

CHILD SAFETY

Screening of volunteers, classroom aides, church paid employees

The most obvious way to protect our children from child abuse is screening volunteers and employees for criminal backgrounds, abusive tendencies or history. The “six month rule” should be used. This rule states: a person must be a member or regular attendee of a church for six months before they are allowed to hold a position working with students.

Supervision

Students are to be supervised by an adult at all times. Playgrounds should be clear of any thing that would be a danger to a student. Report any stranger that is loitering near a playground.

Hiking and field trips present a significant liability. Supervisors should be placed at the beginning, the middle, and the end of a group of children to prevent children from wandering off or incurring injury. Use a head count before entering or leaving any area to ensure every child is present.

Pick-up and releasing of children

Schools should have an authorized release list. Check all IDs against the list. Any changes to this list must be made in writing by the legal parent or guardian. No child should be left unattended or unsupervised before or after school.

In the case of divorce, parents need to be informed that it is their responsibility to let the school know if the non-custodial parent is not allowed to pick up the child. This can be done by filing a form and having a copy of the court order.

Create a safety zone

Make it difficult for strangers to have access to children by creating barriers between children and public areas. 1) If possible, fence the playgrounds. 2) Keep available entrances limited and quickly question the presence of strangers or unauthorized persons in the facility. 3) Route all visitors through the office. 4) Maintain tight supervisory control and use the two-adult rule where possible. 5) Know where your students are and what they are doing. 6) Maintain visibility solid closed doors present a liability 7) Provide adequate lighting indoors and outdoors.

Child abuse reporting

The Mandatory Reporting Law requires any person who supervises or has responsibility for children, who knows or suspects abuse or neglect, or who has observed the child subjected to conditions which could result in abuse or neglect, to report it. Failure to report to the authorities is a crime. Develop a “notice of injury” report and unobtrusively check the child’s health and well-being immediately after drop-off. Any suspicious marks, bruises, lacerations, or indications of neglect should be documented and reported to a supervisor. Indications of physical or sexual abuse should be reported to the authorities.