

Welcome to *Connect* - Information Sheet

Connect is run by members of Ainsdale Village Church. Its aim is to provide a safe place for young people to meet up and make new friends. The group is open to children aged 7 -11 (within school years 2 to 6) and meets each Friday within term time from 6:00pm till 7:30pm.

The Connect Team

The team is made entirely of volunteers. A list of our current leaders and helpers can be found on our page of the church website. They will not all be present at every session; some you will see most weeks, others only occasionally.

The “Small Print”

Connect is a group led by Christians and is based around a Christian ethos. We aim to provide an opportunity for children to learn about God and the Bible in a fun and interactive way. We also encourage children to explore and develop their own ideas about faith.

To ensure we can offer as safe an environment as possible there is a cut off number for the amount of children allowed to attend each session. This is decided on a weekly basis based on the number of leaders available and in keeping with our safeguarding policy ratio up to a maximum of 40 children.

Each child is required to be **signed in and out from the church by a parent or guardian**. Please inform us on arrival, if your child will be collected by someone else. We are also unable to let children leave by themselves without written consent signed and dated by their parent/guardian.

Weather permitting, we like to make use of our beautiful garden during the summer and autumn months. It is however a community garden and therefore open to the public. There is a space for you to give/decline permission for your child to play outside on the registration form.

We operate based on mutual respect between the leaders and children. All children aged **7-11 within school years 2 to 6** are welcome to attend Connect on the condition they can agree and abide by the following expectations.

- They are respectful towards the leaders and helpers, do not talk over them or ignore instructions.
- They do not use inappropriate language.
- They are not intentionally disruptive or disrespectful during group sessions.
- They do not bully or cause harm (physically or mentally) to any other member.
- They respect the church building and grounds and do not cause any intentional damage.
- During the colder months, sessions will take place inside – during these sessions running around and excessive shouting is NOT permitted.

It is important that your child knows and understands if they are repeatedly unable to meet these expectations, they will be asked to leave the group. In this eventuality, the parent/guardian will be notified by letter (either paper or email) with an outline of the reason(s). If, at a later date, your child felt they were now able to abide by the group's expectations, they would be welcome to return.

Additional Information

Subs are £1 a week and this is expected to be paid at the start of each session. This money is used to buy games and supplies for the group.

For the tuck shop we recommend children bring their money in a secure purse/wallet (preferably with their name on it).

We advise that children do not bring any electronic devices such as mobile phones. If they are necessary, please ask your child to leave them at the tuck shop for us to keep safe until the end of the session. - **Connect will not be held responsible for any thefts, loss, or damages.**

We love to share good news as a group. If your child has anything they would like to share please let us know when you sign in.

Leaders wear red lanyards and visitors and young leaders wear yellow lanyards. If you need to talk to a member of the team please request to speak to a "Team Leader".

Please ensure we have your current mobile number and email address (if applicable). Should a session need to be cancelled for whatever reason, we will notify you by email in the first instance.

And finally...We hope your child enjoys *Connect!*

Please complete a registration form and sign at the bottom to indicate that you have read and understood this information sheet and that you and your child agree to the terms for being a member of Connect.

We recommend retaining this information sheet for future reference.

Safeguarding at Connect

We believe that children deserve the best care that the church can provide and that it should be a safe place for everyone involved. That is why we have produced our own Safeguarding Policy which applies to all children who attend our Church and Youth Group. On the Church Vestibule notice board, you will find our Code of Conduct which all our volunteers adhere to and must sign. Those who lead and help at the Youth Group, from the Fire Officer to the Tuck Shop helpers are there to protect your children in a fun environment with a Christian ethos.

If you want to read more about our Safeguarding Policy, just ask one of our volunteers who will let you read the Code of Practice which we keep on the premises.

There are rules regarding ratios of children to helpers for different age groups, so our Church Deacons arrived at a ratio of 7:1, i.e. 7 Children to one Adult. That does not mean that one adult will continually follow 7 children around; it is an average and in addition to any Registration or Tuck Shop Assistants. This provides added safety for your children. There will also be Fire Drills, for your Children's Safety and your peace of mind.

Jenny Boulton (Safeguarding Officer)