



# **Grace Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, and Protocols**



*The Children's Ministry at Grace Presbyterian Church welcomes all interested individuals to learn about service opportunities with children. Just as Grace's vision and biblical picture of Christ's Church focuses on all generations and all peoples, we also welcome all people and all generations to be part of our volunteer ministry, according to our children's ministry protocols. In our ministry, we pursue several protocols that help us provide the safest and most joyful experience for our children and volunteers.*

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 when working with minors. Anyone who knowingly continues to not follow these Policies and Procedures will no longer be allowed to serve in Children's Ministry.

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

We realize our responsibilities go deeper than just providing the best care. We are role models for these young impressionable lives. 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 (ESV) 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."*

We also have a responsibility to share God's love and goodness with the children. *"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;"* (Psalm 78:4-7)

Thank you for serving in Grace Kidz at Grace Presbyterian Church!

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## Grace Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry Mission, Vision, Beliefs, and Values

**Our Mission** for the Children's Ministry at Grace Presbyterian Church is

### *Making Disciples for LIFE*

We want children dependent on Christ in all spheres of life (at home, at school, and in the community) and "for a lifetime" (through every stage of life).

**Our Vision** is for each generation of children to be equipped and trained in the knowledge of the Bible, God's perfect love, and what it means to live as disciples of Christ for life; to come alongside parents to encourage and support them as their child's primary disciple-makers; and to equip and provide a loving community of volunteers to assist the children and parents toward these goals.

**We Believe** all children are:

- ~ Specially created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:14-16)
- ~ Sinners in need of a Savior (Romans 3:23)
- ~ A valued part of the Covenant (Genesis 17:7)
- ~ An example (Matthew 18:1-5)
- ~ Special to Jesus (Mark 10:13-16)
- ~ Watched over and cared for by God (Matthew 18:10-14)
- ~ Not too young to live for the Lord and impact our world for God (1 Timothy 4:12)

**We value** Children and Family Ministries that are Biblical, safe, fun, creative, relational, welcoming, relevant, prayerful, and family-supportive.

By:

- ~ Creating an environment where children will be **encouraged** to receive Christ early (2 Timothy 3:15), learn to hate sin (Psalm 97:10), and become more like Christ (Luke 6:40).
- ~ Providing quality care and instruction throughout our Children's Ministries.
- ~ Serving the children, their parents, and our fellow workers in love (Galatians 5:13)
- ~ Treating all the children who come through our doors with love, care, respect, and fairness.
- ~ Demonstrating an example of Christian living before these impressionable lives.

**Love God \* Love Others \* Make Disciples**

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# GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## VISION, VALUES, MISSION, GOALS

*Grace is a church focused on helping people from all walks of life connect with God through a personal, life-changing relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. We believe God's amazing grace provides **FAITH** to trust in God, **FREEDOM** from guilt and sin, and **FUEL** to live a life that pleases God.*

### OUR VISION

We envision a church with **God's unlimited grace inspiring all generations and peoples to follow Christ in glorifying worship, gospel dependence, gracious humility, and global discipleship**, so that we may join in the song of Revelation 5, impacting Peoria and the world.

### OUR VALUES

#### **Glorifying Worship**

*Worshipping God and ministering to one another in worship by:*

- Shaping our gathered and personal worship according to the gospel's priorities
- Centering our worship on the Lord Jesus Christ
- Welcoming and strengthening God's people in worship

#### **Gospel Dependence**

*Living in Biblical grace, truth, and prayer by:*

- Seeking to live for Christ in every moment and sphere of life
- Submitting to the authority of God's Word in the decisions of life
- Praying without ceasing

#### **Gracious Humility**

*Exhibiting humility, compassion, and restoration by:*

- Being humble, broken people helping fellow broken people in an environment of trust
- Relating to one another out of the grace we've been shown in the gospel through humility, authenticity, confession, and forgiveness
- Restoring one another in love

#### **Global Discipleship**

*Being a disciple-maker in all of life and everywhere on earth by:*

- Making multiplying disciples within the church for Christ's service in all of life.
- Selflessly reaching out to all people throughout the Peoria area with the gospel by direct and cooperative efforts
- Extending gospel outreach through global missions for the salvation of many

### OUR MISSION

Love God. Love others. Make disciples.

### OUR GOALS

We will glorify God by ...

- Building a missional church that attracts, engages, and values the contributions of all ages, backgrounds, and races.
- Loving all generations and helping them reach, love, and nurture upcoming generations.
- Broadly sharing the message of His grace.

# Children's Ministry Personnel

## Definition of Roles

Director of Children and Family Ministries: A full-time employee, hired by the church, to oversee children and family ministries, including the part-time children's employees and volunteers.

Children's Ministry Assistant: A part-time employee, hired by the church, to assist the Director in overseeing the programs and events of children's ministry.

Nursery/Preschool Superintendent: A part-time employee of the church who oversees the nursery and preschool areas on Sundays or Wednesdays.

Department Coordinator: A volunteer appointed by the Director to lead a department, program, or event within Children's Ministry.

Room Leader: A volunteer appointed by the Program Coordinator, Superintendent or Director to lead a room within Children's Ministry.

Volunteer: Appointed by the Department Coordinator, under the supervision of the Superintendent or Director. Reinforces the lesson, cares for the children, and helps children with activities.

Secretary: A volunteer appointed by the Department Coordinator, under the supervision of the Superintendent or Director. Does administrative work as needed.

Welcome Team Member: A volunteer appointed by the Director to welcome families and assist with registration and checking in.

## Personnel Requirements

1. Children's Ministry Volunteers are approved by the Director of Children and Family Ministries. The Sunday Morning and Wednesday Night Superintendents will also have an active role in the process, when the Volunteer falls under their leadership.
2. Potential 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 following our policies, procedures and guidelines. Potential Volunteers will also complete a Background Check through Protect My Ministry, which includes a National Criminal Database Search and National Sex Offender Registry Search. In addition, Volunteers will complete and pass the Illinois Mandated Reporter Training.
3. Volunteers must have attended Grace Presbyterian Church for a minimum of six months before allowed to serve with children.
4. Department and Program Coordinators must be adult members of Grace Presbyterian Church.
5. Team Leaders must be adults.
6. Volunteers must be 7th Grade or older to serve. Exceptions may be made in the case of a younger child serving alongside a parent.
7. If at any time, the volunteer realizes he or she no longer meets these requirements, he or she will be responsible for alerting the Director or one of the Superintendents. In addition, the Director will communicate any concerns with the Volunteer as needed.

# Classroom Management

## 1. Registration

- a) For some events, registration will take place using an online form prior to the event start time. The family's information will be entered into the church database and the child will be assigned to a room by the Form Manager.
- b) All Walk-ins 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 a room corresponding to their age group or grade.
- c) First Time Guests will be placed into a "Visitor Group." Once a child has attended five times during a quarter, he will be added to the class roster.
- d) All children must be registered and attend the class at their age, grade, or developmental level. One-time exceptions may be made, if the older child attends one department lower than where they should be placed.

## 2. Check-in and Check-out Procedures

- a) All Children's Ministry Volunteers must wear a green Name Tag, which they will receive after checking in electronically.
- b) All children will be checked in electronically and must wear a nametag.
  - i. Nursery through Second Grade will receive two nametags and an alpha-numeric code tag.
    1. One printed nametag will go on the child. This tag includes allergy information, classroom name, and an alpha-numeric code.
    2. The second printed nametag will be given to the classroom greeter/secretary to be placed in a notebook for tracking occupants in case of an emergency.
    3. 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 through Sixth Grade 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 for emergency purposes. Children are released independently to meet their parent or guardian in a predetermined location. Parents may request the child stay in the room until picked up.
- c) Children, birth through second grade, should be escorted to their classroom by a person who is 7<sup>th</sup> grade or older. Children 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or older may walk to their classroom independently.
- d) Only persons 7<sup>th</sup> Grade or older may pick up a child.
- 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.

## Classroom Supervision

- a) A minimum of two volunteers, including one adult, must be in the room any time children are present, regardless of how few children there are.
- b) The "Sensation Station (Special Needs Sensory Room), which is fully visible through a window, may contain one adult and a child or children with special needs, but the adjacent large-group room must be fully staffed and the Department Coordinator must monitor the room and volunteer. Parents of children with special needs will give prior consent.
- c) 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.
- d) 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
- e) If a department is short-staffed, the Director or Superintendent may make adjustments to meet minimum staffing requirements. Examples include: two departments may be combined and/or approved parents may be asked to stay in the room. As a last resort, no additional children will be allowed into the classroom until proper staffing ratios can be obtained. The department coordinator will assume supervisory responsibility and inform the Director or Superintendent of the circumstances and the parents of pertinent policies.
- f) The Director or Superintendents will make frequent visits to ensure Department Coordinators are providing proper supervision and enforcing the policies.
- g) Parents are welcome to stay with their child for one program day, but children will still need to check in electronically and the parent who is staying with the child must have the matching alpha-numeric code with them. Parents must check with the Department Coordinator or Room Leader before entering a classroom. Parents must follow all policies and procedures. Parents who stay with the child more than one program day, will need to complete a screening process to return.

## Health and Safety Policy

*Everyone gets sick at some point. And often children get sick without much warning. Below are our policies and procedures to help minimize the spread of germs and keep everyone as well as possible.*

1. Sick children, as described on our Sick Child Policy (see next page) should not be accepted into a Children's Ministry program or activity.
2. Blood or other bodily fluids should not be handled without the protection of medical gloves.
3. Toys and equipment will be disinfected regularly.
4. Peanut and nut products should never be used at any time. This includes products made in the same plant as other peanut or nut products.
5. Toys and recreational equipment will be age appropriate for the department which they are in.
6. Ample supervision must be provided to minimize injuries, especially during large group games and activities. Excessive roughhousing should not be allowed.
7. An emergency escape plan is posted in each room and described on our Emergency Procedures. All Children's Ministry Volunteers must know and understand the plan and how to execute it.
8. All toys and equipment must be used according to the safety instructions that came with the item.
  - a. All straps and buckles must be securely and properly fastened when a child is in a swing or stroller, for example.
  - b. Crib rails must be fully raised when a child is in the crib.
  - c. Children should not stand on riding toys or rockers.
9. If an injury occurs while in a Children's Ministry program or activity:
  - a. If there is an emergency, call 911 immediately.
  - b. All on-site injuries must be reported to the Department Coordinator or Room Leader, who will assess the injury and decide the proper treatment.
  - c. The Director or Superintendent should be notified of all injuries when they occur.
  - d. Parents will be notified whenever an injury occurs. Department Coordinators, with advice from the Superintendent or Director, will determine if this is immediately or at pick up.
  - e. An Accident Report must be filled out if the following occurs:
    - i. If the injury requires a doctor's visit of any kind. This includes a phone call for consultation, visiting a prompt care, dentist, etc.
    - ii. If any injury requires treatment, such as a band-aid, ice, or prolonged rest from participating in activities.
    - iii. If the injury leaves a mark, such as a bump, bruise, or scrape.

## *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 or congestion, 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 100.4° within the past 7 days**, without medication.

**Loss of taste or smell**

**Headache or body aches**

**Experiencing shortness of breath or trouble breathing**

**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 your child has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days or is awaiting test results, they should not attend in-person services, programs, or events.

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 to pick them up.

All open wounds must be covered.

GraceKidz Staff cannot administer medication, unless it is an Epi-Pen in an emergency situation.



# Grace Presbyterian Church Accident Report

Injured Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Age/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the Injury Occur? \_\_\_\_\_

1. What happened? *Please detail the events surrounding the accident. Explain what the child was doing just before and when the injury occurred. Include any people, toys, or pieces of equipment that were involved.*

2. Describe the injury in detail. *Name the body part(s) that was injured (forehead, wrist, etc.) and the extent of the injury (bruised, sore, swollen, bleeding, etc.)*

3. What, if anything, was done in response to the injury? *Examples: ice or bandage applied, rest, parents called, etc.)*

Reported By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Grace Presbyterian Church Accident Report

Injured Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Age/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the Injury Occur? \_\_\_\_\_

1. What happened? *Please detail the events surrounding the accident. Explain what the child was doing just before and when the injury occurred. Include any people, toys, or pieces of equipment that were involved.*

2. Describe the injury in detail. *Name the body part(s) that was injured (forehead, wrist, etc.) and the extent of the injury (bruised, sore, swollen, bleeding, etc.)*

3. What, if anything, was done in response to the injury? *Examples: ice or bandage applied, rest, parents called, etc.)*

Reported By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Diaper and Restroom Policy and Procedures**

### **Diaper and Clothing Changes:**

1. Only Team Leaders should change diapers or clothing. However, Parents may request to be paged to allow the parent to care for their child, or they may request that only a woman change their child's diaper or clothing.
2. All diaper or clothing changes should be done on a diaper changing station and in view of others.
  - a. Changing stations are provided in all nursery rooms and are in full view.
  - b. All restrooms also have a wall-mounted changing station. When changing diapers or clothing on one of these stations, the bathroom door, including the stall door, must be left open.
3. Gloves will be provided to protect hands from soiled diapers or clothes.
4. Hands must be washed and the changing pad/station must be sanitized after each diaper or clothing change.
5. The Team Leader/Coordinator should always be right by the child's side, with a hand on the child, whenever a child is on the changing station.
6. Only wipes meant for diaper changes should be used. Do not use surface wipes or hand wipes.
7. Only administer diaper cream if instructed by the parent and cream is provided by the parent.
8. Soiled diapers should be placed in a baggie before being thrown away in a closed diaper pail.

### **Restroom use:**

1. In-room Facilities
  - a. 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.
  - b. 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.
2. Public Facilities
  - a. Children needing to use a restroom located outside the classroom must be escorted by a Children's Ministry volunteer.
  - b. The Children's Ministry volunteer should check to be sure the restroom is safe before the child enters the restroom.
  - c. The Children's Ministry volunteer should remain outside the restroom and wait for the child to exit.
  - d. If the volunteer must enter the restroom, be sure to leave all doors open, either fully or partially. This includes the bathroom stall.

## Discipline Procedures for Grace Kidz

*Train up a child in the way he should go;  
even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Proverbs 22:6

**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. However, we want to train children to grow and mature. Therefore, we are determined to gently guide children in correct behaviors. We can do this by:**

- Keeping the children moving, engaged, and busy with purposeful activities to reduce the opportunities a child will have to misbehave.
- Being clear on what is expected.
- Redirecting any inappropriate behavior so the child gets back on task.
- Responding with gentleness, respect and understanding. Harsh words and profane language must be avoided.

*Physical discipline of any kind should never be used. This includes grabbing a child, spanking or slapping, and pushing a child to sit down. 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.*

**As much as possible, discipline should be limited to redirection or distraction.** If needed, the child may be moved away from the temptation and continue participating.

**When an older child continually disobeys a specific request from a teacher, the Room Leader or Coordinator should follow these steps.**

**Step 1:** The Room Leader should have clearly stated what is expected and explain the consequence of misbehaving again. When possible, the consequence should be related to the behavior. Do not proceed with the consequence until the child misbehaves again after this has been communicated.

**Step 2:** The Room Leader will lovingly explain the misbehavior to him before moving forward with the consequence. Avoid saying things like, “You were bad” or “You made Jesus sad.” If you decide a “time out” is the best consequence, seat the child in an area so they can still hear the lesson and not miss the biblical truths being shared. *Do not have them face a wall.*

**Step 4:** When the child has calmed down (but not to exceed 1 minute per age), the Room Leader should assure them of God’s love, encourage them to ask for forgiveness, and warmly welcome them back into the group.

**Step 5:** The Room Leader should notify the Superintendent or Director of any disciplinary action and they will decide if, when, and how to tell the parents.

**We strive to have a loving Christ-centered atmosphere in our children’s programs and all children will be warmly welcomed the next time they attend. It is a privilege to help mold children in the character of our Lord and we look forward to working alongside the parents in this process.**

## **Physical Contact**

*Touch is a part of nurturing children and an effective way to express God's love. Yet, physical contact must always be age and developmentally appropriate, and done so in a manner that is pure, positive, and leaves no room to question the motives behind the contact.*

The following guidelines are promoted for pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love.

1. **General Contact:** Physical contact should be child-initiated and not last longer than the child wants. Avoid touching a child anywhere a swimming suit would be worn. Do not put your hands under clothing, except as needed for diaper or clothing changes.
2. **Hugs:** Quick one-armed side hugs are permitted. Avoid full body-to-body contact hugs.
3. **Kisses:** Kisses of any kind are inappropriate.
4. **Lap Sitting:** Appropriate lap sitting may occur with children Pre-K or younger. Encourage children to sit next to you.
5. **Casual Touch:** Patting the back and giving high fives are examples of appropriate casual touch. Holding hands can also be appropriate, such as during prayer or a game, but should not last longer than is needed.
6. **Age Appropriate Contact:** Keep physical contact age appropriate. Infants might require constant physical contact while older children should only receive quick encouraging contact.
7. **Play:** Never throw, toss, or swing a child. Do not lift a child by his arms or legs. Play should never become too rough. Avoid prolonged contact during play, such as with wrestling.

# Reporting Abuse and Neglect

## Definition of People Involved

A “Child” or “children” refers to any person under the age of eighteen (18) years old.

A “Worker” is any person who serves with the children, whether they are paid or unpaid.

The “Ministry Director” refers to the staff member overseeing that ministry.

“Abuser” refers to the person who is suspected of abusing or neglecting the child and who lives in the same house as the child or is responsible for the child’s welfare such as a parent, teacher, or coach.

## Child Abuse or Neglect:

Child abuse is any action or lack of action that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse includes, but not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** –Inflicts a physical injury, that is not accidental, such as bruises, bites, bone fractures, cuts, welts, and burns.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, incest, risqué jokes and innuendos, pornography, and inappropriate hugs.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

## If You Suspect Child Abuse or Neglect:

If a Worker has “reasonable cause” to believe that a child may be abused or neglected, they must report such suspicions to the Ministry Director immediately.

Reasonable causes for concern includes, but not limited to:

- Gives verbal testimony of abuse or neglect
- Has unexplained marks on the body or the explanation does not match the type of injury.
- Alludes to incidents in writing, drawings, or prayer requests.
- Wears long sleeves during warm weather to cover bruises.
- Has an unnatural fear or dislike toward a particular person.
- Acting sexual behavior or has sexual knowledge beyond what is age appropriate.
- Often hungry in the morning, poor hygiene, showing signs of failure to thrive.

***If the child is in immediate danger or needs medical attention, call 911 immediately.***

As you interact with the child, remember to:

- Take the child's comments and complaints seriously.
- Stay calm and listen. Act as naturally as possible.
- Limit your questions to only a few, such as "How did that happen?" "Where were you when it happened?" And "Who was with you?" Probing further could interfere with an investigation later.
- Do not promise the child you won't tell anyone.

Do not confront the Suspected Abuser.

Parents may be notified later in the reporting process, as telling them too early may interfere with the investigation.

## **Reporting the Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect:**

As soon as a Worker has "reasonable cause" to suspect abuse or neglect, the Ministry Director must be notified immediately. If the Ministry Director is not available, the Worker should contact the Executive Pastor.

The Worker who suspects abuse or neglect should fill out the Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form. The Ministry Director can assist with the information. All fields do not need to be completed, if this delays the reporting process.

### **For suspected abuse or neglect involving someone who does not work for Grace Presbyterian Church, such as the child's parent, coach, uncle, or neighbor.**

1. The Ministry Director may review the Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form and discuss the findings with the Worker. Doing so should not delay the process.
2. The Worker or Ministry Director should call DCFS to report the suspicion of abuse. The phone number is 1-800-25ABUSE. Use the Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form as a reference and write down notes from the call, including the Hotline Worker's name.
3. Follow the instructions of the Hotline Worker. If the case will be investigated, the person who made the call must complete and return the Written Confirmation Form within 48 hours.
4. The Ministry Director may decide to notify the parents or guardians of the child that a report was made, if this does not put the child at additional risk.
5. The Ministry Director should let his or her Supervisor know of the report.

### **For suspected abuse or neglect involving someone who works (paid or unpaid) at Grace Presbyterian Church or when the child was attending an event hosted by Grace Presbyterian Church when the possible abuse occurred.**

1. The Ministry Director may review the Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form and discuss the findings with the Worker. Doing so should not delay the process.
2. The Ministry Director will immediately notify the Executive Pastor.
3. The Executive Pastor will notify the church's attorney. The Attorney may give advice contrary to what is written here. Always follow the advice of the Attorney.

4. The Ministry Director should call DCFS to report the suspicion of abuse. The phone number is 1-800-25ABUSE. Use the Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form as a reference and write down notes from the call, including the Hotline Worker's name.
5. The Ministry Director may decide to notify the child's parents or guardians of the suspected abuse or neglect.
6. The Executive Pastor and Ministry Director will cooperate with any official investigation.
7. The Executive Pastor and Ministry Director will conduct an internal investigation into the circumstance of the alleged abuse or neglect. Workers or Staff Members who are the subject of any investigation of alleged abuse or neglect will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation. A Staff Member who admits to or found guilty of performing abuse or neglect will be permanently terminated from their duties with the church.
8. The Executive Pastor, under the counsel of the Attorney, will be the only person to communicate with news media. The Executive Pastor will also be the point person for law enforcement and government officials.

### **Support:**

Pastoral care will be arranged for those who desire it. This is for the purpose of providing support during a time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.



# Grace Presbyterian Church

## Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect Form

Fill in as much information as you can before calling DCFS.  
However, inability to obtain all the responses should not be a reason to delay contacting DCFS  
**1 (800) 25ABUSE or 1-800-252-2873**

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardians Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and/or Relationship of person who may be abusing the child: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the child in immediate danger? Yes or NO

1. What leads you to suspect abuse or neglect? *(Please be as specific as possible)*

2. Other unusual behaviors, observations, or comments:

4. Note what you said or did once you began to suspect abuse and what happened next.

Name of the Hotline Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of the phone call: \_\_\_\_\_

Information and/or Instructions given by the Hotline Workers:

Name of Person filling out this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Children's Ministry Security Policies and Procedures** **~ Unauthorized Persons or Intruders ~**

*Sadly, we live in an era where we need to be prepared for Intruders and Threats. Being prepared before an event arises can save lives.*

### **General Information**

1. If at any time you feel threatened or in danger, call the Facility Manager or Safety Team for help. (The Facility Manager and Safety Team members can be contacted on Channel 1 and 3 thru the red facility radios located on the Children's Welcome Desk.)
2. Every Department should have a Walkie Talkie to aid in communication. It needs to be turned on at all times, tuned to channel 8, and have the volume loud enough to hear over the noise in the room.
3. A Police Officer and members of the Safety Team are usually on campus for all major events.

### **Procedure for an Unauthorized Person**

*An unauthorized person is someone who should not be in the Children's Area. This could include, but not limited to, someone who does not have connections with any child in our program, is not a volunteer, church staff, or Hospitality Team Member.*

1. Our Welcome Team will help monitor those entering the children's area. Unauthorized people will be asked not to enter. All Children's Ministry Volunteers and Staff should be attuned to those in the children's ministry areas, so an unauthorized person can be quickly identified.
2. The Director, Superintendent, or Welcome Team Member should approach the unauthorized person in a friendly manner and ask them if they need anything. Another Children's Ministry Volunteer or Staff should monitor the situation and provide backup help, if needed.
3. As you are talking, explain that only parents and volunteers are allowed in the children's area and begin walking them out to the atrium. If they resist, they move to "Intruder" status and the "Intruder Procedures" should be implemented immediately.
4. If it is determined that it is safe for them to be in the Children's Area, a Children's Ministry Volunteer, Hospitality Volunteer, a Staff Person, or a trusted parent must accompany them on their tour.

### **Procedure for an Unarmed Intruder or an Unstable Person**

*Examples of an Unarmed Intruder or Unstable Person could be a non-custodial parent wanting to pick up their child, a person asking for money, or someone who seems a little "off." They don't appear to be an immediate threat, but precautions will be taken in case the situation escalates.*

1. The Children's Ministry Director, Superintendent, or Children's Volunteer will make the announcement on the Children's Ministry Walkie Talkies. The announcement will be, "Close your Doors."
2. A Safety Team member, Facility Manager, or member of the Peoria Police Department, if present, can be radioed to help take care of the situation.
3. Class can go on as normal but keep your classroom doors closed. The Main Children's Ministry Doors may also be closed, depending where the person is.
4. Listen to the Walkie-Talkie for further instructions.
5. Once the situation has been resolved, the Children's Ministry Director will give the "All Clear" signal.

## **Procedure for an Armed or Hostile Intruder in the building**

1. The Children's Director will be alerted to an intruder via the Safety Radio. She will have an open line of communication with the Facility Manager and Safety Team to stay updated on the situation.
2. The Children's Director will make the announcement on the Children's Ministry Walkie-Talkie. The announcement will be "Lockdown with Intruder."
3. Department Coordinators and Room Leaders should listen carefully to their Walkie-Talkie to stay updated on the situation. The Children's Ministry Director will communicate needed information. Do not hesitate, but immediately follow any instructions given, even if they differ from the procedure below.
  - a. Immediately, the people closest to the Main Children's Ministry Area Doors will close them. They will lock automatically.
  - b. No one is allowed in the hallways. Everyone must go into a classroom, including parents and other children.
  - c. Close the classroom door and pull the shade to cover the window. Turn off all lights and sounds. Remain quiet.
  - d. Remain in your designated spot (assuming it is safe) until you are given the "all clear" signal from the Children's Director.
4. If there is active shooting inside the building, and it is safe to do so, follow the Building Evacuation Procedures
  - a. If you are unable to exit the building, find a hidden area in your room, such as the bathroom. Barricade the door. Remain as quiet as possible.
  - b. If the Intruder has already made their way to your classroom, throw things at the intruder to distract them. Help the children run away or hide as you are able.
5. The Department Coordinator or Room Leader can make last minute adjustments to keep everyone safe if the situation warrants a different plan.
6. Parents are *not* allowed to pick up their child until the Children's Ministry Director gives permission. The Check Out Procedure must be followed.

**I will say to the LORD,  
"My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!"  
~ Psalm 91:2 ~**

**Addendum to Children's Manual and Covenant  
Effective December 13, 2016**

**Firearms/Weapons In Children's Ministry Areas**

We ask that volunteers serving in the Children's Ministry Classrooms refrain from bringing firearms into the classrooms when children are present.

- I willingly agree not to bring any type of firearm into the children's ministry classrooms at Grace Presbyterian Church while serving children, regardless of my status as a concealed carry license holder in the state of Illinois.

# **Evacuation Procedures**

## **Children's Ministry**

### **General Procedure:**

- ❖ *When the alarm sounds, immediately begin the evacuation procedure. Do not wait for further instructions.*
- ❖ *Walk calmly, in a line, and as a group to your designated spot.*
- ❖ *Department Coordinators are responsible for educating the rest of their team on these procedures.*
- ❖ *The Department Secretary will lead the department to their designated area. She is to take the attendance book with her. Immediately after everyone has arrived to the designated area, attendance should be taken. If there are any discrepancies, the Department Coordinator should be notified immediately. The Coordinators should then immediately notify the Superintendent or Director.*
- ❖ *Volunteers should lead the children to their designated spot, counting the children as they go to ensure they always have the correct number of children.*
- ❖ *The Department Coordinators should double check all areas of their rooms to be sure everyone has exited, before joining the rest of their department in the evacuation location.*
- ❖ *Children will remain under the supervision of the Department 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.*

### **For a BUILDING EVACUATION**

1. Follow the Building Evacuation Procedures that are posted in each room.
2. Do not use the Elevator.
3. Stand at least 50 feet from the building.

### **For INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If necessary, the elevator should be reserved for the Infants, Toddlers, and those unable to use the stairs.

1. Purple, Blue, and Green Rooms should calmly enter the lower level through the stairwell near the front of the building (stay on the left) and go to room 021.
2. Yellow, Orange, and Red Rooms should calmly enter the lower level through the stairwell near the canopy and go to room 015.
3. Sunday Morning 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade should calmly enter the lower level through the stairwell near the front of the building (stay on the right) and go to room 004.
4. Sunday Morning Preteen (5th & 6th Grade) should remain in their room, 004
5. Pioneer Girls should all move to 004
6. Boys' Brigade should enter the lower level using the stairwell near the front of the building and go to room 015.

## **Policy for Off-site Activities**

### **Official Grace Activities**

1. All Children's Ministry Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures must be followed, even when off-site.
2. In addition:
  - a. Adults and children should not concurrently share shower facilities. Likewise, Adults should not change clothes in the presence of minors.
  - b. Volunteers should never be alone with a child, including when riding in a vehicle, while hiking in the woods, sleeping in a tent, and similar activities.
  - c. One-on-one discussions must take place in a public setting when others can be present.
3. Permission Slips must be signed by a parent or guardian before the child is allowed to attend the event.

### **Non-Grace activities involving Grace children's volunteers**

1. It's important for parents to know when children's volunteers are operating in an unofficial Grace capacity. Private interaction between an adult and child should not take place without parental consent.
2. 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.
3. For your protection and reputation, it is strongly advised that you continue to follow all children's ministry policies, procedures, and guidelines, even when conducting a private event for children who are a part of Grace Pres.

# **Room Usage Guidelines for Children's Ministry Rooms**

## **Definitions:**

Grace Kidz Ministry is one that includes programs and events that fall under the Children's Ministry of Grace Pres. And is included in the children's ministry budget.

Direct Grace Ministry is one that falls under a staff member's responsibilities and is included in the church budget.

Outside Ministry is one that may be supported by Grace, but they do not fall under the authority of a staff member nor are they included in the church budget.

## **Reserving Facilities:**

Use of any of the Children's Ministry's rooms, for any reason, should be reserved through Grace Connect and approved by the Director of Children and Family Ministries and the Director of Facilities. Please contact the church office or the Children's Ministry Assistant, if you need assistance.

## **Storage Space:**

If you are using the room for multiple sessions, you may request storage space. If space is provided to you, you may store your ministry supplies in this location at the end of your ministry day. All items should be stored here and not left out. If you are not provided space, you need to take all belongings with you at the end of your ministry day.

If you are unsure what space you may use, please contact the Director of Children and Family Ministries for clarification. The space may change from time to time based on current needs.

## **Snacks:**

All snacks must be peanut and nut free. This includes snacks brought in for adults, as the oil residue may be left behind causing an allergic reaction.

Snacks purchased by Children's Ministry may only be used by Grace Kidz Ministry programs and events. All other ministries should provide their own snacks and either store them when not in use or take them home.

Direct Grace Ministries may request permission to use paper goods found in Central Supply. Outside Ministries will need to provide their own paper goods.

## **Room Cleansing:**

All toys and equipment must be cleaned and disinfected at the end of your ministry day, so it is ready for the next group that uses the room and equipment. Please use disinfecting wipes or spray to clean the toys and equipment, following the instructions on the container.

Direct Grace Ministries may request permission to use the wipes and spray available in the room. Outside Ministries will need to provide their own disinfecting products.



## **Supply and Equipment Usage:**

Direct Grace Ministries may use items found in Central Supply. All items must be checked out by filling out the form on the clip board. If you need assistance, contact the Central Supply Coordinator.

All Ministries must have access to their own “consumable supplies, such as crayons and glue. Those supplies must be stored in your designated storage space or taken home.

In some cases, non-consumable items, such as scissors, may be shared among the ministries. If you need to share these items, contact the Director of Children and Family Ministries for permission.

Every item you use must be cleaned and put back exactly as found. If something gets broken or misplaced, notify the Director of Children and Family Ministries.

Crib sheets, blankets, burp cloths, etc. may be put into the laundry basket found in the Infant Nursery or washed in our in-house washer and then promptly returned. If you use the cribs in the nursery, put a clean sheet on the bed so it is ready for the next group to use the room.

Do not move toys or other items from one room to another without prior permission. If you are permitted to move toys or items between rooms, wash them and put them back where they belong.

## **Multi-age kids using one of the nursery or preschool rooms:**

Toys and room facilities should be used in an age-appropriate manner. Older kids (or younger caregivers) should be supervised to ensure that they are treating the toys and room gently and with respect. Provide alternative crafts and activities to keep them busy and calm.

## **Respect other Ministries using the room:**

If an item has the name of another group on it or is in a cabinet marked with another ministry name, do not use it unless prior permission is given. Respect each other's belongings.

If you use a shared item, take great care in treating it nicely and put it back correctly.

Take one last look around your room before you leave to be sure you have put all your belongings away. Throw away all trash and any items that cannot or will not be used again. Keep clutter under control.