vineyardkids

Safeguarding Children Document

Welcome to Vineyard Kids at York Vineyard Church!

This handbook is intended to give you all the information you need to get involved in our children's ministry. We hope it will answer any questions you may have. It is also the training manual for our volunteers and should help you complete our training programme for the Vineyard Kids Team.

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1. Introduction

A. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide a best practice working policy for activities associated with Vineyard Kids. It is designed to ensure that both children and adults are protected as best as possible for Vineyard Kids activities.

This document supports the church's Safeguarding Policy which provides a more comprehensive picture of the legal framework and the organisational process and policy for safeguarding young people. The safeguarding policy provides the driving legal principles behind this document and can be found on our website.

This document is designed to be a short summary for volunteers and staff to use as a reference for all our kids activities. It provides guidance on pastoral care, events and activities and communication amongst other things. It aims to widen the scale and quality of the provision of children's work by providing some clarity on appropriate boundaries and principles, as well as providing a set of rules to work with. It is vital that volunteers read this document so that we can provide the best and safest possible environment for children to enjoy Vineyard Kids.

B. General principles

In general the purpose of this document is to ensure that we, as a team:

- Always do what's in the best interests of the child.
- Always think about limiting the vulnerability of staff and volunteers.
- Make sure you know who your Team Leader is and always maintain regular and clear communication with them about activities and issues.

We see the protection of children that are entrusted to our care as part of our worship of God.

Whether it's the parental advice in Proverbs or the example of Jesus demonstrating his love for children by spending time with them, the Bible is clear about the importance of loving and caring for children - and this is why we feel it is so important to prove a safe and loving environment in Vineyard Kids.

2. Team

A. Expectations for children's team

The baseline expectations for volunteers on the children's team at York Vineyard are that they are coming to York Vineyard on a Sunday, part of a small group, and living and modelling a lifestyle that reflects their Christian faith and desire to honour God in all they do. They must have a passion for the vision and values of the church, and demonstrate a heart for the discipleship of young people. Anyone keen to get involved in the Vineyard Kids team must acknowledge the importance of these expectations and be open to a degree of accountability to their coordinator. In certain exceptional cases the expectations may be altered temporarily through discussion with their coordinator on a case by case basis (for example someone is unable to attend a small group for exceptional practical reasons but is part of an alternative and equivalent York Vineyard group that offers the same potential for being known and pastorally supported). Team members should be 16 and over. Younger people may help with the younger age groups if agreed by a coordinator, but they do not count towards the ratios in section 5g.

B. Recruiting and training

All Vineyard Kid's team will be subjected to a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. They are allowed to visit Vineyard Kids activities as a 'shadower', supervised at all times, up to three times before the DBS check has been completed and received by York Vineyard. They are not to be left in sole charge of any children, and must be approved by the Vineyard Kids Coordinator. Once they are DBS checked they will be permitted to wear a Vineyard Kids lanyard (or T-shirt, if these are in use).

If a potential team member has recently joined the church from another church and they would like to start serving within 6 months of joining then we would ask for a reference form to be completed by a staff member from their previous church. If a potential team member has joined the church within the last 6 months and has not been a committed member of another church in the previous year then we would ask them to wait 6 months before joining the team.

If the Coordinator and Safeguarding Officer consider a youth volunteer aged 16 and over to be functioning in a role where they are leading and influencing younger children they also require a DBS check. For example a 16 year old supporting leadership of a group would require a check. A 16 year old leading the refreshments team at an event, where parents are present, would not require one. New Vineyard Kids team members are required to undertake online child protection training and attend an introduction meeting.

Updated child protection and safeguarding briefings (especially dealing with new or current issues) are included regularly as part of team meetings, leaders meetings and team communication.

Attendance at child protection training and other meetings is recorded and monitored. If a team member's training lapses to the point where the coordinator is concerned about their awareness of child protection, the issuer will be raised and handled on a case by case basis.

3. Sunday Mornings

A. Registration and collection of children

In order to minimise the risk of losing children into unsafe or unsupervised areas, we implement the following procedures:

Dropping children off

Children must be signed in at the Kid's Sign in Desk at the beginning of church before 11am. Parents of new or visiting children must fill in a consent form with details of all children that will be taking part in Sunday morning sessions. Children in Vineyard Kids Church can be dropped off from 10:45am, children in Creche must be dropped off after worship. All parents must sign their children in on the sheet with the sticker they received at the sign in desk. Late comers can join the appropriate group but must be signed in on arrival.

Collecting children

Children must be collected at the end of the service, by 12:15pm. When the parent/carer comes to pick their children up at the end of the service, they are asked who they are collecting. The sign in sheet is then checked to make sure that the child's name matches the sticker. No other adults can collect a child without returning the sticker. Young people under 16 cannot collect a child.

B. Register and incident log

A register of leaders serving on a particular morning should be kept, along with the theme of the morning. Any incidents that have taken place during the course of the morning should also be recorded using an accident and incident form found at the Kids Sign in Desk.

C. Toileting and nappies

Children in **Creche** must be encouraged to go to the toilet before the session. If a child needs the toilet or needs a nappy changing during the session, then the child's parents must be called on the emergency phone.

Children in **Vineyard Kids Church** should be taken to the toilet by the most appropriate team member (who is certainly DBS checked) and then follow the outlined procedure:

- The team member should check the toilet area is empty and allow the children to go in the cubicles by themselves. The team member should wait in the doorway or in the corridor.
- Children will be taken in groups of 2 or more.
- Team members should never use the toilet while they are supervising children in the toilet.
- Always ensure a parent is called if the removal of a child's clothing is essential (i.e. soiling of clothes or a medical accident).

No cream should be applied to children under any circumstances. A parent must be called to apply creams such as suncream or medical creams, unless the child has permission from a parent/carer to apply it themselves.

D. Good working practice

It is recommended that the guidelines of good working practice outlined below be adhered to wherever possible:

- Ensure that you are not alone with a child where your activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- In exceptional circumstances, a DBS checked worker may be left solely in charge of any children of any age. Children or young people attending a group should not be left alone at any time.
- Wherever possible two leaders in a relationship will not be in sole charge of a group of children.
- Serious concerns about a colleague's behaviour should always be reported to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer (Katie Rowe), or Deputy (Nicki Abbey).

E. Expectations in Vineyard Kids Church

In Vineyard Kids Church we use the 'Be Respectful' framework. Team members should be aware of this framework and implement it during their sessions. We also share this with the children so that they understand what is expected of them.

In Vineyard Kids, we:

- Are ready to learn, meet with God and have fun doing so.
- Treat others as we would like to be treated. This means:
    - ◊ Listening to each other
    - ◊ Being polite and helpful
    - ◊ Staying safe in the environment
    - ◊ Respecting equipment and keeping the space tidy
    - ◊ Being respectful of others during worship

4. Pastoral Care

A. Interacting with children

It is important to take note of the following guidelines when interacting with children, both when serving in a kids group or at an event, or when interacting with children around church on a Sunday morning.

- Be aware of your language style, voice tone, body language and dress and how this might be perceived by an individual child.
- Keep all physical contact public (e.g. hugs).
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the team member's.
- Touch should be age appropriate.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued.

B. Disclosure

There may be occasions when a member of the team has a definite or growing concern in relation to a child attending Vineyard Kids. These concerns may be based on an number of signs and symptoms that something is not right and that a child may be being subject to some form of maltreatment. The maltreatment could take the form of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and/or neglect.

Appendix A contains a description of some of the indicative symptoms of these types of abuse, and further expansion on this information is available in the York Vineyard Safeguarding Policy, available from the Safeguarding Officer. In all cases disclosure will be reported to the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Safeguarding Officer. If they are unavailable then disclosures should be reported to the Vineyard Kids Coordinator. The Safeguarding Officer oversees Vineyard Kid's response to the disclosure and ensures it is consistent with the safeguarding policy. Appendix A contains details of the Safeguarding Officer's role.

It is important that as a children's team we are vigilant for symptoms of maltreatment. If you have concerns about a child, talk to the Vineyard Kids Coordinator and explain what you have observed and why you are concerned. Don't initiate a conversation with the child about your concerns without speaking to the Vineyard Kids Coordinator first.

Alternatively the child may make a disclosure about maltreatment to you in a pastoral setting. They may confide that they are being abused or that they are behaving or intending to behave in a way that harms themselves or intentionally puts themselves at risk of harm.

The recommended procedure to follow in the event of disclosure or suspicion of maltreatment is:

1. Listen carefully to the disclosure, allegation or concern that is being reported to you. Try not to ask questions but to allow the referrer to speak freely, without interruption. Take a note of the body language. Reassure the child that you take what they say seriously, but do not promise confidentiality as you may need to share the disclosure for their safety.
2. Report the matter directly to the Safeguarding Officer. If they are unavailable, contact the Safeguarding Deputy or Vineyard Kids Coordinator.
3. The Safeguarding Officer should fill in the Child Protection Disclosure Form. This form should include a written record of all that has happened, including your response and guidance given. They should include observations and anything the child has told you. It is important to make notes as soon as possible after conversations with the child or a third party, recording dates and times of events.
4. You must not discuss your suspicions or the allegations with anyone other than the Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, Vineyard Kids Coordinator, or if necessary someone from the Senior Pastoral Team.
5. Do not seek to confront the named or suspected adult in any way.

This procedure is applicable whether the disclosure comes from a child or third party.

What to do in 'extreme' circumstances

If a child is in immediate danger due to extreme circumstances you should call the police and seek their advice. You must also contact the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

What are extreme circumstances? When a child is so physically harmed, or emotionally traumatised, that immediate medical attention is required. Other circumstances may be if the next time that the child meets the alleged abuser there is a real possibility of severe physical harm, or even death. Or if the child is so desperate that they may possible inflict self-harm, attempt to commit suicide or make a call for help from a highly unsafe environment.

C. Behaviour

As a team we are corporately responsible for ensuring activities with the children are able to run smoothly. The whole team needs to use appropriate and clear communication to handle disruptive behaviour as it arises. This is best done by the nearest team member at an early stage so that disruptive behaviour doesn't escalate.

There will always be a cause for disruptive behaviour from children and we aim to be aware of this context and act appropriately in the situation. How we respond may therefore vary depending on the child, for example if they have behavioural difficulties we are aware of, or have current upheaval in their home lives etc.

Always follow the following principles.

- Discipline should be in proportion to the concerning behaviour.
- Discipline should never be aggressive, emotional, physical, mocking or belittling.
- Correction should always be aimed at the behaviour not the individual (e.g. you may say "lying about taking those sweets was wrong", but never "you are a liar").
- Discipline should be constructive and in the best interests of the child and the group.

Cont...

- The needs of the group as a whole outweigh those of an individual (e.g. it may be necessary to call the parents of one child rather than disrupt an entire session).
- Discipline other than verbal warnings should be recorded and communicated to the coordinator, who may then communicate with parents.
- We are not trained to restrain a child and would not unless the circumstances were extreme and the child or other people were in immediate danger. The children in the group and the individual child should be made safe and parents called to collect the child immediately.
- Where restraint is absolutely necessary, there will always be at least two adults present.

5. Events and activities

A. Using the Church Building (rooms/security)

All children's events should have an appropriate group leader and a first aider. Everyone should know who these people are. There should be an adequate ratio of team to children (see table in section 5g).

The group leader is responsible for ensuring events are run properly and that access to the building is controlled for the protection of the children.

The key holder is responsible for fire safety, security and ensuring the building is used appropriately. Make sure they tell you what the procedure would be in the event of a fire alarm.

When using a designated room in the Church building, ensure there are two team members present wherever possible. A single adult should not work in a room with a lone child for any length of time. However there may be situations (illness/injuries/disruptions) where it is necessary for a short while. In these circumstances, follow the procedures mentioned above with regards to leaving the door open.

B. Consent forms

The standard York Vineyard Kids Contact Form is the means through which we gather and record important information about contact details, health, dietary requirements, allergies and consent for activities. Blank copies are kept at the Kids Sign In Desk. Completed forms should be collected and given to the Vineyard Kids Coordinator or a member of staff for processing.

- For photographing or videoing, consent must be checked via Church Suite.
- Some activities (e.g. DTI) require bespoke consent forms and risk assessments.

C. Tobacco and alcohol

Smoking and drinking are not allowed during York Vineyard events involving children, young people or vulnerable adults. Anyone who appears under the influence of drink is not allowed to be involved in our activities and will be excluded. Youth, if attending Cause to live for or other events for 16+, have a responsibility along with their parents to abstain from drinking alcohol. An email will be sent stating this to the parents prior to the event.

D. Physical games and horseplay

Horseplay (play fighting, rough and tumble) tends to be good fun but often leads to injuries, arguments and fights. It is also difficult to draw a line between what is and isn't appropriate.

For these reason horseplay, even with your own child, should not be a planned activity and team members should take action to prevent it. It is best if this is done firmly but also sensitively and not confrontationally.

Physical games should be overseen by an adult and appropriately risk assessed. For more bespoke or unusual activities an activity specific risk assessment should be prepared and approved by the group leader.

E. Overnight stays

Requirements:

- An overseer who is competent for the size of the event and clarity on who that is.
- Risk assessment (checked by overseer).
- Event plan (checked by overseer).
- Appropriate consent forms and a planned procedure for handling specific issues such as behavioural problems, special needs and medicine which has been discussed and agreed with guardians.
- Adequate ratio of team to children (see table in section 5g).
- Team members and children must have separate single sex sleeping areas. Team members can go into these areas to resolve issues but this should be minimised during 'sleeping times'.

F. Trips and off sight activities

Requirements:

- Overseer who is competent for the size of the event and clarity on who that is.
- Risk assessment (checked by overseer).
- Event plan (checked by overseer).
- Appropriate consent forms and a planned procedure for handling specific issues such as behavioural problems, special needs and medicine which has been discussed and agreed with guardians.
- Adequate ratio of team to children (see table in section 5g).

G. Cars and travel

Requirements:

- Discussion on a case by case basis.
- Risk assessment (checked by overseer).
- Event plan (checked by overseer).
- A consent form with consent for travel.
- Adequate ratio of team to children (see table in section 5g).

Anyone wishing to give a lift to a child must:

- Be legally entitled to drive the vehicle - take photocopies of their license and insurance documents.
- Check the vehicle is roadworthy - check seatbelts, tax, and that the vehicle has recently been serviced if travelling long distances
- Check your insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for driving - some insurers class driving as a volunteer as 'business use'.
- Be aware of this related legal stuff:
    - ◊ Everyone must wear a seatbelt (driver's responsibility to check).
    - ◊ No driving and using phones (even hands free devices).
    - ◊ No drink-driving/driving under the influence of drugs, or smoking whilst driving.
    - ◊ Take account of any medical condition we need to know about which may affect ability to drive.
    - ◊ A helpful rule is don't drive for more than 2 hours without taking a break.
    - ◊ Make sure heavy loads are secured.
    - ◊ Stick to the highway code (e.g. speed limits).
    - ◊ Make sure drivers know what to do in the event of an accident.

H. Summary of ratios and oversight

The table you've all been waiting for...!

Event/group	**Ratio adult:children**
Creche, Sunday morning	1:3 with a minimum of 2 adults
Kids Church, Sunday morning	1:8 with a minimum of 2 adults
Youth, Sunday morning	1:8 with a minimum of 2 adults
Youth group	1:8 with a minimum of 2 adults
Offsite activities	1:8 with a minimum of 2 adults
Overnight stays	1:8 with a minimum of 3 adults
Coach	1:8 with a minimum of 2 adults
Car	1:8 with a minimum of 1 adults

6. Communication

A. Internet and social networking

Team members must not be friends with Vineyard Kids children on any social media platform (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc...) and should 'unfriend' any existing Vineyard Kids friends and not have online communication with children through chat rooms or instant messenger/ Whatsapp.

Team Leaders may communicate with children aged 16 and above for appropriate reasons, such as a 17 year old who is a member of a younger kids team, via email where the parent is copied in to all communication.

B. Phones

All communication by phone or text must be with parents/carers and not children.

Appendix A

Part 1. Disclosure information

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm. This maltreatment may occur in a family or in an institutional or community setting. It is often inflicted by people known to them but on occasion also by a stranger. Both adults and children can be abusers.

Physical abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately young person induces illness in a young person (Factitious Disorder).

Sexual abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessary involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. This may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is perpetrated by adult men and women, as well as other children and young people.

Emotional abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may be difficult to detect. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of abuse or neglect, although it also may occur alone.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. Bullying, including cyber bullying, and causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger is also included.

Neglect

This constitutes the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the individual's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide protection from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Part 2. The role of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer in relation to disclosure or suspicion of abuse

1. Will collect and clarify the specific details of the allegation or suspicion.
2. Will also keep a clear record of what has taken place, what advice has been given/action taken and may ask for consultation with external agencies (thirtyone:eight).
3. Will respect your confidence and that of the child concerned. In some circumstances, however, due to the nature of concerns raised the matter may need to be taken further.
4. Will undertake their role in consultation with the Vineyard Kids Coordinator.
5. Will ensure that the referrer receives appropriate feedback.
6. May report your concerns directly on behalf of the church or may ask you to report your concerns, with their help, to the children's services.
7. Will ensure that the support arrangements are in place for you.

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