



Keeping our Children Safe

Working Guidelines for Leaders and Helpers in
Christ Church Bangkok Children's and Youth Ministries.

To be used in conjunction with The Child Protection Policies of
The Diocese of Singapore and Christ Church Bangkok



Important Contacts

These are the main contact details of the people you may need to contact in the course of your work with various children and young people's groups at Christ Church. Please feel free to approach them if you have any questions or concerns about the work.

Vicar of Christ Church – Rev. Norman Jones, vicar@christchurchbangkok.org

Children and Youth Minister Leader – Patty James, ccbighthouse@gmail.com

Leader of Tiny Tots – Patty James, ccbighthouse@gmail.com

Child Protection Representatives – Brenda Coughlan and Annette Sohn

PCC Children and Youth Committee contact – Devin Arenas

Department of Social Development and Welfare – for reporting incidents of child Abuse, 074 330 222

ChildLine – Helpline for children and young people – free phone 1387, office number 02 623 3814

Bangkok Police for emergency contact – 191

Tourist Police – 1155

Family Counselling Services – Scott Berry and Associates 064 939 0222

Letter from the Vicar of Christ Church

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generosity in considering giving time to our work and ministry among children and young people at Christ Church Bangkok. They are of course an essential and precious part of our Church Family, and we want the very best for them.

Through this work we are helping to introduce and grow their faith and trust in a living God and Church, through teaching that is relative, fun and enriching to them. Increasingly in today's world we need to do this in a safe and secure environment, which as far as is possible reduces the risks to their safety and wellbeing. As a result, we have recently revised our Child Protection Policies to incorporate The Singapore Diocese Policy as well as our own Christ Church Policy, which you will receive as you begin working with us.

This document, "Keeping our Children Safe," we hope is a more accessible and easier to use guidance for your part in this work and is to be used in conjunction with the other more formal policies.

These documents are to support you as leaders and helpers along with safeguarding our children and other vulnerable groups within the Church.

We hope that you will enjoy and feel fulfilled in the work you are about to begin and please feel you can approach myself or any of the other contacts listed at any time with concerns.

With every blessing, to you and your work with us.

Rev Norman Jones
Vicar of Christ Church, Bangkok

January 2025

Introduction

Christ Church Bangkok developed Child Protection Guidelines for leaders and helpers in 2007.

In the years since then, the Church worldwide has needed to come to terms with the harsh reality that it needs to be increasingly rigorous and clear in Safeguarding and Protecting its children, young people and other vulnerable groups- which may include the elderly, disabled or other adults with specific needs.

The Singapore Diocese in 2018 issued new Child Protection Policies and a Manual for all who work with and care for these groups in its congregations.

As members of the Singapore Diocese, we have adopted these policies alongside a suggested Parish Child Protection Policy and this working document.

It sounds like a lot to take in! However, we do not want leaders and helpers to feel overwhelmed by these documents but informed and supported, and as a result, they themselves protected in the work they will be doing.

It is expected that all our leaders, helpers and others who encounter children, young people and other vulnerable groups, will receive the documents as well as some introductory training sessions, to ensure the safe recruitment and working practices needed to implement the policies. Policies are no good stuck in a manual on a shelf. To be effective, they need to be used and implemented by those who work face-to-face with the groups concerned!

We believe this way of working will greatly improve and manage the risks inherent in working with our groups as well as protect you and assure parents that their children are in a safe and caring environment.

Thank you again for your willingness to share in this valuable work.

Definitions used in all Documents

Child – A child is defined as a young person up to the age of 18 years.

Young person – Still a child but usually referring to those 13 – 18 years of age.

Adult – Any person over the age of 18 years.

CPR – Child Protection Representative, usually with a close link to the leaders and children but not a leader themselves.

CPRT – Child Protection Review Team, includes the Vicar, Church Wardens, CPR and ministry leader and any other relevant party, who meet if a Child Protection Incident occurs - e.g., this includes an accident, causing injury, an abusive action by a leader helper or other person, or a disclosure of alleged abuse made by a child.

Leader – Usually an adult over 18 years who is responsible for a group of children during periods of teaching /activity together.

Helper – May be a young person 16-18 years of age or an adult who works alongside the leader.

Child Protection – Is reactive and is a part of Safeguarding and promoting welfare. It's the activity that undertakes to protect specific children who are suffering or may suffer significant harm.

Safeguarding – Is proactive and preventative and includes protecting children, young people and other vulnerable groups from ill treatment. It ensures that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. It takes action to enable all children and other vulnerable groups to have the best possible outcomes.

Abuse – recent or historic, physical, sexual or emotional abuse by an adult or other child or young person. This also includes neglect of a child. Please see the definition of Physical, Sexual and Emotional Abuse in the Parish Child Protection Policy.

Singapore Diocese Child Protection Manual – We are part of the Anglican diocese of Singapore and adopt the guidance in this document developed in 2018. We have adopted its suggestions for a parish policy for Christ Church in the deanery of Deanery of Thailand.

Thailand's Child Protection Act 2003 – This is the Law of Thailand developed to protect children from abuse. It addresses the problems of all types of abuse, including issues of underage labour and human trafficking.

UN Convention of the Rights of the Child – This agreement was a global standard of care for Children and their Rights to grow up free from violence and exploitation. The Convention was ratified by Thailand in 1992.

Recruitment Process for Leaders and Helpers

Person expresses desire to help in Lighthouse or other work involving children



Speaks to Children's and Youth Ministry Leader, Vicar or CPR



Establishes six-month church membership requirement



CPR shares documents to be completed in an application pack and requests names and contact details of two church members who can act as referees



During the waiting period, the candidate can be familiarized with the work, if they work alongside other experienced leaders



On receipt of all the returned forms the candidate can be interviewed by the Children's and Youth Minister Leader and, or, by the Vicar and CPR



Candidate having fulfilled all stages can begin their role and as soon as possible attend CP workshops

Welcome and Congratulations!

Disclosure of a significant incident or alleged abuse

Leader or other person receives a report of an incident



Immediate support and comfort for the child in the presence of another leader or parent

Decision as to immediate action to be taken with Vicar or CPR

Follow the procedure from P16-26 in the Diocesan Children Protection Manual



The CPRT will be alerted to meet to consider action needed



The procedure must be documented and at the end of each stage suitable support offered to the child, alleged perpetrator and parent(s) when relevant.



All options are made clear in the Diocesan CP policy as are all actions to be taken and Diocesan personnel who are to be informed of the outcomes.

What's Next?

Now that you have gone through our Safe Recruitment process, we are ready to get started!

So, what follows is to help start you off working with our children and young people. Sometime in the coming months you will be invited to some of our Child Protection and Good Practice Workshops which are to inform and increase awareness of Keeping our Children Safe. As well as providing information we work through some fun exercises and hopefully create a safe environment for everyone, to ask questions and explore these issues.

Usually, the sessions will last for around an hour and will be a regular rolling program, probably four sessions over a year's timeline. Watch out for details on the website and by e mail invite. We will always try to deliver the sessions on Sundays before or after church services.

General Guidelines for working with our children and young people

Leading or Helping in a Group

- Always check out the space you are working in to see it is safe and ready for the children. As we work in a child-friendly building this should be straightforward but please report any damaged or faulty equipment or furniture to the Church Coordinator or other office staff.
- Where possible the group should always have a Leader and helper present. If for any reason this is not possible, you should inform the Lighthouse leader who may be able to invite another helper or parent to join you or move your group to an area where other leaders are in view. This is just to allow you to feel supported should you need to leave the group for any reason.
- Never leave the group unattended by an adult, for any reason. Find someone to stand in for you or to pass a message to a parent or other person rather than leave the children alone.
- Never allow unauthorized people to have unsupervised access to the children in your care, e.g., a visitor or passerby looking in on the group.
- Ensure children in your group do not wander off unattended. We work in an open compound used by many people each day, as a short cut or just looking around. If children want to take a break or wander back to parents in church another helper or leader must accompany them so you can remain with the main group.

Dealing with Distressed Children

- We are part of a congregation representing many cultures and these cultures have different approaches to touching children. The intent is usually to offer comfort or affection but in order not to give opportunity for misunderstanding there are clear guidelines about appropriate touch in our Parish Child Protection Policy on pages 4-6.
- In general, avoid any unnecessary touch or be in the presence of others if you need to comfort a distressed child. Always ask the child if they want you to offer a hug or other appropriate gesture of comfort before “smothering” them with affection!

First Aid and Toilet Visits

- If a child needs First Aid, other than for the most basic application of a sticking plaster, for example, immediately contact another leader to alert the parent/carer in church to decide on a course of action. Familiarize yourself with the location of a first aid kit in the building.
- The toilets in the Rainbow Land building are for children only. No adults must use these toilets. There are adult toilets in the Li Hall.
- On P7 of the Parish Child Protection Policy there are guidelines about toilet visits. Generally, the rules are the same, in as much as, ensure your group are not left alone and ensure visibility of other leaders where possible when attending to personal care in the toilets. Always encourage the children to visit the cubicle on their own and wait at the exit door to accompany them back to the group after washing hands.

- Leaders and helpers should not be changing diapers, parents should be alerted if this task is required.

Meeting Children Outside of Church Activities

- It is inadvisable to meet with children and young people alone and outside the Sunday Group activities unless invited by their parent/carer.
- Any activities away from the church compound for a fun or social activity must be with other leaders and with written consent of the parent / carer.
- Adequate risk assessment of an outside activity must be made by either the Group Leader or the CPR.
- It is not appropriate to have online contact with members of your group. This is, in effect, “meeting them alone.” Please direct any correspondence to parents or carers of the child or young person.

Taking of Photographs and Videos

- There should be no taking of any photographs or videos of children and young people in our groups or activities without their and parents’ consent.
- There should be no publication of any photographs either in print or on any social media sites.

Responding to Concerns or Allegations of any Form of Abuse

You will find specific guidelines around this issue in our Parish Child Protection Policy. There is also a flow chart to show the action to be taken in this document.

In brief, if a child comes to you as a leader or helper they know and trust, about any allegation of abuse, physical, sexual or emotional, try and follow the steps below.

- Listen carefully to the child and try to establish comfortable eye contact.
- Do not investigate, question or lead the child to gain more than they want to tell you. Ideally invite another leader or CPR to join you.
- Check out what they have told you by reflecting back what they have told you and ask if that is correct.
- Do not make promises about keeping secrets or not telling anyone else.
- Do assure the child they have done well to tell you, that you believe what they are telling you and that you are treating it as a serious situation.
- Tell the child you will let them know what will happen next and if possible whilst this is happening alert another leader.
- As soon as is as practical and possible write down some notes to prompt you when filling in the formal Incident form the CPR will help you with later. Try use the words the child used in their disclosure. If you have seen any unusual signs or marks on the child, make note of these too.

- If the incident has taken place at home, it may not be appropriate to immediately alert the parent / carer in church, so seek out the Group Leader, CPR or Vicar for further advice asap. If the incident involves another adult or child and not a parent or carer then try to invite the parents to join you as soon as is possible.

Please remember these occurrences are actually very rare but when they do happen, we all need to be prepared to respond in a sensitive and correct way. Abuse of any kind is traumatizing enough for a child or young person but how others and we respond should not in any way re traumatize the child further.

The work you will be doing with children will give you and them great satisfaction and should develop warm and trusting relationships.

Experience shows that it is within these warm and trusting relationships that any troubles, traumas and worries that children have, may be disclosed. That carries great privilege, but great responsibility and we want you to feel supported in that role.

The Leadership here at Christ Church are very grateful for your offer of service to the children of our church family and if you have any questions or concerns, please feel you can approach the Vicar, CPR or the Children and Youth Ministry Leader, confident that we will support you.

May God bless you in your work and the children and young people in your care as we seek to show them Christ's love and grow in faith.