

MYCHURCH

Children's Ministries
Policies and Procedures

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

833-737-SAFE (7233)
MinistrySafe.com

MYCHURCH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES
[SAMPLE POLICY FORM]

1st Principle:
Any policy document intended to protect children from sexual abuse must be rooted in the *abuser's grooming process.* For Policies and Procedures to be effective, staff members and volunteers must receive Training to better understand the grooming process of the offender and Peer-to-Peer sexual abuse risk. MinistrySafe provides this information through Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (SAAT) and Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse Training.

2nd Principle:
The *abuser's grooming process* varies depending on the age and gender of the victim, and type of ministry programming. Grooming of a child unfolds differently in children's ministry than it does in student ministry, camp ministry, or a youth sport program. Policies and Procedures must be rooted in the *grooming process* unique to the program, and the age and gender of children served.

Note: Sample Policies
MinistrySafe provides a variety of sample policy forms – rooted in the *abuser's grooming process,* and tailored to various types of programs (student ministry, education, camp, youth sport, daycare and more).

Contact **MinistrySafe** to learn more about additional policy and screening forms.

This sample policy is related to MyChurch's Children's Ministries.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

833-737-SAFE (7233)
MinistrySafe.com

How to Use this Sample Policy Form

This sample form contains color-coded prompts and instructional comments within the body of the document. Because there is no 'one size fits all' policy form, the authors have attempted to provide guidance on as many matters as possible. It is expected that ministry leaders **will modify these policy documents** to fit the programs, positions, facilities and other factors that make each ministry unique.

Red type is instructional and should be removed from the final draft of your policy document.

Yellow highlights relate to positions or titles assigned to a person or persons with supervisory responsibility (i.e., Children's Pastor or Executive Pastor). Modify this document such that the correct position or title for YOUR ministry is associated with the responsibility described. *Remove the highlights in your final policy document*.

Blue highlights relate to specific state reporting requirements. Insert relevant state reporting requirements. *Remove the highlights in your final policy document*.

Once all highlights and red types are removed, be sure to re-check the Table of Contents to ensure that the page number listed corresponds with the appropriate section.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Dear Staff Member or Volunteer,

Welcome to MyChurch!

At MyChurch, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

This handbook provides a general overview of procedures and guidelines for MyChurch staff members and volunteers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

MyChurch Leadership

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

MyChurch
Children's Ministries Policies & Procedures

Contents

Overview of the MyChurch Safety System	5
Child Safety Policy	7
Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse	8
Safety Committee	10
Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan	11
Communicating with Families	13
Disciplinary Policies	14
Restroom Policies	15
Verbal Interactions with Children	17
One-to-One Interactions with Children	18
Sexually Oriented Conversations	18
Sexually Oriented Material	18
Physical Contact	18
Electronic Communication	20
Tobacco Use	20
Intoxicants	21
Nudity	21
Physical Appearance	21
Medication	21
Transportation	22
Planning Group Events	23
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement	24

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

833-737-SAFE (7233)
MinistrySafe.com

MinistrySafe

Overview of the MyChurch Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, MyChurch requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training
MyChurch Policies and Procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the MyChurch Safety Committee.

Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip MyChurch staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, MyChurch requires all staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This Training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process
Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the MyChurch Screening Process, which includes:

- Employment Application (staff members only)
- Safety Application
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Reference Checks

**A volunteer must attend MyChurch for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.*

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures
Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Background Check
MyChurch requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children or student activities or programming undergo a Background Check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of Background Check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children or students. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving minors.

The policy segment above is intended to clearly identify for an applicant with inappropriate motives the barriers to gaining access to children or students at MyChurch. In addition, the segment describes measures meant to equip staff members and volunteers to recognize abuser characteristics and behavior, as well as reporting requirements. These policy segments provide an **opt-out opportunity for would-be abusers.*

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

MinistrySafe

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

MyChurch supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of [STATE] law for any staff member or volunteer to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in MyChurch programs. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at MyChurch to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their immediate Supervisor, the Children's Pastor or the Executive Pastor.

Designations may vary depending on the size, structure or reporting relationships within a church. This segment should identify the position or title of the individual to whom staff members or volunteers are to report.

Note: In some states, mandatory reporting to law enforcement or child protective services is a NON-DELEGABLE DUTY for teachers, school staff members and school administrators. In other words, telling a supervisor or principal does NOT fulfill the mandatory reporting obligation.

*In several states, employers MAY NOT **require** an employee to notify a supervisor or employer of the occurrence of a mandatory report.*

KNOW YOUR STATE'S LAW!

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

MyChurch staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all MyChurch policies. Anyone working with children or students at MyChurch is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff members and must follow these guidelines. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children's Ministries – for both staff members and volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Executive Pastor and the Board of Elders.

These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within a church body.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

MyChurch is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to local law enforcement (or Child Protective Services) and the MyChurch Safety Committee Chair.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or a member of the MyChurch Safety Committee. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report *grooming behavior,* any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the MyChurch Safety Committee.

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, MyChurch staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate Supervisor in the Ministry area, the Children's Pastor, or the Executive Pastor.

These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within the church body.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in MyChurch Children's Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Child Protective agencies or MyChurch.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be precluded from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at MyChurch. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from MyChurch.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at MyChurch.

Staff members and volunteers should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and will seek counsel from the church leadership and attorney, if needed.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to local law enforcement or the [COUNTY or STATE] Child Protective Services Emergency Response Hotline:

1-800-___-____

Because many adults are unfamiliar with [STATE] reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, MyChurch utilizes a 'tandem or dual report' model, where permitted. A 'dual report' occurs when a MyChurch supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, CPS OR THE ABUSE HOTLINE *DIRECTLY.* Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED from MyChurch before reporting to law enforcement personnel or the Child Abuse Hotline. In addition, a report may be made without involving or informing MyChurch personnel.

While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse or neglect (or any inappropriate or 'grooming' behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to an immediate supervisor or a member of the MyChurch Safety Committee. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in MyChurch programs.

When in doubt, report.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

State reporting requirements vary state by state. Research your state's law for specific reporting requirements for your church.

NOTE: A church should never investigate as a condition of reporting.

Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, MyChurch will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable MyChurch Children's Ministries to carry out appropriate Ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- the Executive Pastor
- the Children's Pastor
- the Student Pastor

**These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within a church body.*

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing MyChurch Policies and Procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the MyChurch Board of Elders regarding safety issues.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan

BUILDING SAFETY

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children. No child will *ever* be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes or activities.

SUPERVISION

Only parents (dropping off children), screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and children are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. All other adults should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a ministry supervisor or security team member should be notified immediately.

Two trained, screened adults should supervise children at all times.
MyChurch practices the *Two Adult Rule,* which requires a reasonable number of adult leaders (with a minimum of two) to be maintained when supervising children. A married couple or two family members comprise *one adult* for purposes of compliance with the *Two Adult Rule.*

Avoid being alone with an individual child in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another staff member or volunteer must be notified so that the *Two Adult Rule* can be followed.

If two individuals serving in a room are related, a third unrelated volunteer or staff member must also be present.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Avoid distractions that would impact your ability to effectively supervise children and maintain situational awareness (i.e., use of cell phones, wearing headphones, etc).

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

PLAYGROUNDS

On the playground, remember to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures.)

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS

MyChurch is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-child minimum ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 & 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 & 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

**The above ratios are MinistrySafe minimum recommendations. Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better.*

If a worker is *out of ratio* it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children's Pastor. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker-to-children ratios into compliance with MyChurch policy.

CHECK-IN

Upon check-in, each child will receive a name tag, and their parent or guardian will be given a claim tag. Volunteers must check each claim tag before releasing a child at pick-up. [Customize to fit check-in process.]

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

If a claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to _____, where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child is released. (Have the child stay in the classroom; the parent may pick up the child once cleared.)

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Any time a child has been entrusted to MyChurch staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Children's Pastor *before* releasing the child.

Communicating with Families

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are invited to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at MyChurch will be required to complete the MyChurch volunteer application and screening process.

Parents who leave a child in the care of MyChurch staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in ministry programs.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Disciplinary Policies

DISCIPLINE

It is MyChurch's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. **When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.*

2. If the child repeats the action, guide him or her to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others, and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.

3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. ("Georgia, you didn't stop hitting Cole when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.")

4. After a third time, refer to a staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the ministry supervisor.

NEVER…

- Yell at a child.
- Grab a child.
- Threaten a child. Always follow through with your word.
- Hit a child.
- Confront a parent in front of others.
- Openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in MyChurch ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no *harmless put-down* where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense:* Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense:* Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with a pastor and the child's parents. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.
    a. Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that the child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP... be discreet.
3. *Third Offense:* Send the child to a pastor or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

Restroom Policies

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a restroom in use by children. Adults should use a restroom separate and apart from restrooms used by children during weekend services or when there are children present. [Unless not possible given physical plant/facility limitations.] No volunteer OF ANY AGE should enter or occupy a restroom while children are using it. When no child is present, adults (and young volunteers) are allowed in a restroom (one at a time) so long as there is another adult at the doorway keeping any child from entering. Only adult females may change diapers, and must do so on diaper changer stations within plain view of other volunteers.

NURSERY CHILDREN

Because nursery children may require assistance with their restroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Diapering

- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- **Children should be changed on changing stations only.**

Toilet Training

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- When children are taken into restrooms, the door will be left partially open.
- Young children will never be left unattended in restrooms.
- Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with staff members or volunteers. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 'Accidents' should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from MyChurch in the children's area if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

GRADES 1-6

If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior restroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.
If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the restroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall. Any

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

If restroom use is required:

- Only *adult* female workers will assist children in the restroom, unless a parent is assisting their own child.
- Only one child in the restroom at a time in a single toilet facility.
- When a worker is assisting a child, the door must not be locked, and must remain ajar. In general, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- All students in grades 1-3 must be accompanied to the restroom by a female leader. 4th and 5th grade students may go to KIDS ONLY restrooms alone with a restroom pass from their room.
- Be aware if a child repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor if it occurs.
- A single staff member or volunteer should never take a lone child to the restroom.

DISABILITIES

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of individuals with disabilities. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change the diapers of all individuals with disabilities. If individuals with disabilities require assistance using the restroom, a volunteer may assist them in the restroom.

Verbal Interactions with Children

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. MyChurch staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

One-to-One Interactions with Children

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in MyChurch Children's Ministries programs. Another adult who has completed the MyChurch application and screening process should always be present.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Sexually Oriented Material

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries at MyChurch are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Physical Contact

MyChurch is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, MyChurch has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

- Physical contact in any form should be above reproach, for the benefit of the child, and never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times.
- Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

AVOID the following interactions:

- Never touch a child in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even if a child has been injured in one of these areas. Never allow casual contact in these areas, under or over clothing.
- No sitting on laps.
- No hand-holding, unless part of a worship/prayer service or a group game.
- Never touch in anger or disgust.
- Never touch in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Avoid touching a child between the navel and the knees.
- Never carry a child piggy-back, or on your shoulders.
- Never place hands beneath a child's clothing to play, rub or comfort.
- Never tickle, participate in 'horse-play' or wrestle with a child.

Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

Physical affection should occur only in observable locations or when in the presence of other staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others, including other children.

Inappropriate touch and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touch or display of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Pastor or the Executive Pastor.

Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Pastor or the Executive Pastor.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

MinistrySafe

Electronic Communication

All communication with children must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with ministry leadership or a parent.

TEXTING

Texting between staff members or volunteers and children is not permissible.

COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS

It is permissible for the ministry to use applications that have messaging features – using a Children's Ministry account. At least one other staff member must have credentials to access the application and regularly review the messaging, comments and postings.

It is not permissible for staff members to use ministry or personal accounts to direct message children.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff members and volunteers must maintain a high moral standard in social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension from participation in children's ministries at MyChurch. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media. Please ensure that photos or videos posted on social media reflect MyChurch ministry guidelines related to alcohol, tobacco and modesty (dress, posture and content).

Tobacco Use

MyChurch requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during MyChurch activities or programs, whether on campus or away. MyChurch is a tobacco-free facility.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any MyChurch facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any MyChurch program or activity.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers in MyChurch Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e., changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), a staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Children's Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

Physical Appearance

Please dress in modest, comfortable attire. Please do not wear thin-strapped shirts or low cut shirts while serving. First impressions are important; please take this into consideration while serving. Please:

- No revealing swimsuits
- No revealing/form-fitting clothes
- No shirts with low necklines or that show midriff
- No short dresses, skirts or shorts

Medication

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child while serving in ministry programs, including over the counter drugs. For certain trips or activities (i.e., mission trips, camps, etc.), MyChurch will bring a medical professional who will dispense appropriate medications consistent with other policies and signed parent permission forms.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may, from time to time, be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- Absent an emergency, **cell phones may not be used by drivers** while transporting minors (other than navigation applications for directions). In an emergency, stop the vehicle to use the cell phone, unless a stop cannot safely occur. Texting or other cell phone use is strictly prohibited while driving.
- No drivers under age 25 may drive MyChurch owned or rented vehicles.
- In transportation, the TWO ADULT RULE or *RULE OF THREE* must be followed.
- Transport only the number of children for whom you have seatbelts.
- Seatbelts should be worn at all times while in the vehicle.
- No one should be double-buckled.
- Use extra caution when driving children.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

Planning Group Events

When planning a group event outside of regular programming, volunteer leaders should keep parents and staff members informed of details and abide by MyChurch policies. Some events may require a release form.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Some Children's Ministries activities/events require overnight sleeping arrangements for children, staff members and volunteers (i.e., camp, mission trips, etc.). All programmed overnights must be approved by a ministry supervisor and receive permission from parents. No overnights are allowed on MyChurch property unless part of a ministry-sponsored event.

No overnight between any church staff member or volunteer and an *unrelated* minor may occur in any context. If pre-existing family relationships exist wherein overnights may occur between 'family friends', these relationships must be communicated to a ministry supervisor.

For each overnight event, Children's Ministries staff members must create a child safety plan that will supplement this policy document to provide specific child protection steps unique to the event (activity, travel, location, other groups present).

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

MinistrySafe

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of MyChurch's Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at MyChurch.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by MyChurch.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at MyChurch at any time (if possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between MyChurch and me. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the MyChurch Policies and Procedures manual.

_____

Staff member or volunteer name (please print)

_____

Staff member or volunteer signature

_____

Date

This page is to remain attached to the MyChurch Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved

MinistrySafe

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of MyChurch's Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at MyChurch.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by MyChurch.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at MyChurch at any time (if possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and MyChurch. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the MyChurch Policies and Procedures manual.

_____

Staff member or volunteer name (please print)

_____

Staff member or volunteer signature

_____

Date

This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the Ministry Supervisor.

© MinistrySafe 2024
All Rights Reserved