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***Preschool Ministry – Child Health and Safety Polices***

December 2017

***Check-In Process***

In order to protect the children in our care, every preschool family (visitors and members) must be checked in at the preschool desk prior to entering their classroom. Parents/guardians and children will receive a safety identification sticker with coordinating codes. These stickers must be presented to the Preschool Ministry staff at pick-up to ensure the parent/guardian and child codes match. Only the parent/guardian with the safety ID sticker is allowed to pick up a child. Parent/guardians must also leave a cell phone number at the check-in desk in case the preschool staff needs to contact them during church. All parents/guardians must be on church grounds while their children are in the care of The Church at Canyon Creek Preschool Ministry. Any allergies or special needs should be made aware to the Preschool Ministry staff during the check-in process.

***Volunteer and Staff Qualifications***

Volunteers (youth and adult) must be 16 years or older and all hired staff must be 18 years or older. The hiring process for all preschool staff includes completion of an application for employment, interviews and orientation/training. Additionally, TCACC conducts an annual background check on all volunteers and staff (18 and older) before their start date. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidential at TCACC. All Preschool Ministry staff are required to comply with all policies and requirements established in The Church at Canyon Creek Employee Handbook.

The following will automatically disqualify an applicant from any staff or volunteer position:

* history of sexual abuse of children
* conviction of any crime in which children are involved
* history of any violent or sexually exploitative behavior
* any other charges or convictions for other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the preschool pastor

All Preschool Ministry volunteers and staff will wear a name tag that identifies them as approved.

***Training***

All Preschool Ministry staff are required to attend 3-4 trainings per year on topics related to child development, child protection/safety, and spiritual development for preschoolers. Preschool Ministry volunteers are required to attend one training per year on child protection/safety and general policies and procedures.

***Discipline***

All Preschool Ministry volunteers and staff are responsible for providing a safe, loving and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play and interact with others. This should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children toward acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior and, when necessary, correcting and redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of correcting inappropriate behavior may include:

* Correcting the child verbally
* Separating the child from the situation or problem for a brief time
* Redirecting the child to a new activity
* Helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate

Preschool Ministry volunteers and staff are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping or spanking. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child demonstrates inappropriate behavior within the classroom or there are repeat offenses, the classroom volunteer or staff should make the Preschool Pastor aware and a conversation will take place with the parents/guardians.

***Two Leader Rule***

The Church at Canyon Creek Preschool Ministry requires that a minimum of two volunteers and/or staff are in attendance at all times when children are being supervised regardless the number of participants. At no time should a leader ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with a child. If a volunteer or staff member needs to leave a group of children, another volunteer or staff member must be notified so the two leader policy can be upheld. This is for the protection of the child(ren) as well as the volunteer/staff.

***Diaper Changing/Restroom Procedures***

Diaper changing stations and restrooms are located inside the preschool classrooms. Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer or staff. Classrooms with potty trained children will always adhere to the open door and two adult policies. One volunteer or staff will stand at the open door while a child is inside the restroom. If the child needs assistance, a second volunteer or staff will assume the position at the door while the first adult helps the child. This allows for visibility on the restroom procedure as well as the whole classroom.

***Physical Contact with a Preschooler***

The Church at Canyon Creek is committed to protecting children in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy Preschool Ministry. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by TCACC preschool volunteers and staff.

Using good judgement, the following are appropriate ways to touch children:

* Holding, cradling, rocking an infant or toddler
* Lap sitting is appropriate for infants-5 years
* Short reassuring hugs for nurturing or developing a sense of security
* Handshakes and high-fives

The following are actions a volunteer or staff member should never take:

* Never touch a child in anger or frustration
* Never touch a child between the navel and the knee
* Never touch a child’s private parts (with the exception of diaper changing and restroom procedures)

***Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect***

Anyone who witnesses, suspects or has any reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be neglected and/or harmed or threatened with abuse in any form should contact the Preschool Pastor or other TCACC Pastoral staff. This could include physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

* **Physical abuse**-any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
* **Emotional abuse**-emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
* **Sexual abuse**-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**-depriving a child of his/her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter and medical care.

Any person who serves as the initial point of contact is required to report all allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to Child Protective Services.

***Medications/Injuries***

Medications will not be administered by a Preschool Ministry staff or volunteer, with the exception of life threatening conditions, i.e. Epi-Pens. In all other circumstances, parents/guardians will be notified by the Preschool Pastor and will be asked to administer any medications needed. Our staff and volunteers will care for simple injuries. In the event that a more serious injury occurs, parents/guardians will be notified, and if necessary, Emergency Medical Services will be called.

***Food/Allergy***

The Preschool Ministry area is a peanut, egg and dairy free environment. No food except for the church-supplied allergy free snacks will be served to toddlers-five years old. If there are additional allergy or food restrictions, parents/guardians will need to provide an appropriate snack and let the preschool staff or volunteer know. *No other food will be permitted into the classrooms.*

Volunteers and staff are required to check each child’s safety identification sticker for red allergy alerts.

***Sick Child Policy***

It is best to keep a sick child at home. Symptoms that are not allowed at The Church at Canyon Creek Preschool Ministry are fever above 100 degrees, vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained rashes and discolored mucous or any contagious illness. Volunteers and staff must report any illnesses to the Preschool Pastor and parents/guardians will be notified to come pick up their child.

If a child has been sick:

* Children should not come to church until he/she has been vomit, diarrhea and fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication.
* Children should not come to church until he/she has been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours, or with a written statement from their doctor stating they are no longer contagious.
* Children should not come to church with chickenpox until all pox have dried and no new pox have erupted.
* Children should not come to church with head lice until they have had one medicated shampoo and is found to be nit free by the Preschool Pastor.
* Children should not come to church with pink eye until 24 hours after the first medical treatment.

It is recommended that parents/guardians report any contagious diseases to the Preschool Pastor for the safety of the rest of the children.

***Communication and Social Media***

We often use pictures and video to celebrate our ministry. The safety of our preschoolers is very important, therefore we use a **closed** Facebook group. Parents will be asked permission to use photos or videos of their child for any other social media outlets used by TCACC.