



**PARAPARAUMU
BAPTIST CHURCH**
Te Hāhi Iriiri O Paraparaumu

"Where faith defines life"

Paraparaumu Baptist Children's Ministry Policy

Updated August 2023.

Note 1: This is an interim policy while the Baptist Union of NZ updates the national policy document. It will be reviewed and updated when new national policy released.

Note 2: The current Baptist Union "Safety First, Baptist Children and Family Ministry Safety Handbook" is the referenced document, adapted and summarised in this policy statement.

Goal: The intention of our children and family ministry is to encourage children and associated families to grow in faith. This policy will apply to all parts of Children's Ministry (Sunday School, Mainly Music, Playgroups, Creche and any other event created by Paraparaumu Baptist Church).

Principles:

1. To provide a safe and secure place for all children and adults.
2. To ensure that all children, without exception, are treated with care and respect.
3. All adults involved will be Police checked and two referees will be contacted to comment on suitability. One of these will be verbal.
4. Where practical, job descriptions should be available.
5. An appropriate complaints and reporting process is available, and publicised.
6. Suitable records are to be kept, when necessary, within the Privacy Act.
7. Suitable and appropriate rooms and spaces are to be used, especially in regard to Principle 1.
8. Children with special needs will be treated equally and fairly, and when possible, specialised equipment or programmes may be utilised.
9. Health and Safety is a priority, and all team members must be aware of their responsibilities and actions.
10. All leaders/helpers must be aware of fire and emergency procedures.

Accountabilities: All leaders/volunteers are accountable to the Elders, apart from day to day events and planning which are done in conjunction with the Pastor, to ensure the ministries fit into the life of the church.

Appendices

Job Description – Leadership of Sunday Programme, Mainly Music
Standard of Conduct for People involved in Children's Programmes
Positive Behaviour Guidelines
Child and Leader Protection Guidelines
Health and Safety Guidelines

NB: Documents related to police vetting form, volunteer application, referee form, child registration, reporting of incidents, are held within our Child Safety file.

Job Descriptions

Job Description - Leadership of Children's Sunday Programmes

Goal: To build, train and lead a team of leaders/helpers for Sunday morning so that we can engage with families and help children learn that God loves them

Children's programmes for children aged 0 -10 years.

Desired Results: The Children & Families Leader ...

- a. Identifies new leaders and integrates them into the leadership teams of Sunday morning programmes.
- b. Helps develop the gifts and skills of each leader through training, mentoring, resourcing and personal support
- c. Oversees the planning, leadership, and resourcing of the programmes.
- d. Assists the Senior Pastor and Worship Coordinator in planning worship services that relate to people of all ages (especially children & families) – includes during the school holidays
- e. Actively encourages, trains, and equips parents as the primary spiritual caregivers and helps them take ownership of their children's spiritual growth (in conjunction with other church staff and events)
- f. Children discover that God wants to have a relationship with them

The Children & Families Leader has the choice to engage with any pastoral matters that emerge with children and/or their families or refer them to the Pastoral Care Coordinator or Senior Pastor for appropriate action and care.

Job Description - Leadership of Mainly Music Programme

Goal: To build, train and lead a team of leaders/helpers for Mainly Music so that we can engage with families from our community and build relationships with them.

Mainly Music is a music and movement programme licensed by Mainly Music (NZ) for children aged 0 – 4 years.

Desired Results: The mainly Music Leader ...

- a. Identifies new leaders and integrates them into the leadership teams of Mainly Music programmes.
- b. Helps develop the gifts and skills of each leader through training, mentoring, resourcing and personal support
- c. Oversees the planning, leadership, and resourcing of the programmes.
- d. Encourages the team to build relationship with caregivers in a natural and caring way.
- f. Team members are not to pressure caregivers to attend church events or to make a faith decision. Team member may share their own faith journey where appropriate.

Standard of Conduct for People Involved in Children's Ministry Programmes at Paraparaumu Baptist Church

Communication, Physical safety, Spiritual safety, behaviour, confidentiality

1. All children in our care will be looked after in an open and honourable way.
 - Children's questions will be answered openly and honestly.
 - We encourage open communication about the programme between teachers, parents and children.
 - Parents are encouraged to discuss anything concerning their child with the child's small group leader and/or the small group team leader and/or the Children's Ministry Pastor.

2. In order to safeguard/protect children from abuse, leaders are not permitted to:
 - Take children alone to a solitary or dark place
 - Visit or counsel alone
 - Be involved in children's ablutions (except with young children when absolutely necessary and in sight of other people).
 - Helpers in the creche call a parent should a toddler need a nappy change.
 - Kiss or cuddle unwisely or do anything that is potentially sexual.
 - On social outings at least two leaders are present and the leader:child ratio should not exceed 1:8

In the event where substantiated sexual abuse is suspected, the matter will be taken to the pastor and to the police.

3. Leaders will not put pressure on a child to make a Christian commitment.

4. If any leader has problems with a child's behaviour, they will refer the child to the leadership of that ministry area, who is responsible to take any appropriate action and to liaise with parents and/or the pastor.

5. Leaders will respect and maintain the confidentiality of any information they receive about either the children in their care or their families.

6. The involvement of a friend or other community resource person is only to happen with the knowledge and approval of the ministry leader.

I agree to abide by the above standard of conduct.

Name printed in full:

Signature of Volunteer in Children's Ministry

Date

Positive Behaviour Guidelines

We believe that all children need boundaries, which are created and reinforced with gentleness and understanding. We also believe that there will be certain children who need extra attention and encouragement in the area of discipline. This guideline is to protect the ministry environment while still being sensitive to the needs of each individual child who is created in the image of God.

Some aspects to take into consideration when writing the policy are:

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

- Physically and/or verbally hurting another person
- Engaging in behaviour that may result in injury to self or others
- Damaging or defacing property or equipment
- Inappropriate language
- Not listening to leaders
- Disruption of another child's play or learning

Strategies for leaders when a child becomes disruptive

- Restate the rules to the entire class/ group
- Walk in the child's direction, standing near him/her
- Gain eye contact with the child
- Lightly touch the child on the shoulder letting him/her know that you care and are aware of his /her behaviour
- Redirect the child's actions
- Change your activity
- Move the child to a different seat or location in the classroom
- Another leader who is not teaching up front can move to stand/sit next to the child who is misbehaving.

Disciplining Principles

- Good behaviour needs to be reinforced verbally
- Always focus on the behaviour, not the child
- Always maintain the child's self-esteem
- Never smack or touch a child unkindly
- Do not shout or threaten a child
- Always be kind and loving towards the child
- Disruptive behaviour is to be handled in back of the classroom, not in isolation.
- If the need arises to address the behaviour in private, do it with another leader present.

Handling Persistent Unacceptable Behaviour for Preschoolers

When a preschooler continues to disrupt class, follow these steps:

- Move the child to a thinking chair (sitting apart). The thinking chair should be placed where the child can readily observe the rest of the class. The child should not be humiliated or placed in a corner.
- Tell the child how long he/she will be in the chair and briefly remind him/her why

he/she is being disciplined.

- A good rule of thumb is one minute per year of the child's age.
- At the end of the time-out, the leader will approach the child in a spirit of forgiveness and invite him to re-enter the classroom activity.
- Pray with the child for peace and God's love to surround them.

Handling Persistent Unacceptable Behaviour for Primary School Children

Here are a few ideas to remember when ministering in a positive way to the individual who continues with disruptive behaviour:

- Encounter him/her on an individual level. Take him/her to the side or back of the room for discipline.
- Explain the broken rule. Help the child to understand which rule was broken and the importance of following all rules.
- Encourage repentance. Repent means to turn around. With God's help, any child can choose repentance and experience a dramatic change in behaviour.
- Engage in prayer. Pray with the child.
- Expect God to work in the child's life. As you place the child in a different geographic location in the classroom, trust that God will help him/her with self-control.

Follow up on unacceptable behaviour

- Any discipline incident is to be recorded on an incident form.
- Inform the Children's Ministry Leader (CML) of the incident.
- Lovingly inform but do not blame or embarrass parents of the incident and actions taken.
- In the event the child's behaviour still does not improve the child's parent should be invited to attend the class with their child until the behaviour improves.
- Keep communication open with parents encouraging them, and offer any resources the church has available.

Child and Leader protection guidelines

To keep our children safe from other children and adults we have set out some guidelines. The guideline also includes how leaders are to interact and supervise children. This protects leaders, administration, and the church from accusations of negligence or abuse. All who serve at a church are to be above reproach.

Not only is the church to protect children and leaders but it also has a duty to be vigilant of those who are being mistreated in any way. The duty includes reporting suspected mistreatment.

Protecting children from other children

Some children may exhibit inappropriate behaviour towards other children in the group

- Emotional abuse e.g. taunting
- Physical abuse e.g. bullying
- Sexual abuse

No form of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse is acceptable. Where a child persistently abuses other children despite behaviour management intervention his/her parents will be asked to withdraw the child from the programme.

Leaders will expect and encourage positive interactions from all children, therefore:

- No put downs
- No name calling/teasing/bullying

Protecting children from inappropriate adult behaviour

None of the following behaviours are acceptable:

- Physical Abuse - the deliberate infliction of physical pain or injury or of physical coercion. Examples include any form of assault such as hitting, punching, kicking, biting, pushing, burning and physical restraint;
- Psychological Abuse - the infliction of mental anguish involving actions that cause fear of violence, isolation or deprivation and feelings of shame, indignity and powerlessness. Examples include verbal intimidation and humiliation, shouting or screaming, threats of physical harm, favouritism and belittling another's culture or appearance;
- Sexual Abuse/Harassment - the implied threat or actual sexual behaviour which is offensive, inappropriate, or detrimental to another person's well being. Examples include deliberate and unwelcome physical or sexual touching, suggestively sexual comments, requests for sexual favours, obscene exposure, and the display of pornographic material.
- Neglect - is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time, and results in impaired physical functioning or development of the child. Examples include: Physical neglect - failure to provide the necessities to sustain the life. Neglectful supervision. Medical neglect - failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care. Abandonment - leaving a child with no intention of returning. Refusal to assume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care or control for a child.
- Spiritual abuse - is a form of psychological abuse that occurs when a person in religious

authority misleads and maltreats a child in the name of God or church by taking advantage of the child's spirituality by putting the child in a state of unquestioning obedience to an abusive authority.

Steps in protecting both children and adults

- All leaders will go through the recruitment, screening, and appointment of staff and volunteers process - nobody to be exempted.
- The code of standards is to be adhered to

Identification of child abuse

Training on identifying when a child needs help, is available for free on www.cps.org.nz in their booklet called "How can I tell?"

Reporting of child abuse

Unfortunately, child abuse is present in our community. We must protect our children and meet legal requirements to report suspected abuse.

Section 15 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 Section 15 provides that:

"Any person who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a Social Worker or a member of the Police."

- When harm is suspected act immediately.
- Consult with someone experienced, like management staff or outside agencies (Child Youth and Families or Child Protection Services).
- Record details of what you saw, heard and what the child or someone else told you. Include times and dates. If your suspicions are not confirmed as significant, continue to monitor the situation closely in consultation with others.
- If your concerns are confirmed, report the suspected abuse to the CYF or Police and if there is an immediate danger, please report immediately – all leaders can do this.
- Inform the leadership of your actions so that you gain support.
- The CML will take responsibility and report directly to the senior pastor and/or the Police

Responding to suspicions and/or allegations against a leader in a church

- If any suspicions of abuse occur leaders and staff are to first and foremost act in the best interest of the child concerned.
- Do not protect the church, its "reputation", any leader or Pastor at the expense of the child.
- All suspicions and/or allegations are to be treated with confidentiality towards all parties.
- The accused leader will be advised of their rights and asked to seek independent legal advice.
- The accused leader will be supported and treated with respect. Counselling will be offered to all parties concerned.

See BAPTIST UNION Administrators Manual for full description of these procedures.

Steps in responding to a child's disclosure

When a child does share with you that something has happened to them, show your care and concern by:

- Listening carefully
- Tell the child you believe them
- Tell the child it's not their fault, they are not responsible for the abuse
- Tell the child you are pleased they told you (abusers threaten or manipulate children to prevent disclosure)
- Acknowledge it is hard to talk about these things
- Do not press for details
- Assure the child you will support them
- Do not make promises you are not able to keep, i.e. confidentiality
- Tell the child certain adults need to be informed who can protect them so the abuse can stop.
- As soon as is practical, record details of your conversation and contact the CML and Pastor.
- For confidentiality reasons, a leader is only to report their findings to the CML, the Pastor and the Police or CYF.
- Leaders are NOT to attempt any form of counselling.

Health and Safety Guidelines

It is the goal of all Baptist Churches to keep children physically safe during Children's Ministry Programmes. While there are many aspects to health and safety this guideline will be focusing on what is most relevant to Children's Ministry.

All leaders need to know and understand the minimum standards that need to be maintained whilst on the church premises.

- A duty to take all practicable steps to protect themselves and those under their care.
- To comply with all specific and general Safety Procedures.
- Not to willingly interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided in the interests of health, safety, and welfare.
- To report the following conditions to the Children's Ministry Leader:
 - o Any hazardous condition or situation
 - o Any sub-standard/dangerous behaviour or conditions.
 - o Any accidents, injuries and near misses experienced.
 - o And/or take all reasonable action to reduce or eliminate the possibility of recurrence.

The following are some guidelines to fulfil this standard:

Premises

- Safety plugs are placed on unprotected power points.
- Adequate lighting in all areas.
- Floor coverings are firmly attached.
- Glass doors or low windows are fitted with safety glass.
- Windows in children's areas are to be safe, and secured to prevent children climbing or falling out.
- There are no poisonous plants in Children's outdoor or indoor play area.
- Water, soap, and towels for hand washing are available in all toilets.
- The whole premises (indoors and out) is smoke free at all times.
- Children do not access the kitchen unless under direct supervision of a leader or adult.
- All cleaning agents are stored out of reach of children.
- Child safety locks are used on cupboards and draws, which store items dangerous to children.
- Emergency and fire evacuation drill practiced by leaders every 12 months.
- There needs to be a working landline phone on the premises in case of emergencies.

Equipment

- Electrical cords and appliances are regularly checked for safety.
- All heaters are secured.
- No electrical cords are trailing.
- All electrical equipment and machinery are inaccessible to children.

Outdoors

- Children's play area gates and fences are child-proof or a system is implemented to keep children safe, near roads and car parks.

- Sunscreen is made available for use during outdoor programmes.
- Children are asked to bring hats to the programme when activities are scheduled for outdoors.
- Pathways and steps are kept clean, clear, and free from mould and moss and are adequately lit at night.
- All animal encounters are to be directly supervised by leaders.

First Aid

- The First Aid kit and children's medication (if held) are stored out of reach of children and are accessible to all leaders. The number of First Aid Kits are to be proportional to the number of children and the location of children on the premises.
- Containers for cleaning up of bodily fluids can be stored with the First Aid kit. First Aid kits are to be taken on all excursions off site.
- First Aid kit/s are checked and replenished regularly; the check list is to be signed and dated at least four times a year or in proportion to use.
- It is recommended that there is always at least one certified first-aider or registered nurse on site.
- Leaders are made aware of children's medical problems, medication, allergies and disabilities through the children's church ministry registration form, updated annually.
- No over the counter medication is to be kept in the first aid kit.

Unwell children

- Children who are unwell will be taken to a comfortable, quiet place and their parents will be contacted and asked to collect the child as soon as possible.
- Should a serious accident occur, to leaders or children, an emergency contact will be notified immediately.
- An ambulance will be called if necessary.
- If this is not possible the leader/child will be transported in a private vehicle to a Medical Facility.
- Children and leaders with the following symptoms are asked to stay at home for the well being of all:
 - o Fever.
 - o Vomiting and/or diarrhoea within the last 24 hours.
 - o On antibiotics for less than 24 hours.
 - o Common cold, including green or yellow runny nose.
 - o Discharge in or around the eyes.
 - o Excessive coughing.
 - o Any communicable disease

Prescription medication

- When a child needs prescription medication to be administered, a medication request and record form is to be completed by the parent; including the name of the medication, frequency, and dosage levels.
- Medications are to be administered by the child if he/she is able, if not the Children's Ministry Leader may help.
- The medication request and records form is to be completed by the CML when the medication is dispensed.

Hygiene and Cleaning

- All surfaces and table tops to be washed before food is served.
- All food to be kept safe either covered in the kitchen, or in the refrigerator.
- All people handling food to wear disposable gloves.
- Children and leaders wash their hands after going to the toilet, before and after all eating, and after contact with animals.
- Cleaning and disinfecting all nursery and pre school equipment is carried out at regularly.
- All floors/carpets are clean.

Risk Analysis

- Identified risks are to be reported to children and leaders immediately and minimized as far as possible.
- Risks requiring maintenance are to be reported to the Children's Ministry Leader within 24 hours.
- All hazards are to be documented on the hazard identification and analysis form.
- All leaders are to take responsibility for reporting potential hazards, to the CML as they arise.

All people supervising and/or caring for children should be easily identified through nametags and/or T-shirts or other visible forms.

Safe ratios should be adhered to all the time.

Large Events

An OSH report should be written for separate event. Contractors of equipment used at events need to submit their OSH plan and give training to volunteers on site.

Other

- An incident and accident reporting form is kept in a clear folder on the wall in the kitchen.
- The incident and accident reporting form can be used by all for reporting: Accidents, Personal Injury, Safety Concerns, Complaints, Abuse and Other.
- Children are instructed clearly about safety before commencing projects, especially regarding any new or potentially dangerous equipment like hot glue guns.
- Smoking is not permitted in the buildings at any time.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency the children's safety and wellbeing will be the prime concern for all children's leaders. For this to occur the following guidelines are suggested:

Safety measures for emergencies

- All exits are clearly marked by a green and white 'EXIT' sign.
- Evacuation plans and procedures are clearly displayed in each children's ministry room.
- All exits are to be kept free from obstructions at all times.
- All leaders are to be trained in the church's emergency procedures.
- Even though Churches are exempt from doing fire drills on Sundays with a congregation, drills should still be practiced by all children's church leaders during ongoing training.
- A record of all fire drills is maintained. This specifies the date, time, and staff/volunteers members participating.
- Emergency/fire procedures are to be discussed with the children that attend Children's Ministry every term.
- An assembly area is to be designated and children are to know where the designated spot is.

In the event of a fire

- All leaders become fire wardens.
- On hearing a Warning Signal e.g. air horn, bell or alarm, leaders are to move children in an orderly fashion to the Assembly Area via the nearest safe exit.
- Have a leader check all rooms, including toilets.
- Parents need to meet their children at the assembly area, not in the Children's ministry location.
- The CML is to take the attendance register with them to assembly area, using the attendance sheets systematically check that all are present.
- One leader is to stay with the children at all times at the assembly area.
- The CML is to ensure that the Fire/Emergency Service has been called.
- Children may only return once the all clear is given.

In the event of an earthquake:

- Take cover beneath a strong desk or table.
- Remain calm and give reassurance.
- Evacuate the area only when instructed to do so or if the building is obviously structurally unsafe.
- Proceed to assembly area.
- If outside, instruct children to move clear of buildings, power poles, power lines and trees.
- Leaders to stay with children at all times at the assembly area.