

Centre Point Church - Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Context

Centre Point Church (SC037055) comprises two congregations located in Bathgate and in Edinburgh. As a Christian organisation and to uphold its reputation, Centre Point Church (the Church) complies with all relevant legislation with regards Child Protection.

To ensure a safe and secure environment for children, the below seeks to articulate minimum standards in which organised children's activities are conducted. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect children from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour whilst also protecting Workers from false accusations.

2. Protecting Vulnerable Groups

Prior to Workers commencing participation in children's activities, it is a requirement that they have first been assessed by the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG). This is a legal requirement.

In both congregations, a Responsible Person is appointed for overseeing PVG procedures - forms and guidance should be sought from them in the first instance. These are:

- Nathan Lewis – Edinburgh
- Jean Jackson – Bathgate

Workers can only commence responsibilities in children's activities after:

- The PVG scheme have confirmed the due diligence process has been completed and they have been approved.
- They have signed the acceptance declaration at the foot of this policy
- They have been known to the Church for at least 6 months
- They have agreed in writing to the Church's statement of faith.

Young people below the age of 18 are permitted to support children's activities but are not classed as Workers for the purposes of this policy and are not included in calculation of ratios.

3. Operating Principles

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

3.1 Ratios

Adult to child ratios should be considered when leading an activity. With pre-school children, the adult to child ratio should be no less than 1 adult to 5 children. No minimum ratios are prescribed for older children. It is best practice to ensure two adults are with children at all times.

3.2 Toileting

For pre-school children, it is good practice to take multiple children to the toilet at once (where possible) and for 1 Worker to go with them to supervise. Unless the child requires help, there should be no need to enter a cubicle with a child and at no time should a cubicle be locked. In relation to nappy changing, it is good practice to agree with parents in advance whether the nappy should be changed or the parent alerted.

For school aged children, there is no similar requirement.

3.3 Register

All children of pre-school age must be signed in and out when parents/guardians/carers take children to organised children's activity. Records will be maintained for an appropriate period and will only be used in the case of an allegation being made.

All children of school age will be recorded by means of register maintained by Workers.

3.4 Physical Contact

Physical contact should be minimised to protect Workers from allegations of inappropriate conduct.

3.5 Discipline

It is recognised that there are different styles of disciplining children. The Church does not permit physical discipline in any guise (e.g. smacking, hitting or pushing). Instead, the following process flow should take place when matters of discipline arise:

1. Give child a verbal warning
2. Request the child to take time out (e.g. on chair away from the group)
3. Take the child back to their parent/guardian/carer
4. At an appropriate time, discuss the events that led to this with the child's parent/guardian/carer.

3.6 Couples

Couples or close family members should not be scheduled to serve together unless part of a larger group.

3.7 Allergies/Dietary Requirements

Consideration to allergies and dietary requirements should be given prior to commencing relevant activities. Information should be obtained from parents in advance.

4. Reporting Process

An incident record book is maintained in each congregation and there is a requirement to record the following events:

- Matters of discipline (discipline – stages 3 & 4 above)
- Record of accidents

Where allegations are brought against a Worker, these should immediately be reported to the Responsible Person.

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Person to initiate an investigation of any allegations. These will be investigated by a committee consisting of the congregational pastor, a congregation-based trustee, and the responsible person.

Similarly, if a child discloses or shows signs of abuse, neglect or similar, the Responsible Person should be notified for appropriate next step actions to be taken.

5. Removal of Workers

Where a Worker is identified as breaching the requirements of this policy, the matter will be investigated and consideration given to removing them from service. Where an allegation is made against a Worker, that Worker will be suspended from service immediately, and a decision made on future participation once the matter has been fully investigated. Removal of Workers is entirely at the discretion of the church leadership.

Glossary

Child	Any person aged 0-16
Responsible Person	The individual with responsibility for child protection coordination and reporting. Maintains incident book and policy declarations.
Worker	Fully PVG'd volunteers working in children's ministries

Acceptance Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the requirements of this policy, and will at all times seek to comply with the articulated requirements.

Name.....

Date.....