

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHURCH POLICY STATEMENT

Document History

<u>Version</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Last Updated</u>
1	LIVE	Approved	August 2005.
0	DRAFT	Pending approval by church members.	1 st August, 2005

Church Policy Statement

This document will be supplied to all involved in the work.

The Church seeks to reach as many children and young people as possible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This mission is largely expressed through the work of Sunday Schools, Bible Classes and weeknight meetings for all ages. Outings, parties and other special occasions are also held.

Throughout the operation of these meetings, and during the collection and transporting of children, the safety, protection and welfare of the children is the first priority.

The implementation of the church's policy is through the following procedures:

1. All aspects of the policy, procedures and operation of the children's work are under the authority of the pastor, supported by the Elders' and Deacons' Court of the church. Day-to-day operation of the children's work is managed by the Sunday School coordinator, consulting the pastor, the coordinator being appointed by the Elders' and Deacons' Court.
2. All appointments of children's meeting staff will be made by the pastor in conjunction with the Sunday School coordinator. No unofficial appointments will be allowed. No person with a history involving child-related offences will be allowed to undertake any role associated with the children's work of the church, nor be present as an observer.
3. All leaders, teachers, and other responsible appointments will be members of the Church who have shown themselves to be trustworthy and faithful in all aspects of their lives **and** will have a 'Disclosure Scotland' check.
4. Non-leading helpers may include people who are not members of the Church. These must be approved by the pastor and will normally be members of other churches of like beliefs currently worshipping with us, and will be very well known to us as responsible and trustworthy Christian adults. They will always work under the supervision of Church members.
5. Any member of staff or helper who manifests any irresponsible behaviour or loss of self-control in connection with the children, will be immediately suspended from his or her child-related duties. Following investigation by the pastor and elders it may be deemed necessary to confirm the suspension as permanent.
6. The 'Leaders' Duties in Relation to Discipline and Child Protection' will be given to each department or meeting leader.
7. All leaders will be briefed on the Church's policy and related procedures by the Sunday School coordinator or one of the elders.
8. All staff must be given the 'Discipline and Child Protection Rules', and be briefed on these by their department or meeting leader.
9. A record will be kept of those briefed, and when. This will be reviewed every autumn.
10. All new teachers must undergo a training course, which will include the 'Discipline and Child Protection Rules'.
11. A logbook will be available for each Sunday School site to record any accidents or incidents. Entries should be made by the leader on the same day as the occurrence.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN - CHURCH POLICY STATEMENT

12. Drivers of Church vehicles or private cars used for transporting children will be currently active drivers who are at least 25 years of age (for Church vehicles) or 21 years of age (for private vehicles), having held a full driving licence for at least 2 years and having no motoring convictions. All private vehicles used will be approved by a person appointed by the Elders' and Deacons' Court and must be insured with passenger liability cover. Drivers of church minibuses will be qualified in accordance with current legislation and listed as Approved Drivers with the motor insurance company of the Church.
 13. The activities to be undertaken on all children's outings, camps or other special occasions are to be fully agreed in detail with the coordinator and with an officer appointed for this purpose by the Elders' and Deacons' Court. The full implementation of all our Discipline and Child Protection documents is mandatory on all such occasions.
 14. The Sunday School coordinator will act as the contact for all discipline and child protection issues. He or she will quickly gather the available facts concerning any reports of suspected abuse of children and of any serious incidents involving Church workers. He or she will pass these to the pastor and elders, who will decide on appropriate action.
 15. The pastor and elders will consider the facts concerning an alleged abuse, weighing the evidence carefully. If it is clear that a criminal offence may have been committed, whether by a person outside the church or by a member, they will report the matter to the police and social services. In cases where the facts are less clear and there do not seem to be sufficient grounds of suspicion that an offence has occurred or that a child is at risk to warrant reporting the matter to the police or involving the local social services, the pastor and elders will seek the help of a respected, professional member of the church (eg: a solicitor or doctor) to investigate the allegations and to advise on whether there is sufficient evidence for the matter to be reported. A record will be kept of such incidents.
-