



Section 4: Children And Young People

Adopted by MBC Leadership Council on: 27/05/20
Ratified by the Church Membership on [date]

- i) Guidelines for Activities with Children & Young People
- ii) Social Media and Social Contact
- iii) Use of Inflatables / Jumping Castles
- iv) Ministry Information Form

1. Guidelines for Children and Young People

Principles

The following principles underpin all the procedures and guidelines outlined in the section of our child safe policies:

Principle 1: Risk management

It is not possible to eliminate all risk from activities. However, we have a responsibility to be aware of possible risks and to take appropriate action in response.

Principle 2: Never alone

As a general rule, Church staff and volunteers should never be alone (outside of line of sight of another person) with any child or young person unless they are family members. This protects the child or young person from risk of harm, and it also protects the leader. This rule is applicable for Church programs and social contact outside of Church programs. Exception may be made for family or domestic arrangements which are distinct from any role at the Church, such as babysitting, if this is authorised by the parent or guardian responsible.

Principle 3: Accountability

Procedures and systems help staff and volunteers to maintain accountability with the leadership, with the wider church and community, and with parents of children placed in their care. While sometimes cumbersome and time consuming, documenting and practical procedures are vital for holding us all accountable.

Principle 4: Awareness

Although there are procedures in place, it is important for everyone involved in ministry with children or young people to maintain an awareness of potential risks and issues.

Ministry with children and young people involves building relationships of trust, but staff and volunteers should also be aware of the potential for healthy relationships to be misunderstood as an inappropriate grooming relationship. Similarly, staff and volunteers should remain alert to potentially dangerous grooming behaviour by any other staff or volunteer.

Attendance, Permission and Roll Keeping

a) Record Keeping

At MBC, the following table provides details of the types of records kept, who is responsible, and how long the records should be kept for. It is the responsibility of each ministry leader to ensure these records are up to date and provided to the Church office annually for archiving (either in hard copy or electronic form).

These records need to be kept for the identified length of time, ensuring both confidentiality from general access, and accessibility to those in authority when required.

Type of Record	Method	Person Responsible	Archive Length
WWCC numbers & verification	Elvanto	Children's Pastor	Destroy 7 years after the person has left the church, providing the identifying number of the check, expiry date and date sighted by the school are retained in their staff file
Safe Spaces Training (or equiv)	Elvanto	Children's Pastor	Destroy 7 years after accreditation expires or is revoked, or after Safe Spaces Training is discontinued
Child Information Form	Hard copy, (to be entered into Elvanto)	Office Administrator	Permanent Retention (First Nations), 75 years (other)
Safe Ministry Leader Screening Questionnaire	Hard copy (to be entered into Elvanto)	Office Administrator	Permanent Retention
Volunteer Driver Forms	Hard Copy		Permanent Retention
Kids Church Attendance (kids and leaders)	Hard copy sign in/out sheets	Children's Pastor	Permanent Retention (First Nations), 75 years (other)
Playtime Attendance	Hard copy sign in / out sheets	Playtime Coordinator	Permanent Retention (First Nations), 75 years (other)
Kidsfest Kids Attendance	Soft copy via the mbcevents.org.au website	mbcevents web developer	Permanent Retention (First Nations), 75 years (other)
Kidsfest Leaders Attendance	Hard Copy	Children's Pastor	Permanent Retention
Kids Hope Mentor/Child match		Kids Hope Coordinator	Permanent Retention

Kids Hope Daily Diary Sheets	Hard Copy	Kids Hope Coordinator	7 years after the child leaves
Youth Friday Night Attendance		Youth Pastor	Permanent Retention
Youth Leaders Attendance		Youth Pastor	Permanent Retention
Risk Assessments	Hard Copy		Permanent Retention (Child abuse risk), 40 years (asbestos or poisoning risk), 7 years (Other risks)
Incident Reports for all children/youth	Hard copy	Office Administrator	Permanent Retention

b) Attendance

- Children (ages birth to year 6) should be signed **in and out** of all MBC programs and activities where parents leave their children in the care of our staff / volunteers. This includes: Kids Church, Kidsfest, Hands Of Hope
- Children and their caregivers should sign in their attendance at MBC Playtime even though caregivers remain on site
- Youth (year 7 to 12) must sign themselves in at any MBC youth program under the supervision of adult staff / volunteers (eg a registration table manned by a volunteer)
- Staff and volunteers should sign in their attendance at all MBC kids and youth activities including: Kids Church, Kidsfest, Playtime, Hands of Hope
- Volunteers acting on behalf of MBC on site at a school (including Inaburra School, Kids Hope MPS, Breakfast Club MPS, SRE or school lunchtime programs) must sign in as per the school's protocol.
- For extended / overnight excursions or camps, more detailed attendance records should be maintained, including periodic roll call.

Each ministry / program is able to design their own template for attendance depending on the situation, and records must be held for 45 years.

c) Permissions and Forms

Detailed information on each child who regularly attends an MBC ministry or program needs to be obtained from parents. The appropriate form is included in this document, and can be held by MBC as either as a hard copy or in electronic form (Kidsfest). Included is emergency contacts, allergies, relevant permissions for participating and indemnity.

This information is of no use unless is it easily accessible by staff and volunteers at activity level. Therefore, the ministry leader must hold either the hard copies or a print out of relevant information when running the activity.

These forms need to be held by MBC for a minimum of 45 years.

Supervision

General Procedures

Supervision is one big key to creating SAFE SPACES and to minimising risks. A few points to consider when supervising children and young people in an environment:

- Be alert to the whole environment/ room. This means having your back to as few children and young people as possible. Get used to scanning the room regularly.
- Work together! If you see an area not being supervised effectively, jump in and be involved or alert someone who can help out. If children's behavior is becoming unmanageable with one or two people, seek out support.
- Ensure there are 2 people in any area supervising. Don't leave a room with one leader. Support each other.
- Be fully present when supervising. Don't be distracted on a phone or conversing with other leaders about things that can wait until the end.

Toileting Children

Children notoriously need more trips to the bathroom than adults. There needs to be clear procedures for managing toileting in all children's and youth ministries that support safe practices.

- For babies and toddlers in nappies, parents should be sought as the first contact if a nappy change is required. There are currently no Children's ministries where children are left in care without access to parents/ guardians.
- For preschoolers who may require assistance, adults should seek to support them verbally as much as possible (eg instructing what to do next in the process). If they physically require support, the adult/ leaders should ask the child if it's ok to help them, alert another leader that they are helping the child, and provide basic help such as lifting off the toilet, pulling up underwear, and washing hands.
- For older primary age children, children should be sent to the toilets in pairs and leaders should always watch for them returning to the group.
- If a child needs assistance, or behavior needs to be managed in a toilet area, verbal instruction should be given from the doorway, leaving the door open (either with another child or a foot holding the door open). Adults should NEVER enter a toilet area and close the door behind them.
- Where possible, children's and adults' toilets should be separate. Where this is not possible, leaders should wait to use the toilets when there are not children using them.

Leader / participant ratios

When determining how many leaders are required for an activity there are several factors to consider:

- The age of the children
- The activity being undertaken (eg consideration for higher risk activities such as inflatables or water)
- The environment (eg are spaces easily observed or do we require lots of smaller areas to be supervised)
- How many leaders may be required for safe operation and risk minimisation
- How many leaders may be required for building healthy connections and discipling

Ratios required by provided by early childhood services and schools are a good guide if there is uncertainty.

0 - 2 years 1:4
2 - 3 years 1:8
3 - 5 years 1:10
Primary age 1:15

Junior leaders (those who are under 18 years old) can take responsibility for many facets of the program such as Bible stories, planning activities, and leading small groups. However, junior leaders should not count toward the ratio of leaders to participants.

NB - Remember Principle 2 - Never Alone!

Overnight Activities

Where there are activities involving overnight accommodation, consideration should be given to some of the additional risk factors involved, including

- transport arrangements
- sleeping arrangements
- bathroom configuration
- safety and instruction on activities
- third parties involved
- physical safety of external locations

Driving

From time to time, especially in youth ministry, there may be the need to transport children and young people for outings:

- There must be signed parent permission for pre-planned outings / events where leaders/ volunteers need to transport children and young people in a car.
- Where there is an unforeseen circumstance, parents / guardians should be contacted by phone for verbal permission and a form signed retrospectively.
- Children and young people will not be permitted to travel with a Red "P" plate driver during an activity.
- All leaders / volunteers must be at least on their Green "P" plates to be a designated driver. However, black licensed drivers will be used first and Green 'P' plate drivers used only if necessary.
- If there are insufficient drivers and a bus is not available, volunteer parents or others from the Church will be asked to drive.
- Any person asked to transport children and young people must have a WWCC, and have completed a Volunteer Driver Form (Appendix 5).
- Although obvious, all drivers must drive within the law at all times.

Time alone in cars

Staff and volunteers should not be in a car alone with a child or young person unless they are family members. **If there are exceptional circumstances which mean that a child or young person may be at greater risk if not transported in the car** but there are no other people available to travel with them, then the time spent alone in the car must be minimized as far as possible and some additional measures may be taken such as

- the staff member or volunteer receives express permission from parent or guardian;
- a phone call is placed to another leader and maintained throughout the journey

If it has been necessary for a staff member or volunteer to spend time alone in a car with a child or young person then the situation and the circumstances giving rise to the situation should be recorded and the Safe Church Team and/or Ministry Leader should be notified.

Valuing the Input of Children and Young People

We believe that children and young people should be given opportunities to make some decisions about the programs and ministries that they are involved in. Each ministry is unique and should seek ways that children can provide feedback and discuss new ideas for the program. Some examples may be discussion times, surveys and suggestion boxes.

2. Social Media And Social Contact

MBC recognises that social media is a useful tool in communication and innovative promotion of ministries. It does also have the potential to cause harm and to create angst if used incorrectly or inappropriately. The following guidelines should be adhered to when considering content for MBC social media platforms and websites.

MBC currently has:

Church Website	menaibaptist.org.au	Administration by Steve Lawrence
Events booking website	mbcevents.org.au	Hosted and maintained by John Uebel
Public Facebook Page		Administration by Kathy Van Heerdan
MBC Families CLOSED Facebook group		Administration Cassy Eccleston
MBC Youth Instagram account	@amplify_menai	Administration Youth Pastor

General Guidelines:

- For any public websites, and public social media pages (eg Facebook, Instagram etc), there must be signed parental permission for any images of children and young people to be used.
- The administrator is responsible for ensuring that there are consents for any images used of children and young people.
- Families choose to opt into the MBC Families Facebook group, and can leave at any time. Members of this group can post images. These images are not to be used for any other purpose outside the group.
- If anyone in Leadership Council/church attendee takes a photo of adults for the purpose of utilising on a social media or web platform, they must make those in the photo aware of the purpose and ask for verbal consent.
- If MBC becomes aware that any person is uncomfortable with an image used, they will take that image down as soon as possible.

Social Media and Social Contact with Children and Young People

Fruitful Christian ministry with children and young people involves healthy, appropriate relationships. This can at times involve contacting them outside of Church programs and can include meeting in person. While some conversations are private it is important that relationships between staff and volunteers and children and young people are transparent, and that parents, families and program leaders are appropriately informed and have given permission for this contact.

For many Church programs, telephone and online communication are a useful tool for building community and pastoral care and support. However, telephone and online communication may be used by those seeking to harm children, young people and vulnerable people. Telephone and online communication may be used to test or step over relational boundaries. We need to be mindful of the positional power dynamic that exists between staff and volunteers and the children and young people under their care.

Staff and volunteer leaders must not call, send, or post any telephone or online communication that:

- constitutes unlawful discrimination;
- is harassing, threatening or derogatory;
- is obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
- that attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else; or
- is defamatory.

In Person Communication Outside Church programs

Staff and volunteers, when meeting with a child or young person, should:

- have parental or guardian consent, where practicable;
- meet with them in a public place (for example, a café) in line of sight of other people;
- not have children or young people alone in your home, or visit children or young people alone in their home when no other adult is present; and
- make a record of the time, location, duration and circumstances of any face to face meetings with any child or young person.

Telephone and Online Communication outside Church programs

There should be very few situations when adult leaders need to speak to **primary age (up to 12 years)** children by phone or email. If a situation does arise, this must be done through the parent / guardian, using the parent/ guardian's phone number or email, and explaining to them first why you would like to speak to the child. Leaders should not contact a primary age child on the child's mobile unless there is a serious emergency relating to their safety. Leaders should not interact with primary age children through social media.

Phone, SMS, messaging and email contact for children in **high school (13-17 years)** is permissible. Situations can include conveying information about Church programs and/ or encouragement. SMS, direct messaging (eg Instagram DM and Messenger PM), and emails should be retained for accountability. Private videos are not appropriate and should not be part of communication with young people.

Caution must be used when participating with children on social networking sites. You must maintain transparency and be accountable for what you say. You must also take care with the message you intend to communicate through both the words and images you use as it may be perceived differently by those who view it. Staff and volunteers should consider limiting social media contact with children in years 7 & 8, however, if social media contact is made with children in years 7 & 8 the following guidelines are recommended:

- Limit contact to group discussions that can be read by others.
- Consider gender dynamics. For example, you should never have a group discussion where the group of students are all of the opposite gender (for example a male leader should not have an online chat with four of the year 8 girls).
- The history of the chat should be kept. Staff and volunteers should not communicate using social media which cannot be retained.
- Consider privacy settings which prevent personal contacts from seeing or interacting with child contacts connected to your ministry.

- Ensure any text is beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.
- Ensure all photos are beyond reproach and cannot be misconstrued.
- Private contact or conversations with children in years 7 & 8 should be limited to conveying information about Church programs and basic encouragement.

Inflatables and Jumping Castles

For the purpose of this policy, the term Inflatables encompasses Jumping Castles, Inflatable Slides and Inflatable Obstacles.

Menai

Baptist Church recognises that the use of Inflatables as part of organised programs enhances the participation and enjoyment of individuals to whom we are ministering. However, MBC also recognises that this brings moderate risks of accident or injury. Therefore the following procedures need to be followed when any inflatable is part of an MBC event in order to minimise risks to all involved.

As owners of inflatables, MBC also needs to ensure adequate storage, care and maintenance of the equipment as part of minimising risks to participants and those moving and handling the inflatables.

Storage

- Inflatables will be stored in the void of the senior studies area (Inaburra School). There will be no access by students, and the inflatables need to be placed so that they cannot be damaged with passing traffic or equipment.
- When an activity is complete, inflatables must be packed away in their storage bags and returned to their storage area.
- If the slide is used with water or any inflatable gets wet during use, it must be completely dry before returning it to its storage bag. If this involves additional drying time, the coordinator of the event is responsible for organising pack up at an alternate time.

Risk Assessment

- A Risk Assessment must be completed specific to the activity / event.
- The risk assessment should be signed off by one of the MBC pastoral staff.
- A copy of the risk assessment should be given to all volunteers involved in supervising.

Training

- A team of individuals in the church will be trained in transport, handling, set up, pack up and care of inflatables. At least one of these individuals needs to be present when setting up or packing away the inflatables.
- Trained individuals need to instruct others helping in set up / pack up in handling, safe lifting techniques, and care of the inflatables.
- A minimum of 2 people will be used to move inflatables, and additional support will be required for the larger inflatables.

Set Up

- Prior to the activity, the area needs to be cleared of debris, rocks, potholes, overhanging branches and other hazards.
- A well maintained first aid kit must be in the area of the inflatables.
- All cords / leads / anchorage ropes etc need to be covered or flagged as trip hazards.

- The placement of the inflatables should take into consideration traffic flow and collision risks. This includes ensuring participants disembark away from crowds or hazards.
- Inspect the inflatables for integrity (eg stitching, holes, blower and other hazards) prior to use.

Supervision

- Supervision of children and youth on inflatables must be strategic and adequate. While this might differ for each activity, and dependent on the number of participants and inflatables in one area, a minimum of 3 people per inflatable is a good benchmark.
- There should be one coordinating person who can scan the whole environment, and other supervisors monitoring the traffic flow on and off the inflatable/s.
- Supervisors need to ensure participants are following the rules as displayed in the environment. Participants who don't follow the rules need to be asked to find an alternate activity

Rules

- Rules vary depending on which inflatable is used, and if water is involved. The Children's Pastor / Church office can provide a copy of the appropriate rules for each situation.
- Rules should be clearly displayed for both supervisors and participants. Laminated A3 display posters can be obtained from the Church office.
- Rules should be discussed with participants prior to beginning the activity.
- Participants who are not following the rules or who are displaying any other risky behavior should be asked to find an alternate activity

3. MBC Kids and Youth Ministries Information Forms

CHILD'S NAME: _____

D.O..B.: ___ / ___ / ___

What year did / will your child start school? _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION

	PARENT 1	PARENT 2
Name:		
Address:		
Home Phone:		
Mobile:		
Email:		

EMERGENCY CONTACT/S (other than listed above)

1. Name: _____ Relationship to Child: _____

Home Number: _____ Mobile: _____

2. Name: _____ Relationship to Child: _____

Home Number: _____ Mobile: _____

MEDICAL:

Regular Doctor's Name and Contact: _____

Medicare Number: _____

Does your child have any medical conditions, allergies or extra developmental needs we need to be aware of? Please provide details.

CONSENTS:

Medical Treatment Consent: I being the parent/guardian of the above child(ren) understand that whilst every precaution will be taken to ensure the good welfare and protection of my child(ren), Menai Baptist Church (MBC), its staff and volunteers acting on behalf are hereby released from any and all liability in the event of any accident or misfortune, damage or loss that may occur to the child(ren) or their property. In the case of an emergency, I hereby give permission to the First Aid Staff to ensure proper treatment for my child(ren). I understand that every effort will be made to contact me before instituting such procedures. I agree to pay all such doctor, ambulance and hospital fees incurred on behalf of my child(ren). I have detailed any health information about my child(ren) that the First Aid Staff need to know.

Involvement Consent: I being the parent/guardian of the above child(ren) hereby give my consent that my child(ren) may participate in any activities they choose over the course of the MBC Kids and Youth Programs, whether it is games, jumping castles, basketball, etc.

Photography & Video Consent: I being the parent/guardian of the above child(ren) hereby give my consent for my child(ren) to be captured in both photographs and video at MBC Kids and Youth Ministries. Menai Baptist Church reserves the right to use this material for promotional purposes.

Signed: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Thank you for providing this important information. The safety and wellbeing of your child is our primary concern.

Signature of parent / guardian:

Name: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ___