

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

As Pertains to All Ministries Where Adults and Minors Serve Together

Two Adult Rule

No Staff Member or Adult Volunteer can ever be alone with a minor, and there must be no fewer than two screened adults present at all times when with a minor. When a married couple serves together, one or more other Adult Volunteers must be in the room at all times. Youth volunteers are not counted toward the two-adult rule.

Touch

- Appropriate physical touch is a means of communicating love and care. Touch should be gentle and consistent with the following guidelines:
 - Staff and Volunteers will not use touch that is of a sexual nature or is otherwise inappropriate with a minor, including, but not limited to, touching the following areas: chest, genital areas, upper leg, and buttocks. The exception to this would be properly assisting a child in the bathroom, as per Menlo Kids' additional guidelines.
 - Side hugs, high-5's or fist bumps are great ways to connect and affirm a child.
 - Physical contact with children should be minimal and only in the presence of other volunteers.
- The following is prohibited:
 - Kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you.
 - Extended hugging, tickling, or prolonged physical contact.
 - Lap-sitting or placing between your legs with elementary-aged children and older.
 - Carrying children elementary-aged and older.

Mandated Reporting

Volunteers must immediately report knowledge or suspicion of any of the following to a Menlo Staff: life-threatening behavior, physically or sexually abusive behavior, self-harm behaviors (i.e., cutting, burning, etc.)

Menlo Staff is required, by law, to report suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. If a minor discloses abuse, or repeated unexplained injuries are observed, or there is any other reason to believe a minor might be a victim of abuse, staff are required to contact local



authorities. In the event this is needed, the Menlo Staff Lead must be informed immediately. Where there is immediate danger, the first call should be to 911.

No promises should be made to keep incidences of abuse a secret. Minors should be told that due to our commitment to care for them and ensure their safety, we must report what has been shared. Minors should be reassured that trusted adults will support them through the ensuing situation. For more help with how to talk with minors about reporting, contact a Staff member.

Gifts

If gifts are to be given, they must be given to every minor in the group and approved by Staff. These gifts cannot be expensive nor given only to one or a small number of minors.

Additionally:

- Staff and Adult Volunteers are strictly prohibited from dating or being alone with minors.
- Staff and Adult Volunteers will consult their Director if considering sharing with minors personal experiences involving life-threatening, physically, or sexually abusive behavior, or illegal behavior, including, but not limited to, prior drug use, abortion, sexual promiscuity, suicide attempts, etc. These conversations require accountability and often parental permission. When sharing other types of past experiences with students (i.e., mistakes, accidents, other painful experiences, etc.), Staff and Adult Volunteers will use discernment, wisdom, sensitivity, and discretion and will consider the purpose and necessity of such sharing.
- Staff and Adult Volunteers will support and work together with families of minors.
- Staff and Volunteers will not criticize, ridicule, or show disrespect for a minor's siblings, parents, home situation, or household/family rules.
- Staff and Adult Volunteers will not drive alone with a minor. ** See Students and Kids sections for more specific policies on transportation.
- We do not allow volunteers to offer private childcare services to Menlo Church families. Additionally, when Menlo Church families initiate a request for private childcare, we do not recommend that volunteers accept. While this would be a private agreement between two parties that is independent of Menlo Church, it is also a situation that child safety experts regard with concern. Should you wish to seriously consider a received request, we urge you to speak with the parent(s) about how to ensure the safety of the child(ren) and yourself.
- At least two Staff or Volunteers must be present for the duration of time minors are present on campus.
- Adult Volunteers will not take photos of minors or post content about them on their personal social media account. Staff will take photos and post them on Menlo social media channels only after receiving parental permission to do so.
- Staff and Volunteers will not lead minors into questionable, illegal, or compromising situations.
- Staff and Volunteers will use discernment, wisdom, and sensitivity when minors address private or personal matters with them. Staff and Volunteers must never promise to keep information a secret.

As Pertains Specifically to Menlo Kids and Menlo Students

During Weekly On-Campus Menlo Kids and Students Gatherings:

- **Parents**
 - **Early Childhood Rooms:** Parents may remain in the room to observe or to help their own child acclimate for up to three Sundays. After that, we feel it is helpful for the child to have the opportunity to try adapting to the environment without the parent's presence. A "visitor" name badge must be worn.
 - **Elementary Rooms:** Parents may remain in the room to observe or to help their own child acclimate for up to two Sundays. A "visitor" name badge must be worn.
 - **Menlo Students:** Parents may remain at the program to observe or to help their own child acclimate for one program day. A "visitor" name badge must be worn.
- **Visitors**
 - For safety purposes, we do not permit people to wander around the Kids or Students areas unattended. If an adult without an approved name badge is seen, Staff must be alerted so that the person can kindly be asked to leave immediately.
- **Potential Volunteers**
 - Potential Volunteers may observe the program if they have prior approval from Menlo Staff (which includes a cleared background check for people 18 years and older) and follow these guidelines:
 - Wear a "Visitor" name badge.
 - During the large group program time they observe only.
 - During the life group time: Early Childhood and Elementary potential volunteers do not participate in small group activities.
 - Middle and High School potential volunteers may participate in Life Group as long as there's at least one trained volunteer present at all times.
- **Staff and Volunteers**
 - Cell phones or other electronic devices should not be used during ministry time, unless it is a specific part of the ministry activity.
 - If there is a need to respond to a personal issue or emergency on your phone, other team members must be informed so you can step out momentarily.
 - When appropriate, a cell phone may be used to contact a parent.

Guidelines for Life Group Gatherings Outside Regular Weekly Ministry

- Two-Adult Rule must be followed at all times, even when only one student is present.
- Invitation and subsequent communication about the event will be directed to parents/guardians. In Student Ministries, students can also be included.
- Parents/Guardians will be invited to any Menlo Kids Life Group event.
- Parents/Guardians will provide transportation to and from the event site.
 - Menlo Kids volunteers will not transport kids unless they have written permission from parents and a second adult is present.
 - Menlo Students volunteers will not transport kids unless they have verbal parent permission, and a third person is in the car.

As Pertains Specifically to Menlo Students

In-Person Safety

All one-on-one meetings with students will take place in public, well-lit, well-populated places and under the knowing approval of Menlo Students Staff. Menlo Church requires that all Leaders create a calendar invite for any one-on-one meeting outside the weekly program and include the campus Student Director and the student's parent in the invite. This policy and public gathering space serve to fulfill the two-adult rule. Staff and Adult Volunteers will not meet one-on-one with students in a car, a bedroom, a home, or a private office. Staff and Adult Volunteers will only share a seat on a bus with another adult and will not sit alone with a student in the back row of a van. Additionally, they will limit phone and digital contact.

Digital Safety: Our goal is to set up appropriate boundaries regarding online contact between adults and minors in a way that balances accountability and safety with a healthy, effective ministry. Regarding any sort of electronic communication with students, Menlo Church asks Staff and Adult Volunteers:

- To only use social media platforms that can be archived or printed. Social media, like SnapChat, with disappearing media may not be used.
- To be brief and limit casual check-ins to 4-6 total exchanges at one time
- To screenshot any questionable or concerning texts from students, or any conversations that go beyond the 4-6 total exchanges.
- To always converse with the goal of moving actual conversations to in-person.
- To only write and send messages that you're fine with someone other than the recipient reading.
- To bring the Staff Student Director into the conversation immediately if any of the following are true: The student is a harm to him/herself; the student is a harm to someone else; someone else is harming the student.
- To only initiate communication with middle school life groups through group texts or emails.
- To approach video calls as "one-on-ones" and follow guidelines listed above.
- To not post content on social media that may be perceived as inappropriate or of undesirable conduct (i.e. illegal activities, consuming alcohol, etc).

As Pertains Specifically to Menlo Kids

Diaper Policy

- When changing diapers, at least two adult volunteers must be present.
- Minors and male volunteers may not change diapers.
- When a child's diaper has been changed, let the parent know by placing an "I've been changed" sticker on the front of the diaper.

Bathroom Safety

- Children may not travel to the restroom by themselves. All children must be escorted or viewed by an adult volunteer to the outer door of the restroom.
- Make sure that the restroom is clear of adults before allowing children to enter. Ask other adults who are entering the restroom to please wait until the children are finished.
- Never go into the bathroom alone with a child.
- If a child needs assistance, an adult female volunteer may enter the stall, leaving the stall door open. A second volunteer must be in view.

Cell Phone, Photo and Social Media Policies

- Only Menlo Staff and approved photographers may photograph or video minors attending Menlo services and/or events.
- Volunteers are not allowed to take photos or post pictures of children on their personal social network profiles or sites. Pictures can only be posted on the church's social media or website by Menlo Staff.
- On occasion, an approved photographer will be on campus taking photographs and videos. Parents will be given the opportunity to 'opt out' at check-in. Any child who is not released to have a photograph or video taken will have a "No Photos" sticker on their nametag. Volunteers will be informed when photographers or videographers are in the building.
- Volunteers are not allowed to have any phone or social media interaction with kids.
- Kids may not use cell phones or other electronic devices during programming.