

HERTFORD AND HITCHIN QUAKERS

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE in QUAKER MEETINGS

Guidelines for Parents

There are people of all ages in Meetings, including many children and young people. The following information is designed to help those meetings run as constructively, enjoyably and safely as possible for all who are involved: children, parents/carers and volunteers.

In some Meetings, children meet in a designated separate area to hold their own Meeting, with activities and supervision arranged that is appropriate to a wide range of children from babies to early teens. There are always two volunteers running children's meetings, though one of these may be a child's parent. Please inform the Clerk or Children's Meeting Convenor if your child has any special learning needs or health issues such as allergies. Where the child is pre-school it may be necessary for parents to share the care. When the children join the adult meeting, parents/carers are again responsible for the children.

At the start or end of the Meeting for Worship, the children may join with the adults for about 10 to 15 minutes. Please don't worry if they are restless during that time. Meeting for Worship will normally have a period for notices and reports. If your child wishes to leave before these that is fine, but please remember that they are no longer the responsibility of the volunteers.

Normally, our Meeting Houses are safe to wander in but there may be a gallery or staircase where falling is a risk, or there may be a garden with routes onto the road. Although we try to keep our gardens well-maintained and litter-free, sometimes hazardous rubbish is tossed into gardens unnoticed. (Please let someone know if you discover such objects in the grounds.) Very young children should be accompanied to the toilet by a parent. Children should not enter kitchens unsupervised.

It is very important that you know where your children are at all times. Under exceptional circumstances parents may not be in the Meeting for Worship, but if they are not in the Meeting House they must be contactable in an emergency. After Meeting for Worship there is no one especially assigned to supervise the children and there may be equipment, for example gardening tools, which may be dangerous.

Unless your child is unhappy about being left in other people's care we expect that you will be able to experience the Meeting for Worship without having to worry about them. We hope that at some point you will be able to join the rota of volunteers. We do all that we can to ensure that those working with the children are responsible and trustworthy by requiring that all volunteers are appointed to this role through the Safer Recruitment process and are cleared by the Disclosure & Barring Service. If you have any questions or concerns about the care of your children, please ask the clerk.