



Safeguarding: Organising Church Activities

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Introduction

This booklet provides useful additional information for those who organise and run activities involving children, young people, or vulnerable adults. It should be read in conjunction with the introductory leaflet '**Safeguarding: What you need to know**'. Trinity organises and runs a large number of events and activities throughout the year. These might be for the wider Trinity family, specifically for children and / or young people, or for adults, some of whom may not worship at Trinity. Whatever the nature of the activity, it is important that all safeguarding concerns are identified and addressed. This includes ensuring that organisers and helpers are safely recruited and have undergone appropriate training.

DBS checks

Safeguarding legislation enables organisations to carry out background checks (through the national Disclosure and Barring Service - DBS) on potential employees and volunteers who will work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults. The DBS check determines whether a person may pose a risk of harm to individuals in these vulnerable groups. Where this is not the case, the potential employee / volunteer is provided with a DBS certificate. DBS checks currently must be repeated every five years. All those involved in running activities with children, young people, or vulnerable adults must hold a current DBS certificate. New helpers should contact the Safeguarding Deputy (Safeguarding@trinityearly.org.uk) to arrange a DBS check.

Safeguarding training

All staff and volunteers working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults are required to undertake safeguarding training, as are senior leaders of the Church. Training for those at Trinity is currently run through the Methodist Church. It is organised at two levels: Foundation and Advanced. This can be taken online, in person, or a combination of both. Most staff and volunteers working with vulnerable groups are only required to take the Foundation course, whereas senior leaders are also required to undertake Advanced level training. Training has to be renewed every four years. Trinity's Safeguarding Deputy will advise on specific training requirements and provision.

Risk assessments

Virtually all activities involving children, young people, or vulnerable adults require a risk assessment to be carried out in order to minimise the risk of harm to those taking part. Such assessments involve identifying the potential risks or hazards (either in the environment or specific to the activity) to the participants. For example, risks might include tripping over items left on the floor, or stacked chairs toppling over. Risks can vary in their severity and in their likelihood of occurrence, so it is important that risks are categorised on these dimensions. Once potential risks have been identified, the person carrying out the assessment needs to determine what can be done to reduce the risk of harm (e.g. large screens placed in front of any stacked chairs).

Trinity has developed a number of templates that can be used / adapted for completing risk assessments (*Contact: Safeguarding Deputy*). Once the template has been completed, it needs to be checked by the Safeguarding Lead to confirm whether the activity is sufficiently safe to take place. This needs to be done at least two weeks prior to the planned event. When planning new activities, it is advisable to consult the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy well in advance of the activity taking place.

Where activities are repeated frequently (e.g. **Junior Church / Sunday School**), the original risk assessment template should be reviewed following any significant changes to the activity (and at least annually) and adapted if necessary. Where activities are held infrequently (e.g. **youth camp**), the original template should be reviewed each time the activity takes place and adapted where necessary.

All completed risk assessments should be kept on file by the author and by the Safeguarding Lead / Deputy.

Safer working practices when organising and running activities for children and young people

Many of Trinity's activities are aimed at children and / or youths. They can take a variety of forms. For example, they may take place within the Church building or off the premises. Similarly, parents / carers may remain present for the event, or leave the children / young people in the care of the person/s leading the activity. Whatever the nature of the activity, they should be organised and run in such a way as to avoid the risk of harm to those participating. Organisers and helpers should be mindful of the following:

- Activities should always be held in a venue that is warm, well ventilated and where there is sufficient space for the number of people attending.
- Activities should only take place at external venues that have regular health and safety checks, and risk assessments carried out (e.g. other churches, schools, leisure centres).
- If anyone taking part in the activity has ‘special needs’, organisers need to consider whether these can be met, or whether additional support is needed.
- Fire exits should be clearly signposted and never blocked. Organisers and helpers should be aware of fire evacuation procedures.
- A register should be kept of those taking part, as well as an accident book to record any incidents.
- A first aid kit should be readily available.
- If food is provided, this should be in line with Food Hygiene Requirements.
- Hot drinks should only be served and drunk in the Hall, preferably using cups with lids, when very young children are present (**e.g. Trinity Toddlers Group**).
- Organisers / helpers should establish clear rules and expectations for children’s behaviour during the activity.
- Good behaviour should be encouraged and disruptions handled calmly.
- Organisers / helpers should actively monitor interactions to prevent bullying or exclusion, and intervene immediately if issues arise.
- Young children should be accompanied to the toilet by a helper where parents are not present.
- If photographs / videos are taken by the organisers, parental consent is needed. For young people aged 12-17 years, consent is also needed from the young person.
- Where events are attended by parents or other visitors, they should be reminded that they should not post any images on social media that include children / youths other than their own.

Activities where parents / carers remain present

For some activities, particularly those involving the youngest children, parents or carers remain present throughout the event. Where this is the case, the parents / carers remain responsible for their children’s safety. It is important, however, that they are informed of this, preferably in writing, prior to the event taking place. They should also be made aware of Trinity’s Safeguarding Policy. Where events take place regularly, such as **Trinity’s Toddlers Group**, this is best done through a Parent Agreement letter, which provides the necessary information, and is signed by the parent / carer.

Where parents / carers are present and responsible for their children, there are no regulations requiring a minimum number of adult helpers per number of children. However, the organisers should set a maximum number of attendees that they feel is appropriate for the space and number of helpers available. For example, for **Trinity's Toddlers Group** this is currently 50 children.

Activities where organisers are responsible for the safety and welfare of those taking part.

Such activities include those where parents are elsewhere in the Church building or in a nearby building (**e.g. Junior Church / Sunday School**) and those where parents / carers go elsewhere while the event takes place (**e.g. Youth Fellowship**).

Consent forms should be completed by parents / carers before their children can engage in activities where they will not be present. Consent is also needed before young people can engage in any Church organised **virtual activities**.

Where organisers are responsible for the safety and welfare of participants, it is important that there are sufficient adult helpers for the number (and age) of children / youths taking part. The table below shows the required numbers.

Age	No. of Adults	No. of children / youths
0 – 2 years	1	3
2 – 3 years	1	4
4 – 8 years	1	6
9 – 12 years	1	8
13 – 18 years	1	10
<p>Note: it is strongly recommended that there should be a minimum of 2 adult helpers. Also, you may need additional adults when activities take place outdoors.</p>		

Where the activity involves both male and female participants, it is good practice to have both male and female adult helpers. However, it is recognised that this is often not possible for the younger age groups. Having both male and female adult helpers is increasingly important for children over the age of 11.

Youths under the age of 18 who want to develop their leadership skills through helping to run activities should not be included when calculating the number of helpers

needed. They should always be overseen by an appointed worker who is responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Dropping off and collecting children / young people from activities

It is advisable that children 11 years or younger should be taken to, or collected from, Church activities by an adult. Where 12 -17-year-olds make their own way to an activity, it is still the responsibility of the parent to ensure their safety. Where children / young people need to be transported to an activity venue, such as a leisure centre or park, it is again the responsibility of the parent / carer to arrange any lift shares etc. If the activity location is some distance away and the organiser/s arrange transport, it is important that they use licensed and insured vehicles with appropriate seat belts etc.

Where parents are not present whilst an activity is taking place, it is important that organisers have their up-to-date contact details.

Children / young people should not be left at an activity venue before the agreed time (e.g. 2pm for **HK Sunday School at the Salvation Army**). An adult helper, who is formally responsible for the children's safety should be in attendance before children under the age of 18 can be dropped off.

Children / young people must be collected on time at the end of the activity. Parents / carers should be contacted by phone if they do not turn up at the requested time. Helpers should not leave the building until all children / young people have been collected.

Organising and running activities where vulnerable adults might be present

Trinity currently has no activities aimed specifically at vulnerable adults. However, one or more vulnerable adults may be present during regular events, such as Church services, Refresh Café, Community Lunch. Organisers should be sensitive to this when arranging such events and consider whether additional support might be needed. It is important to remember that vulnerability can take different forms. It may not be visible and can be permanent (e.g. a physical impairment), or temporary (e.g. as a result of bereavement).

Home visits

- When visiting someone, on behalf of the Church, who might be considered to be vulnerable, it is important that the visitor holds a current DBS certificate.
- Visitors should not call unannounced. Visits should be arranged in advance.
- Where possible, visitors should inform the vicar, or an appropriate pastor, in advance of the visit taking place (particularly when visiting someone for the first time).
- Visitors should be clear about what support they can offer (e.g. fellowship, prayer) and never offer support that should be provided by a relevant professional.
- Visitors should never offer 'over the counter' remedies or administer prescribed medications, even if asked to do so.

Further information on organising Church activities, including residential events, is available at [Methodist.org.uk/OrganisingEvents](https://www.methodist.org.uk/OrganisingEvents)