

Child Protection Policy

Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church

Statement of Purpose

Seventh-day Adventists place a high value on children. In light of the Bible they are seen as precious gifts from God entrusted to the care of parents, family, community of faith and society-at-large. Children possess enormous potential for making positive contributions to the church and society. Attention to their care, protection and development is extremely important.

Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our ministry leaders and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “children” or “youth” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “volunteer” means anyone who works with children.

Church Responsibilities

- The Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church seeks to protect children entrusted to its care from harm caused by abuse.
- Provide appropriate levels of adult supervision at all times.
- Provide proper oversight and management of volunteers.
- Train and orientate volunteers in order to provide proper supervision of the ministry or activity.
- Provide each volunteer with a written copy of the policy and/or expected code of conduct required by the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Report all allegations of suspected child abuse to the proper authorities in accordance with the child protection laws as required by jurisdiction in the local area. The church will fully cooperate with authorities investigating the incident.
- Designated person(s) will report physical injury, child sexual abuse, willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, or neglect.
- Notify the parent(s) or guardian of the child. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. The visit is for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis.

Selection of Volunteers

It is the responsibility of the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church to select individuals who will serve in volunteer positions.

No adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church sponsored ministry or activity until the volunteer has been known to the members of the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time period allows the members to become acquainted with the individual's talents, personality, temperament, and suitability for working with children.

All new volunteers shall provide the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church two (2) references and submit to a screening procedure that will include a signed Volunteer Ministry Information Form (**Form-1**). The references provided must be unrelated to the volunteer and be known for a minimum of three (3) years.

Individuals who submit incomplete Volunteer Ministry Forms will not be considered for a volunteer position.

All new volunteers shall be appropriately trained and background screened using Verified Volunteers www.ncrisk.org/adventist (**Form-2**) before they are allowed to supervise children. Volunteer background screening will be updated every three (3) years and training will be conducted as needed.

The Safety Officer will notify the appropriate ministry leader and the volunteer when the screening process is complete.

All volunteer leaders, regardless of previous experience, shall submit to the screening procedure (Verified Volunteers) required by the church.

The Safety Officer/Committee shall periodically review the performance of all volunteers. This can occur through the observation of the volunteer's interaction with the children, leadership, other volunteers, parental comments, complaints, etc.

Teenage Volunteers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary for volunteers who are themselves under 18 to assist in working with the children during programs or activities. The following guidelines are to apply to teenage volunteers:

- Must be at least 14.
- Must be screened and receive orientation and training.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with child(ren).

Orientation for Volunteers

The Safety Officer will conduct orientation sessions to train volunteers on its ministry expectations toward youth and children.

Orientation will cover the following areas:

- The church's mission and the expectation the church has for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse free manner.

- The Child Protection Policy.
- The expected code of conduct, and the rules to be followed by volunteers in relation to supervision and interaction with children.
- Child abuse awareness (physical, emotional, mental, neglect, sexual) and bullying.
- Appropriate physical contact with children.
- Appropriate supervision of children.
- Stranger awareness
- Openness for observation of activities
- Reasons for dismissal.
- Reporting laws in the local area.

The Safety Officer will provide orientation to new volunteers, and will strive to provide the most current, and up to date training for all volunteers at appropriate intervals during the calendar year.

Volunteer Service Coordinator

In order to carry out the purpose of the Child Protection Policy, the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church will appoint a Volunteer Service Coordinator who is responsible for implementing this policy and administer the Verified Volunteers Program for the church working in cooperation with the Pastor or a designee.

This individual will be nominated to serve by the Safety Committee, and approved by the Church Board.

This person will ensure that the Child Protection Policy is being followed, review the Ministry Volunteer Information Form, check references, ensure the completion of Verified Volunteers training and background screening, coordinates orientation and training, and report to the Pastor or designee on program compliance.

Confidentially

It is the duty and responsibility of all involved in the screening, interviewing, and selection process of volunteers to conduct themselves with the utmost integrity and confidentiality.

All information received during the screening process, will be maintained by the church on a confidential basis and maintained on the Verified Volunteer password protected secure electronic database.

All allegations of inappropriate conduct involving a child with a volunteer will be promptly referred to the appropriate investigative agency by the Pastor, Safety Officer, or designee.

The Safety Officer or designee will respect the rights of all parties involved in any alleged incident and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.

Code of Conduct for Church Volunteers

The Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers shall be electronically signed by all volunteers and shall be kept on file within the Verified Volunteer Training database.

In addition to the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers, all volunteers are expected to adhere to all rules established by the church.

Failure to adhere to the rules will be cause to immediately remove an individual from volunteer service.

Additional Provisions

Sick Child Policy

It is the desire of the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide a healthy environment for all children. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding to involve their child in church activities and programs when ill. Children who are observed by volunteers to be ill will be separated from other children, and the parent or guardian will be asked to pick up their child(ren).

Medications Policy

It is the policy of the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medication to children under our care. Medications should be administered by the parent.

Exceptions to the medication policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life threatening conditions (such as asthma, or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the appropriate ministry leader to develop a plan of action.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured, the following steps should be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, volunteers 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 will be picked up.
- For injuries requiring medical attention beyond First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an Incident Report (**Form-3**) will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Children's Pickup

The parent/guardian is responsible for dropping off and picking up their child from all children programs and activities. If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up the child, the name of that individual is to be provided to the ministry leader at the time of drop off. Children who are six (6) years old or older are permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion without further supervision of the volunteer unless otherwise instructed by the parent/guardian. At the end of all programs and activities volunteers should ensure that the younger children are returned safely to the parent/guardian or designee.

Two Adult Rule

It is the goal of the Immanuel Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church that a minimum of two (2) adult volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some Sabbath School classes may have only one (1) adult teacher in attendance during the class session. In these instances, door(s) to the classroom should remain open, or if the door is closed, the teacher and children should be visible from the door observation window.

Restroom Guidelines

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the restroom prior to Sabbath School, Children's Church, and all other programs and activities. For the protection of all, volunteers should never be alone with a child in the restroom. Children should always be sent to the restroom in pairs and escorted by an adult volunteer of the same gender. Volunteers are to check the restroom to make sure it is safe before allowing the children inside. The volunteer should remain nearby, and then escort the children back to the classroom or activity area. If a child requires assistance, the volunteer should leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

Off-Site Trips & Events Policy

Permission Forms

Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and Medical Consent Forms must be completed prior to all trips. The two-adult rule must be followed throughout the trip with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities. Under no circumstances may one adult alone take or accompany minors on an overnight outing.

Ratios

The required adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones for any ministry with children or youth shall be 1:6. Gender balance is preferred. For overnight trips, an adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones of 1:4 is preferred, although 1:6 is permissible. Gender balance is required.

