



Freedom Kids Team Handbook

September 2021

The purpose of this handbook is to give all members of the Freedom Kids Team the right information to help them lead our children in a confident and safe way.

Why we do what we do

We want the children to gain as least as much from being part of our church as the adults do. This means providing them with the opportunity to worship God, hear teaching about Him, talk with and listen to Him, and enjoy the friendship and support of the church family. We aim to do this in a way that suits their various ages and stages.

How Sundays work

The children join the adults for worship at the start of the morning service before going to the **meeting room with the kids' team**. From this time until the children are released to their parents/carers at the end of the adult service the children are the responsibility of the Freedom Kids team.

Team members use ChurchSuite to record which children will be present in their session. They then take the children to the appropriate room for their session, which will tend to include time to chat with each other, games, teaching and an opportunity for the children to respond to God.

The curriculum is designed by the Children and Families Leader and each session is planned by the session leader. This is supported by episodes of Freedom Kids TV which is available on the Freedom Church UK Youtube channel.

How we protect our children and our team

Our approach to Safeguarding is guided by two main principles:

1) We need to keep the children safe from harm:

Accidents

We need to keep an eye out for potential hazards and use our common sense. If a child is hurt during a session then this needs to be clearly explained to the child's carer and recorded on an Accident/Incident Form (these can be found in the general resources box or freedomchurch.uk/safeguarding).

If you think a child needs First Aid you need to:

- Speak to the designated first aider and summon **the child's carer**
- Call an ambulance if appropriate
- Record the incident and all action that was taken on an Accident/Incident form on the day that the incident happened and pass this on to your team leader or co-ordinator.

Fire

The fire alarm is raised when there is a continuous ringing without a pause. If the fire alarm goes off please do the following:

- Collect the register and check that you have all the children with you.

- Follow the correct procedures for the venue- ensure you are familiar with these before the session by reading the signs posted in the venue
- Do another head count to check that you have brought all of the children to safety.
- Sign them over to their parents/carers when they arrive.

Welfare concerns

If you suspect that a child is suffering harm or abuse (including neglect) you need to speak to Phil Carter (Designated Safeguarding Lead). If Phil is not contactable, please speak to Sim Dendy (Designated Safeguarding Officer). Please also maintain confidentiality; once you have passed your concerns on to Phil or Sim they will take whatever next steps may be necessary.

If a child makes a disclosure to you about abuse they have suffered please do the following:

- Listen carefully without interrupting to ask questions
- If you feel you need to ask questions keep them open, e.g. '**How did that make you feel?**' instead of, '**Did that make you feel sad?**'
- Reassure the child that you believe what they are telling you.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Share what you have been told swiftly and accurately by completing a Welfare Concern Form (these can be found in the Welcome/Check-In desk) and passing it to Phil or Sim, ideally within the same day. They will be happy to help you fill out the form if you would like them to.
- Please **don't** ever promise a child that you will keep a secret for them.

Any behaviour from a child that looks like it could be bullying needs to be reported directly to the Children and Families Leader.

2) We need to keep ourselves and our church safe from allegation:

This means keeping our interactions with the children public, appropriate and transparent. For this reason we follow these specific safeguarding policies:

- While we are serving during a Freedom Kids session we don't go anywhere on our own with a child who is not ours.
- Only team members with a DBS check may take children to the toilet.
- Toilet runs are done in groups, i.e. one adult with at least two children.
- We never leave children unattended except while they are in a toilet cubicle.
- If a child is injured or sick or needs to leave the session for any reason other than using the toilet we ask their parent/carer to come and attend to them.
- It is not appropriate to have private contact in the form of electronic communication with the children we serve without the permission and knowledge of parents/carers.

Who is responsible for what?

Freedom Kids are responsible for behaving reasonably for their age and stage by acting with kindness and respect for others. We encourage all Kids Team members to mention any issues to parents swiftly so that they can be 'nipped in the bud' and not become a problem.

Freedom Kids Team members are responsible for keeping the children safe while they are in sessions and doing what they can to help them have fun and grow in their faith. This includes preparing the room before the session, tidying away at the end of the session, and providing the specific teaching and games-related resources needed for the session. Please pass on receipts to Eve Ibbott if you buy any resources so that you can be reimbursed by the church. You are also responsible for arranging a swap with another team member if you cannot take your place on the rota any given week.

Thank you for reading this and for serving our rather fabulous children!