

WAGGA WAGGA EVANGELICAL CHURCH

PO Box 817
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650 secretary@wwec.org.au
ABN 16 626 431 746



W A G G A W A G G A
EVANGELICAL CHURCH

WWEC GUIDELINES - Serving in WWEC Children's/Youth Ministry

Introduction

Wagga Wagga Evangelical Church loves and values children as Jesus does. As a result the church considers it a privilege to teach and instruct children and contribute to growing them in their knowledge and love of God.

Children's/Youth ministries at WWEC include:

- Kids church (including Toddlers, Preschoolers and School Age groups)
- Youth church
- Youth group
- Women's Bible Study crèche
- Special Religious Education (SRE)
- Mission events for children

The following information outlines guidelines designed to ensure the safety and welfare of children and youth in our care, and our ministry workers. The primary strategy for achieving this is outlined below:

To ensure the safety of our children and ministry workers, ministry workers should never be completely alone with a child or young person, except in an emergency situation that would warrant completion of an incident report.

As an absolute minimum there must be at least two children/youth with a children's/youth worker at all times. In all situations it is preferable that at least two ministry workers are present.

The principle above applies to all children's/youth ministries, all activities, all venues, all the time. This principle underpins the following guidelines.

1. Supervision

At church, children are supervised in the 'Family Room' by their parents up to the age of 2 years. Our Kid's Ministry programs begin at 2 years with a Toddler Program (2-3.5 years) and continue through Preschool (3.5 year - school age), K-2 (Kinder to Year 2), 3-5 (Years 3-5 at school), Youth Church (Years 6-8) and Leaders In Training (Years 9-10).

We require a ratio of less than 1:8 in Toddlers and Preschoolers or no less than 2 leaders in a room. For School age groups we aim for a ratio of 1:15 or no less than 2 leaders in a room.

Youth church (Year 6-8) normally has 2 leaders, and each leader is aware of the need to ensure they are never alone with a young person, and that at least two youth are present in a room with a leader at any given time.

It is acknowledged the degree of supervision will vary according to the:

- venue, time, duration and nature of the activity
- age, maturity, ability and gender mix of the children
- size of the group ¹.

2. Registration and permission forms

Parents/guardians of new children attending our kids/youth programs (all children up to age 18) are required to complete a registration form for their child which is given to the leader of the group before the lesson so that any medical information and emergency contact details are known. Where families continue to attend WWEC, with permission, their details are entered into WWECs church database; Elvanto. Parents/carers have access to their profiles in Elvanto and can modify information at any time. Relevant child/youth contact details and medical information is included on sign in sheets or class rolls (see below) which are updated each term.

Toddlers and preschool

Parents sign children in and out of these groups. Once the children are settled the teacher takes a head count and ensures this tallies with the number of children on the sign in sheet. Toddlers and preschool children are not able to leave the room after the program until they are signed out by a parent or carer. This also provides the opportunity for helpers to provide a handover or feedback to the parents/carers, and to discuss any issues or concerns. This is particularly helpful for visitors and newcomers. Siblings under 18 years cannot sign children out of children's ministry events or activities. Parents can give permission for other adults to sign children out. It is preferred that the children's/youth ministry workers are made aware of this when the child/children are signed in.

Infants and primary

Children in the infants and primary rooms walk to the classrooms with their teacher. A roll is taken at the beginning of the lesson. If the children leave the room during the lesson for an activity, everyone will walk to the activity as a group, a head count is completed on arriving at the activity (e.g. grassed area), and a head count is repeated on return to the classroom. At the end of church, a teacher walks with the infants children back to adult church. Primary children are allowed to return to adult church as a group without a leader. Teachers in the older rooms will pass on any necessary feedback to parents/carers after church at morning tea. It provides a good opportunity to speak with newcomers and to provide information about kids church. Permission forms are completed for any off site activities.

¹ Faithfulness in Service 2007

Youth Church

Our youth leave the adult service before the sermon and walk together with their leader(s) to their room to complete a Bible study. A roll is taken at the start of Youth Church. Youth return to the main hall afterwards.

Youth Group

Our youth program runs weekly on Friday night from 7-9pm. Our youth team consists of a minimum of 2 leaders each week, with at least one male and one female. Youth sign in to the program each week and sign out when they leave. Parents are asked to complete a registration form at the start of each year, or when their child begins attending Youth Group. Any information about youth is directed to parents/carers through SMS and email. Permission forms are completed for any off-site activities such as our annual youth camp.

3. Personal care

Assisting and encouraging independence shows love and concern for the children in our care². We avoid providing personal care, particularly where it is possible for the child to perform the task for themselves³.

The following guidelines have been designed to assist in this regard:

- If a nappy change is required in Toddler Church, a Kids Church Leader will ask the parent/carer to come and change the nappy.
- Parents of toddler and pre-school children are encouraged to take them to the toilet before signing in at kids church.
- For Toddlers and Preschool groups, parents are called to assist their children in toileting. If the parent is unavailable, a female helper will take a minimum of two children to the toilet, and generally no more than five children at a time. The helper will not assist the child to do anything they can do themselves, and will avoid entering the toilet cubicle with a child.
- If a younger child needs to be lifted onto the toilet, the helper will do this with the door open and then immediately leave the cubicle. If assistance is required with clothing this is provided prior to entering the cubicle. In the occasional instance where assistance may be required with toileting, disposable gloves are available in the kids church box.
- Infants and Primary children are to go with a friend of the same gender to the closest toilets. Leaders/helpers will monitor the time children are away from the classroom. A helper will be sent to locate them as soon as it is decided they have not returned in a reasonable timeframe.
- If there is an instance where it is necessary for a helper to escort older children to the toilet, the helper will remain in the entry doorway. Helpers are not able to enter the toilet cubicle to assist older children with personal care. If assistance is required parents are notified to assist their child.
- In the case of children with special needs any special requirements will be identified in discussion with the parents before the child is left in care. There may be the capacity to provide some additional assistance providing this is within the scope of child protection legislation and WWEC policies.

² Safe ministry (Youthworks) training manual

³ Faithfulness in service 2007

4. Unsettled / upset children

Parents are encouraged to support strategies designed to minimise the likelihood of children becoming upset in the process of separating from parents or carers. In the Toddlers group for example, parents are asked to pack morning tea (snack and drink) for their children, which the children have on arrival. If children become upset in Toddlers, the kids church team member will utilise a number of strategies to divert attention and engage the children in activities they enjoy. If however a child cries continuously and cannot be consoled for a period in excess of 5 minutes, a kids church team member will notify the parent/s. There may be times where parents and team members negotiate a longer time period, however if the child cannot be consoled and is crying continuously, a team member will notify the parents or carers and ask them to return to the Toddler group after a maximum period of 10 minutes.

5. Activities and games

It is important to consider the message children may learn from the way events are organised and conducted. Games or activities that emphasise gender, physical, intellectual or ethnic differences should be assessed for their appropriateness. Games involving physical contact especially with older children should also be considered to ensure the level and type of contact is appropriate, and is not likely to offend or embarrass more sensitive participants⁴.

Some other aspects of games and activities that should be considered include:

- how teams are selected - does the process make anyone feel uncomfortable or undervalued?
- how leaders are chosen - does everyone get a chance to lead?
- does the game or activity encourage cooperation, team work, and inclusion of all team members?
- will everyone understand the game and be able to participate?
- is the activity appropriate for all the ages represented in the group?
- how will you manage the situation where a child is unwilling to participate?
- is the environment safe? is the activity safe?
- will children who are visiting feel comfortable with this activity?
- have you got sufficient team members to ensure safety, facilitate inclusion and participation, and to monitor and moderate behaviour appropriately?
- have you carefully previewed any visual materials you will be using to ensure their suitability?

If you have any doubts about the suitability of the activity or game it is recommended that you do not proceed with the activity. It would also be useful to seek the opinion of your Team Leader in this instance.

6. First aid and emergencies

The following strategies are employed to ensure safety:

- A registration form is completed for new children attending any children's/youth ministry activity to identify allergies, special food requirements/restrictions, or other special needs
- Parents are asked to provide morning tea for their children in Toddler and Preschool Kids Church Groups. Parents are asked not to pack food containing nuts. Children are only allowed to eat the food their parents have provided, however with parent's consent a plain biscuit or packet of plain chips may be offered if children arrive without something for morning tea
- Children in school age groups are provided morning tea by those on the WWEC Morning Tea roster. This food does not contain nuts

⁴ Faithfulness in Service 2007

- For children's/youth activities where the parents or carers are not on site, the list of emergency contact details will be retained in case of an emergency
- Leaders are not able to accept children who are unwell with contagious illnesses into a group. Where it becomes obvious children in care are unwell the child will be escorted back to their parents or the parents asked to collect their child
- The primary first aid kit is maintained at church in the kitchen in the hall. Smaller first aid kits are maintained in the kids church boxes in each room.

In the event of a minor incident, leaders will administer basic first aid (e.g. apply band aid). Detailed information regarding first aid and emergencies procedures (including a list of trained first aiders) is outlined in *WVEC Procedure - Workplace Health & Safety (WHS)*. A copy of the procedure is located in the 'Sunday Services Folder' located in the hall where WVEC Sunday morning church is held. If it is necessary to administer first aid and the child remains upset after a period in excess of 5 minutes the parents or carers will be advised. If the child settles, the leader will advise the parents of the details of the incident when they collect the child. An incident report form may be required. In the event of any significant injury or incident the parents will be asked to attend immediately if they are onsite, or telephoned if off-site. The decision making in relation to care will then rest with the parent, however the leaders will provide whatever assistance they can. The leaders will complete a *WVEC Incident Report*. Forms are located in the WVEC Sunday Services Folder. The leaders will notify the Ministry Team Leader as soon as possible and give them the completed *WVEC Incident Report*.

In the event of an evacuation leaders are responsible for implementing the evacuation plan. A copy of the plan is included in the 'Sunday Services Folder'. In the event of an evacuation Kids Church Leaders will follow the procedure below:

- a 'runner' from the main WVEC service will be sent to quietly notify the Kids Church Leader of the need to evacuate
- a Kids Church Leader is to collect sign in sheet and/or attendance roll, and advise children they will be moving to the grassed area adjacent to the basket ball courts.
- a Kids Church Leader is to assemble children in a line, with a leader at the front and back of the line
- calmly leave the classroom, head out the main door, and proceed to the grassed area near the basketball courts (see School Site Evacuation Map)
- all children must remain with in their group (parents are instructed not to collect their children until a roll call is completed)
- on arrival at assembly point leaders advise the Ministry Team Leader or Emergency Warden they have arrived
- children can be collected from class lines at this point but must be marked off on the attendance roll by the leader as they are collected by parents/carers.

7. Communication

Ministry workers should never be completely alone with a child or young person. This same principle applies to all forms of communication with children and young people. When considering other communication media (e.g. email, social networking or chat sites, phone, text messaging), it would not generally be considered necessary or appropriate for ministry workers to enter into closed one-on-one conversation with a child or young person.

Communication between ministry workers and children/youth should:

- Be limited to administrative or logistical content e.g. reminder about event, change of event time
- Be open communication e.g. a group email to participants, or inclusion of the Team Leader or other relevant ministry workers in 'cc' field when emailing
- Be with the approval of, or under the direction of, the Ministry Team Leader and relate to the activities of WWEC
- Where possible, records of communication should be retained in keeping with legislative record keeping requirements.

Facebook

- Youth activities may have a public Facebook page which Ministry workers can utilise to engage with youth as this communication is open and allows parents to freely view all content
- Ministry workers must not seek out and 'friend' youth with their personal Facebook account. If a young person seeks out and 'friends' a ministry worker, they are allowed to accept their 'friend request', but must keep all communication out in the open for all to see. This means it is never acceptable to have a private message thread in Facebook. If communication occurs, it should be on 'walls' where parents and other ministry workers can observe
- No photos are to be posted on Facebook unless the parents have given consent (parents consent records are kept on *Elvanto*). Security settings of any open Facebook page must be set to restrict non-administrators from posting photos
- Content will be regularly reviewed by the Youth Team Leader and by the Pastor overseeing youth ministry. Ministry workers must ensure no bullying or inappropriate communication occurs between young people on the Facebook site. Anything inappropriate should be removed and, as a last resort, young people can be 'blocked' from the page.

Informal meetings with youth outside of weekly youth group

A youth leader is able to meet up with youth informally during the week if:

- Parents have given explicit consent and there is a minimum of two youth or two leaders present
- Where there is only one youth, a parent must be present & visible at the location of the meeting
- It is preferable that youth are dropped off and picked up by parents – no lifts to be given. This acts as an additional form of (implied) consent
- If youth walk to or from the informal gathering, then a phone call or text message is to be made to the parents to let them know where their child is and confirm their consent
- Meetings with youth should generally be held in a public place e.g shops or a cafe. If meetings are held in a home, either a parent is present or a minimum of three youth
- Leaders must ensure they are not alone with one youth and isolated in a venue

Email

- Email content should generally be restricted to administrative/logistical content only
- Avoid emailing individuals, use group emails
- When communicating with youth under 18 years of age, use the email address of the youth's parent(s), otherwise if using the email address of the youth, always copy the email to one of the other youth group leaders who does not live in the same household as you

Phone

- Contact should be restricted to short calls for administrative/logistical purposes only
- Defer other matters till face to face meeting can be organised (with another adult or youth present)
- Consider whether it may be more appropriate to convey information by phone directly to parents

- Consider contacting their home phone in preference to their mobile phone. If parents answer the phone advise of the purpose of your call and the expected length of the phone conversation. It may be appropriate to leave a message with the parent or carer
- If a child or young person initiates a call for non administrative or logistical reasons, or the conversation is likely to be lengthy, it may be necessary to gently exit the conversation until another person can be present and/or the issue can be discussed face to face.

Recommendations about the sort of contact that is likely to be appropriate at different ages:

Type of Contact	Primary School Students	Years 7-9 Students	Years 10-12 Students
Phone Calls	Only after speaking to parent then, if the parent gives permission, with the child and only for ministry purposes	To be avoided. Preferable to speak with the parent first and ask permission to speak with the young person.	Reasonable phone contact for ministry purposes permissible. Long conversations to be avoided.
Text Messages	X	For logistical purposes only	For logistical purposes and or group encouragement
Emails	X	For logistical purposes and encouragement only	For logistical purposes and or group encouragement
Social Networking	X	Use discretion & follow guidelines above	Use discretion & follow guidelines above
Video meetings (eg Zoom)	invite to meeting using parents email. Meetings occur with two leaders.	invite to meeting using parents email. Meetings occur with two leaders.	invite to meeting using parents email. Meetings occur with two leaders.

If at any time you suspect a child or young person is developing or displaying an interest in communicating with you outside the group regarding non administrative or logistical matters seek the advice of your Ministry Team Leader immediately.

8. Photography

Photographs should:

- be taken only with parental/guardian consent
- not be used or displayed in any public forum without consent (of the child's parent and the young person themselves if appropriate)
- not be taken on a ministry worker's mobile phone (young people should not be permitted to take photos of ministry workers on their mobile phones)⁵.

Anyone involved in taking photographs of children or youth at WWEC events for church purposes (e.g. promotional purposes) should refer to 'WWEC PROCEDURE - Information Management'.

⁵ Electronic communication policy http://www.psu.anglican.asn.au/index.php/p2/safe_ministry_resources

9. Rules and discipline

A primary aim in all children's and youth ministry is to engage the children in age appropriate activities where they can learn and enjoy themselves. The following assists in achieving this:

- well prepared, structured lesson plans – plan lots of activities to accommodate different interests, and children finishing tasks at different rates e.g. plan a few different crafts, or have a helper plan a quiet game to play with those who finish early
- proactively anticipate and manage the needs of the group – e.g. at the beginning of kids church allocate helpers to a particular child or group of children, ask children to move away from other children if a particular relationship often results in disruptive behaviour
- kids church rules – although the expectations of each age group will be different the agreed kids church rules below provide general expectations that apply across all age groups.

Kids Church rules

1. Follow the teacher's instructions.
2. Only one person speaking at a time.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself
4. Respect other people and their property (be kind).

Within younger children's ministry groups: toddler, preschool, K-2 groups, these rules are known as the '5 'L's';

LISTEN: to the person speaking

LOOK: to the Leader while they are talking

LIPS: one person speaking at a time

LEGS: keep your legs crossed when sitting

LAPS: keep your hands in your laps

Children and young people of any age are most secure when they know the limits or boundaries in which they can operate, and which behaviour will be acceptable to the adults around them⁶. It is out of love that we discipline children (like God does with us). It is loving to children who have difficulty behaving, and it is loving to the rest of the class. Having rules and discipline helps to make the class a safe, fun and productive learning environment where kids can grow in their knowledge and love of God.

Discipline strategies must obviously be age appropriate. The following guidelines ensure behavioural management strategies are appropriate and consistent with the aim of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our children and to minimise the risk of any dissatisfaction with care provided at WWEC.

For young children:

The following strategy is recommended:

- Bend down to the child's eye level or sit on the floor and provide a clear, age appropriate explanation as to why the behaviour is undesirable. Speak clearly, calmly and kindly.
- If the behaviour is repeated, initiate directed play where the two children are separated for a time in different play groups or areas. Ensure the child is engaged in an activity they enjoy.

⁶ Safe ministry (Youthworks) training manual

- If the behaviour continues it may be necessary to assign a helper to the child (where possible). This may involve play in a separate area of the room for a time, or the child sitting on a “time out chair” for no more than one minute for each year of the child’s age.
- If the behaviour continues, or it is not possible to adequately meet the needs of the child and other children, it may be appropriate for a leader to ask a parent or carer to attend.

For the infants and primary groups:

Kids church discipline strategy

When a child is distracting others or disobeying directions,

1. Make sure the rules are displayed and understood.
2. If the difficult behaviour continues, move the child next to other leader.
3. If the difficult behaviour continues, move the child away from group, still in the room, for a specified amount of time (one minute per year of the child’s age).
4. Contact the Team Leader to come and talk to them. The Team Leader may ask the parents to come and sit in the group with their child until the child’s behaviour improves.

- A laminated copy of the kids church rules are kept in the box and should be stuck up on the wall before each lesson so that you can refer to and review the rules to remind children of what is expected. It is important that if the child does not follow the rules after specifically being reminded of the rules that the teacher immediately starts moving through the discipline strategy above.
- Speak clearly, calmly and kindly.
- Avoid giving ‘chances’ before implementing the strategy, and avoid suggesting to a child if they don’t follow the rules they will be ‘taken back to church’ as we don’t want children to grow up seeing church as a disciplinary measure.

In relation to discipline for older children the following strategy is recommended:

- Provide a clear, age appropriate explanation as to why the behaviour is undesirable with reference to the agreed group rules if appropriate.
- Speak clearly, calmly and kindly. Be mindful that for older children there may be times where it is appropriate to do this out of the hearing of peers (but still in view of others) to avoid unnecessary embarrassment.
- Outline clearly the process that will be followed if the behaviour is repeated.
- The process from this point on will depend on the exact behaviour or situation however if for example the offence was being disruptive or disrespectful during the lesson the following process may apply:
 - a. Instruct the child to move to a different spot in the group
 - b. Ask the child to sit next to the teacher
 - c. Ask the child to sit in an area of the room that is not with the main group for a set period of time
 - e. Send a helper to get the Kids Church Team Leader, who may then call the parent to attend if necessary.

In relation to your role as children's/youth ministry worker it is **NOT** acceptable to:

- raise your voice (unless it is to warn of immediate danger)
- berate, belittle, ridicule or humiliate a child
- use personal insults or references to personal traits i.e. ‘you are a’
- physically restrain a child (unless to protect or avoid an accident or prevent the harming of another child - to be used as a last resort)

- smack a child or use any form of physical contact as a disciplinary measure
- isolate a young child (toddlers / preschool) outside the room as a form of discipline.

10. Physical contact

It is important that we are positive in the way we respond to what children and young people say, how they behave, their efforts and contributions. Our first option for affirming a child or young person however should be non-contact e.g. verbal responses, smiles, appropriate attention. We need to teach children/youth appropriate levels of physical contact for the settings we are in, and that there is a greater need for formality in a group setting than they may be familiar with in a family context⁷.

Physical contact should generally be initiated by the child or occur with their permission (excluding circumstances such as immediate physical danger or medical emergency). When you make physical contact with a child, be very careful that you respect the child's feelings and privacy⁸.

Appropriate physical contact should be brief and may include:

- high five
- handshake
- patting the child on the head, hand, back or shoulder in affirmation
- open hugs (side by side, not face to face)
- taking a younger child's hand and leading them to an activity
- praising or welcoming a child by holding the child's two hands in yours
- holding a preschool child who is crying, providing they want to be held⁹¹⁰.

Inappropriate contact includes:

- kissing a child, or encouraging a child to kiss you
- extended hugging or tickling
- touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume
- carrying older children or having them sit on your lap
- any physical contact that may even potentially be interpreted or construed as being sexual in nature or overtone
- anything that could give the impression of favouritism or an inappropriate special relationship¹¹.

In exceptional circumstances such as immediate physical danger either to themselves or another child or a medical emergency there may be a need for physical restraint of a child or young person. In this instance it is necessary to complete an incident report form identifying the circumstances of the incident, the restraint provided and why it was considered necessary, the people involved in the incident and any witnesses. The relevant Ministry Team Leader, the child's parents or carers, and the Senior Pastor must be informed of the circumstances of the incident as soon as practically possible.

⁷ Safe ministry (Youthworks) training manual

⁸ Faithfulness in Service 2007

⁹ Safe ministry (Youthworks) training manual

¹⁰ Faithfulness in Service 2007

¹¹ Faithfulness in Service 2007

11. Off site activities

When planning an offsite activity involving children or youth, a risk assessment will be completed following the process below:

- the Team Leader/organiser will complete the WWEC Activity Planning Form and WWEC Risk Assessment Form
- the completed form will be reviewed by the WWEC WHS Officer for approval. The WHS Officer may need to contact WWEC's insurance company.
- the information contained in the WWEC Activity Planning Form will be used by the Team Leader/organiser to draft the permission form for the event (with input from the WHS representative if necessary)
- the Team Leader/organiser will send out permission forms to parents/carers
- only children/youth with completed permission forms will be able to participate in the activity/event.

Supervision ratios will be met (see section 1. Supervision) with reference to the risk assessment for the particular event. There may be instances where a higher level of supervision is required eg children with special needs. Where outings include children/youth of mixed gender, where ever possible ministry workers and parent/carers of mixed gender will accompany the group offsite. An attendance list and emergency contact details should be taken to all offsite activities where parents and carers are not in attendance. Signed permission forms and attendance records must be maintained as church records.

Where possible it will be the responsibility of parents to arrange transportation for their children to and from church activities and events. Where it is necessary for children/youth to be transported in private vehicles by ministry workers, the permission form must specifically include this information. In this instance two other requirements must be met:

a. Child protection considerations

Ministry workers are not to be alone in a car with a child or young person even with parental consent, except where the child or young person is a family member. Where possible each car will contain two ministry workers and a minimum of two children/youth, however a minimum requirement would be one ministry worker and two children/youth in each car with consideration of gender issues.

If in a particular situation this is not possible (e.g. emergency, or refusal likely to place child or young person in danger) another adult must be informed of the trip and the reason for the trip being necessary. This would necessitate the completion of an incident report form as soon as practicable. This information is based on the Sydney Anglican Network's Transport Policy¹². Where several cars are involved in transporting youth or children to/from to the same event/location, attempts should be made to travel together in convoy (i.e. leave at the same time, take same route).

b. Safe driver considerations

Where transport in private vehicles (other than parents/carers vehicles) is necessary as part of a ministry activity/event the vehicles must be registered, be safe and well maintained, and have comprehensive car insurance. Drivers must have a valid driver's licence (with a minimum three years of driving experience), be experienced, have a good driving record, and agree to drive responsibly and courteously, obeying all road rules including observing speed limits and ensuring

¹² Transport policy <http://www.psu.anglican.asn.au/index.php/p2/youthworks>

seat belts are worn. In the event of a car accident, the responsible driver is responsible to pay any gap/excess required by their insurance company.

12. Overnight activities

Overnight stays with children or youth require additional planning to ensure safety. The following information provides a guide to assist planning such events at WWEC:

- A WWEC Activity Planning Forms must be to completed to identify specific risks and mitigation strategies
- Determine who will supervise the event, and who will be onsite overnight:
 - Mandatory supervision ratios must be met (see Section .1 Supervision)
 - Consider gender issues. Male and female leaders will be required for mixed gender events
 - Any adult who will be on site overnight must have completed the appropriate WWEC screening (see WWEC Procedure Safe Ministry Roles, Responsibilities & Screening)
 - Main leaders must have up to date child protection training (check with the WWEC Administration Officer). Adults onsite who have not completed training are considered to be 'under supervision'
 - All leaders should be recently familiar with the information in WWEC Guidelines for serving in children's/youth ministry (this document)
- Determine in consultation with pastoral team if WWEC's insurer needs to be notified of the event
- Need signed permission slips including provision of emergency contact details and any relevant medical information such as allergies or dietary requirements. This information should be available on the premises of the overnight event
- Ensure basic first aid supplies are available on site, or take one of the smaller WWEC kits. Determine from the permission form if anyone will need to bring or take medication during the event and make necessary provisions. Any medication on site must be in original packaging, and have information included on the permission slip
- Ensure the 'rules' are clearly explained at the commencement of the event.

13. Ministry in schools

WWEC is an approved provider of Special Religious Education (SRE) for our local area. In response to the recommendations from the 2015 Review of Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics, WWEC compiles with the current Special Religious Education Procedures. This document provides important information about teaching special religious education in schools including the responsibilities of all parties, and approval and reporting obligations.

(<https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/ef3d9746-f038-47f4-8907-6a6fa3cb74ca/1/2019-SRE-Procedures.pdf>)

WWEC fulfils the requirements of this procedure and information can be found on our website.

14. Addressing concerns and complaints

On occasions parents, carers, or other people involved in church may raise a concern relating to a matter involving their child, the content of the teaching program, or some other point of concern. In this instance it is important to listen carefully, to receive the information willingly, and not to become defensive or dismiss the person's concerns.

Dependent on the type of concern the appropriate action may include;

- directing the person to report their concern to a WWEC Safe Ministry Contact
- directing the person to speak with the Children's Ministry Team Leader or the WWEC Kids Church Coordinator
- informing the person you will report the concern to the Ministry Team Leader.

15. Disclosure of risk of harm

There may be times where a child or young person discloses information that raises concerns about their safety, welfare or wellbeing. It is important that every person involved in ministry is aware of the definitions of child abuse (see Appendix 1) and when to report concerns.

Confidentiality is an important aspect of relationships with children and young people, however it is important that we make it clear that there are limitations. There are times when you will have a responsibility to report information that has been disclosed to you, even though this may breach confidentiality. This may include:

- when a person is in danger
- when a person threatens to harm themselves or others
- if you become aware that a criminal offence may have been committed.

If you are unsure as to whether a disclosure is a reportable offence the NSW Government have a mandatory reporters guide which assists childrens workers. This can be accessed at this [LINK](#).

In instances where a disclosure raises significant concern for safety, welfare or wellbeing:

- DO stay calm and listen to what you are being told
- DO convey that you hear what they are saying (avoid strong reactions to what you are hearing)
- DO satisfy yourself that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting abuse or risk of harm
- **DO report the incident/concern to a WWEC Safe Ministry Contact as soon as possible**
- DO write a record using the *WWEC Safe Ministry Report* of what you said and what the child or young person said as soon as possible
- DO reassure the child you are there to give support

- DON'T be dismissive of what they have told you
- DON'T reflect back to a child what they are saying (i.e. restate what they have said in your own words)
- DON'T promise not to tell (as you may be obliged to break confidence)
- DON'T ask more questions than are necessary to be clear about what the child is telling you
- DON'T ask leading questions (i.e. questions that suggest an answer)
- DON'T touch the child
- DON'T feel you have to prove what has been disclosed (this is not your role)
- DON'T promise the abuse will stop or that you can resolve the situation
- DON'T discuss the matter with anyone other than the appropriate person
- DON'T notify the parents or caregivers ¹³¹⁴.

¹³ Disclosure of risk by a child/young person guidelines <http://www.psu.anglican.asn.au/index.php/p2/youthworks>

¹⁴ Safe ministry (Youthworks) training manual

Appendix 1 - Child protection definitions

Child or children

A person 0-15 years of age. A young person or youth is a person who is 16 or 17 years of age.

Child abuse

Conduct in relation to a child which is bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, neglect, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or any sexual behaviour with or in the presence of a child including sexual communications and gestures, showing sexually explicit or suggestive material and sexual physical contact.

Child related employment

Employment (paid or voluntary) that:

- primarily involves contact with children AND
- involves direct contact with children AND
- where that contact is not directly supervised by a person having the capacity to direct the employee in the course of employment AND
- in the specific work environments listed in the NSW Commission's Employer Guidelines.

All four criteria must be satisfied for the position to be child related employment.

Conviction

A charge proven in court and recorded as such, including a finding that the charge for an offence is proven, or that a person is guilty of an offence, even though the court does not proceed to a conviction. Those offences included on a person's criminal record which, because of the passage of time and legislative preconditions having been met, are no longer to be considered in any administrative decision making. Sexual offences and child-related personal violence offences can never be "spent" for the purposes of the Working With Children Check.

Ill-treatment

Inappropriate behaviour towards a child involving excessive correction or discipline or supplying prohibited drugs to a child.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child is harmed by the failure to provide basic physical and emotional necessities of life. For example, failure to provide or arrange for adequate and proper food, supervision, nursing, clothing, medical attention or lodging for a child. Generally neglect offences are linked to a person with care responsibilities for a child, such as a foster carer.

Neglect can be ongoing or a single significant incident. However, neglect typically develops as a pattern of behaviour that results in harm to a child over a period of time. For example, accidentally leaving a child locked in a room alone for a short period, and after all standard workplace procedures have been followed, is not considered to be neglect, though it may be inappropriate professional conduct.

When considering whether a child is being, or has been, neglected, it may be useful to focus on the effect on the child. Incidents that do not suggest any impact on the long-term physical, emotional or intellectual well-being of the child are unlikely to constitute neglect.

Person of interest (POI)

A person who has been convicted, accused, is reasonably suspected of, or has admitted to child abuse or sexual offences.

Physical assault

Physical assault must include all three of the following elements:

- It is an act committed on or towards a child; and
- It involves either the application of force to a child or an act that causes a child to think that immediate force will be used on them; and
- It is either hostile or reckless (a reckless act is one where the person would reasonably foresee the likelihood of inflicting injury or fear and ignores the risk).

Actual physical harm does not have to occur in order for an assault to have taken place ie the child does not have to be injured. Physical contact which is an inevitable part of everyday life does not amount to an assault.

Prohibited person

A person convicted of a serious sex offence, the murder of a child, a child-related personal violence offence or a person who has been found guilty of a registerable offence against children under the Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000.

Registrable person

A person who has been found guilty of a registrable offence against children under the Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000.

Relevant record

Relevant records include Relevant criminal records, Relevant Apprehended Violence Orders and Relevant employment proceedings.

Serious sex offence

An offence, involving:

- sexual activity or acts of indecency committed in NSW and was punishable by penal servitude or imprisonment for 12 months or more; or
- an offence, involving sexual activity or acts of indecency, committed elsewhere and that would have been an offence punishable by penal servitude or imprisonment for 12 months or more, if it had been committed in NSW; or
- an offence under section 800 or 80E (sexual servitude) of the Crimes Act 1900, committed against a child: or
- an offence under Sections 910-91 G (child prostitution, other than if committed by a child prostitute) of the Crimes Act 1900 or a similar offence under a law other than a law of New South Wales; or
- an offence under Section 91 H, 578B or 578C (2A) (child pornography) of the Crimes Act 1900 or a similar offence under a law other than a law of NSW; or
- an offence of attempting, or of conspiracy or incitement, to commit an offence referred to in the preceding paragraphs;
- any other offence, whether under the law of New South Wales or elsewhere, prescribed by the regulations.

Offences that are no longer offences in New South Wales are not included. Offences involving sexual activity or an act of indecency are excluded if the conduct constituting the offence occurred in a public place and would not have constituted an offence in New South Wales if the place were not a public place.

Sexual offences include sexual assault, the involvement of children in sexual acts or acts of indecency and any sexual threat imposed on a child. Sexual assault refers to sexual intercourse by a person with a child.