



## **Safety Policy Guidelines for ZPC Children and Student Ministries**

### ***Statement of Purpose***

The ZPC children ministry is committed to partnering with families to help children know love and serve Jesus and the youth ministry at ZPC exists to partner with families to help students connect with Christ, to each other and with the larger ZPC community so that students and all participants will come to know, love and follow Jesus. We are so glad that you have made the decision to change lives of children and youth at ZPC by volunteering.

In order to create an environment where children experience the love of Christ and grow as His disciples, Zionsville Presbyterian Church seeks to establish and promote policies that will protect the safety and well-being of all our children and youth. We wish to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of Matthew 18: 1-10, preventing any harm that could come to children during our activities. We value our volunteers and we desire to protect their integrity. We seek to honor the trust that parents place in us when they place their children in our care. Finally, in the process of providing a safe and secure environment, we reduce the risk of needing to use church resources for liability purposes.

### ***Application Process:***

1. Interview and training with ministry leader.
2. Completion of a volunteer application form.
3. Applicants will give ZPC permission to conduct background checks with law enforcement agencies.

\*People younger than 16 will be considered teens and must always be teamed with adults when serving.

### ***Volunteer Safety Guidelines :***

#### **Discipline Policy**

Everyone who serves in our children and youth ministry are required to create and preserve an environment in which all children and youth feel safe, secure and loved. This process will involve the following elements:

1. Make every child/youth feel loved and welcome.
2. Clearly state expectations or classroom behavior standards in a positive manner.
3. Reinforce positive behavior often.
4. Communicate with the parents regarding a child's negative behavior, doing this in a positive, hopeful and truthful manner. Work to identify corrective steps together.

Parents are expected to communicate any special needs and concerns to teachers and staff. Parental insight is invaluable in helping ZPC minister appropriately to their children and youth.

#### **Inclement Weather Procedures**

1. If notified of severe weather, immediately move away from outside walls and any area of glass.
2. Move to closest lower level enclosed areas, such as restrooms.
3. Do not go to, or remain in, the gym, sanctuary, or gathering space.
4. Have children sit on the floor with their knees pulled up and their head and face on their knees.
5. Keep everyone calm and take attendance as soon as safely possible.

#### **Fire Evacuation Procedures**

See specific instructions on evacuation in each classroom. Get kids and students to the parameter of the parking lot where they will meet up with their parents.

#### **Reporting Policy**

Any volunteer that suspects any form or evidence of child abuse and/or neglect must confidentially report it to a ministry staff member or to a pastor of the church immediately.

### **Supervision Policy**

1. All who serve with children and youth are required to serve as part of a team of at least two unrelated adults at all times, unless participating in youth small group programming.
2. Supervision in areas where children and youth are present must not be hindered in any way, such as by covering windows or locking doors.

### **Touching Policy**

We wish to promote an environment where appropriate affection is provided for the purpose of nurturing our children. In order to avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior, all who serve in our children and youth ministry will carefully follow the guidelines for practicing appropriate touching, as identified below.

Appropriate touching includes:

1. Expressing God's love to the child/youth.
2. Touching that occurs on the child's/youth's shoulders, arms, hands, upper back or head.
3. Giving sideways hugs.
4. Holding and comforting a preschool child or baby who is crying or is afraid.
5. Gently and calmly holding the shoulder or chin of a child when redirecting the child's behavior, especially with children who have attention issues.

### **Protective Health Measures**

1. We will use "universal precautions" which means the blood and bodily fluids of everyone are considered potentially infectious. Disposable gloves should be worn whenever a teacher or worker is handling blood, open sores, cuts, the inside of a person's mouth, or any other bodily fluid such as vomit. These gloves and other first aid items should be available in each classroom cabinet in a clear plastic bag.
2. Wear disposable gloves to clean up areas that have been exposed to blood or other bodily fluid spills. Disinfectant spray is stored in the housekeeping closet next to the Noah's Ark office. This should be used to sanitize all areas exposed to any bodily fluid spills.
3. To dispose of gloves, paper towels, and other potentially contaminated materials, place such items in one of the plastic bags in the wastebaskets and securely close with a knot. Remove from the classroom as soon as possible. Wash your hands.
4. Wash your hands before handling or serving all food products.
5. Encourage children to wash their hands after using the bathroom.
6. Children who are ill should be removed from the classroom and into the care of parents as soon as possible. Seek assistance from a children's ministry staff person in the hallway.

### Youth Relational Guidelines:

As a youth volunteer we understand and encourage communication with youth outside of regular programming. The following policies are set for the safety of the youth and the volunteer. Notifying the parents and ministry leaders is required with continual one on one meetings to provide safety and support.

### **Relational Meetings**

1. In general, meetings with youth should take place with more than one student
2. If meeting with a student more than once a month it should occur in a public place and the parents and ministry leaders should be notified

### **Transportation**

1. In general, don't be in a car one-on-one with a student
2. If unavoidable, the parent or ministry leader should be notified

### **Electronic Communication**

We recognize that building relationships involves several forms of communication, including: social networking, phone calls, and texting. We also recognize this is hard to monitor and ask parents to actively check accounts and cell phones. Volunteers are to work hard to protect the emotional well-being of the student. Should volunteers, parents, or students find anything of concern they are to contact the ministry leader immediately.