

Junior Church

The junior church program offers biblically centred lessons, fellowship, and games for children of primary school age. It operates in the same building as worship for parents during the sermon.

Junior Church is designed to be a friendly, educational environment. By enrolling their children into the Junior Church program, parents are giving consent for the teachers to teach core Christian beliefs from scripture and to appropriately encourage the children to grow and develop in their own faith. The teaching curriculum will be approved by the Junior Church Coordinator and subject to review by the Pastor and/or Church Leadership Team.

Junior Church Workers

The teacher/leader volunteer will be a church member, who has a current Working with Children Check, and has completed the Safe Ministry check and is approved by the Junior Church Coordinator and the church Leadership Team for this ministry. Volunteer helpers who are a teen or a parent of a child present in the group do not require Working with Children Check although it is the church policy for regular volunteer helpers be both church members and have Working with Children and Safe Ministry checks.

Forms and Attendance Role.

Parents of children attending Junior Church are required to complete F004 Children and Youth Programs Enrolment form. They are also required to disclose any details of allergies or medical conditions impacting their child. Children with anaphylaxis are required to bring their EpiPen to Junior Church.

Children move upstairs independently, to join the program. The teacher/leader will mark down each child on the attendance sheet by name as a record of their presence at Junior Church and to be able to do a headcount in the event of an evacuation of the building.

If there are visiting children who wish to come to Junior Church, the parent or adult who has brought them to church must sign the attendance sheet upstairs. If a child is going to regularly attend Junior Church without their parents attending the church service, the normal enrolment form should be taken home and filled out by the parent who then nominates on the form the responsible adult who will be at church with the child.

Parental Care.

In the event a child requires the toilet, they will be asked to take a toilet buddy with them from the Junior Church group. The pair will visit the toilet, and return, together.

In the event of illness, medical emergency or sustained behaviour that is harmful or inappropriate, the rostered helper will return the child to their parent, or request the parent attend Junior Church. The teacher/leader will normally remain in the Junior Church room but will endeavour to make contact with the family at the end of the church service to debrief about the behaviour or incident.

Physical Contact

Discipline

It is unlawful for anyone other than a parent or legal guardian of a child to physically discipline a child. A parent or guardian cannot pass that authority to another person. Under no circumstances is a child to be physically disciplined by a Junior Church worker, and every reasonable effort must be made to prevent a child being disciplined by another adult or older child.

Comfort

If a child shows signs of being upset or distressed, the rostered church worker will have a conversation with the child, to discover what the problem is. The worker will discern with respect to the child's age and maturity, the best way to speak with them. If the child leans in to seek comfort, placing an arm about their shoulder is appropriate. The worker will respect and respond to the child's actions and body language. If the child cannot be settled back into the group within a few minutes, the rostered helper will return the child to their parent or guardian, while the teacher/leader remains in Junior Church with the group.

Restraining a child

Physical restraint should only be used in emergency circumstances where there is real risk of a child harming themselves, or others. The teacher/leader will endeavour to restrain the child by taking the child's hands and holding them firmly, or holding their arms to their side. The rostered helper will take the rest of the group downstairs to their parents and then bring the parents or guardian of the upset child upstairs as soon as possible to attend their child.

Concerns of parents

If a parent has a question or concern they would like to discuss with a Junior Church worker, arrange for another worker, or the Junior Church co-ordinator to be present for the meeting, and hear the concern. If the matter is not resolved at the initial meeting, arrange a future meeting. Report the matter to the Junior Church co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will follow up with leadership, and the senior pastor if required. The co-ordinator will sit in on the follow up meeting.

Disclosure of risk of harm

If a child displays behaviour, or visible physical marks, which raise the concern that the child may be at risk of abuse or neglect, this concern **MUST** be reported to the senior pastor as soon as possible. A F001 Risk of Significant Harm Disclosure Form must be completed.

If a child says or reports to you information which raises the same concern as above, firstly, listen to the child, and let them know you have heard what they have said. **DO NOT** question the child further, but report the matter to the senior pastor as soon as practical. A Risk of Significant Harm Disclosure Form must be completed.

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

Approved:

Name / role:

Date:/...../.....