

Welcome to



Children's Ministry Policy Manual

3102 W. Ralph Rogers Road, Sioux Falls, SD 57108
Phone: 605-336-3378 www.centraf.org

Angel Wallman
Director of Children's Ministries
angel.wallman@centraf.org

Molly Stevens
Nursery Coordinator of Children's Ministries
molly.stevens@centraf.org

Becky Jaspring
Early Childhood Coordinator of Children's Ministries
becky.jaspring@centraf.org

Janette Obermueller
Worship Creative Arts Coordinator of Children's Ministries
janette.obermueller@centraf.org

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~ Protection Policy ~

As a church, we exist to connect people with a life that counts for eternity. In so doing, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital and we take this responsibility seriously.

This policy is intended to ensure that church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ and these guidelines are set to provide a safe and nurturing environment that creates an opportunity to bring our children to the Savior. All who teach, help, or care for children under the trust of Central Baptist Church must understand and follow these policies and procedures. As ambassadors of Christ, we are committed to strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. **For this reason, every worker of Central Baptist Church must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior.**

I. Security Policies:

A. Drop-off and Pick Up Policy

Families will check in (all of their children) at a central welcome station that will be a computerized system. This will generate a nametag for each child they are checking in and it will generate a "PICKUP" tag. Nametags will be put on the children prior to coming to the classroom. The PICKUP tag will remain with the parent or guardian. After they have done this they are welcome to enter our classrooms when adequate supervision is available. Generally, two adults will be provided 10 minutes before a program starts.

For Pick Up: Parents/authorized people will go to the appropriate classroom and present their "PICKUP" tag to retrieve their child. If they have lost the "PICKUP" tag, they must go to the Welcome Desk where the volunteer will verify their information and reprint a "PICKUP" tag.

Volunteers must verify that persons picking up children have the appropriate "PICKUP" tag before releasing the child.

Any unauthorized person trying to pick up a child must be directed to an adult at the Welcome Center desk.

B. Volunteer Identification

All volunteers and staff working with children will wear a nametag identifying themselves as an approved teacher, helper or caregiver in the room.

C. Registration

Through the computerized system all families will be registered before entering the classroom. Visitors will be directed to specific computer stations to check in their families.

D. Diaper Changing

All approved nursery volunteers may change children's diapers. Rubber gloves must be worn when changing a child and when cleaning changing table. Table must be cleaned after each use. The trash in rooms that have diaper-changing stations will be removed after each event.

Nursery, toddler and 2-year-old rooms are the only diaper changing rooms. 3-year-olds must be potty trained before advancing to the 3-year-old Sunday school room.

E. Bathroom

Most classrooms for younger ages (Nursery through Kindergarten) have bathrooms located in the rooms.

If a younger child needs assistance in the classroom bathroom, an approved volunteer of the same gender, if possible, may enter to assist observing the following guidelines:

1. If the bathroom door has no window, the door must be left open while the approved volunteer is present.
2. If there is an Early Childhood classroom without a bathroom, an approved volunteer should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. It should be the aim to always go in a group. Avoid taking a child to the bathroom alone.

If for some reason, only one child must go to the bathroom, an approved volunteer should escort the child to the hallway bathroom and check the bathroom to make sure that everything is in order. The volunteer should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. The volunteer should open the bathroom door and call the child's name if he/she is taking longer than seems necessary. If a child requires assistance, the volunteer should leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

Remember, never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed, and never go into a bathroom stall with a child and close the stall door.

Elementary classrooms will utilize the hallway bathrooms. These children should not go alone. They can be escorted by an approved volunteer or be paired with a peer buddy with the teacher's permission.

We strongly encourage parents and their children to visit the bathroom prior to each class.

II. Classroom Policies:

A. Staffing Guidelines

1. All workers, volunteer or paid, will have completed a Children's Ministry worker application. Parents may be asked to assist temporarily when necessary.
2. **The "Rule of 3" should be observed.** Children should always be in groups of three or more and at least one person in the group should be an approved volunteer. At no time should a child be alone or with just one other person, be they adult or child.
3. The program or department coordinators will make regular visits to the classrooms to insure that classrooms are properly supervised.
4. The following ratios are staffing guidelines.

Nursery:	One volunteer per 4-5 children
Pre-school:	One volunteer per 6-8 children
Elementary:	One volunteer per 10-12 children

5. If a class is unexpectedly short-staffed, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. Combining of Classes: Two classes may be combined, if practical, to meet the staffing requirements. A notice will be posted for parents telling them where to pick up their children.
 - b. Utilization of Parent Helpers: If combining classes is not an appropriate option, a parent will be asked to stay to meet the staffing guidelines before additional children will be admitted to the classroom. The teacher will assume supervisory responsibility.
 - c. Cancellation of Class: Classes without adequate staffing will not commence. Additionally, programs which continually experience staffing deficiencies will be subject to review and possible cancellations.

B. Proper Displays of Affection

We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. In order to protect the children in our care we are implementing a touching policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children and students.

1. Hugging, holding hands and other forms of appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our church setting, however the physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or student. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a 2-year-old to sit on a worker's lap, but it is not appropriate for a teenager or leader to interact this way.)
3. The child or student should initiate touching. It is a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based on the adult's emotional need.
4. Touching and affection should only be given in the presence of other children's ministry workers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers are present and the touching is open to observation. This rule is especially important when diapering a baby or helping a young child change clothes or use the restroom.
5. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers, our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should be above reproach.
6. Church workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
7. Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with the ministry staff person who oversees his/her ministry

area. This will need to be recorded on an Incident/Accident Report and given to the Pastor/Director of the ministry area.

8. If any accidents occur while a child is in the care of Central Baptist Church functions, an Incident/Accident Report will be completed and given to the Pastor/Director of the ministry area.

C. Discipline

Nursery – 5th Grade:

All interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity and fragile life. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, training and correction. Physical punishment will not be used. Teachers may contact the department coordinator for assistance in dealing with disruptive students. A parent(s) will be notified in situations requiring stronger discipline.

How to handle:

- ❖ Try to redirect the child to an appropriate activity/behavior.
- ❖ Remove the child from the activity. They may re-enter when their behavior is appropriate.
- ❖ For extreme behavior problems the child will be removed from the room to be with a Children's Ministries staff member. The child may re-enter if behavior changes or will stay out of the classroom until the parent comes to pick them up.

D. Personal Disclosure

While your own personal disclosures of the challenges and difficulties you've experienced can build rapport and trust and encourage students' honest discussion of their life situations, they should be brief and always for the benefit of the students not yourself. Do not talk with students for your own support and guidance.

III. Volunteer Screening Policy:

- A. Application
- B. Background check
- C. Orientation and training

A volunteer is considered approved when they have filled out the appropriate application, the screening procedures related to the volunteer have been completed, the volunteer has been orientated on the Protection Policy procedures outlined in this document, and the volunteer has been notified of his/her approved status.

All volunteers need to reaffirm that their life circumstances have not changed in ways that may negatively impact their ministry, every year of service. This is done with an Annual Renewal Application.

IV. Child Abuse or Neglect Policies

A. Reporting the Abuse

All volunteers and employees of Central Baptist Church shall immediately report to the Pastor/Director of their Ministry Area any allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect of minor children (0-18 years old) which they become aware of during their duties at Central Baptist. If the appropriate Pastor/Director is unavailable, then the allegation or suspicion shall be reported to the Senior Pastor.

1. A report is called for if a child:
 - a. Verbally complains about, or mentions in passing, specific acts of neglect or abuse (physical, sexual, or verbal) or exposure to sexual activity, pornography or abuse of others.
 - b. Verbally complains about, or mentions in passing, vague references to having to do bad things or having bad things/secret things done to him or her.
 - c. Alludes to abuse or neglect in writing, in prayer requests, or in drawings.

- d. Has an injury that can't be adequately explained or which the child attempts to hide or deny.
 - e. Has an inordinate number of unexplained injuries.
 - f. Has an age inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual matters or acting out of sexual behavior.
 - g. Is frequently dirty or smelly or inadequately dressed, is undernourished, does not receive appropriate medical care for injuries.
 - h. Reports or evidences difficulty urinating or discomfort sitting.
 - i. Reports or evidences an atypical fear or discomfort of being with particular people.
2. All allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect shall be kept confidential and be discussed only with the appropriate persons indicated in this Protection Policy. Once reported, the volunteer or employee shall complete and submit a "Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect" Form, which will be given to them by the Director.

B. Responding to a Child

1. If a child first speaks to you about abuse or neglect, be sure to take his/her word seriously. Don't deny or minimize the problem. Stay calm and listen. Offer emotional reassurance that it was right to tell you and that it is OK to talk about what may be bothering them. Do not promise you will not tell anyone. If the child asks, tell with whom you will discuss the problem.
2. As a volunteer/employee it is not your responsibility to interrogate the child to get "all the facts" or to attempt to substantiate any allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect. Your responsibility is to listen, to ask a few questions so you have some understanding of what the child has said to you, to offer reassurance that it is OK to talk about what's bothering the child, and to immediately report your concern.