



Statement on Children with Additional Needs

1. Background

'Additional needs' is an umbrella term describing someone of any age with a specific extra need, disability (physical, hidden, mental or learning/intellectual), medical/health condition, or other impairment – whether diagnosed or not.

People with additional needs have always been a part of the people of God. They belong in the church family. In recent years in church and society, increasingly more has been done, both to recognise people's additional needs and to meet them.

2. What we believe

We believe that all people are created in the image of God, are precious to God and, that out of His deep love for them, He sent His Son to redeem them. We believe that Christ's body, the Church, is one but has many parts and that the body is incomplete without every part.

We recognise that people with additional needs can experience extra barriers to being part of the body and accessing services and opportunities in the church. We know Jesus was deeply concerned for all, especially for people who were disadvantaged, sick or disabled. He had compassion on them, welcoming them, showing kindness and consideration, often meeting their physical need, sometimes healing them and always offering to meet their deepest need, a relationship with the God who made them.

We are to follow Jesus' example and to be increasingly like Him, transformed into His likeness by His Spirit at work in us.

3. What we will do

We undertake to:

- a. love God and one another – as He first loved us.

- b. take reasonable steps to provide access for people with disabilities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, but we will seek to go above and beyond this base-line requirement.

- c. always seek to ensure the physical safety and spiritual wellbeing of everyone who comes through our doors, in keeping with our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- d. be hospitable and so welcome all, including people with additional needs, and so be advocates for additional needs inclusion.
- e. take account of any immediate knowledge of an individual with additional needs in the church family and work proactively with them to better understand their needs.
- f. pray for people with additional needs, as we would for anyone who belongs to our church family.
- g. document any specific actions or responses required to provide a safe and nurturing environment, both for the individual and the whole church family.

We will prepare a Support Plan and/or Risk Assessment which must be signed by

- all parties required to support the individual
- the individual or family/carers/staff who are handing over responsibility for the supporting the individual whilst involved in a church activity

We may not be able to accept responsibility for supporting an individual until supporting documentation has been signed to signify agreement.

- h. teach, model and encourage what it means to be in a godly, respectful, safe and nurturing relationship in our church family.
- i. endeavour to secure resources to support people with additional needs where possible.
- j. ensure that staff members and volunteers have access to training to aid their ability to understand and support a specific individual in the church family who has an additional need.
- k. look out for the families of people with additional needs who may experience unique or intense pressures or restrictions.
- l. be alert to hidden additional needs, including mental health conditions.
- m. signpost to other provision elsewhere if necessary. We recognise that our resources are finite and that there may be some additional needs that we are unable to support in the family at Emmanuel Epsom; however, we will make every effort together so that we can do as much as possible.

(based on the Urban Saints' Additional Needs Inclusion Policy)