



Grace Sunday School Code of Practice

This is supplementary to our safeguarding policy. Any safeguarding concerns should be reported directly to either Fiona Shaw or Jenny Simmonds and a written record recorded on the attached form (Appendix 3). Please follow the guidance in the main safeguarding policy which is displayed on noticeboards at Landmark House.

Safeguarding children as they arrive and depart Transition of children from parents/guardians to volunteers at Grace Community Church Safeguarding Policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the children's ministry volunteers. This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a formal system of hand-over between parents/guardians and the volunteers. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by volunteers.

Specific guidelines for different services:

- a) **Sunday School** Children gather in the main church building with their parent/guardian at the beginning of the service. At the point indicated in the service the parents/guardian will take the children upstairs where their classes will take place. The parent/guardian will ensure their child is toileted/ nappy changed before leaving. Once the registered children are gathered, this marks the official start of the volunteers responsibilities. At the end of the service, when indicated by a member of the church fellowship, the parent/ guardian will collect their children promptly from Sunday school. This marks the official end to the volunteers responsibility for the child.
- b) **Breakfast Mornings:** For the duration of fellowship breakfasts children are in the care of their parents/guardians. The children may mingle freely with any adults in the building at the discretion of their parents/guardians.

Registering all children and volunteers present in each teaching group must be recorded each session. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come, the DSL can immediately find who was present on any given date.

A 'Child Allergies and Contact Form' must be filed in for each child in Sunday School, (including any visitors). These forms should be filled out by a parent/guardian at their first drop off or if their information needs updating and available in registration folders for the volunteers to consult. Volunteers should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group.

Two Volunteers rule: Two volunteers must be present in each room at all times. It is not necessary for the two volunteers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, children should not be left unattended in a room. At other times with some planning this scenario need not occur. In addition to always having two volunteers present, we endorse the OfSTED minimum requirement which are:

Age of children	Number of Adults	Number of Children
0-2 Years old	1	3
2-3 Years old	1	4
3-8 Years old	1	8
8+	1 +1	For the first 8 children For every further 12

Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested, but the individual group may have fewer adults.

If not enough volunteers turn up on the day, the volunteers must either:

- (i) Recruit another DBS-screened individual to help
- (ii) Meet in the same venue as other screened volunteer, in full view of those volunteers.

Discipline

All volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if the behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Volunteers should never spank or hit a child. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Volunteers should never shout at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

Appropriate contact and conversation

Volunteers need to be above reproach in all that they do and wisdom is often required to know what that looks like in different situations. Two good questions to ask in any situation are '*What is the worst that could happen?*' and '*What is the worst way this could be perceived?*' Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should feel free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued. Concerns about abuse should always be reported to the safeguarding team as listed below. Conversations should be appropriate for the age of the child.

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and young people as part of their coming to understand human relationships.

Volunteers should follow the following guidelines:

Can I have a child sit on my lap when we're all sitting on the floor?

Yes you may – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. For younger children this may be the best way of keeping them engaged. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

Can I play rough and tumble games with children?

Yes you may – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Remember that they are not as strong as you.

Can I hold hands with a child?

Yes you may if there is a clear reason to do so – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reasons could include walking a child to the bathroom, playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

Can I ever hug a child?

Yes you may if a child is clearly distressed – as long as you are in public and there is no likelihood it will make the child feel uncomfortable or be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate, like congratulating them. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's, and should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker. Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

Can I ever tickle a child?

It is difficult to see why a child would need to be tickled by a volunteer. It is best avoided when acting as a volunteer. This is not to say that a child should not be tickled, but there is a time and a place.

Can I ever physically restrain a child?

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

Toileting

If a nappy needs changing, the parent will be contacted to come and change it for the child.

If a pre-school child requires assistance in going to the toilet, it is best for assistance to be given by a volunteer. The volunteer should wait outside the half open door unless the child requires assistance. The cubical door must not be closed with the volunteer and child inside. The child and volunteer must wash their hands with soap before returning to the class group.

School-aged children should be able to take themselves to the toilet without assistance.

Risk Management / Illness / Accidents

Volunteers should consider the health and safety of all children and volunteers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups. If a child appears ill whilst in the church's care, volunteers will use their discretion to determine whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit is kept in both kitchens. All volunteers should be familiar with its location. Any incidents must be reported. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Volunteers will report all injuries, whether major or minor, in the incident book kept with the first aid kits, and to the child's parents.

Volunteers should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.

If a parent/guardian is needed to be contacted for any reason during the service, a message will be sent via mobile phone to either Fiona Shaw, Alice Laing or Lydia Presdee in the meeting for them to quietly get a message to the parent/guardian.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Name: Fiona Shaw Email:

safeguarding@throughgrace.org

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Jenny Simmonds

Email: safeguarding_deputy@throughgrace.org

Sign and date when read:

Review: April 2025

Appendix 3 RoC Form



Record of Concern

Child's Name:

Child's DOB if known:

Your account of the concern:
(what was said, observed, reported by whom)

Additional Information:
(context of concern/disclosure)

Your Response:
(What did you do/say following the concern)

Your Name:

Your Signature:

Date and Time of this Recording:

Action and response of Designated Safeguarding/ Deputy Lead: