

Working with U18s – good practice at a glance

- We want everyone who joins any HTH activity to be as safe as possible.
- We believe that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.
- This document is about working with people aged under 18.

In this document:

- 'U18' means someone aged under 18.
- 'parent' means parent or carer.
- 'meeting' means any activity organised by HTH.
- 'leader' means anyone leading or helping at a meeting.
- 'disclosure' refers to an U18 telling someone that [abuse](#) is taking place.

1. Confidentiality

If an U18 asks to speak to you in confidence:

- Do not promise them confidentiality if you think they might be at risk of harm.
- Do tell them you want to help and support them.

2. Disclosures and concerns

If an U18 makes a disclosure to you, or you're worried that they are at risk:

- In an emergency, or if you think they're in immediate danger, call the emergency services on 999.
- Otherwise, consult the person to whom you are responsible (such as your group leader), or, first, our Youth Minister, or then our Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). Their telephone numbers are in section 16 below.
- Decide with them whether to seek advice or to refer the matter immediately to the police or care services. You do not need the U18 to consent to this if you think they might be at risk of harm.
- As soon as possible afterwards, get a concern form from your group's registration folder or the church office. Write down what happened, your concerns, and what you've done.
- Transfer the information from the concern form to HTH's IT systems with a member of staff or our PSO.
- Only tell others who need to know.

3. Time alone with U18s

- Minimise the chances of any adult being alone with any U18, or small group of U18s. Doing this will help protect both U18s and adults (including leaders, helpers, visitors, and parents).
- If you need to talk confidentially to an U18, do this in a place where another adult can see you.
- If you find yourself alone with an U18, tell your group leader or another leader as soon as possible.
- Explain to parents that you will not be responsible for their U18 at a meeting until two leaders are present.

- At the end of a meeting, two leaders must stay until all U18s have been collected.

4. Behaviour

- Treat all U18s with respect and dignity. Think about your language, tone of voice and where you put your body.
- Don't invade the privacy of an U18 when they're going to the toilet.
- Don't play rough games, or games which are physically or sexually provocative.
- Don't make sexually suggestive comments to, or about, an U18.
- Don't touch anyone inappropriately or intrusively.
- Don't scapegoat, ridicule, or reject an U18.
- Don't let an U18 develop an inappropriately close relationship with you. If this happens, tell another leader about it and take steps to detach yourself.
- Don't let an U18 seek attention from you that is overtly sexual or physical.

5. Touch

- Touch is an important part of human relations, for example as a natural way of responding to distress, or to stop an U18 hurting themselves or others.
- Be aware what physical contact is appropriate and what is inappropriate, both in general terms and in relation to a specific U18.
- Be conscious of situations in which your actions or body language, however well-intentioned, could be harmful or misconstrued by others.
- Never use corporal punishment.

6. Telephoning or messaging U18s

- Avoid telephoning or messaging an individual U18. Contact them instead through their parents or, if available, a group chat.
- If you do need to contact an individual U18, or if an U18 contacts you, please contact our Youth Minister for further advice.

7. Records

- Register every U18 who attends each meeting, and keep their details up to date: addresses, dates of birth, emergency contact numbers, and any specific information like special educational needs or medical conditions, including allergies.
- Keep a permission form signed by a parent of each U18, confirming that they know that their U18 comes to meetings.
- Make sure parents know where their U18s are.
- Use a separate permission form for meetings that are out of the ordinary, such as trips.
- Keep the records where they can only be accessed by people who need them. If you are not sure, speak to your group leader.

8. Premises

- Ensure that the premises and equipment you are using are safe, and that they remain safe during your meeting.
- No U18 should be out of sight, for example to go to the toilet, without a leader knowing. Be aware of how long an U18 is out of the room and check if they're away for an unreasonably long time.

- If an U18 is being collected by a parent, ensure they don't leave the meeting on their own, including if your group goes into the church worship space for the last part of a 10:30 am Sunday service.
- Don't use your home as a venue for U18 meetings.

9. Accidents and emergencies

- If you don't have a mobile phone with you, find out which other leaders do.
- Know where the fire exits and extinguishers are, and where to assemble in an emergency (on the grass in front of the Community Hub).
- Record any accident, and action taken, in one of the three accident books (in the Community Hub, the main church kitchen, or the far left blackboard cupboard in the bigger room upstairs).
- There are first aid kits in the main church kitchen and the Community Hub under the television. There is a defibrillator outside the main church kitchen. Do not give an U18 medication (including plasters) without their parent's consent. Ideally, there should be an adult present who has completed a basic first aid course. If not, consult the list of first-aiders displayed next to each first aid kit, as one may be nearby, for example in the office or in an adult congregation.

10. Insurance

- HTH has insurance for church activities. However if your group is doing something different to its normal meetings, please check with a member of staff that it is covered.

11. Transport

- For trips, it is usually more appropriate to meet at the venue, leaving parents to arrange transport.
- If you do need to give a lift to an U18 (for example, in preference to leaving them uncollected after a meeting), ideally take another leader in the car with you, or ask the U18 to sit in the back. Avoid giving lifts to only one U18 of the opposite sex.
- Do not give a lift to an U18 of primary school age unless you have an appropriate child car seat or booster seat.

12. Internet safety

- If an U18 uses the internet as part of a meeting, make sure they only access relevant content. For further advice on safety and the internet, email and mobile phones, please refer to [U18 protection policy update 1– internet and media](#).

13. Adult / U18 ratios

All meetings of all groups must always have at least two leaders aged over 18.

Minimum ratios of adults to u-18s for indoor meetings are:

0-2 year olds	1 leader to every 3
2-3 year olds	1 leader to every 4
3-8 year olds	1 leader to every 8
8 year olds and above	1 leader for the first 8 plus 1 leader for every additional 12

- If several smaller groups meet in the same room, or in rooms off a main room where a separating door can be left open, leaders can use discretion in deciding how many leaders each smaller group needs.

- Where a smaller group meets away from other groups, it needs at least two leaders.
- In mixed-sex groups, try to have leaders from both sexes.

14. Teamwork

- As far as possible, plan your meetings and procedures as a team so everyone knows what's agreed.
- Have clear roles for each leader so everyone knows what's expected of them. Group leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows everyone to discuss inappropriate behaviours and attitudes.

15. More information

- HTH follows the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook. There's a link to it [here](#) and on our website at hthmacc.com/safeguarding

16. Contacts

Diocese of Chester Safeguarding Officer	safeguarding@chester.anglican.org	07704 338885
Parish Safeguarding Officer Jen Vincent	safeguarding@hthmacc.com	07533 043417
HTH Youth Minister Jared Brown	jared@hthmacc.com	07936 351216
HTH Vicar James Gibson	james@hthmacc.com	01625 424587