
Volunteers with Infants, children and teens

Safety & Security Policy for Workers

“Reducing the Risk II,” a child sexual abuse resource, is the approved guideline for all Free Methodist churches. The following procedures will assist us in providing the safest environment possible for all minors in our care.

Screening of Children’s Workers

All individuals who work with children or teens in any capacity are asked to complete a ministry application form. If the applicant has been a member of the church for less than six months, two personal reference checks as well as a criminal records check will be completed.

Playing It Safe

Following these simple guidelines will assure both our families and children’s workers that we are doing everything possible to maintain a secure environment:

Check In and Pick Up

- Parents are asked to check-in and pick-up their children. Younger children will not be released to older siblings.
- Sick children will not be admitted to nurseries or classrooms.
- We will utilize cell phones on vibrate to reach nursery parents, and a two part security tag system in Early Childhood & Grade School departments.

Restroom Policy

- In our nursery, only women will do the diapering
- A volunteer should never send a child to the restroom alone.
- One adult should not be alone with one child in the restroom; take children to the restroom in groups of two or more.

Classroom Safety

- Two workers are to be present in each classroom
- Expressions of affection are acceptable, but never pursue a child.
- Refrain from holding a child on your lap.
- Workers are never to shame, slap, hit, pinch or paddle a disruptive child; rather, remove a disruptive child from others, to a corner of the room or talk to him ./ her outside the door
- Children should never be left alone in the classroom; if you have an emergency situation, please ask another volunteer for assistance or notify the on-call cell phone aide.
- When waiting for your last child to be picked up, please move into a common area
- Always wear protective gloves when handling bodily fluids (diapering, mucus, vomit, blood) and follow correct disposal procedures

Reporting Policy

- If a child is **injured** in any way while in your care, please fill out an OUCH! Report, giving a copy to the child’s parents and also leaving a copy in the Children’s office.
- Immediately report any suspicion of child **abuse or neglect** to the Children’s office.

BASICS of CHILD SAFETY & SECURITY for CHURCHES

You may think *“It could never happen to us!”* but each week accidents take place where children are injured or become sick while at church, and where accusations are made regarding sexual impropriety by a church member regarding a child or teen. Having a simple **Safety & Security Policy** in place is a NECESSITY at your church for the following 3 reasons:

- To protect the children and teens under your care
- To protect volunteer caregivers, teachers and workers from false accusation
- To protect the local church from the trauma of allegation and litigation.

“Reducing the Risk II” a child sexual abuse resource, is the approved guideline for all Free Methodist churches. An adaptation of it has been developed by Spring Arbor FMC which includes Sample Forms. You can download it at www.seregionfmc.org under the tab: Resources, “Reducing the Risk II.”

When developing your policy, or reviewing your existing one, include the following:

1. **TWO PERSON RULE:** Volunteers should not work alone with children or teens; always have a co-worker or helper.
2. **GO IN GROUPS** to the restroom – this protects both the children and the workers.
3. **ALWAYS REPORT INJURIES:** Accidents happen! Workers should always tell parents where a bump, bruise or cut came from – don’t make parents ask (see OUCH REPORT). Does your church have a prominent place where you keep basic First Aid Supplies, zip lock baggies and ice?
4. **BULLYING & MISBEHAVIOR:** Bullying shouldn’t be ignored, and misbehavior shouldn’t be kept a secret. Parents may have some tips for your workers, or this may be a ministry opportunity for the church to help a family resolve behavioral problems with their child.
5. **RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT:** Check frequently for safety, repair & insect infestation
6. **BE AWARE OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE RISK LEVEL:**

Typically, the risk is least during high occupancy times such as Sunday AM when there are lots of people on site and fewer opportunities to isolate a child / teen.

As the number of events happening on site goes down, the risk level goes up.

The risk level is the highest at off-site and overnight events.
7. **LATE PICK-UPS:** Never leave a child or teen to wait alone for their parent after a church event, even if a parent says that he or she is “on the way.” Also, never leave one adult to wait with a child or teen alone for parent pick-up; the “TWO PERSON RULE” applies until every child is back in their parents’ care.
8. **TRANSPORTING:** All drivers should have valid driver’s licenses on file.
Never have just one adult pick up or drop off a child or teen.
Do not allow a licensed teen to transport a group of peers or children on a church event.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS WITH BABIES & PRESCHOOLERS:

Preparing the Nursery or Classroom for Young Children:

When a caregiver or teacher first enters a room before the children arrive, note the following:

- Is there anything broken that needs to be removed?
- Has anything been brought into the room (small toys) that could become a choking hazard?
- Are all outlets covered?
- Are there any dangling cords (draperies, media) that could become a choking hazard?
- Are all TVs, etc. securely bolted / strapped to carts to avoid falling on a child?
- Does the floor need to be swept or vacuumed or trash emptied?
- Sanitize all tabletops and nursery equipment with disinfectant wipes prior to ministry

Admittance:

- Only caregivers & teachers should enter a classroom; parents should remain at the door

Teen Helpers:

- Only those at least 18 years of age should work in an infant nursery (under 15 months).
- Only those at least 16 years of age should work with toddlers (15 months – 24 months)

Nursery Toys & Bedding:

- Crib sheets & blankets should be changed after each use
- Once a toy is “mouthed,” it should go into a “dirty toy” container for sanitation; it is best to limit the number of accessible toys per service / program so each hour has a fresh supply. Books or toys that cannot be sanitized should not be in the church nursery.
- Walkers, baby swings, cribs, etc. should be sanitized after each use & before each service

Diapering Basics:

- Caregivers should wear gloves when changing a diaper
- Prepare the changing counter with disinfectant spray, and lay clean paper (pan liner or wax paper) on counter before laying down the child.
- Disposal: Following diapering, caregivers should place the used diaper in a grocery baggie
Workers pull off gloves from wrist, inverting over hands
Used countertop paper & gloves are placed in grocery baggie with diaper & tied shut
Place baggie in secure trash basket.

Snack Time:

- Snack tables are sanitized (from crafts / activity papers) before serving food; use Kleenex, napkins or paper towels as individual placemats.
- Sanitize children’s hands at the table
- Workers wear disposable gloves when preparing / serving snacks
- Keep snacks simple in Early Childhood – Cheerios or Animal Crackers. Check for allergies

Suggested sanitizer: ODOBAN at Sam’s Club in gallon jug concentrate and spray bottles