

Safe Ministry To Children and Young People Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Safe Ministry To Children and Young People Guidelines has been prepared to fulfil the church's commitment to be a safe space as outlined in our Safe Ministry Policy. These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with our Safe Ministry Policy and team/ministry specific handbook (where applicable). It is a requirement that all staff and volunteers adhere to these guidelines; failure to adhere may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, this may include dismissal (in the case of staff) or removal from the serving role (in the case of volunteers).

BEHAVIOUR OF LEADERS

Your Role

When serving in a Ministry with children/young people, you are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children/young people in your care. While it's important for children and young people to feel they can trust and confide in you, it is equally important to avoid encouraging any inappropriate dependence.

Your authority over children and young people comes from your position, age, maturity, and physical presence. Abuse occurs when this authority or power is misused. Any form of child abuse is always unacceptable, and Coastal Bible Church maintains a zero tolerance policy toward it.

Equity

You are expected to treat all children and young people fairly, equally and with dignity. Children and young people have the right to be respected, listened to and have their particular needs addressed in all ministries. No child or young person is to be discriminated against for any reason. Your actions and behaviour must be non-discriminatory and always in the best interests of the child. This is an outworking of Jesus' command to love your neighbour as yourself.

Sexual Misconduct

Under no circumstance is any form of sexual behaviour to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children and young people participating in any of our ministries. Engaging in sexual behaviour with any children and young people in Coastal Bible Church is prohibited, even if those involved are above the legal age and give consent.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Contact behaviour - such as kissing, sexual contact, sexual intercourse
- Non-Contact behaviour - such as flirting or inappropriate texting
- Use of electronic media of any kind for the purpose of sexually based content
- Exposing children or young people to inappropriate photography, including pornography or nudity
- Inappropriate conversations, or conversations of a sexual nature with, or within the presence of, a child or young person

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Language and Tone

All children and young people should be communicated with in a manner that respects and values them. At no point should children or young people ever feel threatened as a result of inappropriate language or tone. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Screaming or yelling
- An aggressive tone
- Insults
- Verbal communication that is sexual in nature of any kind
- Derogatory comments or jokes made at the expense of the child/young person

Physical Contact

Physical contact between volunteers and children/young people needs to be treated with great care. In general, physical contact should be initiated by the child/young person, or occur with their permission. Be respectful of the child/young person's feelings, and make sure you are observed by other leaders. If a situation arises where it is necessary to physically restrain a child/young person, there are a number of considerations to be made. This kind of physical contact should be a last resort, aimed solely at preventing harm to the child/young person or others, and the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances. Such an incident must be reported right away to the Ministry Leader, or a member of the Safe Ministry Team. The Ministry Leader/Safe Ministry Team will then ask you to provide a written account of this incident, so that it can be documented and addressed accurately and appropriately.

Should a child or young person initiate physical contact that is sexual and/or inappropriate, you must report this immediately to the Ministry Leader or member of the Safe Ministry Team. Once again, you will be asked to provide a written account of this incident, so that it can be documented and addressed accurately and appropriately. This is in order to prioritise the safety of all involved - for the child/young person, for yourself, and for any others implicated.

Listed below are examples of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with a child/young person. Please note these lists are not exhaustive, but rather serve as a guide to what appropriate physical contact with a child/young person should look like.

Appropriate physical contact includes:

- Bending down to the child's eye level, speaking kindly and listening attentively
- High fives and fist bumps
- Gaining permission before hugging a child and respecting their right to say 'no'
- Taking a young child's hand and leading them to the planned activity
- Comforting an upset child by placing an arm around their shoulder or holding a young child with their permission

Inappropriate contact includes (list is not exhaustive):

- Kissing or coaxing a child into physical contact with you
- Tickling
- Extended hugging
- A child sitting on your lap (excluding infants or toddlers)
- Touching children or young people in areas that would normally be covered by swimming attire (breast, buttocks or groin areas)
- Overly physical contact, for example: wrestling

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- Any physical contact that the child has said 'no' to (with the exception of a life-threatening situation)
- Grabbing or hitting a child in anger, as a means of discipline

Gift Giving

Within our ministries, gifts/prizes may be given to individuals/teams for participating in games, celebrating birthdays, etc. These gifts/prizes are given under the direction of the Ministry Leader on behalf of Coastal Bible Church. Should a leader or volunteer want to purchase/organise a gift, this must be done for an entire group (for example, all children in the 'Surfers' ministry) and permission must first be given by the Ministry Leader before any gifts are given. Inappropriate singling out of an individual child to give a gift is not permitted, nor can gifts ever be given in monetary form - the Ministry Leader should always be consulted if you're unsure about the appropriateness of a prospective gift.

Clothing

When working with children and young people, you will often be sitting on the floor to interact alongside them, or sitting on a seat while the children/young people are on the floor. With this in mind, please consider modest and appropriate clothing. Take note of clothing that is appropriate for bending, kneeling, and getting up and down from the floor.

Ministry specific identification (i.e. lanyards) are to be worn, to allow children and other people to clearly identify you as the leader.

Discipline

Working with children and young people is a privilege. Even though we are not expecting that the children and young people who walk into our ministry spaces will behave perfectly, it is important that each child or young person understands our behaviour expectations. If a child or young person is misbehaving, it will be more than likely that one of the room expectations is not being met. In the case that a child acts in a disrespectful way, please take the following steps:

1. Get down to the child's level (or position yourself at an appropriate proximity to a young person) and talk with them about the desired behaviour
2. If behaviour continues, please remove the child/young person from the current activity and warn them that if their behaviour continues, their parent/carer will have to be contacted, and that they may have to be removed from the program
3. If the parent/carer has to be contacted due to the fact that the child/young person continues to be disrespectful, please inform the parent/carer of the situation and ask that the child/young person remain with the parent/carer either in the program or outside of the current program

When it comes to correcting children and young people, it is vital that we keep at the forefront of our minds the grace that God has so extravagantly and unconditionally given to us. Certainly, we want children and young people to recognise their misbehaviour and the consequences of their misbehaviour (not only with respect to themselves but also with respect to others), but we concurrently want them to learn how to understand their misbehaviour within a redemptive framework. Therefore, when it comes to correcting a child, our goal is to graciously restore them rather than condemn.

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If a child's behaviour seems unusual, inform the Safe Ministry Team, inclusive of the Ministry Leader. The Safe Ministry Team will record the child's name, date, time, and a brief description of the child's behaviour/the events that took place. As necessary, the Safe Ministry Team, in partnership with the Safe Ministry Coordinators, will then notify the appropriate authorities and/or the child or young person's parent/carer.

Toileting Procedure

Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry

In the Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry program, parents/carers are responsible for assisting their own children with any toileting needs (including changing soiled nappies or clothes). If for some specific reason this is not possible, then two Coastal Bible Church Kids volunteers must be present to walk the child to the bathroom. The child is required to undertake all necessary actions of going to the toilet themselves, including removing their clothing and putting it back on. Both volunteers will stay within eyesight of one another the entire time.

When a child requires the toilet in Splashers or Nippers (1-4 years old), please use the Kids Ministry phone located on the sign-out desk to contact the parent/carer using the contact number on the child's name tag. If the parent/carer does not respond, please contact the Library Manager rostered on the day. The Library Manager will locate the parent/carer in the Auditorium so that the parent/carer can tend to their child's toileting needs.

Coastal Bible Church Kids volunteers can use the following text message template when using the Kids Ministry phone:

"Hello [insert parent's/carer's name], [insert child's name] needs to go to the toilet. Can you please come over to the Kids Ministry program to assist them. Thank you!"

[Insert Kids Ministry Volunteer's name]

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Children in Divers and Surfers (5-12 years old) will let their leader know when they need to use the bathroom. In this instance, volunteers will stay within eyesight of one another at all times. One volunteer will walk the child towards the bathroom inside the Kids Ministry space, ensure there is no other child, or adult in the bathroom by knocking on the door, and then supervise them entering/exiting the bathroom. The volunteer will not enter the bathroom with the child, or assist the child with any aspect of toileting. When the child has finished using the bathroom, both the volunteer and the child will walk back to re-join the program.

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Coastal Bible Church young people will use the bathroom independently. Coastal Bible Church Youth Leaders will never be alone with a child/young person, and this includes settings like bathrooms, during the course of the Youth program. If a Youth Leader needs to enter the main women's/men's bathroom while a young person is in there, they will make sure another Youth Leader, of the same sex, is with them.

If the venue allows, Youth Leaders who need to use the bathroom during the Youth program will use any available ambulant toilet facilities.

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Digital Communication

All volunteers are expected to abide by the Coastal Bible Church Code of Conduct at all times, whether engaging with children and young people face-to-face, or via digital communication platforms. Communicating via digital technologies is only permitted with young people who are in high school (not with children 12 and younger).

Any communications with a young person using digital technology is to be conducted:

- on an age appropriate medium (noting that many social media sites currently have a minimum age of 16). Youth Leaders are not permitted to use digital platforms designed for anonymous communication, or for which no record of conversations exist (e.g. Snapchat), when communicating with young people,
- according to the terms of service of the provider,
- in an open manner, specifically that there are always at least three persons present (specifically, one young person and two volunteers),
- in line with Coastal Bible Church policies and procedures, including this document.

When communicating with a young person using digital technology, volunteers must take care to ensure that:

- it is an appropriate way to communicate with a young person,
- you are sensitive to the impact of your words, images and actions on the young person and any other person who may access it,
- you do not use sexually suggestive, sexually explicit or offensive language or images,
- the circumstances of the communication, including the language and images used, do not suggest your relationship with the child is inappropriate,
- when using digital platforms, you do not initiate/encourage conversation topics likely to encourage the disclosure of pastorally sensitive matters, e.g. "How can I pray for you this week?". Such conversations should take place in-person,
- Digital interactions with young people are never deleted. Digital interactions with young people must be disclosed to Coastal Bible Church Safe Space Coordinators on request.

Volunteers must not initiate social media friendships with children and young people. Friend/follow requests by young people to Youth Leaders should be assessed on a case by case basis. Youth Leaders are under no obligation to accept friend/follow requests and should not do so unless engagement with the child on the digital platform can be done according to these guidelines.

Face-to-face interactions are the best way to build relationships with, and minister to, children and young people. Digital communication is not suitable for matters that are pastorally sensitive, emotionally charged or that require a back-and-forth conversation. In those cases, the conversation should be conducted in-person. If a young person initiates a pastoral conversation with a leader using a digital medium, the leader should seek to move the conversation to an in-person context as soon as practical.

Phone calls are not permitted between Youth Leaders and young people. If there are extenuating circumstances that require a phone call (such as a Coastal Bible Church Youth Volunteer running late for Kids Ministry briefing), please consult the Ministry Leader or a Safe Ministry Team member. In this instance, the Ministry Leader or Safe Ministry Team member will call the parent first for permission to speak to the young person, and then aim to have another adult who also hears the phone call.

We strongly encourage volunteers to ensure all of their personal relationships are considered above reproach at all times.

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Photography

No photos or videos are to be taken by volunteers while serving in Ministries within Coastal Bible Church. No personal information may be taken and uploaded on the internet (including social media), or be used in any other way. Coastal Bible Church has a Photography Team that may take images/videos of a Ministry program taking place. These images/videos are taken on behalf of Coastal Bible Church, and are taken and used according to Coastal Bible Church's Privacy Policy and Photo & Video Policy and Procedure.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Supervision/ Child-Adult Ratio

Ratios for child-adult supervision will vary according to the type of activity, length of activity, age of the children/young people and size of the group. Multiple volunteers should always be present to ensure that supervision and accountability is maintained.

Ratios help ensure that children/young people and the volunteers have the best experience while being part of Coastal Bible Church ministries. It is very important to adhere to the ratio guidelines for the safety of the children and young people. To keep each other accountable, NEVER leave another leader alone in a room when children and young people are present. If necessary, stand in the doorway and call for someone to assist you/stand in your place, or call the Library Manager or Ministry Leader to come and assist you.

Suggested ratios (after the minimum requirement of 2 adults is met):

- 1 – 2 Year Olds: 1 leader to 4 children
- 3 – 4 Year Olds: 1 leader to 8 children
- Primary School Age: 1 leader to 12 children
- High School Age: 1 leader to 16 young people

First Aid

It is a requirement that there is a minimum of one (1) qualified First Aid Officer present during every ministry program, who can assess any injuries and provide first aid treatment as necessary.

When an injury does occur, the volunteer/s aware of the incident are to contact the Ministry Leader, who will assess the situation and have the designated First Aid Officer administer first aid as required. Volunteers are required to complete an Incident/Injury/Hazard Report Form for any injuries that occur during the ministry program. Volunteers are to ensure that the parents/carers are made aware of the injury and sign the Incident/Injury/Hazard Report Form.

First aid kits are to be available and fully stocked for all ministries. All volunteers and First Aid Officers must be aware of the location of all first aid kits. If a volunteer notices that the first aid kits need to be reviewed or requires additional resources, they should notify their Ministry Leader or a Coastal Bible Church staff member immediately.

Should a child be required to take medication, this must be taken under the oversight of a qualified First Aid Officer, ensuring written consent and instructions have been given by the parent/carer. Volunteers are not permitted to give children or young people medication (including over-the-counter medication like Paracetamol), except under direction from an Emergency Services Operator, or other suitably qualified person. A suitably qualified person means someone trained in first aid and competent to administer first aid in the given situation.

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Parental/Carer Consent

By checking their child into a ministry program/event, a parent/carers gives consent for their child to participate in the event and all elements, including games, of that event.

When offsite events take place, permission forms are to be signed by parents/carers, outlining the start and finish times, event details and location of the event.

Transport - Coastal Bible Church Youth

Coastal Bible Church Youth Leaders may offer transport services for the convenience of parents to allow their young people to join the Youth program. In such cases, parents/carers are required to sign a transport waiver, giving permission for their child to be driven in a Youth Leader's car. There will be a 2:1 ratio of adults to young people in the vehicle at all times, ensuring proper supervision. Full disclosure will be provided regarding the individuals who will be driving and accompanying the young person/people in the vehicle. All drivers must hold a valid driver's licence and drive a registered vehicle. The driver and other adults in the car must hold a valid Blue Card. There must be a minimum of two (2) Youth Leaders, both over the age of 18 and one being the same sex as the young person being transported. In all other instances, children and young people are to be transported at all times by their parents/carers to and from any ministry program or event.

In an emergency where a child/young person needs urgent transport, a volunteer may drive a child/young person with the following elements in place:

- The Ministry Leader and/or one of the volunteers accompanying the child in the vehicle, (i.e. the volunteer who is not driving the vehicle), is to communicate with the parent/carers of the child/young person. They will explain the reason they are transporting their child, and the destination they are heading to - for example, transporting to a hospital,
- Two volunteers, both above the age of 18, with valid Blue Cards are to be in the car at all times,
- Volunteers must be the same sex as the student being transported (if possible),
- Remaining children/young people in the Ministry program are not left alone and the child-to-adult ratio meets the above requirement.

We acknowledge that some Coastal Bible Church volunteers may have personal relationships with families from our church, outside of their role in the Children and/or Youth Ministry. In such instances that you are personal friends with a family from our church, we recommend that you do not transport their child without at least one other adult in the car, and ensure you have the parents/carers sign a transport waiver, giving permission for their child to be driven by you. .

Additionally, some young people may be driven to our Youth Ministry by an older sibling/friend. In this instance, the parent/carers of the young person being transported should sign a transport waiver, giving permission for their child to be driven, checked-in, and checked-out by the nominated person.

Venue

Potential hazards are to be identified before the commencement of all activities involving children and young people. This includes the below:

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- Being aware of fire safety and evacuation procedures,
- Ensuring emergency exits are clearly marked and access to these exits is not blocked,
- Ensuring areas where children and young people are playing are free from trips, slips or fall hazards.

Risk assessments are completed for all ministry programs and any additional events.

Food Handling

All leaders who handle food are required to adhere to the Coastal Bible Church Food Safety Policy and Procedure. Parents/carers are required to list all allergies on ministry registration forms at check-in.

Presence of Non-leaders

Parents

Parents/Carers are allowed in ministry programs involving children and young people, for the purpose of attending to their own child's needs—for example, helping settle their child at the beginning of the Coastal Bible Church Kids program. Volunteers are to ensure that the parent/carer wears the allocated 'visitor' lanyard and encourage them to focus solely on their own child, steering them away from acting as a leader or initiating physical contact with other children or young people. Any parent/carer present in this way must adhere to the guidelines in this document. If a parent/carer remains in a ministry program for more than 10 minutes, they are required to sign-in on the Visitor Sign In & Out Sheet, and sign-out upon leaving the program.

Support Workers

Children/young people with disabilities may need the assistance of a Support Worker during a Coastal Bible Church Kids or Youth Ministry program. Support Workers are allowed to be present for the purpose of supporting that child/young person, and must provide a current, valid Blue Card to the Ministry Leader. They are expected to follow all relevant policies, including the Guidelines outlined in this document, and sign-in on the Visitor Sign In & Out Sheet, and sign-out upon leaving the program.

Observers

From time to time, a person thinking about becoming a volunteer in Coastal Bible Church Kids or Youth Ministry, or a guest accompanied by the Ministry Leader/another Coastal Bible Church staff member, may be present in a ministry program. These observers are required to present a valid and current Blue Card to the Ministry Leader, and must not initiate physical contact with children/young people.

The Ministry Leader is responsible for:

- Attaining parents'/carers' permission (ie. email or text message) for their children/young people to be observed during the program,
- Introducing the Observer at the start of the program to ensure the children/young people are aware of the Observer,
- Inducting the Observer with the Coastal Bible Church Safety Induction Manual, Safe Ministry Policy, and the site tour,
- Providing the Observer with a Visitor lanyard,
- Supervising the Observer and ensuring they do not take on the role of teaching or leading the program.

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Coastal Bible Church - Youth Volunteers

Coastal Bible Church Youth Volunteers are young people who express a desire to join the Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry team. In this instance, the Ministry Leader will liaise with the young person and their parents/carers to explain the processes involved, and to have them both complete and sign the Coastal Bible Church Kids Under-18 volunteer application form and read through the Coastal Bible Church Safety Induction Manual, Safe Ministry Policy and Safe Ministry to Children and Young People Guidelines. Youth volunteers who are under the age of 18 will only be allowed to serve in a Coastal Bible Church Kids 'Nippers' or 'Divers' program, and the Ministry Leader will roster Youth Volunteers to the programs appropriately.

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedures

Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry

When the parent/carer signs their child/ren in to the Kids Ministry program, they will receive a name tag for each child, which lists the child's name and the child's parents'/carers' contact number/s on it. Volunteers must check that every child is wearing this name tag as they enter the Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry program. No child will be allowed into the Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry program without being properly signed-in.

During the sign-out process, volunteers are to confirm that the adult signing the child/ren out is a parent/carer of the child. Do not release a child from the Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry program to another adult who is neither a parent or carer of the child. If a parent does not come to collect their child for any reason (e.g. prayer ministry), two volunteers may take the child to the parents/carers and have the parent/carer sign their kids out.

If parents/carers become impatient and rude, be polite but firm as you remind them that we are required to follow the sign-in/sign-out procedures for the safety of all children in our care. Always be respectful, and if there is a problem, please get the Coastal Bible Church Kids Ministry Leader or a Coastal Bible Church Safe Ministry Co-ordinator.

Coastal Bible Church Youth Ministry

Coastal Bible Church young people are required to be signed-in and signed-out of the Coastal Bible Church Youth Ministry program by their parent/carer. Upon a young person's first time attending Coastal Bible Church Youth, their parent/carer will complete a registration form, listing allergies, special needs, medical conditions, and providing consent for their child to attend the program and participate in all activities.

If a new young person arrives with their friend who is a regular attender (so the new young person's parent is not present), the sign-in volunteer or Ministry Leader will give the new young person's parent a call and say:

"Hi, it's <name> from Coastal Bible Church's Youth Ministry program. We have <young person's name> here, who's come along with <friend's name>. Just thought I'd reach out to introduce myself and to make sure you're aware he/she is here with us".

The Ministry Leader or volunteer then explains that we have a registration form that we'd usually have new parents fill out, and asks if that form can be sent to them digitally, to be filled out immediately, or to verbally complete the form over the phone with the Sign-In volunteer (making explicit note of the privacy

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policy and declaration sections of the registration form). The Sign-In volunteer then makes a note on the young person's registration form that their parent/carer was contacted.

Our regular attending young people are checked in to Elvanto or on paper form, and checked-out upon departure. An assigned volunteer then counts the total number of young people signed in and volunteers (including new young people on the paper registration forms). They then submit an attendance report on Elvanto.

Risk Management

Our ministries foster a risk-aware culture which means that we acknowledge that our work involves risks every day. We believe that risks should be proactively managed by all volunteers and that risk management should be part of the culture. Everyone has a responsibility to manage risk and to support each other in managing risks.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to identify, analyse, evaluate, respond, monitor and communicate risks associated with any activity involving children or young people. You should identify and minimise all potential hazards before embarking on any activity with children or young people. This would include:

- Being aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedures,
- Ensuring that emergency exits are clearly marked and never obstructed or internally locked,
- Not knowingly permit children/young people with serious contagious diseases to attend the activity,
- Not using any materials besides what the Ministry Leader has provided. Anything else must be approved by the Ministry Leader prior to use,
- Always remaining in eyesight of another approved Coastal Bible Church Kids Volunteer / Youth Leader while interacting with children or young people.

You should ensure that:

- All activities have defined boundaries that are easily observed or patrolled,
- All aspects of children and young people's activities are open to observation,
- Children and young people are not permitted, during the course of the ministry program, to leave the church/program premises (unless for an approved ministry event, where written consent has been received from parents/carers),
- Individual/small group ministry, if needed, occurs in the presence of adults, a public place or a location with high visibility.

Some of the games and activities played with children/young people can involve higher levels of risk. Please speak with the Ministry Leader if you feel additional considerations, such as specific risk assessments, should be completed before allowing students to be involved. If you are ever doing an activity and you feel it is unsafe, or that there is a risk of harm, STOP the activity immediately. Never continue an activity if you feel there is a risk of danger or injury, whether physically or emotionally.