



INTERIM

*Children's Ministry Policies*

Summer 2021

Dear Children's Ministry Volunteer,

Thank you for your desire to serve in Immanuel Anglican Church's ministry to children and youth. Our vision is to see every child encounter Jesus Christ and be transformed by the power of the Gospel to become a lifelong disciple of Christ. To that end, we aim to make Immanuel's Children's Ministry a place that is:

- **FULLY SCRIPTURAL** – Where children experience the presence and love of God in the Holy Scriptures, allowing them to know, trust and love Him.
- **FULLY SACRAMENTAL** - Where children's hearts and habits can be formed by a sacramental spirituality that connects their minds, emotions and bodies to the truth and goodness of Jesus.
- **FULL OF THE SPIRIT** – Where children learn to be filled with the Holy Spirit and use their creativity and spiritual gifts to serve the church and encourage one another.
- **FREE TO SACRIFICE** – Where children grow in their vision for serving others, and are able to trust Jesus enough to make sacrifices for the church and the world.
- **FOCUSED ON THE SALVATION OF OTHERS** – Where children develop the love and courage to boldly share their faith with friends and welcome others into the family of God.

As a church, we believe that safeguarding the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is one of our most important callings. 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 pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members, which are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Following these guidelines will protect children, you, and the mission of Immanuel Anglican Church. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

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

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wood, Children's Ministry Director

**Contact:** [jennifer@immanuelanglican.org](mailto:jennifer@immanuelanglican.org) // (630) 360-5435

## EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS

1. Maintain an abiding relationship with Jesus, through regular enjoyment of Scripture, prayer, worship, Sabbath rest and fellowship with other believers.
2. Complete all required screening, training and documentation procedures before beginning to serve.
3. Sign the Invitation to a Confessional Life document before you begin serving, and yearly after that. Take initiative to meet with a leader for confession if there is an area of unconfessed sin in your life. *(If, during a time of confession, it becomes clear that there is a pattern of unrepentant sin in your life, we do ask that you notify the Children's Ministry Director to discern if this may be a season to step back from serving.)*
4. Attend all required Children's Ministry Meetings.
5. Regularly attend Immanuel Sunday services, including on Sundays when you are not serving in the Children's Ministry.
6. Take initiative to find a substitute for yourself if you are unable to serve on your assigned day. *(You can do this by requesting a substitute through the Serving tab on IO, or by emailing the whole group.)*
7. Give Director a 30-day notice before stepping back from serving. *If you must conclude your serving commitment before a Sunday you have already confirmed you will serve, please help the Director find a replacement for that Sunday!*

## OVERVIEW OF IAC SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, Immanuel Anglican Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

### **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

Immanuel Anglican 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 or a member of the Immanuel Anglican Church Safety Committee. 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.

To equip staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, **Immanuel Anglican Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training.** This training will be renewed every two years.

### **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children are required to complete Immanuel Anglican Church's Screening Process, which includes:

- an online application through Immanuel Online;
- a face-to-face meeting with director;
- references to be checked.

\*A volunteer must A) be a member in good standing and B) have been attending Immanuel Anglican Church for **six months** before being eligible to serve in positions providing ministry services to children or students.

### **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**

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

## **CHILD SAFETY POLICY**

### **CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES**

1. All children must check in at the welcome table outside of the ministry area. Check-in begins fifteen minutes prior to the start of the service and closes fifteen minutes after it has begun. The on-site coordinator must be present and ready for children during 30 minutes of check-in.
2. First-time guests should also check in at the welcome table through the computer system where we will collect basic information. Ask each new family if there are any allergies to be aware of – food or otherwise.
3. Greet each child with warmth and make them feel welcome. The on-site coordinator will bring children to their classes from the welcome area. Parents

should not enter the ministry area.

4. Do not allow adults to pick up children if they are not a parent/guardian. Siblings under the age of 18 are not allowed to check-in or pick-up. However, adults that are not parents/guardians may pick up children if it has been arranged with the Director beforehand.

## **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

Immanuel Anglican Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. Child abuse can be physical (such as burns or broken bones), sexual (such as fondling or incest) or emotional (such as verbal aggression). It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Immanuel Anglican Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Children's Ministry Director or Rector.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

Immanuel Anglican 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 or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services, or another appropriate agency.

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. 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. Volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Children's Ministry Director or Rector, or any other staff (if these persons cannot be reached).

## **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

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

## REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

### REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Children's Ministry Director, or the Rector.

### 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 Children's Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or students at Immanuel Anglican Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Immanuel Anglican Church.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or students at Immanuel Anglican Church.

### REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at Immanuel Anglican Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the immediate supervisor of the area, the Children's Ministry Director, or the Rector.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible, within 48 hours after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Children's Ministry, the Children's Ministry Director or Rector will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation.

A volunteer may, in reporting to the Children's Ministry Director, allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies. In no way is any provision in this policy meant to discourage any volunteer from *personally* reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

If appropriate, the Children’s Ministry Director or Rector will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

## RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

Immanuel Anglican Church Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

## OTHER SAFETY GUIDELINES

### BUILDING SAFETY

The Children’s Ministry Director will be responsible for ensuring that the Children’s Ministry Space 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 Ministry Space 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 downstairs, to a room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children’s Ministry volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

### WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

Immanuel Anglican Church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children’s Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child **minimum ratios** will be observed:

PROGRAM	WORKERS	CHILDREN
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 3-5 years old	2	12
Elementary	2	12
Junior High/High School	2	20

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 our 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, biting 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 a 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 entire 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 Director.

## **BATHROOM GUIDELINES**

Under no circumstance should a volunteer change a child's diaper or accompany a child alone to the bathroom while the child is under care of Immanuel's Children's Ministry.

Parents will be instructed to change diapers and take potty-trained children (of all ages) to the restroom before Sunday classes begin. If a child has an emergency and needs a fresh diaper or trip to the restroom, the parent will be notified. Volunteers should never leave the classroom 1-on-1 with a child.

## **IF A CHILD HAS AN "ACCIDENT"**

Notify the parent immediately. Bring the child to an area away from other children but not isolated. Reassure the child and comfort them that their parents will arrive soon, and give books or other small toys to occupy their time. Use sanitizing wipes to clean any area of the floor or mat that were wet in the accident.

Do your best, when a child has an accident, to reassure them and the parents with a gracious and confident attitude. Do your best to keep the child or parents from feeling guilty or embarrassed about the situation.

## **IF A CHILD VOMITS**

If a child vomits while under supervision of Immanuel's Children's Ministry, the parents and Children's Ministry Director should be notified immediately. Remove all children gently from the area where the sick child vomited, redirecting other children to another activity while giving attention to sick child. If the child continues to vomit, find a container for them to use to minimize contamination of surrounding area.

Once the parents arrive and remove the child from the class, clean the affected area with disinfectant wipes and set aside all toys and supplies that may have been affected. Once all the children have been picked up, wash these supplies thoroughly with soap and water and dry before returning to the bins.

Do your best, when a child is unexpectedly sick, to reassure them and the parents with a gracious and confident attitude. Do your best to keep the child or parents from feeling guilty or embarrassed about the situation. Also, mention the situation to other parents, so they are aware about their children's exposure to the germs.

## **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any Immanuel Anglican Church program or activity.

## **MEDICATION**

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in Children's Ministry.

## **MODESTY**

All volunteers must present themselves in appropriate attire while serving.

## **NUDITY**

Staff members and volunteers serving in Children's Ministry 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.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event 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 Children's Ministry activities or programs. Another trained, screened adult should always be present.

## **VIRTUAL INTERACTION**

Under no circumstance should a Children's Ministry volunteer maintain communication with child or student in Immanuel's ministry in any form that is not completely transparent and guaranteed to be monitored by the parents of the child: this excludes phone calls, online messaging, texting and other virtual forms of interaction outside of Sunday mornings.

## 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. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Church vans, or vehicles owned or rented by Immanuel Anglican Church, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.

## PARENTAL CONTACT

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

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

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 child's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process.

## PHYSICAL CONTACT

Immanuel Anglican Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Immanuel Anglican Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Children's Ministry programs:

- 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.

- 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 Rector.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or Children's Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Rector.

## **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 are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care.

## **TOBACCO USE**

Immanuel Anglican 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 Immanuel Anglican Church activities or programs. Immanuel Anglican Church is a tobacco-free facility.

## **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. 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 a 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 Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and welfare of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministry 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 has authority to pick up that 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.

## **SUPERVISION**

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### *Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement*

I have received and read a copy of Immanuel Anglican Church's Interim Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Immanuel Anglican Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Immanuel Anglican Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide a 30-day notice to my supervisor.

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

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of Immanuel Anglican Church policies and procedures manual.

Your Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Detach this page and return to Children's Ministry Director.**