



education

Abuse Prevention and Safety Policy

Purpose: These guidelines are to promote safety for participants of ORC Education Ministries and to promote and ensure appropriate relationships between students and leaders.

Arrival and Dismissal – Children’s Ministry

- At least one leader shall be present at the time the Program is scheduled to begin.
- At least one leader shall remain at the conclusion of the Program until all the children are picked up, or otherwise leave the Program.
- Children that are Kindergartners or younger must wait in the room with at least one leader until they are dismissed to a guardian or other family member. Children will be dismissed to other persons at the teacher’s discretion after identification has been made.
- Children who are First Graders or older, and are mature enough to depart from the main activity alone, may be released at the end of the program.

Restroom Breaks – Children’s Ministry

- Leaders are to respect the privacy of children, and to protect their own privacy, in all situations.
- Diapers of infants and toddlers must be changed in open view of other helpers. If possible, allow the parents to change the diapers.
- Encourage the class, especially the Promise Land classes, to use the restroom as a class.
- Children three years old through grade 5 may use the restroom without assistance from a leader. If assistance is needed, the restroom stall door must be kept open. If no other adult is present, the leader of Kindergartners and older children, should wait for the children in the hall by the open door of the restroom.

One-on-One Contact

- One-on-one contact with students is important and encouraged. Leaders should take the following precautions to avoid settings which would make one vulnerable to an accusation or the appearance of impropriety.
 - Leaders should meet one-on-one with students in public places and should be visible by others.
 - If there is a need to meet in the privacy of a room, the door should remain open.
 - One-on-one meetings should not be held at the student’s or leader’s home. Without the presence or permission from the student’s parent or guardian.

Physical Contact

- It is acknowledged that physical touch is a powerful and an important way of connecting and conveying care.

The following guidelines for physical contact.

- Leaders should avoid full embraces with students. One-armed-side hugs are appropriated, if welcomed by the recipient.
- It is not appropriate for leaders to have students who are First grade or older, sit on their laps, unless it is a part of a group game, skit, or activity.

Overnight Outings

- Consent Forms and Medical Release Forms will be required for each person.
- Special permission from the parent or guardian is required for anyone not participating in the complete event.
- Sleeping areas will be designated male and female. These quarters are off limits to the opposite sex, unless an area is needed for the whole group to meet.

Reporting Incidents

- Any leader who suspects that abuse has occurred during an Overisel Reformed Church sponsored activity shall report such suspicions immediately to the appropriate Ministry Director. A “Documentation Form” shall be completed immediately by the leader and Ministry Director. The Education Ministry Facilitator will be notified of such a report immediately to determine a course of action.
Depending on the accusation the “Action taken” could include
 - Notification of incident to the ORC Senior Pastor.
 - Notification of incident to the ORC Executive Committee.
 - Notification of incident to the relevant authorities.
 - The gathering of professional and legal advice for ORC.
 - The alleged offender should be informed of the allegations by the Education Ministry Facilitator, Ministry Director and one of the ORC Pastors at the appropriate time and treated with dignity and support. He/She should be temporarily removed from his/her ministry and placed under the pastoral care of the Senior Pastor until the issue is resolved.
- A camera is available in the Education Office to obtain pictures of any physical marks that should be documented. Pictures should **ONLY** be taken in the presence of a Ministry Director.

Transportation

- Only adult leaders, parents, or guardians of the students with a valid drivers license, are permitted to drive vehicles to transport students during an event.
- Seat belts must be worn by all passengers. Every person must have their own seat.
- All drivers are committed to extreme cautious driving, adhering to all rules of the road at all times.
- Only vehicles of those who completed and signed an “Authorization for the use of Private vehicle by Adult Volunteers of the ORC Education Ministry” are allowed to be used to transport students.
- See “Authorization for the use of Private vehicle by Adult Volunteers of the ORC Education Ministry” for further information

- Any damage to a borrowed vehicle has to be reported to the Director of the appropriate ministry immediately upon return to the church after the use of the vehicle. The Ministry Director has to report the damage to the vehicle owner immediately upon return of the vehicle to the owner and provide all relevant information for insurance claims purposes to the vehicle owner as soon as possible.
- Adult leaders should avoid traveling alone in a vehicle with a student.
- A ride may be given to a single child if the adult leader secures permission from the student's parent or guardian.
- When transporting students in a vehicle, the Annual Consent and Release Form will be on file at church and also present in the vehicle with the adult. If a student does not have the required form, their parent or guardian will be contacted to received verbal permission.