

GARY KIDS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Gary Kids Protection Policy & Parental Covenant

Gary Kids mission is to share the love of God with children and nourish life-long relationships with his son, Jesus. Or, as we put it, to help kids *grow in faith*. Our Gary Kids team exists in order to help support families in the spiritual growth and formation of their children. We welcome the opportunity to guide and support you and your family in a caring and loving Christian environment.

As you know, our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection for our future – and more specifically, to our children. God calls us to create communities of faith where children, youth and adults grow safe and strong. Our purpose for establishing this Protection Policy and Parental Covenant is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children. Our congregation recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy and procedures in place, and enter into a covenant with parents/guardians, their children and the teachers, leaders and caregivers in whose care children are placed, in order to prevent, as much as it is possible, the opportunity for the occurrence and/or appearance of abuse of children. As parents, we ask that you familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures, uphold your responsibility, and know that in enrolling your children in the programs of Gary Church, together we are entering into a covenant to protect all of God's children to the best of our ability.

Gary Kids Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Nursery

- The Infant and Toddler nursery is located in the lower level and open on Sunday mornings from 8:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
 - Parents should sign their child/ren in and out on the attendance sheets located outside the Infant Nursery & Toddler Room.
 - Diaper bags should be labeled.

Kids' Church & Sunday School

- Each Sunday morning, please sign in your child on the grade-appropriate attendance sheet at the Gary Kids Hospitality Desk in the Lower Level Lobby.
 - Write your child's name on a color-coded nametag.
 - Each Sunday School class will be assigned a color for the year (Preschool 3's & 4's color code is red; Kindergarten is orange; Grade 1 & 2 is green; Grades 3 is blue; and Grade 4 & 5 is purple.)
 - Children with food allergies should place a smiley face sticker on their nametag for easy identification by leaders.
- Once your child/ren is signed in, your family may proceed to the Sanctuary for 9:00 a.m. worship.
- During worship, children ages Preschool 3's–Grade 5 are invited forward for a special Children's Message.
- Following the Children's Message, children ages Preschool 3's–Grade 3 will proceed to the lower level for Kids' Church.
 - Kindergarten–Grade 3 will worship in the lower level.
 - Preschoolers will go directly to the preschool room.
 - Grade 4 & 5 will be invited to stay in worship.
- Sunday School begins at 10:00 a.m., with Kindergarten–Grade 5 classrooms in Gamon Hall and the Preschool class in the lower level.

- Kindergarten–Grade 3 will be transitions from Kids’ Church to Sunday School by their leaders.
- Preschoolers will remain in the preschool classroom.
- Grades 4 & 5 will proceed to Sunday School after worship.
- Sunday School ends at 10:50 a.m. Please sign out your child on the attendance sheet located outside each Sunday School classroom.
 - Students in Grade 4 & 5 will not need to be signed out at 10:50 a.m. They will be released at 10:50 a.m. to find their families.
 - Children that are not picked up by 11:00 a.m. will be escorted to the nursery.

If you have any questions about our Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures, please contact the Director of Children’s Ministries through the Church Office.

Gary Kids Sunday School Attendance Incentives

- Children will receive a sticker to place on the attendance board in their Sunday School classroom during the 10:00 hour. Each time a child has placed 5 stickers on the attendance board, they will be allowed to visit the treasure chest for a small prize.
- Each month certificates of perfect attendance plus a Popcorn Shop token will be presented to those children who attended Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday of the previous calendar month.

Gary Kids Parent Responsibility

All Gary Kids parents are asked annually to complete a registration form for their child/ren and to read and support these guidelines as well as the behavior guidelines. Parents are asked are to ensure that the registration information is kept up-to-date. For the safety and security of all children, parents/guardians are also required to ensure their children get to and are picked up from their respective program according to the Drop-off/ Pick-up Procedures. We believe parents are the primary guide for their children’s spiritual development and are able to partner with the church through various teaching, leading and care giving ministries. If you would like to be a part of this experience please contact the church office (668-3100 or office@garychurch.org) for more details.

Classroom Management & Discipline

Gary Kids works to help children *grow in faith*. Because of this, children will be expected to respectfully participate in group activities and classroom lessons at an age appropriate level. The purpose of discipline is not punishment for wrongdoing, but assistance in doing what is right. All interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully respect a child’s dignity and fragile life. Physical punishment or intimidation will not be used. Situations requiring discipline (examples, not exclusive to this list):

- direct disobedience to a request from the teacher
- aggressive or belligerent behavior
- damage to church or an individual’s property
- situation dangerous to the safety of others
- disrespect shown to people/property

If the above behavior becomes persistent, the child will be asked in a positive way to “join with the class” and participate in a specific activity and to stop (name the specific behavior) now. Should the unacceptable behavior continue, the child will be asked to take time away from the class until the

behavior is acceptable. This could include a short walk down a hallway, leaving to get a drink of water, sitting in a chair away from the classroom activity for a “breather”, or something else that will provide a break and time to calm the unacceptable behavior. In these situations, the child will be accompanied by the teacher/leader or church staff. If there is still no improvement, a Gary Kids team member, will inform the parent/ caregiver of the situation and she will be asked to take her child into her custody.

Parents should be familiar with classroom management and discipline policy as stated in this covenant. The respect of personal space and appropriate level of physical contact is important to create a safe place for those in our care. Permission must be obtained from a child before hugging them or holding their hand. Any form of discipline which honors and respects a young person’s inherent worth and leaves their dignity intact is acceptable and encouraged. Our program has zero tolerance for any form of corporal punishment, threatening or violent behavior, or verbal abuse.

Illness

Upon recommendations of the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should not be taken from home when any of the following exists:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Common cold
- Sore throat
- Croup
- An unexplained rash
- Any skin infection
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- A runny nose with green/ yellow discharge
- Any known contagious childhood diseases

If the teacher or leader suspects that a child is ill, she/he should talk to the parent/caregiver away from the child to explain that ill children cannot be accepted in the classroom for the protection of other children and teachers. A child will not be admitted to the classroom if one or more of the following exists:

- Fever (oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater)
- Signs or symptoms of any illness listed above
- Symptoms which would prevent the child from participating comfortably in activities
- A diagnosed communicable disease (until a medical evaluation determines the child is no longer communicable and can resume contact with other children)

If a child becomes sick while in the classroom, the leaders will notify the mother, and give the child appropriate attention and supervision until she arrives. If the child is vomiting or has diarrhea, the leaders will keep them away from other children with extra attention given to hygiene and sanitation until the mother arrives to pick up the child.

Injury, Allergy and Accident Prevention and Response

- A well-stocked first aid kit is kept in the Nursery, the Resource Room and the Gary Kids Hospitality Desk. The contents are replenished as needed. The first aid kits are readily accessible during class time. Leaders have access to emergency phone numbers as well as parents’ contact information. In an effort to ensure our smallest children are cared for appropriately, it is requested

that only caregivers and volunteers be allowed in the nursery. Toddlers and young preschoolers are required to not bring toys to the nurseries.

- Toys in the nurseries are regularly reviewed, sorted and cleaned. Those which are broken or unsafe are discarded.
- Due to an increase in peanut allergies, all food items are requested to be “peanut free.”
- In the event of an emergency, 9-1-1 will be called immediately.

Safe Sanctuary Policies

The congregation of Gary United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, workers, and volunteers who participate in the ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation’s commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, or ritual abuse) should volunteer or be hired to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
2. All adult volunteers with children or youth of our church must have been involved in the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer or staff assignment.
3. Adult volunteers and ministry staff with children should observe the “Two Adult Rule” at all times so that no adult is left alone with children or youth on a routine basis.
4. Adult volunteers with children shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adult volunteers and ministry staff shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” At Gary Church, we strive to make the gospel’s mandate real by providing a safe and secure place in which children may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship in the community of faith.