

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

RULES FOR ALL INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S WORK

'And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me' (*Matthew 18.5*)

General Discipline and Child Protection Aims

With large numbers of children being collected and brought to our Sunday Schools and weeknight meetings, behavioural problems are likely to arise. The golden rule in our handling of children is 'Prevention is better than cure'. Many problems can be avoided if staff are well prepared in advance, arrive before children (whenever possible), and are watchful and ready to avert potentially difficult situations. These rules have the following aims:

- The welfare and protection of the children at all times.
- Maintenance of respect for the Tabernacle and the Lord's work in the eyes of parents and children.
- The consistent presentation of a good example of Christian behaviour to the young.
- The prompt dealing with bad behaviour so that the atmosphere is not spoiled for other children.
- The advancement of children with behavioural problems by giving them an opportunity to overcome their problems with the concerned and patient support of Tabernacle staff.
- The safe return home of children in a dangerous neighbourhood.
- The prevention of uncoordinated and conflicting courses of action being taken by different staff members.

Discipline Guidelines

(1) Speak firmly but without ill-temper and shouting to a misbehaving child. Make it clear that certain behaviour is unacceptable on our vehicles and in the building (eg: deliberate foul language, racist comments, violence to others, any form of bullying, conduct likely to cause an accident, damage to property).

(2) It may be necessary to part two fighting children, or to direct miscreants with a firm hand to the vehicle or room where they are supposed to be. In no circumstances should any member of staff strike a child, no matter how gently as this constitutes criminal assault.

(3) Report incidents urgently as follows:

- All Sunday School staff including transport team – report to the child's department leader.
- All weeknight meeting staff including transport team – report to the child's meeting leader.
- Leaders are responsible for recording details in the logbook.

(4) Be careful to co-operate with any plan of action decided on to deal with a problem.

(5) No member of the transport team or individual teacher should ever ban a child from attending Sunday School or weeknight meetings, or refuse transport. Only department and meeting leaders are empowered to stand down children.

Safeguarding children

1. In order to protect the children and the workers from potential problems, workers should avoid being alone with a child in a place where they cannot be seen.
2. If staff find themselves alone with a child, they must avoid all physical contact.
3. Workers should avoid giving lifts in cars to just one child. If unavoidable, the child should sit in the back of the car.
4. All children must be taken home unless collected by the family or where a parent has agreed that the child (if over 11 years old) can go home unaccompanied.
5. If you suspect that a child is suffering from the effects of physical injury or sexual abuse, do not question the child or speak to the parent but, without delay, inform your department/meeting leader, who may have knowledge of previous problems and has guidance on action to be taken. Within an hour of the meeting, make a written note of the details including any comments made by the child and pass these notes to the leader.

6. If you have reason to believe that another worker is having an inadvisable level of physical contact with the children, or is reacting in an inappropriate or potentially violent manner to problems, you must report your concerns immediately to your department/meeting leader. If he or she cannot be spoken to, you must report to the Sunday School Coordinator or a Tabernacle elder without delay.

Issued by the Elders and Deacons

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