

SWYM SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

Post holder responsible for Policy:	Office Manager
Contact details:	01395 487071
Date written:	13 November 2015
Date revised:	May 2026
Approval route (names of committees):	Board of Trustees
Date of final approval:	May 2026
Date due for revision:	December 2029
Date policy becomes live:	May 2026
This document replaces:	N/A

It should be read in conjunction with:

SWYM Safeguarding Policy			
SWYM Residentials and Events Guidance and Procedures			
<p>Controlled document</p> <p>This document is a SWYM policy document. It should not be altered in any way without the express permission of the author or their representative.</p>			

Contents

Code of Conduct	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose of Guidance.....	3
3. Guidance for Safe Working Practice	4
Context.....	4
‘Unsuitability’	4
Duty of Care	4
Confidentiality.....	5
Power and Positions of Trust	6
Behaviour.....	6
Personal Living Space.....	7
Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism	7
Infatuations.....	7
Digital Safeguarding Expectations	8
Communication with Children and Vulnerable Adults (<i>including the Use of Technology</i>)	8
Social Contact	9
Sexual Contact	9
Physical Contact.....	10
Intimate Care	11
Personal Care	11
First Aid and Administration of Medication	12
‘One-to-One’ Situations.....	12
Home Visits	13
Transporting Children	13
Trips, Outings and Overnight Activities	14
Photography and Videos.....	15
Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage	15

Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Our Commitment

Safeguarding is an organisational priority for SWYM and a key part of our mission: we are dedicated to protecting the physical, emotional, spiritual, and digital well-being of everyone in our care, and to creating communities where all can thrive safely. We work closely with thirtyone:eight, who advise and support our safeguarding processes. thirtyone:eight 24/7 Helpline: 0303 003 1111.

When the SWYM Policies Apply

- SWYM-led activities (e.g. residential): Follow the SWYM safeguarding policy.
- Church placements: Follow the church's safeguarding policy while upholding SWYM standards.
- SPREE: Church groups attending must follow their own internal safeguarding procedures for their groups, but the overall safeguarding framework for the event is SWYM's.

2. Purpose of Guidance

It is important that all adults working with children and vulnerable adults understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children and vulnerable adults in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts. The guidance aims to:

- keep children and vulnerable adults safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- assist adults working with children and vulnerable adults to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- support leaders, managers and employees in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided;
- support employees in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- support safer recruitment practice;
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and vulnerable adults; and
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

All those in South West Youth Ministries and Ministry Partnership organisations should be familiar with, and know how to access their Local Safeguarding Children's Board's policy and procedures for managing allegations against staff.

2.2. Definitions

Children and Young People: Throughout this document references are made to "children". This term refers to children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. All children and young people are regarded as 'vulnerable persons'. If any activity takes place in Scotland this may be at age 16 under the age of legal capacity (Scotland) Act 1991.

Adults: References to 'adults' or 'volunteers' refer to any adult who is employed, commissioned or contracted to work with or on behalf of, children and vulnerable adults, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

Vulnerable Adults: This term refers to anyone over the age of 18 years who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation, which may be by reason of illness, age, mental illness, disability or other types of physical or mental impairment.

Manager: The term ‘manager’ refers to those adults who have responsibility for managing services including the supervision of employees and/or volunteers at any level. This may include members of Church Leadership Teams and/or Pastors.

Employer: The term ‘employer’ refers to the organisation which employs, or contracts to use the services of individuals in pursuit of the goals of that organisation. In the context of this document, the term ‘employer’ is also taken to include ‘employing’ the unpaid services of volunteers. The employer in the church context is the body with responsibility for recruitment decisions (e.g. the PCC or Board of Trustees).

Safeguarding: Process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development. The process ensures children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Duty of Care: The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child or vulnerable adult involved in any activity or interaction for which that individual or organisation is responsible. Any person in charge of, or working with children and vulnerable adults in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally to owe them a duty of care.

3. Guidance for Safe Working Practice

Context

All adults who work with children and vulnerable adults have a crucial role to play in shaping their lives. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and vulnerable adults in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance has been produced to help adults working in all settings to establish safe and responsive environments which safeguard children and vulnerable adults and reduce the risk of adults being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

This means that these guidelines:

- *apply to all adults working in all settings whatever their position, role, or responsibilities*
- *may provide guidance where an individual’s suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults has been called into question.*

‘Unsuitability’

The guidance contained in this document is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of adults who work with children and vulnerable adults. Adults whose practice deviates from this guidance and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.

This means that workers should:

- *have a clear understanding about the nature and content of this document*
- *discuss any uncertainties or confusion with their line manager*
- *understand what behaviours may call into question their suitability to continue to work with children and vulnerable adults*

Duty of Care

All adults who work with, and on behalf of children and vulnerable adults are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, these adults have a duty to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children and vulnerable adults have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

The duty of care is in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between adults and children and vulnerable adults. It is also exercised through the behaviour of the adult, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

This means that workers should:

- *understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached*
- *always act, and be seen to act, in the child's or vulnerable adult's best interests*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour*

This means that churches and organisations should:

- *ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are adopted, implemented and monitored*
- *ensure that this code of conduct is continually monitored and reviewed*
- *ensure that, where services or activities are provided by another body, the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures*
- *foster a culture of openness and support*
- *ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised*
- *ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable*
- *ensure all adults have access to and understand this guidance and related, policies and procedures*

Confidentiality

Adults may have access to confidential information about children and vulnerable adults in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or vulnerable adults concerned.

If an adult who works with children or vulnerable adults is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a manager or nominated Safeguarding Coordinator. Any actions should be in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols.

The storing and processing of personal information about children and vulnerable adults is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation. Employers should provide clear advice to adults about their responsibilities under this legislation.

Whilst adults need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children and vulnerable adults, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a child or vulnerable adult under any circumstances.

Additionally, concerns and allegations about other people should be treated as confidential and passed to a Designated Safeguarding Coordinator without delay.

This means that workers need to:

- *be clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so*
- *are expected to treat information they receive about children and vulnerable adults in a discreet and confidential manner*
- *seek advice from a manager if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has*

been requested of them

- *know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported*

Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their role, all those working with children and vulnerable adults are in positions of trust in relation to those in their care. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

Workers should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

This means that workers should not:

- *use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage*
- *use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children or vulnerable adults*
- *use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so (see Section 3.13)*

Behaviour

All adults working with children and vulnerable adults have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and vulnerable adults. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.

There may be times, for example, when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position in their workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with children or vulnerable adults. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.

The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration by an employer as to whether there may be a potential risk to children and vulnerable adults in the workplace.

This means that workers should not:

- *behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children, vulnerable adults or act as a role model.*
- *make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such*

This means that workers should:

- *be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with children and vulnerable adults*
- *follow this code of conduct agreed by South West Youth Ministries*
- *understand that the behaviour and actions of their partner (or other family members or co-habitees) may raise questions about their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.*

Personal Living Space

No child or vulnerable adult should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/guardians and managers. Under no circumstances should children assist with chores or tasks in the home of an adult who works with them. Neither should they be asked to do so by friends or family of that adult.

This means that workers should:

- *be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations*
- *be mindful of the need to maintain appropriate boundaries*
- *refrain from asking children to undertake personal jobs or errands*

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when adults may wish to give a child or vulnerable adult a personal gift. The giving of gifts or rewards to children or vulnerable adults should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children, whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual child or vulnerable adult will be part of an agreed plan.

Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or 'groom'. Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or vulnerable adults for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness.

Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children, vulnerable adults or parents/guardians wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

This means that workers should:

- *be aware of any agreed position on the giving and receiving of gifts*
- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared*
- *generally, only give gifts to an individual child or vulnerable adult as part of an agreed reward system*
- *where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant monetary value*
- *ensure that all selection processes which concern children and vulnerable adults are fair and that wherever practicable these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff*

Infatuations

Occasionally, a child or vulnerable adult may develop an infatuation with someone who works with them. These adults should deal with such situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.

An adult, who becomes aware that a child or vulnerable adult is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a manager or parent/guardian so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

This means that workers should:

- *report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child or vulnerable adult may have developed an infatuation with an adult in the workplace*
- *always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries*

Digital Safeguarding Expectations

The organisation recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend to online environments, including social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, and digital communication tools.

This means that workers should:

- Communicate in an open, transparent, and accountable manner.
- Avoid one-to-one communication unless necessary and authorised.
- Never request, share, or comment on inappropriate images or personal information.
- Refrain from contacting children or vulnerable adults through personal accounts.
- Challenge and report harmful, exploitative, abusive, or concerning online behaviour immediately.

Failure to follow these expectations may constitute a safeguarding breach.

Communication with Children and Vulnerable Adults *(including the Use of Technology)*

Communication between children and vulnerable adults and workers, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, social networking services, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or vulnerable adult. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child, young person or vulnerable adult, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny (e.g. by always copying another worker or manager into any email communications).

Adults should also be clear in their communications with children and vulnerable adults so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and vulnerable adults including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with management and parents/guardians. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child or vulnerable adult outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet-based web sites other than private group pages on social networking sites maintained specifically for a specific group activity.

This means that workers should:

- *not give their personal contact details to children or vulnerable adult, including their mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites unless these are agreed forms of communication*
- *only make contact with children and vulnerable adults for professional reasons and in accordance with agreed plans and policy*
- *recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to a child in a crisis situation or at risk of harm. It should only be used as a last resort when other forms of communication are not possible*
- *not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages unrelated to their role to a child or vulnerable adult*
- *ensure that if a social networking site is used, administrative details are not shared with children and vulnerable adults and privacy settings are set appropriate to the age-group of those using the site*

Social Contact

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, e.g. pastoral work in the community, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the adult's own family or personal networks.

It is recognised that some adults may support a parent/guardian who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent/guardian comes to depend upon the adult for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

This means that workers should:

- *have no secret social contact with children and vulnerable adults or their parents/guardians*
- *consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work*
- *always approve any planned social contact with children, vulnerable adults or parents/guardians with a line manager,*
- *advise management of any social contact they have with a child, vulnerable adult or a parent/guardian with who whom they work, which may give rise to concern*
- *report and record any situation, which may place a child or vulnerable adult at risk or which may compromise the organisation or their own role or standing*
- *be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be agreed in advance with a manager.*
- *understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.*

Sexual Contact

All workers should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with children and vulnerable adults. Intimate or sexual relationships between workers and children and vulnerable adults will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable.

Any sexual activity between an adult and the child with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

This means that workers should not:

- *have sexual relationships with children and young people*
- *have any form of communication with a child or vulnerable adult which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative (i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact)*
- *make sexual remarks to, or about a child or vulnerable adult*
- *discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children or vulnerable adults*

This means that workers should:

- *ensure that their relationships with children and vulnerable adults clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful and appropriate relationship*
- *take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation*

- *understand that attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with adolescent boys and girls.*

Physical Contact

Some roles within the church may require physical contact with children as part of their role. There are also occasions when it is entirely appropriate for other adults to have some physical contact with the child or vulnerable adult with whom they are working. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, adults should only touch children and vulnerable adults in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

Not all children and vulnerable adults feel comfortable about physical contact. However, any physical contact is fine as long as it is initiated by the person themselves.

When physical contact is made with a child or vulnerable adult this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one person in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different person. Adults should use their judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If an adult believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator as outlined in the Safeguarding Procedures for handling allegations and an appropriate record made. Parents/guardians should also be informed in such circumstances.

Where a child or vulnerable adult seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. Careful consideration must be given to the needs of the child or vulnerable adult and advice and support given to the adult concerned.

This means that workers should:

- *be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child or vulnerable adult, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described*
- *never touch a child or vulnerable adult in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny not indulge in 'horseplay'*
- *always encourage children and vulnerable adults, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently*
- *be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender*
- *understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted*

This means that churches and organisations should:

- *ensure they have a system in place for recording incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by management*
 - *make adults aware of relevant professional or organisational guidance in respect of physical contact with children and meeting medical needs of children and vulnerable adults where appropriate*
- *be explicit about what physical contact is appropriate for adults working in their setting*

Behaviour Management

All children and vulnerable adults have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour.

Adults should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child or vulnerable adult. The use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and whilst there may be a legal defence for parents/guardians who physically chastise their children, this does not extend, in any circumstances, to those adults who work with or on behalf of children.

Where children or vulnerable adults display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults must follow an agreed plan of action, and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed. Where a child has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive handling plan may be drawn up and agreed by all parties.

Intimate Care

Some job responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with children and vulnerable adults on a regular basis, for example assisting young children with toileting, providing intimate care for children with disabilities or in the provision of medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact should be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed. The additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical or learning disability should be taken into account and be recorded as part of an agreed care plan. The emotional responses of any child or vulnerable adult to intimate care should be carefully and sensitively observed, and where necessary, any concerns passed to managers and/or parents/guardians.

All children and vulnerable adults have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible.

This means that workers should:

- *adhere to any agreed plan for intimate care and this code of conduct*
- *make other staff aware of the task being undertaken*
- *explain to the child or vulnerable adult what is happening*
- *consult with managers and parents/guardians where any variation from agreed procedures/plans is necessary*

Personal Care

Children and vulnerable adults are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard children and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the child or vulnerable adult concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

This means that workers should:

- *avoid any physical contact when children or vulnerable adults are in a state of undress*
- *avoid any visually intrusive behaviour*
- *where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering*

This means that workers should not:

- *change in the same place as children*
- *shower or bathe with children or vulnerable adults*

- *assist with any personal care task which a child or vulnerable adult can undertake by themselves*

First Aid and Administration of Medication

It is expected that there should always be adults working with children and vulnerable adults who are trained in basic first aid techniques. When administering first aid, wherever possible, adults should ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Parents/guardians should always be informed when first aid has been administered.

In circumstances where children need medication during the course of their activities, an agreed plan should be in place and appropriate permissions given by parents/guardians for administration of medication. Depending upon the age and understanding of the child, they should where appropriate, be encouraged to self-administer medication or treatment including, for example any ointment or use of inhalers.

This means that churches and organisations should:

- *ensure staff understand the extent and limitations of their role and level of training in applying basic first aid and understand where an injury requires more experienced intervention*
- *ensure there are trained and named individuals to undertake first aid responsibilities for all activities*
- *ensure training is regularly monitored and updated*
- *ensure that arrangements are in place to obtain parental consent for the administration of first aid or medication*

This means that workers should:

- *adhere to agreed plans for administering first aid or medication*
- *comply with any necessary reporting requirements*
- *make other adults aware of the task being undertaken*
- *explain to the child or vulnerable adult what is happening.*
- *always act and be seen to act in the child or vulnerable adult's best interests*
- *report and record any administration of first aid or medication*
- *always ensure that an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities*

'One-to-One' Situations

It is not realistic to state that 'one-to-one' situations should never take place. It is, however, appropriate to state that where there is a need, agreed with a manager and/or parents/guardians, for an adult to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult, certain procedures and explicit safeguards must be in place.

Adults should be offered training and guidance for the use of any areas of the workplace which may place themselves, children or vulnerable adults in vulnerable situations. This would include those situations where adults work directly with children and vulnerable adults in unsupervised settings and/or isolated areas within community settings or in street-based projects for example.

'One-to-one' situations have the potential to make child and vulnerable adults more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in 'one-to-one' settings with children and vulnerable adults may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Both possibilities should be recognised so that when one-to-one situations are unavoidable, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security of children and vulnerable adults and the adults who work with them.

There are occasions where managers will need to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of 'one-to-one' work. These assessments should take into account the individual needs of the child or vulnerable adult and the individual worker and any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Meetings with children and vulnerable adults outside agreed working arrangements should not take place without the agreement of managers and parents/guardians.

This means that workers should:

- *ensure that when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed*
- *avoid meetings with a child or vulnerable adult in remote, secluded areas*
- *always inform other colleagues and/or parents/guardians about the contact(s) beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by*
- *always report any situation where a child or vulnerable adult becomes distressed or angry to a manager*
- *carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child or vulnerable adult when in 'one-to-one' situations*

Home Visits

There are workers for whom home visits are an integral part of their work (e.g. pastoral support and care at home). In these circumstances it is essential that appropriate procedures and risk assessments are in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and the adults who work with them.

A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child, vulnerable adult, parents and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make adults more vulnerable to an allegation. Specific consideration should be given to visits outside of 'office hours' or in remote or secluded locations. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed. Where little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone. There will be emergencies where risk assessments are not possible in advance, e.g. when emergency services are used. In these circumstances, a record must always be made of the circumstances and outcome of the home visit. Such records must always be available for scrutiny.

Under no circumstances should an adult visit a child or vulnerable adult in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child to their own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If in an emergency, such a one-off arrangement is required, the adult must have a prior discussion with a manager and the parents/guardians and a clear justification for such arrangement is agreed and recorded.

This means that workers should:

- *agree the purpose for any home visit with managers, unless this is an acknowledged and integral part of their role e.g. pastoral care workers*
- *adhere to agreed risk management strategies*
- *ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with their manager and, where appropriate action is taken*

This means that churches and organisations should:

- *ensure that they have appropriate arrangements for risk assessment and management*
- *ensure that all visits are justified and agreed*
- *ensure that adults are not exposed to unacceptable risk*
- *ensure that adults have access to a mobile telephone and an emergency contact person*

Transporting Children

There will be occasions when adults are expected or asked to transport children as part of their duties. Adults, who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers should wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Adults should also be aware of current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children. Where adults transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist license/insurance e.g. PCV or LGV - staff should ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle.

It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a child or vulnerable adult outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed with the parents/guardians.

There may be occasions where the child or vulnerable adult requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a manager and parents/guardians.

This means that churches and organisations should:

- *ensure workers are aware of appropriate guidelines for transporting children and vulnerable adults.*

This means that workers should:

- *ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/ or ability to drive (e.g. refrain from having alcohol within twelve hours of driving)*
- *be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/guardian*
- *ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times*
- *ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven*
- *ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are notified and agreed with managers*

Trips, Outings and Overnight Activities

Adults should take particular care when supervising children and vulnerable adults on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Children, vulnerable adults, adults and parents/guardians should be informed of these prior to the start of the residential. In all circumstances, those organising residentials and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays. Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

This means that workers should:

- *always have another adult present in 'out of workplace' activities, unless otherwise agreed with a manager*
- *undertake risk assessments where applicable*
- *have parental consent to the activity*
- *ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times*
- *never share beds with a child or vulnerable adult.*
- *not share bedrooms unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been previously discussed with manager, parents/guardians and children and vulnerable adults*

Photography and Videos

Working with children may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Informed written consent from parents/guardians and agreement, where possible, from the child, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose.

There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them. It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children for their personal use.

This means that workers should:

- *be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded*
- *be able to justify images of children in their possession*
- *ensure the child understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that they are appropriately dressed.*
- *always ensure they have parental permission to take and/or display photographs*

This means that workers should not:

- *display or distribute images of children unless they have consent to do so from parents/guardians*
- *use images which may cause distress*
- *Photos and videos may be taken during an event for the use of SWYM promotional material. Images and videos must be transferred to SWYM cloud storage and deleted from personal devices within 2 weeks.*
- *take images 'in secret', or taking images in situations that may be construed as being secretive.*

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the internet is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children, if proven.

Adults should ensure that children are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Organisations and adults need to ensure that internet equipment used by children have the appropriate controls with regards to access, e.g. personal passwords should be kept confidential.

Where indecent images of children or other unsuitable material are found, the National Safeguarding Coordinator, Police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves.

This means that workers should:

- *follow their organisation's guidance on the use of IT equipment*
- *ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material on the internet*
- *ensure that any films or material shown to children are age appropriate*

This means that churches and organisations should:

- *have clear e-safety policies in place about access to and use of the internet (see thirtyone:eight Help... leaflet <https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/resources/help/online-safety/>)*
- *make guidance available to both adults and children about appropriate usage.*

Expectations for Speakers at SWYM Events

We're so grateful for all speakers/teachers at SWYM events voice and experience. We don't want to prescribe every detail of your content, but we ask all speakers to follow these guidelines to help create a consistent and transformative learning environment:

Theology, breadth and difference

We hold to the core of historic Christian faith: that there is one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are offered eternal life and relationship with the God who loves us. Where appropriate, offer a range of views and hold space for questions, encouraging respectful dialogue. Please approach complex or potentially divisive topics with wisdom, humility, and sensitivity. If you're ever unsure what's appropriate, we're happy to talk it through in advance.

Speak with clarity and kindness

Please avoid assuming knowledge – especially theological jargon or academic language. Take time to explain key terms and use stories and examples to make your teaching accessible. Help trainees feel safe to ask questions or admit they don't understand.

Keep to time and plan interactively

We ask that every session includes interaction (discussion, reflection, creative activity, or Q&A); transformation is more likely when young people and or leaders are actively engaged.

Word and Spirit

Please prepare and deliver your session in a way that is open to the Holy Spirit and grounded in Scripture. We want to model letting God's word speak for itself, so include the Bible clearly and meaningfully. If your session includes a response time, please follow the **Prayer Ministry Guidelines** provided. Our team will work with you to create a safe and well-supported space.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If a young person and or leader discloses something concerning (e.g. abuse, self-harm, unsafe living situation), **do not promise confidentiality**. Listen carefully, stay calm, and affirm that they've done the right thing by speaking up.

Report it immediately to one of our Safeguarding Coordinators, who will take the appropriate next steps. If you are unsure how to respond in a situation, seek guidance from the SWYM team.

Creating Safe Spaces

We want every session to be a place where young people and or leaders feel safe – spiritually, emotionally, and relationally. Many come carrying past wounds, doubts, or disappointments. As teachers, we set the tone for how secure and supported they feel as they grow and wrestle with big questions.

Power and Positionality

As a speaker, you carry visible and invisible power in the room. Young people and or leaders may look up to you, seek your approval, or feel nervous in your presence. This isn't something to fear, but it is something to steward wisely. You have the power to shape how those listening think about God, ministry, themselves, and others. We encourage you to **create space for learners to reflect, not just absorb**.

Watch your language

- Avoid sarcasm, shaming language, or humour that puts others down.
- Be mindful of making sweeping statements ("all young people today...", "real Christians always...").
- Speak from your experience, but don't present it as universal truth.

Don't overstep relationally

- Maintain professional distance, and maintain appropriate boundaries at all times, even if you know certain trainees in another context.
- Be warm, but not overfamiliar. Avoid private or prolonged one-to-one conversations after sessions.
- Never initiate or encourage physical touch (hugs, laying on hands, etc.) unless explicitly invited and appropriate.
- If you notice concerns about a young person and or leaders wellbeing or conduct, don't challenge it publicly or intervene directly. Instead, **raise it with the SWYM team**.

A Trauma-Aware Approach: Using PACE

We recognise that many young people and or leaders carry unseen stories of instability, trauma, grief, or rejection. Others may be processing past experiences of church, family, school, or mental health. Some may have found healing, some may still be in the midst of struggle. Our role as facilitators and speakers is to cultivate spaces that are safe, respectful, and attuned to these realities.

Each topic in our curriculum has a section identifying potential risks/sensitive topics. Please ensure that you note these and consider how you can mitigate these and similar risks. If you are unsure, please speak to a member of our team. We encourage speakers to keep the principles of **PACE** in mind when interacting with young people and or leaders, especially during group discussion, personal reflection, or moments of ministry:

Playfulness

Playfulness doesn't mean being silly or trivial – it means approaching others with warmth, creativity, and a relaxed presence. A light-hearted tone can help reduce performance anxiety, disarm defensiveness, and build relational safety.

- Use gentle humour and friendly body language.
- Add appropriate moments of humour or joy to help break the ice or reduce tension.
- Share stories or illustrations that feel human and relatable, not heavy or pressured.
- Make participation optional in anything reflective or personal. "You're welcome to..." is more helpful than "Let's all...".

Acceptance

Many young people and or leaders are still working out their theology, their identity, or their place in ministry. Acceptance means holding space for them as they are – without needing to correct, impress, or push for a response.

- Show care even when the person is disengaged or unsure.
- Affirm that questions, doubt, or struggle are welcome.
- Avoid shaming language – especially around sensitive issues (e.g. past church experience, sexuality, mental health, leadership confidence).
- Avoid jokes, examples, or illustrations that assume stable family life, neurotypical experience, or specific church backgrounds.

Curiosity

Rather than assuming why someone is disengaged, reactive, or struggling, curiosity invites understanding. It opens up space for conversation and deeper insight. Instead of assuming or judging a

response, take a posture of compassionate curiosity. Many behaviours are surface-level expressions of deeper stories.

- Ask reflective questions like, “What’s that been like for you?” or “I’m curious whether...”.
- Frame questions as invitations, not interrogations.
- Avoid assumptions about spiritual maturity or background.

Empathy

Empathy is more than listening – it’s choosing to emotionally connect with the experience of another. More than advice or solutions, most people need to know that they are seen, heard, and not alone.

- Acknowledge emotion when you see it: “That sounds really tough” or “Thanks for being brave and sharing that”.
- Avoid minimising pain with quick fixes, clichés, or spiritual platitudes.
- Allow silence, eye contact, or simple presence to do the heavy lifting.

Prayer Ministry Guidelines

Prayer is a vital part of all we do at SWYM. As we seek to shape the head, heart, and hands of our trainees, we want to create safe, Spirit-led spaces for people to encounter God – not just in theory, but in real, transformative ways. Whether it’s in response to teaching, worship, or a personal moment, we want to be open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a way that is biblically grounded, pastorally sensitive, and spiritually empowering.

Our Approach

As you lead sessions, please root your teaching in Scripture and allow space for God to speak and move. We’re not looking for hype or emotional manipulation, but genuine moments where people can encounter God and respond. Please communicate clearly and gently. Emphasise that response is always an invitation, never a requirement. Young people and or leaders are encouraged to pray with one another or with members of the SWYM team or their local leaders where appropriate.

Principles for Leading and Facilitating Prayer

Open: Prayer is relational. Encourage attentiveness to the Spirit and openness to what God might be saying or doing. Pray with expectancy, but without pressure.

Encouraging: Whatever the outcome, every person should leave a time of prayer feeling encouraged and assured of God’s love. If someone becomes emotional or shares something difficult, the priority is to help them feel safe, seen, and supported. If required, encourage them to speak with a staff member afterwards.

Active: Don’t rush, but don’t go on indefinitely. Remain spiritually alert and present as you pray. Avoid performance or over-talking. Sometimes silence is sacred.

Hands: Laying on hands can be appropriate and biblical, but it’s never required. Always ask permission. If in doubt, don’t. A hand should be light and respectful, not intrusive or distracting.

Hearing from God

We believe God can speak today – through Scripture, through others, and the Holy Spirit. If you sense something for someone:

Check-in: Is it loving, helpful, encouraging, biblical? Does it line up with God’s character?

Share lightly: Avoid phrases like “God says...” Instead, try: “I wonder if this might be from God – see what you think and feel free to let it go if it’s not helpful.”

Encourage the person to weigh and test what is shared. They may want to write it down or talk it through with a trusted leader.