



Christ Church

Safe Sanctuary Policies

Dear Kids/Student Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to the Christ Church Kids & Student Team!

At Christ Church, we take our responsibility to care for children and Student very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children and Student can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children and Student, protecting them, you, and the mission of Christ Church. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Christ Church Leadership

Overview of Christ Church Safety System

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, Christ Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or Student (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **THREE SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements. The signed page should be turned in upon completion to Kids or Student Ministry Staff.

STEP TWO: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Christ Church policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the Christ Church Staff. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Christ Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. A video link will be emailed to you and there will be short online test after watching the video training to verify that training has been completed. This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP THREE: Criminal Background Check

Christ Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in Kids or Student activities undergo a criminal background check. The background check form must be filled out and turned into Kids or Student Ministry Staff.

Child/Student Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Christ Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Christ Church to act in the best interest of all children/Student in every program.

REPORTING ABUSE, SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Christ Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the appropriate agencies.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to an immediate supervisor, the Kids Ministry Director or the Student Director.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are also asked to report 'grooming' behavior or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, the Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Christ Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal or reassignment from Kids/Student Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Any possible policy violations need to be reported to the Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship, who will then report to the Executive Director of Ministries and Program if a policy was possibly violated. Any final decisions related to action regarding policy violations will need to be evaluated by the Executive Director of Congregational Life.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Kids and Student Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies. Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving kids or students at Christ Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving kids or students at Christ Church.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Texas has both civil and criminal laws to protect children from abuse and neglect. Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report. [Texas Family Code Section 261.101 (a)]

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

Christ Church Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship will be responsible for ensuring that the building areas are monitored during Sunday classes or any other programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and kids/students in classrooms and group areas.

No kids or student will ever be left unattended during ministry programming or classes. After every programming event, Kids/Student staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures). Any two kids together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

During Student activities, Student staff members and volunteers are to monitor the boundaries and ensure that no Student wander into other areas of the buildings unsupervised. Student staff members and volunteers are also to check the bathrooms regularly and monitor activities there.

2 WORKER RULE AND CLEAR SIGHT LINES

Kids Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. The 2-Worker rule should be observed (2 workers per classroom, 2 workers within line of sight when outdoors or large meeting areas). The Clear Sight Line rule requires that there should be unobstructed visibility to all activities where kids and students are present. One-to-one mentoring or consulting should be conducted in sight of another leader. One staff member or volunteer can be in contact with multiple kids or students as long as they are in sight of other staff or volunteers.

In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

Exceptions: Escorting kids or students between on-campus buildings or in hallways, in cases of emergency care where one staff member or volunteer needs to go get help

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

Christ Church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Kids Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child **minimum ratios** will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20
Student	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

DISCIPLINE

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children and Student are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior with any child should be reported immediately to parents and to the supervisor, Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship. Christ Church Ministry Staff can assist with classroom behavior managements and discuss with parents when necessary.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Christ Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Christ Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Kids and Student Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and Kids/Students are important for kids development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other kids/students or staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Kids and Student Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

Kids and Student staff members and volunteers should NEVER engage in the following behavior:

- Any behavior defined as physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Threaten or intentionally inflict emotional or physical injury
- Commit any sexual offense or engage in any sexual contact
- Make any kind of sexual advance or make a request for sexual favors
- Engage in verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Give massages, kiss or any other similar contact
- Piggy Back rides or letting kids sit in your lap

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children or Student should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children/Student.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children or Student in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children or Student.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child or Student has been entrusted to Ministry staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and welfare of the child or Student. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children and Student.

Kids Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. It is presumed a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up that child. In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Kids Ministry Director before releasing the child.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers in Kids Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Christ Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Kids Ministry and Student Ministry programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Diapering on a changing table inside a nursery bathroom must be done with the door open.
- 4) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 5) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the Check-In Tag Binder ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 6) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 7) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the Check-In Tag Binder ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be verbally assisted where possible. If physical assistance is necessary, another staff member or volunteer should be present, when possible.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available in the Kids area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School age children

School age children bathroom activities must be monitored. A staff member or volunteer should make sure that a child goes directly to the bathroom from class and returns promptly. This means that one staff or volunteer person should stand in the class doorway and watch down the hallway.

A child may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Student age children (6th -12th grade)

Student age student bathroom activities must be monitored. A staff member or volunteer should make sure that a Student returns promptly from the restroom. If they do not return promptly, then the staff member or volunteer should go check on the student.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual student, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the student needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the Student in completing their activities, while the Student remains behind the closed door of the bathroom stall.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care.

TOBACCO USE

Christ Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Christ Church activities or programs. Christ Church is a tobacco-free facility.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any Christ Church program or activity.

MEDICATION

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in Kids or Student Ministry regular activities. Follow the rules in place for medications on trips.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers serving in Kids or Student Ministry should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Director of Kids Discipleship or Director of Student Discipleship concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Children and Student should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Church vans, or vehicles owned or rented by Christ Church, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive any children or Student in any vehicle.
5. A copy of a current Driver's License and Proof of Insurance must be on file with Church Staff for all drivers
6. When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-worker rule applies.
7. When multiple vehicles are used for an event, a single Worker may drive if all vehicles drive together.
8. Occupants of vehicles shall wear seatbelts.
9. Drivers shall not drive more than eight (8) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period
10. Drivers shall consent to a random drug test if required.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Christ Church's Kids/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Christ Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Christ Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Christ Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of Christ Church policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to remain attached to MY Church Kids Ministry Policies.]

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Christ Church's Kids/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Christ Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Christ Church.

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I hereby acknowledge receipt of Christ Church policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to Kids Ministry or Student Ministry Staff.]

Christ Church

Christ Church, April 2022

Policies & Procedures for Kids/Student Ministry

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