

Acton Congregational Church
Sunday School Safe Church Policies and Procedures for Parents

Please refer to the "Welcome to Sunday School" booklet for the full version of our policies.

The Safe Church Committee and the Children's Christian Education Committee are committed to providing a safe environment for teachers, parents and children who participate in our Sunday school programs. These programs include the Nursery, Sunday school classes, vacation bible schools and any other CE sponsored event. The following policies and procedures should be read, understood and followed by all parents and teachers at ACC.

Parents are responsible for their children before Sunday school and during Fellowship Hour. Children should be supervised by their parents throughout the church building and taught to respect the people and property associated with it. **Please note: a child should NEVER be in the elevator or outside the church building unless under the supervision of adults.**

Attendance and Dismissal Procedures

- Children in Preschool - 1st grade must be picked up by a parent. ***Siblings will not be allowed to pick up their brother or sister unless they are in 7th grade or older.*** It is the responsibility of the parents to pick their child up promptly. Teachers will stay in the classroom until all of the children are picked up.
- Children in 2nd - 6th grade will be instructed to select a location for meeting their parents after Sunday school and Worship services are over.

Bathroom

Parents should have their children use the bathroom before worship and Sunday school.

Children up through 1st grade will be accompanied to the bathroom. The teacher, aide or Floater should wait outside the door. If a very small child needs help, the restroom door should be propped open.

Weather Procedures:

If Worship Services and/or Sunday school are being cancelled due to inclement weather, it will be posted on the church website and appear on channels 5 and 7. Teachers will be notified by phone and email to confirm that Sunday school is cancelled. In the event that worship or SS has not been cancelled despite the snowy weather, teachers who can are expected to come to church. Sunday school classes will be arranged according to numbers of children and available teachers. If it makes sense to cancel Sunday school at the very last minute, a sign will be posted in the church entryway; children will attend worship with their families.

Behavior and Discipline

We welcome all children to our Sunday school program. Children are encouraged to express their opinions and feelings while being respectful of the opinions and feelings of others. Each student is expected to participate in a way that will create a caring, safe and accepting environment for all. Teachers and students alike are required to work, play and communicate in a cooperative manner. Unless under the direct supervision of ACC staff or volunteers, discipline is the primary responsibility of the parent or guardian.

In order to lower the chance of discipline problems, our volunteer teachers will be trained and encouraged to:

- Create a comfortable, inviting environment in which children are given personal attention.
- Thoroughly prepare for their lesson in advance.
- Feel comfortable setting good, firm limits and expectations. Teachers will establish rules of behavior with their team of teachers and will strive to be consistent from week to week. Teachers will be clear with their students about classroom rules and consequences of inappropriate behavior.
- Create a Class Covenant with students on the first day of Sunday school
In September and refer to it as necessary.
- Keep students involved and motivated by selecting activities that match the age and interest of their particular class.
- Be mindful of each individual child's learning abilities and learning style.

In the event that a class exhibits disruptive behavior for more than two Sundays in a row, teachers will:

- Discuss the concern with their team teachers. Is the same behavior happening for all teachers?
- Review and adjust teaching strategies and classroom activities.

- Arrange for assigned seating.

In the event that an individual child is disruptive, teachers will:

- Gently remind the child of the classroom expectations.
- Redirect the child to a more appropriate behavior or give them a responsibility.
- Have the child sit next to them or ask the aide to sit next to the child.
- Place a gentle hand on his/her shoulder. Using a calm voice, the teacher will try to help the child join the activity or conversation.
- If this is still not enough, teachers will speak to the child individually away from the rest of the class.
- Give the child the opportunity to identify the wrong behavior.

In the event that the child is unable to understand or accept what is expected of them, teachers are empowered to give the child a "time out". This can be done in a corner of the classroom or outside in the hall. The classroom door should remain ajar. Separation time should not exceed 1 minute for each year of age. Parents will be informed immediately if their child has experienced a "time out".

If the child's uncooperative behavior persists on subsequent Sundays, the child should be brought to the Resource Room by an aide, floater or the Superintendent. Every attempt will be made to locate the parent.

- If the parent is teaching in another grade, the child should stay in the Resource Room with an adult until their parent is available.
- If the parent is in worship, an adult should go up to the sanctuary and ask an usher to locate the parent.
- The parent will be asked to come to the Resource Room to meet with their child and the supervising adult.

If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive after this initial intervention, an additional meeting will be arranged with the teacher, parent and CE Coordinator to discuss the behavior concerns and strategies. Only in extreme classes will the child be asked not to return to Sunday school for a predetermined period of time.