

# IMMANUEL KIDS

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES  
2016-2017



**IMMANUEL**  
ANGELICAN CHURCH

# CHILD PROTECTION AT IMMANUEL ANGLICAN

## **Child and Youth Safety Takes Priority**

As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital. Our policies ensure that church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing children.

The primary purpose of our policies is to promote the safety and well-being of children and youth by providing clear instructions about the operation of children and youth ministries at Immanuel Anglican. The leaders of Immanuel Anglican request the cooperation of the adults in our church who must abide by all guidelines.

## **A Higher Standard**

As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, everyone at Immanuel Anglican must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. All adults must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place. I Thessalonians 5:22- "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

## **CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING PROCESS**

Adults working directly with children in any ministry must complete the following:

### **Application Forms**

Applicants must complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information.

### **Criminal Background Check**

This will be kept in strict confidence and will only be available to Immanuel Anglican professional ministry staff.

## **CHILD MALTREATMENT & ABUSE**

**Child maltreatment** is any type of harm to a child by a caretaker. This includes acts of commission (assault) as well as acts of omission (failure to protect). This could mean injuries to a child by unsafe driving, poor judgment on a field trip by an inexperienced leader, an understaffed nursery where a child falls from a changing table as well as sexual abuse or molestation.

As defined by the state of Illinois, **child abuse** is "the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caretaker, someone living in their home or someone who works with or around children. The mistreatment must cause injury or must put the child at risk of physical injury.

Child abuse can be physical (such as burns or broken bones), sexual (such as fondling or incest) or emotional (such as verbal aggression)” ([www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs)).

Sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of a perpetrator. According to the National Resource Center on Sexual Abuse, it is “any sexual activity with a child whether in the home by a caretaker, in a daycare situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.” Sexual abuse does not have to involve physical contact, or be violent. It is any behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially and developmentally ready.

Examples of sexual abuse involving touching are: fondling, rape

Examples of sexual abuse not involving touching are: inappropriate sexual comments, obscene phone calls or text messages or emails, inappropriate pictures.

## CHILD ABUSE PERPETRATORS

**Child molesters cannot be identified by appearance, intelligence, dress or even membership in a church.**

There are two types of child molesters.

**Situational**— an individual who gives in to temptation and acts on impulse. The tendency for abuse may never exist until the opportunity arises. This person is deterred by minimizing situations that are ripe for abuse by training, strong supervision and emphasis on guidelines.

**Preferential**— an individual who abuses children repeatedly and will work to gain access to vulnerable children. Many are adept at living a “hidden life” and appear completely normal to others. Be aware of “grooming behaviors”: a pattern of behavior by a child molester that makes a child more vulnerable to molestation. This person is deterred by a six month rule, criminal background checks and protection policies.

“Grooming Behaviors” may include providing gifts, trips or money. Be aware of excessive attention given to selected children and fostering reliance on or an emotional attachment to an adult. Take note of anyone creating a “guru” syndrome- a ministry focused on the personality of the ministry worker. Be alert should a ministry worker initiate “secret activities”. There are no secret activities or meetings closed to parents.

Our main priority is the welfare of our children. Our children’s ministry program is to serve, uplift, instruct and protect kids. Working with children is a privilege and it is the responsibility of the church leadership to select the best qualified people.

## RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE & MALTREATMENT

### Recognizing Sexual Abuse

Physical signs of abuse may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavioral signs may include:

- Severe anxiety inappropriate for age
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Withdrawal from activities and friends

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- “I don’t like [a particular ministry/volunteer worker]”
- “[A ministry/volunteer worker] does things to me when we’re alone”

### Recognizing Neglect:

- A child appears to be undernourished
- A child is dressed inappropriately for the weather
- A young child has been left alone

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If you ever see anything that appears suspicious or see any inappropriate behavior by another adult, please **report it immediately to the Children’s Director. If the Children’s Director is unavailable, report immediately to the Rector.** Immanuel Anglican employees are mandated reporters and will report abuse to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS).

Under Illinois law, as a volunteer at the church you are not a mandated reporter, but you need to report to a church staff member.

## REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE

Three controllable factors that affect the risk level of child abuse are:

### 1. Isolation:

- Risk increases as isolation increases.
- Most cases of sexual abuse occur in isolated settings.

- Four factors affect isolations: (1) the number of people present, (2) the time of the activity, (3) the location of the activity, and (4) the physical arrangements.

## 2. **Accountability:**

- Risk increases as accountability decreases.
- Child sexual abuse always occurs in settings where proper accountability or checks are not in place, especially without the accountability of another adult in the room.

## 3. **Power:**

- Risk increases when there is an imbalance of power, authority, influence and control between a potential abuser and a potential victim.
- Children are vulnerable to sexual predators because of the imbalance of power related to age, size, strength and control.
- Most child victims know and trust their abuser. Once abuse occurs, perpetrators will use their power, authority and influence to promote silence.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES**

### **Touching Policy**

Children want and need physical affection, but for the safety of all, touching should:

- Always be done in the presence of other adults. It should be in public.
- Initiated by the child for the benefit of the child.
- Be non-demanding. Gentle touch of shoulders, hands, arms, back is OK.
- Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing; it should be above reproach.
- A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
- Children over the age of 2 may not sit on the lap of a volunteer.

### **Bathroom Policy**

Nursery:

- Diaper changes are only done by the child's parent.

Preschool:

- When a child is going to the bathroom, stand outside the door, facing away from the bathroom. Leave the bathroom door slightly open.
- If a child needs help using the bathroom, a same-gendered adult can help while another adult waits outside the partially open door.

Elementary:

- Before the child enters the bathroom, identify and be aware of any other adults in the bathroom.
- 2 adults must take a child to the bathroom.

### **Security**

- Parents/Guardians must check-in and pick-up their children from all ministries or child care unless the staff of Immanuel has been previously notified. Siblings under the age of 18 are not allowed to check-in or pick-up.
- All children entering a room must have checked-in and must be wearing a nametag.