

Safety & Security Policies for Rocky Mountain Christian Church

INTRODUCTION: *In order to protect our children, teachers and our church, and to facilitate the prevention of child abuse, Rocky Mountain Christian Church (Niwot & Frederick) has instituted the following Safety & Security policies and procedures.*

Expected Volunteer and Employee Conduct

These guidelines have been established to avoid instances and allegations of child sexual abuse. They are to be followed by every volunteer and employee serving in RMCC Family Ministry.

AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF ABUSE -- In general:

- ▼ Share disciplinary actions with your leaders.
- ▼ Avoid contact with children without the presence of a second adult.
- ▼ Share with parents and document any out-of-the-ordinary observations and conduct. Share documentation with Family Ministry Staff.
- ▼ Avoid even the appearance of evil.

FOLLOW GUIDELINES FOR TOUCH -- Guidelines our volunteers and employees will follow:

- ▼ Use of touch must be non-demanding. This means that hugs and kisses should not be asked for by a volunteer, and they should not be forced upon a child.
- ▼ Use of touch must be gentle and passive, not aggressive. Never strike a child for the purpose of discipline or for any other reason. Touch must never be of a sexual nature.
- ▼ Use of touch should be conscious and not haphazard. The touch should be one that gently reminds a child in correction, quiets a child in pain, or affirms a child in a positive manner.
- ▼ Use of touch should be limited to placing a hand on a child's shoulders, hands, arms, head, upper back. Avoid holding older children (age 4 and above) on your lap, unless it is to comfort a crying child. Even then, take care to keep your hands on the child's back or shoulders.
- ▼ Never fondle a child. Inappropriate touch in the following areas is not permitted: chest, genital areas, upper legs, buttocks.

DON'T GO OUT OF BOUNDS -- Volunteers and employees of RMCC need to be careful not to find themselves in situations which do not appear to be above and beyond reproach from the perspective of an outside observer, a visitor or other church member.

BATHROOM BREAKS -- Bathroom breaks are often a necessary part of Family Ministry. There are some general guidelines we should follow as a team to avoid the appearance of misconduct and to offer parents peace of mind.

Please keep the breaks to a minimum. Our children are in our care for a short period of time. If a break is necessary, try to schedule it instead of allowing spontaneous interruptions to class time. A scheduled break provides for a system of accountability between volunteers within a room. In this manner, volunteers and employees will need to keep track of fewer trips, and additional assistance may be available from another classroom volunteer. We know that scheduled breaks are much more of a challenge with younger children, and allowances will be made where appropriate.

When sending a child to the bathroom, be aware of who has already left, approximate return time, and send your assistant to check on children who are delinquent. You do not know what other children or adults may be in the bathrooms, so please keep track of your children.

When accompanying a child to the bathroom, stand in the doorway to the bathroom with the door open if they only need your supervision. If they need your direct assistance, leave the bathroom door open by using the door stop, enter the bathroom and assist as required.

Do not close a stall door while you are in the stall with a child. Leave it ajar. Avoid touching the child's genital area when assisting the child. Ask another adult to be in visual contact if possible.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN -- If you witness a violation of proper volunteer/employee conduct, your response as a representative of the church may vary greatly depending upon the situation. As a witness you will be asked to make a judgment on what you have seen or heard. Mandatory reporters face criminal penalties for not reporting abuse or neglect. These would include professional church staff, police officers, welfare workers, teachers, directors of schools. The majority of the volunteer staff at RMCC are permissive reporters. Permissive reporters are permitted by law to report suspected abuse/neglect but are not required to do so.

PROCEDURE FOR SCREENING VOLUNTEER WORKERS:

- ▼ The volunteer is interviewed by telephone or in person.
- ▼ Each volunteer fills out an application which a Family Ministry Staff member reviews.
- ▼ References are contacted if the staff or Elders cannot be a source of reference.
- ▼ Criminal background checks will be conducted for all volunteers and for all paid childcare providers.
- ▼ Approval is based upon application, interview, references and criminal background checks. All information collected for Family Ministry is confidential and kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- ▼ Adults who have been convicted of physical and/or sexual abuse of children will not be allowed to serve in any church-sponsored activity or program for children.
- ▼ Volunteers working with children are expected to have attended RMCC for a minimum of 6 months. Sometimes exceptions are made with strong references from your previous church.

GENERAL SECURITY - Children are not allowed to wander around the building unsupervised. If you see a child who is "ditching" class, please escort that child to class or contact a Family Ministry staff member, who may take the child to the Worship Auditorium to sit with mom or dad.

For security purposes, we do not encourage adults or teens to wander through the children's or large group areas without permission. If you see an adult or teen hanging around our children's classrooms, please contact a Family Ministry staff member.

SECURITY TAGS - When parents check in their children for Sunday school, they print out a stick-on nametag for each child, giving their location during both service times. Parents keep the claim stub with a number that matches the number on their child's tag. In case of emergency, a teacher can locate parents in worship by phoning tech booths (**Niwot ext 249; Frederick ext 302**) their child's number will be displayed on the screens. If parents are in a classroom, your Classroom Facilitator or Area Coordinator will need to go find them.

Parents who are returning to pickup their children must give you the security claim stub matching the number on their child's nametag. It is imperative that you return the child only to the parent or sibling with the security claim stub. There may be custody issues between parents that we are unaware of. If a parent has lost the security claim tag, or appears to be upset regarding the enforcement of this policy, please refer that parent to a Family Ministry staff member. Under no circumstances should you dismiss a child to anyone without the security claim stub until you have the approval of a Family Ministry staff member.

DISMISSAL FOR ELEMENTARY-AGE CHILDREN - Children in kindergarten–4th grade must remain in their classroom until picked up by a parent or an older sibling with the claim stub. Even though children may say they are to meet their parents somewhere else, do not release them on their own.

All volunteers in our Family Ministry areas will be required to review and sign a copy of this policy. PLEASE VIEW OUR ENTIRE SAFETY & SECURITY POLICY ON OUR WEBSITE AT www.rmcc.org or REQUEST A COPY FROM stallman@rmcc.org.

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