

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD WORKING WITH MINORS POLICY

Applicants please retain policy for your reference

POLICY STATEMENT

In order to provide a safe, secure and loving environment for children where parents/guardians feel comfortable leaving their child, and to minimize the ministry and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusations, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced. All workers are expected to adhere to the following policies regardless of their area of ministry.

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

- Regularly attend church services for at least three months
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Complete a volunteer application
- Submit to a background check. If charges are found, the applicant will submit charges to a staff pastor who will discuss charges with applicant and make a decision, with the Lead Pastor's input, regarding the applicant's eligibility to work with minors. When indicated by any of the following; application, reference checks, or background checks, candidates may pose a threat to others (for example, candidates with a prior history of committing or attempting physical or sexual abuse) will be removed immediately from consideration for any position working with minors.
- Be approved by a staff Pastor
- Age limitations for minors assisting with minors:
 - Nursery-High School Age
 - Preschool-7th Grade through High School Age
 - Elementary-8th Grade through High School Age

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

- Parents are encouraged to volunteer on a regular basis and must complete the application and screening process
- Parents are welcome to attend their children's classes but will not serve in a supervisory capacity unless application process is complete. If parent wants/needs to continually attend they will go through the application and screening policy.

VISITORS

- Under no circumstances are visitors allowed to help or participate in the children's ministry programs
- Visiting parents of participating children may sit in on a class at any time but will not be used in a helping or in a supervisory capacity

SUBSTITUTES

- Substitutes must come from the approved workers list

SECURITY PROCEDURES

- Parents/guardians will check their children into the activity.
- Children will be released only to the care of the parents/guardians who signed them in or to persons specifically authorized to pick the child up from the activity (an adult who has written authorization from the parent/guardian if exceptions need to be made parents/guardians may meet with the ministry pastor to discuss needs.
- Workers will remain with children until all children are released to parents/guardians
- When a worker is talking with a minor concerning spiritual or emotional needs there will be two workers present whenever possible. When only one worker is providing guidance, it will be done in full view of other workers in a public space.
- Hugging, carrying, touching, holding children on the lap and etc. will be kept to a minimum and as necessary for babies and toddlers.
- Workers will not engage in back and forth texting, face-booking, emailing or phoning with a minor. Only informational messages will be sent by these means.

RESTROOM & DIAPER CHANGING

- Restroom use will be monitored to make sure children return in a reasonable amount of time
- Workers will not accompany a child into the restroom unless they need basic assistance in which case the door will be left ajar while helping them
- Nursery workers will assist with restroom breaks but will not change diapers except in cases when reaching the parents is not feasible
- Parents will be called to change their child's diaper or for help in the restroom other than light assistance

ADULT TO CHILD RATIO

- For purposes of this policy, "adult" means a volunteer at least 18 years of age and at least four years older than the oldest child being supervised.
- Whenever practical, at least two approved adults will be present at every activity involving minors. When this is not possible a lone volunteer will never be alone with a lone child. If only one child comes to a class the worker will leave the classroom door open or move the class setting to a more public space.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to maintain appropriate adult to minor ratios.
- The adult/helper ratio for the nursery is an approximate ratio one to four with a maximum occupancy of 20.
- The adult/helper ratio for the preschool is an approximate ratio one to eight with a maximum occupancy of 35.
- The adult/helper ratio for elementary age children is an approximate ratio of one to ten.
- The adult/helper ratio for middle and high school children is an approximate ratio of one to fifteen.

DISCIPLINE

- The use of corporal punishment (spanking, grabbing, shaking, etc.) is expressly forbidden. This includes parents in the classroom who are disciplining their own child. Physical restraint will be used only when reasonably necessary to prevent harm to the child or to others.
- Disruptive behavior will be handled in a public space, not in isolation with a worker and child alone
- Use the 'Three Strike Rule' when disciplinary problems occur 1) A verbal warning is given 2) The child is placed in "time-out" 3) The parents/guardians are called and asked to remain with their child for the remainder of the service or activity
- For behavior of a serious nature (causing injury to self or others, sexual misconduct by the minor, leaving the group, etc.) parents/guardians will be notified immediately as well as a staff pastor. The minor will be removed from the event and returned home. In the event that a child consistently misbehaves or is harmful to themselves or others, the parent or guardian will be asked to accompany the child to all services and activities.

ACCIDENTS OR ILLNESSES or Incidents

- Parent/guardian of an ill or injured child will be contacted immediately
- When an injury is obviously minor (cuts, scrapes, etc.) first aid will be provided at the time of the injury. The participant's parents/guardians will be notified of the injury and treatment when they pick up the child.
- In the event of an injury untreatable by simple first aid, workers will seek appropriate professional medical attention immediately and call emergency medical services and notify parents/guardians as soon as possible and fill out an incident report immediately and submit to ministry pastor or to the office.

MEDICATIONS

- No medications of any kind will be administered including over the counter medications
- When a minor will be traveling with medications the medications will be turned in to the leader prior to departure.

TRANSPORTATION

- Permission slips must be obtained from parents/guardians prior to transporting children off the premises
- A copy of permission slips, names of chaperones, drivers, date of trip and destination will be turned into the church office prior to the trip
- In-house overnight events will require permission forms for minors and event form filled out with chaperones listed.

FIRE EMERGENCIES

- Workers will immediately begin evacuation of minors in their care using the nearest safe exit. If emergency occurs during regular service ushers, board members and staff will come to assist in the evacuation.
- The nearest fire alarm will be pulled, if possible, and 911 will be called as soon as all have exited the building
- Paid staff will go immediately to assigned areas to assist with evacuation.
- Attendance sheets will be taken to evacuation site, if at all possible, to ensure all children are accounted for and for check out purposes
- The assembly area is the upper parking lot on Court Street across 19th Dr.
- No one will be allowed to RE-ENTER THE BUILDING!
- Children will be kept in the care of the supervisor during the emergency. They will not be released unless a board member, a pastor, or a staff member relieves the supervisor or until parents/guardians take custody of their child/children.
- These instructions will be reviewed regularly as well as drills.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

- Workers will notify activity supervisor of any actions undertaken by themselves or by others which violate this policy
- Workers will come under review upon violating this policy and will be refrained from working with children when appropriate

POLICY REVIEW

- This policy will be reviewed periodically by staff members and the church's governing board
- Last review date : 10.28.2021
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