



Volunteer Handbook Policies & Procedures

Dear GraceKids Team Member,

We are so excited you are joining us in our mission to love the children of Grace Canton and raise up the next generation of Jesus followers!

We have been given the stewardship, by parents and by God, of the most vulnerable and valuable asset in God's kingdom: His children! We take this role very seriously, and we are grateful you have committed to assist us in teaching and caring for our children. As the teachers and helpers in our classrooms each week, you are a critical player on our team!

Please read through all of the guidelines and procedures found in this handbook. Thank you in advance for taking the time to review the material, and please direct any questions or concerns to myself.

Let's make GraceKids the best hour of each child's week!

In Christ's Love,

Amanda Lawyer
Children's Director

Grace Kids Values

Safety

We are committed to providing a safe environment at Grace Kids for our children to grow and thrive. We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure Grace Kids is a safe place for children. For this reason, we obtain applications and background checks on every volunteer and maintain a safe and secure facility.

Truth

We believe children need a scriptural foundation so when the Holy Spirit begins to move in their hearts, they will be prepared to make a decision to surrender their lives and follow Jesus. The message of Jesus Christ is presented to children in relevant, age-specific ways. We are dedicated to showing children how the principles of God's word can be applied to their daily lives and involving them in God's Kingdom work from an early age.

Fun

Learning about Jesus is fun! God created children with creative imaginations, a variety of learning styles, and a desire to have fun. We want to present the truth of God's Word through methods which are consistent with how children are created to think and learn.

Discipleship

We believe there is no greater calling than to love and shepherd the next generation of Jesus followers. Our volunteers are here to create an environment where children will be accepted and loved as they ask questions and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Grace Kids Environments

Children are separated into age appropriate classrooms using the following guidelines:

- Nursery: Newborns (6 weeks old) through potty trained
- Pre-School: Children who are potty trained and 3 years old through going to kindergarten.
- Elementary (Student Center): Children who are in kindergarten through 5th grade
 - The Elementary classroom features a large group Bible story and worship time followed by small groups where children are further divided by grade for application activities and discipleship.
- In the event a child is home schooled, we will place them according to the grade they would be in if they were enrolled in public school.

Grace Kids Definitions

- **Child:** ages newborn – 11 years
- **Youth Helper:** ages 12 – 17
 - Completed a Youth Worker Application
 - Has received training from another Teacher or Adult volunteer
- **Adult:** 18 years and older AND has finished high school
- **Adult Volunteer:**
 - Completed a volunteer application
 - Background check completed
 - Attended volunteer training
 - Regular attendee at Grace Canton, may or may not be a church member

Areas of Service in Grace Kids

Nursery

Adult Helper

- Greets children & parents as they arrive in the classroom
- Controls the flow of check-in and check-out in the nursery
- Pages parents to diaper their child
- Maintains the room
- Volunteers on a regular basis and may train other nursery helpers

Youth Helper

- Plays with the little ones
- Provides an extra pair of hands for the adult helpers
- Helps with room maintenance

Preschool

Teacher

- Prepares for and presents the lesson in a creative, engaging, and energetic way
- Greets children & parents as they arrive in the classroom
- Controls the flow of check-in and check-out in their classroom
- Controls the flow of activities (music, drama, video, teaching) during the group time

Youth Helper

- Interacts with the children and assists during story time, craft, snack, and other activities
- Can assist children who are in need of more one-on-one attention
- Takes children to the restroom as needed

Kindergarten – Fifth Grade

Teacher

- Controls the flow of activities (music, video, teaching) during the group time
- Greets children & parents as they arrive in the classroom
- Leads small groups
- Controls the flow of check-in and check-out in their classroom
- Prepares for and presents the lesson in a creative, engaging, and energetic way

Youth Tech Support

- Run the computer, sound system and video screen
- Helps teachers with small group activities

Check-In/Registration Table

- Ensures that all children are properly signed in and checked out at the check-in table
- Registers visitors and new families
- Provides a contact person for questions about the children's area

Volunteer Requirements

- 1. Read the Volunteer Guidelines and Procedures, especially the sections that pertain to your area of service.**
- 2. Fill out a volunteer application and background check authorization.**

All adults involved in the children's ministry must complete an application. All applicants will give permission for a background check. In addition, a background check must be completed for pastoral staff and other employees. The application form will be held as confidential and will be stored in a locked file. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry or volunteer position. Public databases will be utilized to screen for a history of abuse and suspected abuse.
- 3. Complete any necessary training**

All Children's Ministry staff and volunteers at Grace Canton will receive appropriate orientation and training for their role (including the recognition, prevention and reporting of suspected child abuse). Annually all volunteers and employees should review the Policies & Procedures Handbook and sign their intent to comply (See Application)

Substitutes and Sickness

If you are unable to work on your scheduled day, please contact the Children's Ministry staff as soon as possible. If another adult volunteer or teacher is able to work on your scheduled day, please notify the Children's Ministry staff of the switch. If you become sick within 24 hours of your day to serve, please call or text the Children's Ministry staff as soon as possible so we can make necessary arrangements.

Sunday Expectations

Sunday Morning Worship Service

<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>Volunteer Service Rundown</u>
9:15	10:45	Volunteers are in positions ready for check-in
9:30	11:00	Worship service begins
10:35	12:05	Service ends and checkout begins
10:45	12:15	Volunteers are dismissed from posts once all children have been picked up by their parents/guardians and the room is clean

Service Expectations:

- Arrive 15 minutes before scheduled service time
- Clean and straighten the room after the children leave
- Report and concerns or ideas for improvement to the Children's Director

Volunteer Nametags

All individuals in GraceKids should have on a nametag. GraceKids nametags are issued to all GraceKids volunteers and can be found at the volunteer check-in station. These should be put on as soon as you arrive. **Parents and guests who are not regular volunteers must check in and receive a GUEST nametag.**

Room Openings

Volunteers and teachers must arrive 15 minutes before services start. All areas must be ready to begin receiving children **15 minutes prior to the service.** It is essential that all leaders must be ready to greet their children as they begin to arrive. Rooms cannot and will not be opened until necessary volunteers are in place.

Child Registration and Check-In

Our goal is to safely and quickly check in each child in a friendly manner. This is often the most stressful part of a parent's morning at Grace Canton and is an important moment to make a positive impression. All regular attendees and first time guest will check in at the Check-In table.

1. First time guests fill out a registration card and receive a guest tag with a unique number. The child receives an identical copy of that tag. The Check-In table attendant will be available to walk first time guests to the appropriate classroom and introduce them to one of the teachers. First time guests are also given a copy of the Grace Kids Policies & Procedures Handbook and asked if they have any questions.
2. Regular attendees (those that have previously filled out the registration card) do not need to fill out the card again. They can simply print out their security stickers and proceed to the classroom door. After registration, parents walk their child to the door of the appropriate classroom. A volunteer is at the entrance to greet the child and walk with them into the class.
3. Parents should be reminded to take their child to the restroom before checking them in. There are restrooms in each room if necessary, but it's easier to do this in advance.

Parents in the Room

One of our primary values of Grace Kids is to provide a safe environment for children each week. A parent may choose to stay with his or her child during the service to observe the environment or comfort the child. Parents are always welcome to visit, but they must follow the GraceKids guidelines. They must be checked in as a visitor and receive a guest nametag. Since they do not have an application on file, they are not allowed to be alone with, lead children in activities or small groups or care for any other child except their own.

At The Classroom

1. Greet and introduce yourself to each child, make them feel welcome.
2. If a diaper and/or diaper bag is left with the child, make sure that the diaper bag has a name tag on it. All bottles, pacifiers, diapers, or cups that are left with the child should also be labeled with their name.
3. If snack is served in the classroom, ask the parent if the child has any allergies.
4. We ask that every adult and child remove their shoes before entering the Nursery.

Interacting with Parents upon Dismissal

1. Always smile and thank the parent for bringing the child. It is our privilege to serve them.
2. If possible, mention something their child did in class that day, who they played with, what they did well, what they learned, etc.
3. Always tell the parents about any diaper, feeding, bathroom, or injury-related events.
4. Always follow the check-out plan (see below).

Checking Out Children

1. Children are NOT to be released to anyone other than the adult with the correct security sticker. Siblings are NOT allowed to pick up their younger brothers and sisters, even if they have the security sticker.
2. The volunteer verifies that the number of the parent's security sticker and the child's security sticker match.
3. Then the child may be released to the parent.
4. Volunteers return any guest tags to the Check-In table.

Clean Up Procedures

1. Make sure toys and all supplies are returned to appropriate containers.
2. Throw away any trash left in the room.
3. Wipe down tables and hard surface toys with disinfecting spray.

Security

In order to keep Grace Kids a safe and secure environment for parents and children, the following security measures are constantly in effect:

1. Volunteers will match the number on the security sticker of the child to the number on the security sticker of the parents. This happens **every time** a parent enters or exits the classroom with a child
2. Only staff and volunteers with the proper identification and parents with the appropriate documentation are allowed into a classroom. Guests in Grace Kids must check in at the check-in station and receive a guest badge, which must be displayed at all times.
3. No adult is allowed to work in an environment without a completed application and background check.
4. Every classroom should follow the following rules regarding staffing:
 - Two-adult rule – In a room with children and/or youth present, there must be:
 - One adult volunteer present, **door must remain open**
 - One adult volunteer AND one Teen Helper present, **door must remain open**
 - Two adult non-related volunteers present, **door may remain open or closed** (examples: two adult volunteers, adult volunteer + Teacher, or Teacher + Teacher)
5. In the event that a parent loses their security sticker, they will be required to show identification to the Children's Director and fill out a lost security sticker form (see page 25).

Evacuation of the Building

In the event of an emergency and the building needs to be evacuated, the Teacher/Leader will serve as the point person. If the Teacher is not in the room, another adult volunteer will provide leadership. The Teacher will follow the exit signs and exit at the closest door. Infants will be carried. Toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners will either be carried or walked outside. Upon exiting the building, all Children's Ministry staff, volunteers, and children should gather in the rear parking lot by the basketball hoop. Parents should collect their children from this area following our normal check out procedures (i.e. matching security stickers).

General Wellness Guidelines

To ensure the health of children and volunteers, we ask that sick children do not attend Grace Kids. The Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child should not leave home when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever (over 100.4 degrees) within the last 24 hours
2. Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
3. Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough
4. Common cold, including **colored** runny nose
5. Sore throat
6. Croup
7. Any unexplained rash
8. Any skin infection – boils, ringworm or impetigo
9. Untreated pink eye or other eye infection
10. Any communicable disease
11. Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits

In the event of a contagious disease (lice, chicken pox, etc.) all parents will be notified.

Medication

Grace Kids staff and volunteers WILL NOT administer any medication except in life threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent to come to the room and give it.

In a situation where a child has a potentially life-threatening condition and medication may need to be given, a Medication Authorization form should be completed and signed by the parent.

EACH time a parent drops off a child and his/her medication, clear directions must be written out BY THE PARENT outlining the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed (see page 26). The form is to be given directly to the Teacher by the parent so the Teacher can read the directions and ask for clarification, if necessary. The signed form is to be turned into Grace Kids for their records.

Accidents/Health Conditions

If you encounter a life-threatening situation (loss of consciousness, significant blood loss, difficulty breathing), immediately call 911 from a cell phone and give them the following information:

- Type of injury or health condition
- Information about the injured person: age, gender, etc.

Minor accidents (bumps, bites, bruises, scrapes, etc.) can be handled in the room. Band-Aids are kept in each room's first aid kit; ice can be found in the kitchen. Always contact the parent in these situations to make them aware of the minor accident.

The person who witnessed the accident needs to fill out an Incident Report before leaving for the day. Be honest with the parents about the situation that occurred; reassure them of our desire to provide the best care possible. Recognize that parents may be upset but do not let that deter you from being honest with them. Do not offer medical advice to parents. Simply offer your apology or concern.

Disabled Children

Special needs children are to be a part of the whole, not separated from the group. The child is to be included in all activities offered.

Any child who needs assistance in being able to fully participate within Grace Kids or for the protection of them or others needs someone to oversee their care. The child will be matched with a volunteer to work one-on-one within Grace Kids to give them the best experience possible for learning about God's love.

The goal is for all children to actively participate in Grace Kids without special assistance. If you see a child in Grace Kids that may require assistance, let the volunteer leader in your room know what you have observed. A volunteer leader will be contacted to help find the best way for this child to thrive in Grace Kids.

Teachers' Children

We do allow you to teach in your child's room if they understand that you have a commitment to the other children in the room. If you do not want to be in your child's room, please communicate that to a coordinator or the Children's Ministry Director. If you are unable to do your job in your child's room due to distraction or lack of attention for other children, you will be replaced with another worker.

If a teacher cannot discipline your child by using "time out" or is having difficulty getting your child to cooperate you will be asked to come down and talk to them. You must take the child out of the room and into another setting. Children see you as a teacher and they will not understand measures you may take with your own children. Please discipline your child in privacy for this reason.

Your child will follow all the rules of the other children in Grace Kids. Explain all the rules to the child so they are aware of all expectations.

Positive Interactions with Children

The steps below outline a process to help all volunteers maintain positive interactions with children during Grace Kids. There must always be two non-related adults present when supervising one or more children.

Ways to Avoid Problem Behaviors

1. Come prepared by praying and reading through your lesson beforehand.
2. Be sensitive to the moods of the children in the group.
3. Provide enough space for each child.
4. Set clear and age appropriate expectations with the children.
5. During story time or small group time, seat distracting children closest to you.
6. Arrive early and ask the Children's Ministry Director or other teachers questions, if needed.

When Kids Require Discipline or Guidance

1. Use a firm but gentle voice to address the behavior.
2. Remove the child from the activity.
3. Focus your remarks on the behavior **you want to see**.
4. Do not use words or a tone of voice that shames or frightens a child.
5. Do not use sarcasm or scream at a child.
6. Never make remarks that put down the individual as a person or make negative references about appearance, race or gender.
7. Never use corporal punishment or spanking of any kind.
8. If the child will not listen, then notify the Children's Ministry Director who will page the parents.
9. Use touch in affirming ways
 - Appropriate examples: high fives, pat on the back or shoulders, etc.
 - Inappropriate examples: demanding/expecting hugs, slapping on the buttocks, kissing, etc.
 - If assistance is needed, contact the Coordinator or a staff member.

Biting, Hitting, Etc.

Isolate the child by putting them in a crib or in a time out chair. Comfort the one who has been hurt. Notify the Coordinator immediately and fill out an incident report (see page 24). The Coordinator will discuss the issue with both sets of parents. Do not discuss the situation with anyone else. Do not tell the parent of the child who was bitten which child was the biter, and vice versa. Talk to parents separately.

Reporting Potential Abuse

1. Report your suspicions of child abuse/neglect to the Children's Ministry Director.
2. Report any suspicions that a child or teen reports to you about potential abuse to the staff.
3. Report any inappropriate behavior of a fellow volunteer to the staff.
4. Do not wait or second-guess your observations.

Crying Children

Crying children need care and compassion. When crying is not due to obvious concerns (being hurt or sick), please tend to their immediate needs. Depending on their age, this will vary. Beyond offering a snack or drink, and being picked up, trying to engage a child in an activity often stops him/her from crying. Quiet reading, music or art are often activities that will soothe crying children. Whatever the activity is that soothes the child, it is important the "Two Adult Rule" is followed. Reassure children they are in a fun and safe place. And, if asked, reassure them that their parents will come back for them. If appropriate, tell them the schedule so they know what is going to happen next and when their parents will come. Sometimes they need to know what lies ahead.

If after tending to immediate needs and trying to engage in activities the child is still crying, talk to the Children's Ministry Director. **If the child has been crying consistently for 10 minutes, it is time to call his/her parent.** When you and the Children's Ministry Director decide it is time to call a parent from the service, follow the instructions posted in your room.

Then tell the child you have called his/her parent and continue to try to engage him/her in activity. When the parent arrives, explain to the parent his/her child was crying, that you tended to the child's immediate need if there was one, and that you tried to engage the child in activities. Tell the parent that he/she may stay with his/her child and participate in GraceKids.

If the parent decides to leave with the child, let the parent and child know how much we enjoyed him/her and we look forward to seeing him/her again next week. Encourage the parent and child to come back. Also, be sensitive to answer any other questions the parent might have.

Parents that leave with children may return to the classroom when the child has stopped crying, but they will need to stay as guests in that classroom for the remainder of the service.

Diapering Policies

We do change diapers if the parents allow it. If they have not given us permission, please check the diapers of all infants and toddlers during each service. If a child is attending more than one service, he or she should be checked each time. Use the parent number to call the parent from the service if a diaper needs changing.

Toilet-Trained Children Who Have Accidents

When a child who is toilet-trained has an accident, please call parents out of the service so that the parent is informed and can assist their child if necessary. Let parents know that we call all parents so that they can assist their child and comfort them. If parents appear upset or angry, please help diffuse the situation by reassuring parents that this happens to all children.

Children who have an accident do not need to leave Grace Kids; it is up to the parent whether or not they can stay. Obviously, each situation is unique and common sense needs to be used. Until the child is fully potty trained, parents should send their child in a pull up. A child of any age is never to be punished for accidents.

Feeding

Please follow the parent's instruction in detail when feeding children. In addition, the following procedures should be observed.

1. Bottles and food should be administered by adults, not student helpers.
2. Ensure that the bottle or food that you are feeding the child is properly labeled.
3. Be sure to check for allergies before beginning.
4. Burp infants after giving them a bottle.

Bathroom Policies

Please follow these procedures while taking children to the bathroom:

1. Both the preschool and elementary room have their own bathrooms.
2. It is assumed that children in kindergarten and above will not need assistance, unless special physical needs exist.
3. If a young child needs to use the restroom, he/she should do so by himself/herself, if possible. If assistance is necessary (for opening the door or for helping with clothing), an adult (not a teen helper) may assist. The assistant should stand outside the restroom and prop the door open while the child is in the restroom. If the child requests assistance within the stall, the assistant should keep the door propped open, keep the stall open, and be there no longer than reasonably necessary. Unless such assistance is needed, youth ministry staff and volunteers must avoid being in the restroom with children and teens. Staying outside the restroom provides the best protection.
4. Always wash your hands (if you assisted the child) and the child's hands with soap and water after the child has used the toilet.

EMERGENCIES

1. If there is a life threatening issue, call 911 immediately.
2. Treat minor injuries (bumps, bruises, scrapes, etc) in the classroom using the first-aid kit, and fill out an Incident Report.
3. If you need to evacuate the classroom at any time, lead children to the emergency exit.

Grace Kids Incident Report

General Information

Child's Name: _____

Parents Names: _____

Supervising Adults: _____

Information on Incident

Date: _____

Time: _____ Location: _____

Parents Notified by: _____

Time: _____

Describe the incident:

Describe the extent of the injury:

Describe the first aid and course of treatment:

Signature of person completing report: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Children's Ministry Director: _____ Date: _____

Lost Security Sticker

Child's Full Name _____

Parent's Full Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Driver's License Number _____ State _____

ID Checked by _____

Medical Authorization Form

Child's Full Name _____

Parent's Full Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Instructions:

I authorize a Grace Kids adult volunteer to administer medication in case of emergency as described above.

Parents Signature _____ Date _____