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## CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

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Grace Church is committed to protecting and releasing in our children the calling God has placed on their lives. We look to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as a guide: "...may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete..." (NASB). We have been charged by God with the responsibility of protecting each child's spirit, soul, and body; we will do everything possible to fulfill that charge.

We are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment that fosters spiritual, emotional, and physical health for all children who participate in our ministries. We are also committed to protecting staff members and volunteers from unwarranted accusations. To that end, all staff members and volunteers who work with our children must abide by the following Foursquare "Child and Youth Protection Code of Conduct."

### **Staff Members and Volunteers of Grace Church will**

1. Treat children with respect and fairness at all times, regardless of the child's race, sex, age, or religion.
2. Respond with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
3. Act as a positive role model for children by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and maturity.
4. Dress appropriately and avoid wearing provocative and/or revealing clothing.
5. Engage in appropriate displays of affection.
6. Refrain from inappropriate physical interactions.
7. Refrain from using inappropriate corrective measures.
8. Refrain from swearing or telling offensive or vulgar jokes.
9. Avoid involving children in inappropriately burdensome or disturbing problems or issues.
10. Refrain from sharing or keeping secrets with children.
11. Not abuse alcohol or drugs.
12. Refrain from discussing sexual encounters in the presence of children.
13. Not have or view sexually explicit materials, including any type of pornography.
14. Refrain from staring at or commenting on a child's body.
15. Refrain from perpetrating any kind of abuse upon any child; this includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. *Verbal abuse*: degrading, threatening, cursing
  - b. *Physical abuse*: hitting, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraint
  - c. *Sexual abuse*: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually-oriented conversations
  - d. *Emotional abuse*: shaming, humiliating, cruelty
  - e. *Neglect*: withholding or denying food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care, freedom of movement, or failure to protect

Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated. Allegations of abuse may result in immediate removal of the staff member or volunteer from duties, and may result in permanent dismissal at the sole discretion of Grace Church. Grace Church will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made and investigated.



16. Immediately report concerns or complaints, including suspicions of abuse, about a Grace Church staff member, volunteer, or child to the immediate director of the program and to a member of the ministerial staff.

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## **APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

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### Appropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Positively reinforcing children
- Telling clean, positive, light hearted jokes
- Encouraging children
- Praising children

### Inappropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Calling children names
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in personal problems or issues of staff members/volunteers
- Sharing secrets with children
- Cursing
- Telling offensive, vulgar, or sexually oriented jokes
- Complimenting a child on his or her physique or body development
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Making derogatory remarks, including but not limited to derogatory remarks about the child, the child's family or ethnic background
- Using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate children

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## **APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS**

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### Appropriate Physical Interactions:

- Pats on the back, arm, or shoulder
- Side hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder, "temple" or "A-frame" hugs
- Handshakes
- "High fives" and hand slapping
- Touching hand, face, shoulder, arm
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands (with young children)
- Soothing infants
- Sitting beside a child
- Sitting with a small child on adult's legs



#### Inappropriate Physical Interactions:

- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the staff member/volunteer
- Any physical activity that is or could be perceived by another to be sexually stimulating to the adult or the child
- Full frontal hugs, except when holding infants
- Kisses on the mouth
- Kisses of any kind that are unwanted by the child
- Touching chest or anywhere below the waist
- Showing affection in isolated locations such as closets, remote hallways, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
- Staff member/volunteer sleeping in bed with a child
- Wrestling with children
- Piggyback rides
- Tickling
- Allowing a child to cling to the leg of a staff member/volunteer
- Holding a child on a staff member/volunteer's lap so the child is straddled over private areas
- Massage given by a child to a staff member/volunteer
- Massage given by a staff member/volunteer to a child

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### **APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE CORRECTIVE MEASURES**

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It is important that program managers, staff members and volunteers make sure that each child clearly understands behavior expectations. It is essential that program directors ensure that each staff member and volunteer understands appropriate and inappropriate corrective measures and that children may never be punished because of bladder or bowel “accidents” nor because of vomiting or other manifestations of illness. Always remember, correction is not punishment. Rather it is an opportunity to teach a child a better way to behave while stopping inappropriate behavior. Make an effort to praise good behavior a child displays. The staff member/volunteer must remain calm at all times when correcting a child. When correction is necessary, the following guidelines apply.

#### Appropriate Correction Options

- Talking with the child about what behavior would have been more appropriate. Explain natural consequences to inappropriate behavior.
- Assigning a period of time away from the other children. If the offense is repeated, place the child away from the group in a way that avoids public humiliation for approximately one minute per year of age, not to exceed five minutes.
- Calling for assistance in the case of persistent misbehavior, e.g., the program director, counselors, and/or pastors. The person called for assistance may contact the child's parent/guardian or sit with the child until the misbehavior subsides or for the duration of the Grace Church activity.
- Intervention to protect a child from harm or risk of being harmed.

#### Inappropriate Corrective Options



- Using condemning language or tone
- Employing corporal punishment: includes shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, shoving
- Threatening to use corporal punishment
- Engaging in name calling, shaming, degrading or derogatory remarks, ostracism
- Biting, pinching, hair and/or ear pulling
- Withholding food/water, or medical care
- Using mechanical or unnecessary physical restraints
- Isolating a child in a small, confined, and/or dark place
- Imposing physical exercise as a punishment

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### MAJOR SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

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The following are the major signs of physical and sexual abuse, emotional damage, and neglect. The presence of one of these signs, or even several in combination, may not indicate that abuse has occurred. They may indicate a recent accident, or the presence of a medical condition, emotional illness, or other problem. If a number of these signs occur together or if they reoccur frequently, child abuse or neglect might be the cause.

#### Signs of Neglect

- Poor hygiene, bad odor
- Inappropriate dress for weather
- Left alone, unsupervised for long periods
- Failure to thrive, malnutrition
- Untreated medical condition
- Constant hunger, begging or stealing food
- Extreme willingness to please
- Frequent absence from school
- Arriving early or staying late at school or play areas or other people's homes

- Extremes in behavior; very aggressive to withdrawn and shy
- Fear of going home
- Fear of parents and/or other adults

#### Signs of Emotional Damage

- Low self-esteem
- Self-denigration
- Severe depression
- Aggression
- Withdrawal
- Severe anxiety
- Failure to learn

#### Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises; welts on face, neck, chest, back
- Injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- Unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back
- Fractures that are inconsistent with the account of how an injury occurred
- Untreated medical condition

#### Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Pain, swelling, or itching in the genital area
- Bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent urination, pain
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease
- Refusal to take part in gym or other exercises



- Poor peer relationships
- Age-inappropriate interest in sex
- Drastic change in school achievement
- Running away or delinquency
- Regressive behavior