

# Valleybrook Child Safety Policies and Procedures

## POLICY

The Children's and Youth ministry of Valleybrook Community Church (VCC) shall be implemented in a safe and secure manner. Staff, volunteers and parents shall follow procedures governing; supervision of children, screening and qualifications for staff and volunteers, incident reporting, illness, medications, allergies, discipline, restroom, privacy, sanitation, photo publication and injury response. Ministry leaders shall train ministry team members in these procedures and give an annual report of the training as part of the annual ministry report in August.

### Key Terms:

**VCC** - Valleybrook Community Church

**Large Group Teacher** - The adult that conducts the teaching of the lesson in the classroom

**Children's/Youth Worker** - One who serves as a volunteer in Children's or Youth Ministry

**Staff** - One who serves as an employee of VCC

**Adult Children's Worker** - One who serves as a volunteer in Children's Ministry who is age 18 or older

**ECD** - Early Childhood Director

**CMD** - Children's Ministry Director

**YMD** - Youth Ministry Director

## POLICIES

**Six Month Rule** - Volunteers are required to have attended VCC for at least 6 months prior to working in Children's/Youth Ministry. Any Large Group Teacher must also be a member of the church.

**Two in a Room Rule** - All classrooms serving children birth through third grade should have at least two Children's Workers at all times, consisting of a Large Group Teacher and an assistant teacher.

**Open-View Classroom Rule** - All rooms at Valleybrook that are used to work with children and youth are required to have a door with a window to allow viewing from the outside. In addition, the doors remain closed, so that all visitors must be let in by an adult children's worker.

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**Parent Pickup Rule** - Children (age 3 through third grade) are to be released to the same adult who dropped them off, with a signature.

**Prompt Report Rule** - Any injury (requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid) or evidence of abuse noted during a VCC Children's/Youth Ministries event must be reported to the CMD/YMD as soon as possible (preferably the day it happened) and a report must be completed.

**Screened Volunteers Only** - The only people authorized to be in the room with children/youth are volunteers who have been screened and approved by the VCC CMD/YMD.

**Volunteer Screening** - All volunteers interested in serving in the Children's/Youth Ministry are background checked. Each volunteer will fill out a background check consent form, and a background check is conducted. All volunteer prospects are interviewed by the CMD/YMD and the three references that are given by the potential volunteer are contacted.

**Volunteer Training** - Formal volunteer training sessions occur annually, in addition to several informal training opportunities throughout the year, in order to ensure all volunteers are properly equipped.

## Reporting of Abuse

Children's/Youth Workers must contact VCC CMD/YMD if:

1. Worker suspects abuse (such as, but not limited to, physical, emotional, or sexual) or neglect
2. A child or youth confides in Worker that they are being abused
3. A reliable 3<sup>rd</sup> party informs Worker that they know of or suspect abuse of the child or youth. (Second hand reporting is not a good practice, the person with the first-hand experience should report the incident.)
4. A child or youth (in any discussion) indicates possible harm to themselves or others. (Such statements should not be kept secret, but should be reported to the appropriate authorities, including parents.)

CMD/YMD will contact the Senior Pastor and Elder Board should a possible abuse case be reported to them and a follow-up plan will be created and performed.

Alleged abuse at a VCC event or by a VCC Children's/Youth Worker or Staff will be handled with the following Procedure:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. If a VCC Children's/Youth Worker or Staff is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct, they will immediately be removed from working with children pending an investigation.

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3. VCC Elder Board will be contacted immediately.
4. VCC will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
5. VCC will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities.
6. In the event the alleged abuse is conducted by a VCC Children's/Youth Worker or Staff and there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team appointed from VCC will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident.
7. A member of the VCC Elder Board will be a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. All other Workers should refrain from speaking to the media and others. Gossip and slander will not be tolerated.

## **Sick Child Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children and youth at VCC. To that end, children with the following symptoms should NOT be allowed to participate in an activity or event at VCC:

- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

## **Procedure:**

In birth through third grade classrooms, if a child is brought to their class and exhibits any of these symptoms, Children's Workers will request that the parent/guardian not place the child in their class (unless explanation is given). If children are observed to be ill following placement in the class, a VCC Children's Worker will separate them from other children and immediately seek the parents for removal of the child from the classroom. In fourth grade and above classrooms, a child/youth observed to be ill will be asked to leave and find their parents.

**Additionally**, children who have experienced Fever, Diarrhea, or Vomiting within the last 24 hours, should NOT be allowed to participate in an activity or event at VCC. A child/youth should be "fever free" for 24 hours before entering their class. If a Children's/Youth Worker is aware that this policy has been ignored, the above Procedure will be implemented.

If a child/youth is being treated with antibiotics, he/she should be on the drug for at least 24 hours before going into his/her classroom.

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Children of ages birth through third grade who have continually clear-runny nose or rash due to non-contagious allergies or symptoms that hang on long after the child is no longer contagious, parents must let the Children's Ministry know by tagging the child with a green allergy tag found at the Children's Ministry sign-in/out table.

Children's/Youth Workers have been instructed on these policies and procedures, and parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care.

## **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of VCC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children/youth under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy should be discussed in cases of children/youth with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the VCC CMD/YMD to develop a plan of action.

## **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of VCC not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children/youth. A VCC Children's/Youth Worker should consult with the VCC CMD/YMD if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## **Restroom Usage Policy**

No child nursery through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade should ever be permitted to be unescorted in a public bathroom. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each event or activity with VCC.

### Procedure:

The female Adult Children's Worker should check bathrooms first to make sure that it is safe for a child. The VCC female Adult Children's Worker should remain outside the bathroom and wait for the child to finish using the bathroom facilities. If a child preschool age or younger needs assistance, an Adult Children's Worker must leave the stall door open while they assist.

## **Privacy Issues**

VCC Children's/Youth Workers are prohibited to meet with children/youth accept in public areas. They will avoid 1-on-1, private interactions where no accountability can be confirmed.

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## **Accidental Injury**

To prevent accidental injury, all activities that require equipment or special safety devices (i.e. helmets) will be done only with safety approved equipment. All activities planned should be age-appropriate and done with a “safety first” mentality. In the event that a child or youth is injured while under VCC care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, a VCC Children’s/Youth Worker will provide First Aid (Band-Aids) as appropriate and will notify the child’s parent or guardian of the injury at the conclusion of the event. (Notification required only for children age birth through sixth grade)
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the VCC CMD/YMD. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

## **Medical Emergency Plan**

Should a serious injury of a child or youth occur at a VCC event, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Determine the severity of the injury.
2. Call 911 if the child or youth is having a severe allergic reaction, bleeding severely, unconscious, or no longer breathing.
3. Give as much care as possible until medical personnel arrive on the scene.
4. Inform the child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) of the incident.
5. The VCC Children’s/Youth Worker will inform the CMD/YMD of the incident. The CMD/YMD will then call a member of the Elder board.
6. If possible, the VCC Children’s/Youth Worker will go with the child to the hospital.
7. A VCC incident report will be filled out and given to the VCC CMD/YMD
8. Follow up with the situation as deemed necessary by the VCC CMD/YMD and Elder Board will be done.

## **Checking In/Out Procedures**

Nursery:

Our number one value in Children’s Ministry is SAFETY! We want families to feel confident and comfortable leaving their child in our care so that they can worship without worry. When signing in, a parent/guardian will receive a sticker that matches the sticker on their child.

When picking up a child, only parents/guardians may present the children’s workers with the security sticker they were issued at sign in. The Children’s Worker will then get the child and see if the codes match. If a security sticker is lost, the Children’s Worker will ask to see a driver’s license. This is just a security precaution!

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Preschool and Children's Church:

When the Preschool and Children's Church children arrive in their class, attendance will be taken by highlighting the box next to the child's name (or adding their name if they are visiting). When class is over, parents must sign out their child by initialing in the highlighted box. Sign-outs must take place in the classroom or second hour gym. For everyone's safety, there are no hallway sign-outs. Once a child is signed out, responsibility of this child has now been handed back over to the parent/guardian.

Separation Anxiety (birth through third grade)

We want every child to feel comfortable in the room; so, if a child is having separation anxiety or difficulty transitioning, a children's worker will ask a parent/guardian to assist with their child. However, after their child is content, Children's Workers will ask that parents exit the nursery. Children's Workers will ensure that parents are contacted during the service if they are needed.

## Photo Release

We love to chronicle the events and the people of Valleybrook. Please consider filling out a Photo Release Form in order that photos of you or your family can be published in one of the various formats listed on the form.

HAND WASHING POLICY (birth through third grade)

Workers:

- Hands should be washed with soap and water or sanitizing gel:
- Before handling snack.
- Before and after changing diapers (if a child has a poopy diaper, hands should always be washed with soap and water).
- After helping a child in the bathroom.
- After wiping and blowing noses.

Children:

- Children will be required to wash hands after using the bathroom.

SNACKS (birth through third grade)

Snacks are a common occurrence in the Children's Ministry. If a child has a food allergy or special need related to food, parents are asked to communicate this to the CMD/ECD.

Parents are encouraged not to bring special snacks unless approved by the CMD/ECD.

Children's Workers must refuse unapproved snacks.

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## Nursery Specifics

### VOLUNTEER ARRIVAL

Children's Workers serving in the Nursery should arrive at least 20 minutes before each service to ensure they are prepared for children to check in.

### After Services Procedures

1. Spray toys and disinfect nursery/classrooms
  - a. Toys & Tables can be cleaned with disinfectant spray and wiped off
  - b. Swings, beds, chairs, mirrors are to be wiped with Clorox wipes
2. Bag up trash and spray the trash can with disinfectant and put in another liner.
3. Vacuum room.
4. Please leave the room looking neat with things in their proper place.
5. Make sure nursery doors are locked when leaving.

**Please do not spray or disinfect room until all the kids leave!!**

### Diaper Procedures

Diapers are changed in the same room and only by a female adult Children's Worker.

Diapers should be changed at least once per service (more if they become soiled after being changed).

#### Procedure:

Always wear gloves when changing diapers.

Have a clean diaper and all needed supplies readily available.

Change diaper.

Dispose of dirty diapers in blue bags.

Throw away used diaper, wipes and gloves in the trashcan.

If a child is wearing cloth diapers, place the wet diaper in a bag (parents should provide these bags) and put it back in the child's diaper bag.

Let the parents know the diaper had been changed.

Disinfect diaper changing area and wash hands appropriately.

**NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED ON A CHANGING TABLE!!!**

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## Youth Ministry Specifics

**Transportation** - VCC Youth is a destination Youth Ministry. Information will be provided as to when and where they are to meet. The students and their families are responsible for getting them to and from the destination. Under no circumstances are any of the identified Youth Leaders to transport any students unless there is a specified event and permission form has been filled out.

**Facebook Page** - The Facebook page is used to inform students and their families. Only Youth Leaders are permitted to initially post on the page. If a family or student wants to share information via the page, they must go through a Youth Leader.

## TRAINING CURRICULUM

### Child Abuse

#### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

**Physical abuse** is any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

**Emotional abuse** is emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, persistent teasing, bullying, or inappropriate sexual conversation.

**Sexual abuse** is 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, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

**Neglect** is depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

#### How to Detect

Most injuries are not caused by abuse. But bruises are often the first sign of possible abuse. You should suspect physical abuse of a child or vulnerable adult when:

- Any injury cannot be explained or does not match the explanation.
- Repeated injuries occur.
- Explanations change for how the injury happened. [www.everydayhealth.com](http://www.everydayhealth.com)

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## Indicators of Child Abuse:

### Physical Abuse

- Aggressive and hostile behavior towards others
- Afraid of adults and/or parents
- Self-destructive behavior
- Persistent bruises and fractures without explanation
- Scars that indicate a pattern of abuse

### Emotional Abuse

- Depression or withdrawal
- Severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Suicidal
- Eating disorders
- Extreme passive/aggressive behavior
- Extreme effort to seek adult attention

### Sexual Abuse

- Advanced sexual knowledge/behavior for child's age
- Depression
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised/bleeding vaginal or anal areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left with someone
- Comments such as "I don't want to be alone with..."
- Nightmares
- Unexplained hostility towards an individual
- Change in attitude

### Neglectful Abuse

- Failure to thrive
- Inappropriate dress for climate
- Chronic hunger
- Depression
- Persistent medical conditions
- Poor hygiene