

# St. Andrew Child Safety Policy

## INTRODUCTION

Jesus values children. The Bible makes this clear. He welcomed children (Matthew 19:13-15) and commands us to do so as well (Matthew 18:5).

The intent of these safety and supervision procedures is to teach those who desire to minister to children and youth, specifically:

- how to demonstrate the love of Christ to young people
- how to provide a safe environment for them to learn and grow closer to Jesus
- how to avoid situations in their lives that might injure or harm them

We are thankful for the staff and many volunteers that God has raised up to allow us to minister and provide for those children who are entrusted to our care. Every volunteer and staff member must be a good role model, upholding Biblical principles. All personnel who work with children and youth are encouraged to incorporate at all times a spiritual approach in their ministry in the children and youth programs (Proverbs 22:6).

The St. Andrew Council is responsible for making sure these procedures are implemented and followed.

Our goal is that every classroom and church-sponsored activity will be a safe place where a young person feels special, loved, and cared for.

## SUPERVISION

It is optimally protective that two trained staff or volunteers be present in every classroom, office, nursery, and car when children or youth are present. A child is a person under the age of 12. A youth is a person 12-17 years of age. Legally any person under the age of 18 is a child.

This accomplishes several purposes:

1. Ensures that in case of an emergency, there will always be one adult available to stay with the child or youth while the other goes to get help.
2. Protects any child or youth from the possibility of abuse.
3. Protects the volunteers and staff from false accusation of abuse.
4. Ensures general physical and emotional safety.

## TWO-PERSON GUIDELINE

It is our expectation that every activity has at least two individuals present at all times who have completed the volunteer training. The two-person guideline applies to any child/youth activity sponsored by St. Andrew, regardless of whether the activity is on or off premises.

When it is not possible to have two staff or trained volunteers present, the following procedures must be followed:

1. At least one staff or trained volunteer must be an adult.
2. Another St. Andrew staff member (not him/herself) must be informed.
3. Any room with only one adult individual supervising children or youth must have an open door and/or window with high visibility into the area.
4. There must be another trained individual responsible for regularly checking in with each adult supervising alone.

## SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF TWO-PERSON GUIDELINE

Sunday School

While it is optimally protective that two trained individuals be in every classroom at all times, this may not always be possible. When it is not possible, the Sunday School Director or other St. Andrew staff person must be informed. A door or divider must be open and an adult “floater” must be available to check on rooms supervised by a single individual.

#### Church Nursery

During services, the church nursery is considered part of the worship activity. There must be at least two staff or trained volunteers present in the nursery. There may be moments when one of the staff or trained volunteers is required to be out of the room. This is acceptable due to the flow of parents and other adults in and out of the nursery, and the high visibility to the rest of the congregation.

#### Vehicle Transportation

While it is optimally protective that two trained individuals be in a vehicle with children or youth at all times, this may not always be possible. When it is not possible, another staff person (not him/herself) must be informed. No adult, other than their parent or guardian, may travel alone with a single child unless absolutely necessary or unless the parent/guardian gives written permission for a specific driver.

#### Counseling

It may not be possible, or even advisable, to have a second staff person or trained volunteer present during individual counseling. In this case, the person doing the counseling must inform another staff member (not him/herself) that he/she will be alone with a child or youth.

### **SPONTANEOUS UNTRAINED VOLUNTEERS**

While it is optimally protective that everyone who volunteers with our children and youth be formally trained, there may be situations where an adult has gone through the church's volunteer background screening, but has not yet completed training, is asked at the last minute to help with a limited one-time task. Volunteers, in this situation, are defined as “spontaneous, untrained volunteers”. A summary of our policy guidelines will be given to all spontaneous, untrained volunteers before they begin their tasks. Our expectation is that everyone who works with our children and youth be properly trained. The idea of unforeseen volunteers is not meant to be another option for volunteering, it is only meant to cover last minute and non-recurring situations.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Physical contact with children and youth is inevitable, and often nurturing, when staff and volunteers are engaged in activities with them. The following policies will encourage “safe touching,” while at the same time protect both children and adults.

1. When adults are interacting with children and youth, both of their hands must be visible at all times.
2. Touching must be limited only to non-vulnerable areas of the child's or youth's body.
3. Staff and volunteers must be aware of each child's or youth's individual needs and preferences for touch and respond appropriately. Asking permission of the child or youth before hugging or touching is respectful. Refraining from unwanted physical contact is essential if the child or youth communicates verbally or non-verbally that they do not want to be touched.
4. Brief hugs, pats on the back, touches on the shoulder, handshakes, and “high fives” are appropriate if the child or youth welcomes it.
5. In times when a child or youth needs to be reassured, comforted, calmed, or consoled, closer physical contact such as holding or side-cuddling is permitted, if the child or youth welcomes it.
6. Physical contact in conflict situations is not permitted unless it is necessary to protect oneself or others.

### **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Blinds and curtains on the windows will be left open during church activities. Notes, poster, or other visual obstructions may not be taped or otherwise block the view from outside the room. Lights must on at all times. Allowable exceptions include nap time or when showing a video. When showing a video, the view from a window or door must be left unobstructed.

It is recommended that all volunteers receive first aid/CPR training and keep it current. Volunteers giving first aid when bodily fluids are present are required to wear protective gloves. This protects the volunteer and the child or youth. Those volunteers who are not up to date on their training may talk to the office to get information about training opportunities.

First Aid kits are found in the nursery, in the office in the cabinet under the paper cutter, in the parish nurse office, in the kitchen in first drawer under the basket cupboard, and in the Learning Center classrooms. The AED is in the narthex. First Aid kits should also be available on off premise events.

## **RESTROOM POLICIES**

Staff or trained volunteers should change diapers in the nursery whenever possible. If it is not possible or practical to change a diaper in the nursery, the men's and women's restrooms on both levels are equipped with changing tables. Whenever possible, a second adult should be present. If that is not possible, the restroom door should be propped open.

Children or youth who do not require assistance in the bathrooms will not be permitted to seclude themselves with other children or youth in any of the bathrooms without adult monitoring. If a child or youth needs assistance in the restroom, the outside door to the restroom will be propped open and stall doors will remain open.

## **ACTIVITY CHECK-IN AND DISMISSAL POLICIES**

All activities or classes with children must have a registration form for each child that indicates those allowed to pick up the child, signed by a parent or guardian. Additionally, the form will also include those people who are specifically **NOT** allowed to pick up a child. A medical release must also be part of the registration form. Changes concerning who is allowed/not allowed to pick up a child must be provided in writing by a parent or guardian to the staff in overall charge of the program or the office.

All activities or classes with children who have not begun 6<sup>th</sup> grade must have a sign-in/sign-out book. The book includes the name of each child, a place for the person dropping off to sign the child in, a space to indicate if a different pre-authorized person will be picking up the child, and a place to sign the child out.

If a different person, other than the person who dropped the child off, is picking up the child, they need to show a photo ID unless they are well-known to the staff/volunteer releasing the child. Anyone picking up a child must be on the registration form. If someone arrives to pick up the child who is not on the registration form, the emergency contact number must be called and the staff/volunteer in charge of the program must handle the situation keeping the safety of the child as the overriding concern.

It is the responsibility of the staff/volunteer in overall charge of each class or activity to make sure that procedures are in place so that only people who have been authorized in writing be allowed to pick up each child. Likewise, procedures must be in place to prevent anyone specifically **NOT** allowed to pick up a child from being able to do so. Each staff/volunteer must be given the necessary information about who is allowed/not allowed to pick up each of the children with whom they are working.

## **GENERAL SECURITY**

For security purposes, uninvolved people are not permitted to wander around during children's or youth's activities. If any person, who is not an active participant, is discovered in the area of an ongoing activity, they should be greeted pleasantly and asked if they require any assistance. If the staff/volunteer has a safety concern, they should immediately notify the person in charge of the overall program. 911 should be called if the situation warrants. The priorities in all interactions should first be the safety of the children, then the safety of staff, volunteers and anybody else in the area.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All volunteers must first be screened through the standard St. Andrew background check procedure.

## **DRIVING AS PART OF A CHURCH EVENT**

Written permission from a parent or guardian is required for all children or youth who are transported as part of a church of activity, whether in the church van or a private vehicle.

### **Church Van**

All drivers of the church van must be approved volunteers or staff and must have completed the additional St. Andrew driving background check.

### **Personal Vehicles**

All drivers of personal vehicles must be approved volunteers or staff. They must give the office a copy of a valid driver's license and current proof of insurance for the vehicle being used.

## **DISCIPLINE**

All children and youth have a right to a safe environment. Appropriate forms of discipline may be necessary to maintain a safe environment. Appropriate discipline has the goal of teaching positive interaction between children and adults, and between children and each other. Appropriate discipline does **NOT** include corporal punishment or other forms of physical intervention unless it is required to ensure the safety of children or adults. Staff or volunteers may never use physical punishment, e.g., withholding food, physical retaliation, threats, yelling, sarcasm, or abusive language.

Our basic principles of positive guidance include:

- Setting clear and consistent limits that are just, fair, age-appropriate, and easy to remember
- Modeling good listening, self-control, patience, gentleness, and forgiveness
- Focusing on what children should do rather than what they should not do
- Praising appropriate behavior
- Acknowledging that many "misbehaviors" are simply "mistaken behaviors" and can be utilized as learning opportunities
- Guiding children and youth toward the resolution of conflicts or problems through teacher example and active teaching/support
- Respecting all emotions and feelings as valid, guiding children to recognize emotions, and express them in socially acceptable ways
- Communicating positive expectations of behavior by those adults in charge of programs

## **CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT / REPORTING**

There are many kinds of child abuse:

**Physical abuse:** Any injury to a child that is not accidental. Non-accidental injuries may include beatings, violent shaking, human bites, strangulation, or poisoning. The results may be bruises and welts, broken bones, scars, permanent disfigurement, long-lasting psychological damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage or death.

**Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation:** Use or attempted use of a child for sexual gratification. This includes incest, rape, sodomy, sexual penetration, fondling, voyeurism, exhibitionism, or exposing children to pornography.

**Neglect:** Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or medical care.

**Abandonment and mental injury:** Abandonment is parental behavior showing intent to permanently give up

all rights and claim to a child. Mental injury is the result of cruel or unconscionable acts or statements which are related to observable and substantial impairment of the child's psychological, cognitive, emotional, or social well-being. Maltreatment may include a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, manipulating, or providing no love, support or guidance.

**Threat of harm:** Subjecting a child to a substantial risk of harm to his/her health or welfare.

**Child selling:** Buying, selling, or trading for legal or physical custody of a child. It does not apply to legitimate adoptions or domestic relations planning.

For more information, please refer to the Oregon Department of Human Services publication, "What You Can Do About Child Abuse." It may be downloaded at: <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/de9061.pdf> .

## **REPORTING**

If a staff member or volunteer has a reasonable cause to believe a child or youth in a St. Andrew program or activity has been abused, he or she **MUST** take action.

If there is an imminent safety concern about any child, call 911 immediately.

Oregon has mandatory reporting laws that may apply to certain staff members or volunteers. It is the responsibility of each person working with our children to know whether these laws apply to them.

St. Andrew requires that abuse, suspected abuse, or outcries be reported immediately. The Oregon Department of Human Services (Washington County) dedicated child abuse hotline is 503-681-6917.

If the person in charge of an activity becomes aware of abuse or suspected abuse, he or she must report it to Oregon Child Protective Services immediately.

If staff/volunteer becomes aware of abuse, suspected abuse, or the child makes an outcry, and the staff/volunteer is not a mandatory reporter, he/she is still strongly encouraged to report directly to Oregon Child Protective Services. At a minimum, the person in charge of the activity must be informed immediately.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

All incidents of abuse, suspected abuse, or outcries must be documented with the St. Andrew Suspected Abuse Documentation Form. These forms must be turned into the office as soon as reasonably possible. Confidentiality and security of documentation forms must be maintained at all times.

## **VIOLATIONS**

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to report any violations of these policies. Reports can be made either in writing or verbally to the person in charge of the activity or a pastor. All violation reports are confidential.

## St. Andrew Suspected Abuse Documentation Form

Your Name:

Today's Date:

Name(s) of the child or children suspected of being abused (or who made an outcry):

Nature of suspected abuse (check all that apply):

Physical       Sexual       Emotional       Neglect

Date(s) of suspected abuse/outcry:

Did you personally witness an incident of abuse?       Yes       No

Name(s) of any other witnesses, if relevant:

Are you a mandatory reporter?       Yes       No

Did you make a report to Oregon Child Protective Services?       Yes       No

If so, to whom?

Please give a narrative description what you have seen or heard that makes you suspect abuse (use back to continue narrative description).