



WARD
Preschool

2020-2021

PARENT HANDBOOK

AND

VOLUNTEERING

POLICY AND

GUIDELINES

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1. Welcome

Welcome to Ward Preschool. We are pleased that you have chosen our program to be a part of your child's growth and development.

This Program Handbook contains the policies and procedures of Ward Preschool. Please take the time to read the Handbook and keep it in a convenient location for reference. The Handbook is meant to serve as a reference guide. It is not meant to cover every aspect of the Ward Preschool program or every situation which may arise. Parents should feel free to contact the Director with questions concerning the contents of the Handbook.

2. Changes to Handbook

Ward Preschool reserves the unilateral right to add, delete, modify or amend the policies and procedures described in the Handbook upon thirty (30) days written notice to Parent.

Changes to policies and/or procedures contained in the Handbook are effective only if set forth in writing and signed by Ward Preschool.

3. History and Ministry Statement of Ward Preschool

Ward Preschool strives to provide a Christian atmosphere in which preschool age children of the members of Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the community are given the opportunity to develop spiritually, physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally.

In February 1978, the Session of Ward Church endorsed this vision and approved the implementation of a preschool ministry whose purpose would be "to provide a distinctively Christian atmosphere for the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development of preschool children." Placing key emphasis on Christian character development, the school complements the church's overall Children's Ministry to preschool children. It also seeks to provide unique support to families of preschool children. It was originally named Ward Daytime Preschool and changed to Ward Preschool in the spring of 2005.

The fundamentals underlying this ministry include:

- A. A statement of faith relevant to a Christian educational institution and consistent with that of Ward Church's beliefs and values.
- B. An understanding of the school as an extension of the Christian home. The school would help parents to train their children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, both educationally and spiritually.
- C. A value on the school being an extension of Ward Church, through granting Ward Church member families, alumni of Ward Preschool, or currently enrolled families, a first preference on enrollment.

The Ward Preschool ministry envisions itself to be a supplemental resource, not a replacement of current Sunday ministries. It shall provide further opportunities for planting foundational teachings about God and His Word in young lives as well as doing the work of character development.

4. Philosophy of Ward Preschool

“To provide a distinctively Christian atmosphere for the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development of preschool children.”

Purpose

The intent of Ward Preschool is to give the child a Christ-centered foundation for the development of a positive self-image, socialization skills, basic moral and spiritual concepts, and educational readiness skills; all to be nurtured in an atmosphere of Christian love.

General Program Description

Ward Preschool views play as fundamental to children’s learning, growth and development, enabling them to develop and clarify concepts, roles and ideas through role play activities and use of open-ended materials. Play further enables children to develop fine and gross motor skills, to learn to share with others, to see other’s points of view and to be in control of their thoughts and feelings. Ward Preschool’s curriculum is play based.

The program includes structured and unstructured activities in the areas of art, music, science, social studies, math, emergent literacy, and fine and gross motor development. Story telling, in house special events, field trips, and a variety of learning centers suitable to the children’s ability level will also be included.

A staff of at least one (1) professional per ten (10) children will provide a balanced program geared to the individual needs of the child. Children will be in teaching groups of not more than twenty four (24) or in a small group of not more than twelve (12) for much of the programmed day. This will give children opportunities for building positive relationships with their teachers and with each other.

5. General Information

- A. Children should be toilet trained, able to care for themselves in the bathroom, without the aid of a diaper or pull-up.
- B. Children should be able to communicate their needs to others.
- C. Children should be physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of benefiting from the preschool experience.
- D. The Preschool Director reserves the right to recommend the withdrawal of a child if in the Director’s professional judgment, the child cannot make the adjustment necessary for both the child and/or the other children.

- E. In case it is necessary for the Preschool Director to recommend a child's withdrawal, the following procedure shall apply:
1. Before the withdrawal, a written statement shall be sent to the Director of Children's Ministry and Preschool Advisory Council.
 2. At the same time, a personal interview with the parent shall be instituted to explain the decision.
 3. A written letter also shall be given to the parent, which shall include the reasons for the withdrawal.
 4. Unused portion of tuition will be refunded.

6. Nondiscrimination Policy

Ward Preschool will maintain and conduct all practices relating to enrollment, discipline, and all other terms and benefits of child care services provided in a manner which does not discriminate against any child, parent or family on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or handicap.

7. Admission Requirements/Preschool Schedule

Toddler Fun and Two Fun Program

Must be age 1 (Toddler Fun) OR 2 (Two Fun) by September 1st of current school year. These programs meet one day per week.

Toddler Fun 9:15-10:15 AM or 10:30-11:30 AM

Two Fun 9:15 - 10:45 AM

3-Year-old Program

Must be age 3 by September 1st of current school year.

This is a two OR three day per week program.

AM Program times 9:00-11:30 AM M/W/F or T/TH

PM Program times 12:30-3:00 PM T/TH or T/W/TH

4-Year-Old-Program

Must be age 4 by September 1st of current school year.

This is a two OR three day per week program.

AM Program times 9:00-11:30 AM M/W/F or T/TH/F

PM Program times 12:30-3:00 PM T/W/TH

Extended Day times 9:00 AM-3:00 PM M/W or T/TH or T/W/TH

An optional AM Friday STEAM Enrichment class may be added to any EXD program

Young Fives Program

Must be age 5 by September 1st of current school year.

This is a three full day program.

Program Times: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM T/W/TH

8. Ministry Objectives and Program Implementation

Objectives will be introduced at the 3 year old level and reinforced throughout the 4 year old and Young 5s programs. The Young 5s program will incorporate additional literacy, fine motor and cognitive objectives. All programs are designed to encourage kindergarten readiness skills.

- A. To help each child develop morally and spiritually by encouraging

them to:

1. Know God and His love for all
 2. Learn Bible verses
 3. Participate in prayer
 4. Be kind and courteous
 5. Know right from wrong
 6. Show compassion and empathy
- B. To help each child develop a positive self image by encouraging them to:
1. Feel comfortable in the school setting
 2. Be creative
 3. Think for himself and solve his own problems
 4. Be self-confident
- C. To help each child develop positive socialization skills by encouraging them to:
1. Share, play, and work with other children
 2. Interact with teachers
 3. Speak in simple sentences
 4. Sit and listen in a group without interruption
 5. Show self control in a variety of situations
 6. Follow directions
 7. Display an appropriate attention span
- D. To help each child develop cognitive skills by encouraging them to:
1. Grow in the area of pre-reading skills
 - a. Recognize and print his own name
 - b. Recognize the 8 basic colors
 - c. Recognize basic shapes
 - d. Recognize letters of the alphabet
 - e. Understand opposites, likenesses and differences
 2. Grow in the area of number skills
 - a. Recognize numerals 0-20 depending on age
 - b. Relate numerals to set of objects 0-10
 - c. Rote counting
 - d. Understand concepts of more, less and same
 3. Participate in a variety of music experiences
 - a. Sing a variety of types of songs
 - b. Use rhythmic instruments
 - c. Move to the beat of music in a variety of ways
 4. Grow in the development of gross motor skills
 - a. Run
 - b. Kick
 - c. Throw
 - d. Catch
 - e. Balance
 - f. Jump
 - g. Hop
 5. Grow in the development of fine motor skills using a variety of

media including but not exclusive to:

- a. Cutting skills
 - b. Painting skills
 - c. Coloring skills
 - d. Tracing skills
 - e. Pencil skills
- E. The following objectives are introduced in the 3s and 4s program as appropriate with more of an emphasis in the Young Fives program.
1. Recognize sound/symbol relationship
 2. Understand concepts about print i.e., left to right, return sweep, letters vs. word
 3. Retell stories
 4. Beginning writing
 5. Mathematical Concepts

Program Implementation and Strategy

The children in Ward Preschool will be given the opportunity to develop spiritually, socially, cognitively and emotionally by participating in the following types of activities:

- A. Learning centers in the following areas:
 1. Table top/manipulative toys/fine motor skills
 2. Art-structured and unstructured
 3. Dramatic play/imaginative play
 4. Gross motor/body awareness
 5. Science
 6. Library
- B. Music Program
 1. Singing
 2. Rhythm instruments
 3. Finger plays
 4. Performances
- C. Group Time
 1. Bible time
 2. Prayer time
 3. Snack time
 4. Calendar/weather
 5. Story time
 6. Playground or gym time
- D. Field trips and in house special events

9. School Calendar

The Preschool will be in session from the Wednesday following Labor Day until the Thursday prior to Memorial Day, with a one week recess at Thanksgiving, a two week recess at Christmas and a one week recess the first week of April, regardless of when Easter is. The last day of school will be a full day. Professional development days and other vacation days will be determined each calendar year. A yearly calendar will be

published and distributed to the parents in September. When Northville Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the Preschool will also be closed. School closing information can be found on the Ward Church website, our Facebook page and your local news stations.

10. Confidential Information

Each child has a right to confidentiality. All information pertaining to the children in the program, including all reports, records, and data are confidential and used for internal purposes only. Information pertaining to children enrolled in the program will not be released to third parties without the express written permission of Parent, unless required by statute, court order or licensing mandate.

11. Parent Participation and Communication

- A. Parents are welcome at the program any time to observe their child. Advance notice is appreciated by Ward Preschool staff.
- B. Volunteers will be under the supervision of a member of the Preschool staff. At no time will a volunteer be left alone in a closed room with a child.
- C. We encourage ongoing communication between Ward Preschool staff and parents. Parents should feel free to ask questions about the program or their child's care. Information about daily and weekly activities and special events will be posted on the podiums located outside your child's classroom. Additional notes and notices will be placed atop each child's hook or placed in each child's cubby box. Email will also be used for communication.
- D. In the fall, each child will receive a written progress report. Parent Teacher conferences, including assessments, will be held in the spring of each year. Conferences will be scheduled by appointment. Parents will be notified in advance of their appointed time. If at any time an additional conference is desired, please contact the classroom teacher to schedule an appointment.

12. Required Forms

The forms listed below must be fully completed and submitted online before the child can be considered officially enrolled in the program. These requirements are to be completed by May 1st prior to the school year. Parent is solely responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information contained within those forms and for keeping all such information current. Ward Preschool assumes no responsibility for keeping forms updated.

- A. Application
- B. Non-refundable Registration Fee (paid each year for each child)
- C. Child Information Record
- D. State Health Appraisal Forms (signed/dated by physician within past 12 months) including immunization record.
- E. Child Placement Contract
- F. Parent Permission Form

- G. Help Us Know Your Child
- H. Parent Notification of The Licensing Notebook
- I. First month's tuition payment
- J. Copy of child's birth certificate
- K. Tuition Express — Automated Payment Processing Form

Optional:

Parent Volunteer Application with copy of driver's license. This form is good for 2 years.

If applicable:

Certified immunization waiver (must be obtained from your local Health Department)

Epi-pen/Medication Waiver

13. Registration Fee

Upon registration, Parent is required to submit a nonrefundable registration fee. The fee is used to offset the administrative expenses incurred in processing enrollment materials. This registration fee may not be used to offset tuition payments.

14. Preschool Tuition Schedule

Tuition schedule is as follows:

- A. The first tuition payment and enrollment forms are due May 1st prior to the start of the school year. If 1st tuition payment and enrollment forms are not received by May 1st a \$25.00 late fee will be added to your account and/or your child's placement will be forfeited.
- B. Monthly tuition payments (9 payments) are due the 1st of each month (May and then September-April). It is Parents full responsibility to make payments on time.
- C. The first month's tuition is refundable by August 1st.
- D. When 2 or more children are enrolled from the same family in the same school year, there will be a 10 % discount given for the 2nd, 3rd...child. This does not apply to Toddler, Two Fun or Camps.
- E. A 5% discount will be given if your tuition is paid in full by May 1st.

15. Tuition Changes

Ward Preschool expressly reserves the right to change tuition schedule or other fees upon thirty days written notice to Parent.

16. No Tuition Adjustment for Absences

No deductions shall be made for absences due to illness, vacations or inclement weather; "make-up" days will not be permitted.

17. Payment Policy

Tuition and Fee payments will be automatically deducted from a debit or credit card (2.5% fee), or your bank account (no fee). Each family is required to enroll in Automated Payment Processing. An Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Form for your Bank Account or Credit Card must be completed with your online

enrollment forms.

18. Billing Procedures

Ward Preschool is pleased to offer MyProcure, a free online portal for you to access account information. It is the parents full responsibility to check their MyProcure account and pay tuition on time each month. In the event of nonpayment due to nonsufficient funds or declined card, you will be charged a processing fee based on our financial institution's current pass along fee.

19. School Closings

The Preschool program will be closed when Northville Public School district closes for snow emergencies or inclement weather. The Preschool program may also be closed due to loss of electricity, fire damage, communicable disease outbreaks, etc.

20. Absences

Notify Preschool office if your child will be absent. All viruses and communicable disease must be reported. It would be most helpful to the teacher if parents would contact the school when any unusual circumstances occur at home which would result in a change in the child's behavior and feelings e.g. new baby, illness, death.

21. When to Keep a Child Home

Ward Preschool requires that the parent keep the child home when he or she is ill for a number of reasons. Keeping a sick child home helps to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses to other children in the program. Also, Ward Preschool is required to report all viruses and communicable diseases to the Wayne County Health Department. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, please keep the child home.

- Fever
- Discolored nose discharge
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Ear discharge
- Rash
- Eye discharge
- Diarrhea
- All contagious illnesses/
conditions

22. When a Child Becomes Sick at the Program

Ward Preschool will report to Parent any accidents, suspected illnesses, or other changes observed in the health of a child. Ward Preschool will notify Parent when the child is exposed to a communicable disease while in care, so that parent may monitor the child for symptoms. When a child becomes ill while at the program, a staff member will comfortably isolate the child in an area where the child can be supervised. The parent or responsible adult will be notified and is required to pick the child up immediately.

23. When your Child May Return to School after Illness

- A. Your child has been fever free for 24 hours, without the use of Tylenol or any other fever reducer.
- B. Your child has been diagnosed with a bacterial infection, and has been on antibiotic for 24 hours.
- C. It has been 24 hours since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
- D. The cough has eased, nasal discharge is not thick, yellow or green, the eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- E. The rash has subsided or the physician has determined that the rash is not contagious.
- F. Your child must be out for 24 hours after they are sent home, not just until the next morning. The only exception to this is if you provide a written statement from your child's pediatrician that the child is not contagious and may return to care.

24. Contagious Illnesses and Diseases

Ward Preschool will take the necessary precautions to contain and prevent the spread of contagious illnesses or diseases. Toys, utensils, toilet, and lavatory used by an ill individual shall be appropriately cleaned before being used by another child. However, the Preschool cannot guarantee that contagious illnesses or diseases will be completely contained or will not be spread to other children. Parent must recognize that while in care, it is possible that the child may be exposed to a contagious illness or disease.

25. Medication Policy

When Parent requests that the Preschool administer medication, the following provisions shall apply:

- A. Medication, including prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, or individual special medication procedures, will be given or applied only with prior written permission from Parent. Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given in accordance with those instructions. Ward Preschool will not honor any instruction from a Parent which contradicts the instructions of the physician (for prescription drugs) or the instructions on the label (for over the counter drugs).
- B. Ward Preschool will maintain a record as to the time and the amount of any medication given or applied.
- C. The medication shall be in the original container, stored according to the instructions, and clearly labeled for the specific child. The Preschool will keep the medication out of the reach of children, and will return the medication to Parent or destroy it when no longer needed.

26. Emergency Medical Care

Parent gives permission to Ward Preschool to call 911 in the event of an emergency. Any costs incurred for 911 emergencies are the sole

responsibility of the Parent.

27. Child Abuse Reporting

Ward Preschool and its employees are required by law to report any instances of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. They must also report any instances in which there is a "reasonable suspicion" that abuse or neglect may have occurred. Ward Preschool takes these responsibilities seriously and will report any actual or reasonable suspicions of abuse.

28. Discipline

The staff of Ward Preschool shall use positive methods of discipline which encourages self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation, which are carried out in a loving manner. Redirection, proximity to teacher, as well as non-severe discipline methods such as removing the child from the source of irritation or isolating him/her on a chair within the classroom may be used to prevent a child from harming other persons or property. The methods of discipline used will also take into consideration the individual's developmental stage.

29. Disruptive Behavior

When a child's behavior is disruptive, (i.e. biting, hitting, throwing objects or using bad language), parents will be notified. If the child continues the disruptive behavior, a parent conference will be held to discuss reasonable solutions to the situation. The discussion will include a consideration of any disability which affects the child's behavior and reasonable accommodations to meet the child's needs.

If a reasonable solution and/or accommodation cannot be reached, the child will be removed from the program with two weeks notice to allow Parents to find an alternate preschool. An interview with the child's parents and written letter regarding the reasons for the child's withdrawal will be given to the Parent. Unused portion of tuition will be refunded.

30. Food

Snack will be provided by Ward Preschool. Ward Preschool strives to be a peanut/tree nut free school. Parents of children in the Extended Day and Young Fives programs are required to provide lunch for their child. Lunches should be nutritious and peanut/tree nut free.

31. Health Care Plan

Children and staff will wash hands: Before handling food, after using the bathroom and after touching a cut or open sore.

Gloves shall be used by staff when it is necessary to assist a child in situations where the staff member would likely become exposed to bodily fluids. Any items that have been exposed to bodily fluids shall be

double bagged until they can be properly cleaned and sanitized. The snack area shall be cleaned and sanitized prior to serving food. Equipment, toys, etc. shall be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis as well as when exposed to bodily fluids or when they have been handled by a child known to be contagious. Steps to insure controlling infections, such as frequent hand washing, removing an ill child from the classroom, and sanitizing equipment when necessary shall be taken. Additional resources for health related information are located in the preschool office.

32. Rest Time

Children in the Extended Day and Young Fives Programs will be provided a rest time. Quiet activities such as listening to soft music and independent reading may take place at this time.

33. Transportation Services

Ward Preschool does not provide any transportation services. It is the Parents responsibility to provide transportation for fieldtrips.

34. Field Trips

The program will occasionally take the children on field trips. Parent will be required to fill out a permission form giving the child permission to go on the field trip. When Parent does not give permission for the child to go on the field trip, Parent will be responsible for making other arrangements during that time as the child's class will not be in session at the school that day.

35. Personal Items from Home

Ward Preschool discourages children from bringing personal items from home to the program, with the exception of a show and tell item or rest time bag items for Extended Day programs. The preschool is not responsible for loss or damage to any personal items.

36. Clothing

Due to the nature of some of the activities the program offers for children, the parent must recognize that children's clothing may occasionally become soiled or damaged, although provider takes all appropriate steps to prevent this from occurring. Parents should therefore bring children to the program dressed in "play" clothes, and not "good" clothes. Ward Preschool assumes no responsibility for damage to a child's clothing.

The program strives to bring the children outdoors for play on a daily basis in fall and spring. During the winter, scheduled outside days will occur either on a weekly or a monthly basis. Parents will be notified of outside days.

The parent must be certain that the child is dressed appropriately according to the weather conditions. This may include, but is not limited to: rain gear, jacket, sweater, long pants, hat, mittens, and snow pants. If

a child arrives at the program and does not have the appropriate outerwear for outdoor activity, Ward Preschool reserves the right to call the parent and ask that the appropriate clothing be brought.

37. Termination

Either Parent or Ward Preschool may terminate the preschool agreement upon two weeks written notice to the other party. Where Parent does not provide two weeks written notice, Parent is still required to pay for the final month of preschool, following the notice of termination, whether or not the child attends the program.

Ward Preschool reserves the right to terminate this agreement immediately, without notice to Parent, if:

- a. Preschool tuition and/or other fees are not paid when due
- b. The child's continued participation in the program creates a direct threat of harm to the child, other children, or the preschool staff.

38. Arrival and Departure Procedure

All children must be brought into the building and signed in with the time noted by Parent (or other authorized person) on the Sign-In/Sign-Out log located on the podium outside your child's classroom. After signing in, the child must be taken to his or her teacher. Children should never be left unattended. At pick-up, Parent, or other authorized person, must enter the building, notify the child's teacher that they are picking up the child and sign the child out noting the time on the Sign-In/Sign-Out log. Persons other than Parent will be asked to present a valid Driver's License or Picture ID. Habitual late pickup may result in child's termination from the program.

39. Child Release Policy

- A. The parent must supply the names of the individuals to whom Ward Preschool may release the child in the event of an emergency.
- B. Ward Preschool will not release the child to any individual whose name is not on the list.
- C. Before Ward Preschool releases the child, if the individual is unknown to any one of the Ward Preschool staff, the staff will require that the individual show positive identification in the form of a valid Michigan Driver's License or picture ID.
- D. Parent must be aware that Ward Preschool and its staff are not properly trained to make assessments relating to intoxication or other impairment and, therefore, assume no responsibility to assess the competency or condition of any individual appearing to pick up child.
- E. Should Parent wish to allow an individual not listed on the card to pick up child, Parent must leave a signed, dated, written note with Ward Preschool at time of drop off.

- F. With respect to child custody disputes, until custody has been established by a court order, neither parent may limit the other parent from picking up the child, and Ward Preschool will release the child to a known identifiable parent. If a parent is prohibited from picking up a child, custodial parent must provide copy of court order.
- G. Ward Preschool assumes no responsibility for any injury or harm to the child who has been released to a person on the child release card or identified in the written exception request process.
- H. As part of our emergency plan, we ask that you update the information on your child information and child release forms to ensure that we have current telephone numbers (home, work and cell) for all emergency contact persons. It is Parents sole responsibility that all information is updated and current.

40. Photo Release Form/School Directory

From time to time, Ward Preschool will take photographs and video of the children participating in program activities or field trips. The pictures may be used in a variety of media such as school bulletin boards, preschool publications, and the preschool website. Students will not be identified by last name. Parents are asked to give photo consent in parent permission forms at enrollment.

41. Circle Drive

Please park only in designated parking areas. Parking is not allowed in designated fire lane areas. Northville police will issue tickets to violators. You may leave your vehicle in the circle drive (noting fire lane) while you are in the building long enough to drop off or pick up your child. (10 minute maximum). If you are in the building for a program or conference, please park in the parking lot area.

42. Sibling Policy

It is the policy of Ward Preschool that **ONLY** preschool age children registered for the current school year are allowed to stay in the classroom during school hours. Any child or adult helping in the classrooms must have an approved Parent Volunteer Application.

43. Fundraisers

Ward Preschool does not participate in any fundraisers, unless approved by Ward Church Session.

44. Birthdays

Children may celebrate birthdays or half birthdays with their class by bringing in a special snack and celebrating with a song. Please refrain from inviting outside guests for your child's special day (e.g. clowns, birthday party organizations, etc.). These should be done on your own time so that the majority of school time can remain for learning. If you choose to bring in a snack for your child's birthday, a healthy snack (such as fruit, vegetables, muffins, cheese, crackers, yogurt, etc.) is encouraged. Please note Ward

Preschool strives to be a peanut/tree nut free school, so you must stop at the Preschool desk to have the snack approved.

45. Holiday Celebrations

As Ward Preschool is a Christian preschool, we choose to celebrate the following days:

Thanksgiving—giving thanks to God

Christmas—Christ's birth

Valentines—God's love

Easter—Christ's resurrection

46. Private Duty by Employees

Please note that if you ask any of the employees of Ward Preschool for private duty (e.g. babysitting, serving as nanny, transportation, etc.) for any of the children enrolled in the program, they are acting on their own behalf, not under Ward Preschool. Employees are on their own separate time during these duties and are in no way under Ward Preschool or Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church while performing these "private duties".

47. Integrated Pest Management Program

Ward Preschool will notify parents of upcoming pesticide applications that occur inside and outside of the building. An annual notice will be posted at the entrance to the preschool and will also be posted either on the school's website, through e-mail, or notes on the podium.

The advance notices will contain information about the pesticide including the target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, contact information at the school, and a toll free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by MDA.

48. Emergency Policy

Ward Preschool has developed an Emergency Management Plan to be implemented in the event of an emergency situation. Ward Preschool staff are trained annually in emergency procedures and regularly practice fire and tornado drills with the children



Volunteering at Ward Preschool

Policies and Guidelines

40000 Six Mile Road

Northville, MI 48168

248-374-5911 wardpreschool.org



Ministry With Minors Policy

Ward Church places a high value on the physical safety and moral purity of all young people under its care and spiritual oversight.

This standard reflects the words of Jesus himself who said,

***“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”***

Matthew 19:14 NIV

At a time when young people throughout our nation are in unprecedented jeopardy, the church of Jesus Christ must clearly uphold the high standard of the Lord.

The three primary goals of this policy are to:

- **Provide children with a safe environment for learning, nurture and care.**
- **Protect church staff and volunteers from false allegations of abuse.**
- **Reduce legal risk to the church.**

In an effort to achieve these goals, the following shall apply to all Ward Church ministries and activities which deal with minors, both on-site and off-site, as well as to all non-Ward groups who use Ward Church facilities.

1. Process of Selecting Adults Eligible to Volunteer in Preschool:

A. Application: Parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in Ward Preschool may volunteer once the following is completed:

1. Ministry with Minors Application is submitted with its requirements which include:
 - a. Authorizing a background check, and future rechecks.
 - b. By signature, agreeing to this Ministry for Minors Policy.
2. Receive approval to work with minors from Ward Preschool.

B. Approval of Eligible Adults: The Ministry with Minors Application and result of the Background Check shall be reviewed in strict confidence and determined to be eligible or ineligible. In addition to the discretion given above, any of the following shall be considered disqualifying offenses to serve in ministry with minors (children/youth):

1. Any conviction of assault, kidnapping, abuse, neglect, possession or promotion of child pornography, indecency with a child, or any kind of sexual offense.
2. Any felony conviction.
3. Any misdemeanor conviction involving moral turpitude (sexual, lying, etc.)
4. Conviction of any misdemeanor involving use of alcohol or drugs within the past 3 years.

All documents pertaining to a person's Ministry with Minors Application shall be kept confidential and in a locked filing cabinet.

C. Review of Previously Approved Adults: A new background check shall be ordered on each eligible adult worker every two years.

D. Limited Exception: The department head may grant a limited exception to the Screening Process for circumstances where an adult offers to assist at a program where his/her child is present and that is conducted in a very open setting and where numerous other approved staff or volunteers are present.

2. General Statement of Prohibited Behavior:

Certain behaviors are unacceptable under any circumstances and will not be tolerated. A policy of zero-tolerance exists in these situations. All persons involved in ministry to minors should be aware that Michigan law requires that child abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate civil authorities. Ward Church will fully cooperate in any investigation by civil authorities into allegations of abuse. Examples of unacceptable behaviors are described below:

A. Abusive Behavior: This includes any behavior that mistreats or injures another person.

1. *Physical abuse:* Deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in non-accidental injury to a minor. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. It is different from what is considered proper discipline.
2. *Emotional abuse:* Behavior that attacks a minor's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive,

aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a minor beyond his/her capacity. It also includes acts of harassment. Examples include constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, demeaning, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating a minor.

3. *Sexual abuse*: Any sexual exploitation of a minor, whether consensual or not, by an adult or older child. It is against the law to touch a child for a sexual purpose; to encourage or force a minor to touch another person in a sexual way; to encourage or force a minor to participate in any sexual activity; or to tell a minor to touch him/herself for an adult's or older child's sexual purposes.

- B. Improper Discipline:** This includes inappropriate and harmful attempts to control a minor. Improper discipline includes yelling or screaming at minors, threatening them or physically hurting them. By contrast, proper discipline involves establishing clear boundaries of acceptable behavior and maintaining such behavioral expectations with firm and kind expressions of authority.
- C. Other Acts:** Some activities are not appropriate in the proximity of minors and will not be permitted on the premises of the church or at church-related activities or events. Any such activity will require immediate suspension and removal of the adult from the event. These include:
- Possessing obscene or pornographic materials
 - Possessing, consuming, using or being under the influence of any illegal drugs or chemicals
 - Possessing, consuming or being under the influence of alcohol
 - Using profane, vulgar or obscene language or gestures
 - Possessing weapons (unless part of an organized activity, e.g. Kids Kamp activity.)

3. General Rules of Supervision for Adults Working with Minors:

The behavior of adults working with minors must reflect the highest standards of Christian maturity, foster trust at all times and be above reproach.

- A. Prudence:** Adults shall refrain from any behavior with minors that could be viewed as sexual. Prudent discretion must be exercised before touching another person since how physical touch is perceived cannot be predicted. Particular care should be taken in relationships with those most vulnerable such as children, teenagers and those who are developmentally delayed. Physical contact with minors should be completely nonsexual and never in private or in environments that are not observable by others.
- B. Appropriate affection:** Appropriate affection between adults and minors is important for a child's development and a positive part

of church life and ministry. The following forms of affection are regarded as appropriate examples:

- Side hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder or “temple hugs”
- Hand shakes
- High-fives and hand slapping
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Caring for the physical / emotional needs of a young or disabled child

C. Inappropriate affection: In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are inappropriate and therefore not to be used:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Wrestling with minors

D. Alone with Minors: At no time shall an employee or volunteer be allowed to be alone with a minor unless parental permission has first been given in writing, or the interaction is conducted within the following guidelines:

1. Any one-on-one meeting involving a minor must be conducted with the door open or in a room with a window in the door.
2. If an adult and a minor are alone in a room, there shall be an adult roamer on premises who is aware of the one-on-one situation and the classroom door shall remain open at all times, unless the private nature of the meeting requires the door to be closed. In such case, another adult shall be informed of the meeting, and will remain in close proximity until the meeting is over.

E. Off Campus Events:

1. Adults working with minors shall abide by all laws and regulations applicable to the location of the event.