

Guidance for setting up children's liturgy groups

Children's liturgy groups are founded for primary aged school children from 5 years of age to 11 years of age. However, most parishes will expect children who have made their communion to then stay in the main body of church for the whole mass and stop attending children's liturgy, as if they are old enough to understand and receive the sacraments, they are old enough to understand the Gospel and readings in church.

Parents should not attend children's liturgy, if the child is new to the group parents are allowed into the first 2 sessions to settle their child if the child cannot settle in children's liturgy sessions after this without their parents, then they should not attend until they are ready to attend without parents. The catechists for children's liturgy have the same level of DBS check as a schoolteacher and parents would not expect to sit in a classroom with their child, so the same should apply to church.

All group leaders and helpers must be over the age of 18 years and must undertake the full safer recruitment and DBS process with their parish safeguarding representative before taking up role within the group. Groups cannot begin until the DBS process is complete and the parish safeguarding rep has received an email from safeguarding stating they can be appointed to role.

All sessions must have at least 2 adults in attendance if for any reason there is less than two adults, the group session must be cancelled.

The DfE ratio guidance must be followed at all times which is:

one adult leader for every 3 children aged 0-2 years;

- one adult leader for every 4 children aged 2-3 years;
- one adult leader for every 6 children aged 4-8 years;
- one adult leader for every 8 children aged 9-12 years;
- one adult leader for every 10 children aged 13-18 years.

When children and young people are identified as having additional needs that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist care or support, this must be discussed with the child's parent or carer and the child if appropriate. Following the discussions and risk assessment, the group leader should consider increasing the levels of supervision to meet the assessed needs.

There must always be enough leaders on duty to supervise the activity and appropriate cover available to supervise children and young people should the leaders on duty be called away in an emergency e.g. to take a child to hospital. Consideration must be given to unforeseen circumstances arising (e.g. an accident) whereby it is not always possible to

maintain the presence of two adults. For this reason, care needs to be taken in the planning stage when selecting an adequate number of leaders and the venue for activity.

All group attendees should complete the consent form for children and vulnerable adults which can be downloaded at [DBS safe recruitment - Robust selection and appointment processes](#)

Any information held on the young people should be accessible by the group leader, parish priest, parish admin and safeguarding rep. This information should be securely destroyed 5 years after the person leaves the group.

A register should be taken of all adult leaders and young people at every session as well as recording any incidents however minor they may seem, for instance accidents, bullying etc, using the session recording sheet which can be found at the link above.

Safeguarding training can be arranged on a parish or deanery area basis where a need for training is identified, and should be requested by the parish priest via Claire Newton at c.newton@rcaol.org.uk

Risk assessments should be completed where appropriate advice on risk assessments can be sought through the Health & Safety section of the diocese.