



Christian City Church
connect
HEPBURN HEIGHTS

Safe Ministry

At Christian City Church Hepburn Heights the spiritual, physical and emotional safety of our children, families and children's volunteers is of utmost importance.

Therefore we believe

- the children should be in a safe environment whilst they are attending any of our fun-filled, Christ-centred programmes
- parents should be able to leave their children in our care with the peace of mind that they will be safe
- our teams should be able to minister to children in a safe and fun-filled environment..

With respect to these values, we have put the following procedures in place. Please familiarize yourself with them, and ask your Team Leader to elaborate on anything you don't understand.

DUTY OF CARE

Whenever a Minister/child relationship exists, the Minister has a special duty of care. This is defined as follows:

A Kids' Church team member/leader is to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a child under the member's/leader's charge, from risks of injury that the member/leader should have reasonably foreseen." As part of that duty, members/leaders are required to supervise children adequately. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those that could arise (that is, those that the member/leader should have reasonably foreseen) and against which preventative measures could be taken.

Tiny Tots (crèche) care aims to provide safe, hygienic, well managed, quality care for short periods while parents engage in an activity. A crèche is only available to the participants in the group's activities and only for the duration of the activities. During this time organisations, groups and their employees have a **duty of care** to the children accepted into the crèche.

KIDS' CHURCH AIMS TO PROVIDE DUTY OF CARE THROUGH THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

- All Kids' Church Team Members over 18 have completed a "Working With Children" card, and have been trained.
- A Team Leader will not begin admitting children into their room without appropriate support staff. After children have been accepted into the room the Team Leader will maintain the appropriate ratio of carers to children (see Appendix A).
- All Kids' Church personnel are required to follow the check-in and check-out procedure as laid down by the Kids' Pastor (see Appendix B).
- It is important that no child/children are left alone under the supervision of only one carer.
- Supervision is deemed to start when the Leader takes charge of the child at the door and finishes when the parent collects their child from the room or two staff members return the child to the parent/guardian.

ROOM CAPACITY

The number of children allowed in a programme is dictated by the following guidelines as recommended by "**Department for Community Development**".

<i>[taken Children</i>	Age range of enrolled Children	Contact staff members to enrolled children ratio	<i>from and</i>
	0-24 months	1:4	
	24-36 months	1:5	
	36 months or older	1:10	

Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 2006]

TOILETING

Ages 3 months – 3 years – Tiny Tots

Nappy changes **MUST** be done by the parent only; unless permission has been given in writing for the nursery leader to change them. Children capable of using the toilets need to use the toilets in the Tiny Tots change area. If toileting is necessary the **TEAM LEADER** will nominate 2 carers to supervise the child – at least one must be a **TEAM MEMBER**. **NO** assistants are permitted to change nappies or take children out of the room for drinks or toileting. All children must wash hands before leaving the toilet area and before food and drink.

Ages 3-5 – Kindy/Pre-Primary (Jellybeans)

Years 1 – 3 (Buzz)

Years 4 – 6 (Vibe)

Children who need to go to the toilet must go in pairs, and the children need to be of the same sex and age group. They must be accompanied by at least one TEAM MEMBER (two if child is going by themselves) who must check that the toilets are safe, i.e., no unauthorised person/s is there, no spills or slippery floors, etc. All children must wash hands before leaving the toilet area and before food and drink.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE IS STRICTLY NOT ALLOWED

Children are not to be berated, yelled at or intimidated verbally or physically. If a child is displaying aggressive, dangerous, disruptive or disrespectful behaviour – then we apply the Behaviour Management Plan step. It is vital that the Team Leader step in as soon as they see inappropriate behaviour to ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all times. Team Leaders need their staff to bring disruptive behaviour to their attention quickly so that it can be dealt with promptly.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN

At the beginning of every programme, the behaviour expectations and '3 step warning procedure' must be explained to the children. This should be done in a fun, yet clear way. We expect older children to co-operate and be responsible for their behaviour, for themselves.

Making the requirements and boundaries clear to the children, empowers them to make good choices, and takes the pressure off the leaders to be responsible for choices that only the individual child can make. If, as a last resort, a child must leave the programme because of unacceptable behaviour, it will in most cases be because that child chose consistently to not curb their inappropriate actions. Sometimes it will be because a child has little capacity to control their own behaviour.

Sad as this is, our staff are not equipped for controlling such behaviour, particularly since they are not empowered with any disciplinary tools, other than those that require Co-operation and goodwill from the children.

Tiny Tots & Kids' Church will apply this concept of correction, co-operation, and consequence, in an age appropriate fashion. Ultimately, if a child continues with distracting or disruptive behaviour, or their actions put others at risk, their parents will be asked to remove them from the programme.

THREE STEP WARNING PROCEDURE EXPLAINED:

Step 1

Get the child's attention, and then give a clear verbal warning to stop the inappropriate behaviour, let them know that this is their first warning, and the next warning will mean that

they will be made to sit out of the group. Avoid doing this publicly or from the front of stage, as our intention is not to embarrass or intimidate.

Step 2

If the child fails to respond to this warning, separate the child from the other children, (Use a 'time out' chair or area) under the supervision of a Team Member.

- The Team Leader should speak to the child and explain that if they continue to behave inappropriately they will be removed from the programme and put in the care of their parent (or guardian).
- It is important at this stage to speak to the child on a pastoral level and ascertain if there are reasons for the child's behaviour, especially if it is out of character for them. Also show the child practices that lead to positive and responsible behaviour. That way, should they choose to curb wrong behaviour, they will know what is expected and how to head in that direction.

Step 3

If the child ignores this warning, the Team Leader will need to call on the parent to remove the child for the remainder of the programme. A child is never sent out. A parent/guardian must be sent for, to collect their child. Kids' Pastor will discuss incident and follow-up after the service with the parent/child.

- Team Members do not speak to the parents about the behaviour problems and parenting issues – only the Kids' Pastor or their representative is permitted to do so, as this is a Pastoral issue and can be a sensitive area.

If a pattern of bad behaviour develops, the parents may be asked to keep the child with them for a specified time, at the discretion of the Kids' Pastor.

INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN

- For primary school aged children only appropriate body touches are acceptable (i.e. Side-on hugs). Children are never permitted to sit on a leader's lap. For children under 6 years of age the leader's knee is considered appropriate.
- If a child shows any discomfort with acceptable physical touch (i.e. hand on a shoulder) then it must be discontinued at once.
- However, when a child is endangering themselves, others, or equipment then reasonable force may be used to restrain them. Reasonable force is the minimum required for any situation. This force would be imposed for the sake of safety.
- A child must never be wilfully intimidated, verbally or non-verbally, at any time during their time in our care.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

- If a carer suspects a case of abuse, (physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect) this should be reported to the Team Leader immediately. On no account should this be discussed amongst the team. The Team Leader will speak to their Supervisor immediately, who in

turn will bring the issue to the Senior Ministry within 2 hours for Pastoral Response. Child abuse is intolerable, and must be dealt with promptly through established procedures.

REPORTING ACCIDENTS

- If a child sustains any injuries, (however minor) the team leader will notify the parent.
- If first aid is needed, the parent is to be contacted immediately.

PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

- Kids' Church personnel are never permitted to administer medication. If a parent requests that this be done, they must be called out of the service to administer their child's medication themselves. In some circumstances a child is particularly at risk and may need some medication or injection at very short notice. In that instance a parent may appoint someone to sit in on the programme and keep watch over that affected child, and that person may act on behalf of the parent. If this is unacceptable, the child cannot be a part of our programme.

Transport

- Parental permission must be granted in writing prior to a child being transported in any vehicle. The **only** exception is in cases of emergency.

The Bible says to avoid the appearance of evil. This Conduct Policy is in place to protect you, the minister, from any false accusations that may occur. (Satan is the accuser of the brethren Rev 12:10). By setting a high standard in our conduct, we leave no door open for him to attack.

Counselling:

No one is permitted to counsel a child alone. Counselling must only occur in two's. If the need to counsel a child arises, it should be done in public, yet out of hearing range.

All counselling must be done in the presence of another leader.

Any serious counselling needs must be reported to Pastor Nicole Meagher.

Leaders are not permitted to drive a child home.

No adult is allowed alone in a child's bedroom or bathroom.

Body Contact:

- Never place a primary aged child on your knee/lap.
- Children in a primary age group should not be carried around (piggybacks, however, are accepted).
- Leaders are not allowed to kiss the children.
- Frontal hugs are not appropriate—either hug a child on their side or kneel down and hug them.

Toileting:

Toilets are an area requiring your serious attention since they provide an ideal opportunity for abuse.

- When escorting children to the toilets, the leader must check to see that the room is safe—no “strangers” lurking around.
- When a young child needs to go to the toilet, they are to be escorted by two leaders, and leave the child in the toilet with the door closed. The leaders are to stand at the toilet entrance. If a child needs assistance, two team members must be present
- Discouraging primary aged children from going to the toilet during the service reduces the amount of trips required.
- One toilet break in the middle of the service should be permitted for all primary aged children. Group toileting is the best way to reduce the risk of abuse.

SUSPECTED UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR

In the situation where you feel you have witnessed unusual behaviour,(ie. Stranger outside the Kids’ Church looking in, or a person not in the children’s ministry team leaves the adult service early and heads directly to the Kids’ Church, or a team member is breaking policy by holding a child on their lap etc) please report to the Kids’ Church Pastor immediately.