



missio **KIDS**

teaching kids to know Jesus and make Him known

Children's Ministry Policy & Procedures Manual

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Dear Children’s Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Missio Dei Church!

At Missio Dei Church, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can come to know Jesus, grow in His Gospel, and can begin to follow Him by making Him known in their everyday lives.

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, protecting children, you, and the mission of Missio Dei 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,

Missio Dei Church Leadership

Missio Dei Church Policies & Procedures for Children’s Ministry

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Overview of Missio Dei Church Safety System

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, Missio Dei Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Missio Dei 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 Missio Dei Church Children's Ministry Team. 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, Missio Dei Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children are required to complete Missio Dei Church's Screening Process, which includes:

- an Employment Application (employees only);
 - a Children's Ministry Serving Application (employees and volunteers);
 - a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers); and
 - references to be checked (employees and volunteers).
- *A volunteer must attend Missio Dei Church for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing ministry services to children.

STEP THREE: 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.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Missio Dei Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's activities undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

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

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 the Children's Director, Lead Pastor, or Elders.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Missio Dei Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, 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 Child Protective Services, or another appropriate agency.

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 asked to report 'grooming' behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Children's Director, Lead Pastor, or Elders.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Missio Dei 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, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children's Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Children's Director, Lead Pastor, or Elders.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Children's Director, Lead Pastor, or Elders.

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 Children's 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 children or students at Missio Dei Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Missio Dei Church.

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 children or students at Missio Dei Church.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

WHO MUST REPORT

Tennessee law mandates reporting by any person who has knowledge of physical or mental harm to a child if: (1) the nature of the harm reasonably indicates it was caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect; or (2) on the basis of available information, the harm reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect. Tennessee law also mandates reporting by any

person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused, regardless of whether it appears the child has sustained an injury as a result of the abuse. The Tennessee mandatory reporting laws define a child as a person under 18 years of age.

HOW TO REPORT

Call 911 if the situation is a life threatening emergency. In other cases, a report of child abuse or child sexual abuse must be made immediately to one of the following four authorities:

- The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (reports can be made by calling the Central Intake Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004);
- The sheriff of the county where the child resides;
- The chief law enforcement official of the city where the child resides; or
- A judge having juvenile jurisdiction over the child.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

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

Missio Dei Church Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Missio Dei Church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee on each campus, which will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable Missio Dei Church Children’s and Student Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee on each campus will be comprised of the following members:

1. Lead Pastor
2. Children's Director,
3. Student Director, and
4. Any designee of the elder board.

MEETINGS

The Lead Pastor will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Missio Dei Church policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Missio Dei Church Elders regarding safety issues.

Children's Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with children.

1. **Children's Director** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once a month for programs that occur weekly.

2. **Children's Director** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
3. **An Elder** conducts an unscheduled observation of a Children's Ministry program at least once each quarter.
4. **The Lead Pastor** meets with the Children's Minister at least once monthly to discuss Children's Ministry, including safety training and procedures.
5. **The Elders** meet with the Children's Minister once each year to discuss Children's Ministry, including safety training and procedures.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Children's Director will be responsible for ensuring that the Children's Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the Children's Building or on the children's playground during children's ministry programming or classes. Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. 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.)

After every programming event, Children's Ministry staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the children's 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 children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the classroom or playground.

Once your child has been picked up from the classes or events, it is the parent's sole responsibility to watch and care for their child. Any adult that sees a child left unattended should immediately inform the child's parent.

In the event of an emergency, the Children's Director and all volunteers will escort all children to a safe place and immediately contact parents or legal guardians in alignment with the training received upon serving.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

Missio Dei Church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child **minimum ratios** will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Babies - 2's	2	10
Preschool, 3-5 year olds	2	12
Elementary	2	20
Kid's Events	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children's Director. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately 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 are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior

management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold a child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly - just 2 more minutes.")
- 7) Affirm the child once he or she has completed the time-out and allow them to rejoin the class activity. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with affirmation.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Children's Director. Also, parents will be informed if any child is inconsolable after 10 minutes of crying. All parents are expected to follow these guidelines during kid's classes or events with their own children.

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 in child's designated classroom.
3. Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
4. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the weekly check-in cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
5. Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
6. Children should be changed on changing stations only.
7. Once a child has had their diaper changed, the time and person responsible for changing their diaper should be listed on the weekly child's check-in card.

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 always be left open.
4. Young children will be led to the restroom by an adult and the adult will wait at the door until they need assistance or are done
5. Parents should consult the classroom staff or volunteers 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 weekly check-in card ("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 children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School age children

School age children 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. A mid-class bathroom break will be taken as a whole. Children will enter to use the restroom one per stall at a time. The remaining children will wait in the hall until all have used the restroom and then return to the classroom.

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.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

SICKNESS

Any child who is currently sick or sick within the last 24 hours should not be checked into any classroom. This is for the health and safety of the other children in the ministry and our volunteers. If any child has shown any of the

following symptoms in the previous 24 hours, please do not check them into any program or activity:

1. A fever over 100 degrees
2. Any signs of chickenpox or other contagious virus/bacteria
3. Diarrhea
4. Vomiting
5. Flu symptoms, including, but not limited to, runny nose, cough, or rash

Additionally, we request that you use discernment when checking in the siblings of a child experiencing the symptoms above, as they may also be contagious as well.

If your child appears to be sick at the time of check in, our team will request that you do not check in your child.

INTOXICANTS

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

FIREARMS

Any staff member or volunteer that chooses to have a firearm in their possession must follow all local and federal laws. All staff and volunteers are asked to conceal carry or refrain from carrying while serving with kids in any classroom or activity.

MEDICATION

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in Children's Ministry. Medication is only to be administered by a parent or legal guardian. If a medical emergency arises, the parent or legal

guardian will provide instructions and permission in how to proceed (i.e. Allergy, epic pens, etc.) Written instructions should be given in advance.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers serving in Children's 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 Children's Director concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Children's Ministry activities or programs. Another trained, screened adult should always be present.

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 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 any vehicle, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Missio Dei 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 Children's Ministry programs. If a child is unconsolable for more than 10 minutes, the parent or legal guardian will be contacted.

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. Video Monitoring is also available in every children's classroom and stairwells. Parents may view this live stream at any time by viewing the TV in the hall outside of the classrooms. Volunteers not scheduled to serve that week should refrain from hanging out in classrooms unless extra assistance is needed.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Missio Dei Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Missio Dei 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 Children's Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, high-fives and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's 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 the Children's Director, the Lead Pastor, or Elders.

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 children or Children's Ministry 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 Children's 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 the Children's Director, the Lead Pastor, or the Elders.

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.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and up-lifting. 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.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children 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. All staff and volunteers should be focused on the care of the children while serving and should refrain from being on their cellphone, unless there is a need to contact a parent or in the event of an emergency.

CHECK-IN PROCESS

Missio Dei Church Children's Ministry is committed to providing a safe environment for all children. A check-in process is followed to ensure all children are properly registered and accounted for. The check-in process begins 15 minutes before adult classes or the Gathering start. First time guests will be asked to fill out a registration form. Once the form has been filled out, the information is entered into the computer to create a check-in sticker that the child will wear during the class or activity. Stickers are placed on the back of all children placed in the care of Missio Dei Church Children's Ministry. Returning children upon arrival will receive their sticker from the check-in counter.

Once the sticker is received, parents of Pre-k and under children will receive a weekly check-in card. The parents will fill out the check-in card and give to the staff or volunteer in the child's classroom. All bags, cups, snacks and personal belongings should be labeled when leaving in any classroom.

A clipboard will be located at each room to sign in your child as you leave them. A parent or legal guardian must sign their child in before dropping them off.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

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

Children's 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. A parent or legal guardian will be required to sign out their child at the time of pick-up.

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 Children's Director before releasing the child.

Once a child has been checked out of any children's program or activity, it is the parent's sole responsibility to monitor and care for their child while on the church grounds.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs. While serving during any class or activity, staff and volunteers are committed to focusing on the teaching, care, and safety of all children. Staff and volunteers should refrain from personal conversations that distract from class schedules and curriculum. Phones should only be used to contact a parent or guardian, or in the event of an emergency.

Each classroom has a guided schedule hanging on the wall inside a frame. These schedules are there to help guide class time. Curriculum books for the pre-k and elementary classes are given in advance. All staff and volunteers should read their scheduled lesson plan in advance. Any questions or

confusion can be addressed with the Children's Director in advance. All supplies needed for the day will be placed in the classroom.

Any bags, cups or personal belongings should be labeled. All staff and volunteers will ensure that children only eat snacks provided by their parent or legal guardian. If an allergy arises in any classroom that calls for the removal of certain snacks (i.e. nut allergies) all parents will be notified of changes in advance. Any snacks or meals provided in a Children's Ministry activity or event will be announced in advance so that parent permission can be given.

Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Missio Dei Church's Children's 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 Missio Dei 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 Missio Dei 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 Missio Dei 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 Missio Dei Church Children's Ministry policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Date

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

[This page is to remain attached to Missio Dei Church Children's Ministry Safety Policies.]

Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

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