

Parental Guidelines and Safe Sanctuary Policies for Children and Youth Programs

2009-2010



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Expectations for Preschool and Elementary Parents During Sunday School Hours

- Please read the “Safe Sanctuary Policy,” found on pages 7-12 of this booklet, for detailed instructions about the safety of your child at Davidson United Methodist Church.
- Sunday School begins at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Teachers will be ready to receive children when 2 unrelated adults are present in the room—no earlier than 9:15 a.m. or 10:45 a.m. If only 1 adult is present, you will be asked to stay until the 2nd teacher arrives or wait in the hallway.
- A full lesson will be planned for each hour. Please make the effort to arrive on time. If your children are “late,” please have them enter the classroom quietly.
- Sunday School concludes at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Please pick up your child promptly—by 10:40 a.m. or 12:10 p.m.—at the latest. If you are a teacher who will be waiting on children to leave from your classroom, please alert your children’s teachers or make arrangements for pick-up by an authorized adult.
- When worship concludes earlier than Sunday School, parents should wait quietly in the Sunday School halls.
- Only authorized adults, parents, or grandparents may drop off/pick-up children at the door of the classroom. Older siblings **may not** pick-up younger children. This applies for every classroom of infants through 5th graders.
- The staff and Sunday School Committee of DUMC have certain expectations for behavior in the classroom. The guidelines for behavior are designed to be age-appropriate. Essentially, the teacher will discuss the action in question with the student inside the classroom. If two episodes of misbehavior occur within the morning, the child will be asked to sit in time-out inside the room. The teacher will alert Ellen Johnson or Menita Mercuri who will talk with the parents. An approach will be negotiated, which may include having the parent stay with the child in the room for one or several weeks.
- Classroom rosters will be available to teachers who will occasionally call on parents to assist. One person from the teaching team will take the lead. Many of our teams have from 4 to 6 teachers. At times, only one person is available and parents who are willing to assist can help us “keep the door open” for that class on that particular Sunday. Cheerfully take a turn when the request suits your schedule!
- We need to know if your child has allergies, including foods and the need for an epi-pen or asthma apparatus. Infants through 4 year olds have detailed cards at the classroom door for this information. A form is also provided outside the classroom door for school age children. Snacks served during Sunday School are always peanut-free.

Wellness Policy

Q. When should by child be kept home from the church nursery and/or Sunday School?

A. Any child with the following should be kept home from church:

- A fever of 100° F or higher, or
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, or
- Fever accompanied by other indicators, such as:
 - Known exposure to communicable diseases (i.e. chicken pox),
 - Extreme malaise (tiredness),
 - Nausea, vomiting, and/or abdominal pain, or
 - Symptoms of upper respiratory infection (i.e., coughing, sneezing, green or thick discharge from nose).

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child be without fever and diarrhea for a full *24 hours* before returning to normal activities.

Q. What about “pink eye”?

A. Conjunctivitis is the medical term for pink eye. Children should stay home if:

- Eye(s) is/are severely red and somewhat swollen and there is a yellow discharge.
- Child excessively rubs the itching eye(s).
- Eye(s) is/are watering and sensitive to light.

Children may return to the classroom after *24 hours* of treatment.

Q. What if my child is on an antibiotic?

A. Children may return to the classroom 24-48 hours after beginning an antibiotic. Please check with your physician. We cannot administer any medication in the church!

Infant-Toddler II

Guidelines for Checking Children In and Out of the Nursery

Children move between the Infant/Crawler/Young Walker classrooms during the year based on ability. Please check with your child's primary child-care attendant before moving your child to another room. When your child reaches the Young Walker Room, he/she remains in that room until our next promotion Sunday in August.

The church will provide a clean, well equipped/age appropriate room, caring and consistent child-care workers, pagers and wipes.

PLEASE DO:

- Locate child's attendance card (behind letter for last name—not always alphabetical behind that letter).
- If there is no card, complete a green "Newcomers to Sunday School" sheet.
- Receive a pager from child-care attendant and write number on the attendance card or "Newcomers" sheet. Parents must take a pager.
- Premix bottle if using formula (staff may not mix formula).
- Hand child and **LABELED** belongings (bag, diapers, bottle/cup) to child-care attendant. If you are the parent of two or more nursery age children who are not in the same room, please send a bag per room.
- If you want to check on your child, please use our one-way windows. Your child may not see you when you stick your head in the door, but another one may and there is the possibility of a once calmed child becoming upset again.
- If your child has trouble settling—let a child-care attendant know how long you wish to wait before being paged. If a child is afraid and cannot seem to settle—child-care staff is to page within 8-10 minutes. If a child is mad—child-care staff waits it out a bit more. If a child is new and has trouble adjusting—we recommend regular attendance and leaving the child a bit longer each week.
- Upon returning to the room for pick-up, please hand pager to the child-care attendant.
- Wait for attendant to hand child over gate or open gate for child to exit class.
- Create a line in the hallway if necessary for pick-up, as families will pick-up one at a time. If your child sees you before it is your turn, he/she may become upset.

MOST IMPORTANTLY:

The caregiver who drops off the child must be the caregiver that picks up the child. No siblings are to drop off or pick-up. It must be an authorized adult. Also, no adults should enter the room unless they are working in the nursery or your child is very upset or new and you first check with the primary child-care attendant for that room. This is for the safety of all children in the nursery. We have had family members without visiting rights come to "visit." There is also the potential for a little one to "escape" unnoticed anytime that the gate is opened.

Infant-Toddler II, continued

PLEASE DON'T:

- Please do not enter the classroom—this disturbs other children who may have already settled.
- Please do not peek your head in the doorway—use the one-way windows.
- Please do not send any medicine—even in bottles or juice—we cannot give medicine to your child (see the last line of our Wellness Policy).
- Please do not ask child-care staff to feed your child—if he-she will need to be fed (other than a bottle) during the hour, ask the child-care staff to page you when/if your child needs to be fed.

We cannot give unlabeled bottles or cups to any child. Please initial pacifiers as well!

**Preschool Children (Ages 2-4)
Procedures for Dropping Off and Picking Up**

When dropping off:

- Locate child's attendance card (behind letter for last name—not always alphabetical behind that letter).
- If there is no card, complete a green "Newcomers to Sunday School" sheet.
- Mark your child present (for ages three and under, write pager number in box for that date upon receiving pager from teacher).
- Make a nametag and place on your child's back.
- Hand attendance card to the teacher as your child enters the room.

When picking up:

- Return pager to child's teacher.
- Receive attendance card and child.
- Place attendance card in the back of the card box.

Guidelines for Molly McKay Youth House and Youth Activities Grades 6-12 | Website: www.dumyouth.com

The youth ministry of Davidson United Methodist Church strives to provide youth with a safe environment in which to grow and learn about God. The following list will help parents and youth be well informed. Please read thoroughly and contact Kristen Twitchell with any questions. Youth e-mails are sent out regularly. E-mail Kristen to be added to the distribution list: ktwitchell@davidsonumc.org
Youth office: 704-987-9949 Molly McKay House 704-987-9948

PARENTS OF YOUTH CAN HELP IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Make sure that you are clear about the beginning and ending times of youth events. We appreciate our volunteers and believe that their time should be used efficiently. Check the bulletin, Dove online, church and youth websites for updated information.
- Respect our carefully planned events and build in time so that young folks can fully experience the program or fun that is planned. Youth should notify an adult on site if they have to leave before the event is over.
- Instruct youth to stay on the church grounds while a youth event is in progress. There is a safety risk for youth who walk into downtown. Parents MUST inform Kristen ahead of time for any exception to be approved. Only youth with pre-approved permission may leave the church grounds before the event is over. PARENTS—please know where your youth are at all times! These are young adults who should take some responsibility for themselves. The first time that this rule is broken, parents will be contacted immediately!
- Check to see if Kristen or another “in charge” adult is present at the Molly McKay House before dropping your youth off for a visit or an event. Youth are to be in a group at all times, when visiting the Molly McKay House. Supervision is critical to youth safety.
- Be assured that doors to meeting rooms are open at all times, unless a small group is in session with 2 unrelated adult leaders present.
- Be aware that we expect respectful treatment of peers and adults. Immediate feedback will be shared with parents if youth are not living up to the proper maturity for the church event.
- Challenge youth to use their free time at Open House responsibly. At 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays, youth should decide whether they are leaving or staying for small groups, and alert the leader if they are leaving. If they stay, they must attend small group meetings. No roaming the Molly McKay House.
- Support the church in its effort to care for youth with regard to group trips. No youth will be allowed to drive as assistants on youth trips that are away from the church (even one youth driving solo is not permitted).
- Know how your youth is getting home. Do not leave your youth in charge of finding a ride home. Leaders may not give youth rides to their destinations.
- Complete permission forms so that youth may be allowed to go to off campus events. These forms may be found on the youth website referred to above.

These guidelines have been set to protect your youth and to insure that the environment will foster spiritual growth.

Safe Sanctuary Policy

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2

“In particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse.”

Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2005-2008

Davidson United Methodist Church, intent on providing a safe environment for children and youth who participate in programs designed to help them grow in their faith, enforces the Safe Sanctuary Policy printed below. This policy maintains guidelines and procedures set by the United Methodist Church to help ensure the physical safety of our children and youth. This policy is also designed to protect our adult volunteers as well as the church as a whole from unfounded allegations of misconduct. We believe the church should be a safe place for all ages to learn, serve and grow in their faith. Volunteers are defined as unpaid persons serving in ministry with children and youth. Children are defined as those persons from birth through fifth grade. Youth are persons from sixth grade through age 18. Adults are persons age 19 and older.

A. Selection and Training of Paid Workers and Volunteers.

1. Davidson UMC will order nationwide criminal background checks on all employees. (These will be filed in a locked cabinet and kept under the strictest of confidence.) The business office will run all checks, with the exception of childcare employees. The children’s ministry department will request all childcare employee checks. Background checks will be run at least every five years, and more often as deemed necessary.
2. Davidson UMC will order nationwide criminal background checks on all adults who volunteer with children and/or youth. Volunteers must complete a background form giving the church permission to run the check. Checks will be run and reviewed by the program staff person to whom the volunteer relates. (All documents will be filed in a locked cabinet and kept under the strictest of confidence.) Background checks will be run at least every five years, and more often as deemed necessary.
3. The responsible program coordinator will contact previous church and/or personal references on each volunteer. Persons refusing to have a background check run, provide an accurate social security number for a residence trace or who have been actively affiliated with DUMC for less than six months will not be allowed to volunteer with children and youth. Neither will any person who has been convicted of, or pled guilty to, physical and/or sexual abuse of children, or other serious crimes against persons (rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.), or against whom such charges are pending, be allowed to work with children or youth. A decision concerning a volunteer's service will be made after analyzing all information and in the best interest of the children and youth involved.

4. In the event of a combined program with another church, an intern program and other similar circumstances, the Senior Minister or his designee may make an exception to the "six month rule."
5. All program staff members are required to complete CPR and First Aid training. In the childcare area, there must be at least one certified caregiver in each room. It is highly recommended that volunteers working off campus also receive this training.
6. All DUMC employees and volunteers working with children or youth must attend one Safe Sanctuary Training Session in person. Annual renewal will take place online. A designated DUMC employee will maintain records of all screenings as well as completion of annual Safe Sanctuary training.

B. Guidelines for Workers with Children and/or Youth

1. All activities for children and youth will operate on the two-adult rule. A minimum of two adults is to be in or with each group of children. If two of the adults are related, a third unrelated adult must be present.
2. Any group of children or youth meeting in a room without a hallway or door window should do so with the door propped open. There are to be persons monitoring each floor in the educational building during all ministry activities. It is recommended that a person serve as a monitor in the Molly McKay House as well.
3. The Leader: Child recommended ratio for children's activities is 1:10 in the classroom, and 1:6 on trips or overnights. The Leader: Youth recommended ratio for youth activities is 1:20 in the classroom, 1:15 on day trips and 1:8 on overnight trips.
4. On overnight trips all adult chaperones must be over the age of twenty-one. There will be one female counselor per every eight girls and one male counselor per every eight boys. No youth shall be housed alone with an adult. Neither shall a youth travel alone in a vehicle with only one adult unless it is their parent.
5. All children, youth and leaders are expected to behave in a Christ-like manner during all on and off campus activities sponsored by Davidson UMC. Each class on campus and each group going off campus will sign a covenant of Christian behavior. If discipline issues do arise, leaders should make one effort to resolve the issue with another adult present or as a witness. If the negative behavior continues, the leaders are to contact a parent and have the child removed from the group. If a parent cannot be located, time out within the room may be used. No form of verbal abuse or physical discipline is ever to be used.
6. Adult volunteers working with youth and children are to be at least five years older than the youth and children they are assigned. DUMC values the presence of youth volunteers. Youth volunteers may assist in instances where there is less than a five year age difference and may serve as a third person in the room after the two adults per room has been fulfilled. It is recommended that youth wishing to assist in the childcare area complete a babysitter's course. (Red Cross or Safe Sitters.) Youth must be in senior high to volunteer in the infant nursery. It is also recommended that youth volunteers complete an online Safe Sanctuary training/questionnaire.

7. Any questionable or inappropriate behavior should be reported immediately to the appropriate ministry leader as such conduct can precede abuse, even though the observed act itself does not constitute abuse.
8. Program staff and volunteer leaders driving children or youth must pass a DMV check. Each passenger must wear a seatbelt when available during DUMC off-campus trips. Double buckling is not allowed.
9. First aid kits are located in the Molly McKay house, each DUMC vehicle, in the first floor hallway (between restrooms), the kitchen, the chapel and in the church office. Also small kits are provided inside a Sunday school cabinet in each preschool and elementary classroom. Kits will be checked monthly and restocked as needed by church staff.
10. Other organizations that use Church premises for children and youth oriented activities (for example, Boy or Girl Scouts) will provide a copy of their policy to the DUMC business office. Their policy must be compatible to DUMC's. After review, the Safe Sanctuary committee will be called together by the business administrator if anything is questionable. The organization will also receive a copy of the DUMC policy and will be responsible for adhering to it as well. The policy that is stricter will prevail.

C. Guidelines for Parents and Leaders

1. All children through the fifth grade are to be escorted to and from group activities/classes by an authorized parent or adult. No sibling is allowed to drop-off or pick-up.
2. Youth are to use the "buddy" system during all on and off campus activities. While using the buddy system, preferably, 3-4 youth should accompany one another. However, when this is not possible, the minimum number of youth using the "buddy" system should be 3.
3. Parents are to be given detailed policies and procedures for all children and youth related "on campus" events. Itineraries will be distributed in addition to policies and procedures for all "off-campus" events.
4. Once on DUMC property, children and/or youth will not be permitted to leave the church property, even with parental consent, until the event is concluded unless escorted by parents. Staff and volunteer leaders are placed in precarious situations when children walk up or down main street for snacks, to meet someone, etc. . .
5. As for youth events, we realize, and ask parents to realize as well that we are a downtown church. Parents are advised to discuss youth group rules and regulations with their middle and high school youth. We ask that parents actively take a role in knowing where their youth are at all times. Once on DUMC property, youth are to remain on campus for the duration of the event they are attending.
6. Children and youth must complete a permission form in order to participate in off campus activities. A medical treatment consent form is also required. All forms must be signed by a parent/guardian.

7. Any prescribed medications to be given during an on campus activity must be administered by the parent. Permission forms for prescribed medications to be taken during off campus activities must be completed by a parent. Medications are to be under the control of and administered by an adult in charge. The group will be accessible to parents by way of phone.
8. To ensure Internet safety for our children and youth, only first names will be used on any DUMC website. Permission must also be granted by a parent for the use of children/youth photos on any DUMC website.

D. Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Abuse of a Child or Youth

1. Incidents of abuse or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse of children or youth will be reported as soon as possible to the Minister of Christian Education, the Senior Minister or their designee.
2. The Senior Minister, the Minister of Christian Education or their designee will report the alleged incident of abuse or suspected abuse to the Director of the Department of Social Services of Mecklenburg County.
3. The person reporting the incident will document, in writing, all known facts and circumstances and will also make a report that documents all steps taken in the course of handling the reported incident.
4. All adult members of DUMC staff, and other adults participating in programs on the property of DUMC are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse of children or youth. They will be encouraged not to hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate. The Church will be supportive of individuals who in good faith make reports of actual or reasonably suspected cases of abuse.
5. Any organization that uses DUMC facilities will also notify the Senior Minister or his designee as soon as possible about any incident or suspected incident of abuse involving any person affiliated with such organization while using DUMC facilities.
6. The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded.

E. Responding to Allegations of Abuse of a Child or Youth

1. Every allegation will be taken seriously. Adequate care and respect must be offered to the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators until the allegation can be substantiated or cleared.
2. All procedures listed in the previous section on Reporting will be strictly followed.
3. All records relating to the matter will be maintained in confidential files.
4. All efforts in handling the situation will be carefully documented.
5. The parents/guardians of the suspected victim will be notified immediately.
6. The liability insurer for the Church will be notified about the incident by the Senior Minister or his designee, as appropriate.
7. The safety and security of the child must be safe-guarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.
8. An in-depth investigation will be carried out by church personnel under the supervision of the Senior Minister or his designee as well as by civil authorities if appropriate.

9. The Senior Minister or his designee will be the sole spokesperson for the Church insofar as media inquiries are concerned.
10. Any person accused must be treated with dignity and support. That person will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities, as circumstances dictate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.



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