

All Souls Religious Education Program Safety Policy

All Souls Church (ASC) and its congregants want all people at the church to be safe. The Religious Education (RE) Safety Policy (Safety Policy) is about the reasonable boundaries, behaviors, and rules ASC and its congregants follow and respect to keep children and youth under the age of 18 safe. We ask that all adults in the church follow these rules with all children/youth in the church during church-related activities. We understand that individual adults may have grown up with different rules, or follow different rules with their own children. We, the Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE) Committee, arrive at these rules and behavior expectations after research, consultation with child safety professionals, and prayerful consideration.

- **General:** No adult should ever be alone with one child/youth, unless that child/youth is their own child/youth or legal ward. An adult mentor who is talking to a youth can find a place that provides some privacy, but may not be alone in a room with a youth. Examples of safe mentor conversation locations include a corner of Pierce Hall, a corner of the lobby, or in a room with the door open where people walking by can see them.
- **Background Checks:** ASC RE staff will perform background checks on all individuals who regularly work with youth at church-related activities.
- **Registration:** Parents/guardians must complete RE registration for each child or youth participating in RE. Registration may be done online or using forms available in each classroom.
- **Snacks:** ASC will offer snacks at RE classes and events that are relatively healthy and unlikely to be allergens. Parents must notify the ASC RE Director of any special food allergies, so that ASC RE staff can make an effort to provide appropriate snacks.
- **Drop-Off:** If a parent/guardian is the first to drop off a child/youth and there is only one teacher in the room, the parent/guardian will stay until another teacher or youth arrives.
- **During Service:** During service, children/youth must either be in class or with their families in the service.
- **Outside of Service:** In times outside of service and RE classes, youth may move through the church with age-appropriate independence. However, youth are expected only to enter spaces meant for people to occupy, e.g. youth cannot climb into closets, hide backstage, or go by themselves into the bell tower. Consider both the physical safety of the space and the likelihood that youth could get hurt out of view by objects or people. Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising youth.
- **Pick-Up:** Parents/guardians must pick up children and youth in 5th grade and younger promptly after class. Teachers may not dismiss a youth in 5th grade or younger on their own, unless the parent/guardian has expressly permitted this in writing. Please be mindful of this when socializing after the service.
- **Off-Site Activities:** Youth may not leave the church for RE activities without a signed permission form from a parent or guardian.
- **Emergency Plan:** ASC will perform evacuation drills so that the children and teachers are familiar with the routes. Parents/guardians will meet youth outside in an evacuation.
- **First Aid:** ASC provides limited first aid kits in every classroom. A more comprehensive kit is at the front desk. Teachers will promptly notify parents/guardians of any serious health issues.

- **Photographs:** ASC will not publish pictures of children/youth in ASC publications or on social media without express parental/guardian permission, which may be provided at RE registration. Adults and youth at ASC should not post pictures or identify youth on social media without the youth's and parent/guardian's permission.

Serious violations of the Safety Policy should be reported to the RE Director, Dolores Miller, at 202-517-1469.

Thank you for participating in the All Souls Church Religious Education Program.