

Information we may collect about your children... What we use this information for

Introduction

If your child (aged under 18) is participating in groups, events or ministries run by the church, we will collect certain information about you (as parent/guardian) and also about your child. Some information is required for legitimate interests and safeguarding purposes, and some information is collected with your consent so that we can better serve your family and communicate with you, and where appropriate, with your child too.

Children details are not visible to other church members within the member-facing My ChurchSuite platform, except where your child serves on a rota or is a member of a small group; in which case their name only is visible to fellow rota and group members and group/ministry overseers.

If they have signed up to an event their sign-up contact details will be visible to the event's overseer(s).

Child name

Your child's name is used to help identify them in the church's database to users, and also to others on any rotas, small groups or events they participate in. We may address them personally by name in our communications (if you have agreed you/they receive these from us). Optional name fields such as their middle name or middle initial are helpful where there are multiple children with the same name. You may also prefer your child to be optionally known by a formal name.

Sex

Your child's sex is used to help us understand the demographic makeup of the church, and also to send relevant communications about gender-related initiatives based on your child's sex (if you/they have agreed to receive these from us). Your child's sex is recorded as either male, female or unspecified/unknown.

Date of birth

Your child's date of birth, used to calculate their age and school year, is used to help understand the demographic makeup of the church, and also to send relevant communications about age related and school year-related initiatives for your child (if you/they have agreed to receive these from us).

Your child's date of birth is also used to determine their eligibility for the correct age-appropriate groups at our weekend services and mid-week groups and clubs. As you child gets older we will use their date of birth to process them up into their next age-appropriate group(s).

Child image

You may optionally upload a preferred profile image for your child if you wish. In a growing church the pastors, staff, ministry/group leaders find a profile image helpful to 'put faces to names' – making it easier for leaders to identify your child. Their profile image displays in their contact profile in the database.

Linked parent name(s) and relationship to the child If you, as parent/guardian, are part of Witham United Reformed Church to and your details are in our database (see previous section), we will link your child to your contact profile in the database. In doing so, your child will also be linked to any spouse/partner that you are also linked to in our database; essentially linking family members together.

Unlinked parent name(s) If you as parent are not part of Witham United Reformed Church, we will still need to know some of your information, including your name, emergency contact details and your relationship to the child. This information is required for safeguarding purposes, to enable us to address you by name should we need to contact you about your child, and also to communicate with you church news, events and information (if you have agreed to receive these from us).

Child address Without an address we won't know where to send letters or forms used by the church as part of caring for your child and for safeguarding e.g. consent forms.

We may use your child's postcode to understand the geographic makeup of the church members and to provide relevant information about events and initiatives in your child's geographic area, such as mid-week small groups and clubs.

Parent telephone and mobile From time to time we may need to contact you quickly, and your telephone or mobile number will be used for that purpose.

Additionally, where your child is participating in church events, groups or ministries, the leaders may be provided with your telephone and/or mobile contact details so that they can contact you in the event of an emergency, or to communicate any changes or important information that you need to know that affects your child.

Parent email The church communicates primarily by email because it's free and accessible to most people. Your email address is also used to send confirmation emails when you submit information to the church, for example,

- When signing up your child to an event or small group,
- When checking in a visiting child through our child check-in system.

We communicate about church announcements, news, events and ministries (if you have agreed to receive these from us). From time to time our communications may also include information about another church's event that we're supporting or recommending.

Ordinarily we communicate with a child's parents only. On occasion where we with older children (youth), we'll endeavour to copy you in on those communications so that you know what has been sent to your child.

In the absence of a child's own email address, we can use your email address e.g. for the purposes of sending rota reminders for your child.

Additional parent contact mobile

You may wish to provide us with an alternative contact parent mobile number which will be used for communication to a second parent/guardian that is not the spouse/partner we have linked to you in the church's database e.g. where parents are separated or divorced. This information enables us to contact them in the event of an emergency and to keep additional parents equally informed about information, news and events concerning their child.

Additional parent contact email

You may wish to provide us with an alternative contact parent email address which will be used for communication to a second parent/guardian that is not the spouse/partner we have linked to you in the church's database e.g. where parents are separated or divorced. This information enables us to keep additional parents equally informed about information, news and events concerning their child.

Child email

The church communicates primarily by email because it's free and accessible to most people.

Your child's email address is also used to send confirmation emails when you/they submit information to the church, for example,

- When signing your child up to an event or small group,
- When checking in a visiting child through our child check-in system.

If your child serves on a rota, they'll receive rota reminder and rota related emails to their email address. If your child is a member of a small group, they'll receive group-related emails to their email address.

Child mobile

From time to time we may need to be able to contact your child quickly. Additionally, if they are part of a mid-week small group or serve on a rota, their fellow group/rota members or leaders may need to call them, perhaps to organise a rota swap or to communicate a change to a rota or group meeting, or to circulate a request for prayer. Some church ministries also send SMS rota reminders.

Occasionally the church may communicate a last-minute announcement by SMS (if you/they have agreed to receive these from us).

School

Knowing a child's school, if you choose to share this information with us, can help us connect your child with other children in the church at the same school.

We also run school-based initiatives throughout the area. Knowing your child's school will enable us to communicate with you or your child about initiatives we are running at their school (if you/they have agreed to receive these from us).

Check-in barcode The church operates a child check-in system for groups at weekend services and some events. If you wish, we can provide you with a unique check-in barcode that you can optionally use to quickly locate your children in the church's check-in system. We record your family's barcode against each of your children in our database.

Other [custom] fields We currently maintain the following optional fields of information about your child in our database with the following purposes...

- **None** – no fields implemented.

We currently maintain the following required fields of information about your child in our database with the following purposes...

- **None** – no fields implemented.

As the church considers new initiatives and opportunities in the future, we may begin to collect further optional information about your child in our database. We will let you know about such initiatives, and the purpose for collecting this additional information about your child before this happens. You can then choose whether that is information you wish to share with us.

Key dates We maintain a timeline of certain key dates, milestones, anniversaries and events throughout your child's involvement with the church. This begins with the key date they first connect with the church, but will subsequently include other key dates, such as their participation in certain events and ministries. For example, we'll record a key date when they join/leave a serving ministry or small group or attend a newcomer event or discipleship course.

Knowing these key dates helps us stay organised and is a useful basis for sending appropriate communications (if you/they have agreed to receive these from us), for discipleship, and for pastoral care.

We also use the absence of certain key dates too. For example, we would like to invite those without a 'newcomer event' key date to the next newcomer event.

Some key dates are maintained for safeguarding purposes; such as the date your child's DBS Check is taken, so that we know when to renew it.

The key dates we maintain about your child are only visible to authorised users of our admin-facing database.

Tags We use tags as a way to categorise and group together children in our database. Like key dates, tags help us stay organised and are a useful way or directing communications to the right groupings of people (if you have agreed to receive these from us).

While some of the tags we create are based on the presence or absence of information you have provided to us, no automated decisions are made using tags; and a human being is always involved in decision-making or communications concerning you and your data.

Notes

From time to time we may add notes against your child's contact details in the church's database. These might be a note about a conversation we have had with you/them or something you/they have asked us to do. Notes ensure that things don't get forgotten.

We only retain notes for as long as they are relevant and then they are deleted from the system.

Photo/Video consent preferences for internal and external presentation

We sometimes use still photos and video footage taken during our weekend services and events run by the church for publicity purposes. By default, your child will not be included in photo/video used for internal (shown at weekend services) or external (on flyers or the church website) presentations.

We maintain a record of any photo/video consent you give for your child to be included in internal and external presentations. Where permission has been given, we will also endeavour to show you the photos/videos being used prior to use or publication. However, if permission is subsequently withdrawn, we cannot guarantee to be able to retract the past use of photos/videos already in circulation.

Medical e.g. allergies, dietary requirements etc

We maintain a record of relevant medical information you share with us about your child, including allergies, dietary requirements, and medical conditions that we may need to know about in order for your child to participate safely in the events, services and activities of the church. It is always the parent's responsibility to keep us informed of medical information changes.

A shortened version of your child's medical needs e.g. "allergic to nuts", will be printed on your child's check-in name badge, so that group leaders are aware of this information when your child is attending a group or event that they are checked in to.

Special needs

We maintain a record of and special needs you share with us about your child. This information is used to ensure those responsible for caring for your child when they are in our care are aware of your child's special needs. It is always the parent's responsibility to keep us informed of changes in special needs.

Doctor contact details

You may optionally provide us with doctor contact details for your child. In the event of a medical emergency involving your child we will contact you, but we may also need to seek advice from the child's GP using these details, if provided by you. Usually this information is only requested when your child is participating in a residential event run by the church.

Additional information field

We do not currently use this field.

Child's group(s)

We maintain a record of your child's participation in the children/youth groups that we run at weekend services, mid-week and at certain events. For safeguarding purposes we maintain attendance records.

Groups are a great place for your child to build deeper friendships in the church, to receive and extend prayer, for discipleship, to form accountable relationships, and to receive encouragement in their own journey of faith.

We will record the date your child joins (or leaves) a group and we will add their name to the member list for that group. We'll remove them from the group member list when they leave the group.

Since group participation reflects a deeper level of church engagement, group members (and their parents) are an important audience for many church communications (if you/they have agreed to receive these from us).

Additionally, we use group attendance data to produce statistical reporting on the number of unique individuals attending groups (which may be different to the group's weekly attendance count, since different people attend at different times or frequency). This attendance data informs our decision-making about when to multiply or add new groups, and to identify groups that have available capacity to take further children.

We also want to care for your child well – our experience is that group membership is not necessarily the same as group participation! Our pastors and group leaders may periodically refer to children group attendance to consider whether it is appropriate to reach out to you or your child if they've been absent from the group for any period. In this regard, be assured that our desire to reach out comes from an attitude of genuine care for your family.

You are free for your child to not be known as a group member (to opt out) and they may attend some groups simply as a visitor if you wish. They will then be excluded from the group's member list and their attendance will only be noted when they visit; but no contact will be made if they are absent and choose not to visit the group.

Group attendance data helps us understand each group's demographics, enabling us to better direct newcomers to appropriate groups, based on those who are already members of the group.

Child event attendance

When you sign up your child to participate in an event, we will maintain an historic record of the sign-up details provided, including your name and/or your child's name, email address, telephone number, and also

details of any tickets selected and payments made. We do not keep any record of payment card details used to purchase any tickets.

Some events may have additional questions on the sign-up form that are relevant to the event - for example, detail of dietary needs for an event with catering. Your question responses help us with event management.

We'll send a sign-up confirmation email. That confirmation will serve as their receipt if there are tickets and payments. The confirmation also serves as the event ticket and may be required for entry to the event.

Event sign-up details will be accessible to church's designated event overseers who are responsible for running the event.

By nature, we often welcome those who may be considered vulnerable, at risk and children at church events. For safeguarding purposes, we may record attendance at events.

We may communicate with you and/or your signed-up child before and after the event, and we may communicate with you both about other similar events or initiatives (if you have agreed to receive these from us).

Your child's participation (or absence) from an event you have signed up for may also form the basis for future event invitations – for example, in follow up to attending a newcomer event we may notify you about some helpful next steps with the church and things you and your child might like to get involved in. Similarly, if you've signed up for an event and are later absent – we may contact you as a courtesy and may offer you an alternative event if that is possible.

Child small group membership and attendance

In addition to weekend services, many people find their primary place of belonging is expressed through being part of one of our small groups. Small groups are where people primarily receive pastoral care within the church and are a great place for your child to find deeper friendships, to receive prayer support, discipleship, form accountable relationships, and encouragement in their spiritual journey.

We record the date your child joins (or leaves) a small group and we will add their name to the member list that the group's leaders maintain within our database about their group. We'll remove your child from the group member list when they leave the group.

Since small group membership reflects a deeper level of church engagement, small group members are an important audience for many church communications (if you have agreed to receive these from the church).

By nature, we often welcome people who may be considered vulnerable, at risk and under 18's into our small groups. For

safeguarding purposes, we will record your child's attendance at small groups.

Additionally, we use attendance data to produce statistical reporting on the number of unique individuals attending groups, which may be different to the group's weekly attendance count as different people attend at different times with varying frequency. This attendance data informs our decision-making of when to multiply or plant new groups, and to identify groups that have available capacity to accept new people.

We also want to care for your child well – our experience is that group membership is not necessarily the same as group participation! Our pastors and group leaders may periodically refer to small group attendance and reach out to you if your child has been absent from the group for any period. In this regard, be assured that our desire to reach out comes from an attitude of genuine care for your family.

You are free for your child to not be known as a group member (to opt out) and they may attend the group simply as a visitor if you wish. They will then be excluded from the group's member list and their attendance will only be noted when they visit; but no contact will be made if they are absent and choose not to visit the group.

Small group attendance also helps us understand each group's demographics, enabling us to better direct newcomers to appropriate groups they may wish to try, based on those who are already members of the group.

Child's ministry serving commitments, roles, past, active and future rotas, unavailability

Serving on a team is more than just meeting a need within the church; teams are a helpful place to make friendships and enjoy discipleship. We produce rotas for those who serve on teams in the church's ministries.

For those serving on a ministry/team, we record the date you join (or leave) that ministry and we add your name to the ministry's member list that the ministry's overseers maintain within our database about their ministry. We'll remove you from the ministry member list when you leave the ministry.

In order to distribute rotas, send timely rota reminders, facilitate rota swaps and communicate changes or important information about the rotas you serve on, we need to contact you. This will usually be done by email but may also be by SMS (if you have agreed to receive these from us). Your name and your contact details are made available to other rota members, and your name and any roles assigned to you are shown on the rota. Regrettably we may be unable to include you in a serving rota if you choose to opt out of receiving communications.

Since serving on a team reflects a deeper level of church engagement and because we place a trust in people when they serve, ministry

members are an important audience for many church communications (if you have agreed to receive these from us).

It's possible that people who are vulnerable, at risk and under 18's may be serving on rotas too. For safeguarding purposes, we will maintain an historic record of past rotas you may have served on.

Additionally, we use serving rotas to produce statistical reporting on the number of unique individuals participating in serving teams. This serving data informs our decision-making of when we need to recruit for vacancies, when we need to make changes to rotas and when we are starting new serving opportunities in the church.

We also want to care for our serving team members, including providing training when appropriate, and to communicate about social and other team events. Our pastors and ministry overseers may periodically refer to past and active rotas to consider whether it is appropriate to reach out to your child if they've been absent from the rota for any period. In this regard, be assured that our desire to reach out comes from an attitude of genuine care for your family.

You will also have the opportunity to advise your child's serving unavailability. This helps us with advance rota planning and avoids us assigning your child to rota dates when they are not available, reducing the need for unnecessary rota swaps/changes.

Your child's serving involvement and serving patterns helps us understand each ministry's demographics, enabling us to identify serving opportunities for others and to ensure they are not overstretched or serving in roles that may not be appropriate for them.

Sent communication history

We maintain a record of all communications sent to you by us.

Where your email software returns an "open/read" response to our email system, our communications history shows the date and time the message was opened. We periodically review email open rate statistics to better understand the reach and effectiveness of our communications.