

Child Protection Covenant

Guidelines for Working with Children and Youth at Grace

Grace Lutheran Church recognizes the importance of ensuring a safe and protected environment for its children against abuse. All volunteers must read and adhere to the following policies:

Two-Adult Rule: Two approved adults must be present during any church activity involving the supervision of anyone under the age of 18. In an emergency, an adult who has not yet been approved may work with an Approved Adult. The adult who has not yet been approved may not be left alone with children or youth. (note: an *unapproved* adult may not be used).

Open-Door Rule: When possible, doors shall be left open so that *the interior of the room is visible*. If the doors are closed, persons *outside the room* must be able to see into the room.

Empty-Room Rule: When leaving an empty classroom or youth room after an activity, the door shall be left open.

Expressions of Affection: Adults must use caution when expressing affection toward children/youth. Remember to place reasonable limits on physical interaction. Follow these guidelines:

<u>Appropriate Displays of Affection</u>	<u>Inappropriate Displays of Affection</u>
Always ask permission before touching	Any form of unwanted affection
Pats on shoulder or back	Full frontal or "bear hugs"
Handshakes	Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
High fives	Lying down beside children
Fist bumping	Kisses or Massages
Verbal praise	Patting children on thigh, knee or leg
One arm around shoulders	Tickling or Wrestling
Holding hands while walking or during prayer	Touching or hugging from behind
	Compliments related to physique or body development

Bathroom Procedure: Children over 4 years of age will be escorted to the restroom. The volunteer will stand in the hallway and wait for the child to be finished. Younger children who may need assistance: one volunteer may assist the child while another stands nearby. The door to the restroom must remain open. Diapering will be done only in an observable area with doors open.

Discipline: Every effort will be made to re-direct and guide children to make appropriate choices when participating in church activities. Physical restraint and isolation will not be used except in cases where the child's behavior puts themselves or others at risk. Adults will never subject a child to physical punishment including but not limited to rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, hitting or spanking. Adults will never subject a child to emotional stress including but not limited to name calling, shaming, derogatory remarks about a child or a child's family, or language or actions that threatens or humiliates the child. All behavior issues will be brought to the parents and the appropriate staff member immediately following the incident.

Electronic Communication: All communication through electronic media (email reminders, text messages, etc.) must be copied to the staff person's direct supervisor. When communication with an individual supervised child is necessary, every effort will be made to include the child's parent in the message.

Social Media: Volunteers may not communicate directly with supervised children through any form of electronic communication or social media. Furthermore, volunteers and staff may not take or use pictures, video or audio recordings of students to use on their *personal social media* accounts at any time.

MANDATED REPORTING

Reporting Suspected Abuse: If in the course of working with children or youth, you have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, either at home or at church, it is **required** that you report the matter directly to CHILDLINE at **800-932-0313**.

Additionally, Grace Lutheran Church requires you to notify the Senior Pastor or Congregation Council President immediately. The Senior Pastor or Congregational Council President may **not** dissuade you or make an independent determination of whether to report. However, you may request that the direct supervisor be present at the time the report is made.

Covenant for Child Protection at Grace

I have read these guidelines and I hereby subscribe to follow them because I want to participate in making this congregation a safe place for the spiritual development of our children.

Printed Name of Staff or Volunteer

Signature of Staff or Volunteer

Date