



NAD Guidelines and Procedures For Well Trained Staff & Volunteers

Objectives

- a. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a moral and civil duty to protect the Children and youth entrusted to its care. The local community also has an expectation that the church will provide a safe haven for children who participate in its ministries.
- b. The church is committed to providing safe worship and educational environments to help children and youth learn to love and follow Jesus Christ. "Church should be a safe place to bring our children. Everyone involved in work with children who are minors must meet all Church and legal standards and requirements." (Church Manual, Edition 18, pages 168-169.)
- c. Jesus placed a high value on the protection of children (Matthew 18:1-6); therefore, child protection is an essential element in all church-sponsored children's activities.

Volunteer Selection and Management

The work of volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of the Church's mission and ministry. The management policies and procedures employed to supervise the work of volunteers must be consistent with the mission of the church or school and must support its successful achievement.

a. Selection and Screening of Volunteers

1. It is the responsibility of the local church and/or school to select, screen and manage trustworthy individuals to fill volunteer positions in ministry for children and youth activities. *(There are some conferences that have adopted this task and expense on behalf of their churches)*
2. In selecting individuals for volunteer positions, only persons who support the mission of the organization should be recruited.
3. The church shall adopt a practice that no adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has held membership in the congregation or has been known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.
4. All volunteers are required to participate in a screening procedure that will include a signed Volunteer Ministry Information Form, names of three (3) personal references and a criminal background check wherever possible. Individuals who submit incomplete forms will not be considered for a volunteer position.
5. Background screening should be completed before the volunteer is allowed to serve.
6. All volunteer leaders, regardless of their previous experience, shall submit to the screening procedure provided by the church. The volunteer screening procedure should be updated for each individual every three (3) years.
(Individuals who are unwilling to support the volunteer screening guidelines and practices should not be allowed to serve).
7. The local church or school is responsible for the cost of implementing these screening procedures. The local conference may provide financial assistance at their discretion. *(There are some conferences that have adopted this task and expense on behalf of their churches)*
8. It is the duty and responsibility of the church to maintain all volunteer information on a confidential basis at all times. *(There are some conferences that have adopted this task on behalf of their churches).*

b. Supervision of Volunteers

1. Failure to comply with the established volunteer guidelines and code of conduct will result in the volunteer being asked to terminate participation in the ministry.
2. All allegations of inappropriate conduct involving a minor will need to be reported to the authorities. The church will respect the rights of all parties involved in the alleged incident and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially, and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.
3. Appropriate corrective action - discipline, counsel, or removal from ministry – will be taken when necessary.

c. Orientation and Training of Volunteers

1. Provide all volunteers with an understanding of the ministry's mission and the expectation the church has for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse-free manner.
2. Explain and provide in writing the expectations, code of conduct, and rules to be followed by volunteers in relation to supervision and interaction with children and youth. Reaffirm that alleged incidents of child abuse will be investigated and reported to authorities in accordance with local law.
3. All volunteers will be required to participate in educational courses on child abuse (physical and sexual) and the necessary steps to be taken to prevent the occurrence of child abuse incidents.
4. Training should include instructions on appropriate methods of physical contact to affirm children.

NOTE: These Guidelines have been adapted from the North American Division Working Policy and Adventist Risk Management Resources.*

* NAD Policy - FB20-Child Protection and Volunteer Screening Policies for Children and Youth Ministries
<http://adventistyouthministries.org/safety-resources/volunteers>

Volunteer Code of Conduct and Guidelines

FB 25 Youth/Children's Ministry Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. *Acknowledgement* – Because I want our children and youth to experience the best possible environment, it is important for those working with children and youth to have guidelines for conduct to protect not only those under their care but themselves as well. As a ministry volunteer, I want parents and others to be comfortable with me.
2. *My Commitment to Volunteer Ministry* – As a Youth/Children's Ministry Volunteer:
 - a. I will provide appropriate adult supervision at all times for the children for whom I am responsible.
 - b. I will have at least one other adult, eighteen (18) years of age or older, to help with the supervision of children. If I find myself in a situation where I am the only adult present, *Under No Circumstances* will I allow myself to be alone with one child (the two-person rule). This protects the child as well as protecting me the adult, from possible allegations.
 - c. I will ask a child's permission before physically touching him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is specifically true for any areas that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and/or shorts. If an injury is within this area, I will make sure another adult works with me as care is provided.
 - d. I will refrain from physical and verbal attacks and corporal punishment, which are inappropriate behaviors and should never be used as discipline. I will attempt other forms of discipline such as "time out" or "sit-in-that-chair", which may be safer, more helpful discipline methods to use with children.
 - e. I will affirm children with appropriate touching by keeping hugs brief and "shoulder-to-shoulder" or "side-to-side." I will keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level. For small children who like to sit on laps, I will encourage them to sit next to me. I will be particularly careful when taking small children to the restroom; for instance, I will take another adult along, or leave the door open.
 - f. I will avoid conducting activities in rooms that do not have an interior viewing area, or I will leave the door open during the activity to allow easy observation by others.
 - g. I will comply with the volunteer screening process and complete the Volunteer Ministry Information form, as required by the church.
 - h. I will be aware of the evidence, signs and symptoms of child abuse and will become educated about the legal requirements for reporting suspected cases of abuse. I commit if I become aware of any behavior by another individual, which seems abusive or inappropriate towards child, I will immediately report that behavior to the church pastor, elder, school, and/or conference administration and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.
 - i. I will cooperate with church leadership in conducting children and youth ministries by being a volunteer who is loving, kind, firm, and always a thoroughly professional person. I understand that working with children and youth is not only a privilege; it is also a serious responsibility that must be approached with utmost care.
 - j. I will participate in orientation and training programs conducted by the church.
 - k. I will uphold the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
 - l. I, the undersigned, have read this document and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for the Youth/Children's Ministry Volunteers as outlined above. I will retain a copy of the document and keep it for reference.

Signed _____ Date: _____

NAD - YOUTH/CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT
http://adventistyouthministries.org/files/safety-guidelines/cpp_nad_youthchildrenministryvolunteercodeofconduct_arm-2.pdf

SUPERVISION

Well-trained adult supervision will greatly minimize the risk of inappropriate conduct during children and youth ministries activities and events. It will also minimize the potential of false accusations being brought against an adult staff member or volunteer.

- a. Adults supervising children and teens must be constantly vigilant for signs of inappropriate behavior by other adults. When there is a breach of the code of conduct, this should be addressed immediately by the ministry's leader to protect the minor, the adult, and the ministry.
- b. It is important to remind adult staff members on how to properly interact with children. Take note if a staff member is over-friendly or establishes a special relationship with a child that includes direct contact outside the ministry.
- c. Never leave unattended a child or group of children for whom you are responsible for. Provide appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- d. Parents are responsible for supervising their children before and after church sponsored children's programs and seeing that their children are picked up at the appointed dismissal time. Every reasonable effort will be made to release children to their parent or designee.
- e. No child shall be released to another older child or permitted to go to the restroom accompanied by an older child unless the child is a sibling. Provide extra care when taking small children to the restroom. Take another adult along, or leave the door open.
- f. Minors under 18 years of age (children and teens), should not be permitted to remain on church property unless two adults are present.

Elements of Effective Supervision

1. Always have a minimum of two adults supervising children and youth at all times.
2. Have a record of the names and numbers of all children or youth participating in the ministry event and how to best contact parents or guardians in the event of an emergency.
3. Have vision panels or windows which allow easy sight into all classrooms and office areas.
4. Adults must be fully engaged in the responsibility of supervision and watchfulness at all times.
5. Do not allow distractions (e.g. phone or personal conversations, texting, computer or tablet use) during assigned supervisory responsibilities.
6. Keep track of the whereabouts of all children and youth throughout the event facilities.
7. Be especially vigilant of time spent and the number of children or youth in restroom areas.
8. Make sure areas not being used in the facility are properly locked, limiting access by unauthorized individuals.
9. Make sure all exterior areas are properly illuminated during nighttime activities.
10. Have roving adult supervision monitoring the facility and parking lot areas during the event.
11. Never be alone with a child (if possible). In the event you are the last adult left with a child, call the parent or child's guardian. If they cannot be reached, call another trusted adult to notify them of your situation, the steps you are taking to contact the parents, and ask if they could return to assist.

Additional Resources:

Best Practices in Supervision of Children and Youth webinars

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qH-E3YX97c&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5CWmpCHIK8&feature=youtu.be>

Supervision Seminar - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5CWmpCHIK8&feature=youtu.be>

Youth Supervision Guidelines

https://adventistrisk.org/Adventist_Risk/media/ARM/Resource%20Page/PDFs/English/IFS_YouthSupervision_NADENG.pdf?ext=.pdf

Appropriate Supervision for Youth Counselors

<https://adventistrisk.org/en-US/Safety-Resources/Solutions-Newsletter/Appropriate-Supervision-for-Youth-Counselors>

https://adventistrisk.org/Adventist_Risk/media/ARM/Resource%20Page/PDFs/English/IFS_YouthSupervision_NADENG.pdf?ext=.pdf

VOLUNTEERS' BEHAVIOR

- a. A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children.
- b. Under no circumstances may volunteers give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
- c. Alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by any individual on church premises or during a sponsored activity.
- d. Only age-appropriate language, material on media products (such as camera phones, internet, video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people (sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable).

<http://adventistyouthministries.org/safety-resources/volunteers>

APPROPRIATE TOUCH

- a. Always ask a child's permission before physically touching him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is especially true for any areas that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and/or shorts. (If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as care is provided.)
- b. Volunteers must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (this should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child).
- c. Affirm children with appropriate touching by keeping hugs brief and “shoulder-to-shoulder” or “side-to-side.” Always keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver's kiss should be to the forehead or cheek only – not elsewhere. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.

For more information on Good Touch and Bad Touch for Staff visit:

https://adventistrisk.org/Adventist_Risk/media/ARM/Resource%20Page/PDFs/English/IFS_AppropriateTouch_NADENG.pdf

APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE

- a. Any discipline administered shall occur within the visual contact of another adult. Any form of physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
- b. Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children is unacceptable.

RESPECT FOR CHILDREN

- a. Children's need for privacy should be respected at all times. Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and restrooms.
- a. Photographs of children or young people must never be taken while they are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility).
- c. Tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be carried out for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

Additional Resources:

“Suffer the Little Children”

<https://adventistrisk.org/en-US/Safety-Resources/Solutions-Newsletter/Solutions-Classic-Suffer-the-Little-Children>

We Are Accountable

<https://adventistrisk.org/en-US/Safety-Resources/Solutions-Newsletter/We-Are-Accountable>

TRAVELING WITH MINORS

- a. Volunteers should not travel alone with a child or young person. If only one adult is available, there should be a minimum of two children or young people present for the entire journey.
- b. If an emergency situation arises where it is necessary to travel alone with a child, the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.

TRIPS

- a. All trips and any meetings conducted off the church premises must be pre-approved by the church board. All overnight activities or miscellaneous trips must have prior documented approval of the church board. All minor attendees must have a signed parental permission slip for each trip as well as an emergency medical treatment release. Parents must be notified of adults in charge of the activity.
- b. All trips, including day trips and overnight stays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies.
- c. Adequate liability insurance through your local Conference and Adventist Risk Management should be in place prior to any trip.
- d. Appropriate auto insurance companies should be in place prior to any trip. Written consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.
- e. A copy of the trip itinerary and contact telephone numbers for leaders should be made available to parents and guardians.
- f. There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.
- g. Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules are followed and appropriate boundaries are maintained.
- h. The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip.
- i. Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same gender as the group being supervised.
If in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a child's sleeping areas without another adult being present he or she should immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility.

TRANSPORTATION

- a. When transporting children or youth, there should always be two adults in each vehicle. The driver's responsibility must be focused on the highway and traffic conditions. They cannot safely drive and provide vehicle supervision at the same time.
- b. **Why can't we use 15-passenger vans?** The use of 15 passenger vans are not approved for use in church and school sponsored events by the Adventist Risk Management Liability. <https://adventistrisk.org/en-US/Safety-Resources/Solutions-Newsletter/15-Passenger-Vans-The-Risks-and-the-Alternatives>

Additional Resources:

<http://adventistyouthministries.org/safety-resources/trips-transportation>

Skills that Youth Leaders Should Master – Resources

<https://adventistrisk.org/en-US/Safety-Resources/Solutions-Newsletter/3-Skills-Every-Youth-Leader-Should-Master>