



2023 EDITION

BREAKING THE SILENCE

YOUNG HELPER AGREEMENT

FOR 12–17-YEAR-OLDS SERVING AS YOUNG HELPERS

Providing young people an opportunity to serve in ministry is a great way for them to grow in the Christian community. We need to bear in mind that Young Helpers are not legally adults and so should never be left alone in charge of children. Young Helpers can be a great asset to a children's ministry when appropriately supported and supervised. Adult leaders need to follow the Breaking the Silence Code of Conduct regarding their own interactions with Young Helpers who are still to be considered as young people. Due to consideration of age and year groups, Young Helpers should only be involved in ministry for primary-school aged children or younger. This agreement serves as a safe ministry measure ensuring that Young Helpers are suitably chosen, informed and supported. This meets Standard Five of the Child Safe Standards, which covers all ages: 'People working with children are suitable and supported.'

PURPOSE

1. To protect children and young persons from abuse and prevent inappropriate or unreasonable expectations being made of them.
2. To ensure adult leaders take responsibility for volunteers aged under 18 years in relation to their interactions with adults and children whilst engaged in children's ministries.
3. To ensure that children and young persons are provided with a safe environment in which to engage in ministry activities.

The Bible tells us that Jesus cares about kids and wants them to be a part of His family.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. The kingdom of Heaven belongs to people like them."¹ Jesus then blessed the children.

The Bible also tells us the way that we need to speak to others.

In the book of James, it states: 'Sometimes [the tongue] praises our Lord and Father and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so, blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely my brothers and sisters, this is not right.'²

In Ephesians, we read, 'Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.'³

Use the Word of God as your guide.

'All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.'⁴

¹ Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

² James 3:9-10 (NLT)

³ Ephesians 4:29 (NLT)

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)



WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOUNG HELPERS IN THE CHURCH

This agreement is to assist Young Helpers in understanding what they need to do as Helpers in the church, kids' and youth ministries and activities.

1. As a Young Helper you always recognise that you are a role model to others. Children and other young people will look to you as an example. Your behaviour reflects on what people, children and young people think of **the church**. You need to act in a way that is safe for you and for others.
2. Always talk to an adult leader in the Church if you are worried about a child or young person's behaviour or safety.
3. Always set a positive example to others in the way you relate to them.
4. You will not have a romantic relationship with someone where your role is a Helper in the same ministry as them.
5. As a Young Helper, you will usually help with primary school children and younger children.
6. Always show respect to others through your words and through your actions. Never say disrespectful or hurtful things to or about another person. If someone else is saying disrespectful or hurtful things to or about another person, always let an adult leader know.
7. Always be careful in the way you interact with others in playing games and in greeting and congratulating or showing concern for them.

Make sure that you allow for a suitable physical space between you and others, congratulate with a high five or a verbal congratulations if the child or young person is comfortable with this.

Always make sure you are with 2 adult leaders and that you are always in an area where others can see you and you can be seen by them. Where possible, also be where others can hear you and you can hear them.
8. Always be aware of words or actions that may make others feel hurt, offended or scared. This means you **must not** be involved in behaviour that includes:
 - Asking a child or young person to do anything that they are not comfortable doing. If they do not want to join in an activity, talk to your adult leader and provide a safe alternative or option.
- Making any gesture, action or comment including jokes that makes someone feel uncomfortable.
- Showing someone inappropriate photos, pictures, videos or any other content that would potentially cause that child or young person harm and make them feel uncomfortable.
- Physical contact which makes someone feel uncomfortable or scared. This may include kissing, hugging, touching, pinching, patting or rough physical conduct such as wrestling.
- Touching any private part of the body, including incidents where the touch is meant as a joke or is an accident.
- Giving of special gifts or special rewards to just one or a couple of children or showing special attention to one or a couple of children which could be seen as favouritism or **grooming**.
9. With regard to **children**:
 - You will not visit a **child**, in their own home or have a **child** at your home unless a parent is present.
 - If you are asked to mind a child by a parent outside of the church, always talk to your adult leaders about this.
 - Always make sure that even when you are not in the position of Helper, you will make sure others are able to see that you interact with children and other young people in a way that is respectful and safe and encourage them to be respectful and safe.
 - You will not share personal social media accounts with children and those who are in a group where you are a Helper. All social media interaction will be through an approved account or app that is visible to church leaders and parents of the children and young people.
10. With regard to **adults, children and young people**:
 - You will not be involved in **bullying** behaviour, targeting of an **adult, child** or



young person to cause them distress and humiliation - for example name-calling.

- Always treat your family and friends, including a boyfriend or girlfriend with respect and safe behaviour. Do not behave in a way that is hurtful, including physical hurt, forcing someone to do something they do not want to do, causing others to feel scared of you, saying hurtful things, making people feel disrespected.

11. With regard to adults, children and young people:

- You will not drive a **child** or **young person** as

a Learner or Provisional driver in a ministry context. You must not be alone with a person under your leadership in a vehicle.

Where these requirements cannot be followed in an emergency, the circumstances of the emergency and details of what happened must be reported to the leader in charge.

Any breaches of this Agreement for any reason will be reported to the appropriate leader or Senior Minister as soon as possible who will then report the matter to the CPU.

ADDITIONAL REMINDERS

- If a child comes to you asking for advice about a problem or is distressed, immediately take them to an adult leader of the same sex as the child. They should be in view of other leaders.
- If a child tells you about any kind of situation where they are being hurt or where they are scared, you must tell this information to the leader in charge, a minister; an elder; or if you do not feel comfortable talking to the leaders for any reason, the Conduct Protocol Unit. This includes information about another leader.
- You must never take photos, videos or recordings of anyone, especially a child or young person on church property or at church activities without the permission of the adult leaders and the consent of parents / carers. These should only be shared on the church approved social media and not be shared outside of the closed group. Photos should then be deleted from your phone if taken on your phone.
- If you wish to undertake informal arrangements with families, such as babysitting, you must inform your ministry leader or minister.



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YOUNG HELPER'S CONDUCT AGREEMENT:

- I have read and understood the above Agreement and **Additional Reminders** and agree to follow them.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Family name:		Given name/s:	
Previous names / aliases:			
Date of birth:		Gender: Male " Female "	
Address:			
Suburb:		State:	Postcode:
Phone:		Email:	

YOUNG HELPER'S STATEMENT:

The information contained in this document is correct to the best of my knowledge. If appointed to this role, I agree to be bound by the constitution and by-laws and policies of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I have been given the following Breaking the Silence documents and details (please tick):

- Speak Out Seek Help** Booklet
 Job Description

I confirm that:

- If I have ever been accused, charged or convicted of a criminal offence or had allegations made against me in relation to abuse or misconduct, I have disclosed this to my senior Minister or the person nominated to administer this form.
- I will familiarise myself with any specific safe ministry protocols that have been put in place for the activities will be assisting with.
- If I fail to abide by the young helper agreement, I will inform my leader in charge, the senior minister or the Conduct Protocol Unit at the earliest opportunity.
- I understand that any breach of the safe ministry agreement may lead to being suspended or terminated from holding any role in relation to working with children, youth or other vulnerable persons in church ministries.
- If I am undertaking ministry to children at the time I turn 18, I will promptly undertake the BTS process to be screened, trained and reappointed by my church.

Young Helper's name:	
Young Helper's signature:	Date:



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PARENT / CARER CONSENT:

I consent to my child:

- being appointed as a Young Helper in the Presbyterian Church, and
- providing the above agreement in connection with their appointment.

Parent / Carer's name:

Parent / Carer's signature:

Date:

SUPERVISOR'S AGREEMENT:

Activity / Program of involvement:

As the leader responsible for supervising and supporting the Young Helper:

- I understand the conditions and provisions of their involvement.
- I acknowledge the limits of their responsibilities and will ensure that the tasks given to them are appropriate.
- I acknowledge that as a minor, they cannot be relied upon to supervise other children and young people.
- I will ensure that the Young Helper is never put in a position where they are alone with the children, or alone with a sole adult leader.
- I will ensure that the other adult leaders are reminded of this too.

Supervisor's name:

Supervisor's signature:

Date:

The completed and signed agreement should be held by the local Session and a copy sent to the Conduct Protocol Unit of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW.

Special thanks to the Professional Standards Unit (Anglican Diocese of Sydney), Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT, and Australian Human Rights Commission for allowing us to adapt and utilise their resources.