

Welcome to **CONNECT**

Information Sheet

Launched in April 2012, 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 all our current leaders and helpers can be found on our page of the church website. They will not all be present at every session. The team provides enough people who can give their time to ensure we keep to the correct ratio and keep your children safe. Some volunteers you will see most weeks others not so often.

The “Small Print”

Connect is a group led by Christians and as such it 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 number of 40 children.

Each child is required to be **brought to and collected from the church every week by a parent or guardian**. We also ask that they are signed in and out. This is to ensure their safety, and we will not allow children to leave by themselves. It is important that you inform us, when you bring your child, if they will be picked up by someone else.

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, particularly during worship.

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 children not to bring any electronic devices such as iPods/mobile phones. If they are necessary, please ask your child to leave the items 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.

Please ensure we have your email address (if you have one). 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 would also recommend you retain 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 the Registration people and 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)