

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

LEADERS' INSTRUCTIONS

The leaders of each department and weeknight meeting have a vital role in ensuring the implementation of our rules for discipline and child protection. Leaders must be constantly alert to possible problems and dangers and must take appropriate action without delay to prevent problems arising.

The Leaders' Duties

1. To be fully conversant with the church's policy on Children's Safeguarding and Discipline and the rules given to all staff and to ensure their full implementation in their department or meeting.
2. To ensure that registers are being accurately kept at every meeting and that full home address and telephone details for every child are recorded and available.
3. To do everything in their power to prevent behaviour problems leading to children being physically handled. If a child is behaving in such a way as to provoke a disturbance, the department leader must withdraw the child and arrange for him/her to be taken home if possible. The leader should inform the parents of the problem and ask them not to send the child for a few weeks, until we can be sure their behaviour improves. Department and weeknight leaders have the authority to stand down children from attendance but must ensure that the Sunday School/Bible Class teacher is informed without delay.
4. To record details of any accidents or other incidents in the site logbook. (See below).
5. To carefully note details of any concern reported by a member of staff that a child may be suffering from the effects of some form of abuse, and to pass those details to the Sunday School Coordinator on the same day. The leader is not to question the child or to report the matter to the parents.
6. To take immediate action if any incident occurs during which any member of staff appears to have lost their self-control in connection with the children and to ensure the restoration of a harmonious atmosphere and the safety of all the children. The details of the incident are to be recorded in the logbook and reported, on the same day, to the Sunday School Coordinator, or a Tabernacle elder.
7. To ensure that any child removed from a lesson for bad behaviour or ill health, is cared for by a responsible adult until he/she can be taken home.
8. To ensure that every meeting begins and ends on time so that parents' expectations for the collection and return of their children are met.
9. To maintain order without frightening words, threats or physical intervention.
10. To ensure that every child is kept safely on the premises until taken home by Tabernacle staff or collected by their parents (except children over 11 whose parent(s) have given permission for them to go home unaccompanied).
11. To liaise closely with other leaders to ensure consistent treatment of difficult children.
12. To ensure that first aid facilities are available and that any team members with first aid skills are known to the leader.
13. To report to the Sunday School Coordinator when the running of a meeting would jeopardise the keeping of these rules (eg: through insufficient helpers or staff for transport).

The Logbook

In order to provide a record for future reference a logbook will be available for each site. The purposes of the logbook are to record details of:

1. Any accidents involving the children.
2. Any incidents resulting in the physical restraint of children.
3. Any incidents resulting in the suspension of a member of staff.
4. Children leaving the premises early without prior consent.
5. Children usually collected by a parent, who does not appear.
6. The need to communicate with parents concerning behaviour problems.
7. The need to report suspicions of child abuse to the Sunday School Coordinator.

Entries must be made by the leader, on the day referred to. If no incidents are reported, no details of the meeting will be recorded.

The logbooks available are:

1. Tabernacle: Morning School, Sunday School, Bible Classes, College Classes, Tuesday and Friday meetings, and crèche - kept in the Deacons' Vestry.
2. Surrey Gardens Sunday School and weeknight meetings – kept on site.
3. Surrey Square Sunday School and weeknight meetings – kept on site.
4. East Dulwich Tabernacle Sunday School and weeknight meetings – kept on site for use by Tabernacle and EDT staff.
5. Minet Road Sunday School and weeknight meetings – kept by the meeting leaders.

Notes on Physical Games, Outings and Camps

The organising and leading of activities which may involve an element of physical risk is a highly responsible role which must be taken very seriously. These activities include games in our halls at weeknight meetings, winter parties, trips to local recreational facilities, outings and camps.

The following principles and guidelines must be followed to minimise risk and enable us to continue to enjoy the blessing of God on our work and the respect of the parents.

1. All activities will be under the clear leadership of a responsible person appointed by the Elders' and Deacons' Court or by the Pastor.
2. In activities involving children and young people (those under 18) held outside the normal times of meetings, prior written consent of a parent/guardian must be obtained.
3. If the event involves any unusual or new activity not previously agreed, the event leader must obtain prior agreement of the Pastor or the Sunday School Coordinator.
4. All risks must be assessed and the activity carefully planned in advance so as to minimise the risk of accident or other misadventure. Times of departure and return should be clearly stated and adhered to.
5. The activity must be fully supervised with a ratio of supervising adults to young people agreed by the Pastor or the Sunday School Coordinator. In the case of wet weather occurring during an outdoor activity, special care must be taken to ensure that children without suitable clothing are sheltered. The responsible person will take the final decision on abandoning activities because of the weather, after consultation with other supervising adults.
6. Sleeping arrangements on camp must be carefully considered. Staff will not sleep in the same room or tent as young people, but will be housed close to and within earshot of them.
7. In all physical games the leaders must watch for and take action to reduce an excessive competitive spirit, which may lead to aggressive and high-risk behaviour. This applies to both adults and young people taking part in the activity.
8. On journeys in vehicles, seat belts must be worn and behaviour on the vehicles supervised to ensure that the driver is not distracted and that doors and windows are not inappropriately used.
9. The public liability risks involved in the regular activities of the church, including outings and Boy's Camp, are covered by our insurance company, but we must take every step to operate in a responsible manner. New or unusual events should be notified to the insurance company. This will normally be done by a staff member but the organiser should check that this has been done prior to the event.

Issued by the Elders and Deacons

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