

Policy: Behaviour guide for our Sunday Children's and Young People's Groups

To make Jesus known (encounter) and grow together in Him (transformation and love).

Purpose:

St Paul's are a people who, through encounter, transformation, and love, are growing in their life with God.

- *Encounter – with God the Father through His Son, the Word, by His Spirit.*
- *Transformation – through a loving, healing, and liberating relationship with God.*
- *Love – and care for one another, those around us and all God's creation.*

As a church we exist to make Jesus known (encounter) and to grow together in Him (transformation and love). We want every area and aspect of church life to align with this purpose. We provide Sunday children's group time because it provides an age-appropriate forum to make Jesus known and it helps us all to grow together in Him.

The aim of Sunday children's group time is to work in partnership with parents and carers, so that together we may help children and young people grow towards maturity in Christ, by proclaiming the good news of Jesus, in the context of wholehearted Christian community.

This document sets out agreed actions and guidance for our children/youth workers and volunteers, on how best to model and teach positive patterns of Christian behaviour to children and young people.

St. Paul's Kingston values **all** children and young people. We understand that children and young people usually behave with respect and good intentions; but may sometimes behave in ways that challenge the smooth running of their groups. We therefore aim, through a consistent and fair guide of behaviour management, to establish a caring, safe, and stimulating environment in which each child and young person may develop their own full understanding of what it means to know Jesus and grow in relationship with Him. We also recognise that in some circumstances, behaviour perceived as disruptive may be the child's attempt to communicate. Our intention is to have compassion for everyone present. Therefore, in every such situation, we are required to make a judgement about what behaviour can be safely tolerated, and what behaviour must be restricted or prevented for the safety for all concerned.

Each group within the broader Sunday children's groups will work out and publicise some simple 'group rules' for acceptable behaviour within their group, and how these group rules will be protected. This will be overseen by the pastor responsible for children's work to ensure continuity through all groups. Group leaders will also be trained and prepared ahead of such a session by the pastor responsible for children's work.

Celebrating and reinforcing positive behaviour

St Paul's Kingston believes good behaviour should be recognised and praised. Youth/ Children's workers and volunteers will:

- Recognise and highlight good behaviour and genuine achievement as it occurs, ensuring that children and young people are praised for behaving well as well as referring to the positive behaviour being praised to exemplify it.
- Explain, and importantly demonstrate, the positive behaviour we wish to see. We recognise that our behaviour will influence the behaviour of the child/young person.
- Let parents and carers know about their child's/young person's good behaviour.

Group rules for each group

Each group within the broader Sunday children's groups will have an age specific guide so children know and understand the behaviour that is expected during group time.

Children are more likely to follow what they know and what they have had a voice in creating and as such will be involved in creating the group rules for their group. Concepts will be stated positively, for example: "Treat others with kindness and respect" rather than "Don't interrupt when someone else is talking."

A poster will then be created with these group specific rules on it and those in the group will add their names to the poster. The poster will be displayed in the group rooms during sessions and can then be referred to during group times by leaders and helpers.

These are examples of what may be included:

- Treat others as you would like to be treated, with kindness and respect.
- Listen to others.
- Join in and take part in group activities.

Protecting the group rules for each group

Suitable actions may include:

- A positive reinforcement from the children's youth worker/volunteer about better choices following a negative incident or series of incidents.
- Let parents and carers know about a child's/young person's misbehaviour.
- Intervention conversation with group leader, parent or carer and child.
- Remove child/young person from the group session for a few minutes to calm down. Or remove the child/young person back to their parents/carers for the remainder of the session. (This action should only be used with prior agreement of parent/carer bearing in mind the possible impact of a separation action for some children and young people.)
- Reparation for deliberate damage to equipment or possessions.

- As part of our commitment to protecting everyone from harm, we will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour, for example:
 - bullying, swearing, fighting, racism, name calling, spitting, vandalism, stealing.

When challenging behaviour arises, leaders should debrief after the group session with children/youth worker, to learn from mistakes, make a record, decide what needs to be done and whether/how other leaders on the rota should be communicated with/ supported.

The PCC/church council and parents will be informed when a serious incident has occurred.

Records will be kept of all serious incidents relating to behaviour and/or accidents (using incident forms).

A copy of this policy will be given to parents/carers along with a consent form.

If challenging behaviour becomes part of a group's culture, leaders should meet with Children, Youth and Family Pastor/vicar/ relevant parents or carers to plan how to address it.

All leaders, helpers and volunteers working with children and young people should be trained and supported in implementing this policy.

At the start of each academic year this policy will be reviewed with leaders and helpers and any changes will be updated and implemented.

Expectations

Church and volunteers:

- Leaders and helpers for Sunday children's groups model good practices when we set a basic outline of how group time will be spent together. This helps to create structure for group time as well as set expectations for all those involved. An outline of group time structure will be provided for leaders and helpers by the children's worker. Training on this will be given during leader meetings held throughout the year.
- Prayer is essential. Leaders and helpers will meet with the wider Sunday service team to pray before the service begins. Each session will also have a focused time of prayer with and for the children during the group time.
- We encourage and welcome parents/carers to participate fully in the spiritual learning and growth of their children. At its best, Sunday service children's group is a place where lessons learned about Jesus at home are reinforced. A Sunday leader/helper/volunteer is not finally responsible for the child's spiritual development- but they can really help to support parents and be a catalyst for growth by reinforcing and exploring at church, lessons learned at home.

Parents/ carers:

- Encourage a positive attitude; high standards of engagement and behaviour both to church and to discipleship in Jesus, by taking an interest in the learning and activities of my child/young person.
- To the best of my ability, ensure my child knows what to expect from Sunday group time to take a full and positive part in all activities.
- Let the children's pastor know about any problems which may affect my child's learning or behaviour.
- Uphold the integrity of the church within the community by not misusing any church related/managed social media platforms by posting derogatory, inflammatory, or abusive content online.

Children/young people:

- Agree to behave by the agreed upon group rules.
- Join in and participate in activities during group time.
- Try to get on with others who are part of our church family showing respect and concern for other people and their belongings.