

### **Guidance for Youth and Children's Work about coming back into church.**

The following was discussed and decided at the Diocese Covid planning group on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This is seen as some guidance of how to resume youth and children's work in churches.

#### **Church Services.**

The Church of England guidance says that :

- We warmly welcome all children and young people, they are part of the worshipping body of Christ. Young children should be supervised by the parent or guardian and appropriate hygiene precautions followed.
- Separate children's activities being organised by the place of worship alongside or within a service or at other times during the week should follow principles in the general guidance from the Department for Education on Out of School Settings . (<https://cutt.ly/Rpqj1J7>)
- In outline, these recommend that, to reduce the risk of transmission, children and young people who attend should be kept in small, consistent groups, and of no more than fifteen children and at least one staff member. Children should be assigned to a particular class or group and should then stay in those consistent groups for future sessions and avoid mixing with other groups in your setting.
- If possible, those attending should practise physical distancing in line with the government's current guidance. As the risk of transmission is considerably lower outdoors, providers who normally run sessions indoors should consider whether they are able to do so safely outside on their premises.
- Particular attention should be paid to cleaning frequently touched surfaces by children and those that are at child height.
- Any shared facilities for children, such as play corners, soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean, should be removed and/or put out of use.

Government Guidance specific to younger children

- We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.

What this practically means is :

- Churches can not offer creche facilities or access to toys or play corners. Young children must stay with their parents.
- If Sunday school or youth groups are run during the services then the same rules apply to that of a church service :
  - social distancing for Upper KS2( yrs 5 & 6) and older is a must.
  - frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
  - no singing
  - no use of communal books or bibles

- numbers of children & young people allowed to attend must be limited to the capacity of the venue they are using ( enough room to obey the social distancing rules).
- Within the groups, bubbles should be formed with a fixed membership. This must be a maximum of 15 children / young people per bubble plus the appropriate number of adults to ensure safeguarding requirements are met. In essence, you can not move members from bubble to bubble but you can add new members up to a maximum of 15.
- You can not provide refreshments of any kind and the children/young people should be encouraged to bring their own labelled drink with them.
- All equipment and surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned after the service.

### **Youth events that happen at other times such a socials, small group or evening club.**

Please see <https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Amber-Aware.v2.5.pdf> for guidance from National Youth Association & <https://cutt.ly/Rpqj1J7> for Government advise about out of schools settings.

This gives the overall approach, but a couple of key points to note.

- If you organise social activities please do not provide any food or drink -please ask the young people/ children to bring a packed lunch/tea and drink. At this point you cannot organise a BBQ or Hog roast etc.
- If you meet anywhere outside the church or its buildings or grounds, e.g a local park or public space, you need to:
  - complete a risk assessment
  - get PCC approval
  - ensure you have obtained parental consent
  - inform your insurer, so it is covered by your church insurance.

These must be done every time you organise one of these events.

This guidance does not cover every eventuality but hopefully gives guidance of how we can resume children's and youth work within the diocese.

Thank you all for all the work that you have done to provide innovative solutions throughout the lockdown. Any questions please contact us.

**Rob Dillingham**

**Deputy Director for Apostolic Life**

**July 2020**