

METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES
CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING AND DISCIPLINE

GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTING CHILDREN

1. Purpose

Pick-up teams have a key role providing the chief means of communication between parents and teachers. Children's attendance may depend as much on their collector as on their teacher so a happy relationship with all the families from which you collect children is important. Collectors may have missionary opportunities with the families because of the contact provided through the children.

Constant, serious-minded attention to the safety and well being of the children is vital. These guidelines together with the Discipline and Child Protection Rules must be observed if we are to continue to have the privilege of so many children at Sunday School.

2. Collection Information

Details of children to be collected are contained in route packs or lists. Collect the pack/list each week, noting any changes or new children. Hand it back in on arrival at Sunday School. Keep your route information up-to-date and accurate, so that, should you be absent, all necessary information is available to your stand-in. Indicating your normal order of collection is helpful.

3. Safety

It is easy to see that our spiritual objectives could be dashed if children were to be hurt or lost. We therefore remind you of the following rules:

- Every minibus must have a helper on board when transporting children.
- Never bring a child to Sunday School without the permission of their parent/s or without having the details required on the registration cards (name, address, date of birth, telephone number) - even if this means delaying their attendance for a week. A dangerous situation could arise if we had a child at Sunday School who became ill and whose address we did not know or whose parents did not know where they are.
- Always advise parents if a child you have collected decides not to come or runs off.
- Always be on time. Children left waiting (whether at the church or on streets and estates) are open to danger.
- Children in the youngest classes should be delivered to their classroom on arrival and collected to go home.
- On returning home, ensure children get into their flats or houses: do not just drop them off and leave them to find their own way indoors.
- Be sensible about physical safety. Keep children in a group and away from roads while waiting for cars or buses. Wait until vehicles are stationary before allowing children to cross in front of them. Keep careful control as children move between vehicles at the church, before and after Sunday School. At all times watch out and be alert for dangerous situations. Once children are in a vehicle, it must not be left unattended.
- Doors must be firmly closed before a vehicle moves off. While travelling ensure seat belts are in use and do not allow playing with doors, leaning out of windows, rough games or behaviour likely to distract the driver. If children persist after a warning, please report the matter to the Transport Coordinator or their department leader urgently. The bus helper must sit in the seat closest to the sliding door and be the first off when the bus stops.

4. New Children

Numbers on the routes will fluctuate over time. Do try to recruit new children as the opportunity arises. If there is unfilled space on a route or requests for collection and no space, then contact the Transport Coordinator or Mission Leader to make them aware.

Only certain routes are suitable for actively recruiting new children; other routes may only recruit younger brothers and sisters of those already collected if there is capacity. In general, we give priority to areas closest to the Sunday School.

Always take a new child with their completed registration card to the New Children's Desk (or mission registrar) on arrival. Ensure that details are correctly processed and record them in your own route

pack. If young, find out which department the child will be in, so that you can collect him/her at the close of Sunday School.

Too many new children (particularly of the same age) on one Sunday can disrupt the atmosphere and be counter-productive. It is better to make a few recruits each week.

5. Misbehaviour

The Discipline and Child Protection Rules must be adhered to by all of our children's workers. Many behavioural problems can be avoided if the rule is 'Prevention is better than cure.' Staff must be punctual. Dangerous situations arise when children are left waiting. Be watchful and ready to avoid and divert potentially difficult behaviour, especially by seating children likely to be unruly separately on entry to the vehicle.

6. General

- Collectors are vital to the work and should be very reliable in weekly attendance. If you have to be away on a Sunday, advise the Transport Coordinator or Mission Leader as soon as possible so that arrangements for another person to collect your children can be made. If it will not be possible to collect children on a particular day, the parents should be informed in advance.
- Relay any relevant information about the children you collect to their teachers. In the case of important or urgent information (eg child seriously ill, family moving, dissatisfaction with Sunday School, discipline problems, etc), let the department/meeting leader know. The name of each child's teacher or department contact name is contained in each route pack.
- Discuss cases of repeated non-attendance with teachers and never stop calling for a child without reference to their department leader.
- Never ban a child – only leaders may take that decision.
- If children swear, insult staff, act abusively to other children or damage the vehicles (eg seating), that behaviour must be referred to the department/meeting leader.
- Aim to fill each seat in your vehicle. If you have vacancies and are on a recruiting route, it may be helpful to canvass other families from the blocks you already visit.
- Those who are standing in for regular collectors and who are not known to the parents should carry some form of ID (eg: a copy of the Sunday School invitation card).
- Encourage each child to bring their Bible.

In past years the Lord has greatly blessed the efforts of our team of committed collectors. Many have sacrificed time and comforts to provide this invaluable service to local children, enabling our Sunday Schools and weeknight meetings to expand to their present size. May this spirit of commitment continue in the days ahead knowing that our labours will not be in vain in the Lord.

Issued by the Elders and Deacons

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