

Family Ministries

2017-2018 Children's/Youth Worker

Handbook



Coming alongside families to encourage all generations
to glorify God and make disciples



South Suburban Evangelical Free Church
Apple Valley, Minnesota

Welcome to South Suburban Family Ministry!

Thank you for your interest in wanting to be involved in the Family Ministry at South Suburban!
We are excited to have you on the Team!

In the following pages, you will learn about Opportunities to Use Your Gifts, Requirements to be an Approved Children's/Youth Worker, How to Share the Gospel, and Topics and Policies Relevant to this particular area of ministry.

Feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to getting to know you as a member of the Family Ministries Team and serving together!

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Coming alongside families to encourage all generations to glorify God and make disciples.

¹ My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.
² I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—
³ things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.
⁴ We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

Psalm 78

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STATEMENT of FAITH of SOUTH SUBURBAN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

1. **God** – We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new.
2. **The Bible** – We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.
3. **The Human Condition** – We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.
4. **Jesus Christ** – We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus – Israel's promised Messiah – was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.
5. **The Work of Christ** – We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.
6. **The Holy Spirit** – We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.
7. **The Church** – We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.
8. **Christian Living** – We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.
9. **Christ's Return** – We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.
10. **Response and Eternal Destiny** – We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

OPPORTUNITIES TO USE YOUR GIFTS

Children and Youth Ministry volunteers serve in a variety of capacities: teachers, caregivers, directors, assistants, coordinators, administrative support, and substitutes.

Year Long

- **Nursery**
 - o Infant through age 2
 - o Sunday School hour, Worship Service hour, and special meetings
 - o Roles needed: Youth and Adult Nursery Volunteers
- o **Preschool/Elementary/Youth Sunday School (9am hour)**
 - o Kids age 3 through pre-K are in the Preschool Sunday School room
 - o Grade K-6 are in Elementary Sunday School rooms
 - o Grade 7-12 are in Youth Sunday School which meets in the Journey Room
 - o Roles needed: Adult Teachers and Assistants
- **Children's Church (10:30am hour)**
 - o Children age 3 through pre-K meet in the Preschool room
 - o Children in grades K-4 are dismissed after the worship songs to the fellowship hall
 - o Roles needed: Adult Lead Teacher, Youth/Adult Assistants

During the School Year

- **AWANA**
 - o Kids age 3 through 6th grade; Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm
 - o Roles needed: Small group assistants, Listeners, Awana Store Assistants, Special Events Assistant, Craft Planner and Organizer for Cubbies (preschool), Awana Nursery (serving kids of Awana leaders)

Summer

- **Kid's Worship Adventure**
 - o Kids age 3 through kids going into 6th grade; Every Sunday morning beginning in June and running through the entire summer
 - o Roles needed: Youth/Adult Teachers and Assistants for each age group. Music Leader (s), Craft Leader(s), Game Leader(s), Snack Leader(s), Bible Teacher (s)
- **Vacation Bible School**
 - o Kids age 3 through kids going into 6th grade; Beginning of August, Sunday-Thursdays
 - o Roles needed: Youth/Adult Teachers and Assistants for each age group. Craft Leader(s), Game Leader(s), Snack Leader(s)
- **Backyard Kids Club**
 - o For kids in the neighborhood where the host family is
 - o Dates determined according to availability of host families and staffing
 - o Roles needed: Host families, Youth Leaders, Adult Presence

Additional Areas

- **Family Ministries Directional Team**
 - o Meet regularly regarding policies and programs affecting families
- **Sermon-Time Totes**
 - o Organize activity bags for young children during worship services
- **Choirs**
 - o Organized in cooperation with Worship Ministries
- **Teachers at Children's/Youth Ministry Worker Trainings**
 - o Teach or facilitate discussions on topics relevant to Children's/Youth Ministry
- **Special Event Opportunities**
 - o Birthday Party for Jesus, AWANA in the Sun, Sports Camp Outreach

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE APPROVED
FOR MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT SSEFC

1. Application
 - Contact Information
 - Character Reference
 - Testimony
 - Background Check (every 3 years)
 - Interview with Julie Morgenstern (Family Ministries) or Phil Halstead (Youth Ministry)
2. Commitment Form (reconsidered and signed annually)
 - Includes full intent to
 - Lead a Christ-honoring life
 - Be punctual and consistent in attendance
 - Attend training opportunities to sharpen ministry skills
 - Rely on God in lesson preparation, leading, and assisting
 - Regularly attend and support the services and programs of SSEFC
 - Follow ministry guidelines and submit to leadership
 - Teach what is in harmony with the doctrinal statement of faith of SSEFC
3. Annual Entry-Level Training for First-Time Workers
 - Complete Application (above)
 - Commitment Form (above)
 - Receive Worker's Badge
4. Specialized Trainings
 - Break-out sessions equip and empower volunteers as they serve in their respective areas
 - Update Contact Information
 - Commitment Form (reconsidered and signed annually)

Other Notes:

- An *Official ID* must be worn when serving in any form of ministry with or on behalf of children and youth.
- For anyone under the age of 13 to become an approved worker, they must have completed grade 5 and can serve in the nursery or in preschool.

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

(see the green cards in the pews)

God created everyone and everything for a good and loving purpose. (Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:7)

People are made to glorify God in loving and purposeful relationship. (Genesis 1:31 and 2:18)

Sin is choosing our way in life rather than following God's direction. (Isaiah 53:6 and Romans 3:10-23)

Jesus Christ is God's Son, sent to earth by God the Father to rescue us from sin and reorder our lives in relationship to God. (1 John 4:10 and John 14:6)

Salvation is God rescuing us from sin and spiritual death when we receive Jesus by faith as a gift of grace. (John 1:12 and Ephesians 2:1-10).

God created everyone and everything for a good and loving purpose. *That's why we dream of what life and love should be like.* God is the creator and starter of everything, material and spiritual. He has always existed independently from all he created. He acts in love for the good of all he has created.

People are made to glorify God in loving and purposeful relationship. *That's why we have unfulfilled longings for meaning in life.* We are made to be in relationship with God forever and to work together with him and other people for his glory and our joy. God gives us direction on how to experience a life of fulfilling purpose.

Sin is choosing our way in life rather than following God's direction. *That's why we sense something is broken in us and our world.* All people start with the desire to be their own boss and replace God's plans and glory with their own. Rebelling against God's rule over our life results in spiritual and physical decay and death for us and our world.

Jesus Christ is God's Son, sent to earth by God the Father to rescue us from sin and reorder our lives in relationship to God. *That's why we have a longing for security and a fear of death.* Jesus took up life as a man but continued to be God. By God's plan he took our judgment and satisfied God's justice by dying on the cross in our place. Jesus broke the power of sin and death in his resurrection back to life.

Salvation is God rescuing us from sin and spiritual death when we receive Jesus by faith as a gift of grace. *That's why we long for something or someone to reorder all life.* God invites us to receive his Spirit and new life free from the judgment and rule of sin. Nothing we can do ourselves can take away our sin and its consequences. We must believe what God says and receive life as a gift by trusting Jesus. This is spiritual birth into a whole new life.

TOPICS

Topics Covered (alphabetical order):

- Accidents/Injuries
- Communication with Minors
- Crying Children
- Decorations
- Discipline Philosophy
- Emergency Exits
- Forms
- Health/Illness
- Nursery
- Open Doors
- Outings and Activities
- Photo Name Badges
- Phone Use
- Power in Prayer
- Promptness
- Recording and Reporting Procedures
- Reporting Suspected Abuse/Neglect
- Resources
- Restroom
- Room Use
- Substitutes for Workers
- Two-Leader Policy
- Special Needs Children

Accidents/Injuries

Although we do our best to ensure each child's safety, accidents do occur. It is important that you remain calm as you react to and treat the injury.

- Minor Injuries
 - o Wash the injured area with water only.
 - o First aid supplies are in the wall unit in the kitchen
 - o Notify Children's Ministry Staff and parents when they come to get the child.
- Major Injuries
 - o Inform the Children's Ministry Staff and parents immediately.
 - o Remain calm and continually reassure the child.
 - o Follow emergency procedure.
 - 1. *Breathing* has top priority. Clear airway. Give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if necessary.
 - 2. *Stopping any bleeding* through pressure on the wound has second priority.
 - 3. Treat for *shock* after breathing and bleeding have been stabilized. (Elevate feet and keep the child warm.)
 - 4. Do not move a child if there is possible *injury to the back or neck*.
 - 5. *NEVER administer any oral or topical medication* (aspirin, Tylenol, bacitracin, first aid cream, etc.). *Parents may do so, but not you.*
 - 6. *If injuries require professional medical attention*, parents are to be notified right away. If the parent is not immediately available, 2 Approved Children's Workers are to accompany the minor to the medical facility.
- Incident Reports
 - o Promptly and completely fill out an incident report. For any injuries that involve the head, loss of consciousness, immobility of a limb, a fall, biting, and injuries that bleed, swell, or require ice.
 - o Have the form signed by parents and any witnesses.
 - o Turn the report in to the Family Ministries Director/Youth Director.

Communication with Minors

Any personal communication with students in your care through 6th grade must go through the parents or the post office. No social media or electronic communication directly with the student.

Crying Children

Children cry! It is a natural and normal indication of hunger, sleepiness, pain, boredom, illness, or fear. Volunteers may not be able to control the reasons for crying, but they can impact the inward and outward responses. In consoling a crying child, **DO NOT GO ANYWHERE ALONE WITH THE CHILD**. This is for your protection as well as the child's. If a child cannot be consoled after 15 minutes and after trying various methods (reading, singing, engaging with toys, etc.) the Nursery Coordinator or another adult worker will notify the parent (phone call or finding them in the building). Make sure there are still 2 Approved Workers present with the children if one needs to leave the room.

Decorations

Leaders are strongly encouraged to make their area of service attractive and to display items to encourage attendance, enthusiasm, and understanding. Please do not use tacks, staples, adhesive tape, or masking tape on painted surfaces. **Please use painter's tape or special adhesive material can be made available.** Please only use adhesive that will not leave marks on the walls. If it is not in the resource room, it can be obtained from the Family Ministries Director or Nursery Coordinators. Feel free to explore and utilize the supplies available in the Resource Room.

Discipline Philosophy

Discipline does not mean punishment. Our goal is to keep children and youth from:

- Hurting or disturbing other children physically or verbally
- Damaging equipment or property.
- Placing themselves in dangerous situations
- Learning a habit of disrespect toward others and others' property.

Do not use degrading nicknames. Be careful to not humiliate the offending child/youth. Never correct the child in an angry manner or voice.

Basic rules of conduct at SSEFC are a matter of respect:

- Walk in the church building at all times.
- Use an appropriate voice and tone.
- Respect others.
- Respect the church building and property.
- Follow directions given by workers.

Leaders are free to make their own simple, realistic, reasonable class rules. *Communicate your expectations BRIEFLY and CLEARLY, and enforce them LOVINGLY!*

Give attention to misbehaving children/youth in appropriate but unexpected ways.

- Praise appropriate behavior.
- Calmly remove a distracting item, move/separate children/youth, or ask a co-leader to sit beside the offender.
- Examine your own teaching techniques and room arrangement. When young people cannot see or hear clearly, when distractions are within reach or sight, or when you are poorly prepared, you are creating an atmosphere for further distraction and misbehavior.
- Involve parents and identify positive steps that can be taken to correct the problem.
- Take into account the age and maturity level of the child. A short time in a “time out” chair may help control intentional misbehavior. Clearly and calmly explain to the child what behavior was wrong. Notify the parents of the behavior and what action steps were taken.
- Pray for and encourage students who are disciplined.
- In more difficult situations, bring the child/youth to or ask for assistance from the Family Ministries Director/Youth Pastor.

****Children/Youth are NEVER to be physically disciplined by Children’s/Youth Workers.****

Emergency Exits

In case of a tornado or fire, the classrooms should be evacuated as quickly and calmly as possible. Exit maps (including indoor protective areas in case of tornado) are posted in each classroom.

Children’s/Youth Ministry Workers should familiarize themselves with the maps and instruct the children/youth in their care regarding these procedures. Once a year, an emergency drill will be conducted, in which case staff will be notified in advance.

If it is necessary to exit, go *at least* 50 feet away from the building and do not re-enter until you are told to do so. Once again, your calm and reassuring voice is vital. ***Nursery and Preschool Children*** can be assisted by the closest adult or senior high Sunday school class. The “Evacuation Crib” should be utilized to move the children safely inside or outside of the building. If it necessary to leave the building during inclement weather, cover children quickly with blankets or jackets; but do not take *extra* time to find a covering when it is essential to leave the building quickly.

When taking shelter due to severe weather, no one should be in rooms with exterior glass. Rooms that may be used include: West youth room and hallway; nursery check-in area; all first floor restrooms; conference room; first floor education wing hallway; kitchen and pantry; hallway, storage, and ushers room behind the sanctuary.

Forms

The following forms can be found in your classroom or outside the Family Ministries Director’s office. Once filled out, they should be returned to the Family Ministries Director.

- Counseling
 - o When a child allows God to do His work in his or her life, there is great cause for rejoicing and follow-up prayer. So when you have the blessing of counseling a child – salvation decision, assurance of salvation, forgiveness of sin, commitment to holy living, baptism, etc. Please fill out the small counseling card and give it to the Family Ministries Director.

- Encouragement Form
 - o Whenever you sense a child in your care would benefit by an additional encouragement, use this form to request a visit, call, or note from the Family Ministries Director. Examples of such occasions might be illness, injury, hospitalization, divorce or separation, school activity or award, etc.
- Events & Outings Permission Slips/Release
 - o Simple outings or transportation in a vehicle not driven by the parent (a trip to McDonald's, a program at a nursing home, etc.) usually require only the shorter release form. Longer outings or those that involve some risk (sledding, overnights, hayrides, etc.) require the longer release form. When in doubt, use the longer form.
- Incident Reports
 - o A report must be promptly and completely filled out for any injuries that involve the head, loss of consciousness, immobility of a limb, a fall, biting, and injuries that bleed, swell, or require ice. The form should be signed by parents and any witnesses and turned in to the Family Ministries Director. *Err on the side of caution. When in doubt, fill one out!*
- Suspected Abuse
 - o It is important that suspicions or accusations are documented in writing, even if you verbally share it with a staff member. This does not mean that every report will result in direct or legal action, but written documentation is important in making an evaluation.

Health/Illness

- *Sick infants/children/youth will not be allowed to stay in the nursery or classroom* if they have fevers over 100 degrees, hacking coughs, suspicious rashes, diarrhea, or open wounds. If the illness is discovered after they have been dropped off, they need to be returned to their parent. If the parent is unable to take the child home immediately, encourage the use of hallways, coat areas, or the church lobby, etc. while waiting.
- *In interacting with people with communicable diseases* care needs to be taken to see that everything we do is in a spirit of genuine compassion and love while taking practical precautions.

Nursery

- Schedule
 - o A volunteer schedule for nursery workers is created 3 times a year and it is emailed a month before the schedule begins. You will receive a reminder email the week before your scheduled service.
- General Responsibilities
 - o If you are able, please interact with the children on their level – the floor. Gliders are provided for those who prefer to rock, read to, and hold the babies.
 - o Keep the rooms and furnishings clean and neat.
 - Please place toys that have been in a child's mouth in the marked container for sanitizing.
 - o Keep yourself clean and healthy.
 - Wash your hands with warm, soapy water after changing diapers, after wiping nose, and before and after cleaning wounds.
 - Disposable gloves are provided and their use is required when changing diapers or cleaning a wound.

- Snacks
 - o Graham crackers and water are provided for the toddlers. Water is given to children in paper cups. Bottled formula is supplied by parents
- Toys
 - o Each area of the nursery has its own supply of age-appropriate toys. Toys are sprayed with disinfectant weekly.

Open Doors

Activities or counseling with children/youth must never take place in a private area. If the door to a room does not have a window, the door must be propped open. Parents, ministry coordinators or leaders, and the Family Ministries Director/Youth Pastor may enter rooms at any time.

Outings/Activities

To avoid conflict with other events on the church calendar and to keep leadership informed about activities involving our children and youth, workers desiring (on their own) to plan an event or outing with the group they work with, *must notify the Children's Director/Youth Pastor in advance*. For over-nighters or events off church property (including activities where transportation is needed or injury is a possibility, such as sledding or horseback riding), permission slips signed by parents must be obtained *in advance* for each participating child, and given to the Family Ministries Director/Youth Pastor. All off-property events are to be listed in the church calendar.

Phone Use

Please refrain from personal phone/texting/social media use while you serve. Exceptions to this are if there is an emergency or if you need to use it for something class related.

Photo Name Badges

Children/Youth Ministry Volunteers must wear photo name badges when ministering to, working with, or caring for children involved in a children's ministry of SSEFC. These badges will be dated and need to be replaced each year upon re-approval as a Children's Worker. Temporary badges are available (for one day only) from the Family Ministries Director, AWANA Commanders, or Nursery Coordinators for those workers who may have forgotten their permanent badges.

Power in Prayer

Be encouraged to know that regularly on Sunday mornings, the Power in Prayer Team meets to pray by name for those serving the kids and for the kids. If you have specific prayer requests at any point, email Paul at pdmstriv@yahoo.com or contact the Family Ministries Director who will forward it to the team.

Promptness

It is *very important* that you be ready to serve *15 minutes prior to the beginning of your responsibility*. If you have prep work to finish, please allow extra time. Being ready to serve 15 minutes prior allows you to greet, interact, and listen to children and their parents as they arrive. It also provides for smooth

transitions. Late arrivals are particularly stressful for parents of infants and young children and may give older children cause to question your personal concern for them.

Recording & Reporting Procedures

- Sunday School Attendance (preK-grade 6)
 - o Attendance forms are provided each week. It is the responsibility of the Sunday School teacher to mark the attendance and make corrections regarding address, phone number, and birthdays.
 - o *Visitors:* Please get specific mailing information so a follow-up letter may be sent.
 - o *Absences:* If possible, please call or send a card to a child if he/she has been absent more than 2 weeks in a row. Cards are available from the Family Ministries Director.
- Children's Church Attendance (preK-grade 6)
 - o Preschool Children's Church keeps attendance by name on the forms provided in the room.
 - o Elementary Children's Church keeps a numerical record of children and workers.
- Nursery Attendance
 - o During the Sunday School hour, Nursery attendance is recorded on the attendance forms in the nursery.
 - o A numerical record of nursery children and workers are kept for all church services, special meetings, Wednesday night ministries, and any other time the nursery is used.
- Awana Attendance
 - o Attendance is recorded by the Awana Club secretaries. Reports are also made annually to the Awana headquarters.

Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect

In accordance with Minnesota statutes and SSEFC policy, it is mandatory to report suspected child neglect, physical or sexual abuse, or emotional abuse to proper authorities. You may discuss any out-of-the-ordinary observations or conduct with the Family Ministries Director. It is better to report a situation that warrants investigation than to ignore a situation due to your own fears and desire to avoid confrontation. The SSEFC policy on child abuse is included beginning on page 16.

Resources

Please help yourself to any materials you need for your classroom or church sponsored event in the Resource Room (E251). Be considerate...return excess items to proper location, clean up any messes you may make, and neatly hang up costumes you may use. If there are supplies that are running low in the Resource Room, please note it on the "Supply List" in the Resource Room, or speak with the Family Ministries Director.

- Miscellaneous Supplies
 - o Room E251 contains resources for general operation – supplies such as paper, glue, scissors, tape, crayons, craft items, fabrics, decoration items, flannel graph, borders, and larger items for theatrical productions, including costumes and props.
- Classroom Cabinets
 - o Prior to the start of Sunday School each fall, Sunday School teachers will have the opportunity to stock their cabinets with items anticipated for general classroom use (pencils, scissors, glue, tape, tissues, wipes).

- Library
 - o Has a number of videos and books for all ages
- Audio-Video (AV) Equipment
 - o Televisions with VCRs and DVD players are stored inside the AV closet in Room E250. Please check with the Family Ministries Director on availability prior to the week of use.
- Large Toys, Sporting, and Play Equipment
 - o These items are primarily found in the storage closets in the gym. Except for sport equipment, they are not made for children in grades 2 and up. Please return them to storage neatly.

*Anticipate your needs in advance (especially seasonal and holiday supplies). FIRST check what is available in the Resource Room (E251).

*If the supplies you need are not in the Resource Room, or your supply request is beyond what is available, you need to contact the Family Ministries Director for permission to purchase the items you need if you wish to be reimbursed. Please use a tax exempt form since sales tax is not a reimbursable expense.

*You will only be reimbursed with the prior permission to purchase the supplies from the Family Ministries Director, Nursery Coordinators, or Awana Commander. However, it is *essential* that you turn in all receipts/invoices right away to the Family Ministries Director along with an Expense Reimbursement Request form (found by the copiers).

Restroom

Preschool Restroom Policy

- ALL preschoolers are to be escorted to the restroom. Adult females should accompany girls, and adult males should accompany boys. The leader is to check the restroom before the children enter and leave the outside restroom door ajar.
- To avoid any allegation of maltreatment, only assist child with “wiping” if the child asks, and also notify the parent that their child requested your assistance in the restroom.
- A parent is to leave a cell phone number if they wish to assist their child when using the restroom during Sunday School or the Worship Service.
- Remind children to wash their hands when finished. Anyone who assists a child in any way must also wash his/her hands.

Elementary Restroom Policy

- Whenever children are involved in one of our ministry areas, *children in kindergarten through grade 2 should be escorted*. Make sure you are not escorting the child alone. Bring another child or if possible, another worker.
- For grades 3 through 6, each leader is to use their discretion about the need for an adult escort. However, the children are not to leave the classroom alone. Use the Buddy System – have them bring a friend with them.
- When escorting children, leaders should always check the restroom before children enter. Leave the outside restroom door ajar.

Room Use

In many rooms you will find a diagram or photograph of how the room is meant to be set up. When you finish using a room, clean it and return it to the way pictured, or at least as it was when you arrived. If you find it necessary to move tables from their original rooms, return them to the correct room

Two-Leader Policy

At least 2 unrelated approved Children's/Youth Workers must be present at every class, program, or children's activity both on and off church property. One of those leaders must be over 18 years of age. Leaders are not to be alone with a child. ***Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Family Ministries Director/Youth Pastor. The classroom door is to be left open when there is temporarily only one approved worker present or when the only approved workers in the room are related.***

Special Needs Children

There are children and youth in our church and community who have special physical, behavioral, medical, educational, or psychological needs. These individuals provide unique situations to administer godly compassion and love – to make a positive difference for the children as well as their parents. In many cases, parents choose to eliminate the church from their child's experiences because of a lack of appropriate ministry. Your sources for advice continue to be:

- The Holy Spirit in response to your prayers and petitions
- The parents
- Family Ministries Director and Family Ministries Directional Team
- The library and others with experience and/or insight in this area

Substitutes

In case of illness or other inability to fulfil your commitment it is *your* responsibility to find an Approved Worker replacement and notify the Family Ministries Director (Sunday School and Children's Church), Nursery Coordinators (nursery), or Awana Commanders (Awana) after your replacement has been found. If time permits, please notify your co-workers. Finding a replacement can be done quite easily by trading places with someone who is already on the schedule. Adults need an adult replacement. *Please make direct contact with at least 3 people before contacting your Director/Coordinator/Commander.* If a sudden emergency (illness night before service/morning of, car trouble, etc.) please directly contact your Director/Coordinator/Commander.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFETY & ABUSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

South Suburban Evangelical Free Church's Children and Youth Ministries encompass children and youth from birth through high school graduation. The parents and families of our participants are entrusting the most precious persons in their lives to our care. And it is imperative that we do everything possible to insure their safety as we minister. If a suspicion or allegation of abuse involving any paid or unpaid SSEFC ministry worker arise, potential or alleged victims must be protected, both in the suspected/alleged incident and from possible future incidents. Second, the ministries of the church must be protected from even the hint of immorality. Third, but very important, the suspected/alleged perpetrator must receive all reasonable due process protection for his/her well-being and reputation.

1.0 POLICY

All ministry staff who serve directly with children and youth, both volunteer and paid, must complete a ministry application.

1.0 Procedure

- 1.1 The Family Ministries Director and Youth Pastor, in collaboration with the Family Ministries Directional Team, will approve all ministry applications. Until the process has been completed, the applicant may temporarily serve up to once month in the ministry for which he/she was recruited or desires to serve, but only with the appropriate Director/Pastor.
- 1.2 The application shall ask for the applicant's:
 - 1.2.1 Background Information (name, address, phone number, marital status, etc.)
 - 1.2.2 SSEFC membership status/length of attendance
 - 1.2.3 Ministry Information (testimony, previous ministry experience, where he/she wants to begin serving)
 - 1.2.4 Non-related character reference outside of South Suburban and contact info
 - 1.2.5 Permission for SSEFC to perform background check
 - 1.2.6 Signature of verification and release
- 1.3 Anyone who ministers regularly with children and youth, both volunteer and paid must be followers of Christ.

2.0 POLICY

No driver under 18 years of age will be allowed to transport children/youth as part of a church event. No driver with more than two moving violations in the last twelve months shall transport children/youths as part of a church event.

2.0 Procedure

Potential drivers will be asked by the on-site ministry leader or his/her designee whether the driver has had more than two moving violations in the last twelve months. If the answer is "yes," the driver will not be allowed to transport children/youth during the event.

3.0 POLICY

Any person transporting children/youths by car during a church activity shall be sure that all riders and the driver use their seat belts at all times when the vehicle engine is running. Any person transporting children/youths by car during a church activity shall have a minimum of \$100,000 - \$300,000 liability insurance.

3.0 Procedure

It is the responsibility of the on-site ministry leader or his/her designee to ask if appropriate insurance is in force, to ask if there are sufficient seat belts for the driver and all riders, and to remind the driver of the need to use seat belts at all times when the engine is running.

4.0 POLICY

All church rooms used for Children's and Youth Ministries activities shall have visibility with at least one uncovered window. Unscheduled visits from church leaders can be expected at any time.

5.0 POLICY

Children birth through 2nd grade who are participating in weekly ministries will only be released from these ministries to persons authorized by the child's parent/guardian. Children in grades 3 and higher can be released directly at the conclusion of any ministry. Teachers/assistants can escort children to parents as well.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Children birth-2nd grade will be released only to adult or sibling authorized by parents.

5.2 Children in grade K-2 must be told at release time to wait in the ministry area for someone to pick them up. A Children's Ministry Leader/Assistant from that ministry is to remain in the ministry area until all of the children are picked up.

6.0 POLICY

Children kindergarten and younger are never to leave the ministry area to get a drink, use the bathroom, etc. except in the presence of at least one Approved Children's Worker. Children in grades 1-6 are not to leave the ministry area for a drink of water, to use the bathroom, etc. except in the presence of friend or Approved Children's Worker.

7.0 POLICY

Children's and Youth Ministries participants are never to be physically disciplined. Also, they are never to be corrected in an angry voice.

8.0 POLICY

Any photography and video or audio recording of children's and student ministries participants must be authorized by the appropriate pastor.

9.0 POLICY

All church related Children's and Youth Ministries activities which take place outside of regularly scheduled on-site ministries must be approved by the appropriate director/coordinator and pastor.

10.0 POLICY

No medications will be administered by staff, either paid or volunteer.

10.1 If a medical need arises, the parent/guardian will be contacted.

11.0 POLICY

All Children's and Youth Ministries staff shall receive training.

11.1 The Approved Worker Orientation is required of all new Children's Ministry Workers twice a year.

11.2 Additional training are required to continue service, 2 times a year.

12.0 POLICY

Children's and Student Ministries workers shall avoid circumstances whenever possible where their reputations or the reputation of the church could be harmed.

12.1. Children's and Youth ministries workers shall refrain from inappropriately touching children/youths. Such inappropriate touching includes:

12.1.1. Anywhere a one piece swimsuit would cover.

12.1.2. Caressing.

12.1.3. Kissing initiated by the teacher/servant. Any kissing involving children/youths above grade 3. For children grade 3 and below, any kissing other than on the cheek, forehead, or top of head.

12.1.4. Frequent hugging initiated by the teacher/servant, and any frontal hugging above grade 3.

12.2. Children's Ministries Workers shall try to avoid taking individual children to the bathroom alone. Whenever a caregiver/teacher is the only leader taking one or more children to the bathroom, the bathroom door to the hallway must be propped fully open.

12.3. Children's Ministries Workers shall not be assigned to minister alone with a group of children. Immediate relatives ordinarily will not be allowed to minister together where they are regularly the only leaders/assistants with a group of children. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Family Ministries Director.

12.4. Children's and Youth Ministries Workers shall try to avoid transporting children/youths other than their own to and/or from church where the servant is alone in the car with the child/youth.

12.5. Youth staff members, both paid and volunteer, shall not drive a student of the opposite sex alone without permission from the parent or guardian.

12.6. Youth Ministries Workers, both paid and volunteer, are not allowed to date students in their ministries or to spend any non-counseling time alone with a student of the opposite sex.

- 12.7. Children's and Youth Ministries Workers shall avoid one-to-one counseling alone with children/youths except in a place where their actions can be physically viewed by another person who is present during the meeting.
- 12.8. There shall not be co-ed housing at any church or church related event. Reasonable and prudent numbers of chaperones/counselors shall be in each room on overnight activities.
- 12.9. All ministries and ministry activities shall be physically supervised by a reasonable and prudent number of leaders/chaperones.

13.0 POLICY

Suspicious of a child being abused shall be reported in collaboration with Ministry Staff to the appropriate governmental agency within 24 hours of perceiving such suspicions.

13.0 Procedure

A teacher/servant who suspects that a participant in his/her ministry is being abused is free to discuss this suspicion with another teacher/servant, ministry leader, committee chairperson, or pastor. Any such advisors should be persons with responsibility in the area of ministry where the suspicion arose. The teacher/servant or any other persons who suspect or have knowledge of abuse shall make a report to the appropriate government agency within 24 hours of concluding that abuse may have occurred. Any teacher/servant who suspects or has knowledge of abuse shall also report this suspicion/knowledge to the appropriate pastor immediately.

14.0 POLICY

If an allegation of abuse is made against an SSEFC Children's/Youth Worker the allegation shall immediately be processed in accordance with the following procedure.

14.0 Procedure

- 14.1. If an allegation or suspicion of abusive behavior involves a person, either paid or voluntary, who serves in a church ministry, the person who is the subject of the suspicion or allegation shall not be contacted about the suspicion/allegation by anyone, either paid or volunteer, who serves in church ministry until advised by the investigating governmental authorities that such contact is appropriate.
- 14.2. In the event of suspicion/allegation, the following persons shall immediately be informed: the Family Ministries Director and Children's Ministry Liaison in which the suspected/alleged perpetrator serves. The Director and Liaison shall inform the Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Overseer Board. If the suspicion/allegation involves a Director/Coordinator/Liaison/Pastor/Overseer, the Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Overseer Board shall be directly informed by the person who has perceived or received the suspicion/allegation. This person can be the Ministry Worker who perceived the suspicion or received the allegation, or it can be any other Ministry Worker or leader with whom the person consulted. All persons who perceive suspicions or receive allegations or are consulted about any suspicions/allegations are responsible to report them in accordance with this procedure.

- 14.3. All persons named in #2 above are responsible to see that all legally mandated reports, as defined by Minnesota and United States statutes, have been made in a timely manner.
- 14.4. The pastor and/or Overseer Liaison shall interview the alleged victim or his/her representative, if appropriate per the following subdivision (14.4.1.), securing necessary information.
 - 14.4.1. If the alleged victim is in high school or younger, the first interview shall be performed by a child protection investigator. The suspected/alleged victim will not be interviewed by anyone associated with the church until approval for such contact is provided by the investigating authorities.
- 14.5. The first interview with the suspected/alleged perpetrator shall be performed by a child protection investigator.
 - 14.5.1. After this, if appropriate and if an allegation has been made, the alleged victim or his/her representative shall be allowed to state the allegation to the alleged perpetrator in a setting which protects the interests of the alleged victim.
 - 14.5.2. After child protection investigators indicate that it is appropriate for church officials to contact the alleged perpetrator, the pastor and committee chairperson, or any other person designated by the Senior Pastor, shall state the allegation on behalf of the church to the alleged perpetrator.
- 14.6. The pastor and Overseer Liaison shall decide, under the authority of the Senior Pastor, whether the alleged perpetrator shall be allowed to continue in his/her ministry.
 - 14.6.1. This decision shall be made first in consideration of the needs of the alleged victim and other potential victims. Second, the effectiveness of the ministry shall be considered. Third, the wishes of the alleged perpetrator shall be considered.
 - 14.6.2. Ministry participation by the alleged perpetrator will probably be suspended while the allegation is investigated.
 - 14.6.3. The alleged perpetrator may in rare circumstances be allowed to continue in ministry as long as all contacts with ministry participants are physically supervised by an adult who is not related to the alleged perpetrator.
- 14.7. If the investigation substantiates the allegation, the alleged perpetrator shall be removed from the ministry where the alleged abuse occurred, and his/her participation, if any, in other ministries shall be reviewed for appropriateness.
 - 14.7.1. The church officials in #2 shall be informed, and the church will cooperate in any resulting legal proceedings.

- 14.7.2. The church shall seek to establish a process by which the alleged perpetrator can be restored to a feeling of full fellowship with the Body of Christ at SSEFC. However, the alleged perpetrator shall not be restored to ministry with children or youths.
- 14.8. If the investigation disproves the allegation, restrictions on ministry participation by the exonerated person shall be removed, and the church officials in #2 shall be informed.
- 14.9. If the investigation fails to substantiate the allegation, the pastor and leadership team chairperson responsible for the ministry and the church officials in #2 shall meet to determine appropriate action in the case. These persons may wish to interview one or more of the parties to the allegation, if appropriate.
- 14.9.1. If the unsubstantiated allegation involves a child or youth as the alleged victim, and if the alleged perpetrator desires to continue in ministry, the alleged perpetrator shall undergo psychological evaluation as a condition of continued participation in the ministry.
- 14.9.2. This evaluation shall be performed at the expense of the alleged perpetrator's insurance company or at the expense of church resources.
- 14.9.3. Selection of the psychologist/psychiatrist who performs the evaluation is subject to church pre-approval as a condition of continued participation in ministry.
- 14.9.4. The alleged perpetrator shall provide a release to the psychological evaluator to permit informing the church in the event that no pedophobic or pedophilic or hepaphobic or hepaphyllic tendencies are shown in the evaluation.
- 14.9.5. If the church receives written notification from the evaluator that no pedophilic or pedophobic or hepaphobic or hepaphyllic tendencies were displayed by the alleged perpetrator in the evaluation process, the alleged perpetrator shall be considered exonerated of the allegation and may be returned to unrestricted ministry leadership. Such notification does not guarantee return to ministry, however.
- 14.9.6. If the church does not receive written notification from the evaluator within one week of the first available appointment that no pedophilic or pedophobic or hepaphobic or hepaphyllic tendencies were displayed by the alleged perpetrator in the evaluation process, the alleged perpetrator shall be removed from participation in the ministry, and the appropriateness of his/her participation in other ministries, if any, shall be reviewed by the Board of Overseer.

