

Upton Vale Baptist Church Additional Needs Policy (Under 18s)

Purpose

Upton Vale Baptist Church seeks to provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment where children and young people of all abilities can participate in the life of the church. We recognise that every child is unique and will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments, where possible, to enable them to access our children's and youth ministries.

About UV Kids and UV Youth

Our children's and youth ministries are overseen by the Children's Pastor and Youth Pastor, both of whom are members of the church staff team and are line managed by the Senior Pastor.

All other leaders and helpers serve as volunteers.

Upton Vale Baptist Church is not a statutory service and therefore cannot provide the same level of support available through schools or specialist agencies. We continue to abide by legislation set out in the Equality Acts 2010 for non-statutory organisations.

Our sessions are intentionally varied, incorporating opportunities for movement, creative engagement, discussion and quieter reflection, recognising that children and young people learn and engage in different ways. We have groups for specific ages and numbers each week can vary.

Working in Partnership with Families

Parents and carers are key partners in supporting children and young people with additional needs. Families are asked to contact the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor before attending where additional support and reasonable adjustments may be required. A meeting will normally be arranged to discuss the child's needs, identify any reasonable adjustments and agree how we can best support their participation. (Personal information will be handled in accordance with the church's Privacy Policy)

Where appropriate, an extended settling-in period may be agreed, allowing a parent or carer to remain with the child initially while they become familiar with the environment. Ongoing communication between the family and ministry leaders is encouraged to ensure support remains appropriate. Where another supporting adult will accompany the child or young person, families should inform the relevant ministry leader in advance.

Support We Can Provide

Responsibility for the care and wellbeing of any child or young person attending remains with their parent or carer.

The level of support we are able to provide will depend on the needs of the individual, the environment, volunteer availability and the safe operation of the group.

Group leaders retain responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone attending. If a child or young person is unable to engage safely with the session, or if their behaviour significantly affects the safety or participation of others, the group leader may:

- ask a parent or carer to remain with the child or young person during the session;
- recommend an alternative arrangement for that session; or
- ask the child or young person to leave the group – under parental supervision - if this is necessary for the safety and wellbeing of those present.

Where this happens during a Sunday service, parents and carers are welcome to use The Link, where the service is live-streamed.

One-to-One Support

Any one-to-one support must be agreed in advance with the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor and is subject to the availability of an appropriately recruited, trained and safeguarding-approved volunteer. The church cannot guarantee that one-to-one support will always be available or offered for children with complex needs.

Final Note

This policy is designed to give clarity as to the usual working arrangements for children and young people accessing Sunday services, mid-week groups or one-off events. Our aim is to provide a collaborative approach with parents/carers as a church community to support all children, where possible, to grow as disciples of Jesus.

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