

# **Nursery & Children's Ministry Child Protection Policy**

## **Christ Covenant Church**

“Our children are worshippers who have an eternal destiny—either heaven or hell. God can use us as parents to help point them to Jesus. What an enormous privilege, but what weighty responsibility that is. Churches also have a responsibility to steward the gift of children. Several hours a week, parents entrust this very precious gift of children to churches—to watch over, instruct, and protect the kids under their care. Church workers then should consider the time spent with other people's children not as a burden, but as a great privilege and important responsibility.” (Deepak Reju)

### **Protecting Children Before They Arrive**

To ensure a safe environment for all children, every applicant who wishes to serve in the nursery or children's ministry is required to submit a background check and attend childcare training before serving.

### **Screening Procedure**

To ensure safe and quality care, Christ Covenant has established several criteria all caregivers must meet to work with our children:

- All caregivers must be members in good standing of Christ Covenant.
- All caregivers must be eighteen years of age or older. Youth who are at least eleven years old are welcome to assist (subject to the approval and direction of the Director of Children's Ministry), but they are always in addition to the adult caregivers.
- All caregivers must have completed childcare training.
- All background checks must be satisfactorily completed.

### **Training**

All caregivers must attend childcare training before they are allowed to work with children. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing caregivers to update them on policies and procedures. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

### **Signing a Child in to Nursery and Children's Ministry**

All parents who would like their child to be in the nursery or participate in a children's ministry program must check the child in to the appropriate classroom or activity granting permission for the child to participate in the event or program. The child and parent will receive a coordinating identification sticker to be used at pick up.

### **Pick Up Procedures**

Any parent with a child signed in to the nursery or a children's ministry program must pick up the child using the identification sticker given at check in.

### **Allergy Policy**

Classes frequently have snack times, and it is the parents' responsibility to inform teachers and volunteers of allergy needs. Special needs should also be noted on the identification sticker.

### **Two Caregiver Rule**

At least two qualified caregivers must be present in each classroom at all times. One of those caregivers must be an adult. We consider adults to be age eighteen and older. Youth who are at least eleven years old are welcome to assist (subject to the approval and direction of the Director of Children's Ministry), but they are always in addition to and supervised by the adult teacher. If at any time there is only one person in the room, the class door must remain open to the hallway.

### **Hostess Responsibilities**

The hostess is a caregiver whose duties are not limited to any one classroom. The hostess will assist at the check in kiosk and will then be available during class time to be of service to the other caregivers (e.g., locating parents if needed, substituting temporarily for another caregiver).

### **Restroom Procedure for Nursery**

If possible, parents should have their children use the bathroom before entering nursery. All diaper changing and/or potty needs must be handled by female caregivers only.

### **Restroom Procedure for Children's Ministry**

Children pre-k through fifth grade needing to use the restroom shall go with another child of the same age and sex. The restroom should be unoccupied by adults prior to children entering. The hostess will supervise from outside the closed bathroom door until the children are finished. The children must wash their hands with soap and water, then the hostess will ensure they return back to the classroom. This will enable the classrooms to maintain appropriate child to caregiver ratios at all times.

### **Electronics Policy**

Cell phones and other devices are not to be used during class time by children or adult caregivers. If it comes out the teacher will ask that the child put it away. If it continues to be a distraction, the teacher may hold on to it until the end of class time.

### **Graduating From Nursery**

Children who are four are able to move up to the Prek/K class. The transition may occur quarterly on the first Sunday in September, December, March, and June.

### **Appropriate Discipline**

All nursery and children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating the child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).

Nursery and children's ministry volunteers and staff members should never yell, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, ask the Director of Children's Ministry to call the parents.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

According to North Carolina law, "Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent...or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. The report may be made orally, by telephone, or in writing" (G. S. 7B-310).

All children's ministry volunteers who have any such suspicion should immediately report their concern to the hostess or Director of Children's Ministry who will contact the Pastor of Counseling.

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