



PLANNING FOR SAFE YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

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Youth Group is a fundamental part of the Church. Often, the teen years are the most critical in the growing and strengthening of faith.

Youth games and activities are central to the ministry and involve fun and adventure. It is important to carefully assess any risks associated to such activities and that control measures are established.

It is highly recommended that churches ensure they have safe policies and procedures in place for all ministries, in particular, those with children under the age of 18.

A POLICY IS A COURSE OR PRINCIPLE OF ACTION ADOPTED OR PROPOSED BY AN ORGANISATION.

A PROCEDURE IS AN ESTABLISHED OR OFFICIAL WAY OF DOING SOMETHING.



The checklist will help Youth leaders and volunteers conduct a risk analysis of an activity or event. Riskier activities (those outside of normal Youth games) should be included in the Activity Risk Assessment. These activities may include larger events, concerts, outdoor activities, camps etc. See the COCWA Activity Risk Assessment template [here](#).



PREMISES/VENUE

- ☐ Is the activity covered in the church's insurance? E.g. camps, excursions etc. To find out, email admin@cocwa.com.au
- ☐ What does the set up and pack down look like? Is there heavy lifting involved?
- ☐ Are there slip, trip and fall hazards (e.g. power cords)? How can they be eliminated or controlled?
- ☐ Will the activity disturb neighbours?
- ☐ What is the emergency evacuation procedure?
- ☐ Does the venue have appropriate facilities?
- ☐ If the activity is overnight, have you considered the sleeping and bathroom arrangements?
- ☐ If the venue is multi use, how will you keep an eye on all participants?
- ☐ Are all levels of physical capabilities catered for?
- ☐ Is there a first aid kit and are there first aid trained adults on site?
- ☐ Is the venue in sound condition? Equipment to be used is safe and well maintained
- ☐ Is there direct access to a telephone? Is there mobile reception? How will you alert in the event of an emergency?
- ☐ What is the potential of theft and property damage?
- ☐ Is there potential for intruders or outside parties to enter the premises?

LEADERS

- ☐ Have leaders and volunteers been briefed on the activity/event? What induction and training processes have been undertaken?
- ☐ Have leader and volunteer roles be defined? Are they aware of their responsibilities and accountability?
- ☐ Have all leaders and volunteers been screened for a Working with Children Check?
- ☐ Are there enough leaders for the number of participants? A suggested minimum of two-three leaders per activity
- ☐ Is at least one leader first aid trained and hold a current and valid first aid certificate?
- ☐ How will leaders address any concerns or issues raised by a child or parent/guardian?
- ☐ When leaders are encouraging participants, what physical and verbal contact is appropriate?

ACTIVITY

- ☐ Have parents/guardians been well informed of the planned activity?
- ☐ Have you obtained consent from parent/guardian for the child to participate in all/each activity?
- ☐ What registration procedures are in place? The registration/permission form should include information such as, but not limited to, emergency contact details of two parents/guardians, medical information, pre-existing conditions, allergies, consent etc
- ☐ Do you have an emergency contact for each participant?
- ☐ What incident/accident reporting procedures are in place?
- ☐ Have you obtained consent for the use of photographs and videos to be used on social media?
- ☐ Are the activities appropriate to age group?
- ☐ How will you manage pre-existing medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, anxiety etc?
- ☐ Be sure there are no one-on-one activities. By having safety in numbers, you will maximise the safety of children and leaders alike.
- ☐ If the activity is a body contact activity, what steps will you take to ensure contact is appropriate?
- ☐ Will participants be in one area or many areas? How will you keep track of participants whereabouts?
- ☐ What is the transport arrangement? What are some of the risks if private vehicles are used? What needs to be considered if a bus is hired?
- ☐ If the activity involves water, are there trained lifeguards on duty?
- ☐ If the activity is a team activity, how will teams be selected to make everyone feel comfortable?
- ☐ If the activity is an outdoor event, what procedures do you have in place for the weather? E.g. sun, rain, wind policy
- ☐ If food is being self catered, have associated risks been considered? E.g. food prep and handling, safe temperature storage, allergies, cross-contamination etc.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES AND REACTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

The following outlines what is and what is not considered appropriate in a leader or volunteer role.

IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO:

- raise your voice (unless it is to warn of immediate danger)
- berate, belittle, ridicule or humiliate
- use personal insults or references to personal traits
- physically restrain a child (unless to protect or avoid an accident)
- use any form of physical contact as a disciplinary measure
- isolate a child as a form of punishment
- Create favouritism
- Hug or kiss
- Encourage a child to sit on your lap
- Use any physical contact that may even be potentially interpreted or construed as being sexual in nature or overtone
- Be one on one with a child physically or communicate one on one with a child on technical devices.
- Focus photography and videography on a particular child
- Wear revealing clothing
- Have male leaders present in female specific activities and vice versa

IT IS APPROPRIATE TO:

- Equally encourage and support all participants
- High five
- Hand shake or fist bump
- Gently patting on the upper back in affirmation (not the head)
- Open hugs (side by side, not face to face)
- Make sure you are never alone with a child and that all communication be open and on church devices
- Focus photography and videography on the activity and group as a whole
- Wear clothing that is suitable to the activity
- Where possible, have female leaders to female participants and male leaders to male participants (this is not always possible so plan the activity accordingly)