



FAMILY

@SEYMOURHEIGHTS

Leader

Handbook

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Welcome!

“We partner with parents to teach children and students to worship Jesus, live changed lives, focus on Jesus, and invite others to do the same.”

As we work together to achieve this goal, we all need to be on the same page! Before you get plugged into this vital ministry, we ask that you read through this Family Ministry Leader Handbook. It has everything you need to know as you join the team, and it is a great place to reference if you forget something!

Why are you here?

You’re here because you believe in the next generation, you believe that parents need a village to speak truth into their child’s lives. You are here to passionately pursue Jesus and invite children, students, and families to do the same.

Job Description:

A Family Ministry Leader at SHCC is anyone who chooses to invest in the lives of a few students, children, parents, to encourage them to worship Jesus, live changed lives, focus on Jesus, and invite others to do the same.

- Be Present - Connect the faith of children and students to a community, by showing up predictably, mentally, and randomly
- Create a Safe Space - Clarify their faith as they grow by leading well, showing authentic faith, and challenging them to maturity in Christ.
- Partner with Parents - Remember that parents are the primary spiritual leaders, and back them up, equip them, and help them grow.
- Make it Personal - Remember that you can only nurture faith in others, after you are growing in faith. Allow God to work in your life by imitating Christ daily.
- Move them out - Remember you are just a part of a bigger story in their lives. Push them forward to Jesus and his plan for them.

Qualifications

To be a leader you don’t have to have all the answers, or know everything to say, you just have to live out your faith, and be dependable.

Policies and Procedures

Protective Care and Security Policy:

- All adults in any Family Ministry area must be approved through the interview process and pass a background check unless a parent supervises only their child. A background check must be re-performed and passed every three years.
- All adults in any Family Ministry area must have attended a Connect Class, AND be actively attending SHCC for three months prior to volunteering.
- For Grades 1st- 12th, parents are not allowed to be their child's small group leader.
- A Family Ministry Leader should NEVER be alone with a student, on purpose, or by accident. At times, a student Family Ministry leader-in-training may be partnered with an adult volunteer. Adult supervision is always required in any children's space. Minors may not be alone with children as leaders.
- Family Ministry leaders must immediately report another leader's inappropriate or abusive behavior.
- Family Ministry leaders must immediately report any suspicion of abuse of a child or student by their parent or guardian to their ministry leader. Please see the section labeled "Prevention of Abuse and Molestation."
- Family ministry name tags are required in all Family Ministry areas. A name tag sticker will be placed on each child, showing the child's name and ID number. This number will match any tag on a child's diaper bag (if applicable) and the receipt tag given to the parents. Parents must present this security tag to pick up their child at check-out.
- No unauthorized persons are allowed in classrooms or children's areas. (This includes family or friends who have not had a proper background check or are not of age) An authorized person is a Seymour Heights Family Ministry leader, safety team member, staff member, or parent of a child (only responsible for their child). Any visitor who requests access to a classroom or area should be directed to a member of the Family Ministry team unless they are observing only their child.
- Family Ministry leaders under the age of 13 may not change diapers.
- Family Ministry leaders must attend a yearly safety training and orientation to continue serving.

Protective Care and Security Policy:

- Family Ministry leaders should be familiar with the entrances to each classroom or area and how they are secured. Area doors are closed and locked during services and are equipped with a doorbell for late arrivals. Classroom doors may be closed but not locked unless advised by the area leader or a member of the Family Ministry Team.

Prevention of Abuse or Molestation

- Abuse or molestation means actual, threatened, or alleged acts of physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual misconduct.
- Physical abuse is any non-accidental injury to a minor by an adult or caregiver.
- Neglect is the chronic failure of a parent or adult guardian to provide a minor with adequate food, clothing, medical care, protection, and supervision.
- How to report abuse:
 - If there are any suspicions that a child or student is in an unsafe environment where abuse or molestation is occurring, it must immediately be reported to the Children's or Youth Pastor. Please remember that this is a sensitive subject and should not be discussed openly with other children, parents, or Family Ministry leaders. If a Family Ministry leader feels that the church staff is failing to report abuse to the authorities, it is the responsibility of the observers to report the alleged abuse.
- Signs of Abuse or Molestation include, but are not limited to:
 - Sexually Transmitted Diseases
 - Difficulty walking normally
 - Stained, bloody, or torn undergarments
 - Genital pain or itching
 - Recoiling from being touched
- Behavioral signals suggestive of sexual abuse include but are not limited to:
 - Fear or reluctance about being left in the care of a particular person
 - Recoiling from being touched
 - Bundling oneself in excessive clothing, especially night clothes
 - Discomfort or apprehension when sex is referred to or discussed.
 - Nightmares or fear of night and darkness
- If any of these are noticed, or there is a concern for a child's safety, it is the responsibility of the observer to report this immediately. Please keep in mind that sometimes there are no signs of abuse.

Alleged Abuse or Molestation

- When a family ministry leader suspects that a child or student has been abused, the following steps should be taken:
 - Maintain appropriate confidentiality.
 - Contact the Children’s Pastor/Youth Pastor/Family Pastor and indicate your concerns regarding the suspected abuse. If they are not available, report to any SHCC staff member.
 - If it is determined that there are reasonable grounds to believe a minor has been abused, the observer shall immediately report the suspected abuse to Child Protective Services or law enforcement.
 - If it is uncertain that there are reasonable grounds to report this to law enforcement, the Elders and staff will form an inquiry team. The sole function of this team will be to determine if there are reasonable grounds to believe a minor has been abused. They will not conduct a forensic investigation. Only four questions are to be asked of the alleged victim: (All information obtained will be kept in a secure file.)
 - What happened to you?
 - Where did it happen?
 - When did it happen?
 - Who did it? If the alleged perpetrator is a family ministry leader or SHCC staff member, the Elders will determine if and when the accused can resume ministry to children or students.
 - When reported to CPS or law enforcement, all individuals must comply entirely with any formal investigation.
- Safe Interactions VS. Inappropriate Interactions
 - As leaders of children, we are called to a higher expectation to be above reproach. Please keep these guidelines in mind when interacting with our children or students.
 - Verbal Interactions are also something to be aware of. Leaders are not to speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, or humiliating. Family Ministry leaders are prohibited from initiating unapproved sexually-oriented conversations with students (i.e., aside from curriculum or approved discussions). Leaders are not permitted to discuss their sexual activities with students. A good rule of thumb is to use positive reinforcement, appropriate jokes, encouragement, and praise. Do not use: name-calling, telling secrets, foul language, sexual jokes, shaming, derogatory remarks, harsh language, or discussing sexual encounters.

Alleged Abuse or Molestation

SAFE TOUCH	INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH
Side Hugs	Full frontal hugs or kisses
Pats on the shoulder or back	Showing affection in isolated areas, one-on-one
Handshakes, High-fives, Fist bumps	Tickling, piggyback rides, wrestling, etc.
Touching hands, shoulders and arms	Allowing children above 5 to sit on lap, or massage
Holding hands	Touching any private areas, such as chest, genitals and bottom.

- Retaliation
 - The use of retaliation is prohibited against anyone, including a parent, staff member, Elder, Family Ministry leader, or other volunteers, who in good faith reports abuse, alleges that it is being committed, or participates in the investigation.
- It is important to note that no form of abuse will be tolerated in the SHCC Family ministry. If there is suspicion of abuse by a Family Ministry leader towards a minor, immediately report it to an SHCC staff member or the Elders.
- If a Family Ministry leader is suspected or accused of abuse, that Family Ministry leader will be asked to take a leave of absence until church staff and Elders can perform a proper investigation. The Family Ministry leader will be dismissed and reported to the appropriate authorities if abuse is found.
- If you wish to remain anonymous, you may submit a concern on www.seymourheights.org/familyministryleader
- For more information on the investigation process, please ask for a copy of our Critical Response Plan.

SHCC hopes for the best out of Family Ministry leaders, which is why we have background checks and other policies in place. The safety and security of children are of utmost importance.

Evacuation Policy

- In the event of fire or other emergency evacuation circumstances, Family Ministry leaders must be prepared and knowledgeable of the evacuation plan.
 - Evacuation routes are posted in classroom cabinets. Knowing evacuation routes is critical, and drills will be conducted randomly.
 - Before evacuating, count the number of children/students, and adults. Count again once outside. Take a picture of the room attendance for the day
 - For infants and toddlers, use wagons for transportation. For preschool, children use the "walking ropes."
 - To avoid panic and chaos, remain calm and reassure the children of their safety.

Active Shooter/Lockdown Protocols

- In the event of an active shooter, Family Ministry leaders should be familiar with lockdown procedures.
- In the Family Ministry wing, students will lock down in their classroom locations. If students are in the youth room, they will move down to the Kid's Large group space. The wing will be locked and guarded.
- Lockdown Drills will be performed randomly.

Injury and Medical Emergency Policy

Most child/student injuries can be treated with a bit of loving attention and a band-aid. However, some emergencies require more attention. The following procedures address minor injuries and medical emergencies. In all cases, the area ministry team leader should be notified.

- Appropriate handling of superficial injuries:
 - If possible, separate the injured child/student from other children/students.
 - Using the first aid kit should be sufficient if the injury does not involve blood or other bodily fluids.
- If the injury does involve blood or other bodily fluids:
 - Radio for a safety team member and the area ministry leader
 - Isolate the area; keep children/students from having contact

Injury and Medical Emergency Policy (Continued)

- Locate the first aid kit, put on latex gloves, and attend to the injury using the kit's contents.
- Clean the contaminated area with disinfectant. Make sure to return the disinfectant to where it is kept.
- Wash hands with soap or antibacterial foam if soap is not available.
- Appropriate handling of serious injuries/medical emergencies:
 - Keep everyone calm, including yourself.
 - Radio the safety team and the area ministry team leader.
 - Isolate the child by moving the other children/students to the nearest classroom. Do not move or leave the injured child/student.
 - If necessary, a safety team member or ministry team leader will call 911 and attempt to locate any medical professionals who may be on-site. However, if a family ministry leader believes the situation is critical, please call 911 immediately.
 - A safety team member will locate and advise the injured child's parents of the situation.
 - The ministry leader will defer to the injured child's parents' preference for doctors and hospitals.
 - All adults present during the emergency should immediately document what happened in an Incident Report, especially while the details are still vivid. Use the back of the report for additional comments by other volunteers or students.

Restrooms, Allergies, and Discipline

- Never go into the restroom alone with a child. If the child needs help, bring a second Family Ministry leader. If they are old enough to go by themselves, wait outside for them.
- Be aware of children's allergies, especially peanut and gluten allergies. When giving out food during group times, check with each student to ensure they aren't allergic to anything.
- If there is a child not following the guidelines that have been put in place, try redirecting the child's behavior. If that doesn't work, a child may be put in timeout in Babies or PreK, and in Kids through 456, can be separated from the rest of the students, and a parent will be contacted. Do NOT ever demean or yell at a child. Lead with love in all situations. Verbal harassment will not be tolerated from Family Ministry Leaders.

Sickness Policy

- If a child has had a fever within the last 24 hours, they should not be allowed in the environment.
- The team leader should be notified immediately if a child begins to run a fever or show other symptoms (Green snot, diarrhea, or vomiting) while in a Family Ministry area.

Diaper Changing Policies

- Be sure to wear gloves and sanitize the changing area. Make certain other adults are around during the process and let the parent know that their child has been changed.
- No one under the age of 13 is allowed to change a diaper.

Digital Communications Policies

- Leaders are not to have private digital communications with students. (Includes social media and texting). We understand that texting may sometimes be needed to build relationships with students to minister to them. Please include the student's parent or another Family Ministry leader to the text thread.
- Never delete messages between a Family Ministry leader or student.
- If a one-on-one digital conversation takes place, screenshots are to be sent to a Family Ministry Staff member immediately.
- No male leader is to have one-on-one contact with a female student, or female leader with a male student in any situation.

Overnight Travel Policy

- When on an overnight trip with minors, no Family Ministry leader is to share a bed with a minor.
- A leader should never change or shower in the same room as a minor.
- Minors and leaders will be assigned rooms based on biological gender. There will not be any mixed-gender rooms.

Bus Policy

- There will always be two leaders present on a bus, one driving and one monitoring students. If this is not possible, the video footage will be reviewed after arrival at the church.
- Everyone is required to have their own seat and wear their seatbelt. There will be no seat-sharing or lap-sitting.

Babysitting

- If a Family Ministry leader receives a job for babysitting because of their position as a Family Ministry Leader, parents must sign a release form releasing the church from liability for that service. SHCC cannot recommend Family Ministry leaders as babysitters.

Expectations

- There is a specific time commitment for each area for one year. As students get older, we ask that you give a “soft” commitment above the 1 school year in order to help build relationships and walk through a period of years with the students.
 - Babies- at least once a month
 - PreK - weekly or bi-weekly
 - Kids - weekly for a school year
 - Preteens- weekly for at least a school year, consider 3 years (4th-6th)
 - Teens- weekly for at least a school year, consider 6 years (7th-12th)
- Show up early, be ready to huddle, or just get your head right to serve families.
- Come prepared, and be a good teammate, communicate when you cannot be there.
- Attend trainings, and keep growing in your ability to foster community, teach effectively, and grow spiritually.

Family Ministry Covenant

Introduction

As a volunteer/leader in SHCC Family Ministry, you're in a leadership position, and the children, students and parents will watch what you say and do closely. We think that is great! You should be a role model for the next generation. Paul says: "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." We should be imitating Christ for others to reflect. As an imitator of Christ your lifestyle matters. Maturity is expected, which means who you are on Sunday should be who you are for the rest of the week.

Church Attendance

We believe you cannot feed into a parent, child, or student if you are not being fed and worshipping with the community every week. Therefore, we ask that you attend worship services with us regularly to show a good example and maintain your spiritual growth.

Sexual Behavior

We believe that sex was created by God as an expression of intimacy within the context of marriage between one man and one woman. Family Ministry leaders who embrace a lifestyle that contradicts this teaching, such as:

- If you are involved in a sexual relationship and not married
- If you are currently living with someone of the opposite sex and not married
- If you are married and are now engaged in a sexual relationship outside of your marriage
- If you are practicing homosexuality. Our by-laws state that we believe biblical marriage is between one man and one woman.
- transgender (comment)

Leaders who have these conflicts will find themselves having to pretend to be something they're not and believe something they don't, and will be asked to stop serving.

Dedication, and Communication

As part of our value to "Be Present," we want to provide consistency for our kids and students. We ask that you reach out to the Children's or Youth Pastor as soon as possible if you cannot attend or fulfill a commitment to serve. We also ask that you keep this service commitment a high priority. If, for some reason, you have to step down, we ask that you give as much notice as possible. We may ask you not to serve if you do not show up without communication regularly.

Substance Behavior

If you have a history of past alcohol or drug abuse, this might be something that God uses positively to impact the future of the next generation. We'd love to talk with you further about your story and how it can affect the children and students in our ministry. We have a few guidelines that will determine your volunteer placement and a few reasons we may ask you not to serve at this time:

- If you have been arrested for or convicted of an alcohol or drug-related offense in the past twelve months
- If you are currently being treated for alcohol or drug abuse
- If you have used any illegal substance in the past twelve months
- If consuming alcohol to the point of being unable to drive legally is a regular part of your lifestyle

Social Behavior

The kids and the parents of the kids in your group may visit your Social Media pages. If you use a blog, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, or Snapchat, your students and their families will probably follow you through those platforms. We think social media can be a great way to connect with your students outside of Sunday and Wednesday! However, they'll also be able to see everything you post publicly. Please positively leverage your social media. Please be mindful of these guidelines, and know that we may ask you not to serve for the following reasons.

- If you use language deemed inappropriate by SHCC leadership.
- Post content that disagrees with what we believe as a church.
- If you post pictures deemed inappropriate by SHCC leadership.

Policies

As a family ministry leader, I verify that I have read the handbook and understand and agree to abide by the policies listed in the handbook. I agree that I will attend yearly training and a background check every three years.

I agree to the terms above as long as I am a Seymour Heights Family Ministry volunteer. If I cannot uphold this covenant, I understand that I will need to resign from my volunteer position or that the leadership may ask me to resign.

(Leader Name and Signature)

(Date)

(If the volunteer is under 18, Parent Signature)

(Date)

Contact Information

Erica Stricklen - Children's Pastor - erica@seymourheights.org - (865)300-9566

Jacob Leininger - Youth Pastor - jacob@seymourheights.org - (574)529-3372

