

KIDS MINISTRY
POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL



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I. Philosophy of the Children's Ministry

Purpose

The Children's Ministry at River of Life Church exists to provide a loving, nurturing and safe environment in which to teach our children the importance of a personal relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Objective

To partner with parents, family members and the church body in instilling a deep-seated desire to:

- Know Christ
- Grow in Christ
- Show Christ to Others

Core Values and Beliefs

- Children are gifts from God (Psalm 127:3-5).
- Children can grow in grace and use their spiritual gifts for the glory of God and the edification of the church (2 Peter 3:18 & 1 Corinthians 14:12).
- The congregation (church family) has a responsibility to fulfill its pledge to nurture and train our children in the ways of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6).
- As a church family it is our job to partner with parents and to equip and teach them to be the spiritual leaders of their home (Deuteronomy 4:9-10).

II. Policies

Wellness

- Children must be symptom free from the following (without medication) for at least 24 hours before entering the classroom.
 - Fever of 100° or higher
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Conjunctivitis (Pink eye or other infection)
 - Rash
 - Nasal drainage which is green or yellow
 - Sore throat
 - Open sores
 - Cold
 - Excessive coughing
 - Lice

If a child develops any of these symptoms while checked in, the parent will be contacted by text for pick-up.

An allergy alert will be printed on the security tag of any child who has been identified as having allergies. The security tag alert will identify the type of allergy and will be highlighted in RED. All Leaders are trained to look for allergy alert on each child's tag.

Parents of children with severe allergies requiring the possible use of an EpiPen should advise the attendant at the time of each check-in. EpiPens must be supplied by the parents of the affected child.

Injury & First Aid

We can administer ONLY band-aids and ice packs

- If a child is injured while in the care of the children's ministry, the teacher/volunteer will advise the child's parent upon pick-up unless it is an emergency.
- All injuries must be reported no matter how minor they may seem. The teacher must complete an Ouch Report located in the classrooms and turn into the Children's Pastor at the end of service. In the event of an emergency, call 911 and locate the Children's Pastor immediately.

Safety & Security

It is of utmost importance that our children be taught and nurtured in a responsible and safe environment. We also desire that our teachers/volunteers be protected from any false allegations of misconduct.

- Each applicant desiring to serve in our Children's Ministry is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview, reference and criminal background check.
- Each volunteer in our ministry is required to read and abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.
- Each volunteer will undergo a "shadowing" (familiarization) process with a seasoned volunteer before assuming classroom responsibilities.
- We have a detailed check-in and check-out procedure outlined in the parent responsibility section of this manual.
- There is a "two person" rule that is in place for all classrooms:
 - There must be two people present while children are present.
 - This is to protect the children from possible abuse and the teachers/volunteers from false accusations.
 - If a situation arises where only one adult is present, an unobstructed view of the entire classroom must be maintained.
- In the event that there is a need for last minute volunteers (who have not be screened according to policy), the individuals responding will be cleared for temporary duty by either a Nursery Coordinator, Pre-K Coordinator or the Children's Pastor and placed with an experienced teacher/volunteer who has completed the application process and been cleared for service. Individuals on the backup volunteer list will be utilized first.

Restroom & Diapering

Volunteers should help a child use the restroom only if the child is three (3) years or younger or if a disability dictates help. If a volunteer must enter the restroom she should leave the outer door of the restroom open. If a child is over three (3) years of age, the volunteer should check the restroom before the child enters and wait outside until the child exits.

- Parents are encouraged to take their potty-trained children to the restroom before check-in.
- Only woman teachers/volunteers should take children to the restrooms.
- Volunteers are to wash their hands as well as the children's hands (either at the sink or with hand sanitizer) after using the restroom.
- Only cleared woman volunteers or the child's parents are permitted to change diapers.
- Volunteers must wear disposable gloves while changing diapers and must wear new gloves with each change. Volunteers must dispose of diapers in the provided diaper pail. Volunteers must disinfect the changing area after each diaper. Volunteers must disinfect their hands and the child's hands after changing each diaper.
- All diapers should be checked and changed (if necessary) before pick-up.
- Volunteers are expected to pay close attention to any child on the changing table.
 - The changing area (diapers and supplies) should be prepared in advance.
 - Individuals changing diapers should never look away, walk away from the table or bend down for a diaper while a child is on the table.

Shelter and Evacuation

If a fire alarm sounds (or an evacuation is ordered) while parents are in service, they are asked to follow the evacuation route established for the main sanctuary. Parents flooding the childcare area will cause considerable congestion and prevent the children from being safely evacuated from the building. Children and parents will be re-united as soon as safely possible.

- All volunteers/teachers/coordinators and staff have been thoroughly briefed and are aware of the plan to follow in case of emergency.
- Evacuation routes are posted throughout the building.

Children's Evacuation & Shelter Plan

In case of severe weather, the **in-place shelter** for children will be **all interior classrooms without windows or children's hallway** (highlighted with red hash marks on the evacuation and shelter map)

If it becomes necessary to **evacuate** our church building, this is the procedure to follow:

- **Infants and 2 year olds will exit through the doors that lead to the outside play area.** Take the children to the back right southwest corner of the parking lot. The teacher will need to bring the attendance sheet with them to count the children as soon as they are out of the building to make sure everyone is safe and accounted for. Check each child off the list as the parents pick them up.
- **Pre-K & Elementary age children will leave the building through the doors outside the kids church (train drop-off).** Take the children to the Fitness Center located behind the youth building. The teacher will need to bring the attendance sheet with them to count the children as soon as they are out of the building to make sure everyone is safe and accounted for. Check each child off the list as the parents pick them up.
- Keep your class in a straight line and as quiet as possible. Do not allow them to play or run through the parking lot. Do not release a child to anyone other than the parent who has that child's matching parent security tag.
- When the "all clear" is sounded, it is **safe to re-enter** the building.

III. Classrooms & Ratios

The Children's Ministry offers classes for the following ages:

- Nursery: Infants through 2yrs
- Preschool: Pre-K (must be potty-trained)
- Elementary: Grades Kindergarten through Grade 5
- If there are siblings or friends that want to stay together, the older goes with the younger.

All classrooms open 20 minutes before each Sunday morning service and 20 minutes before each Wednesday Evening Service.

In an effort to provide the best possible care and learning experience for your child, we closely monitor the adult-child ratio in each classroom and make every effort to achieve an optimum environment.

Classroom Ratios

Infants	1:4
2's	1:7
PreK	1:10
Elementary	1:15

IV. Curriculum

The two greatest commandments given by Christ are to love God with all that we are and to love others as He loves us. Accordingly, our curriculum will always help our children integrate these precepts into every area of their lives through eventual acts of service, obedience, worship, study, and prayer.

Our curriculum will always be designed to give our children an understanding of the flow of Bible events, so they are able to know God and recognize how He has worked throughout history to restore a loving and right relationship with his people.

V. Volunteer Procedures & Responsibilities

Requirements to Serve

- Each volunteer is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview, reference and a criminal background check.
- All Lead volunteer positions must be 18 years of age or older.
- Each Teacher Assistant volunteer position must be at least 12 years of age or older.
- Volunteers are expected to acknowledge and agree with River of Life's Statement of Faith (What We Believe), Vision and Mission Statement.

Scheduling

- Volunteers will coordinate with the Nursery Coordinator, Pre-K Coordinator or Children's Pastor concerning volunteer schedules.
- Once a schedule is made, any changes should be made by switching with a team member. It is the volunteer's responsibility to find a replacement if they are unable to serve as scheduled and to notify the Nursery Coordinator, Pre-K Coordinator or Children's Pastor as soon as possible. Team member contact information will be provided by the appropriate coordinator.
- In the event of an emergency causing the volunteer to be late or absent, it is imperative the volunteer CALL (not email or text) the Coordinator or Children's Pastor as soon as possible.

General

- Volunteers must be knowledgeable of and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.
- Personal belongings should be kept off the floor and out of reach of children.
- Volunteers are asked to refrain from using cell phones unless it is an emergency.
- Special treats or snacks can only be brought in on special occasions or when approved by the Children's Pastor.
- Volunteers will refrain from engaging in any conduct, activity (including the posting of questionable or inappropriate messages or material via internet social media), or associations that may reflect negatively or bring discredit upon themselves, their position as a volunteer, and/or River of Life Church.

Arrival

- Arrive a minimum of 30 minutes before the service begins for **team huddle**. PLEASE BE ON TIME! Keep in mind that tardiness is often contagious and adversely affects everyone.
- Upon arrival pick up your lanyard at the Kids Center Kiosk. Lanyards must be worn at all times. You will not be allowed in kids center without a lanyard.

Class Time

- No one is allowed in your classroom unless they are wearing an approved nametag/lanyard/parent security tag.
- One volunteer should welcome the children and take attendance while the other volunteer engages/entertains the children.
- Take note of any children wearing security tags reflecting an allergy alert.
- Volunteers are encouraged be interacting with the children:
 - Sitting on the floor
 - Engaging at the tables,
 - Playing with the toys
 - Being at “eye level” often aids in gaining and maintaining the children’s attention.
- Volunteers and children will remain in the classroom at all times. Supervised restroom and playtime in the play zone area are the only exceptions.
- Enjoy the children and the opportunity to minister to them.

Check-out/Departure Procedures

- When a parent arrives, the security will make sure the parent/guardian has a security tag in order to enter the kids area.
 - The parent will proceed to pickup child from their classroom.
 - The teacher MUST make sure the tag # matches the child’s tag #.
 - Do not release a child without looking at the security tag first.
 - If the child has misplaced their tag the parent can reprint another sticker from the iPads located right out side the play zone area.
- When the parent/guardian leaves kids area the security will check the parent/guardian security tag with the child’s tag one last time. The security will collect all stickers off the child.
- When all of the children have been dismissed:
 - Return classroom supplies.
 - Vacuum the carpet if needed.
 - Sanitize toys and tabletops (Use rubber gloves while cleaning).
 - Seal all trash bags completely.
- Once your room has been cleaned/sanitized, return your lanyard to the Kids Center Kiosk upon leaving.

VI. Parental Responsibility

For the safety and well-being of your child please adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

Alerts & Requests

- If your child has any allergies, special needs or conditions, please note them on the check in sticker at check-in to ensure that your child's teacher is aware.
- Please take your child to the restroom before you sign your child in.
- It is often beneficial for the parents to expedite the check-in process. This lessens separation anxiety and helps your child adjust to the classroom.
- To eliminate confusion and crowding in the classrooms and halls, we ask that you refrain from entering the classroom area at check-in.

Items You Bring

- Please make sure all of your child's belongings are clearly labeled, including diaper bags, cups, bottles, pacifiers, coats, etc.
- We recommend you leave toys and dolls at home. These items are easily lost and can often be objects of contention between the children.

Tags

- Parents are required to show their parent security tag before entering the childcare area. This is an important security measure designed to control access to the children's area and eliminate unauthorized contact with the children.

Regular Attenders

- Security tags bearing your child's name, classroom and special conditions information (e.g. allergy alert) will be printed at check-in. An accompanying parent tag will also be issued.
- Your child's security tag must be placed on his/her back.
- Elementary age children will be dropped off in the Play Zone by Parent/Guardian.

Train Policies:

- ROL Express typically runs Memorial Day through Labor Day when the weather is appropriate. Children who wish to ride the train must check in at the Caboose at the North end of the River of Life parking lot where they will be given an Security sticker.
- Guardians must accompany their children to the train for safety purposes. Parents/Guardians are allowed to ride the train with their children if there is enough room after children are seated.
- Train drops children off at the front of Youth Building by basketball hoop and parent/guardian will pick them up there and bring them to their classrooms.

- Children are not allowed to ride the train back to the station.

Visitors

- First time visitor security tags can be obtained from the Kids Center Kiosk. The following process has been established for visitors:
 - You will receive a parent tag which you must present to retrieve your child at checkout time.
 - You will be encouraged to complete a registration form. This will allow for your child to be formally entered into the attendance system and church family database. You can fill it out right away or turn it in when you check out your child.
- A security tag will be issued for each child. Make sure you advise the check-in volunteer of any allergies, special needs, or conditions your child may have.
- The parents phone number needs to be written on the tag.
- If you are needed during service the kids ministry team will text your phone.
- Some crying or fussing shortly after separation is normal and expected and usually subsides after a few minutes. If we are unable to comfort your child in 10-15 minutes, we will text you for assistance.

Security for Child Check-Out

Nursery & Pre-K:

When entering the kids center present the parent security tag to security personnel. You must have security tag in order to enter the kids area. Please pickup your child in their classroom. The classroom teacher will match the parent security tag with your child's security tag. The security personnel will remove your child's security sticker and match it with parent/guardians security tag upon leaving the kids area.

Elementary - Grades K-5th:

When entering the kids center present the parent security tag to security personnel. You must have security tag in order to enter the kids area. Please pickup your child in their classroom. The classroom teacher will match the parent security tag with your child's security tag. The security personnel will remove your child's security sticker and match it with parent/guardians security tag upon leaving the kids area.

Parent Volunteers

We encourage our parents to volunteer in our children's ministry. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please contact our Nursery Coordinator, Pre-K Coordinator, or Children's Pastor.

VII. Miscellaneous

Snacks

- Children's hands must be cleaned/sanitized before eating snacks.

- A light snack is provided for children who are old enough. The usual snack is water and 2 crackers per child.
- If your child has allergies, please have this noted each time you check your child in. An allergy alert will be printed (identifying the type of allergy) on your child's name tag. The alert will be highlighted in Red.
- Children in nursery and 2's will be served only when they are seated. Children are prohibited from walking around with snacks or filled cups (for sanitation reasons/ prevention of potential cross-contamination by allergens).
- Cups will be removed and discarded as soon as each child finishes.

Medications

- **Please note:** We are unable to administer medications. If your child requires medication, please make arrangements to personally administer what is required before check-in.
- **Parents please note:** Children with allergies requiring the potential use of an EpiPen must supply their own.

Discipline and Classroom Management

Classroom Rules

1. Obey the teacher
2. Listen
3. Be kind
4. Be safe
5. Keep your hands and feet to yourself

Play Zone Rules

1. No running
2. No screaming
3. No climbing up the slide
4. Obey the teacher(s)
5. Have Fun

Preventative Actions

1. Create a loving, caring atmosphere
2. Establish and communicate realistic expectations
3. Focus on positive actions
4. Be fair and consistent

Corrective Actions

1. Handle situations individually as much as possible.
2. Give a warning when a child fails to follow the rules
3. Remind the child of the rules
4. Explain why the behavior is unacceptable
5. Redirect the child to something positive
6. Explain the consequences of unacceptable behavior by describing the correct way to behave.
7. If a child repeats the action, guide him/her to a quiet place separate from the other children for a short, but designated period of time.
8. After a third time, the child will be escorted to Children's Ministry staff to handle the situation in an appropriate manner. If situation cannot be solved the parent will then be notified.

Aggressive Behavior

1. Biting, hitting, pushing, scratching, or pulling are considered aggressive behaviors and will be addressed promptly.
2. If a child displays any of these behaviors, he or she will be removed from the class and the parents will be notified.

VIII. Volunteer Acknowledgement Form

Volunteer Acknowledgement

The Kids Ministry Policies & Procedures Manual contains important information about River of Life Church. I understand that I should consult the Kids Pastor if I have any questions that are not answered in this manual.

I also acknowledge that revisions to this manual may occur at any time.

My signature below acknowledges that I have received and read this entire manual. My signature also indicates that I agree to serve faithfully and to comply with and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

_____ Signature

_____ Printed Name

_____ Kids Pastor

_____ Date