

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

working with Children and Youth

Because our society is filled with pain, problems, and litigation caused by the improper conduct of people working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with children and youth at church have meaningful guidelines for conduct—to protect both themselves and those under their care. As a ministry volunteer, you want parents and guardians to feel comfortable and confident with you. *Here are some practical guidelines:*

- ❑ NEVER leave unattended a child or youth or group of children and youth for whom you are responsible. Provide adequate supervision at all times, no matter what.
- ❑ Always have at least one other adult (18 years or older) with you when ministering to children and youth. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you allow yourself to be alone with one child or youth.
- ❑ Always ask a person's permission before touching him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is especially true for any area that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and shorts. If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as you provide care.
- ❑ Physical and verbal attacks are inappropriate and should not ever be used as discipline. "Time out", or "sit-in-that-chair" may be helpful methods with children or youth.
- ❑ Kids need to be touched appropriately. Keep hugs brief and "shoulder-to-shoulder" or "side-to-side;" always keep your hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver kiss is to the forehead or cheek only, not elsewhere. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.
- ❑ When taking small children to the bathroom, always take another adult along or leave doors open.
- ❑ Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. Be aware of the legal requirements in your locality for reporting abuse. In nearly all places, a caregiver can be held legally responsible for failing to report suspected or actual abuse.
- ❑ Be loving, kind, firm, and always thoroughly professional as a caregiver. Working with children and youth at church is not only a privilege, it is also a deep responsibility that must be approached with the utmost care.



GUIDELINES FOR *All* VOLUNTEERS

Guidelines for all Volunteers: As a volunteer, you should participate in orientation and training programs conducted by your church. Adventist Risk Management and the North American Division recommend the following for all volunteers. These serve as a protection to you and your ministry against charges of abuse:

- ❑ Volunteer screening—All volunteers must complete the screening process required by the NAD through Sterling Volunteers (ncsrisk.org/adventist) every three years.
- ❑ Six-month rule—Do not recruit a volunteer who has been a church member for less than six months.
- ❑ Two-person rule—Have at least two adults present at all times.
- ❑ Glass window rule—If the door to a room does not have glass in or around it, the door should be left open, so the volunteer is in full view.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING AS A VOLUNTEER FOR THE CHURCHES AND/OR SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
Risk Management Department

P.O. Box 619015, Roseville, CA 95661 • riskmgmt@nccsda.com • (916) 886-5626