

St Mary's Contact Centre - Toys Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

St Mary's Contact Centre is committed to providing a safe environment for parents and children visiting our centre. This policy will ensure that all toys/games used by children, their families are clean and fit for purpose. The guidance within this policy is evidence based and reflects best practice.

2. Aims

This policy will assist Coordinators and volunteers to:

- Ensure all toys/games for use within St Mary's Contact Centre are fit for purpose
- Ensure all toys/games are cleaned regularly and stored correctly
- Ensure all toys/games are checked at the beginning of every session for signs of damage or wear and tear.

3. Introduction

Toys and games are an important resource within contact centres and it is vital that consideration is given to what is provided.

A variety of toys and games should be provided appropriate to a range of ages, abilities and reflecting diversity. An effort should be made not to 'gender' toys and play areas.

An integral role of child contact centres is to promote positive parent-child relationships. Many toys and games encourage positive parent-child interaction, for example blowing bubbles with a toddler, imaginative play, ball games; for older children, games like Jenga and cards, computer games, pool; craft activities can be made appropriate to a range of ages and abilities.

Toys must be clean and meet BS standards.

4. Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers within the contact centre must follow this policy.

Coordinators must:

- Ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the contents of this policy.
- Ensure there is an approved method for ensuring that the toys and equipment are kept clean, recognising that other groups within the church use some of the same toys.
- Devise a process to ensure that all toys/ games in the centre are cleaned as per this policy.
- Undertake an audit of compliance with this policy.
- Review annually

5. Criteria

Toy/games selection and purchase: Toys/games with hard surfaces (plastic, vinyl, varnished or painted wood, metal) must be able to be thoroughly cleaned. Where toys/games with fabric parts must be used, these parts will be able to be laundered.

Electrical games must be subject to annual PAT testing.

Donations of toys and games: Toys and games may be received from members of the public. These items must be checked by the Coordinator or their Deputy and will be disseminated as appropriate. We will not receive soft toys made of fabric which cannot be cleaned in accordance with infection control policies and guidelines. Donated electrical games **must** be PAT tested before being used in the centre.

Updated January 2024

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6. Steps to be taken

The Coordinator and volunteers will examine each toy/game either prior or after each session to ensure that it is fit for re-use, i.e. check for broken parts/ faults/ loose wiring or replacement batteries etc.

Toys for babies and very young children **must** be examined at the start of each session. Any that are not clean will not be used that session and will be cleaned during the course of the session. Most will be able to be washed or wiped with soap and water and then air dried. Fabric toys should be washed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Other Toys/games will be cleaned using detergent and warm water or detergent wipe if they are soiled or if not soiled, should be cleaned regularly.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Name	Signature	Date
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7. Cleaning Procedure

The Centre Co-ordinator must designate staff/volunteers to check the toys and games each session and to clean toys on a monthly basis. Check if the manufacturer gives any cleaning instructions, if not the guide below gives some general guidelines.

Wooden toys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• wipe with clean cloth and soap and water. Air dry. Check for paint flaking, varnish flaking and splinters.
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Books and posters should be examined for visible soiling• wipe the cover with detergent wipe during cleaning schedule
Construction Toys eg Lego	Wash all bricks in a warm solution of detergent as per manufacturer's instructions Spread out to dry
Plastic toys	Wash in soapy water.
Metal toys	Wipe with clean damp cloth (soapy water)
Hand held electronic toys (i.e. computers/ Gameboys/ CDs/ DVDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damp wipe (disposable cloth and neutral detergent or detergent wipes)
Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damp wipe as above

Cleaning and Detergent:

- Use detergent wipes to wipe toys.
- If wipes are not available/suitable, use a fresh solution of detergent made up as per manufacturer's instructions
- Dry with a clean paper towel
- Do not store toys wet