

Guidelines for year - round contact with Haslemere Members

"....so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ" (Colossians 1 v 28b)

Our care for members does not stop at the end of a house party. Our long term goal is that members should grow to love and know Jesus more and follow him more obediently. These guidelines will hopefully help with this task...

Why the guidelines? At Haslemere we believe in 'relational' youth work, which means that we get to know one another as fellow leaders and members. By building trust and confidence, we can share something of our lives and ultimately the Good News of Jesus. So having had members in our dorms at Haslemere, how are we to keep in touch in between house parties?

Today with the dawn of the internet this has become a great tool to keep in touch. But unfortunately there is also great potential for exploitation and abuse. Sadly at Haslemere we have had experience of this, and it could very easily have been the undoing of this wonderful work of God. Therefore the guidelines below are to help us keep healthy and encouraging channels of communication open with members from our dorms. By keeping to them we avoid any unnecessary suspicion of 'grooming' that has grown in recent years due to the internet. Not all parents understand that the contact their 15 year old son/daughter has with a 26 year old leader, following a house party, is purely to encourage and nurture.

The guidelines are also laid out for your own protection and for the protection of the member.

As we are often reminded at Haslemere, attention from leaders can sometimes be misunderstood by a member. A touch on the shoulder, a hug, etc, can be mistaken for something else. In the same way, with any communication after a house party, we must not be overly attentive otherwise this too can be misunderstood by a member, parent or guardian.

Some of the following guidelines are lifted straight from Ventures Policy, so may sound a little formal.

First and foremost – Pray

This is the most important thing we can do for members. We ask that you commit to praying for members you have had in your dorms regularly through the year. If you have a personal prayer list add them to that. In whatever way you can remember to pray. Use the Haslemere photo and regular prayer updates as a prompt.

Meeting members outside of the Venture A leader meeting up with a member away from the Venture, other than in the context of the local church (when that church's safeguarding policy will apply), is normally inadvisable. Where a leader feels such a meeting is appropriate he/she shall seek approval from the Overall Leader or the Church leader and if such a meeting is deemed appropriate by the Overall Leader or church leader then the member's parent's permission must be obtained in writing. The location and any accommodation details, numbers of other members and details of other adults present must be given to the safeguarding officer (Paul Peterson)



E-mail and text contact

- Contact between leaders and members before, during and after the event by email or text must be initiated and addressed to the whole group and be for the purpose of giving information and updates only. (This will be delivered via the overall leaders team) • Sustained e-mail and text contact between individual leaders and members is not permitted.
- Email contacted is allowed from leaders as long as it is to a whole dorm group and all other leaders are copied into the emails • If a member contacts a leader through email, text or a private message then the leader must politely reply saying that they are not permitted to have contacted with members through these channels, copying in an overall leader and making sure that a record is kept. • Copies of all e-mails and letters between leaders and members should be retained by the leader involved, and made available to the Safeguarding Officer (Paul Peterson) on request. • If a leader receives an e-mail or text from a member, which makes them wary about either the personal situation of the member or the relationship between the member and themselves, they should forward it directly to the Safeguarding Officer (Paul Peterson).

Internet Safety – including Social Networks The internet is a useful tool for promoting Haslemere and for interaction with members, but there are risks associated with internet use which must be guarded against.

Haslemere have set up a social networking presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This is a useful way of keeping in touch with members, and encouraging them to invite their friends.

The following points should be taken in to consideration:

- Where possible the group should be a "closed group" and the administrator (Sam Baker) should control which photos are uploaded
- Any site should be reviewed regularly (at least every week) in order to monitor the appropriateness of material written and photos posted
- Leaders should not accept members as "friends" other than in the context of local church ministry and family relationships
- There should be NO contact with members via private messages, emails etc unless another leader is copied into the conversation and records are kept of all communication
- Letters/Postcards Everyone loves to receive a letter through the post and because it is a more 'public' document than electronic communication, a friendly letter should relieve the suspicions of anxious parents. Even better is a postcard/Birthday card/Christmas card. A postcard is brief and if a parent needs to see who and what it contains then they can.

Any contact that started outside Haslemere or in a context out of the control of Haslemere, is outside the scope of this policy. If leaders do not adhere to this policy they could be jeopardising their future work with CPAS.

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