

Immanuel Christian School

Child Protection Policy

Dear Staff Member, Faculty Member, or Volunteer,

Welcome to Immanuel Christian School!

At Immanuel Christian School, we take our responsibility to educate and care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can learn and grow in a strong educational environment.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for Immanuel Christian School volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of Immanuel Christian School. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form on the last page.

Sincerely,

Rachel Frecka
Head of School
Immanuel Christian School

Immanuel Christian School

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

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Overview of the ICS Safety System

Because we care for children and desire to protect them, Immanuel Christian School requires all faculty and staff members to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** *before employment begins*.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Immanuel Christian School policies and procedures require that faculty and staff members avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Faculty and staff members are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the Immanuel Christian School Leadership Team.

Faculty and staff members should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Immanuel Christian School faculty and staff members with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse, Immanuel Christian School requires all faculty and staff members to complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided live or online through Abuse Prevention Systems (www.AbusePreventionSystems.com) or MinistrySafe (www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every 3 years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Faculty and staff members are required to complete the Immanuel Christian School Screening Process, which requires faculty and staff members to:

- complete an Employment Application
- complete the Safety Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- provide references to be checked.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Faculty and staff members are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Immanuel Christian School requires that all faculty and staff members undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Immanuel Christian School has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in school programs and activities. It is the responsibility of every faculty and staff member at ICS to act in the best interest of each child in every school program.

In the event that faculty or staff members observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the information to an immediate supervisor, the Principal or the Head of School.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

ICS is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the ICS Leadership Team and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

ICS supports and encourages a culture of communication related to abuse or suspected abuse of children. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between children, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to a supervisor or a member of the ICS Leadership Team. This includes partial or inconclusive information concerning behavior, which may or may not be blameless.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the ICS Leadership Team.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

ICS staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all ICS policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the ICS Head of School.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED/HARMFUL ACT

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the school to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and school related activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at ICS. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from ICS.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Any incident of suspected child abuse must be reported immediately to the Head of School, Principal and/or the Day Care Director. A joint decision will be made to immediately report the incident to Child Protective Services or to monitor further.

Keep in mind that the Texas Family Code states: Any person having just cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report in accordance with Section 34.02 of this code (regardless of any decision or advice the office gives you).

Failure to report an offense under this section constitutes a Class B misdemeanor!

Whether the administration reports the incident or not, if you, the teacher, believe abuse has occurred or is occurring, you must report it. The duty/responsibility to report rests on each individual having knowledge of the abuse.

To make a confidential report to the Texas Protective and Regulatory Services Hotline please call **1-800-252-5400**.

In situations where students approach teachers under the pretense of "you have to promise me not to tell anyone," the teacher must keep in mind that if the subject matter is of a harmful or threatening nature, either to the student or others, the teacher is required to notify the administration or CPS. Teachers should always respond in such situations by informing the student that they cannot make such a promise.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The ICS Leadership Team will take appropriate action on behalf of the school when a report of abuse occurs.

WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN VICTIMIZED

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to supervisory staff and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Staff members and faculty should avoid taking children to the restroom. Elementary students may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, the student should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) If a staff member or faculty must go to the restroom to check up on an individual child they should:

- 1) Seek out another person to accompany them.
- 2) If another person is not available to accompany them they should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance.
- 3) If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.
- 4) Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should only be done in the presence of another staff or faculty.

GIFT GIVING

Staff members and faculty are prohibited from providing special gifts to any individual student. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition (i.e., give mention during announcements; have the entire class sing Happy Birthday, etc.) Any requests for variance from this policy must be addressed to the Principal or Head of School.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and faculty are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in the facility, during a school activity, or while working with students at ICS. Staff members and faculty are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to students.

TOBACCO

ICS is a tobacco-free facility. ICS requires staff members and faculty to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of children and students or their parents. ICS staff members and faculty are prohibited from providing tobacco products to students.

NUDITY

Staff members and faculty at ICS should never be nude in the presence of students in their care.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

ICS recognizes that meeting the educational needs of students may occasionally require that staff members and faculty interact with them on an individual basis. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students:

Individual Meetings

Staff members and faculty should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meetings between a staff member or a faculty and a student behind closed doors. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member or faculty will notify the appropriate Principal or the Head of School immediately before or after the meeting.

Transportation

Staff members and faculty may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of students:

- 1) Students should never be transported without written parental permission.
- 2) Students should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
- 3) Staff members and faculty should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
- 4) No cell phones may be used by the driver while providing transportation for students.
- 5) No drivers under age 25 may provide transportation for students.
- 6) Students should not use a vehicle belonging to a staff member or faculty.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave their students in the care of ICS staff members and faculty for services and activities will be contacted if their child/student becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in school activities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be a part of any and all services and programs in which students are involved at ICS (see Student/Parent Handbook). A parent accompanied by a child to any school program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

VOLUNTEERS

A parent or other volunteer who desires to participate in such a way as to have ongoing contact with children in the school other than his/her own will be considered a Volunteer. All Volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer application and MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Prevention Training before supervising children. Furthermore, all Volunteers must acknowledge and abide by the guidelines set forth in this policy.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

ICS is committed to protecting the students in our care. ICS has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting our students. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of ICS staff or faculty must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in School programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff or faculty and students are important for student's development, and are generally suitable in the school setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the student's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Head of School or the respective Principal.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or School staff and faculty. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At the end of the school day or school activity, ICS faculty and/or staff members are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents or legal guardians.

In the event that staff members or faculty are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a student, they should immediately locate or contact the Principal, Head of School, or a designee before releasing the student.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and faculty are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students. However, it is expected that from time-to-time staff may be called upon to address students regarding human sexuality and purity. Staff members and faculty are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any student in the school. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms.

POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

ICS staff members and faculty are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on School property or in the presence of students. If any such materials are purportedly necessary for classroom instruction, they must be approved in advance by the Principal or Head of School.

INTERNET/ELECTRONIC MEDIA

No computer at or related to ICS is to be used by staff members, faculty or students to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy can lead to discipline from the Head of School. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the Principal or Head of School.

SOCIAL MEDIA/NETWORKING

ICS establishes a social networking policy to safeguard the students, employees, and the reputation of ICS and to provide guidelines to assist employees in using this communication vehicle. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

Students

Employees are prohibited from 'friending' and/or accepting friend requests from current students. Employees are prohibited from posting anything on a social site of a current student unless the employee is the parent or guardian of that student. Please immediately unfriend any students who are your friends on Facebook or any other social network.

Parents

Use caution when 'friending' current ICS parents. ICS expects each employee to maintain a professional relationship with parents. Should you choose to participate in social networking with parents please be aware that at all times you are a representative of ICS. Anything you post, including pictures, is a reflection upon ICS.

Alumnae

It is acceptable to accept social network 'friend requests' with alumnae over the age of 18. However, it is best not to initiate friend contacts with alumnae. Understand that uneven power dynamics of the school environment, in which adults have authority over former students, might continue to shape those relationships. Consider that recent alumnae are in some ways similar to current students because of proximity and age, and because they likely perceive faculty and staff member as authority figures.

Other Friends

Remind other members of your network of your position at ICS and that your profile may be accessed by current or former students, and to monitor their posts to your network accordingly. Conversely, be judicious in your postings to all friends' sites, and act immediately to remove any material that may be inappropriate from your site whether posted by you or someone else.

Privacy

Recognize that there is no such thing as complete privacy on a social networking site. Take care in anything you post online. Keep your privacy settings at appropriate levels to protect

yourself. Any violation in this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain ICS activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and staff members or faculty. In the event that an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and faculty will strictly observe the following rules; any exceptions to the below policies must be approved in advance by the Principal or Head of School:

1. Staff members and faculty will monitor sleeping students periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping areas.
2. Only students of the same sex will be permitted to sleep in the same room.
3. At times, a staff member or faculty will sleep in the same room as students or in an adjoining room. However, staff members or faculty are prohibited from sleeping in a 1:1 ratio setting with students for any reason, unless the staff member or faculty is an immediate family member of the student.
4. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff member, faculty, and/or student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a “one-person-to-one-bag or blanket” rule will be observed.
5. Staff members, faculty, and students will be required to wear both top and bottom clothing while sleeping.

SUPERVISION

ICS staff members and faculty are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working at the school. Some group activities away from the school may permit youth to function in small, unsupervised groups for brief time periods. When group activities allow for this type of unsupervised functioning, staff members and faculty should set clear expectations for students concerning times to meet and “check-in” with staff members or workers in charge of the activity.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or faculty and students should be positive and uplifting. ICS staff members and faculty should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the educating children. Staff members and faculty are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of students.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Immanuel Christian School's Child Protection Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at ICS.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by ICS.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member, Faculty or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member, Faculty, or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the Immanuel Christian School Child Protection Policy and be retained for your reference.]

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[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the school office.]