



Code of Behaviour for Children

Children should be involved in drawing up a code of behaviour for themselves. However, it is important, in working with children, that an appropriate adult with relevant skills and competence participates to support them in developing the code of behaviour.

The methods used in creating a code of behaviour should be age and ability appropriate, with children being encouraged to avoid merely drawing up a list of prohibitions. Instead, the code should be comprised of positive statements about respect and should consider what consequences ensue if the code is broken.

If a particular activity involves the use of the internet, social media, taking photographs/videos, specific guidelines will need to be developed by the group. Also, if difficulties arise in relation to the children/young people's use of social media or the internet within a group, this will need to be addressed by group leaders and specific guidance drawn up to address the issues.

In developing the code, consideration should be given to the following:

- Treating everyone with respect.
- Treating property with respect.
- Not consuming alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Acting as a good role model.
- Attending activities on time.
- Signing in and out.
- Use of mobile phones.
- Telling someone the child trusts if they feel uncomfortable with any situation or individual.
- Never bullying anyone or sending threatening messages.
- Agreeing not to bring any physical item into the church activity that may cause offence or harm to others.
- Use of social media and the internet.

Children should also be involved in drawing up the sanctions for breaches of their code of behaviour. These can include:

- Time out of group activity.
- A child being asked to apologise for their behaviour.
- Informing the parent/guardian of the child.
- Asking the parent/guardian of the child to participate in group activities for a period of time.
- Group leaders monitoring and reviewing behaviour and providing support to the child.
- In serious cases, a child may be suspended or expelled from the group.

Discipline and sanctions when dealing with challenging behaviour:

As far as possible,

- Disciplining of children should be in the form of positive reinforcement.
- Rules about discipline and sanctions should be agreed as part of the code of behaviour and accepted by all workers and children as a condition of becoming involved.
- The anti-bullying protocol should be communicated to all personnel and implemented by everyone.

Sanctions should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly and not used as a threat. Children should be helped to understand why sanctions are being imposed. When a sanction has been imposed, it is important that a child is able to feel that she/he is still valued.

Sometimes, children can be disruptive and their behaviour can be challenging. Such behaviour can put at risk the safety of the child, as well as that of other children and/or of workers. Workers need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour.

When dealing with an incident involving challenging behaviour:

- It is recommended that more than one worker is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with.
- A record is kept, signed and dated in an incident book, describing what happened, the circumstances, who were involved, any injury to a person or damage to property arising from the incident and how the situation was resolved.
- The incident must be communicated to parents/guardians.