

# FCC Kids Ministry

## Volunteer Handbook



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH *of Charlevoix*  
*The church with the purple door*

101 State St  
Charlevoix, MI 49720  
231-547-9122



## **FCC Kids Ministry Volunteer Handbook**

First Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), Charlevoix, MI

### **Our Mission:**

#### **We will be SAFE!**

Safety is our number one priority in every class and at every campus. If we execute a perfect service but a kid gets hurt or lost, none of what we did matters. For that reason, we expect all our volunteers to know and understand all of our safety policies and guidelines. If you don't know if something is safe, ask your service lead.

#### **We will connect the Family!**

Though we know how important our relationship with the kids are, there is one relationship that is way more important... Their relationship with their parents. It is our goal to equip and empower every parent and volunteer to keep their children and all others safe.

## **Volunteer Requirements**

### **Application & Background Check**

All volunteers (18 years and older) that have access to children must complete a criminal background check and Volunteer Application.

### **Age Requirements**

- **Adult volunteers:** Adults 18 and older can serve in any area of Kids Ministry as a volunteer or leader. They must fill out a Volunteer Application Form and a Background Check form.
- **Teen volunteers:** Starting at age 14, teenagers can volunteer in Nursery. They must fill out a Minor Application Form. May not assist/escort children to the bathroom or change diapers
- **Kid volunteers:** Starting at age 10, kids can volunteer in Preschool. They must fill out a minor volunteer form. May not assist/escort children to the bathroom.

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones should not be used during your volunteer time. You may bring it with you if it is put on silent. This includes making/receiving phone calls, texts, being on social media, and/or taking photos.

## **Volunteer Expectations**

### **Arrive on Time**

Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of service in order to have the room open and ready to receive kids.

## **Nametag**

We ask that you wear your Volunteer name tag when you serve. This creates an easy way for the parents and kids to identify the leaders.

## **Absence**

If you are unable to serve on a weekend you're scheduled, we ask for three days notice. If you are suddenly sick the day of your volunteer obligation, call Lynette at 231-675-9817 or the director of your particular program.

## **Be Prepared**

Please come fully prepared and ready to go, which means lessons, lyrics, or whatever else is needed to present, play, or teach.

## **Appearance**

- **Comfort:** Wear whatever makes you comfortable as long as it is appropriate. Please make sure your clothes are neat in appearance.
- **Modesty:** Please, no inappropriate themes on your clothing (beer companies or sexually explicit material, etc.). If you wear a skirt, please make sure it's just above the knee or longer. No midriff exposure, low cut tops, or form fitting/revealing clothes.

## **Hygiene**

Please help us prevent the spread of illnesses by washing or sanitizing your hands:

- When you first arrive in a room
- After accompanying a child to the restroom
- After contact with body fluid (wiping a child's nose, etc.)
- Before handling food

Please instruct children to wash their hands:

- Upon entering classroom
- After using the restroom
- Wiping their noses
- Before eating

Please Do Not:

- Place your fingers in a child's mouth
- Allow a child to put their fingers in another child's mouth

## **Social Media**

If you blog, Facebook, maintain a Twitter account, etc., many people you know and parents will opt to keep up with you through those mediums. While social media can be a great connection tool, it also serves as a window into your life beyond serving. Because you represent FCC, we ask that you leverage social media with that in mind. By joining the FCC Volunteer team you agree to accountability in this area.

## **Photography**

Taking photos of minors with your phone or any other device is not allowed in any of our FCC Kids classrooms. The only people allowed to take pictures are FCC Kids' staff, not volunteers

## **Safety**

Make sure you completely understand the safe touch policy (see next page). This is something we continually monitor for the safety of our kids and volunteers.

## **Reviews**

If you choose to do any kind of teaching or communicating, there will be coaching from the Kids' Ministry leader. The purpose is to celebrate accomplishments, as well as build skills, so we ask that you have a teachable attitude and an open-mind.

## **Meetings**

We have quarterly Volunteer Team Rallies along with the occasional Kids ministry specific training. It is our expectation that you do your best to attend these meetings.

# **FCC Kids Policies & Procedures**

The following pages contain the policies and procedures for FCC Kids. It is imperative that all FCC Kids leaders and volunteers carry out the policies below.

## **Safety**

## **Basic Safety Guidelines**

- Never be alone with a child.
- A married couple must serve with another adult leader in the room at all times.
- Only a woman leader can change diapers.
- Never go into a bathroom with a child. If a child needs restroom assistance the Kids Ministry leader will assist them.

## **Appropriate Touch**

We hope that FCC Kids is a warm, welcoming, and friendly place. We greatly value the safety of our kids; **failure to comply with these guidelines is grounds for immediate dismissal.**

## **Safe Touch & Interaction Policy**

In order to prevent physical and sexual abuse, as best possible, and to protect all adults from false accusations, we have created the following safe touch policies and procedures. All adults who will be directly involved with the caretaking and instruction of all minors under the protection of our church, whether as an employee or volunteer, must adhere to all of these policies. These policies will be closely monitored. Any infractions will result in removal from ministry. Please ask any questions you may have before signing the statement declaring you have read and agree to conform to this policy. Please understand we are not trying to be offensive, but must be very specific about behaviors that are acceptable and those behaviors that are not acceptable.

- Always remain visible to others when interacting with children or students.
- There must be a minimum of two non-related adults in the classroom for all children through second grade.
- We encourage you to use safe touch methods as often as possible: a pat on the back, handshake, tussle their hair, shoulder hugs.
- All physical contact should occur in reference to the needs of the minor -- not the needs of the worker.
- All physical contact should encourage self-esteem.
- All physical contact should take place in public. It should never occur behind closed doors, in private, or secret. Ask a leader or staff person when in doubt.
- All physical contact should be age-appropriate. Holding a toddler on your lap is appropriate, while having a ten year old sit on your lap is inappropriate.
- Discipline must never include physical contact. When a child becomes violent, remove other children from the situation. Workers should not administer any physical discipline (i.e. spanking) to their own child in the presence of other children.
- Adults must not discuss (with minors or in the presence of minors) details

concerning sexual activity or sexual body parts.

- In a considerate manner, adults must redirect minors from inappropriate touching, sexual discussions, or sexual language. In case of resistance, please contact the ministry leader or the minor's parents.
- Workers must dress modestly. A worker who dresses in a way, which exposes genitals, breasts, or underwear, will be asked to leave the classroom/activity.
- Adults must avoid full-body frontal hugs with minors. Hug with one arm from the side.
- When assisting a young child in the restroom, the door is to remain ajar.
- At age four and over, no worker will assist a child in the restroom. If help is necessary, the parent is to be called.
- Massages given to or received from minors are unacceptable.
- Children shall not be shaken or hit, and they shall not receive threats of being shaken or hit.
- Children shall not be humiliated, yelled at, or rejected.
- Children shall not be subjected to abusive or profane language.
- Children shall not be subjected to any form of corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- No adult worker shall give a ride to any minor unless there are others in the car with them AND the parents of said minors have agreed to that ride.

First Congregational UCC's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul>

Questions to ask yourself when interacting with minors:

1. Is what I'm doing in line with the stated values and policies of our congregation.
2. Does it encourage a minor's emotional growth and feelings of self-worth?
3. Would my interaction with the minor be the same if my pastor, spouse, or his/her parent were present in the room?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then stop the interaction immediately, remove yourself from interacting with minors, and analyze your motives and actions. Meet with the church leadership if you have questions about the appropriateness of your conduct.

## **Incidents**

In the case of any non-accident or injury incident that is a cause for concern, please inform the room leader right away. This may include behavior that indicates possible abuse, inappropriate talk or touch from one child to another, or any other incident that a parent or FCC Kids staff needs to know. In addition to a conversation with the room leader and Kids Ministry leader, an incident report form will need to be filled out with the Moderator or a member of the Safe Conduct Policy Team.

## **Bathroom**



Below are bathroom policies for the various bathrooms our kids use on a regular basis.  
**Never allow yourself to be in a bathroom with a child alone.**

#### Bathrooms in Nursery and Preschool

- Only allow one child in the bathroom at a time
- If a child can go on his/her own, let him/her (just stand outside the door and be ready to help)
- If a child needs help or hasn't finished up after some time, talk through the door or slightly crack the door so you can talk without looking.
- If your assistance is required to help button their pants, have them come to the door (while staying inside the bathroom). While you stay in view of another leader you may assist them with their button. If a child needs help wiping, ask another volunteer to stand at the door and watch you as you assist the child.

#### Bathrooms in Elementary and Preteen

- Allow one kid at a time to use the bathroom.
- Do not allow adults or teenagers to enter while a child is in the bathroom.
- If a child needs assistance, only enter the bathroom with another adult in the doorway watching you.

## **Child Abuse Information & Policies**

“The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse” designed the definitions below.

### **Physical Abuse**

Is defined as a non-accidental injury, which may include beatings, violent shaking, human bites, strangulation, suffocation, poisoning, or burns. The results may be bruises and welts, broken bones, scars, permanent disfigurement, long-lasting psychological damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage, or death.

### **Physical/Emotional Neglect**

Is the failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Is constituted through the sexual exploitation of a child by an older person as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism or pornography. It may be done for the sexual gratification of the older person, out of a need for power or economic reasons (such as prostitution, etc.)

### **Emotional Maltreatment**

Is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and a sense of self-worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, manipulation. It can also be defined as providing no love, support, or guidance for the child.

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

- Familiarize yourself with the definitions and descriptions of child abuse listed above.
- If you suspect that a child involved in any of the programs of FCC has been abused, the following steps are to be followed: Report the suspected abuse to a member of the FCC Kids Ministry Staff and or the Moderator or a member of the Safe Conduct Policy Team.
  - Do not interview the child regarding the suspected abuse. This could be considered leading the child.
  - Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other volunteers, parents, etc. All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with your ministry supervisor and the proper authorities.
- You may be asked to complete a Suspected Child Abuser Report. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible. This form will be returned to your ministry leader.

**Please thoroughly read and sign the following statements and return them to an FCC Kids Ministry Leader the first time you come to volunteer.**

I agree to follow and live by the Volunteer Requirements and Expectations listed in the FCC Kids Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer Name

Printed\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

I have read and agree to conform to the Safe Touch and interactions Policies and Procedures listed on pages 6-10.

Volunteer Name

Printed\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_