

Good practice with children and young people for the prevention of abuse

The church should ensure that:

- two leaders are on site for any activity to take place and a female helper is part of the leadership for all mixed sex groups
- leaders have contact addresses and phone numbers for all parents/carers of children and young people and other helpers know where the list is kept – details of any allergy or medication should also be noted
- young people and children should know that they can speak to the young people's representative if they want help or advice – details of other agencies, such as Childline, Social Services, should be available
- access to the building should be safe and well lit

The workers should:

- treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age and watch their speech, tone of voice and body language
- set boundaries for children's behaviour without physical punishment (however, a situation may arise where a young person may need to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person)
- be careful not to ridicule, scapegoat or reject a child or young person
- be mindful of how and where they touch children; if a child responds in a negative way to a comforting touch, stop immediately and find an alternative, non-tactile way to convey concern
- not play unduly rough physical or sexually provocative games
- take care not to let youngsters involve them in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature, nor show favouritism to any one child
- not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in fun, nor respond to any such comments coming from young people
- respect a child's privacy when washing or toileting – if help is needed with the toilet or washing (for instance, if a young child has soiled his/her underclothes) make sure another adult is around; if possible the parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task – but if this is not possible they should be told afterwards
- never invite a young person to their home alone – invite a group, make sure someone else is around and that parents/carers are aware where the young people are
- not give lifts to children/young people on their own unless permission is given by the parents – the child should sit in the back of the car and wear a seat belt; insurance cover should be checked
- not share sleeping accommodation with youngsters
- record accidents and injuries which happen when young people and children are in their care
- ensure that, if a young person wishes to speak to an adult in private, another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom – another adult should be in the building and the young person should know this

If the guidelines are broken for any reason, the young people's representative should be informed

Good practice with colleagues

If a colleague acts in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to your supervisor/leader about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.