

**METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES
CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING AND DISCIPLINE**

CHURCH POLICY STATEMENT

The Church's Mission to the Young

The Tabernacle seeks to reach as many children and young people as possible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This mission is largely expressed through the operation of morning and afternoon Sunday Schools, Bible Classes and weeknight meetings for all ages. Outings, parties and other special occasions are also held. Crèche facilities are also operated during Sunday services.

Our Policy

The church's policies and procedures apply to all activities involving those under 18 years of age. Throughout the operation of these meetings, and during the collection and transporting of children, the safety, protection and welfare of the children is the first priority. The implementation of the church's policy is through the following procedures.

1. All aspects of the operation of the children's work are under the authority of the Pastor, supported by the Elders and Deacons. Day-to-day operation of the children's work is managed by the Sunday School Coordinator consulting the Pastor, the Coordinator being appointed by the Elders' and Deacons' Court. The elders and deacons will receive regular reports from the Sunday School Coordinator on incidents recorded in connection with children's meetings and will consider necessary changes to policies and procedures in response.
2. All appointments of children's meetings staff will be made by the Pastor in conjunction with the Sunday School Coordinator. No unofficial appointments are allowed. No person with a history involving child-related offences will undertake any role associated with the children's work of the church. All leaders and children's workers in whatever capacity will have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure certificate. A single record of all DBS and CRB checks will be securely kept.
3. All leaders, teachers, and other responsible appointments will be members of the Tabernacle who have shown themselves to be trustworthy and faithful in all aspects of their lives.
4. Non-leading helpers may include people who are not members of the Tabernacle. These must be approved by the Pastor and will normally be members of other churches of like beliefs, or those well known to us as responsible and trustworthy Christian adults. They will always work under the supervision of Tabernacle members.
5. Any member of staff or helper who manifests any irresponsible behaviour or loss of self-control in connection with the children, will be immediately suspended from their child-related duties. Following investigation by the Pastor and Elders it may be deemed necessary to confirm the suspension as permanent.
6. The 'Children's Safeguarding and Discipline Leaders' Instructions' will be given to each department or meeting leader. All leaders will be briefed on the Tabernacle's policy and procedures by the Sunday School Coordinator or one of the Elders.
7. All staff must be given the document 'Children's Safeguarding and Discipline Rules' and be briefed on it by their department or meeting leader. Annual refresher training will be given to all staff at briefing events.
8. All new teachers will undergo a training session, which will include the Children's Safeguarding and Discipline Rules.
9. A logbook will be available at each site to record any accidents or incidents. This should be completed by the leader on the same day as any incident.

10. Drivers of Tabernacle vehicles or private cars used for transporting children, will be currently active drivers who are at least 25 years old (Tabernacle vehicles) and 21 years old (private vehicles), having held a full driving licence for at least 2 years and without motoring offences. A list of all private vehicles used will be kept by the Sunday School Coordinator and agreed by the elders. They must be insured with third-party passenger liability cover.

Drivers of Tabernacle minibuses will be qualified in accordance with current legislation and listed as Approved Drivers. Drivers who passed their test since 1.1.1997 may not drive minibuses heavier than 3.5 tonnes weight. Vehicles in this category are listed on the bus key cabinet.

11. The activities to be undertaken on all children's outings, camps or other special occasions are to be fully agreed in detail with the Sunday School Coordinator or with an officer appointed for this purpose by the Elders' and Deacons' Court. The full implementation of our Children's Safeguarding and Discipline policies is mandatory on all such occasions. A risk assessment will be carried out for all new events and activities. The duties of leaders running outings and other special events, separately listed, will be followed.

12. The Sunday School Coordinator will act as the contact for all Children's Safeguarding and Discipline issues. He or she will quickly gather the available facts concerning any reports of suspected abuse of children and of any serious incidents involving Tabernacle workers. They will report their findings to the Pastor, who will decide on appropriate action. A record will be kept of investigated incidents.

13. The Pastor and Elders will consider the facts concerning an alleged abuse, weighing the evidence carefully. If it is clear that a criminal offence may have been committed, whether by a person outside the church or by a member, they will report the matter to the police and social services. In cases where the facts are less clear and there do not seem to be sufficient grounds of suspicion that an offence has occurred or that a child is at risk to warrant reporting the matter to the police or involving social services, the Pastor and Elders will seek the help of a respected, professional member of the church (eg: a solicitor or doctor) to investigate the allegations and to advise on whether there is sufficient evidence for the matter to be reported. A record will be kept of such incidents. Phone numbers of relevant police and local authority contacts are kept by the Sunday School Coordinator and church officers.

14. No meetings involving children's workers will be called for any purpose at the same time as children's meetings (on Sundays or on weeknights) thereby ensuring that all staff are normally available for their assigned duties.

15. Still photographs may be taken of specific children's activities for use in internal displays and promotional materials, without identifying any individuals. Whilst it is not practical to seek individual parent/guardian permission to photograph activities involving groups of children, the following precautions are taken in order to comply with the safeguarding intentions of the Data Protection Act.

- An official photographer is appointed for an event.
- Tabernacle workers are asked not to take their own photographs.
- Pictures are stills only and not videos.
- Pictures are of groups only and not of individuals.
- Pictures are stored only at the Tabernacle and without any reference to the personal identity of the children pictured.

Issued by the Elders and Deacons

29 April 2016