

## INFINITY

INFINITY IS A GROUP OF YOUTH LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE CITY OF EXETER AND BEYOND WHO ARE COMMITTED TO SEEING YOUNG PEOPLE UNITED WITH GOD, WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH ALL GOD'S FAMILY SO THAT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE MAY SEE THE LOVE GOD HAS FOR THEM. (JOHN: 17 20-23)

TO STAND TOGETHER IN UNITY AND PROCLAIM OUR LOVE FOR GOD.....

### WHAT DO WE DO?

- PROGRESSION...TEACHING, WORSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS
- REVELATION...OUTREACH, INTERACTION AND ANSWERS
- PRAYER AND WORSHIP
- SPECIAL EVENTS, SOCIAL EVENTS, TRAINING
- SUPPORTING OTHER YOUTH EVENTS, PRAYER EVENTS,CAMPS, HOUSEPARTIES ETC.

## INFINITY CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND GUIDANCE NOTES 2003

These notes relate particularly to events which are organised by Infinity rather than by individual churches which belong to Infinity (individual church events will be governed by that particular church's child protection policy).

Infinity takes very seriously the need to ensure that Progression, Revelation, Expression, Special events and Social events arranged by Infinity are safe places for young people to come to and that the safety and welfare of the young people are paramount.

Infinity is essentially a network of Christian youth groups from Exeter and the surrounding region and all Christian youth groups can be part of it. It is quite fluid, is potentially very large and doesn't have definite boundaries. So far there have been new youth groups/youth leaders at all the meetings and they are not necessarily known by anyone. In order to safeguard the young people we need to have an established team who are trustworthy and identifiable, both for talking with and praying with the young people and also to act as stewards/general helpers.

The following policies and guidelines have been prepared in order to safeguard the young people. They will be reaffirmed and, if necessary, updated at least annually and whenever improvements to our practice are agreed upon at an Infinity Team meeting.

### 1. THE INFINITY TEAM

The Chair of Infinity, Hazel P, will be responsible for ensuring that the members of the Infinity Team have been appointed according to the following procedures and for ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is implemented.

All members of the Infinity Team will complete an Infinity Team Registration Form.

All members of the Infinity Team will provide contact details of their minister/church leader so that a reference can be obtained as to their suitability for being part of the team.

Each person on joining the Infinity Team will either provide evidence of an enhanced disclosure check by the Criminal Records Bureau, or a POCALS check, dated within the last three years or agree to have an enhanced disclosure check carried out.

Dave P will act as "recruiter" in terms of checking enhanced disclosures using the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service Disclosure Service. Dave will be the only person who will see the disclosures and will keep them securely.

Hazel P and Sarah K will help Dave with checking references.

All members of the Infinity Team will wear identification badges at Infinity events so that they are easily identified by the young people.

## 2. SECURITY

At each event we will have a least two people responsible for security who will be keeping an eye on who comes in to the meetings and be vigilant during and after the meetings.

The welcomers and those responsible for security will have authority to ask people where they are from and not admit them if they are not satisfied that they are genuine e.g. unknown adults should not be able to walk in off the street. Young people who are just intent on making trouble should not be allowed in at the discretion of those on security.

If anyone sees someone in the meeting who they know to be suspect they are to let Dave or Hazel know.

## 3. DISCIPLINE

In the event of serious behaviour problems, the young person will be the responsibility of their own youth leader with support from other members of the Infinity team where

appropriate. In the absence of the young person's own youth leader other members of the Infinity team will take appropriate action and will be accountable to Hazel.

#### 4. FIRST AID

A list of those team members who are qualified in first aid will be kept in the café.

At Belmont the First Aid Box is located in the kitchen.

In other locations Sarah K will ensure there is an accessible First Aid Box.

A record of any accidents or needs for first aid will be kept in an incident book kept in the café.

In most cases young people will have their own church youth leader with them who will be responsible for their care with help from one of the designated first aiders. For those who are not with their own youth leader, their care will be the responsibility of the Infinity team.

In case of serious accident/illness, Hazel P, with the young person's youth leader if present, will be responsible for deciding on the course of action such as calling an ambulance and the young person's parents.

#### 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety regulations are specific to the venues used and will be available in each venue that is used.

A risk assessment will be made at the relevant planning meetings for any games/activities taking place in Progression/Expression/Revelation.

#### 6. AFTER THE MEETINGS

Many young people will be taken home by parents or youth leaders, particularly those who have travelled a long way.

You need to have parental permission to give lifts to young people. This should be arranged beforehand or by a phone call on the night if necessary.

If you are giving lifts home tell at least one other Infinity Team member who you are giving a lift to.

Don't take just one young person on their own unless there is no alternative.

Always let the young people sit in the back of the vehicle when possible (the car should have seat belts in the back).

## 7. TALKING AND PRAYING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two if possible. One-to-one contact may take place only in a public place and in sight of other adult leaders.
- Always same sex, i.e. two males with a male or two females with a female when involved in praying with young people. If for any reason this is not possible then it should happen in a public place and in sight of other adult leaders.
- Always pray and talk in an open space where others are around. Privacy is a factor but don't go alone.
- Confidentiality is important. They must know that the things they share won't be spread around. However, you must never promise absolute secrecy. A good thing to say is "There might be some things that you tell me that I will need to pass on, but I will let you know who I will be talking to and what I will tell them." This is the best thing we can promise and it leaves opportunity for you to refer to others if necessary.
- Keep calm and honest. Don't feel you have to know all the answers. If you don't know, find someone who does and ask them. Don't be afraid to ask for advice. We are not out to prove anything to anyone. We want the best for them. If you feel out of your depth or unsure, ask someone to help you.
- Don't keep bringing it round to your own experience, i.e. "Yes, I remember when that happened to me and...". Testimony is good but listen.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't appear shocked or appalled. Be sensitive and don't say things like "I can't believe it!", "Why didn't you tell me before?" or "You didn't did you?".
- Don't laugh at them.
- Don't minimise or trivialise the issue even if it doesn't seem important to you. If they need to talk about it, it's important.
- Be aware of your body language and the way you're reacting. Always encourage and affirm. Don't judge or condemn.
- Don't feel you have to wrap it up straight away. Some things may need talking through more. In these cases you should involve another adult. Don't offer to do it on your own or offer the availability of someone else without checking with them.

- If you are told anything illegal you must tell Hazel immediately, who will contact the appropriate body as necessary.
- Don't take on board other people's problems as if they were your own. Remember empathy is standing in someone else's shoes with your feet firmly in your own.
- Do not under any circumstances touch someone inappropriately when praying or talking with them. Remember we need to be above reproach. See guidelines on touch below.
- Follow up. If they are part of a church group, say that you'd like to contact one of their leaders so they can touch base with them to see how they're getting on. Be open about this with them.
- Fill out the "Prayer Ministry Form" straight away if appropriate when you've finished praying with someone. This is best done with the young person with you so you can be open about the details and so you can explain about follow up.
- If you have any positive or negative things to feedback, let Hazel know so that things can continue to improve.

## 8. GUIDELINES ON TOUCH

- \* Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- \* Touch should be related to the young person's needs, not the worker's.
- \* Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the young person rather than the worker.
- \* Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the worker or the young person.
- \* Young people are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances i.e. medical attention.
- \* Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary.

## 9. POLICY FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

- ◇ Infinity recognises sadly that many young people today are the victims of neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

- ◇ If a young person discloses some kind of abuse, follow the guidelines about talking and praying with young people above. Especially bear in mind the need for confidentiality without promising secrecy and the need for calmness and loving acceptance.
- ◇ Don't ask leading questions which could be said to be suggesting ideas to the young person and influencing what they say.
- ◇ Try to write down all the details of what was said within an hour of talking to the young person if possible, in case an investigation is necessary.
- ◇ Tell the young person that you will need to let someone else know (this will be the Chair of Infinity, Hazel P). Hazel and the original team member told of the abuse should be the only people involved.
- ◇ IF IT IS FELT THAT THE YOUNG PERSON AND/OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS MAY BE IN DANGER - SOCIAL SERVICES MUST BE INFORMED.
- ◇ If an allegation of serious abuse is made against a member of the Infinity Team, Hazel must be informed and the police must be informed as soon as possible.
- ◇ In such a situation DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE.

## 10. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Please refer to your own church's child protection policy or to the CCPAS Guidance to Churches for this.