

**Mission for Children's Ministry**  
**The Evangelical Covenant Church of Moose Lake**

Our Mission is for all children and their families

- To experience God's love,
- To hear and respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
- And to be challenged to live in obedience and service to Jesus

Through the transforming Word of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit.

**Guidelines for Creating Safe Environments.**

1. Volunteers

- a. Adults (18 years and older) who desire to work with children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following: "One year rule", application process and national background check.
- b. Youth are encouraged to be part of ministry. They need to be
  - i. At least 14 years old.
  - ii. Screened which includes "one year rule" and application process
  - iii. Under the supervision of an adult and never be left alone with children.
- c. Abuse preventive workshop
  - i. All volunteers (youth and adult) will attend an initial abuse prevention workshop sponsored by the Children's Commission before acceptance to a volunteer position.
  - ii. All paid staff, as determined by the children and youth commission, will also be required to attend an abuse prevention workshop.
- d. Follow up and/or updates in "prevention of child abuse" will be presented to volunteers in either workshop form or printed material prior to a ministry start date.

2. Volunteer ID.

- a. Adult and youth volunteers should be identified by appropriate nametags.
- b. If a stranger is loitering in a children's area, feel free to ask, "Can I help you?"

3. "Two Adult Rule"

- a. Goal is to have a minimum of two adult workers in attendance when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. If this is not possible, doors will be left open.
- b. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher.
- c. Minors are not allowed to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

4. Classroom used should provide visual access for those supervising any activities.

- a. Classroom doors without windows should remain open.
- b. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

5. A check-in system will be used for all children in the nursery, pre-school ages, and elementary grades.
  - a. Only a preauthorized adult or teen may pick up their children.
  - b. Under no circumstances should children be released unsupervised to go find a parent.
6. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care.
  - a. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off: Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours; Green or yellow runny nose; Eye or skin infections; Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.
  - b. Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will contact the parent or guardian to request that the child be picked up for the day.
7. Restroom Guidelines
  - a. Children five years of age and younger.
    - i. Use a classroom bathroom if one is available.
    - ii. If a classroom bathroom is not available, volunteers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom.
      1. Check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside.
      2. Remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.
      3. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name.
      4. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.
    - iii. For children over the age of five.
      1. Worker will escort groups of children to the restroom. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.
      2. Older children needing to use the restroom should be accompanied to the restroom either by an adult or with another child. If with an adult, they should make sure the room is clear and then wait outside the door until the child is finished.
  - b. For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.
  - c. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

8. Injuries. In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:
  - a. For minor injuries, scrapes and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (band-aids, etc) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
  - b. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
  - c. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an report will be complete in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.
9. Medications. Volunteers do not administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care.
  - a. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.
  - b. Exceptions may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions).
  - c. Parents of such children should address their situation with the person in charge to develop a plan of action.
10. Sponsored Off Campus Activities:
  - a. Requires
    - i. Consent and release from completed from the parent of any children or youth attending. If a form is not completed, a verbal consent must be obtained from a parent with the appropriate emergency contact information.
    - ii. Designated chaperones to have prevention trained and screened. The only exception would be a parent who will only be responsible for their children.
  - b. All bus drivers and drivers of other vehicles, who will be transporting children or youth other than their own to a church activity, will have consented to a background check of their driving record.
  - c. No youth should ever transport other youth other than their siblings.

### **Guidelines for Appropriate Behavior with Children**

1. Staff and volunteers are responsible for the safety of all the members of their class/group.
  - a. Be aware of any unsafe circumstances or behavior.
  - b. Seek to minimize any opportunities for, or the appearance of, questionable conduct toward children.
2. Physical discipline of a child or even to touch or hold a child who does not want to be touched (except to gently restrain a child for safety reasons) is NOT appropriate.
  - a. No spanking, grabbing, hitting or other physical discipline of children.

- b. Workers should consult with ministry leader if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.
- 3. Physical contact
  - a. Age appropriate.
  - b. Based on need of child.
  - c. Never in isolated area.
  - d. Never on personal areas (bathing suit guidelines).
- 4. Handle seriously
  - a. Anything said or done to a children that they find abusive, offensive, frightening, demeaning or disrespectful. If a person is offended, they define what is offensive.
  - b. Immediately notify the staff or ministry team leader of any situation or environment that is or could be unsafe.