



**SEASIDE
CHURCH**

seasideyouth

SEASIDEKIDS

Volunteer
POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES
MANUAL

Updated: September 10, 2015

Dear Children's/Youth Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Seaside Kids/ Youth!

At Seaside Church, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously.

These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for Seaside Kids/Youth volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of Seaside Church. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Seaside Church Staff

Seaside Church
Policies & Procedures for
Children's/Youth Ministries

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Overview of the Seaside Kids/ Youth Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Seaside Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete 4 SAFETY STEPS before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Seaside Church policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor or Lead Pastor. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Seaside Church staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Seaside Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe sexual abuse awareness training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the Seaside Church Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an Employment Application (employees only)
- complete the Safety Application (employees and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

*a volunteer must attend Seaside Church for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Seaside Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

*This policy segment is intended to clearly identify for an inappropriate applicant the hurdles which exist to gaining access to children or students at Seaside Church. In addition, the segment describes measures in place to equip other staff members and volunteers to recognize abuser characteristics and behaviors, as well as reporting requirements. These policy segments provide an 'opt out opportunity' for would-be molesters.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Seaside Church has a zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at Seaside Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor or the Lead Pastor.

Designations may vary depending on the size, structure or reporting relationships within a church. This segment should identify the position or title of the individual to whom staff members or volunteers are to report.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Seaside Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Seaside Church Staff and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor, Children's Ministry Director or Lead Pastor. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. **Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor or Lead Pastor.**

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Seaside Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Seaside's Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children's Ministry's positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Lead Pastor and the Board of Elders.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Seaside Church staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be immediately directed to the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor or the Lead Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Seaside Kids/Youth. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at Seaside Church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Seaside Church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at Seaside Church.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at Seaside Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Children's Ministry Director, or the Lead Pastor.

Washington State law requires that **any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.** A staff member or volunteer may report to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Lead Pastor and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Children's Ministries, the Children's Ministry Director or Lead Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Lead Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, the Children's Ministry Director or the Lead Pastor will inform the Washington Child Protective Services (866-363-4276).

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The Seaside Church Safety Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

Seaside Church SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Seaside Church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable Seaside Kids/ Youth Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. The Lead Pastor
2. The Children's Ministries Director(s)
3. The Youth Pastor

MEETINGS

The Children's Ministry Director will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Seaside Church policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Seaside Church Board of Elders regarding safety issues.

Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff members and volunteer interactions with children.

1. Each supervisor conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each week for programs that occur weekly.
2. The Children's Ministry Director conducts written performance evaluations every six months for individuals in paid staff positions.
3. The Children's Ministry Director conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
4. The Lead Pastor conducts an unscheduled observation of a Children's Ministry program at least once each quarter.
5. The Lead Pastor meets with the Children's Ministry Director once monthly to discuss Children's Ministry.
6. The Elder Board meets with the Children's Ministry Director once each year to discuss Children's Ministry, including safety training and procedures.
7. The Children's Ministry Director conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Children's Ministry Director will be responsible for ensuring that the Children's Ministry Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the Children's Building or on the children's playground during children's ministry programming or classes.

Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied

by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children's Ministries staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIO

Nursery:	2 workers/	8 children
Preschool (2 and 3 years old):	2 workers/	12 children
Preschool (4 and 5 years old):	2 workers/	18 children
Elementary	2 workers/	20 children
Youth	2 workers/	20 children

*The above ratios are MinistrySafe minimum recommendations. Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better.

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children's Ministry Director. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

DISCIPLINE

It is Seaside Church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

1. Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
2. If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
4. Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
5. Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
6. Monitor the child through the enter time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")

7. Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Children's Ministry Directors.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

All diapering will be done by the parent only.

Toilet training

- 1) **No staff member or volunteer should ever be alone with a child or children in the bathroom.** If a child needs assistance, their parent should be called to help.
- 2) In the case of emergency, a teacher can walk the child to the bathroom, and verbally assist them from outside the door while the parent is called.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be reminded to use the bathroom with their parent before he/she leaves if they need assistance.

Pre-K through Kindergarten children

Pre-K and Kindergarten children should use the bathroom directly attached to the "orange room" classroom.

If a child needs assistance, the teacher can have the check-in volunteer get their parent to come help.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Seaside Church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

MEDICATION

Medication should be given to children by a parent or guardian only.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers Seaside Kids'/ Youth Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Children's Ministry Director concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Seaside Kids/Youth Ministry program. Another adult who has completed the Seaside Kids/Youth application and screening process should always be present.

Seaside Kids volunteers are not permitted to be alone with a group of children. **There must be two adults in a classroom at all times.** In the case that a volunteer has to step out of the room, leaving only one other volunteer with children, the check-in volunteer will be available to stand in the classroom while they are out. If the check-in volunteer is unavailable, a volunteer from another classroom can stand in the hall where they can see both classrooms.

A youth volunteering with Seaside Kids does not count as another adult in the room.

A Seaside Youth volunteer is permitted to be alone with two or more youths (6th to 12th grade). Interactions with only one adult volunteer and two or more youths must be conducted in an open area, either outside, or in a room with the door open and other adult volunteers present.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided.
2. **Staff members and volunteers should not travel alone with one child.** Another adult, or another youth (6th to 12th grade) should be present in the car at all times.
3. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
4. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Seaside Church vans, or vehicles owned or rented by Seaside Church, unless in an emergency.
5. No drivers under age 25 may drive Seaside Church owned or rented vehicles.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Seaside Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, inconsolable, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Seaside Church. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at Seaside Church will be required to complete the Seaside Kids'/ Youth volunteer application and screening process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Seaside Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Seaside Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Lead Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Lead Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries at Seaside Church are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

TOBACCO USE

Seaside Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Seaside Kids'/ Youth activities or programs. Seaside Church is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Seaside Church staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Seaside Church staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Children's Ministry Director before releasing the child.

All children should be wearing identification tags with a number that corresponds to a tag possessed by the parent or guardian. **Volunteers should not release children to any adult who does not have the corresponding tag.** In the event that a tag is lost or missing, please kindly ask that the parent or guardian provide a photo ID to verify identity and relationship to the child before releasing. Ideally, the child should be released to the same adult who dropped off the child. Siblings under the age of 18 are permitted to pick up children if they have the correct identifying tag.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers in Seaside Kids are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs.

Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Seaside Church's Children's/ Youth Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Seaside Church.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Seaside Church.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at Seaside Church at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and Seaside Church. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of Seaside Church policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

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