

## **CHILDREN'S POLICY – FUSION YOUTH 2013 UPDATED**

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**Every leader should endeavour to avoid the appearance of inappropriate behaviour. Think about what someone who is not familiar with you would think if they walked in on you. Protect your reputation by following the guidelines below. Remember, it is hard to build back once it is torn down by rumour or innuendo. As you protect yourself, you will automatically protect our kids, and the name of God's church.**

**We have the privilege of ministering to somebody's pride and joy. Protect them, protect yourself and God's work.**

**Child:** 17 years of age and under

1. Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you. Stick with a hand shake.
2. Do not engage in extended hugging or any tickling/or poking. A short side hug is acceptable.
3. Do not touch a child where a bathing suit covers. Do not touch in any way that could be potentially sensual or sexual. Males, refrain from touching girls wherever possible. If need be, a pat on the shoulder is appropriate.
4. Never be alone with a child. Always stay in sight of other leaders and people. Do not ever visit or counsel children alone (both on and out of church grounds). If you do meet up with more than one child, please keep your pastor informed. Do not ever drive a child on their own.
5. If it is necessary to speak to a child alone, it will be done in the sight of other people. If it is of a deeply personal nature, you must let your Pastor know.
6. Do not engage in too much private conversations on social media and over the phone with children. Your relationship with them must be public so that you are protected.
7. Do not touch a child when disciplining them. But maintaining direct contact is good.
8. Do not carry or sit a child on your lap.
9. You must not play roughly with or speak unkindly to a child.
10. Shower and toilet monitors must work in two's. Ensure you are never alone with a child in a bathroom.
11. Never be alone in the sleeping quarters with a child.
12. Children are not permitted to get into bed together.
13. Children and leaders must wear a dressing gown when outside – or wear appropriate pajamas.
14. Daytime and night time – no walking off alone with a child. The group must stay in contact with all leaders visible.
15. Camp tag must be worn to identify yourself as part of the team.
16. Protect younger children, who may possibly be abused by older children, by never allowing children to be alone and unsupervised. Whilst on camp, children are to have constant leadership protect, always to be achieved in two's.
17. Leaders are not to assist children in dressing.
18. Designate a confidential counsellor, someone who the children can go to with a complaint or concern.
19. Reasonable ratio in a group setting is 1 leader to 8 children.
20. Risk assessment will need to be completed.

## Disclosure of abuse

Abuse: is “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

- Consult with youth pastor/ senior pastor – then a decision on whether to report it must be made. Do not try and handle it yourself.
- “Promise not to tell” does not apply when a child’s safety is in jeopardy. As soon as you are aware of an instance of possible abuse, you must report it to your leader.
- According to the law, any person responsible for the welfare of children must notify any instance of suspected child abuse if they form a belief on *reasonable grounds*. We have duty of care (which is a moral responsibility to provide a safe and protective environment for children and a responsibility to ensure that suspected abuse is adequately investigated and that children are protected from ongoing abuse).
- Your actions reflect on the church and could potentially expose the church to risk.