



THE FINE PRINT

SAFETY GUIDELINES

FOLLOW THE TWO ADULT RULE

We require two workers for each classroom. One must be an adult age 18 or older and have undergone a background check, the other may be a responsible youth helper.

However, one volunteer may escort two or more 1st -5th graders to the restroom, remaining outside the restroom at all times, while a second worker remains for a short time with the class. Junior helpers are not allowed to take children to the restroom or be left alone with a child. A junior helper must always be paired with two adults, or one adult and one youth helper.

As much as is possible we will try to stay within the recommended adult to child ratios. For infants, it is 1 adult to every 4 children. For preschool and elementary, it is 1 adult to every 10 children.

DIAPER CHANGING AND PRESCHOOL RESTROOM TRIP

Only female volunteers over the age of 18 may change diapers in the nursery, and another adult or youth helper must be present while the diaper change occurs.

The preschoolers will go to the restroom as an entire class with both volunteers, using the walking rope. They will stop by the toddler classroom, taking any potty trained kids with them. Make sure to headcount when leaving the cafeteria and again when leaving the bathroom. A single volunteer is not permitted to take preschoolers to the restroom. Please verbally check both the mens and womens restrooms, making sure they are empty, before allowing the children to enter.

In the event of a child needing assistance, the second volunteer should be nearby and aware of the situation. Only female volunteers are permitted to assist children in the restroom and should keep the stall door open at all times while assisting.

If there is a toddler who is still in diapers and needs a diaper change, the parent needs to be contacted using the phone number on the child's name tag or on the check-in clipboard. The parent will then come get their child from the toddler room and take them to the nursery to change them, and then bring them back to class.

DOCUMENT ALL INCIDENTS

If a child in your care is injured or falls ill, or an incident occurs, an incident report must be filled out and signed by you, the director, and the child's parent. Incident report forms can be found in the red clipboards in each classroom. Please notify the kids ministry director of the incident as well.

PRACTICE APPROPRIATE TOUCH

Showing affection is a natural part of ministry and working with kids. Here are some guidelines for showing appropriate affection to kids while maintaining integrity.

HUGS: Hugs should be brief and should be side-hugs when at all possible. Kids should always initiate any hugs — not adults.

HANDS: High fives, handshakes, and fist bumps are always appropriate. Hand holding is acceptable only for kids in kindergarten or below.

HOLDING: A child 1st grade or above should not be held unless the child is being transported for emergency purposes. If a child wants to sit on your lap on the floor, gently move the child to a sitting position beside you.

AVOID AND REPORT ALL INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

The following forms of affection are inappropriate in our kids ministry in any circumstance:

- Kisses
- Kids 1st grade or above sitting on your lap
- Touching genitals
- Tickling
- Any form of unwanted affection

REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Our church policy is to report any signs or suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Contact a staff member immediately if you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect. Do not attempt to gather information from the child or speak with the parents about your concerns. Do not talk with other team members about your concerns.

DEFINING ABUSE

Sexual abuse is any occurrence in which an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor. It could be contact behavior (touching) or non-contact behavior (pictures, spying, exposure, or conversation).

Physical abuse is any contact intended to cause physical pain or injury to a child. The law does permit parents to use corporal punishment, but the discipline must be reasonable.

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or supervision. Neglect can also include exposure to harmful substances or situations.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Watch for possible signs of abuse which may include: Depression, sudden changes in behavior, paranoia, fear of their caregivers or others, aggressive behavior, anxiety, bed wetting or accidents in their underwear, imitating or talking about sexual behaviors, wounds or pain, unexplained bruises, or untreated illnesses. Contact your kids ministry director immediately if any of these signs are observed.

BE AWARE OF ALLERGIES

Although we do not usually provide snacks in any of our classes, parents should let the child's leader know if their child has any sort of medical need or allergy. We cannot administer any medications.

KNOW WHEN TO TEXT PARENTS

If you need to get ahold of a parent at any point during the service, you may text the parent number on the child's name tag. It can also be found on the check-in sheet. If the parent is not responding, or if you need help contacting the parent, please use the classroom walkie talkie to radio into the service. If there continues to be an issue please contact the kids director for help.

Parents can be texted if children exhibit symptoms of illness, are crying inconsolably for more than 10 minutes, or if a child behaves in a violent manner.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

We have emergency evacuation routes drawn out on a map in the red clipboards in each classroom. These routes will be regularly discussed at volunteer meetings. In the event of an emergency evacuation, nursery through 5th grade will exit the cafeteria doors toward the playground. It is imperative that the red clipboards are taken with you when you leave the class.

We will congregate in the back field behind the school, staying in our class groups, making sure every child that is checked-in is accounted for. If the cafeteria exit is blocked, we would use an alternative exit but still meet in the back field.

IMPORTANT: Kids will **not** be released to parents until everyone is outside, accounted for, and the parents have the pick-up sticker or ID to match first and last names.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline should always be done in a positive, patient and grace-filled way that focuses on helping the kids instead of enforcing punishments. When discipline is necessary to keep a safe and effective environment for everyone, here are three steps to take:

REDIRECT

- Get on the child's level and look them in the eye
- Give a verbal warning, explaining why the behavior is not acceptable
- Give a suggestion for the right way to act or behave and help them do it

REMOVE

- If the child does not follow directions when you give them a redirection, it may be necessary to remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to rejoin the service
- Place them in an area away from the other kids for no more than one minute per year of age

REFER

- If the child is still not obeying, the parents may be contacted

Never attempt to physically discipline a child, belittle a child, or administer corporal punishment.

To limit the amount of discipline needed, here are some tips:

1. PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

Become familiar with the curriculum and gather supplies before kids enter the room. When they arrive, be prepared to greet and engage them.

2. ESTABLISH RULES AND EXPECTATIONS EARLY

Communicate the rules and expectations consistently at the beginning of every class. Remind the kids often.

3. BE PROACTIVE

Follow proper ratios and make sure there are enough adults to maintain order in the room. Encourage kids who have trouble listening to be leaders and look for ways to include them in the service.

4. TALK TO PARENTS

If you have to take disciplinary action with a child, let your kids ministry director know after class. If you feel it would be best for you to talk to the parent directly, always do so in an encouraging, gentle and positive way. Ask the parents how you can help their child and support what the parents are already doing.

If a child exhibits violence to the teacher or other kids, parents will be contacted immediately, and the children's ministry leader will talk with the parents.

CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICIES

Kids are under the care and supervision of their parents until they are checked into their classroom. Below are steps a parent must take when dropping off or picking up their child:

- Using our check-in system, parents must print a name tag for each child and place it on them in a visible spot. Parents will also get a claim sticker with a code that matches their child's name tag code.
- Parents must show their sticker with a matching code to the volunteer in order to pick up their child.
- A child's older sibling must be 6th grader or higher AND have the pick up tag in order to check out their sibling.
- If a child has a special need, medical issue or allergy, parents should alert the child's teacher at drop off

IF PARENTS LOSE THEIR STICKERS

Do not release a child to a parent unless they have a matching sticker, even if it's a parent you know. This will communicate to everyone that we take safety seriously. If a parent loses their sticker, they can show their ID to match their name to the parent name on the child's tag.

CODE OF CONDUCT

*****ALL VOLUNTEERS*****

As a ministry team, there are a few things we'd like everyone to abide by:

WORK HARD: You are so important to our ministry! We need you! So please, show up on time, give it your all, and be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to you.

"Do your best... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ." (Colossians 3:23)

BE KIND: Ministry is all about people, so to be effective in ministry, you'll need to reflect God's heart for people. With kids, parents, other volunteers and our staff, treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness and love.

"Get along amongst yourselves... And be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out." (1 Thessalonians 5:13-15)

BE LIKE JESUS: While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every kids' ministry leader to be striving to make wise decisions, to glorify God with their lives and to strive to look more like Jesus every day - especially in key areas like their treatment of others, social media presence (which should reflect the values of Northside), drug or alcohol use and sexual behavior.

THANK YOU!!