

**DUTY of CARE POLICY  
AND GUIDELINES**



**BOOKLET 2**

**CRC CODE OF  
PRACTICE FOR  
INTERACTIONS  
WITH CHILDREN,  
YOUTH AND THE  
GENERAL PUBLIC**

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## **CRC Code of Practice for Interactions with Children, Youth and the General Public:**

### **Behaviour:**

- All interactions with children are to be in public view
- There is to be no secretive or unauthorized clubs or gatherings of children
- Team Members are never to be alone with a child in a solitary place or in darkness
- At no time will any form of corporal or physical punishment be administered
- The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.
- Avoid behaviour that gives the impression of favoritism or encourages 'special' relationships with individual children
- Never change a child's nappy – this is to be done by the child's parent or nominated care giver only.
- As a general rule, open displays of affection *initiated by children in the presence of others* are acceptable *bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances*
- Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued. Children may not be aware of creating such situations. It is a Team Member's duty to be alert to such circumstances.
- **It is inappropriate to initiate close physical contact with children and young people;** physical contact between Team Members and children is inappropriate if it could be perceived as a threat, if it causes embarrassment to either person, or if it does not allow either person to disengage easily.<sup>1</sup>

### **Parent / Carer Consent:**

- Parental or caregiver approval is required before giving gifts to children, other than the giving of small prizes which are part of the normal programmed activities
- Contacting primary school children outside of the normal program hours via phone, text or email requires parental / caregiver permission

### **Transparency:**

- Contacting youth outside of the normal program hours via phone, text or email must be with the Ministry Leader's awareness and consent and for the express purpose of follow up, support or pastoral care, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances
- All counseling of children and youth needs to be authorised by the Team Leader in charge
- Where counseling is necessary, the Team Member and child / young person should remain visible to another adult Team Member in the group

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<sup>1</sup> Team Members Guide, ChildSafe SP3 Safety Management System including Safety Management Online (SMO) Modules

**Language:**

- Use language that affirms the worth, dignity and significance of child / youth participants and other adults
- Be sensitive to cultures and family traditions different from your own. These differences may affect the degree of participation of children, in certain activities or games. Avoid making assumptions about any participant's background, family status or principal caregivers.
- Do not use 'in' jokes, negative language, put downs or sexist language with other Team Members or participants
- Do not speak down to children or young people in a superior way, instead speak to them as people of value

**Monitoring Access to Children:**

- Do not permit strangers in rooms / areas being used. If you notice someone you do not recognise 'hanging around' areas where children / youth are participating, always take the initiative to introduce yourself, politely discover the reason for their presence and redirect them away from these areas as required.
- Strictly observe all custodial and access conditions imposed by law courts and Parents/Carers

**Programs with Child / Youth Participants**

- All primary school children are to be "signed in" and "signed out" by the same adult or an adult nominated by Parent / Carer as the "pick-up person" – when unsure ask for ID and call Parent / Carer if needed to confirm consent. (Note - some churches include 11 & 12 year olds (school year 6 and 7) participants as part of their youth program. Primary school participants of these youth programs are not required to be signed in/out)
- Monitor the exits, and ensure that 'signed in' children cannot leave the designated area unsupervised
- Name Tags are to be worn by all Team Members and other authorised Team Leaders, Staff, and volunteers in areas where activities with children are taking place
- Visitors must be told what areas they are permitted in
- Parents, carers or visitors observing specific programs and scheduled service operators are to sign visitors book and wear visitor name tags
- Parents / Carers are welcome to visit activities to monitor their child's progress or settle their children as required but must apply to become a Team Member if they are supervising or providing care for other children as part of the program
- Home visits must be done with a minimum of two adult Team Members if they are not immediate family members. One Team Member should be the same gender as the child / young person.
- Ensure that toys and activities are age appropriate
- Kitchens are full of dangerous items that can cut, crush or bruise children. Children should not be permitted in kitchens unless doing a properly supervised activity.
- Cleaning cupboards are inherently dangerous because they contain chemicals. Young children will put almost anything in their mouths, so ensure that cleaning cupboards are closed and locked.
- Store rooms and work sheds often contain dangerous tools and items that are not always stored correctly. Storerooms, cupboards and tool sheds will look like great play for children / young people. Keep them locked at all times while children / young people are around.

- Car parks look like playgrounds to children. Do not allow children to run or play unsupervised in car parks. Encourage Parents / Carers to hold their child's hand or (for young children) carry them to the vehicle.
- Musical Instrument areas, especially drums are like magnets to young children, but some also have many hazards including electrocution, crush injuries, and damage to instruments. Children should not be allowed to play with musical instruments or use sound / lighting equipment unsupervised.

### **Supervision of Toileting / Bathing:**

- Only endorsed adult Team Members are to supervise the toilet area to ensure that each child / young person is safe and their privacy respected
- In every instance, two Team Members are required to supervise and if necessary assist with any toileting or washing of children under 6 years old (who are not in nappies)
- Never touch the area covered by swimming togs or bathers, except for a medical doctor or registered nurse doing a medical examination, or if a child under 6 years old (*who is not in nappies*) needs assistance in bathing or toileting.
- Signed parental consent is required if any 6-15 year old children or young people with special needs require help or supervision with toileting or washing. In every instance, two endorsed adult Team Members are to provide this help or supervision. Never help with toileting or washing 6-15 year olds of the opposite sex.

### **Respecting Personal Privacy / Online Behaviour:**

With the explosion of internet and social media sites, care must be taken to respect and protect the personal privacy of every child or young person. Posting to Social Media is not the same as posting something to a web site or blog and then realising that a story or photo should be taken down. Once it is on Facebook or Twitter, it cannot be retrieved. It is effectively public domain. People connected to Team Members' profiles, have the ability to download and share information with others. This includes posts, photos and videos. A particular post, photo or video could put a Team Member's effectiveness as a Team Member or the church at risk of defamation / breaching privacy laws. Therefore:

- Photographs and digital footage taken of activities or events must be for the express purpose of use on church websites and online forums. Any children or youth that do not have photo / digital image consent from their Parent / Carer cannot be included in the church's promotional media or online forums
- Team Members / Leaders should never tag photographs taken during programs and be mindful of the impact of posting any untagged photographs or video footage of individuals & activities on personal social media forums / sites where children or youth can be identified.
- It is recommended that each program has one or two people designated 'official' photographers who are endorsed to take photos / digital footage of participants during the program in view of other adult Team Members. Any photo image or video footage taken of a child is not to be stored for personal use but is only to be stored or used for the church's promotional media / online forums and only where signed consent has been given by Parents / Carers.
- Team Members should post only what they want the world to see. (*Imagine participants, Parents / Carers, Team Leaders, and other Ministry Leaders visiting your profile page.*)
- Team members, Parents / Carers, participants, or any other church participant or leader should not be criticised on social networking sites
- Minors should be conversed via wall posts and not through one to one chats (e.g. MSN or Chat).
- If conversation is initiated by a minor, keep the conversation transparent – only communicate what their Parent / Carer would be happy to read.

### Camps / Trips Away:

- Don't allow children in bed with a Team Member, Team Leader or any other program participant.
- Children of the opposite sex should not share a bedroom (babies and toddlers registered in a nursery or crèche program are exempt when sleeping in their own pram or cot).
- No one is allowed outside bedrooms or bathrooms in underwear
- Never be in the bathroom, bedroom or bunkroom of children or young people of the opposite sex
- Never be alone in the bathroom, bedroom or bunkroom with a child. Always have another leader accompany you
- Only endorsed adult Team Members are to supervise the toilet and washing / showering area to ensure that each child / young person is safe and their privacy respected

### Physical Contact:

- There will be occasions where displays of affection from children are natural. Children must not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances. At times of distress, children may be comforted but physical contact must be limited and **should always be in response to contact initiated by the child or young person, not by the Team Member.**
- As a general rule children are not to be kissed or cuddled. With the consent of the Ministry Leaders, babies and toddlers may be cuddled but only in view of other Team Members.
- It is recommended that hugs be limited to a side on hug where possible. Actions should be age appropriate, keeping in mind that older children and young people learn protective behaviors as modeled by Team Members. Team Members should take specific care to avoid *full front on* body contact.
- Touching a child on the shoulder or arm can enhance communication and is generally appropriate. However, because an unwanted touch can be potentially distressing or even classified as an assault, Team Members should be careful not to touch a child who reacts against touch by word or body language.  
i.e. when dealing with an older child/young person in distress it is usually best to ask before making physical contact i.e. *"I see you are very upset, is it okay if I put my hand on your shoulder?"*
- Never touch the area covered by swimming togs or bathers, except for a medical doctor or registered nurse doing a medical examination, or if a child under 6 years old (*who is not in nappies*) needs assistance in bathing or toileting.

### When Bullying Is Identified: <sup>2</sup>

- Report any bullying to Team Leaders who will assist with managing incidents
- Team Members have a responsibility to intervene to stop bullying (taking care to protect their own safety) if they witness it. In this type of situation it is most helpful to address the victim rather than the bully (i.e. *Do you need help?*)
- If a child / young person tells any Team Member that they are being bullied, or if a Team Member becomes aware that bullying is occurring, the child/young person is to be supported by:
  - Letting the child/young person know that you believe them and involving them in making decisions about what to do
  - Encouraging them to tell you as much as they want to tell. You will need to gather and record the basic details so you can do something to stop the bullying. You will also need to

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<sup>2</sup> Team Members Guide, ChildSafe SP3 Safety Management System including Safety Management Online (SMO)

complete an Accident / Incident Form (available in Online Resources [crcchurches.org/docresources](http://crcchurches.org/docresources))

- Involving Parents / Carers as directed by Team Leaders
- Helping them build social skills and by encouraging assertive behaviour
- Involving other Team Members as directed by the Team Leader. When dealing with a participant who is bullying others, it is important that all Team Members are in agreement about the approach to be adopted

### Behaviour Management Procedures:

- Children, young people and Team Members need a clear process to deal with behaviour that is negative, destructive or harmful to an individual or to others. Safe, effective and consistent methods are required to outwork this process to ensure the dignity of each child / young person is maintained at all times.
- The most effective way for teaching children or young people to behave in an appropriate way is by talking about *and* modelling appropriate behaviour, reinforced with positive verbal encouragement.
- Children and young people do need to be given clear boundaries and to know what the consequences of harmful behaviours will be (e.g. aggression or hitting). However, in deciding what disciplinary strategy to undertake Team Leaders and Team Members need to take into account the age and the developmental stage of children or young people with whom they are interacting
- When a child/young person chooses unhelpful / inappropriate behaviour they are to be clearly given **a choice** between behaving appropriately or accepting the logical consequences for their actions, e.g. if they makes a mess, they tidy up the mess. The **appropriate disciplinary strategies must be included in your church's Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy and made available** to parents of participants if requested. All new participants will be advised of these strategies and asked to adhere to them.

**The following procedures apply in all circumstances where a Team Leader or Team Member is required to redirect, correct, give clear instructions or follow through on consequences for unacceptable behaviour:**

1. At no time will a leader physically strike a child, with their hand, or any other part of their body or with an implement of any kind
2. The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.
3. In devising a disciplinary strategy, Team Members will ensure that, at no time will a child be put at physical or emotional risk by disciplinary action.
4. If isolation of the child from the group is included as a disciplinary option, the child must be isolated within the area, which is deemed to be safe, and within easy supervision of, at least one adult Team Member
5. As long as the immediate safety of the child or other group members is not at threat, the child who is deemed to require disciplinary action will receive a warning first:
  - a. The warning should be clearly stated so the child or young person has clear understanding of the unacceptable behaviour and the expected behaviour.
  - b. The warning should also include the consequences for unacceptable behaviour continuing
6. At no time will a disciplinary action be carried out without an adequate explanation given to the child regarding the reason for the action. It is best practice to speak to a child in view of other Team Members but away from the specific attention of other program participants. This avoids grandstanding behaviour by the child and avoids any embarrassment to the child as well.

7. If a child / young person continues to behave inappropriately despite Team Members clearly instructing the child/young person of their choices, they are to ask the child / young person, "Are you refusing to do as I ask?" (Or words to that effect). If the child / young person answers 'yes' or still refuses the leaders' direction then the child/young person will need to go to a 'time away' / 'time out' area to think about helpful ways they can behave at children's activities / youth group / camp etc.
8. If they do go, do not leave them longer than three minutes in order to positively reinforce their choice. Seek acknowledgement that the child / young person is ready to participate appropriately in the activity / group before they rejoin the group.

### **If The Child Or Young Person Refuses To Take Time Out / Time Away:**

1. Ask if they are choosing *not* to do as they have been asked.
2. After asking this three times in total tell the child / young person that by choosing *not* to go to time out as they have been asked they will be placed on a contract. Let the Ministry Leader / Coordinator or Children / Youth Pastor know.
3. The Ministry Leader / Coordinator/ Children or Youth Pastor will write a contract with the child/young person. This will be a plan of how they can change their behaviour so that they can be a more helpful member of the group. Contracts need to be written without the distractions of other children / young people so that the Team Leader can help the child / young person understand the consequences of any further unhelpful behavior.

Contracts may include:

- Listening to leaders
- Being kind to other children / young people

The two main consequences to be listed are:

1. The child / young person will miss out on the next week's activity / camp if the unhelpful behaviour continues, the second step is -
2. Leave the activity / group / camp

Failure to meet with the Ministry Leader / Coordinator/ Children or Youth Pastor, or failure to agree to the contract, necessitates the person will leave the activity / group / camp. Either they will be returned to their parent, nominated carer or Pastor / Team Leader who will supervise them within clear view of others until their Parent / Carer arrives. If they refuse to leave, parents, or if necessary, the police should be requested to remove them.

### **Behaviour Management Techniques for Younger Children:**

1. Remind the child of the rule. i.e. *"In kid's church we don't hit."*
2. Warn the child and tell them if they break the rules next time they will be going to 'time out' / 'time away' for a while or may be not be allowed to continue participating in the chosen activity. i.e. *"Johnny, in kid's church we don't hit. If you hit someone again you will need to sit over on that chair near Jenny (Team Member) for some time out"* OR *"Johnny, in kid's church we don't hit. If you hit someone again you won't be able to be part of this game we are playing at the moment. You will need to go to time out."*



3. Send the child to time out and tell them if the behaviour continues you will call their Parent / Carer. *Note: Time out should be between 1 and 5 minutes depending on the child's age (1-2 minutes for 2-3 year olds). If a child is put in time out outside their room in any area a Team Member should stay with them at all times while remaining within view of other Team Members. [For 2-3 year olds a Team Member should stay with the child at all times whether the time out takes place in the room or not.]*
4. Call the Parent / Carer, explain what has taken place and ask them to sign the child out for an agreed time or the remainder of the program.

### **Potential for Risky or Dangerous Behaviour**

A child/young person removed from participation in an activity because of unreasonable behaviour must be adequately supervised to ensure the safety of themselves, all participants & all Team Members while the activity is in progress.

### **Complaint Procedure for Inappropriate Disciplinary Action**

In the event of a child/young person disclosing to a group leader that they have been disciplined in a way that is contrary to this CRC Code of Practice, refer to Reporting Concerns/Complaints in (Booklet 3, page 17 to 18)