

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Working with Children and Young People at Emmaus Rd**

We aim to encourage children and young people to grow in their relationship with God, flourish in their relationships with others and inspire hope for their future.

This document outlines how, at Emmaus Rd, we work to achieve the above whilst maintaining a safe environment for all. All team members working with children and young people at Emmaus Rd are required to work within the following guidelines.

### **Creating and maintaining a safe environment**

#### **Ratios**

It's important to ensure there are always enough adult leaders present to ensure the welfare of the children in the group. The following ratios are what we aim for and are based on the NSPCC guidelines.

0-2 years - 1:3  
2-3 years - 1:4  
4-8 years - 1:6  
9-12 years - 1:8  
13-18 years - 1:10

In general, there will always be a minimum of two DBS checked team members leading a group. If there aren't enough DBS checked team members available, the group will be cancelled.

In the event of a group meeting in a team member's home, the meeting should happen only in communal areas (kitchen, living room, dining room, garden). In no circumstances will a team member be left alone with children or young people in a home. A member of the Emmaus Rd Staff team will always have visited the home prior to groups meeting there or will be present during the session within the home.

From time to time team members will meet with young people on a 1:1 basis or in small groups where there is only one DBS checked team member present. On these occasions the meetings must happen in a public place (e.g. a coffee shop) and, if the young person/young people are under 16 years of age, parental permission must be obtained and the relevant team leader made aware of the meeting prior to it taking place. If the young person/young people are 16 years of age or older, parental permission does not need to be obtained but the team leader must still be made aware prior to the meeting taking place.

Team members must not meet 1:1 with children and young people of the opposite sex unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Safeguarding Officers in advance.

### **Consent and medical forms**

When children and young people join Emmaus Rd, any relevant medical or other helpful information will be recorded using the medical form (**Appendix 5**). Relevant information will also be recorded for children and young people visiting Emmaus Rd.

When taking children and young people on trips that are additional to the regular youth and children's programmes, parental consent must be obtained in writing.

### **Signing in and out**

It is vital for the team to be aware of who is in their care at any point and of any special/medical requirements detailed on their consent/medical form. Given the variety of youth and children's activities that are run at Emmaus Rd, within the risk assessment for each activity, there will be details of the procedure for signing in and out or monitoring who is in the care of the team at any point.

### **Risk assessments**

Every activity at Emmaus Rd must be risk assessed using the template found in **Appendix 6** to ensure a safe environment for all. The risk assessment must include a safeguarding plan for the activity.

### **Toileting**

At Emmaus Rd we do not help children and young people with toileting. The team will not change nappies or assist children or young people with personal hygiene other than hand washing.

This toileting policy is consistent across all youth and children's work at Emmaus Rd other than exceptional circumstances that have been written into a care plan and approved by the Safeguarding Officer and their parent/guardian.

If children need to be accompanied to the toilet (for example, when there is no toilet close to the group area or if children will be using a public toilet), 2 DBS checked team members should accompany the child/children. The team members should check that there are no members of the public using the toilet and then wait outside the cubicle for the child/children whilst they use the toilet. If there are members of the public using the toilet, the team members should wait for them to leave before taking the children in.

### **Safe touch**

When physical contact is made with children and young people this should be:

- In response to their needs at the time
- Of limited duration
- Appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background
- In an appropriate manner

Physical contact should never be:

- Secretive
- For the gratification of the adult
- Represent a misuse of authority or trust

### **Dealing with challenging behaviour**

We recognise that children and young people sometimes display challenging behaviour for a variety of reasons. We are committed to supporting children, young people and team members in dealing with this behaviour in accordance with our behaviour policies (**Appendices 7 and 8**).

Here are some basic guidelines for working with children or young people who display challenging behaviour:

- Establish ground rules with the children, young people and the team. Keep them simple and clear, making sure the children and young people understand what action will be taken if they are not kept.
- If children or young people break the ground rules, use two warnings and, if the behaviour is repeated a third time, a consequence should follow. At every stage make sure they understand what rule they have broken and the consequence that will follow if the behaviour continues. Consequences could include;
  - Asking them to take a time out of the activity
  - Contacting their parents
  - Asking them to leave
  - Giving a one week ban

If the behaviour puts themselves or anyone else at risk of immediate harm do not give warnings; act immediately. If a young person is asked to leave the venue parents should be informed if possible. In an emergency situation emergency services should be called, and an incident form completed.

- Discipline out of love never anger (call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger).
- Never reject a child, just the behaviour. Encourage the child that you accept them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour.
- Do not shout in anger.
- Never smack or hit a child.
- Use the opportunity to have a constructive conversation with the child or young person about their behaviour

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Physical intervention should be used only where other methods of maintaining safety or discipline have been exhausted, or where the immediacy of the threat prevents the application of other methods.

The term Physical Intervention encompasses any method of responding to challenging behaviour which involves some degree of direct physical force to limit or alter movement. Examples may include:

- Physically intervening between children e.g. to break up a fight
- Removing a child who is in contact with another child e.g. a head lock or hair pulling
- Blocking a child's path or movement
- Leading a child by the hand, arm or shoulders
- Holding, pushing or pulling
- In extreme cases – using a more restrictive hold or taking action necessary to prevent injury, but this action must be consistent with 'reasonable force'.

Intervention may take several forms but must only take place as a **LAST RESORT** and must be '**reasonable, proportionate, legitimate and necessary**'.

In the event of a child or young person's safety being compromised anyone has the authority to use reasonable force.

Physical intervention must only be used:

- if the child or young person is at risk of causing significant harm to themselves or others, or causing significant damage to property
- as a last resort
- with the minimum force necessary and be proportionate to the circumstances
- for the shortest possible duration

Physical intervention must not:

- be used as a form of punishment; it is always unlawful to use force or physical contact as a punishment, to cause pain, injury or humiliation, regardless of the severity of the child's behaviour or the degree of provocation
- be used to place a child in a position which may restrict their blood flow or breathing
- be carried out in anger (involve another team member if you feel angry or that you are losing patience).
- cause pain e.g. twisting or forcing limbs back, hitting or tripping.

During and following an intervention of any kind:

- The safety and best interests of the child or young person should be considered at all times.
- Team should not put themselves or others at risk of harm.
- Assistance from others should be sought immediately, including the parents/guardians if they are in the building.

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- Anyone involved should be checked by a first aider for any injuries and appropriate medical care sought if required following the incident.
- The parents/guardians of any children or young people involved must be informed.
- An incident form must be completed.
- The Safeguarding Officer should be informed of any incident as soon as possible, they will take responsibility for debriefing the team involved once the situation has stabilised.

### **Dealing with incidents**

An incident, for the purpose of this document, is;

- When someone has been subject to physical harm, whether accidental or intentional
- When a disclosure is made that contains a safeguarding concern
- When a consequence is implemented for serious challenging behaviour (in line with the guidance above)
- When the emergency services are called for any reason

In the event of an incident taking place, an incident form (**Appendix 4**) should be completed and the Safeguarding Officer informed. The procedures and guidance in this document and the safeguarding policy should be followed.

## **Team expectations**

### **Recruitment**

All voluntary team members will complete an application form (**Appendix 10**), apply for a DBS check, provide 2 references and have a face-to-face meeting with a paid staff member. The Youth and Children's Pastors and Safeguarding Officer will make the final decision on successful applicants. Volunteers and paid staff will receive safeguarding training annually.

Volunteers may be asked to start serving on team before this process is completed but will be identified during the sessions (e.g asked to wear a different coloured t-shirt during sessions). They must be accompanied by a fully recruited team member and cannot take children to the toilet and cannot be included in adult to child ratios.

### **Commitment**

At Emmaus Rd relationship is central to the youth and children's work. For this reason, all team members are asked to commit to at least a year serving on team.

All team members should arrive on time and give at least 48 hours notice if they cannot make it to a session.

### **Appropriate relationships**

It is important to maintain appropriate boundaries with children and young people. We encourage team members to build appropriate relationships with children and young people using the guidance in this document and the safeguarding policy as a foundation. Relationships are to be developed within the context and culture of the youth and children's

projects and groups at Emmaus Rd. If it appears that a relationship between a team member and a child or young person is becoming unhealthy in any way, the Safeguarding Officer will intervene.

It is recognised that self-disclosure can be a useful tool in building relationship with children and young people, however we ask the team to be mindful of what they choose to disclose.

- Never share your home address with children or young people (unless you have prior approval from the Safeguarding Officer)
- Never disclose your contact details and social media accounts (unless you have prior approval from the Safeguarding Officer)
- Always remember the relationship and conversation should remain focussed on the children and young people's experiences rather than your own – be mindful that repeatedly disclosing a lot about your personal life can sometimes be unhelpful
- Discretion should be used at all times. Always approach a paid member of the team if you are unsure

### **Substance use**

Under no circumstances should team members be under the influence of any substances whilst working with children and young people. All team members are asked to refrain from drinking alcohol for at least 8 hours before working with children and young people. If any team member is found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst working with children or young people, or if they are found on their person, they will be asked to leave the venue, an incident form will be completed and the safeguarding officer will be informed who will decide if any other action is required.

### **Dress code**

All team members should dress appropriately for the group and activity they are working with/on, giving consideration to the appropriateness of the clothes we choose to wear.

### **Photos and videos**

No photographs or videos of children or young people under the age of 16 will be used without prior written consent from their parent or guardian. Photographs of 16 and 17 year olds may be used with the permission of the young person. Only paid staff members should take photographs or videos of children and young people using staff phones or cameras. The only exception to this is if the volunteer taking the photographs or videos is a pre-approved photographer. In this instance, a paid member of staff will upload the photographs or videos to Emmaus Rd's online space. No one except paid members of staff should post photographs or videos of children or young people on social media and this should only be done through official Emmaus Rd accounts.

### **Digital communication**

Team members will not be "friends" with a child or young person or "follow" them on any social networking site. Team members should be mindful of the content they are posting on their own personal accounts, particularly if young people are able to find it online. Team members should not send direct messages on social networking sites to children or young people. All direct/private communication through social media will be done through official

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Emmaus Rd accounts managed by the Youth and Kids staff team. Passwords for the official Emmaus Rd accounts are shared between the paid staff members.

Existing relationships that team members may have, for example children of family friends will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Volunteer team members should not send private emails or text messages to children or young people under the age of 18. If a young person gets in touch privately with a volunteer, either the Kids pastor, Youth Pastor or team leader needs to be informed immediately. Text messages and emails may be sent to young people under the age of 18 by paid staff members using staff phones/laptops.

Sometimes we will use WhatsApp groups to communicate with young people which DBS checked volunteer team members may be included in. At least two DBS checked members of the team will be included in the group, at least one being an Emmaus Rd staff member with appropriate experience and training.

Volunteer team members are not to communicate with young people outside of the WhatsApp groups, which should be explained clearly to the young people. Young people should also be informed of which adults are included in the WhatsApp group before being added.

Phone numbers and email addresses of young people under the age of 16 should only be stored and used to send emails or text messages or added to WhatsApp groups with prior parental permission. 16 and 17 year olds can choose to be added to WhatsApp groups without parental permission.

Phone calls with children and young people should be avoided, ideally written communication or face to face meetings are preferred. However, at times phone calls will be required. In the case of needing to make a phone call or receive a phone call from a child or young person, the Youth Pastor, Children's Pastor, Safeguarding Officer or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Officers should be informed and a brief summary of the conversation given.

When using video calls to communicate with children and young people, the usual safeguarding principles as meeting in person should be followed. For example, within group contexts two DBS checked adult team members should be present at all times; within a 1:1 context appropriate parental permission should be obtained and the relevant team leader made aware and 1:1 meetings should always be between members of the same sex.

Other guidelines to follow on video calls include:

1. The private chat function should be disabled.
2. Be mindful of what is happening behind you when on a video call. For example, what other members of your household are saying/doing/wearing in the background.
3. 1:1 video calls with young people should be held from communal areas of your home e.g. living room, not bedroom.

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4. Don't record/take screenshots etc. of anyone without prior permission from your team leader.
5. If anyone does/says anything inappropriate or that makes you/other participants feel uncomfortable, remember you can ask your team leader/meeting host to close the meeting or remove a participant at any time.