



1.3D GUIDANCE ON WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Children who are involved in church activities may have a range of additional or specific needs and may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety. In line with a child-centred approach, it is important that all children have opportunities to participate in the life of the church. If a child has specific needs, it is important to engage with them and their parents/carers sensitively to explore ways in which they can participate in the church's activity. To do this well, consideration should be given to the following:

- Consultation with the child and their parents/carers in order to identify what the child's needs are and consider how your group can meet the child's needs by ensuring adequate supervision, ensuring church personnel have the appropriate skills to deal with the child's needs and ensuring appropriate parental consent is in place.
- Some children with additional needs may require one-to-one help in church or a children's group; therefore, ensure that your group has an adequate number of appropriately trained leaders to provide this support.
- Local Safeguarding Risk Assessments may be necessary to ensure everyone can participate safely. Additionally, a care plan may be required to support the participation of the child in the group. Depending on the needs of the child this may involve consideration of:
 - Administration of medicines. It is important that church personnel are adequately trained to administer medicines, are willing to do so, and have obtained parental consent. Additionally, any administration of medicines should be recorded in keeping with data protection. You should also check with your insurers in this regard.
 - Showering and intimate care.
 - Access to bathrooms.
 - Suitability of accommodation.
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child/young person with additional needs, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of the child and their parents or carers. In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the child and tasks undertaken with discretion.
- The views of the child/young person should be actively sought, wherever possible, when drawing up arrangements.
- Children/young people who require additional assistance with personal care tasks may prefer to be accompanied by someone of the same gender. Parental preference and permission should be followed in this regard.
- Any care task of a personal nature which a child or young person can do for themselves should not be undertaken by a leader.
- In a situation where any variation from agreed procedure is necessary, the child, the leader in charge and parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible and it should be recorded appropriately.



- Children with additional needs may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and they may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries. It is important that consideration is given to how to appropriately train and support children in recognition of these needs to ensure they understand who to go to for advice and support.
- It is particularly important that children with additional needs are carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty verbalising their concerns, and so that the importance of what they communicate is not underestimated.
- Be sensitive to the fact that not every disability is visible.

Please note: Church personnel who encounter children or young people presenting with mental health issues/needs should inform their parents/carers and signpost them to the G.P. in the first instance.

