

PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH MINORS

All volunteers in children's or youth ministry are subject to the supervision and evaluation of the childcare coordinator, children's minister, youth minister, and Christian education commission. SMCC reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who are unscriptural in conduct or fail to follow the policies for volunteers working with minors.

All volunteers in children's or youth ministries must be personally interviewed by the respective minister in their area of desired service. The interview process includes completing an application that deals with some of the critical social issues of our world. The application is confidential and is used to help our church provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

Below are procedures volunteers are asked to comply with to prevent allegations of **child abuse** or to prevent the actual occurrence of child abuse.

1. It is recommended that every group of children or youth have at least two workers present at all times. (At times, this is difficult, but having another adult present is your best protection against false allegations.) It is a good rule to never be alone with a young person. (SMCC adheres to minimum leader-child/youth ratios.)
2. It is also recommended that window blinds and doors be kept open in classrooms where children's activities are occurring. Try not to be put in what could be termed a compromising position.
3. Physical contact with children should be minimal. In kindergarten and below, some appropriate touching and hugging is permissible. However, this should only be done in the presence of other adults in an open classroom. In grades 1-12, physical contact should be given with extreme care. It is recommended that a volunteer should not display physical affection to a young person of the opposite gender.
4. When taking children to the rest room, volunteers should only supervise children of the same gender. It is recommended that, if possible, two adults remain in the rest room with the children. Children should have as much privacy as possible when using the rest room. Workers should enter a rest room stall only when absolutely necessary to assist a child.
5. All activities or outings outside the normal planned children's or youth ministry calendar must be approved by the appropriate minister to ensure proper supervision, e.g., Sunday school teachers or group leaders initiating a special activity for their group.
6. Visitors or "new volunteers" are not permitted to help in children's ministry unless approved by the children's minister or child-care coordinator.
7. Parents are permitted to observe their child in his or her class. However, parents must notify the department leader or program director of their presence. At no time are parents allowed to be alone with any child except their own. They are only to observe the class or activity they desire.
8. Volunteers should never drive a child home alone without another adult in the car. In the event it is necessary, the child (ren's) parent(s) should be notified beforehand and permission granted.

As volunteers, there are two other important areas of which you want to be informed. **Health expectations and emergency procedures** in the event office or earthquake are considerations that every volunteer worker should know.

1. In the children's ministry, the health guidelines are in the handbook as well as posted in every preschool room. Know the expectations. Help prevent the unnecessary spread of disease.
2. Every room on the SMCC campus has an emergency exit sign. Procedure flyers are also available. Know what you should do in the room you are working in the event of a fire or earthquake.
3. First aid kits are placed in each major children's/youth center and their locations are clearly noted. Become familiar with their locations and contents.

The staff and leadership of Sierra Madre Congregational Church are grateful to God for the faithful service of the marvelous volunteers He has given us to minister to the babies, toddlers, children, and youth that are a vital part of this fellowship. *We as leaders covenant to support our volunteers in prayer and through training in identifying abuse and how our volunteers can protect themselves from accusations of abuse, as well as how to deal with disease and emergencies. These procedures are part of that process.*