

GRACE CHURCH CHELTENHAM– CODE OF CONDUCT

SAFEGUARDING SUMMARY

It is the policy of Grace Church Cheltenham to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

We have four groups for children on a Sunday: Scramblers (birth to Preschool), Climbers (Reception-Yr2), Explorers (Yr3-6), and Pathfinders (Yr7-9). During the week, we also run Grace Tots (birth to Preschool), Pathfinders midweek (Yr7-9) and Youth (Yr10-13).

The Safeguarding Lead is Ann-Marie Bach, the Deputy (who administers DBS paperwork) is Suzy Fox, and Ethan MacLeod is Trustee Lead for Safeguarding.

PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

GENERAL PROCEDURES WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A comprehensive First Aid kit including logbook is found hanging on the wall in the cupboard under the stairs in the atrium. A mini First Aid kit can be found in every Grace Kids box. These will be maintained by the nominated First Aider.

Visiting parents will be asked by a member of the welcoming team or staff to fill in a **Registration Form**, to be given to the group leader before the Grace Kids session starts. Relevant information from the Registration Form will be added to the register by the leader of that Grace Kids group. The form will then be handed to the Administrator for processing and storage.

A **Register** is kept of children in attendance by leaders in each of the groups – printed on fluorescent card each term. Hand outdated registers to the Administrator for shredding.

If a child is distressed and not settling, a leader will fetch a parent, always erring on the side of caution when making a judgment. Physical settling techniques or physical comfort should be proportionate (does the child need picking up, for example, or could you distract them with an activity or a toy). It should take into consideration the age of the child, their personality and any information or guidance the parents have given leaders in advance – any physical comfort given should always be in public and in view of other leaders.

Activities and materials used will be age appropriate with consideration given to safety at all times.

Photographs and videos may only be taken/used with the express permission of parents and in line with both our data protection policy and our photographic images and videos policy (Appendix 10.3). Permission is recorded on Grace Kids registers.

If contacting children under the age of 18 via e-mail, texts or social media, use group chats including other Grace Kids leaders and parents. Keep messages for future reference. Maintain open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication. See Appendix 10 and 11 for more information.

One adult should never be alone with a single child behind a closed door. Occasionally a private conversation may need to take place, in which case the location should remain visible (e.g. a quiet corner of the main hall) and there should always be at least one other adult in the near vicinity about which both the adult and the child know. If for some reason an adult finds themselves inadvertently alone with a single child, they should move out of the situation and let the Safeguarding Lead know.

Married couples may not lead a Grace Kids group together exclusively, unless there is another DBS-checked adult present in the building, within sight or hearing of the group.

Grace Church Cheltenham cannot be held responsible for any informal childcare arrangements between members of the church family (staff and volunteers), such as babysitting and giving lifts. Parents do so at their own risk. When a formal arrangement is in place, such as youth leaders transporting youth to/from an event, appropriate permissions will be sought and the usual code of conduct will apply.

Where children and young people help on a Sunday e.g. with AV or Music, they remain in the care and responsibility of their parents during that time. It is not our practice to provide DBS checks for the AV and Music teams. Instead, members of those teams should make it clear to the Trustee Lead for Safeguarding or the AV Team Overseer that they would prefer not to have children helping when they are serving (for whatever reason), this will not jeopardise their opportunity to serve on that team.

Venue

Children are never to be left unaccompanied, other than children in Explorers and Pathfinders who will use toilet facilities unaccompanied (see below).

The groups use the classrooms in Centenary Hall as appropriate depending on number, and sometimes use other facilities in the school e.g. the playground, gym, hall.

For their safety, children should not be allowed to play in the entrance vestibule, outside entrance patio or rear grounds unless an adult is supervising.

In the event of a fire, Grace Kids leaders and children will immediately and calmly evacuate the building, bringing the register, via the nearest signposted exit. They will assemble at the fire assembly point, which is the Covered Play Area next to the playing fields. Leaders are to register the children in their group before returning them to their parents.

Arriving at and leaving Grace Kids

The service leader or elder on family news will send leaders and children to their rooms. One leader from each group will go down to the classroom and a second leader will remain in the atrium to greet and collect the Grace Kids and usher them in the right direction. This will ensure that any children who are still in the corridor will be collected by the second leader on their way to the room. Leaders in the atrium can help direct visitors and make sure registration forms are completed for their relevant groups. Parents of Scramblers will accompany their children to their room and stay with them for the first part of the group.

An adult will be sent to alert all groups when their leaders can bring them back. Pathfinders may return unaccompanied.

Toilet procedures

Parents of children in Scramblers will be required to assist their children with any toilet activities.

Children in Climbers will be escorted to the toilet by a DBS checked adult (female ideally). Be as distant as possible from the procedure. Tell another adult where you are going and when you will return. Take more than one child if feasible. If a child needs help parents will be called for.

In Explorers, and Pathfinders, a leader should know when children have gone to the toilet and monitor their return.

Nappy changes and dealing with any 'accidents' remains the responsibility of parents. Where children are in the early stages of potty training, the parents will be notified to assist where necessary, and may be required to remain in with their child during the first few weeks of potty training.

Unknown adults

Unknown adults include not only those who are unfamiliar to Grace Church, but also anyone who is not on the Grace Kids team. Unknown adults should not enter groups when they are in session. The only adults present in groups when they are in session should be those on the Grace Kids team, or parents/guardians settling their own child.

Any parent cannot be counted in adult:child ratios, and has no responsibility over any child other than their own, they must not physically intervene with other children in the group in any way, or be given a leadership role in the session. The exception is any parent who is also on the Grace Kids team. The Deputy Safeguarding Officer will produce a termly list of Scramblers parents who are also on the Grace Kids team, to be kept alongside the Scramblers register.

All church members and especially group leaders are to maintain vigilance with regard to visitors to the church and any unfamiliar faces in the building (Dean Close staff may be around). Dean Close staff should be denied access to the classrooms while Grace Kids groups are in session, ideally until after the church booking (currently 6.30pm).

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES, CONCERNS, ALLEGATIONS AND SUSPICIONS

If you suspect or are told of alleged abuse, you should do the following:

1. Report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Lead, their Deputy, or Thirtyone:eight. A written record of the concerns should be made using Appendix 7: Cause for Concern Form and handed to the Safeguarding Lead.
2. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
3. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

If the young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, contact the Police or Social Services.

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

You may contact the Thirtyone:eight helpline for advice: 0303 003 1111.

GOOD PRACTICE WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Do treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare.

Do remember that you are acting in a position of trust for Grace Church Cheltenham - you will be seen as a role model to the young people and must act appropriately.

Do work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way.

Do work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations – ensure that you are always at least within sight or hearing of others.

Do maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid engaging in any interactions with children that are not suitable or professional. When an individual is having trouble controlling their emotions, or demonstrating that they are in need of attention, they may need adult assistance to help regulate their emotions. Parents may need to be called, always err on the side of caution when making a judgment.

Do make sure your home is a safe and appropriate environment for children and young people if you are hosting groups.

Do avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language/gestures).

Do encourage children to do things independently before physically intervening e.g. taking off jumpers, getting down from chairs. Take into consideration the age and personality of the child. Where possible ask the child for permission, for example "You look a bit hot, do you want to take off your jumper? Do you need any help or can you do it by yourself?"

Do avoid physical games (for example, rugby/football) where the risk of adult on child injury would be high. If unavoidable, adults should put themselves in a position of low/no contact roles e.g. referee, goalkeeper etc.

Do create and nurture a culture where unacceptable behaviour can be challenged – be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or be challenged on your own behaviour.

Do seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary.

Do follow policies, procedures and guidelines, and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions in a timely manner to the Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Do provide opportunities for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have.

Do listen carefully to those you are supporting and respond with sensitivity, especially when dealing with e.g. bullying, bereavement or abuse.

Do respect a young person's right to personal privacy within the appropriate professional boundaries – explain that you will act with discretion.

Do explain to an individual that you are unable to keep concerns to yourself and may need to pass these on to someone else.

Do not make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality.

Do not delay reporting concerns.

Do not take unnecessary risks in relation to physical, emotional and spiritual welfare.

Do not behave in any way that may be perceived as threatening or abusive.

Do not develop inappropriate relationships or have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.

Do not permit abusive youth peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying.

Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures.

Do not show favouritism or exclusion to any individual – all people should be equally supported and encouraged.

Do not pass on your personal and/or social media contact details, or behave in any way that breaches the Grace Church Online Safety Policy.

Do not undertake Grace Kids responsibilities while under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.

Do not exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.

Do not believe 'it could never happen to us'.

BREACHING THE CODE OF CONDUCT

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures:

- We may make a referral to statutory agencies such as the Police and/or the local authority's children's or adult's social care departments or DBS.
- Depending on the seriousness of the concern, you may be asked to leave Grace Church Cheltenham, in discussion with the Leadership Team and Safeguarding Team.

If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the Safeguarding Lead.