

Safe Kids Procedures
for all relevant volunteers involved with minors
and all paid staff (employees) of George Community Church

To best ensure the safety of our children and youth, to protect our volunteers and paid staff from false accusation, and to safeguard the reputation of our church and Christian Community, we ask that Safe Kids policies be fully implemented by all departments and workers (whether paid or volunteer).

While strict, these policies exist to ensure the safety of our children, our volunteers, and our staff. Our purpose is not to develop a cold, sterile environment, but instead to provide a safe environment where the ministry and activities of our church may continue unimpeded.

APPLYING FOR A VOLUNTEER POSITION:

1. You must apply, either verbally or in writing, to the Children's Education Director (CE Director) to work with minors.
2. Criminal background checks must be completed on all adult applicants before they may participate as a worker in any capacity at any function involving minors. Any person who may pose a threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults (others) will be prohibited from working at George Community Church.
3. Generally, all volunteer applicants seeking to work with minors must have attended George Community Church regularly for at least six (6) months. In cases where this is not practical, applicants will be required to provide three references to be checked and paperwork returned.
4. Be willing to watch the IMB Child Safety video online at: <https://vimeo.com/96481766>

ADULT SUPERVISION OF MINORS:

Appropriate adult supervision is of greatest importance.

An adult (or any minor working with other minors) should make every attempt to never be alone with an individual child. If a situation should arise, parents may sign a written consent allowing their child to work one-on-one with an adult. The CE Director must approve such an agreement.

These are specific guidelines for Children's Ministries, Kid's Club/Vacation Bible School, and Student Ministries. Please refer to and adhere to these standards.

APPROPRIATE TOUCHING:

Above all, it is imperative that you are always careful to make sure your conduct is appropriate for the age group that you work with. What is appropriate for one age group is not always appropriate for another.

- **Infants** may need to be patted, held, hugged, or rocked. These are appropriate and are expected.
- **Toddlers and preschoolers** also need to be hugged or held from time to time.
- **School-aged children and teens** have not grown too old for a caring, affirming touch from an adult. However, touching should be limited to handshakes, a pat on the arm or shoulder, or a quick side-hug. Children of this age should not be held on a lap or knee and should not be drawn to the chest for a hug or embrace.

Children of all ages do need to be touched, but that is not our primary purpose in the short times they are in our care. We must be careful not to present any situation that might allow, or appear to allow, any inappropriate actions.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT:

You must not, under any circumstances, at any time, make any comments of a sexual nature, inappropriately touch a minor, watch a child in a restroom or in any way expose yourself, or make any other comments or take any other actions which might be or could be interpreted as sexually arousing or satisfying to you, a child, or any other party present.

Any accusations will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly, and will be reported to the legal authorities as required. We may, at our discretion, seek legal advice in any situation where we feel it is warranted.

In the unlikely event that the Safe Kids plan is not followed, disciplinary action will be taken. Should an employee or volunteer be accused of sexual misconduct, they must comply with the investigation. Refusal to do so will result in temporary or permanent dismissal.

We ask that all employees/volunteers work together for the safety of our children. If you observe a situation that causes concern, you must notify the Pastor or the CE Director.

APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE:

The goal of discipline is to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions. The teacher will set age-appropriate limits and follow through in a positive manner by reinforcing desirable behavior and redirecting undesirable behavior. As the children mature, they will encourage them to solve their conflicts using words rather than physical means. The teacher will talk with them about the consequences of their actions and the feelings of other children.

Removing the child from the group is used only as a means of helping the child gain control. The child remains in the room and the time spent away from the group is less than five minutes. Corporal punishment and verbal abuse are not used.

As teachers, we are responsible for guiding the children through any behavior issues and helping them resolve conflicts. Below are simple guidelines and suggestions:

*BODY CONTACT: Should never be aggressive or forceful, with the exception of safety issues.

*BODY LANGUAGE: The disciplinarian should remain calm and in control at all times.

*VERBAL LANGUAGE: Should address the child's behavior as the issue. The child's self-esteem should not suffer.

*State behavior desired in a positive way (i.e. say "use walking feet" instead of "don't run")

*Squat down to child's level when talking to him/her.

*Try to maintain eye contact and have the child repeat back what you said.

*Help the children verbalize their needs.

*Step into situation prior to it escalating. Your presence may help avoid a conflict.

*Allow the children to resolve their own conflicts whenever possible - do not take over too quickly. *Use a time-out if their behavior out of control where someone could get hurt.

*If the parent is available send someone to get them if behavior is out of control or disruptive to others.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

All children who attend activities at George Community Church without their parents present must complete an emergency information form including emergency contact person, phone number and a list of allergies.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES:

- Church employees/volunteers should only transport minors in groups. An exception to transport a minor alone must be requested in writing by the parents and approved by the CE Director.
- For church events, we prefer that parents deliver and pick up their children. Any carpools organized are the parents' responsibility and not the church's.
- Leaders should only drive minors in groups of two or more, preferably just to an event from the church and then back to the church where parents should be waiting. Leaders should make every effort to never be in a situation where they will be left alone at some point with one minor to drive home.
- Anyone transporting students on behalf of George Community Church must ¹⁾ complete an "Automobile & Driver Insurance Information Form" showing proof of liability insurance coverage for bodily injury of at least 100,000/300,000 and ²⁾ be 21 or older. Volunteers between 18 and 21 may transport minors with written consent from said minor's parents.

Kid's Club/Vacation Bible School
Safe Kids Procedures
Preschool - 6th Grade

Volunteers:

Kid's Club needs one adult volunteer and at least one other volunteer (may be an adult or a minor over age 15).

Vacation Bible School needs one adult per every 10 children in class with additional volunteers in craft & recreation.

Restroom Assistance:

4-year-olds through 6th Graders do not need rest room assistance, but may require supervision in the hallway to be sure they return to the appropriate class once they are done. Children in this age range should ask permission before leaving the classroom.

* We strongly suggest only females assist in the restrooms.

Children's Ministries
Safe Kids Procedures
Infants - 6th Grade

Nursery and Children's Church:

Both the Nursery and Children's Church should have at least one adult leader, with one "floater" shared between the two classes as needed. The Nursery leader must be a female, the Children's Church and Floater volunteers may be of either gender.

Sunday School:

Each class must have at least one adult teacher; the Elementary age teacher may be of either gender. Each class must have at least two (2) students to take place. If there are less than two students, the class will be cancelled for the day and any youth present will join the class for the next age group up.

Restroom Assistance:

Infants through Toddlers: Diapers should be changed in a public area in the same nursery room with other adults. Only adults may change diapers.

2- and 3-year-olds may still need assistance. They should use the women's restroom and assistance should be minimal and only as requested by the child.

4-year-olds through 4th Graders do not need assistance, but should ask permission before leaving the classroom.

* We strongly suggest only females change diapers and assist in the restrooms.

Student Ministries
Safe Kids Procedures
7th Grade - High school

Junior High and High School Sunday School Classes:

Each class must have at least one adult teacher; the Junior High teacher may be of either gender, but we strongly prefer the High School teacher to be male. Each class must have at least two (2) students to take place. If there are less than two students, the class will be cancelled for the day and any youth present will join the class for the next age group up.

Youth Group:

May be held at the church or in private homes. At least one adult leader must be present at all times. A minimum of at least two (2) students must be present for youth group to take place.

Off-campus activities and retreats:

- Student Ministry employees and volunteers are prohibited from dating minors.
- At overnight retreats or events, two Safe Kids trained individuals should be assigned to every sleeping area, and be of the same gender as the youth in the sleeping area.
- Anyone under 18 must not be considered a supervisor or adult chaperone, unless they are fully Safe Kids trained, then they may chaperone in Student Ministries.
- For any official Student Ministries activity off church grounds (e.g. out-of-town events, mission trips, volunteer opportunities, etc.), all leaders must be Safe Kids trained.

Transportation:

*See transportation guidelines.

Reporting Allegations of Sexual Abuse

1. What is Child Sexual Abuse?

It is any form of sexual contact or exploitation with a minor which is used for the sexual arousal or gratification of the offender, the minor, or a third party.

It could involve touching, including fondling; oral, genital, or anal penetration; intercourse, or forcible rape.

Abuse and exploitation that does not involve touching could include inappropriate comments, obscene phone calls, exposure and exhibitionism, showing pornographic materials to minors or taking pornographic photos or videos of minors, or allowing minors to witness sexual activity.

2. Who is the “typical” child molester?

Abusers are both rich and poor, male and female, young and old, educated and illiterate, or all races and religions, and too frequently parents themselves.

Predatory Pedophiles:

*Goes out looking for children *Targets victims *Establishes elaborate strategies
*Most often male, single, 25+ years old *Attempts to isolate children *May have hundreds of victims
*Usually preferential offenders (specific age and gender)

Situational Offenders:

*Opportunist, engages when opportunity presents itself *Obsessive about children’s problems, “rescuer” mentality *May use force *Indiscriminate concerning victims
*Acts on impulse *More of these, but with fewer victims each

3. Who must report strong suspicions of accusations of child sexual abuse?

If you as a worker receive such reports, or have information that leads you to believe something may have happened, report it at once to the Pastor. If the Pastor is not available, report suspicions to the CE Director.

Oregon law requires certain public or private officials “having reasonable cause to believe” a child has been abused to report the incident immediately by phone to the abuse hotline or local sheriff’s office.

Among these officials whom might be directly involved with our church would be: doctors or nurses, school employees, peace officers, clergymen, licensed therapists, and professionals who might respond to an emergency call such as firefighters or emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

NOTE: Failure to report an incident may be punishable by a fine or jail sentence.

However, by Oregon statute, anyone making a good-faith report will be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be imposed for making such a report.

Responding to Allegations of Sexual Abuse

1. All allegations need to be taken seriously.

Do not, in any way, initially respond with disbelief or denial, with an attitude that might be interpreted as a desire to minimize the allegation, keep it a secret or cover it up, or make any other statement, actions or express any attitudes that might make the alleged victim feel guilty or to blame.

2. Be supporting and reassuring to the victim.
3. Carefully gather enough information from the minor—without leading questions—to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe the minor is serious and trying to be truthful. Never discount an accusation because of who is accusing or being accused.
4. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. Leave that to the professionals.
5. Report to the Pastor or CE Director immediately.

That party must immediately make a phone report to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Department.

6. If appropriate, the Pastor or CE Director will notify the parents.

NOTE: Our greatest concern is the safety of our children and that is the main focus of our efforts. Our secondary purposes are to protect our volunteers and paid staff from false accusation, and to safeguard the reputation of our church and Christian Community. It is important to know that many allegations are not presented until years after the incident, and that families usually pursue court judgments only after approaching the church or organization and receiving no acknowledgment or validation of their trauma. Alienation drives them to a courtroom. Be sure you show the same concern for and attention to a report of misconduct several years ago as you would for a recent event.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING IS AVAILABLE FOR ABUSE VICTIMS

Please seek a current list of counselors from the pastor.

Recommended Reading Material:

The Wounded Heart

by Dan Allender

Surviving the Secret

by Pam Vredevelt & Kathy Rodriguez