

GRACE Christian Homeschool Services
Child Protection Policy and Safety Procedures

Teacher Qualifications and Required Background Checks

All teachers must be a member of GRACE for a full year before teaching a class. Any exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis by decision of the Board of Directors. Assistants do not need to abide by the one year rule.

All teachers and assistants must obtain, and must produce for the Board of Directors, clear background checks as required by Pennsylvania law: Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance. In addition, any teacher or assistant who has not been a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a full ten years must obtain and produce a clear FBI Criminal Background Check with fingerprinting. All background checks must be obtained every three years.

Youth over the age of 14 may assist with classes if they have and produce the necessary background checks. They may teach a class if two adults with the necessary background checks are present in the room.

In the event of cooperative classes which require many hands, all families participating in cooperative classes must have at least one adult with clear background checks who is able to assist if needed.

Anyone who is unable to pass a background check or provide evidence of clear background checks will not be allowed to teach or assist with any classes.

For non-cooperative classes (those allowing drop-off), all children must be signed into and out of classes by parent or appointed adult. Non-GRACE members who are picking up children must show ID. The class teacher must be notified ahead of pick-up time if a different person from the drop-off person will be picking the child up.

No children who are not in classes will be allowed on the premises without a parent or designated adult with background check.

GRACE will maintain emergency contact and health forms for all children participating in drop-off classes.

Staffing Guidelines for Classes

Two adults are to be present in all classes, three for the nursery class if possible. Whenever possible, these should not be from the same family; GRACE will make every effort not to have related people teaching unless a third, unrelated adult is also assigned to the class.

In the event that GRACE is short-staffed for classes, we will first attempt to find substitute teachers. If substitute teachers with clear background checks are unable to be found, we will combine classes or cancel classes.

If a family is signed up for classes with one parent (Parent A) scheduled to teach or assist, and Parent A is unable to attend class (due to illness, etc.), the family's other parent (Parent B) may attend with the family's child(ren) and teach or assist as feasible, only if Parent B also produces the clear background checks. If Parent B cannot produce the clear background checks, that family may be allowed to

participate in that day's classes if enough substitute teachers may be found. In that case, Parent B may not assist in any classes.

Cooperative classes will maintain two floater adults with cell phones, one of whom is ideally the director, to facilitate communication and emergency staffing needs.

Classroom Guidelines

No doors to classrooms shall be locked, and no lights shall be off unless necessary for a learning activity.

Parents should always have accessibility to observe their own children at any time.

Minors must not loiter in unsupervised areas. Outdoor access outside of class time is at the discretion of each child's parent. Two unrelated children should not be unsupervised during any GRACE events. All children must abide by any parent or teacher's request to leave an unsupervised area.

No volunteers are ever to be alone with an unrelated child.

If a child arrives before two teachers or assistants are present, doors should be propped open if feasible, and care should be taken to keep children and teachers/assistants easily visible.

If a teacher or assistant must hold a private talk with a child, especially of the opposite gender, the teacher or assistant must remain in view of an open door or interior window.

Class End Procedures

A teacher of a class must bring all children in the class to a specified central location at the end of each class. This shall not apply to the secondary class in a cooperative class situation.

Exceptions to this rule may be made for those parents who are the nursery teachers. Their children will be delivered to the nursery by their children's classroom teachers. GRACE will make a note on the nametags of these children.

Siblings may not pick up children at classrooms, although once the children have been brought to the central location by the classroom teachers, supervision by siblings is at the discretion of each child's parent.

Restroom and Changing Procedures

Adults or teen assistants should accompany children in preschool and primary classes to restrooms. Teachers, parents, or older children may not escort an unrelated child to the bathroom alone. Another unrelated adult as accompaniment is preferable, but another unrelated child will suffice if needed. Preschool and primary classes will schedule restroom breaks for the entire class during cooperative classes. For non-cooperative classes, parents of children in primary or below classes must remain on the premises and will be called to escort their own children to the restroom if needed. All children should be encouraged to use the restroom before classes begin.

All classes or class sessions which last three hours or longer must have a restroom break in the middle for the entire class.

Adults should remain outside restroom while it is in use by a child whenever possible. Restroom door

should be propped open if an adult must accompany a child into the bathroom. If an adult must enter a stall with an unrelated child, the stall must remain open. The same guidelines shall apply if an adult is changing an unrelated child's diaper or clothing. These guidelines apply to hallway restrooms or restrooms attached to the nursery.

Adults shall use bathrooms in a separate location (designated by GRACE) during classes.

Emergency Procedures

Gloves are recommended for anything involving bodily fluids, including diaper changes and wounds. GRACE will provide preventative and first aid items such as glove, bandages, and ice packs.

In case of fire or other emergency, GRACE will have a posted escape plan with escape doors designated for each classroom and a designated meeting place. (At Bethel, this meeting place shall be at the bridge across the parking lot.) GRACE will maintain accurate records of class attendance.

In the event of evacuation, teachers are responsible for the children in their classrooms, not parents. Children should remain with their classroom teachers and follow teachers to the designated meeting space.

Shows of Affection and Touching

All physical affection must be in the presence of other adults. Gentle contact during activities may be on children's heads, shoulders, arms, and hands. Demanding or pressuring for any physical touch is inappropriate and not allowed. Physical touch or affection should be brief in nature and never on a child's private areas.

Adults and teens should avoid initiating full contact, body-to-body hugs or kisses. Preteen and older children should be hugged from the side.

Inappropriate touching will not be tolerated, including but not limited to sports activities and dating situations. At any adult's discretion, a minor may be asked to stop any touching or show of affection.

All teens or adults in romantic relationships should keep in mind the example they set for young children and remember to keep shows of affection family friendly.

Electronic Safety

No photos or videos should be taken in the restroom at any GRACE event.

Any email or electronic communication related to GRACE matters between adults and minors should be copied to the minor's parent.

Concerns and Exceptions

All suspicions of abuse or problems should be brought immediately to the supervisor of the activity (or a Board member if the concern is with the supervisor of the activity), who will report to a Board member. The Board member will report to the whole Board of Directors, and appropriate measures will be taken.

Necessary exceptions to these guidelines should be cleared with the supervisor of the activity as soon as possible, who will clear with a Board member whenever possible.

Special events may have additional guidelines.