



Kids and Youth Safety Policy Overview

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is dedicated to the safety and well-being of children and youth, with policies specific for different age groups: Kids (birth through 5th grade) and Youth (6th through 12th grade).

Staff members, designated as mandated reporters by state law, have the legal obligation to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Volunteers play a crucial supportive role by remaining vigilant and reporting any concerns to our staff, who are prepared to take the appropriate legal action.

This commitment to safety and training is dynamic, with policies regularly reviewed and updated to align with best practices and legal requirements. For detailed information, please refer to the Children's and Youth Ministry handbooks available at St. Andrew's. This comprehensive approach ensures that all children and youth in our care benefit from a secure and supportive environment.

Safety Policies

The safety of our kids and youth is vital. We have established comprehensive safety policies for different age groups, including Kids, Youth, and Adults. Here is an overview of our safety protocols:

Volunteer Process:

- Step 1
 - The volunteer onboarding process starts with an initial inquiry, followed by an application and interview. During this phase, volunteers complete a thorough background check, including fingerprinting at our HR department, and sign key documents such as the "Safe and Secure Policy." This policy, alongside California-certified child safety training and our detailed ministry handbooks, ensures that all volunteers are well-prepared and committed to our standards.

- Step 2
 - After the initial steps, volunteers attend a second interview to discuss their application, any insights from the reference check, and to dive deeper into our policies and expectations. Following this, they engage in a shadowing period to

find the best relational fit within the ministry, and finally, receive a detailed job description outlining their specific responsibilities.

- Step 3
 - Ongoing training is a cornerstone of our approach. Volunteers receive annual updates on safety policies and best practices, and benefit from quarterly to monthly training sessions designed to enhance their ability to support the emotional and theological needs of our young participants.

Bathroom Policy:

- Children birth to 5th grade and adults have separate bathrooms to ensure privacy and comfort.
- In cases where a child requires assistance, a specially trained staff member may enter the bathroom with the door open, following licensing procedures and trained in St. Andrew's bathroom child aid procedures.

Social Media:

- Kids: Kids are not allowed to follow or be followed by adult volunteers on social media platforms.
- Youth: Youth volunteers and staff are not allowed to follow youth.
- Volunteers are not allowed to engage with youth digitally in any capacity through a “disappearing” feature (ie. snapchat, Instagram ghost mode)
 - We ask all volunteers to be mindful of all interactions with parents, students, and their own friends. By participating as a volunteer that individual gives St. Andrew's permission to ask for posts to be unliked or taken down if they do not meet our moral guidelines.
 - Individuals should exercise caution when engaging with content by being mindful of what they "like."

Texting:

- It is strictly prohibited to text Kids to maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure their safety.
- Youth are allowed to be texted so long as it is after 8:00 a.m. or before 10:00 p.m. If a student texts a volunteer outside of these hours and it is an emergency that needs to be addressed, the volunteer must inform a staff member.
- Staff must use their church provided phone number to text a student.

Rides:

- Under no circumstances should an individual be alone in a car with a child or youth.
- Two mandated reporters must be present whenever a child or youth are present.

Adult Ratio:

- To maintain adequate supervision and accountability, we will have a ratio of two mandated reporters at all of our events.
- Classrooms will have ratios of staff and volunteers appropriate to the age range of the kids.

1 On 1's:

- The safety and well-being of our youth participants and mentors are of paramount importance to us. To ensure a secure and transparent environment during one-on-one interactions, it is mandated that all such meetings take place in a public area, within the line of presence of another mandated reporter. After each interaction, the volunteer must complete the "Minor Mentor Meeting" form, accurately documenting the attendees, time, and topics discussed. This protocol is necessary when the total attendance, including leaders, comprises four individuals or fewer. These measures are implemented to safeguard both the youth and the adult, fostering an atmosphere of accountability and protection within our mentoring program.
- Doors must remain open when meeting with youth.

Pictures:

- Taking photos of children is strictly prohibited, except at St. Andrew's sanctioned events and with a clear purpose given by the staff.
- Posting photos of children without parent permission is strictly prohibited.

Medication:

- Specific guidelines regarding medication administration will be provided for each trip or event to ensure the safety and well-being of participants.