



**International MOMS Club®
Fact Sheet**

Behavior Guidelines for MOMS Club® Chapters

It is recommended that every chapter create and approve a Behavior Guidelines for their members. Behavior Guidelines set down the expectation of appropriate behavior at all MOMS Club functions. The Board may create the preliminary guidelines, but they should get input from the membership, and all guidelines must be approved by a vote of the members before it may be adopted.

The Behavior Guidelines should include the chapter's illness policy, their policy on adult and children behavior at MOMS Club functions, and what will happen if the Behavior Guidelines are violated.

For any Behavior Guideline, make sure that you are focusing on the negative behavior – not a specific person or child. Remember that any Behavior Guideline must be enforced equally. If an unpopular person swears and that offends people, don't put in a rule that "No swearing will be allowed," if you are not prepared to enforce the rule on anyone who swears – no matter how popular the person is. The same with children's behaviors – any child is capable of negative behavior at times, so make sure you are prepared to enforce all of your Guidelines fairly.

Discuss the negative behaviors that your members wish addressed in their Guidelines. Your members will bring their own concerns to the discussion, but some behavior problems/policies to consider for both children and adults are:

- * An illness or wellness policy, which reiterates that members should not bring their children to activities when they are ill or have had symptoms (such as vomiting or diarrhea, extreme lethargy, oral temperature of 100+ degrees, severe cough or pain, discharge from the eyes, green mucous, or any other communicable disease, such as. chicken pox, etc.);
- * Physical assault (including hitting, slapping, punching, pinching, biting);
- * Verbal Problems (including swearing, screaming, interrupting at meetings, preventing others from their time to talk, etc.);
- * Respect for Other Members (including gossip (*more on gossip later), inappropriate emails, use of roster for business or non-chapter purposes, harassment or threatening behaviors);

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- * Misc. Anti-Social Behavior (including destruction of property, going to the bathroom in public, inappropriate touching);
- * Treatment of Children by Adults (including what discipline (if any) a member may apply to another member's child, etc.)

When writing your Behavior Guidelines, think carefully about how you are defining unacceptable behavior and if you will be able to apply the guidelines fairly to all members.

For example, everyone would agree that gossip is harmful to any chapter. But how to define it? Depending on the topic, what might be malicious gossip to one person may simply be sharing needed information to another.

And since free speech is guaranteed by our Constitution, you have to be careful that any definition of gossip doesn't inhibit people from being able to converse freely.

But, while the Constitution guarantees free speech, it does not protect lying. Slander (saying something false about another person) or libel (writing something false about another person) is illegal. While most people will make allowances for honest mistakes that didn't hurt anyone, it is never allowed to intentionally slander or libel someone. It is also not allowed to be so careless about what you say that you don't care if you are slandering or libeling someone.

Therefore, instead of putting in your Behavior Guidelines that "gossip" is not allowed, we suggest that you ban slander, libel and lying. All of those can be defined and proven, while gossip cannot.

Once you know what behaviors you want to address, it is important to have the members agree upon what will be done if anyone violates the Guidelines. Possible consequences may include having to leave the activity, not returning to that or other activities until the behavior stops or, for repeat serious offenses, a member may be required to leave the chapter altogether.

You should also include a process for a member to appeal if she feels she has been unfairly accused of something she did not do.

Once voted on and adopted, the Behavior Guidelines become binding on all members. The Behavior Guidelines should be printed in the newsletter for all members to see and should be given to all new members when they join.

If you have any questions
about Behavior Guidelines,
contact your Regional Coordinator.

