



Safer Working Practice Guide: Letchworth Garden City Church



Safer Working Practice Guide

This Guide provides advice on good practice,
which is the main way that children and young people are protected

The advice found in this Guide should be followed as closely as possible

A digital version of this file can be found at: mylgcc.com/safeguarding

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Safer Working Practice Guide for Workers (Paid and Voluntary)

This Guide is supplied as a standalone booklet so that all workers with children and young people own an individual copy.

Children and young people are best protected when the people who are working with them do not feel isolated. Letchworth Garden City Church will encourage all paid and voluntary workers to attend suitable training, which is arranged by LGCC.

Section 1 – Code of Behaviour

All church workers (paid and voluntary) who wish to work with children and young people should:

- Treat all children and young people with dignity and respect, in attitude, language and actions
- Use age-appropriate language, and consider their tone of voice and body language
- Learn to control and discipline children and young people without physical punishment (using physical discipline and punishment is illegal for children and youth workers)
- Avoid, wherever possible, being left alone with a child or young person. When such a situation is necessary or inevitable, it is essential that the child and leader are visible to others (e.g. a door should be left open). Best practice would be to move to a space populated with other leaders
- Obtain additional adult help (if needed) in situations where a worker is alone with a child (e.g. small Sunday school classes). Ensure another member of the team is notified when alone with a child.
- If known in advance, seek a parent's permission if a child or young person is to be seen on his or her own. Another adult must be nearby, and the child or young person must know this
- Only counsel or mentor children and young people of the same sex (i.e. male to male, female to female). Where this is not possible, then another adult (preferably of the same sex as the child or young person) shall be present during the interaction
- Ensure that when they need to see a child or young person off the church premises outside of normal activities, they always do so in a public place
- Consider how many workers should be involved with the group, and whether they have adequate male and/or female workers to safely run the group
- Respect (at all times) the privacy of children, avoiding questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments
- Ensure that another adult is informed if a worker needs to take a child to the toilet. The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs. For reception aged children to year 6 where practical, male and female leaders with male and female children respectively, allow children to use the bathroom cubicles independently whilst ensuring overall safety by remaining outside the main toilet entrance. For creche aged children, please see Section 9



- Speak to parents of children under 2 years old who aren't toilet trained. The expectation is that a parent/guardian attends to them, rather than the worker

All church workers with children and young people **should not**:

- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child or young person, even in fun
- Touch a child or young person inappropriately or obtrusively (including tickling)
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- Invade a child or young person's privacy whilst washing or toileting
- Entertain excessive attention seeking from a child or young person towards themselves, that is overtly physical or sexual in nature
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or young person
- Show favouritism to any one child or young person, or certain group of children or young people
- Allow unknown adults access to children (visitors should always be accompanied by a known person)
- Allow unknown adults to give children or young people lifts
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own. If this is unavoidable, ask the child or young person to sit in the back of the vehicle
- Invite a child or young person to their home, and certainly not alone
- Leave a child alone outside the church without adult supervision. Always ensure a known person will collect the child



Section 2 – Appropriate Touch

Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature. In specific reference to types of physical contact, it is important that the conduct of workers is not misconstrued as abuse.

One of the aims of Letchworth Garden City Church's Safeguarding Policy and Safer Working Practice Guide is to ensure church groups provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and young people, whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. All workers must work with (or within sight of) another adult.

The following guidelines should be adhered to in regard to physical touch:

- Keep everything public, and avoid being on your own with a child of any age. A hug in the context of a group is very different to a hug behind closed doors
- Avoid unnecessary informal touching including tickling. Consciously avoid touching the child in areas of the body that would be covered by a swimming costume. Touching the leg above the knee is also generally not acceptable
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's need. If you believe a child may have been abused, it is important to avoid any physical contact until they learn the difference between 'good' touching and 'bad' touching
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker. Avoid face-to face hugging. Instead of a face-to face hug, try an arm on the shoulder 'sideways hug'. This satisfies the child or young person's need for closeness whilst avoiding inappropriate physical contact
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child
- Children or young person may sometimes need comforting. In such situations, make sure they are responded to warmly but with other adults around
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention
- First Aid should be administered with others around. When giving First Aid (or applying sun cream, etc), encourage the child to do that which they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary
- Very occasionally it may be necessary to remove a child or young person from a situation who is harming themselves or others. Use calm but firm language with clear instructions to defuse the situation. If the situation cannot be defused and physical restraint is needed, use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported to the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator

Section 3 – Inappropriate Behaviour by Children or Young People towards Adults

Children or young people can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult. They may have a “crush,” and attraction, or may act inappropriately following previous abusive experiences.

This behaviour may also be a “cry for help”.

If an adult feels uncomfortable about a child or young person’s behaviour, he or she must:

- Make it clear to the child or young person, with sensitivity, that their language or behaviour is inappropriate
- Tell another team member. Agree what measures should be taken to prevent a recurrence
- Record the incident using the Incident Report Form in case accusations are made in the future. Sign and date the record and hand it to the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator

Section 4 – Recommended Staffing Levels

The minimum required staffing levels (according to OFSTED) for children’s groups are given below. More help may be required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

0-2 years	1 person for every 3 children (1:3)
2-3 years	1 person for every 4 children (1:4)
3-8 years	1 person for every 8 children (1:8)
Over 8 years	1 person for the first 8 children, and then one extra person for every extra 10 children (1:8, + 1:10)

Each group should have at least 2 adults, and it is recommended that wherever possible a gender balance be maintained. If groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with doors open, one person per group is permissible.

No person under 16 years of age should be left in charge of any children of any age, nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at anytime. They should not be counted as a 'worker' when considering staff/child ratios.

Each group that is run for (or involves) children and/or young people must use some form of registration process to ensure there is a safe and secure record kept of attendance. It would also be best practice to ensure that leaders are appropriately identifiable, preferably with badges, lanyards or group uniform (i.e. T-shirts or polo shirts).

Adults asked to help on a very occasional basis may be seen as visitors, but must be accountable to an appointed worker. If they become part of a regular rota, they should become part of the team and be properly appointed through the normal recruitment process and undergo a DBS check.



Section 5 – First Aid Box

There are a number of First Aid boxes around Letchworth Garden City Church, located in every main room. Additionally there is an AED (defibrillator) located in the lobby of the rear toilets (close to Room 2).

In instances that require a First Aider, please contact one of the named First Aiders for LGCC that are named on the posters located next to each first aid box.

- In the case of an accident or injury, only basic details should be entered into the record log (such as your name, the date, what first aid items have been used), which is located in the First Aid box
- In all instances, the Accident Form must be completed. These are located at the Information Hub, Small Building entrance and in each Kids Resource Folder
- Please completed **all** fields of the Accident Form, sign and date, then hand into the ministry leader or a member of the LGCC Office Team
- Should further action be required i.e. should a child need to be admitted into hospital, then the person responsible for health & safety (Martin Gardner) is to be notified and take the relevant action required. If there is no further action, the report can be filed away in a locked cabinet (as per the Data Protection Act)

5.1 HIV/AIDS

Since workers may not know that a child may have HIV or AIDS, it is good practice always to take the necessary precautions. Good hygiene should always be practiced.

Disposable latex gloves and a disposable apron should always be use when dealing with broken skin, body fluids and faeces.

Confidentiality regarding a child's HIV status should always be maintained.



Section 6 – Transporting Children and Young People

These guidelines should apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children and young people, organised by or on behalf of Letchworth Garden City Church. They do not apply to private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between parties with parental responsibility.

The advice on transporting children and young people is as follows:

- Only those who have gone through Letchworth Garden City Church’s recruitment procedures for workers should transport children
- All drivers must have read Letchworth Garden City Church’s Safeguarding Policy, and agree to abide by it
- Parental consent must be given, and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the leadership of Letchworth Garden City Church
- The driver must hold a full driving licence, have adequate insurance and the vehicle must be road worthy
- Having checked drivers, (application form, interview, references etc) it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Consideration could be given to dropping off the least vulnerable child last and plan routes accordingly
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn’t convenient to talk there and then, but arrange to meet the child or young person at a location where there are other adults around
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle, it is good practice to insist children stay in the same groups on the outgoing and return journey. This will avoid the confusion over whether a child has been transported home or, at worst, left behind
- If travelling in convoy with cars and minibuses, please note that the maximum speed for a minibus is 50mph on single carriageway roads, 60mph on dual carriageways, and 70mph on motorways
- At collection or drop-off points, do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by one of their designated adults
- It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular child e.g. where there has been a disagreement, or where a child or young person has any variety of former history with the driver
- If parents are transporting their children (e.g. to and from activities), ensure that all are made aware that such arrangements are the responsibility of the parents involved and not the church or organisation
- Thirtyone:eight recommends that when using minibuses for transporting children, seatbelts should be fitted for all passengers. This is compulsory for vehicles registered on or after 1/10/01

Regulations governing the use of child restraints came into force on 18th September 2006. From that date, all children carried as passengers in cars are subject to the following rules:

- Children under three years of age must have the correct child restraint (exceptions include taxis and private hire vehicles)



- All children between the ages of three and before they have reached twelve years of age, unless the child is over 135cm in height, must use the correct child restraint (exceptions include where a child travels in a taxi, or private hire vehicle, over a short distance in an unexpected necessity, or where two child restraints are already fitted preventing a third from being fitted)
- Children over 135cm in height or aged 12 or 13 must wear adult seat belts if fitted
- Passengers over 14 years of age must wear adult seat belts where fitted (it is the passengers responsibility and not the drivers for ensuring this)
- An additional consent form (which is distributed before any outing that includes vehicular transportation) should be signed by parents and guardians to explicitly permit the transportation of their child by a qualifying worker of Letchworth Garden City Church

Section 7 – Praying with Children and Young People

These guidelines are for workers to adhere to when praying with children and young people, and to set boundaries for children and young people when praying with or for each other. Praying for children and young people involves offering acceptance, respect, non-judgemental listening, sensitive responses, discernment and patience.

If there is a general invitation for people to come forward for prayer in a family service, then it may be helpful to ensure that there are children and youth leaders available to pray for the children and young people if necessary.

- Ask the child what they are requesting prayer for
- Speak quietly and calmly, never shout or raise your voice
- Don't laugh or dismiss out of hand if they are praying for something you consider trite or irrelevant (e.g. my cat's poorly)
- If they do not have specific needs or requests then simply ask God to bless them
- Be aware that a child may want prayer for a specific reason, which can offer an insight into underlying situations (e.g. following a sermon on David and Goliath, children and young people may want prayer for the intimidating giants in their lives. This could be an indicator of bullying or abuse)
- Those praying with children and young people should always be alert to any child protection issues and not forget about or delay doing anything about child protection because they are praying
- If you have prayed for a specific issue, it may be helpful to write it down after praying and give it to the child so that they can let their parents know and remember it themselves
- Explain all your actions to a child or young person and always use clear and simple language (for example, some children may not feel comfortable or understand the use of the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues).
- Refrain from any action which may cause confusion or distress
- If a child or young person becomes distressed, cease to pray. Act calmly and talk with them to ascertain what has caused the distress. Talk to another leader if appropriate before continuing to pray. Consider with whom the child might feel more comfortable. Are there any gender issues? If unsure, cease praying and talk to the child's parent(s) later

7.1 Seeking Permission

- Ensure that parents are aware that you are praying for their child and that prayer is part of your service/ programme (In some cases parents will not be present so you will be unable to obtain consent)
- Always seek the child's permission to be specifically prayed for

7.2 Environment

- Always pray in an open area with other children and leaders around
- Consider your height in relation to the child/young person



- Get down on their level - don't tower over them. It can be good to sit down with the child
- Don't crowd the child or young person

7.3 Touch

- Avoid placing your hands on the child or young person's head as they may find this overpowering
- Seek permission before placing your hand on their shoulder

7.4 Confidentiality

- Never promise total confidentiality should a child or young person wish to disclose to you a situation within a prayer ministry context. You must give them clear boundaries, as you may need to refer a matter to a GP or Statutory Authorities

7.5 "Deliverance Ministry"

- Never allow a leader or child or young person to engage in any activity that may be regarded as "deliverance ministry" - it is inappropriate in the context of children's activities and youth groups

7.6 Language

- Use clear, easily understandable language
- Reflect back what the child has said to you, to show you have understood their prayer request. If a child says they are feeling tired, you could reply, "Let us pray for you as you are feeling tired," rather than, "I understand that you are depressed, so let's pray about that"
- Keep language simple and short when praying, and generally keep prayers short. This will help the child or young person's understanding and engagement

7.7 Giving Advice

- If a child or young person appears to present as being in a distressed state, avoid giving advice about specific problems at this time as they could be very susceptible to suggestion
- Be careful how you advise them if you believe you have heard from God about their situation. It is better to hold that in your spirit, asking God to help you deal wisely with the issue without specifically framing it prophetically, or even mentioning it at all to the child or young person. However, we advise speaking to the session leader and/or ministry leader
- Never advise a child or young person to stop taking medication or cease seeing professionals involved in their care or welfare

Section 8 – Workers Communicating with Children and Young People

All children and young people need to be aware of the protocols that workers follow in relation to email, social media, messenger services and mobile phone usage.

It is important to remember that as well as parents and guardians, children and young people have a right to decide whether they want a church worker to have their email address or mobile telephone number, and shouldn't be pressurised into divulging information they would rather keep to themselves.

Workers should not show favouritism to children and young people in relation to communication technologies e.g. communicating less with those who don't have a computer or mobile phone, offering to pay for a child's top-up card, engaging in private communications on social media, etc.

8.1 Email

Email is a useful tool often used by workers to remind children and young people about events and meetings (e.g. times, dates, themes etc). If email is being used workers should consider the following:

- Ensure messages are in the public domain by including a third party recipient. This method of accountability should provide workers a deterrent from sending bullying, insulting or abusive emails
- It is important workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation, and although it should be obvious when an email is ending, workers should never use inappropriate terms such as "lots of love" to conclude a message
- Children and young people can find it easier to communicate via email because nobody is physically present. Workers therefore need to be careful when using such platforms of communication

8.2 Communication via Social Media, including E-Safety

Under Section 7 (p15-17) of Letchworth Garden City Church's Safeguarding Policy, there is a comprehensive guide to safe and appropriate electronic communication with children and young people (via social media and when using smart devices) entitled E-Safety Policy.

Within it there are many robust and practical guidelines for those working with children and young people that directly relate to electronic and internet-based communications.

Letchworth Garden City Church considers their E-Safety Policy extremely important and of particular relevance – as social media and ever-developing technologies for communication progress and advance rapidly.

For the sake of unnecessary duplication, this E-Safety Policy will not be re-written here, but we strongly encourage you to re-read Section 7 of the Safeguarding Policy as you go through this Safer Working Practice Guide.

8.3 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are one of the most popular ways of communication. They can be used anywhere, at any time and are far more difficult to monitor. Therefore, particular diligence needs to be applied when workers use mobile phones to communicate with children and young people.

- Workers should keep a log of significant conversations and/or texts. Alternatively, the church could consider supplying the worker with a phone and obtain itemised phone bills



- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be passed on to the worker's supervisor. If they are of serious concern, or implicate the worker's supervisor, they should go directly to the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator
- Workers should use clear language, particularly when texting. They should not use suggestive or ambiguous words or abbreviations, such as 'love,' or abbreviations like 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love'
- Most mobile phones have digital cameras. Workers should ensure they follow the guidelines on page 15.



Section 9 – Crèche Procedures

Our Crèche is part of Limitless Kids, and has two areas: 0-2s and 3-4s.

The aim of these groups is to provide a safe and caring environment for babies, toddlers and young children to experience and learn about the love of God. A mixture of play, stories, songs and prayer achieves this.

- Please note, for babies aged under 6 months require a parent or guardian to be with them at all times within these groups

Nappy changing

- If a child needs changing, please notify the parent

9.1 Toileting Procedure

Male and female leaders and helpers can take children to the toilet, but please be aware of the following:

- Male leaders and helpers may take boys to the male toilet, as well as taking girls (but taking girls is not best practice, unless they are taking their own daughter to the toilet)
- Female leaders and helpers may take girls to the female toilet, as well as taking boys (but taking boys is not best practice, unless they are taking their own son to the toilet)
- If you are taking children to the male or female toilets, please ensure that there are no other males in the male toilet (and females in the female toilet) prior to the children going into the cubicle
- If taking children to the toilets, please ensure that you notify another leader within your zone that you are taking children into the relevant toilet
- Let the children go into the toilet, but leave the main toilet door open, waiting outside for them ready to escort them back to their zone
- Children in this age group may still require some assistance with toileting. Please assist appropriately, whilst encouraging the child to be as independent as possible

If a parent needs to be contacted regarding toileting, please use the sticker number and communicate this to the Tech Desk in the Auditorium.



Section 10 – Making and Publishing Images of Children and Young People

Making and publishing images of children and young people is an activity usually enjoyed by children and parents, and can bring useful publicity for the church and relevant ministries.

However, there are some important issues to note, which are the same for still photographs, digital images or video (regardless of the particular technology used). For sake of brevity, this guide uses the collective term “images” for all types of visual recording listed above.

Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998. Therefore, good practice is as follows:

- Photos should only be taken by the designated Leader/s
- Obtain consent from parents and children before making images. Consent is not required in writing if the images aren't being publicised in any way. However, if they are going to be publicised locally, in a geographical region or electronically, specific consent must be obtained
- If the event is an open event, such as a church service, nativity play (or something similar), then a verbal notice can be given out at the beginning by the leader of the service or event, asking that any parent or guardian who objects to images being made of their child should remove the child from view of the camera or approach the leader afterwards and ensure any images they object to are not used
- Where possible each child should be part of a group
- If the photograph is to be published, avoid naming the child. If a name needs to be used, it should only be a first name
- Be clear about whether the image is to be retained for further use
- Store the image securely and dispose of it when it is no longer required
- If photos are taken on a mobile phone, please send them to media@mylgcc.com and delete them off the device



Section 11 – Responding to a Child or Young Person wanting to talk about Abuse

Over time, church workers may get to know the children and young people in their groups very well. A child or young person may feel like they can trust a leader or worker enough to be able to talk about unpleasant situations in their life (at home, at school or at church). This is both a privilege and a responsibility.

If a child asks to talk in confidence, always tell them that will depend on the circumstances discussed. It will be necessary to get the right people and authorities involved if they are being harmed.

11.1 General Points

When responding to a child or young person, a list of good practices below can be followed:

- Listen to the child attentively
- Maintain eye contact
- Allow the child to talk **but don't press for information**. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen
- Tell the child they are not to blame for anything that has happened
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told so we can help them – don't promise confidentiality
- **Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance**
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (using language they can understand)
- **Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child talking to you (don't do this whilst they are talking to you). Please report this using the Safeguarding Incident Report Form.**
- Ensure you include in your notes the following: the child's name, address and date of birth, details of other children in the family home, whether the child and parents are aware of the referral, reasons (why, when and what) for the referral, the type of abuse being reported and any action taken
- Write down exactly what the child said and when she/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity)
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed
- Contact the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer of Letchworth Garden City Church, before contacting agencies such as Thirtyone:eight for advice
- The Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer will then consider if this concern requires a referral to Children Social Care, or the Police, to prevent the Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult returning home if they are considered to be at serious risk of further abuse.
- Records should be kept securely for an indefinite period, after being handed to the Church Office

Section 12 – Guidelines for Discipline

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

It brings security, produces character, prepares for life and is an expression of God's love for an individual. (Hebrews 12:5-12 & Proverbs 22:6)

- Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding for the children and young people in your care
- Work on each individual child and young person's positives, and do not compare a child with another. Rather, encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks
- Build healthy relationships with children and young people and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect them to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself
- Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children and young people attention, and resist allowing demanding children and young people to take **all** your time and energy. However we must also be aware of the needs of those seeking attention
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation
- If children and young people are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly
- **Never** smack or hit a child or young person, and don't shout. Change the tone of your voice if necessary
- Discipline out of love, never out of anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely)
- Lay down ground rules (e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property), and make sure the children and young people understand what action will be taken if not kept
- Every child and young person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore, each person should be dealt with on an individual basis
- Some children and young people have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. Try to engage them with encouragement and involvement.
- Have a disruptive child or young person sit right in front of you, or get a helper to sit next to them
- If their disruptive behaviour persists, warn them and only separate them as a last resort for a short period of time, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging their strengths
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active, rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation
- Remedial action can be taken against a seriously disruptive child or young person. They can be warned that you may speak to their parents or guardians about their behaviour. The Ministry Leader may deem it necessary to ban a child or young person from attending the group for a period of time as a final resort



Section 13 – Record Management

A register of children or young people attending a club or activity should be maintained, together with a register of helpers. This includes sign in and sign out.

A designated person will make a note of other people in the building (e.g. maintenance person, visiting speaker etc) and any other events taking place at the same time.

Workers should write down unusual events or conversations using the Safeguarding Report Form, recording what they witnessed. This may be very helpful, for example, if leaders have to deal with a difficult child who subsequently makes an accusation of assault.

A young person who repeatedly makes throwaway sexual comments about workers may, at a later date, make an allegation of abuse. In this situation, records of previous examples of this behaviour would enable any allegations to be seen in context. Patterns of behaviour or concerns might also emerge from records that might not otherwise be so obvious. For example, bruising noted on a regular basis or a number of young people making similar comments about one worker that raises concerns. Other information might include records of incidents such as fights and the action taken. The Incident Report Form log can protect both children and workers.

All children and youth groups must maintain an up to date record of each child with name, address, contact telephone number and an emergency number. They must keep a record of all relevant medical information for each child, and obtain a signed consent form from parents who have children joining the group. This can also be done via ChurchSuite.

Finally, every group must keep registers, which include the names of leaders and volunteers and their contact telephone numbers.