</li> <li>• All leaders have access to username and password for Twitter account but the lead use of this Twitter account will be the overall group leader. Other leaders wishing to tweet may do so from time to time.</li> <li>• The Twitter account will be set to Private so that only approved people can follow the account.</li> <li>• Users should be aware that tweets are stored indefinitely on multiple online search engines and that they are publicly available to members of the Press or anyone referred to.</li> </ul>
Other Social Networking e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, etc	None	None. NB. If leader profiles are public, then the content must be above reproach at all times.
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be used to confirm 1:1s only if parents are cc'd. Copies of emails are kept.</li> <li>• Parents are informed in emails about details of advertised events.</li> <li>• Where details change or new events are arranged, parents will be informed via email.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to confirm details of and attendance at events. Copies of emails are kept.</li> <li>• Email is used for administrative purposes only. No pastoral issues are discussed via email.</li> <li>• Parents will be sent an email copy of group youth emails sent by leaders. They will not be copied in to young people's emails because this would frustrate young people!</li> </ul>
Chat Rooms and Online Gaming	None	None



## 6. Youth: Solvents and Illegal Substances.

- Workers should be alert to possession and use of illegal substances.
- If a worker becomes aware a child or young person may be abusing solvents they should be encouraged to seek professional help from their doctor or a counsellor specialising in this area.
- It is a criminal offence to allow anyone attending an activity run by our Churches to supply illegal drugs or use them on the premises.
- We have a zero tolerance policy on all illegal substances.
- All youth attending any of our services and events must be made aware of our zero tolerance approach to illegal substances.

For the child involved:

- Ask them to stop, warning them of the consequences if they do not (e.g. ban from the group).
- Inform parents/carers if the young person is under 16 years.
- Inform the parents/carers if the young person is over 16 years (with the young person's permission).
- Discuss with the young person the proposed course of action, particularly if they re-offend (e.g. possibly informing the police).

Write down the content of any discussion with the young person, including the action taken and keep this in a secure place and inform the Safeguarding Coordinator, if they have not already been informed.

## 7. Youth: Tobacco and Alcohol

- There is a smoking ban in all enclosed public spaces throughout the UK and a no-smoking policy should therefore be enforced within any buildings used by our Churches.
  - From October 2014, the ban on smoking has now been extended to smoking in a vehicle with children present (in England and Wales).
  - It is also illegal for anyone under the age of 18 in England and Wales to be sold cigarettes (or other products like roll-up tobacco and cigars) over the counter or at a vending machine.
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- There are also strict regulations on the sale and consumption of alcohol where children and young people are concerned. No alcohol will be sold at our events to any person under 18 years. Proof of age will be requested if a worker is unsure whether it is legal to sell an individual an alcoholic beverage.
- Workers do not have the right to confiscate alcohol found in a young person's possession but they can enforce a no-alcohol policy.
- There may be occasions where it is felt necessary to inform parents /carers that a child/young person has been drinking, particularly if they are under the influence or that there are concerns for their health or safety. This should be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead at the event and/or the Coordinator.

