

Peace Children, Student, and Family Ministry Handbook

Matthew 19: 14 “But Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.’”

Every volunteer is expected to...

- Love the children and students we serve
- Be active in the worship life, mission, and vision of Peace Lutheran Church
- Submit information for a background check (age 15 and up) and update every 3 years (5 years for BCI/FBI) OR be working closely with a volunteer who has been background checked (no unsupervised contact)
- Be appropriate in ALL language and ALL actions towards and around the children and youth.
- Be committed to further developing their personal relationship with our Triune God.
- Practice ‘safe boundaries’ (below)
- Be committed to providing a safe, fun, and loving atmosphere
- Work within your Leadership Team, supporting and encouraging the other members
- Abstain from alcohol and all other substances that could impair judgment while interacting with children and students
- Abstain from tobacco (including, but not limited to, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, etc.) in the presence of children and students

Remember what you say, how you act, what you wear, and every little thing that goes on is your witness and ministry to the children/students.

A Volunteer Team Member should be aware of the following ‘Safe Boundaries’ best practices:

- **Two Adult Best Practice** asks that Peace makes every reasonable effort to have minors supervised by two adults at all times (one of the two need to have an up to date background check on file).
- **Third-Person Best Practice** asks that adult leaders make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where a leader is alone with a child or student.
- **Open Door Best Practice** asks that adult leaders to make every reasonable effort to have the door to the occupied room open IF a leader finds him or herself alone with a child/student.
- **Bathroom Door Best Practice** asks that an adult leader make every reasonable effort to wait outside of the bathroom (in the hallway) for a child/student, unless they are accompanied by a third person.
- Whenever a planned meeting, outing, or event occurs where transportation of minors off site is needed it is our best practice to ask a parent or legal guardian to provide a permission slip and Emergency Medical Form with a parent or legal guardian signature AS WELL AS making sure a member of Peace Staff is aware of the activity.
- Never promise a child or student that you won’t tell their secrets to anyone else. If they mention something that can potentially be dangerous to them or others you MUST (by requirement of public law) take immediate action and report to a member of Peace Staff as soon as possible. Report no later than 24 hours after the incident has occurred.

- Confiscate all weapons and illegal substances upon sight (fireworks, drugs, pornography, underage drinking, etc.). Report all incidents to a member of Peace Staff as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours.
- Dating or 'going out' with any student is not an option for Volunteers.
- Be mindful of physical contact with children, students, and fellow leaders. Avoid any physical contact that may be misinterpreted. *For example children/students should initiate hugs.*
- **NEVER** physically punish, threaten, or verbally abuse a child or youth.

Supervision:

- Children and Students should be supervised.
- Make sure all the children and Students have been picked up/left before all the adult leaders may leave.
- Make every reasonable effort to not allow a child or student to leave an event early without a verbal or written agreement from a parent or guardian.

Children and Student Expectations:

- Respect
 - adult leaders (be quiet when they speak, listen, do not talk back, etc.)
 - each other (keep your hands to yourself, no hurtful words, listen to one another, etc.)
 - yourself (NO drugs, alcohol, or tobacco at ANY events)
 - our space (do not stand on the furniture, do not take what is not yours, clean up after yourself, etc.)
- Stay with the group (or in a group of at least 3 when we break off)
- Remember that we are representing Peace, BUT more importantly God, wherever we go (Ephesians 5:1).

Discipline Procedure:

Steps in dealing with Disruptions/light behavioral issues-

1. Give a warning telling the child/student the choice they are making and reinforce what a good choice would look like " , *you are choosing to be disruptive right now. Can you please sit in your spot so the other children can listen and learn?*"
2. Redirect the child/student from the group (in the hall with another adult, to the side of the room with a chair to sit in); giving them some time away. After a bit go and talk to the child/student about the choice they made and what choice they can make next time. THEN affirm them for a good choice they made, or one they sometimes make ☺ and help get them plugged in for the next activity ... *"let's join the group again so we can !"*
3. If the behavior continues let the child/student know that their parent(s) will be made aware of the situation (by a member of Peace Staff)
4. Talk to a member of Peace Staff concerning issues as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours.

Steps in dealing with Illegal substances/inappropriate behavior-

steps may be skipped depending on severity of issue

1. Take it away/stop the behavior, say don't bring/do it again, tell a member of Peace Staff (depending on the issue a warning may suffice: ex. foul language)
If the issue is more severe this step must be skipped and parents MUST be notified: ex. illegal substances

2. If the behavior continues, take it away/stop the behavior, say don't bring/do it again, a member of Peace Staff will notify parents
3. If the behavior continues, take it away/stop the behavior, say don't bring/do it again, tell them a member of Peace Staff will notify parents, and they will (this is the responsibility of a member of Peace Staff ONLY) choose an appropriate consequence. *For example: suspension from youth group for a month.*

*****Call 911 if you feel it is not a safe situation.*****

***REMEMBER to follow these steps so all the volunteers have the same standard. The behavior will NOT change without consistency or follow through! ***

Facility:

- Clean up after any event leaving it like you found it (or better!)
- Report all damages and/or accidents to a member of Peace Staff as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours after the incident has occurred.
- Last person to leave should turn off all lights and ensure all doors are locked

Bad Weather Cancellation:

- When Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools issues a school closing and/or cancels evening activities, in person Family Ministry related activities for that day and evening will be canceled
- Other Family Ministry activities (overnighters, retreats, special events, etc.) are at the discretion of the group leader

Illness:

- Please stay home if you have a fever and/or are not feeling well. We've got you covered; rest and get well!

First Aid Guidelines:

*Make certain parents and a member of Peace Staff are advised of any and all injuries. *

1. Assess the situation. Care for life threatening situations first. DO NOT put yourself or others in danger in approaching a victim to administer first aid.
2. Call 911* and/or send for help
3. Calm and comfort the person. NEVER leave an injured person alone.
4. Do not move an injured person unless he or she is in an immediate life-threatening situation. Avoid twisting or bending the victim.
5. Apply basic first aid to the best of your knowledge. Keep the person warm.
6. Stay with injured person until emergency personnel have arrived.
7. Fill out an incident report and directly turn in/hand to a member of Peace Staff as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours.

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD CALL 911

When the person

- Is or becomes unconscious.
- Has trouble breathing.
- Has chest pain or pressure.
- Is bleeding severely.
- Has pain or pressure in the abdomen that does not go away.
- Is vomiting blood or passing blood.
- Has seizures, a severe headache, or slurred speech.
- Appears to have been poisoned
- Has injuries to the head, neck, or back.
- Has possible broken bones

Assess the specific circumstance and handle it to the best of your ability.

LEAD:

Matthew 18:5-6 “And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trusts in me to lose faith, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around the neck.”

This is serious stuff! We have a responsibility to these children/youth, to their parents, and to God.

1 Peter 5:2-4 “Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but **LEAD** them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.”

L - LOVE LOVE LOVE!!!! Show them God’s perfect love (as good as our imperfect selves can!). We never know what kind of day, week, or year they have had getting to us so let’s let God love on them ☺ (Romans 8:38-39)

E - ENCOURAGE ENCOURAGE ENCOURAGE!!!! Lift them up and encourage them. They are bombarded constantly with the lies of this world that they are not good enough. Remind them who created and designed them every chance you get. Remind them that they are loved. (Psalm 139:13-14, Colossians 2:2)

A - ASK ASK ASK!!! Use the time we have to interact and talk with them as much as possible. Ask them questions (where do you live, how many siblings do you have, do you play any sports, do you play any musical instruments, what do you like to do in your free time, what’s your favorite food, who are you closest to in your family and why, do you have any pets, where would you go on your dream vacation, what do you want to be when you grow up, AND ON AND ON! ☺) and really get to know them. Make them feel like the most important person in the whole world because they just might be one of Jesus’ lost sheep...and you might be the shepherd He sent to find them! (Matthew 18:12-14)

D- DANGER DANGER DANGER!!!! Make every reasonable effort to ensure all the children/students are in view of an adult. If you see any youth or children go off without an adult it is YOUR responsibility to either call them back to the group or follow them to supervise. If you, or any adults on your team, deem a situation dangerous the rest of the adults need to enforce this rule. It is our responsibility to provide a SAFE and consistent environment. Their parents trust US with their child’s safety. We need to ensure that every child/student under our care is as safe as possible. (Psalm 31:7-8)

Welcome them on His behalf... LEAD!

“Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet each other with Christian love. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:11-12,14

Subject to Change. Last Revised 05/05/22



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ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT

Name of Applicable Individual _____

Date of occurrence _____

Time (approximate is alright) of occurrence _____

Occurrence as it happened: _____

Multiple horizontal lines for describing the occurrence.

Action taken: _____

Signature of Individual _____ Date _____

Reported to the office on (date): _____

Action taken by office _____

Signature of Office Staff (position) _____ Date _____