



# Grace Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures 2017



In Grace Kidz, we're on a mission to "make disciples for life"—to make wholehearted followers of Jesus who will love and serve Him in every aspect of life and for a lifetime.

The policies and procedures described herein are designed to create a safe environment, reflect God's love, and allow volunteers to serve in an effective manner. Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children under the sponsorship of Grace Presbyterian Church must follow these policies and procedures.

This document contains the minimum requirements for any ministry that serves children birth through sixth grade.

In addition to the following policies and procedures, we realize our responsibilities go deeper than just providing the best care. We are also role models for Christian living to the young impressionable lives in our care. As children's ministry volunteers, we must demonstrate a commitment to Biblical standards in all areas of life—both public and private. Therefore, we ask children's volunteers to consider how their lifestyle glorifies God and provides an example of Christian living to our children. As Mark 9:42 warns us, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea."

I sincerely appreciate all that you are doing to love and disciple the children of Grace.

In Christ,

Julie Cordes  
Interim Director of Children's Ministries

## 1. Personnel Requirements

- a) Children's Ministry Volunteers will be approved by the Director of Children's Ministries (hereafter referred to as "the Director").
- b) Volunteers will be required to satisfactorily complete a screening process, which includes completing a Volunteer Information Form that gathers personal information, references, summary of experience, affirmation of beliefs and commitment to a Christ-honoring lifestyle. Information will also be gathered on adult volunteers to conduct a background check that includes a National Criminal Database Search and National Sex Offender Registry Search. If at any time, the volunteer realizes he no longer meets these requirements, he will be responsible for alerting the Director or one of the Superintendents.
- c) Department Coordinators must be adult members of Grace Presbyterian Church.
- d) Volunteers must be 7<sup>th</sup> Grade or older to serve. Exceptions may be made in the case of younger children serving alongside a parent.

## 2. Classroom Supervision

- e) A minimum of two volunteers must be in the room any time children are present, regardless of how few children there are. A special needs breakout room, fully visible through a window and adjacent to a staffed large-group room, may contain one adult and child or children.
- f) The following ratios are staffing minimums (volunteers:children)
  - Infants = 2:4
  - Toddlers = 2:6
  - Twos = 2:8
  - Threes to Pre-K Fives = 2:12
  - Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade = 2:16
- g) If a department is short-staffed, adjustments may be made to meet minimum staffing requirements. Examples include: two departments may be combined and/or parents may be asked to stay in the room. As a last resort, extra children will not be allowed to attend until proper staffing can be obtained. The department coordinator will assume supervisory responsibility and inform the parents of pertinent policies.
- h) The Director or Superintendents will make frequent visits to ensure Department Coordinators are providing proper supervision and enforcing the policies.
- i) All classrooms have either side windows or Dutch doors so parents and supervisors can see the children at all times. These sightlines must not be blocked at any time.

## 2. Registration

- a) All visitors will be checked in using one of our Manned Check-in Stations. A Welcome Team Member will enter the family's information, including phone number, email, birthdates, and allergy information. The child will be assigned to the Visitor Group corresponding to their age group.
- b) Once a child has attended five times during a quarter, he will be added to the class roster. The church's database can be used to track attendance trends.
- c) All children must be registered and attend the class at their age, grade, or developmental level.

## 3. Check-in and Check-out Policy

- a) Children, birth through second grade, should be escorted to their classroom by a parent/guardian or other person who is 7<sup>th</sup> grade or older.
- b) Children must not be allowed to enter a classroom without the proper supervision, as outlined above.
- c) Parents are welcome, but should check in with the room leader before entering a classroom.
- d) Specific department policies are as follows.
  - i. Nursery through Second Grade must be checked in using the Electronic Check-in System. One printed nametag will go on the child. Another printed nametag will be placed in a notebook so we have a record of who is in the room. A label with an alpha-numeric code on it will be kept by the parent/guardian. This tag will be matched to the nametag the child is wearing when picked up. The child will not be released unless the two codes match.
  - ii. Third and Fourth Grade will check in using the Electronic Check-in System. They will only receive a printed nametag to wear in class. The classroom secretary will mark the Attendance Marking Sheet so we have a record of the children in the classroom. Children are released

independently to meet their parents in a predetermined location. Parents may request the child stay in the room until picked up.

- iii. Fifth and Sixth Grade will not check in electronically. Their attendance is recorded by the department secretary so we have a record of the children in the classroom.
- e) In the case someone tries to pick up a child who does not have a matching alpha-numeric code, the child may not leave the department and the person may not enter the classroom. The Director or Superintendent must be notified immediately.
- f) Unless requested otherwise by a parent, mid-week clubs follow the same procedures described above for Nursery through Kindergarten and Third through Sixth Grade.

#### 4. Identification

- a) All Children's Ministry Volunteers must wear a green Name Tag, which they will receive after checking in electronically.
- b) All children must wear a printed nametag. In addition to the child's name, the nametag includes allergy information, classroom name, and an alpha-numeric code, which is described above.

#### 5. Diaper Changing Policy

- a) Only Team Leaders should change diapers.
- b) Changing stations are provided in all nursery rooms and are in full view. Diaper or clothing changes should only be done at the changing stations. If you are in a room that does not have a changing area, you must keep the doors open so others can see you.
- c) Gloves will be provided to protect hands from soiled diapers or clothes.
- d) Hands must be washed and the changing pad must be sanitized after each diaper or clothing change.

#### 6. Restroom Use

- a) In-room Facilities
  - i. Classrooms for children ages Toddler through Kindergarten have restrooms located within the classrooms. The doors to the restroom in Toddler through pre-K have a Dutch door so the top portion can remain open while the bottom portion can be closed for privacy. The Kindergarten restroom has a solid door.
  - ii. If a child needs assistance, a Children's Ministry volunteer may enter to assist the child, but the door must be left open either fully or partially.
- b) Public Facilities
  - i. Children needing to use a restroom located outside the classroom must be escorted by a Children's Ministry volunteer.
  - ii. The Children's Ministry volunteer should check to be sure the restroom is safe. The volunteer should remain outside the restroom and wait for the child to exit. If you must enter the restroom, be sure to leave all doors open either fully or partially, even the bathroom stall.

#### 7. Physical Contact

- a) Touch is a part of nurturing children. Physical contact, however, should always be age and developmentally appropriate.
- b) The following guidelines are promoted for pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love.
  - i. Hugs: Quick one-armed side hugs are permitted. Avoid initiating full body-to-body contact hugs. Never prolong the hug longer than the child wants.
  - ii. Kisses: Kisses of any kind are inappropriate
  - iii. Lap Sitting: Appropriate lap sitting may occur with children Pre-K or younger. Discourage lap sitting with school age children. Rather, encourage them to sit next to you.
  - iv. Casual Touch: Patting the head or back and giving high fives are appropriate physical contact. Holding hands can also be appropriate, such as during prayer or a game. Avoid touching a child anywhere a swimming suit would be worn. Do not put your hands under clothing, except as needed for diaper changing.

- v. Age Appropriate Contact: Keep physical contact age appropriate. Infants might require constant physical contact while older children should only receive quick encouraging contact.
- vi. Play: Never throw, toss, or swing a child. Do not lift a child by his arms or legs. Play should never become too rough.

## 8. Discipline

- a) Discipline should be administered per the spirit of the Discipline Guidelines.
- b) Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all disciplinary actions and words. Harsh words and profane language must never be used.
- c) Physical discipline should never be used on a child. If physical contact is necessary to protect a child from harming himself, someone else, or church property, use the minimum amount of contact necessary to ensure safety.

## 9. Reporting Child abuse or Neglect

- a) If you have reason to believe that a child's physical or mental welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, you must advise the Director or Superintendent immediately.
- b) Here are some examples of information that may make one reasonably suspicious of abuse or neglect:
  - ~ gives verbal testimony of abuse or neglect
  - ~ has an inordinate number of injuries, is dirty or malnourished
  - ~ alludes to incidents in writing, drawings, or prayer requests
  - ~ is often inadequately dressed for inclement weather
  - ~ wears long-sleeved tops during warm days to cover bruises.
- c) At the report of such suspicion, the church will then take appropriate steps as outlined in the Grace Presbyterian Church's Procedure for Responding to Child Abuse/Molestation Accusations.
- d) Please take a child's complaint seriously. Stay calm and listen. Provide emotional support. Do not promise the child you will not tell anyone.
- e) You will be asked to fill out a brief Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form available from the Director or Superintendent. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect is confidential and should not be shared with anyone else.
- f) If you have reason to believe that another Children's Ministry worker is involved in inappropriate behavior with children in their care, you must report this immediately to the Director or Superintendent.

## 10. Health and Safety

- a) Sick children, as described on our Sick Child Policy sheet, should not be accepted in a Children's Ministry program.
- b) Blood or blood-contaminated bodily fluids should not be handled without the protection of medical gloves.
- c) Toys and recreation equipment will be age appropriate for the department which they are in and disinfected regularly.
- d) Peanut and nut products should not be used at any time.
- e) An emergency escape plan is posted in each room. All department coordinators must know the plan and how to execute it.
- f) The active nature of mid-week clubs makes the children in them particularly susceptible to injuries. Club leaders should take extra precaution to provide ample supervision of games and activities in order to prevent injuries. Excessive roughhousing should not be allowed.
- g) On-site injuries
  - i. If there is an emergency, call 911 immediately.
  - ii. All injuries must be reported to the department coordinator, who will assess the injury and decide the proper treatment.
  - iii. Parents will be notified when deemed necessary by the department coordinator.
  - iv. If the injury is more serious, the Director or Superintendent should be summoned.
  - v. All on-site injuries must be recorded on an Accident Report Form.

## 11. Evacuation Procedures

- a) In the event children need to be evacuated from their classroom for any reason, the following steps must be followed:
  - i. Department Secretaries will lead the department to their safety spot. They are to take the attendance book with them so attendance can be taken immediately once children arrive. If there are any discrepancies, the Department Coordinator and Director should be notified immediately.
  - ii. Teachers will lead the children to their designated safety spot, counting the children as they go to ensure they always have the correct number of children.
  - iii. Department Coordinators should be the last to evacuate, after ensuring everyone is out of the department areas.
  - iv. Children will remain under the supervision of the teachers and in assigned small groups, if applicable, for safety and accountability. Parents will not be allowed to pick up their child until the Director has given permission.
- b) In the case of a building evacuation, due to a fire, for example, the Building Evacuation Procedures that are posted in each room must be followed. Department Coordinators are responsible for knowing the procedure and informing the volunteers.
- c) In the event of inclement weather, the children will be assembled on the Lower Level according to the list below:
 

Infants:	021A
Toddlers:	021B
Twos:	021B
Threes:	015A
Pre-K:	015B
K:	015C
1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> :	004
3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> :	004
5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> :	004

## 12. Security policy

- a) If there is an unauthorized person in the Children's Ministry area and he does not satisfactorily answer our questions about his presence, he must be told to leave the Children's Ministry area.
- b) If he continues to be uncooperative, follow the Grace Presbyterian Church Security Policy.

## 13. Policy for Off-site Activities

- a) Official Grace activities
  - i. All Children's Ministry Policies must be followed at all times, including:
    1. Proper worker-to-child ratios
    2. An adult should never be alone with a child. Examples include: an adult and child walking alone in the woods during a campout, talking together in a closed room, riding in a vehicle together without specific parental consent. One on one discussions must take place in public settings with others around.
  - ii. During campouts or overnights, adults and children should not concurrently share shower facilities.
- b) Non-Grace activities involving Grace children's volunteers
  - i. It's important for parents to know when children's volunteers are operating in an official or unofficial Grace capacity.
  - ii. Private interaction between an adult and child should not take place without parental consent.
  - iii. Invitations to any private event or activity must be given to the parent rather than the child. Private invitations must be clearly stated as such. The purpose of the stipulations in this paragraph is to avoid parental confusion between official Grace invitations and non-Grace invitations.

Attachments:

1. Volunteer Information Form
2. Teen Volunteer Information Form
3. Discipline Guidelines
5. Procedure for Responding to Child Abuse/Molestation Accusations
6. Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form
7. Accident Report
8. Sick Child Policy



## Affirmation of Beliefs and Commitment to a Christ-honoring Lifestyle

My signature at the bottom of this page indicates that I affirm these statements:

I believe the Bible is the written Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, without error in the original manuscripts, and authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.

I believe there is one God who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

I believe that all people are sinners and unable to save themselves from God's displeasure except by His mercy.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who became a man, lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death, rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven.

I believe that salvation is by grace, through faith, in Christ, for the glory of God.

I am trusting in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

I will seek, relying on God's grace for the power to do so, to lead a Christ-honoring lifestyle and to do nothing to bring disgrace to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Grace Presbyterian Church, or the Children's Ministries.

## Background Questions

1. Have you ever been arrested for, convicted of, or pleaded guilty to a felony?  No  Yes (please explain)  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is there any current or pending legal action against you?  No  Yes (please explain)  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you ever been arrested for, convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or been involved with any crime or offense for neglecting, abusing, molesting, or otherwise causing bodily harm to any child?  No  Yes (please explain)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Is there anything in your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children?  No  Yes (please explain)  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Background Check Explanation

In order to safeguard the children, we conduct a background check on each applicant for children's ministry. Your signature at the bottom of this page indicates your consent for Grace to conduct a check that includes: National Criminal Database Search (including federal fugitive files; Department of Corrections prison, parole, and release files; and state criminal record repositories) and National Sex Offender Registry Search. This background check does **not** include a credit check, and it does **not** research traffic violations. In order to accomplish this check, we require your social security number and birth date to be provided on the front of this form.

## Signature of Affirmation, Certification, and Authorization

I affirm the statements listed in the section titled "Affirmation of Beliefs and Commitment to a Christ-honoring Lifestyle."

I certify that all the information provided in this form is true and complete and that I have not omitted or misrepresented any information in my responses. I understand that falsification of any of this information can cause me to be removed from my volunteer position. I understand that a position in children's ministry may or may not be offered to me, and that upon accepting a position the church may end my involvement at any time without liability.

I authorize Grace Presbyterian Church to investigate and verify the information I provided and to contact any references or churches listed. I authorize these references or churches to give any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children.

I authorize Grace Presbyterian Church and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a review of my background as described in the section titled "Background Check Explanation." I furthermore authorize any individual, company, corporation, or public agency, including the Social Security Administration and law enforcement agencies, to divulge any and all information, verbal or written, pertaining to me, to Grace Presbyterian Church or its agents.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## Discipline Guidelines for Grace Kidz

We have one basic rule in Grace Kidz: Show Respect.

**Show Respect to God** – by praying when we pray, singing praises when we sing, listening quietly to His Word, etc.

**Show Respect to the teachers** – by obeying them, listening to them, participating in activities, talking nicely to them, etc.

**Show Respect to others** – by speaking nicely, treating them fairly, etc.

**Show Respect to our church** – by writing/coloring only on paper, not littering, keeping feet off walls, etc.

We know children do not always behave respectfully at all times. However, we want to train children to grow and mature. Therefore, we are determined to gently guide children in correct behaviors.

If misbehavior occurs, the following loving correction will take place:

### First:

- The child will receive a verbal correction and will be redirected to an appropriate activity.

### Second:

- The child's teacher will lovingly explain the misbehavior to him before placing him in a time out, one minute per age of child.
- The child will be redirected to an appropriate activity.

### Third:

- The child's teacher will lovingly explain the misbehavior to him before placing him in a time out, one minute per age of child.
- The child will be redirected to an appropriate activity.
- The parent will be gently notified of the incident at pick-up time.

If inappropriate behavior continues, a parent will be asked to pick up or stay with his child.

We strive to have a loving Christ-centered atmosphere in our children's programs and will warmly welcome your child back the next time. It is a privilege to help mold your children in the character of our Lord and we look forward to working alongside you in this process.

We hope that these guidelines will enable the staff, children and parents to have a great year!

**Grace Presbyterian Church  
Procedure for Responding to  
Child Abuse/Molestation Accusations**

Whenever an incident arises in which a church staff member is accused of child abuse or sexual molestation of a minor, it is the policy of Grace Presbyterian Church to take the following steps and actions:

1. The accused party will be presumed innocent until proven guilty. An accused party may be asked to discontinue children's work when there are no witnesses other than the accused and the accuser. However, where two adults were present at the time of the alleged incident, one of whom was the accused, and the other adult states in writing that he or she observed no incident occur, then the accused may remain actively involved throughout the investigative process.
2. Upon an accusation being made, a representative from the Session will notify and consult with the church attorney, and the liability insurance carrier representative for the church. Recommendations received from these sources will be adhered to.
3. Besides any other investigative process that may ensue, the church itself will implement the following procedure for investigation of the incident. The church will arrange for psychological testing for a possible false accusation by the accuser, as well as for possible transference of actual abuse-related emotions from the parent of the accuser to the accused, or for other explanations of the incident that would establish the innocence of the accused. The church will take other steps as deemed prudent by the Session to ensure that the rights of the accused are fully protected.
4. The church shall on a regular basis keep all interested parties notified of the progress in the investigation and other matters, subject to counsel from the church's lawyer or insurance company.
5. If the investigative process, or the church's own investigation, clearly shows that the accused is in fact guilty of the incident, then the church will take all reasonable steps to cooperate with law enforcement authorities in any action they may take against the accused.
6. The Session will be empowered to make all decisions related to the incident and subsequent matters, using as the sole and ultimate criteria for such decisions, the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures. In the absence of other ecclesiastical authority, the Session shall be empowered to function as the highest ecclesiastical tribunal of the Church, and shall be the final arbiter of all questions of church doctrine, discipline, policy, property, and matters of faith and practice whatsoever.
7. The Session shall appoint a Secretary to take charge of record keeping, note taking, and recording of the investigative process for church records, as well as any other matters pertinent to the incident, up to an until such time as the incident has been fully resolved. These records may be sealed by the Session on religious grounds if appropriate to protect privacy and clergy/penitent confidences of parishioners or other parties.
8. The church shall maintain a record of preventative steps taken by the church in advance of any such incident which may be the subject of this Policy. These records shall record in writing the steps, policies, procedures, and implementations, to the end that the church shall not be found to have been negligent in this area, nor to have contributed to any such incident in any way.

9. During the investigative process the Session may employ resources available through the denominational headquarters, or any other churches, organizations, or repositories which might better enable the church to respond to an incident in an appropriate way, seeking to limit damage to the church and to all individuals affected, as far as may be possible.
  
10. After consulting with the church attorney and insurance representative, and being heedful of their advice, the Session shall direct pastoral and other appropriate church staff or volunteers to reach out to the family affected by the incident, in every appropriate manner, seeking to minister to them as Christ would without further regard for the eventual legal outcome of the incident.





## Notice of Injury

<b>Organization</b>	Name: Address:
<b>Time and Place of Injury</b>	Date of Injury: _____ Time: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM Where did the injury occur?
<b>Person Injured</b>	Name: _____ Age: _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____ Name of parents/guardians (if a minor): _____ Employer: _____ Injuries sustained: _____ Where was the injured taken? <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><i>Hospital/Doctor</i></span> Relationship to organization: <input type="checkbox"/> Member <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Camper <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant/Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Other If injury occurred on insured's premises, for what purpose was the injured on the premises?  Who was responsible for supervision at the time of the injury? If injury occurred elsewhere, what connection did it have with the insured's operations or activities? Does the injured party have personal medical insurance that could apply? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Name of medical insurance company:
<b>Full Description of Incident</b>	
<b>Witnesses</b>	Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____ Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

*This is a sample document only. Your organization is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws. Accordingly, this form should not be used or adopted by your organization without first being reviewed and approved by an attorney. Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability in the preparation and distribution of this sample form.*

## Sick Child Policy

### *Should I Bring My Child To Church?* Guidelines if your child might not be feeling well

We know children can get sick quickly and at the worst times! We also know that you look forward to worshipping God with your adult friends while your child is in his or her own class. However, we must consider all the children and their families in our programs. No one wants to come to church and get sick!

**Therefore, we cannot allow a child to participate in our programs if they have:**

**Cold and flu symptoms** including colored nasal discharge, cough, or frequent sneezing.

**Sore throat** or when the back of the throat looks red or has white spots.

**Stomachache/Vomiting/Diarrhea** within the past 24 hours.

**Fever greater than 100° within the past 24 hours**, without medication.

**On Antibiotics**, unless they have been on the antibiotics for at least 24 hours by the beginning of our program.

**Rash and skin infections** of any kind without a doctor's okay.

**Eye infections** until there is no more discharge.

**Lice** until it has been properly treated.

**Any other communicable disease.**

If still in doubt, ask yourself, "How would I feel if another parent brought their child with the symptoms my child has?"

If your child becomes ill while in our care, he or she will be separated from the other children and you will be notified immediately.

GraceKidz Staff cannot administer medication.

**Thank you,  
Grace Kidz Staff**