

I. General Purpose Statement

Damascus Community Church and Christian School (DCCCS) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in its programs and activities. By implementing the below policies, our goal is to protect the children of DCCCS from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

These policies apply to all current and future workers, whether compensated employees or unpaid volunteers. These policies are for the internal guidance of DCCCS only and do not create on the part of any individual or class of individuals any right of action against DCCCS whether in tort or contract. DCCCS reserves the right to modify these policies, in whole or in part, at any time without notice. All workers, whether paid or unpaid, are participating in ministry at DCCCS on an at-will basis, and DCCCS reserves the right to terminate any position or participation in ministry at any time, for any reason, without notice, and at DCCCS's sole discretion.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child," "children," "youth," and "students" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term "minor worker" is a child ages twelve (12) years to eighteen (18) years (through July 1st of their senior year in high school) and is an assistant (paid or volunteer) in caring for younger children during DCCCS programs or activities. The term "worker" includes DCCCS employees and volunteers, both paid and unpaid persons, in-home host, and all who work with children.

III. Selection of Workers

A. Screening Process

All adults who desire to work with, or regularly observe, our children's ministry programs and activities will be screened using the following six (6) step process:

1. **Six-Month Rule:** All adults seeking to work with children must be attenders of Damascus Community Church (DCC) for six (6) months or longer, as confirmed by someone on pastoral staff. (Membership could diminish the six-month requirement, but at the discretion of the ministry leader in consultation with the Pastoral Staff or Executive Team.) Exceptions to the Six-Month Rule may be made for the following:
 - Parents or legal guardians of a child attending Damascus Christian School (DCS), they may be helpers in the presence of DCS staff, or drivers for day trips after their child has been involved in DCS for one (1) month or longer.
 - Parents or legal guardians of children who have been consistently attending (average twice per month or more while the program is running)

our children's ministry programs for six (6) months or longer may volunteer in the area of ministry where their children participate.

- DCCCS employees may work with children upon being hired and signing a contract. (Employees have gone through a formal and more thorough vetting process and may skip steps 2 through 5. While the volunteer application is not required, relevant training (step 6 is still required.)

2. Written Application: All workers (other than DCCCS employees) must complete and sign a DCCCS volunteer application requesting basic information such as experience with children, current employment, and references--as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. This form will be maintained in confidence on file at Damascus Community Church.

3. Criminal Background Check: A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and volunteers. If an individual declines to give authorization, he/she will not be permitted to work with children. (Minor workers are exempt from the criminal background check until July 1st of the year they turn eighteen (18) years old and graduate from high school.)

An offense that disqualifies an individual from working with children will be determined by the DCCCS Elder Council/School Board on a case-by-case basis. In general, convictions for any offense involving children, or convictions involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency--or any conduct contrary to the DCCCS mission--will preclude that person from working with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will automatically disqualify an applicant. Upon completing the background check, the prospective worker must complete child safety training.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at Damascus Community Church. All workers must renew their criminal background check and complete the child safety training every two (2) years.

4. Reference Checks: Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two (2) of the applicant's references will be checked. These references should preferably be from organizations or people who have observed the applicant working with children. References should not be an immediate family member and should have knowledge of the applicant's character. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Damascus Community Church.

5. Personal Interview: Upon satisfactory completion of the application process thus far, at least one face-to-face or phone interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

6. Relevant Training: Persons interested in working with children must complete an orientation prior to becoming an approved children's ministry worker. This includes completing the driver approval process if applicable. If part

of the training includes observing the relevant ministry program, they may begin observing prior to step six (6) of this process. Training will be on-going as determined by the ministry leader.

B. Minor Workers (12-18 yrs.)

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for children ages twelve (12) years to eighteen (18) years through July 1st of their senior year in high school (paid or volunteer) to assist in caring for younger children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to minor workers:

- Must be at least twelve (12) years old and approved by a ministry director/supervisor. (Age exceptions may also be made at the discretion of a ministry director/supervisor.)
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and should not be left alone with younger children. This is especially critical when taking children to the restroom.
- Must complete steps 2, 4, 5, and 6 in the above "Selection of Workers" section.

IV. Policies and Procedures

A. Identification

To promote the awareness and confirmation of those who have been approved as a children's ministry worker, all approved workers must wear their assigned badges that were provided to them by their department when working in their specific role. This could include different ID badges for DCC or DCS, ministry specific lanyards, and/or driver stickers.

B. Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For DCC children's ministries, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed for children in nursery through 6th grade to ensure their release to appropriate adult caregivers. Children must be checked in by a parent or guardian—or an older sibling (at least 7th grade) who has been approved in writing by the parent/guardian. Children should only be released to people listed on their registration form. In the event that an exception to procedure is requested, a children's ministry team leader must be contacted. That person will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of the parent or guardian after discussing the circumstances with him/her. Children in 1st through 6th grade must be picked up by a parent or guardian—or an older sibling (at least 7th grade) who has been approved in writing by the parent/guardian. Children, Kindergarten and younger, may only be released to an adult listed on their registration form. Children will only be released to authorized caregivers with a pick-up slip or sign-out sheet.

On weekday mornings, DCS children are to be dropped off in the gym. All children, Prekindergarten through 12th grade, are to remain in the gym until they are dismissed or escorted by staff to their classes. In the afternoon, DCS children will be picked up from the gym using the school-issued pick-up cards. If a child must leave campus for a scheduled appointment before the regular dismissal time, he/she must be picked up at the office with a note, phone call, or email to the teacher and school office.

C. Rule of 3

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. During some class sessions, only one adult teacher may be in attendance; in these instances, doors to the classroom must have a window. There must always be two or more children with one adult teacher in a classroom.

We recognize that there may be situations where a one-on-one session with a child is necessary. These one-on-one situations must take place in a well trafficked and visible area, and a director/supervisor or colleague must be informed it is happening prior to the session, or if impromptu, immediately following.

D. Special Needs

It is our heart's desire for every child to be supported, engage with their peers, and feel a sense of belonging. This includes children with special needs. If a child needs special care, we will attempt to provide 1-1 or small group assistance. We may ask that a parent/caretaker be in attendance to help facilitate a positive experience for the child.

E. Restroom Guidelines

For the protection of all, children in our children's programs must use restrooms designated for children only. Adults must use restrooms designated for adults only. These restrooms are determined by ministry leaders.

If a worker is escorting children to the restroom, the worker should check the restroom first to make sure that the restroom is empty. Then the children can enter the restroom, but not the worker and the children at the same time. The worker should remain outside the restroom, and when all are finished escort the children back to the classroom. If a child needs assistance, prop the door open or get a second approved childcare worker.

During class time, children in buildings without a restroom facility must be sent to the restroom in pairs.

For the protection of all, a worker must never be alone with a child in a restroom with the door closed or in a closed bathroom stall with a child. At minimum, we will observe the rule of three (3).

F. Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all children at DCCCS. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other families when deciding if their

children are well enough to attend our programs. A child may attend DCCCS with symptoms if cleared by a doctor's note and is able to actively participate in DCCCS activities. A child who is observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children, and the parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. In general, we will defer to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) standards for sick child symptoms and protocol. (<https://5il.co/1r0eq>)

G. Medications Policy

For DCC children's ministries, medications should not be administered. EpiPen may be administered in case of severe reactions with parent's written permission and provision of EpiPen. Parents should be notified immediately if an EpiPen is administered. Exceptions for routine medications are granted during overnight events, such as camps or retreats, as long as proper waivers have been signed by parents or legal guardians. For overnight events, time and dosage must be clearly indicated on the originally labeled container. All medication should be taken in front of a ministry director/supervisor.

For DCS children, medication should be documented on Magnus Health. Time and dosage must be clearly indicated on the originally labeled container, and a written note from the parent/legal guardian must accompany the medication giving the office personnel permission to dispense it. All medication should be taken in front of office personnel.

H. Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps will be followed:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide topical first aid (cleansing, Band-Aids, ice, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent/guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up. Section 1 of the Incident Report must be completed.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's director/supervisor. Appropriate medical attention will be sought. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, Sections 1 and 2 of the Incident Report must be completed.

I. Emergency Procedures

Workers will follow the "Emergency Procedures" flip chart located near the door of each ministry room. The flip chart addresses crisis/tragedy, lockout, lockdown, accident/injury, fight/assault, earthquake/shelter procedures, fire drill/evacuation procedures, and the emergency response team.

J. Evacuation Procedures

- A clearly labeled evacuation route is posted in each room. Workers will familiarize themselves with the route before an emergency occurs.
- If an emergency occurs that requires evacuation, workers will line children up in single file, take a head count with the attendance roster (if this ministry uses one).
- They will follow the emergency route posted in their classroom to the parking lot located on DCCCS property.
- They will keep track of their children while walking to the evacuation area.
- Upon arriving in the designated evacuation area--away from buildings, they will take another head count and compare it to the original head count.
- Children will not be released to their parents until a worker has recorded the exchange.

K. Physical Contact

DCCCS is committed to protecting children in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by all workers.

The following are considered appropriate:

- An arm around the shoulder
- Holding hands while guiding or walking with young children
- A brief hug, or a side hug (avoid long embraces)
- A brief, reassuring pat on the back or shoulder
- Handshakes, high fives, and fist bumps

The following are inappropriate and must be strictly avoided:

- Touching a child in anger or disgust
- Touching a child who doesn't want to be touched, unless needed for a safety or classroom management issue, in which case contact should be made with caution
- Touching a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- Having a child in 1st grade or older sit on the worker's lap
- Tickling or massaging a child

Physical contact in any form must be above reproach. The personal behavior of DCCCS staff members and workers must foster trust at all times.

L. Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Damascus Community Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There will be no spanking, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult the ministry director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues, and parents should be called to intervene when necessary.

M. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse may occur in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child that is intentional, such as slapping, shaking, burning, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – any behavior on the part of an adult that intentionally deprives a child of feeling valued, safe, and secure--such as excessive criticism, belittling, or teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any behavior or activity between a child and an adult--or between two (2) children--that can reasonably be construed as stimulating either party or both sexually.
- Neglect – any behavior that deprives a child of his or her essential physical needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

On occasion, DCCCS workers may have reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a child under their care. Such suspicions should be reported immediately to a ministry director/supervisor or a member of the DCCCS Elder Council/School Board for further action. In this situation, the Child Abuse Response Team (C.A.R.T.) will be summoned. The C.A.R.T. includes the DCC Elder Chairman, the Senior Pastor, the Executive Pastor, and the School Superintendent.

N. Sexually Oriented Conversations

All workers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any DCCCS child.

However, it is likely that from time to time, student ministry related discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will occur in group settings and will convey the church’s views on these topics.

Occasionally, a child will need counsel on sexually oriented matters. It is important to (1) report the conversation to the direct director/supervisor and (2) take care to observe the above guidelines. The director/supervisor will ensure the child's parents are informed when appropriate so they can provide guidance as appropriate. For instances of abuse, please report to C.A.R.T.

O. Overnight Event Sleeping Arrangements

It is anticipated that certain student and/or school ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for children and workers (i.e., retreats, camps, field trips, mission trips, etc.). In these events, workers will strictly observe the following rules:

- Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the ministry director/supervisor and a member of the Executive Team.
- All adult workers must have completed DCCCS's screening and training process within the last two (2) years.
- The Rule of Three (3) must be followed; a single child should not be alone with a worker (unless a parent). A male and female leader should be present on all overnight events if both male and female children are present.
- In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both genders, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by adult workers of the same gender.
- Workers will monitor sleeping children by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping children remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, workers will never physically touch a child.
- If overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each individual (worker or child) will use a single sleeping bag or blanket-wrap. A "one-person-to-one-bag-or-blanket" rule will be observed in these instances.
- Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn--both tops and bottoms.
- Workers remember that these children are YOUR responsibility! Take care of them as you would your own children until they are released to parents or other proper authority.

P. Other Prohibited Conduct

In addition to the child safety policies and procedures previously addressed, the following conduct is strictly prohibited:

- Excessive or inappropriate electronic communication with a child, including, but not limited to, social media and texting. The use of Snapchat, or other disappearing images or messages, is strictly prohibited. (Please see DCCCS Electronic Communication Policy for further guidance.)
- The presence or consumption of tobacco products (including smoking or vaping), alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs in the presence of children. Being under the influences of such substances while leading or participating in any DCCCS activity which inhibits the ability to carry out duties according to the ministry leader is prohibited.
- Any display or demonstration of sexual advances, grooming behavior, sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a child is strictly prohibited.
- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any DCCCS function--whether children are present or not.
- Presenting inappropriate television shows, movies, websites, etc. to children. Regarding choice of movies, leaders will consult with Director/Administration for approval and exercise good judgment.
- Any other act or omission that constitutes child abuse or neglect--or otherwise violates any requirement in this child safety policy.

Q. Driver Application

A driver application is required for all workers, serving as ministry drivers, transporting children for all church/school sponsored events (sports events, youth group outing, etc.). Our insurance company requires that anyone who uses their own vehicle to transport children must show verification of insurance coverage of liability with a mandatory minimum of \$100,000 for property damage and \$300,000 for bodily injury. A copy of the declaration page of your personal automobile insurance policy will be maintained in confidence on file at DCCCS. Driver applications must be renewed each year.

As with the Rule of Three stated earlier in this document, we do not allow volunteers/workers to transport a solitary child. There must always be at least a third person in the vehicle, which may include another minor if he/she is at least 4 years old and in prekindergarten. An exception may be made at the discretion of the ministry director if it is an emergency, the driver is the parent of the child, and/or the driver has permission from the child's parent or guardian to transport the child on file with DCCCS.

Child drivers are not allowed to transport other children from our campus to any church/school events. Likewise, child drivers are not allowed to transport other children from a church/school event back to our campus. (The only exception would be in the case of transporting siblings.) Once a child driver leaves our campus, they are no longer under the responsibility of DCCCS.

Worker Attestation

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the DCCCS Child Safety Policy. I also agree to always adhere to this policy.

Worker Printed Name

Worker Signature

Date