**Pathfinders and Diversity**

An understanding of the importance of diversity is important for every Pathfinder club, Pathfinder and Adventurer Leader and Counsellor as they are likely to encounter children with diverse educational, physical, emotional, attitude or behavioural needs. The children may come to club having been exposed to negative situations from various backgrounds and characteristics which may impact on their ability to fully integrate well within the club. For some leaders this is likely to be a completely new experience which can be extremely challenging, requiring a much wider understanding and awareness of disability issues. Currently this often depends on the Counsellor’s own perception and education of diversity which can be negative and contribute to a negative experience for children and young people who have a disability, including contributing to exacerbating any disadvantage that a child may already have encountered due to an individual or an organisations ignorance or any unconscious bias.

Pathfinders and Adventurer Leaders need to take this into account as more and more children and young people with special learning needs ought to be better catered for and supported to positively engage within the curriculum. This could present many emotional challenges for the Counsellor including unease due to a lack of understanding or knowledge about a child’s condition. Some responses may arise from preconceived ideas based on the teacher’s own personal experience, or their lack of education regarding disability. As Leaders and Counsellors, we need to remember that the Pathfinder and Adventurers Clubs should be available to any child or young person who chooses to attend. Most importantly every child is special to God and it is our duty to demonstrate this and enable every child’s unique individuality to be respected and observed through Gods eyes.

 Children who experience learning challenges be it physical, emotional or behavioural should be viewed positively rather than “as a problem”, irrespective of how challenging a child’s condition may be. Perhaps the club can offer a safe space for the child to learn and develop confidence which will enhance a positive Club and Christian experience. This can assist in bringing a child closer to Jesus.

The Pathfinder Course can at times be quite academic however; its main goal is to train and soul saving. When this is always borne in mind it will assist us to always go the extra mile when supporting children through the programme.

**Counsellors Responsibilities**

1. Counsellors need to take into consideration that every child should be viewed as an individual and not according to the disability label that he or she may have been assigned.
2. The Counsellors will need to complete an assessment form with the child’s family to establish the child’s preferred learning style and to establish how best to support and maintain safety and a learning culture within the pathfinder environment. This means that a number of different teaching methods may need to be employed to assist in the child’s learning.
3. The Club Leaders and Counsellors MUST meet with the child’s parent/guardian at the beginning of the Pathfinder Adventurer year or at the time when the child joins the Club.
4. The club leaders ought to openly discuss the curriculum with the parents and where necessary make adjustment according to the child’s need. The outcome may mean that the curriculum is likely to be covered but perhaps not in the same way it is covered with other children. The work to be presented to the children should be stimulating and involve using all senses including visual, hearing, taste, and tactility. Some children also learn using patterns, pictures videos, matching objects or words, letters, pictures shapes etc. Whatever way the child learns should be used as this will strengthen their ability to be successful and boost their confidence.
5. Counsellors should aim to be creative, to think outside the box where necessary and welcome new approaches to ensure an inclusive culture is developed within the club. This will ensure that all children are supported well to achieve their goals. The Counsellor will therefore be working to the child’s capability by utilising a strengths-based approach.
6. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that Pathfinder courses can be quite academic and challenging for some children. Therefore, the Counsellor may need to adapt mandatory class honours to suit an individual child’s learning style. Assistance can be sought from the child’s parents / guardian if necessary or from other skilled practitioners who are able to offer their services to the club to work directly with children with specific learning needs.
7. Good practice means that where possible children should always be kept with their peers no matter what their age. However, it is understood that where Clubs have limited resources this can be challenging which is why it is important to get the child’s family involved where possible.
8. We must ensure that equal access is available to all children irrespective of their background, ability, or disability. Club members should promote an atmosphere where everyone is valued, and best practice is promoted throughout the club.

**Parents and Guardians Responsibility**

Club Leaders and Counsellors should make it their duty to meet with the Parents and Guardians of each child. They must ensure that they have all the information necessary for the child to succeed. It is likely that Parents and Guardians will need to assist their child with their Pathfinder/Adventurer work outside of club time to ensure that their child achieves the required level of work. This does not mean that the work is done for the child. Parents should be encouraged to maintain communication with their child’s Club Counsellor on an on-going bases and keep abreast of their child’s progress.

**Assessment**

When the Club’s assessment takes place consideration ought to be given to each child’s learning needs/style. The assessor must assess the child in line with the plan that was put in place at the beginning of the Club year. The Club Leader and Counsellor must inform the assessor of what had been arranged to help the Pathfinder Adventurer to complete the course work and honours. Teaching methods will be an important factor and will need to be disclosed to the assessor so that the best approach can be employed when assessing each child. The Counsellor may need to have all the necessary materials required to assist in the smooth running of the assessment process to ensure that Investiture and awards will be given according to the set criteria.

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To conclude each club must ensure that no child is treated differently due to their ability or disability. We must therefore ensure fairness and consistency is maintained throughout the club. Every child is provided with equal access and a safe and nurturing environment from which they can develop their competence and confidence in a safe space that foster individual learning and development for every child.

When assessing, the level of capability need to be kept in mind.

Assess according to the ability.

Speak with Class counsellor to establish what teaching methods were employed.

The counsellor will need to have any materials to assist in the assessment process ready for use.

Colours, matching, videos etcetera.

Cass studies