

## **The St J's Group Safeguarding Job Descriptions**

### **Name of Role: Life Group Youth Worker**

**Where they meet:** Leader's home

**When they meet:** Evenings in the week

**Time they meet:** TBA

**Age range:** 11-18

**Person to whom responsible:** Life Group Pastors (tbc)

The primary purpose for a Life Group for young people is to provide a safe, warm and welcoming community where youth get a sense of belonging, are nurtured in their faith and encouraged to live a life of discipleship. As such the goal of this position is for leaders to be seen as role models in conduct, speech and attitudes, who are intentional about building relationships with youth and help facilitate various activities and opportunities that will guide youth in their faith formation.

The main role for the Life Group Youth Worker is to build loving and caring relationships with a group of teens and facilitate the effectiveness of group meetings. This includes the following:

- Lead a life youth group on a twice a month basis.
- Prepare for meetings that include some or all of the following: devotions, worship, interactive discussions on various topics, social and outreach activities.
- Cultivate a fun, safe and welcoming environment where youth can grow in relationship with others and with Jesus Christ.
- Create opportunities/activities that enrich discussions and prayer times.
- Look for ways to develop meaningful relationships with youth in your group, connecting with them in different settings ie: Sunday Church.
- Involve group members in decisions about meetings, discussion materials, fun activities etc.
- Liaise with wider leaders to identify opportunities for youth participation in the wider church.
- Pray for the youth in your church and especially for those who are struggling.
- Connect with parents
- Maintain accurate records of youth group members.
- Report concerns to the Safeguarding Officer (Rob Bubyer).

Candidates are required to undertake a DBS check.

As the life group will occur in the worker's home. A risk assessment will be needed; e.g. to identify which parts of the house the young people can go into and which toilets the young people can use.

Parents will need to complete a consent form for the young people to attend plus for any additional trips/major events.

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## **General Guidelines for Volunteers**

### **Best practices (Codes of Behaviour) – guidance for group leaders and helpers**

#### **Awareness**

- Be responsible for the group at all times and know what is happening during the session
- Consider safety at all times
- Be on the lookout for undesirable situations and try to avoid them before they start
- Give clear instructions
- Share any concerns with the group leader or the Children's Pastor

#### **Manner**

- Learn children's names and be pleased to see them, be friendly, but not over familiar
- Avoid embarrassing or belittling children
- Treat everyone with respect, be fair, but firm, and praise where appropriate
- Don't show favouritism - spend time with unpopular children
- Respect an individual's right to personal privacy
- Use simple language and your normal voice, be confident
- Don't use rude or offensive language, innuendos or inappropriate humour
- Don't jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Don't exaggerate or trivialise child-abuse issues (see section Safeguarding Policy on 'Abuse')

#### **Listening**

- Listen to the children and be aware of their interests, never avoid questions as everything they say is important to them
- Don't 'tower' over children – listen at their level
- Beware of misinterpreting their behaviour or what they are saying
- Provide opportunities for children to talk about concerns they may have

#### **Leading by example**

- Be a good role model by providing an example you wish others to follow
- Tell the children about yourself - have confidence to talk about God and being a Christian
- Pray for the children and have others praying for you too
- Be scrupulously honest and act professionally

#### **Relationships**

- Get to know each child individually
- Try to build a relationship with their family and involve them if there is a problem
- Don't be critical of the child or the parents
- Encourage friendships between the children and help them to consider each other, e.g. ask more confident children to help new or less confident children

#### **Discipline**

- The team should be in agreement as to the standard of behaviour allowed in the group
- Lay down the ground rules from the start and apply them fairly and consistently
- It can be helpful to involve the children in the process of setting the rules
- Be calm, firm, matter of fact and prayerful. Mean what you say and be consistent
- Think of ways to handle specific situations, in advance, and decide sanctions should they be necessary. Possible sanctions are:
  - Give quiet reminder
  - Stand beside child
  - Put a quick hand on the shoulder
  - Ask child to move within the group
  - Ask child to move to the side of the room
  - Report to team leader
- If a child's behaviour is deemed damaging or unhelpful it may be necessary to involve the parents
- Let the child know that although their action is being punished, they are still valued and respected
- Always let them know why they are being punished
- A log should be kept of consistently negative behaviour to ensure appropriate action is taken
- Good behaviour should be rewarded
- Always remain calm and in control and avoid shouting. Never use physical force or hit a child

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- Do not permit abusive peer activities (ridiculing or bullying)
- Do not allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums or crushes
- Distinguish between children who are distracting (which is accidental) and children who are disrupting (which is deliberate). Your response needs to be different
- If a team leader finds the behaviour of a team member to be consistently destructive or unhelpful or challenging the vision and values of the St J's Group of churches, they should discuss their concerns with the Children's Pastor/Vicar.

## **Toileting**

- Where possible avoid the situation where one adult takes a single child to the toilet, away from the rest of the group. If this is unavoidable, the adult should inform another adult of where they will be and for what purpose. Staff and volunteers will not change nappies. When this is necessary the parent will be contacted. It is important that leaders/helpers are not put in a position which could be wrongly construed or that could make it easy for a child to make wrongful allegations. If attending to a child's need (such as first aid, drinks, safety) do so in the presence of others.
- Older Children must request permission from their leader to go to the toilet. They are encouraged to go in twos where possible. Leaders and helpers should only go to the toilet to call children out if they are mis-behaving: in this instance, they should stand outside the door.

## **Contact with children**

- It is important that leaders/helpers are not put in a position which could be wrongly construed or that could make it easy for a child to make wrongful allegations. If attending to a child's need (such as first aid, drinks, safety) do so in the presence of others. The following should be kept in mind:
  - Touch should be related to the need of the child and not that of the team member and should be age appropriate
  - The child, rather than the team member, should generally initiate touch
  - Touch should not be prolonged
  - Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact and should express any concerns to Children's Pastor (Further guidance can be found in the full safeguarding policy.)

## **Prayer ministry with children**

- Be personally prepared and pay particular attention to dress, personal hygiene, and spiritual health.
- Be prayed for yourself, before and after.
- If at all possible, pray for children of the same sex as yourself and keep your eyes open.
- Use words carefully. Don't tell anyone they have an evil spirit. Pray positively, encouragingly and biblically.

## **Special Needs**

- It is our aim to provide activities and support appropriate for all needs. Individual needs will be taken into account and appropriate support and resources will be sought by the Children's Pastor, in consultation with parents.

## **Dress Sense**

- Leaders and helpers should not wear clothes that are likely to cause offence, draw any unhealthy attention or cause distraction.

## **Guide to handling pastoral situations:**

### **Confidentiality**

- If a child shares information that gives rise to concern, the Children's Pastor should be informed immediately. Information about a child should only be shared with the Children's Pastor. Leaders and helpers should not promise to keep secrets.

### **Supervision of children in groups:**

#### **Attendance**

- Children will be brought to and collected from their groups by their parents
- Children must be registered at all children's activities
- At no time must a child be handed to a person not authorised to collect that child, including older siblings. If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of the person collecting the child, the Children's Pastor should be advised

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## **Groups**

We aim to ensure the following child to adult ratios:

- Age 0-2: 1 adult to every 3 children
- Age 2-3: 1 adult to every 4 children
- Age 4-8: 1 adult to every 6 children
- Age 9-12: 1 adult to every 12 children then 1 more for every extra 12 children
- Age 13-18 : 1 adult to every 12 children then 1 more for every extra 12 children

## **Health and Safety**

- Group leaders should always know how many children they are responsible for and where they are, at all times
- The children should know who the group leader is
- Common sense should be used when setting up rooms and resources. (Fire exits must be unlocked, exit routes must be clear, equipment must be in safe working order etc)
- Windows should be opened and closed by leaders, from the top down to avoid the risk of children falling/climbing out
- Children should not be permitted to climb on equipment or hide from sight. Particular attention should be paid to potential hazards such as stairwells, cupboards and equipment
- Children must not touch electrical equipment (sound systems, Projector, etc) without supervision
- Leaders should be familiar with health and safety procedures.
- Leaders should be alert to any unauthorised people in a meeting or at an event, and ask them to leave
- Children should be supervised at all times on the site.
- Special attention should be paid to safety in the car park at the beginning and end of activities/day.