

# Policy for Children 1-4 years at Cornerstone

## Kids' Space Under 5's

### 1. Introduction

These policies for the running of Kids' Space Under 5's at Cornerstone Community Church come under the Cornerstone Church Trust Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Taken together, they outline our approach to safe ministry at Cornerstone. The goal is to protect children and volunteers whilst running great ministries for children and allowing parents/guardians to benefit from the church's teaching, both mid-week and on a Sunday.

Everyone involved in this ministry on a regular basis will be required to have signed that they have read and agreed to the following information before commencing work.

### 2. Description of Ministry and Leaders

#### 2.1 Ministry Description

Kids' Space Under 5's is the mid-week and Sunday ministries run by Cornerstone Church for children aged under 5 years.

#### 2.2 Leader Role Description

- Ministry Coordinator – A person appointed by Cornerstone to head Kids' Space.
- Ministry Supervisor – A leader who has responsibility for a specific activity and supervises leaders, helpers and children during the activity. The supervisor is accountable to the Ministry Coordinator.
- Leaders – A children's worker who is approved to work regularly in the Children's Ministry. The leader is responsible for the oversight and safety of children placed in their care and is accountable to the Supervisor.
  - A 'Provisional Leader' is a leader in the process of finalising external vetting and safe ministry training. They may be present in a ministry but will be under the supervision of authorised leaders and the supervisor. Responsible for the control and safety of children placed in their care. Reports to and assists the supervisor.
- Helper – A volunteer assistant who helps in a ministry or activity, on a casual basis, where needed to fill a gap in the team. Is aged 16 or older. The helper is accountable to the Supervisor.

All Children's Workers for this ministry must be approved before commencing work. They must wear their lanyard to indicate this.

Other adults may visit the classes to observe but must not be left alone with children without an approved Leader being present. The Ministry Supervisor must approve of adults visiting classes and note who visited to the Ministry Coordinator.

## **2.3 Ratios**

A minimum of 2 children's workers is needed at all times in each classroom. Children are to be supervised at all times when in programs.

Note: These ratios do not take into consideration children with special needs (such as Down syndrome, Autism). The ratios for these children will need to be decided on an individual basis by the Cornerstone Ministry Coordinator, in consultation with the parent or guardian of the child.

If the number of children exceeds the ratio, Supervisors must contact the Ministry Coordinator who then becomes responsible for finding a suitable Leader, Helper or parent to step in. See section 2.4.

### **2.3.1 Ratios for 12 months to 2 years classroom**

One adult is needed for every 4 children (1:4). This fits with legal adult to child ratios in under 5's education.

### **2.3.2 Ratios for 3 and 4 year old's classroom**

One adult is needed for every 5 children (1:5). This fits with legal adult to child ratios in under 5's education.

## **2.4 Use of Helpers**

It is understood that for practical purposes it will be necessary from time to time to have help from other people to fill in at late notice for absentees or to provide extra assistance on a busy day.

These people will be working either in the presence of or under the direct supervision of the Supervisor.

A helper is permitted to assist the ministry up to four times in a calendar year without needing to undergo Safe Ministry training which includes Police Vetting. To assist five or more times within a calendar year, the helper must first undergo Safe Ministry training.

## **3. General Guidelines**

Leaders are not to be alone with children unless there is an unforeseen emergency. If this occurs it should be logged in the Incident Register by the Supervisor.

Careful planning must ensure that at least two adults are present at all times. The supervisor needs to ensure that correct ratios are met and call on help from other adults or leaders if needed. Children's Workers must keep their physical contact with the children to an appropriate level.

## **4. Bathroom policy**

When children need the bathroom, the Supervisor or a female leader must accompany them. Parents are encouraged to change nappies or take children to the toilet prior to signing in their child.

## **4.1 Toileting**

Children should be escorted to the bathroom in groups when possible by the Supervisor or a female Leader. Minimum of 2 children, maximum 4.

Female leaders will need to provide the appropriate assistance for children (such as undoing belts, lifting onto the toilet, etc). Ask the child's permission first before assisting them, as some will be capable of doing it all themselves. If assistance is not needed, the leader should stand at the door to the bathroom to ensure privacy and safety for the child and leader.

Supervisors will perform a headcount after returning from the toilets.

Toileting procedures will be at the discretion of the Supervisor in accordance with safe practice principles.

Leaders and Helpers are all encouraged to use the toilet before and after church. If they need to go while a program is running, they must ensure that they're never alone with a child in the toilets.

## **4.2 Changing Nappies**

Nappies are to be changed in the ministry room by the Supervisor or a female Leader designated by the Children's Ministry Coordinator. Alternatively, a parent is called to change their child's nappy.

## **5. Behaviour Management**

If there are issues with the behaviour of a child the Supervisor shall be involved. If persistent issues arise it will be at the discretion of the Supervisor as to whether to use timeout for the child or to call the parent/guardian.

If there are discipline issues they must be logged in the Incident Register.

## **6. Communication with Parents**

All children will be signed in by a parent/guardian and become the responsibility of those running the ministry. As part of this process the parent will provide a contact cell phone number. Any communication needing to be made with the parent/guardian will either be made by texting or by a Leader being sent to talk to the parent/guardian directly.

The parents/guardians are to sign out their child(ren) when leaving at which point the safety of the child(ren) is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

## **7. Managing of Complaints**

Any complaints received in relation to the programme or its Children's Workers are to be referred to the Ministry Coordinator as soon as possible. If it pertains to abuse, then the Abuse Reporting Procedure must be followed.

## **8. Responding to Incidents**

## **8.1 General Incidents**

All incidents must be recorded in the Incident Register and the Ministry Coordinator to be informed.

Cornerstone will ensure there is a first aid kit onsite. First aid will be administered by an adult with a current first aid certificate. At the direction of the supervisor, parents will be informed of any incidents in a timely fashion appropriate to the severity of the incident.

## **8.2 Contacting Parents in the Event of an Incident**

In the event of a serious incident, the Supervisor will determine the severity of the incident and decide if the parents and Ministry Coordinator should be contacted immediately or if they should be informed of the incident when the child is signed out.

## **8.3 Fire Alarms**

If the fire alarm sounds at any point everyone will evacuate the building and assemble at the dedicated assembly point for the venue. The Supervisor will bring the child register to mark off that all children are present.

## **8.4 Missing Children**


If at any point a child seems to be missing the Supervisor will have a leader perform a sweep of the room and surrounding areas. If the child is not found after a search for the child, the parents should be contacted by phone by the Supervisor.

## **9. Recognising and Reporting Health Concerns**

If a Leader has any significant concerns about the health of a child, including suspected abuse, this must be referred to the Ministry Coordinator as soon as possible.

If the concern pertains to abuse, refer to the [Child Wellbeing & Safety Policy](#) (Section 4)

## **10. Confidentiality and Privacy**

At all times, appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality must be maintained in line with the Privacy Act 2020 and the Cornerstone Privacy Policy  [Privacy Policy Sep 2023.pdf](#)

### **10.1 Photography and Filming of Children**

From time to time, leaders may take photos/videos of children during ministry activities. Any photos/videos taken must be communicated to, and shared with, the Children's Ministry Coordinator. These photos will then be stored securely on the church Drive and leaders will delete photos/videos from their personal phones/cameras. Videos and images stored and used will be in line with parental photography consent.

**Revisions**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comment</b>
21 July 2025	Approved	Significant update
20 Sep 2021	Approved	Changes approved
21 June 2021	Proposed	Major policy review, proposed changes
2 October 2020	Proposed	Additions proposed to sections 2,3 and 4
12 March 2018	Approved	Additions made to section 4 and 8
21 August 2017	Approved	Clarifications made
1 August 2016	Approved	Changes approved as proposed below
27 June 2016	Proposed	Minor changes proposed
23 March 2015	Approved	Minor changes made
23 February 2015	Approved	Full policy review
21 July 2014	Adopted as draft	Minor changes made
29 April 2013	Approved	New document

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to work within the policy framework outlined above. If I have any questions about this policy I will make contact with the Ministry Coordinator.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_