

First United Methodist Church

Children's Church Policies and Procedures

We welcome you and your child to our church. It is the goal of FUMC to provide a safe, nurturing, and educational environment for your child while you attend church services and activities. The following policies and procedures outlined for children's church have been developed for the purpose of ensuring the safety and well-being of all of our children, and in compliance with "Safe Sanctuary" guidelines.

Age

Children's church is available for children ages 3-9. Starting before a child's 3rd birthday a transition period will occur to help each child as they transfer from the nursery to children's church. The transition period will be adapted to each child's individual needs. We request that children 10 and older attend church services unless they are a teen helper as described below.

Description

Children's church is available each Sunday morning during church service. Children will attend church service until children's time is completed during the service and then they are brought to the fellowship hall for the remainder of the service. Each child will be offered a snack and a drink. After snack time is completed the children will be divided into 2 groups. The younger children will be taken downstairs to a play area and the other children will remain in the fellowship hall and be given activities to complete, educational movies to watch, or games to play until church services are completed. Please pick up your children in either the fellowship hall or downstairs play area as soon as church services are completed.

Staffing

Children's church staff is currently composed of a children's church coordinator and church volunteers (number varies according to need). We will have a minimum of 2 workers on duty at all times. Every effort will be made to keep the ratio of 1 adult to every 6 children. Under no circumstances should the children be left alone for ANY amount of time.

Children's church volunteers consist of parents and other church members who assist our children's church coordinator. All parents of children ages 3-9 will be asked to volunteer to assist with children's church during one service approximately once per quarter. A schedule will be sent out in December for the following year and the information will be posted monthly in the church newsletter. A reminder will also be placed one week in advance in the bulletin.

Teen Helpers

Teenagers that would like to volunteer to help with children's church are welcome to do so as needed and prearranged with the children's church coordinator. Teen helpers may assist the children with hand washing, help serve drinks and snacks, clean up following snack time, assist with activities and games, etc. Teen helpers are not allowed to supervise children without an adult present or assist children to the bathroom.

Absences

If a children's church volunteer is unable to keep their scheduled date they must notify the children's church coordinator and/or the director of children's ministry as soon as possible so a substitute may be found. Staff/child ratios are dependent on your faithfulness of service.

In the event the children's church coordinator is unable to work the director of children's ministry is to be notified and will either find a substitute or be the substitute.

Child Illness/Injury

If your child becomes ill or injured during church services one of the workers will notify you immediately.

For the health and safety of all of the children parents are requested to refrain from bringing their child to children's church if the child has had any of the following symptoms in the past 24 hours: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, runny nose with green or yellow discharge, pink eye, rash, cough/sneeze (except in the case of allergies) or any unusual symptom.

Allergies and Medical Information

Parents must notify the children's church coordinator of any allergies their child may have.

Parents are also asked to notify the staff of any medical conditions or special needs their child may have that would affect their care while in children's church.

Children's church workers are not allowed to give medications. If your child requires medications while they are in children's church please make arrangements with the children's church coordinator so you may come back at the necessary time to give the medicine yourself.

Emergency Procedures

In the event a need arises a first aid kit and AED are available.

If a child becomes seriously injured or ill 911 will be notified immediately and then the parents are to be located and brought to the fellowship hall.

If an emergency occurs and the church has to be evacuated the children's church workers will take the children to the closest and safest exit. Parents are to meet with their children in the church parking lot.

Discipline

The safety of all of the children must be maintained. No throwing, biting, hitting, kicking, running, or other unwanted behavior is allowed. If any child exhibits this type of behavior appropriate warnings will be given. If the behavior continues time out sessions may be used for no more than 1 minute per year of age. If the unwanted behavior continues the child's parents will be notified. In the event that the behavior occurs during repeated visits to children's church the parents will be asked to remove the child from children's church until such behavior ceases.

Parental Responsibilities

Please make sure that the children's church workers know where to find you if you will be any place other than the sanctuary in the event a need may arise.

If you do not want your child to have a snack or would prefer to provide your child's snack yourself please inform the children's church coordinator.

Children will only be released to a properly identified and pre authorized adult. Parents are to provide a written list of individuals to whom their child may be released. Children may not be released to siblings.

Please inform the children's church workers if your child is still potty training and how much assistance they may require in using the bathroom.

Staff Responsibilities

In an effort to comply with "Safe Sanctuary" only the children's church coordinator and the director of children's ministry may assist children to the bathroom while they are potty training.

When using the downstairs play area all toys should be picked up and put away. Trash is to be taken back upstairs to be thrown away. The preschool classrooms are not to be disturbed.

All tables and chairs used during children's church must be cleaned off and dropped snacks/crumbs must be swept up after snack time is completed.

All left over drinks and snacks must be stored in sealed bags and/ or containers on designated shelves in the storage closet in the fellowship hall.

Tables and chairs are to be returned to their proper positions, trash should be thrown away, and supplies (crayons, tv, etc.) should be returned to proper places.

All information about the children and their families shall remain confidential unless it is deemed that harm may come from it.

Workers should make every effort to engage unhappy children with appropriate activities and games. If a child is inconsolable after repeated efforts then the child's parents are to be notified immediately.

All policies and procedures are subject to change at any time. We would like to thank all of our children's church volunteers and parents for your help in providing all of our children with a safe and nurturing environment. Your compliance with the policies and procedures is appreciated.

Beth Greenwell, Director of Children's ministry

Sis Dickenson, Children's Church coordinator

Sam Johnson, Pastor