

Children's Ministry Supervision Policies

Santa Clara Church of Christ -- 2600 Belmont St. -- Eugene, OR -- 97404
541-689-2127 -- www.santaclarachurch.com

OUR PROTECTION PHILOSOPHY

These policies and procedures are in place to protect children and youth, staff and volunteers, and our church. It is important that everyone understands how to assess and address risks related to our ministries, in addition to following the policies and procedures set by our church leaders.

We focus on three main areas of risk as we strive for safety in all aspects of our ministry. Reducing the risk of incidents and injuries should be one of our top priorities.

- **Isolation**

Risk increases as isolation increases. A large majority of incidents and injuries occur in an isolated setting. Four factors affect isolation: (1) *the number of people present*, (2) *the time of the activity*, (3) *the location of the activity*, and (4) *the physical arrangements*. We need to think through each of these four factors when planning for ministry activities and events.

- **Accountability**

Risk increases and accountability decreases. Proper accountability is essential in our ministry in that it reduces the opportunities for sexual abuse, false accusations, and other harmful situations. Three factors affect the accountability of supervisors in ministry programs involving youth: (1) *the personal character and integrity of the adult worker*, (2) *the number of youth and staff/volunteers present for the activity*, and (3) *the degree of openness and approval associated with the activity*.

- **Power**

Risk increases when there is an imbalance of power, authority, influence, and control between a potential abuser and a potential victim. An imbalance of power can happen between adults and children/youth, as well as between children/youth to other children/youth. Once an incident or injury occurs, the power that the abuser has can be used to enforce silence from the victim.

Our goal should always be to create a ministry setting where isolation is eliminated, accountability exists, and power is balanced.

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OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- **Identification**

All staff and volunteers must wear ministry provided identification at all times during scheduled service time.

- **Checking in/out**

- 1) Parents will sign in and check out their children at the front check in/out counter.
- 2) The Child's name, pager number, allergies and special instructions will be printed on a label and placed on the child.
- 3) A similar card will be given to the parent/guardian.
- 4) All personal items must be labeled.
- 5) Only the child's parents/guardians are allowed to pick up the child unless parents list someone who is over the age of 18 as an authorized person.
- 6) All parents/guardians will be required to sign the child out at the check-out desk and turn in the child's ID card to the child's teacher.
- 7) Only the adult in possession of the badge will be allowed to pick up the Child. Exceptions can only be granted by the appropriate minister or his/her appropriate representative, or through written parental permission.

- **Two-adult rule**

It is imperative that each class be staffed by a minimum of two non-related staff members or volunteers. If only one adult is present, another adult must be recruited to work for that class period or the class must be joined with another class until a second adult can be found.

All one-on-one interaction should be in a public setting where other Staff and Volunteers are in sight. Never be alone with a child.

- **Child/Adult Ratio**

It is required that a safe ratio of children to Staff/Volunteers is maintained. This does not replace the two adult rule. Staff will do their best to adhere to these suggested guidelines.

Infants (0-9 months)	3:1
Toddlers (10-23 months)	4:1
Two and Three year olds	6:1
Four and Five year olds	6:1
K-5	10:1

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- **Injuries**

When a minor injury occurs administer love and a Band-aid as needed. You must fill out an *Injury Report Form* (located at the Welcome Table and online). When a parent picks up the child, explain the accident to them and ask them to sign the *Injury Report*.

Major injury procedure

- 1) Children's Director/Committee should be informed immediately. They will assign one adult to get First Aid Kit to the injured and another to locate parents.
- 2) One leader must stay with injured child.
- 3) Another leader should take other children to a safe location. NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED.
- 4) Do not move the severely injured.
- 5) Children's Director/Committee will fill out *Injury Report Form*.

- **Staff approval**

All ministry related activities must be approved by the Children's Director/Committee and be listed on church calendars when appropriate. What should be done as early as possible. Openness is important for accountability to occur. Ministry leaders should be fully aware of all activities in advance, and approve the content, activities, and leadership of each program.

- **Permission Forms**

Permission and medical forms are required for all activities and events that are off of church property, overnight, or for special activities. Detailed information about the activity/event must also be provided to the parent/guardian. Hand written notes and verbal authorization from parents/guardians will not be allowed. Permission and medical forms must be taken on the trip or event by staff/volunteers.

- **Youth and adults as ministry helpers**

Certain youth will be helping within our ministry. Regardless of their ability to help, no one under the age of 18 is considered a volunteer/adult, and should never be left alone with children.

Parents not approved by the Children's Director/Committee are not to be considered volunteers, and should not be left alone with any children.

- **Children's Ministry Schedules**

- 1) Teaching/helping schedules are quarterly, unless instructed otherwise. The Children's Ministry will have completed schedules available at the beginning of each quarter.

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- 2) If you are unable to serve on your scheduled day, you are responsible for finding your own replacement from the approved list of Volunteers.
- 3) If a sudden unplanned absence occurs, please notify area manager.
- 4) Show up 10 minutes early on the day you are scheduled to teach.

SANITARY AND BATHROOM POLICIES

• Nursery

The health and well being of all Children is very important to us. If you see something that needs attention please notify the appropriate ministry leaders.

- All used toys and bedding are cleaned with disinfectant weekly.
- Latex gloves and changing pads are provided for nursery workers to use, and are required when changing dirty diapers.
- Volunteers/Workers will wash their hands after each diaper change or wiping any noses
- The changing pad is disinfected after each diaper change
- Diapers will be changed before the end of service. Place "I have been changed" sticker on child's name tag. Never leave child unattended on changing table.
- The nurseries are cleaned after Sunday morning services and once during the week.

▪ Two and Three year old

- May need assistance using bathroom. Please leave door open and assist the child with clothing and hand washing.
- We do not change diapers in this class room. Children should be potty trained. If you get a child who needs to be changed, please page the parents to come and take care of the child.

▪ Four and Five year old

- Walk child to bathroom and stand outside the closed door to make sure child is safe in bathrooms. After child has finished, assist child with clothing and hand washing.
- If a child has an accident, please page parents to take care of the problem.

▪ K-5th Grade

- Open west door of classroom, send child across hall to small Children's Ministry Bathroom. Stand in doorway and watch door to bathroom until child comes out. Encourage hand washing.

ILLNESS/SICKNESS POLICY

Children should be left at home or removed from care of the Children's Ministry with any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

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- 1) For the protection of the Children/Youth, and especially those in the nursery, we will only accept well Children/Youth
- 2) A child should not be put in the nursery if any of these symptoms are present within the last 24 hours:
 - o Fever over 100 degrees orally
 - o Vomiting or diarrhea
 - o Significant, persistent nasal drainage that is yellow or green in color.
 - o Persistent or excessive coughing
 - o Childhood disease such as: Scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc...
 - o Chicken pox – a child may return to the nursery provided all open areas are scabbed over.
 - o Rashes and skin infections
 - o Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or an eye infection
 - o Parasites, any form of lice, mites or ringworm
- 3) We will not administer any medication.
- 4) If a Child/Youth develops any of these symptoms while in our care the Child/Youth will be separated from the other children and the parents will be contacted immediately.
- 5) If a Child/Youth develops an infectious disease (Chicken pox, pink eye etc.) after they have been in the nursery or any other area of ministry, please contact the church office so we can notify the other parents.

- **Parents**

Parents who are concerned about behavior or separation anxiety are welcome to visit their child in the class room for two class visits. After the second visit it will be necessary to have a background check completed and approved before returning to the classroom.

- **When a child cries**

- 1) Assure the parent that separation anxiety is normal and will only last a while.
- 2) Reassure the child that the parent will come back. A trick is for the parent to leave something of theirs for the child to hold on to until they return.
- 3) Try distracting the child with an on-going activity.
- 4) If the child is really upset and disturbing the rest of the class, or has cried inconsolably for more than 10 minutes, page parents.

OTHER POLICIES

- **Behavior Guidelines**

In the event that there are lapses in appropriate behavior, we have formulated the following consequential guidelines. Administer any correction with love and understanding. These are God's precious children.

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The following steps will be taken in this order.

- 1) Reminder of the rules and appropriate behavioral expectations.
- 2) Time out: sitting apart from class for a few minutes.
- 3) If consequences #1 and #2 are not effective, the child will be taken to the Children's Director/Committee member who will determine further appropriate action.

- **Teacher's responsibilities**

- 1) Faithfulness and punctuality are expected of everyone. You are expected to be in your classroom 10 minutes before the class begins, and to remain in the class until your replacement arrives.
- 2) Greet children with a smile and make them feel welcome and important.
- 3) Be prepared to teach your class with ease. Pray over each lesson during the week. Know the Bible story well enough to tell it without having to read it.
- 4) Get involved! Allow your actions to be an example to the children. They are watching.
- 5) Maintain a controlled and happy environment.
- 6) Only release children to an adult with matching name tag.
- 7) Clean up at the end of your scheduled class.
- 8) Do not leave your classroom until the next teacher arrives or all children have been picked up.

- **General Considerations**

1. Use your lap sparingly for temporary security or comfort.
2. Never force a child to hug or kiss you.
3. Never be alone with a child.
4. If child abuse is suspected you must inform the Children's Director immediately.

- **Dress Code**

1. Please wear appropriate, comfortable attire for classroom needs.
2. Clothing should be modest and in good taste because we are representing the Lord Jesus to the children.
3. Volunteers should be clean and neat in appearance. Good hygiene is a must.

OTHER INFORMATION

- **Policy Approval and Oversight**

The Elders are responsible for finalizing the policy and all policy changes. When policy changes are made, notification will be given to all Staff/Volunteers/Helpers, and a new acknowledgement form must be signed and filed in the person's file.

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- **Enforcement and Violations**

All those who supervise other ministry staff and volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of this policy. These persons are required to review and revise this policy on an annual basis. Violations of this policy are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or re-assignment from Children/Youth work. Policy violations will be brought before the Elders and will be documented and filed.

- **Storage of documents and confidential information**

All ministry related documents and confidential information will be kept on file at the church office in a secure location

- **Administration of Medicine and Medical Treatment.**

At no time is a Staff/Volunteer allowed to administer medication(s), including simple over-the-counter medicine, unless written permission has been obtained through a signed and approved, event-specific *Medication Form* that states what types of medications may be administered, and what medications a Youth may possess. No one is ever allowed to assist a Youth in taking medication(s). Youth are not allowed to possess any medications not listed as approved on their *Medication Form*. Any and all medication(s) found will be confiscated unless listed on the *Medication Form* as approved for the Youth to carry. Only medications that are necessary to be carried by Youth will be approved as such.

Simple medical treatment, "first-aid", is only allowed to be administered by those Staff/Volunteers who are certified in first-aid. CPR is to be administered only by those who hold valid CPR certification appropriate to the age of the Child/Youth. Caution and proper protection should always be used when bodily fluids are involved. See the section on reporting incidents and injuries for the required reporting procedure.

- **Computer Policy**

Any computer that a Youth has privilege/access to use must be equipped with an appropriate content filter. Youth should be logged in through a non-administrator account by a Staff/Volunteer. Passwords for computers and/or church software should not be given to Youth. Special permission may be granted to a Youth, but this must receive approval from Staff/Elders and be documented.

- **Special Needs**

We want every Child/Youth to have the same opportunities. Our church exists to minister to everyone, and as such we will not discriminate against any Child/Youth with special needs. We will do our best at being prepared to handle all situations, but there will be instances that arise in which creativity will be necessary to minister to and allow Children/Youth with special needs to participate.

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- **Applicant Denial**

Staff and the Elders reserve the right to deny an applying volunteer or to remove a current volunteer for any reason. Examples of possible reasons for denial are:

- Failure to meet/complete all requirements in the application process
- Previous convictions of child abuse or sexual misconduct
- Information received from the application process

REPORTING AND RESPONDING

Responding

It is important to respond to all situations in which abuse, inappropriate interactions, or deviation from the Protection Plan and/or the Children/Youth Supervision Policies has occurred. Communication in this regard is vital to ensure the safety of our youth, our staff and volunteers, and our church.

Reporting

In all cases where a Staff/Volunteer has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be abused or neglected, or will attempt to cause harm to another person or themselves, the Staff/Volunteer is obligated by Oregon law to report such incidents. Follow these steps for reporting suspected abuse.

1. Always dial 911 if someone is currently in danger.
2. Inform the Youth Minister, Children's Coordinator, or Elders immediately by phone or in person, and follow up with an *Incident Report Form* within 24 hours.
3. The Youth Minister or Children's Coordinator will notify the Elders and will follow the legal guidelines to make a report to a local law enforcement agency and/or Oregon DHS.
4. If the Staff/Volunteer is in doubt regarding whether a report should be made, they should telephone the DHS to discuss the situation to determine whether a report should be made. The person should then document the name and title of the DHS employee, their recommendation and submit the documentation to the Youth Minister or Elders.

For more information on child abuse and child abuse reporting, visit the Oregon Department for Human Services.

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/abuse/main.shtml>

What is Child Abuse and Neglect:

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http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/abuse/abuse_neglect.shtml

Questions and Answer about Reporting Abuse and Neglect:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/abuse/cps/report.shtml>

APPLICABILITY, DEFINITION OF POLICY TERMS, MINIMUM AGE

This policy shall be applicable to all Youth (6th grade through 12th grade) and includes all persons under 18 years of age.

Elder shall be defined as a leader of the church who has received the position according to the bylaws of Santa Clara Church of Christ. All Elders must complete sign an acknowledgement of the church's Protection Plan and the Children and Youth Supervision Policies.

A Staff member is an adult (18+) who is employed by Santa Clara Church of Christ or given the title by the Elders.

A Volunteer is an adult who spends time in church sponsored Children and Youth activities, who has completed the Volunteer Application Process.

A Helper is a person who may only assist another Staff or Volunteer, and is either under the age of 18 or has not fully completed the Volunteer Application Process. *Helpers must not be left alone with Children and/or Youth at any time.* All Helpers must sign a Policy Acknowledgement Form, and agree that they are held to the same policy standards as Staff and Volunteers. If the helper is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian must also sign their Acknowledgement Form.