

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF LITTLE HEATH  
Registered Charity No. 1133045)**

**BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY November 2022**

**POLICY**

*"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." (Mark 9:37)*

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

At Christ Church we have different children's groups and events ranging from Sunday School to outreach work such as Little Feet Toddler Group, so it is important that they enjoy their time in the session, hear the Good News and take part in their group with a consistent well-managed behaviour strategy. Parents and carers want to feel confident that their children are being kept safe, being taught well and having fun, so it's our responsibility to manage behaviour well. Our aim is for children to become self-disciplined, but they may need guidance and support to do this.

In line with our Safeguarding Policy we should treat children with respect and fairness, without showing inconsistency or favouritism. However, within this we should also be aware of children with additional needs and the need for inclusion and differentiation in both teaching, activities and suitable behaviour strategies.

**Three Rules will cover many issues: -**

**Respect God** – listening to and allowing others to listen to God's Word and to respect the teaching in the Bible as we want to love God and grow in our faith.

**Respect Others** – treat others with kindness and consideration and listen to the adults. Make sure that they put other people's needs first.

**Respect the Building** – taking care and not deliberately damaging property or equipment.

**ARRANGEMENTS**

Avoid long unplanned gaps and don't plan too much time where children have to sit and listen. The general guideline is that children can listen and concentrate for as long as their age. E.g. a six-year-old can listen for 6 minutes. Vary the activities so that children burn off energy and re-focus.

Know your material so you engage with your children. Use prompt cards or bullet lists as a reminder, but so that they do not take your attention away from the children for too long.

**Set up your area** – be organised by setting up before your session starts. Cover things over, break up the room, put things away as you go to prevent fidgeting.

**Get to know your group** – find out what their interests are and remember this will change. This is particularly important for children with additional needs so that you can have a box of items ready if they are struggling.

Don't ask a child who struggles to read a large section of text. They will get more and more self-conscious as the other children start to fidget or look bored.

**Engagement** – fast-paced, lots of energy and engaging activities makes a HUGE difference. Ask specific questions to specific children (use their names) to draw out quieter ones and control the more confident children. Build in breaks/change of activity. Use hand signals, musical instruments, clapping or actions to get their attention.

**Distraction** – avoid getting side-tracked by secondary issues; deal with them at the end. Praise the positive behaviour (sitting nicely, colouring carefully) and ignore the negative behaviour (pen clicking, hiding under tables). Remember some children fidget but are still listening.

### **Praise the Good**

Be clear and point out which children are doing things well.

E.g.

*I can see ..... is sitting up straight and ready to start.*

*Fantastic listening. Well done.*

*Thank you for waiting so patiently/letting ..... use that felt tip first.*

Use healthy competition to get things done.

E.G. *Who is going to be the first person to pick five bits up off the floor and put them in the bin?*

*Can we all sit in a circle before I get to zero? 10, 9, 8.....*

### **Preventing Negative Behaviour**

#### **Ignore the Bad (to a point)**

Low level disruption can divert your attention and the children's particularly if you give it fuel. Don't stop what you're doing and focus on that child. Try using silent gestures as you talk first.

Facial expressions (furrowed brow), shake of head, finger to lips (Sssh gesture).

Sometimes just moving round and standing behind or to the side of that child can be enough.

If a child shouts out a lot, give them a job such as listening to others and then feeding back to the group what each person said. Drawing what they are listening to or writing in speech bubbles what each child says. A white board can also be a good prop to use for this.

Keep the tone of your voice level and calm and your body language open and relaxed: 60% of all communication is non-verbal.

Remember it's the behaviour not the child, so demonstrate humility and grace as well as being consistent and fair.

### **Low-Level Disruption**

Use body language or physical signs to prevent further interruptions of the Bible teaching.

- Praise, good listening, sitting, helping etc.
- Make sure the leaders are spaced out around the room and positioned next to more disruptive children
- Body Language (silent instructions).
- Eye contact, raising or eyebrows, shake head, give a 'stare'. Point to person teaching, finger to lips.
- Sit between children who talk or hover behind them so that they can 'feel' your presence
- Whisper a short statement with two options of your choosing:  
'Put the toy away now or I will have to hold it for you.'  
'Stop talking to your friend or I will have to move you.'  
'Sit still or you will have to sit next to me.'

With all these strategies please be aware that children with additional needs may not be able to sit quietly or will fidget. So, know your children and their interests. It is appropriate to use sensory toys for these children. Above all, don't spend too long sitting on the carpet and talking to the children.

If you do need to move children, do it with minimum disruption and no physical contact. If they refuse to listen or move you need to state that this will have consequences and you will need to speak to them at the end of the session. Remember to follow up and talk to them / refer to Cath but do not do this out of sight or ear shot of other adults.

When a child demonstrates unacceptable behaviour, it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child. Therefore, give the child the opportunity to correct/redeem their inappropriate action and discuss with them the positive choices that could have been made.

### **De-escalation**

If you have used lots of strategies and children are still not behaving, then you need to ask yourself why. Are they bored? Unable to engage in the activity? Is it too hard for them? Do they have a low attention threshold? Is there a reason that you are not aware of? Are they having a difficult time at home/school/church etc. or is this deliberate rebellion?

Each reason has its own unique solution, so be sensitive and aware.

God changes our hearts, so we want to live for him and obey him. It can be constructive to overtly talk about behaviour expectations in the group and discuss times when the ground rules are not kept. It is important to be calm and the leader but to encourage children to contribute to keeping our ground rules.

### **Remember:**

Reflect the gospel – show grace and remind them we all struggle but it doesn't make their behaviour acceptable.

Be encouraging, loving and build up relationships.

Keep to your word, don't change the goal posts.

Forget about past mistakes and move on as soon as they are resolved.

Be consistent as a Team and help others, especially if you see other Leaders having difficulties.

### **What happens if de-escalation and other strategies are not working?**

#### **1 Deferred consequence**

As a first step you should have a quiet word with them (if the rest of the group go into Church). If you have to do this, make sure other leaders are aware of this and they are able to be seen and heard by others. It may be that you use the foyer area whilst the service is going on but never be alone with a child.

Use this as an opportunity to speak to them about their behaviour and see if there is anything else going on in their lives that may be affecting them. Talk calmly and focus on behaviour and be positive about them as a person.

#### **2 Escalate**

Behaviour should be managed in the group with moving them next to a leader or away from certain friends – even having rug or carpet places can help. If behaviour is a big concern, a parent could be sent for and decisions made together. After the session a calm discussion with parents and preferably the child could set a positive plan up for the next session. The emphasis should be on how we ALL can learn to make the next session more positive for everyone. If possible Children's Worker/clergy should be involved in discussion with the parents if not they should be informed.

#### **3 Report**

After any incident it is good to record any "ABC"

**A**ntecedent- what triggered the behaviour

**B**ehaviour- what behaviour there was and what adults did (eg sitting them next to them/ telling them they cannot be chosen first every time etc)

Consequence- discussions after the event with child and others if necessary and plans for the next session (eg: child knowing the adult is looking forward to seeing them and the adult won't ask them to read something out as it embarrasses them )

### **Dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

Whenever possible leaders will use this de-escalation script when dealing with anti-social/unacceptable behaviour:

*Child's name*

*I can see that something has happened*

*I am here to help*

*Talk and I will listen*

*Come with me and...*

This de-escalation script aims to remove judgment, blame and disempower negative behaviour. It allows children to feel that have a voice and know their side of the story is considered, making them more open to conversation and consequences.

Remember we would only intervene and handle a child if they were in immediate risk or danger. E.g. running across road in front of a car.

This Behaviour Management Policy was adopted as a whole by the PCC in November 2022

Incumbent Mark Maloney

Church Wardens Louis Spring, Sheila Blake

Date 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## APPENDIX 1

### Behaviour Management – Quick Reference Help Sheet

#### 1 Evaluate

Have I done everything I can to positively engage them?  
Why are they behaving in this way? Do they have additional needs?  
Remind them why we are there and the importance of listening to and learning from God's Word as well as loving others.  
Try actions in the behaviour policy such as praising good behaviour or moving a child

#### 2 Warning

In a calm manner, be clear – what exactly you want them to stop doing and what your next step will be if they continue.  
YOU MUST FOLLOW THROUGH

#### 3 Consequence

If you need to have a quiet word with the child follow safeguarding procedures and make it as positive as possible – it is always the behaviour not the child you are unhappy with. Remember the De-escalation script using some or all of the following  
*Child's name* I can see that something has happened  
I am here to help  
Talk and I will listen  
Come with me and...

#### 4 Escalated consequence

If internal strategies parents can be sent for and decisions made together. If this happens a calm meeting after the session with parents, usually child, and if possible Children's Worker or Clergy invited. The AIM is always to learn from the incident and to set up strategies so things will work better next time

#### 6 Follow up

Complete an ABC chart to learn how to avoid the same situation in the future. Share this with Children's Worker or the Clergy.  
Who do I need to speak to?.. Children's Worker or clergy? /parent? / Team Debrief?

Speak to child at start of next session and focus on the positive behaviour or what you agreed after the last session