



P.O. Box 335
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-0335
www.familypromiseskagit.weebly.com
Email: familypromiseskagit@gmail.com
Office (360) 854-0743

Dear Volunteer Coordinators, Pastors and Volunteers

We all know that we want to accommodate our guest families to be as successful as possible during their stay. But we have veered from the foundation of the National program guidelines. My hope is to – by the end of this letter – steer us back on track to what we all originally agreed on for hosting expectations, and update those who were not at the latest meeting. We want to make sure that all churches have the same expectations of guests. Kids feel they have structure and consistency when the tasks do not change.

NATIONAL GUIDELINES

It is National policy to have at least two volunteers per shift. It is not required to have three shifts in a host day (the dinner servers can be asked to stay for evening activities until the overnighter arrive). No visitors. Confidentiality. Following emergency protocols. Ensuring your church has a fire safety plan, which should be included in your guest orientation. Volunteers should be aware of where the red binder is in case of emergencies, to be able to report medications or allergies. You are not to be left alone with children – **DO NOT WATCH THEM FOR GUESTS**. Other parents can watch children, if it's been approved by Family Promise, but the children should know who is watching them.

SCHEDULES

We want the families to feel at home while they are with us, and in that sense, we want them to maintain the churches as if they were at home. On Sundays, unless otherwise working, families should arrive by 5:30 to be oriented into your church. The provided guideline form should be used to orient them to the rules of all the churches. All families are expected, unless otherwise notified, to be at dinner at 6 p.m. Do not hesitate to call the families if they have not marked down that they won't be there on time. There will be times when families work nights and we have all been guilty of wanting to accommodate these situations, this will burn your volunteers out. Plate can be made for these guests, but dinner is to be put in the fridge at 7 p.m. Guests arriving after 7 p.m. will need to heat up their own or if you have a commercial kitchen it can be reheated for them. Dinner or activity volunteers should not have to heat up full dinner multiple times.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

We do not expect or want the churches to take any part in disciplinary action but do request that reports be made to the office when families are not adhering to expectations. This can be done in the form of an email to Audrea (famprocasemanager@gmail.com) or text message to the on-call cell phone: (360) 333-7524. There are also incident forms in the red binder that can be copied and filled out if an incident occurs within your church. While these messages may not be answered immediately, we then have an accountability record that can be passed on and swiftly dealt with. At the same time, we must all be reminded that the goal of this program is for our families to once again feel independent. Through this process, there will be times when scheduling errors occur: people get jobs; kids have school activities; guests have a million goals to meet; and we are human. We must leave room for those errors. "To error is human, to forgive is divine" Alexander Pope.

We also are aware that you will become very close with some family members and know a lot about their personal lives. We live in a very small community and word travels fast. It is of the utmost importance that we maintain strict confidentiality of anything that could identify these families, such as: names, ages, occupations, physical features, sexual orientations, schools, behavioral observations, etc. From now on, we will be using only our guest's first names, period. The only reason you must use last names is in case of emergency to first responders or FP staff. The information for such an occurrence will be found in the red binder, which should be maintained in a safe place in your church.

EVENING ACTIVITIES

Evening activities have been an extremely successful highlight of this program. Sometimes family members are not capable of attending due to other factors, however we do not want to lose this portion of our program. Some churches have found it works to extend their dinner volunteers until 8 p.m., and have their overnight volunteers come in at 8 p.m. It can be

extremely important to remind your volunteers during this time to bring entertainment for themselves if the families are not present. We are currently working on projects that volunteers could do in that case to help assist the office.

[FORMS](#)

Forms locations – dinner (by where you serve); sign-out (by the door). When guests first arrive to your church, please show them where all the forms are. Attached to this document, you will find guidelines that can be altered to accommodate the physical layout of your church. We have found that when churches are using the same forms, guests will more quickly adjust to the weekly move.

I am hoping the attached forms and this letter will help us all to stay on the same page when serving these families. I hope that you will also find this letter useful in training new volunteers.

Once again thank you for helping to make this program so successful. The Promise could not be fulfilled without you.

Sincerely,

Audrea Woll

Family Promise of Skagit Valley
Program Coordinator
Email: famprocasemanager@gmail.com
Office: 360-854-0743
Emergency Cell:360-333-7524