

Diocese of Canterbury

Messy Church Safeguarding

We all have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people; even if we don't have a specific safeguarding role.

It can be an easy mistake to think that because parents and carers are present when you hold your group that safeguarding isn't really necessary. To some degree, you will be viewed as being in 'a position of trust'.

Messy Church operates under the authority of the church, and therefore is covered by Safeguarding Policy of your church. You will need to identify the appointed Safeguarding Co-ordinator of your church, make yourself known to them and share their contact details with those involved with leading your Messy Church.

Messy Churches need to comply with legislation and government expectations with regards to safeguarding. Where abuse is disclosed, witnessed or suspected, it needs to be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers.

- Be prepared to challenge unsafe practice or inappropriate behaviour by adults.
- Record your concerns and share them with relevant people as soon as you can.
- You may need to act/respond within a short timescale – think about whether a child may be at risk of immediate harm.
- Have a list of contact names and numbers for people to report any concerns to.
- Trust your judgment, if something doesn't seem right then act appropriately.

It is our responsibility to provide a safe place for our families to meet, where children should not knowingly be put at risk of significant harm.

Messy Church values are:

Christ-centred

Messy Church is a church, not a craft club, that helps people encounter Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

All-age

It is for adults and children to enjoy together - every element should be relevant and accessible to all ages.

Creativity

It uses hands-on activities to explore Bible stories, to reflect a God of creativity and to give people a chance to play together.

Hospitality

It reflects a God of unconditional love and is a church for people outside church, providing an oasis of welcome and a safe space in which to thrive. Messy Church is about hospitality, expressed most evidently by eating together – whether it's a plate of sandwiches to share, or sausage and mash.

Celebration

It reflects a God of joy who wants his people to have life in all its fullness.

www.messychurch.org.uk

Guidelines for Messy Church session, (INPUT CHURCH NAME) Canterbury Diocese

- Children **must** be accompanied by parent or carer – **no unaccompanied children admitted**.
- One leader to have overall responsibility for monitoring the workshop therefore they should not undertake any specific responsibility for activities.
- External doors to be monitored to prevent any child leaving unaccompanied.
- A register of all who attend must be kept to include names, DOB (child) relationship to child, any special needs, plus contact details for parent or carer.
- Health & medical requirement. Does your child have any specific needs or requirements relating to illness, impairment, behaviour, allergies or other? Please specify and discuss with parent/carer.
- Leaders and helpers in the initial set up of your Messy Church, to be distinguishable. (*by wearing a Messy Church badge, t-shirt or apron*).
- Parent or carer must **sign in and out** of the session.
- Parent or carer has responsibility for their child
- Each activity table is allocated at least one adult helper.
- No children allowed in the kitchen and only adults to move hot food to tables.
- Child-friendly equipment used. (eg. round-ended scissors)