



Guidelines and Policies for Children and Youth

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INTRODUCTION

Preface

Friends, we are a church family – bound by love for our Lord Jesus Christ and love for one another (Matthew 22:37-40). However, Satan, the enemy of the church, preys upon churches fully committed to the Lord and attempts to discredit and destroy them in any way possible. Today, because of the sinful fallen nature of all mankind, we live in an unfortunate society of sin, distrust, greed, & great risk.

These guidelines are designed to provide a safe, secure, and structured environment for both children and children’s workers in all ministries, activities, and organizations associated with Community of Grace Church in Richmond (including those who use its facilities for other purposes). Some policies outlined below may seem inconvenient or unnecessary; however, our desire is to create procedures that enhance our ministry and that protect the reputation of Christ’s Church and Christ’s people, especially the safety and well-being of those children entrusted to our care.

All church workers will be required to follow these guidelines, specific procedures, and precautions in their entirety. Those who violate this policy will be held solely responsible for their actions and may be relieved of their ministry responsibilities.

Terminology

Child or Children is defined as anyone less than 18 years of age (minors).

Church worker or Staff is defined as an adult 18 years of age or older (volunteer or compensated) involved with the supervision of minors – teaching, assisting, helping, chaperoning, etc. This can also refer to an older youth who is assisting an adult in ministry to younger children (12 years of age or older with nursery through preschool; 15 years of age or older with children up to sixth grade). This individual is expected to demonstrate maturity, good judgment, and Biblical character. All staff (volunteer or compensated) 18 and older will undergo a criminal background check in order to minister to any children.

NOTE: *The team concept at Community of Grace aims to have at least one adult 21 years of age or older.*

Parent(s) can refer to legal guardian(s) if applicable.

Thank you for your ministry both to children and their parents. You help to represent Jesus Christ to all who enter our doors. Both you and children are important to God.

Serving Christ and others in love,
Community of Grace Church

{Sources: Church Law and Tax Report: *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*; Christian Law Association, Seminole FL; Manuals from FGBC churches – Warsaw, IN; Canton, OH; Marion, OH; Worthington, OH; Lititz, PA}

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MINISTRY and PARENTS

Do everything possible to keep parents/guardians informed about and involved in their child's activities with our church because they are primarily responsible for the spiritual, emotional, and physical development of the children that we serve, not you. Ministry to minors must be viewed as ministry to parents/guardians at the same time, so be constantly looking for ways to encourage and support them whenever possible.

NOTES: *All ministries to minors are open to adult (parent and staff) evaluation at any time.*

Staff should strive to speak to a parent / guardian of every child whenever the child is picked up. Staff serving in preschool and toddler ministries should also complete and send home an "Events of the Day" card for each child.

SUPERVISION

Your leadership should be characterized by love and care in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 4). Yet, you are the child's teacher/supervisor and their protector first, not their friend.

For the safety of all children, be in your ministry area **10 minutes before** your ministry begins. Your supervisory responsibilities remain until all children are in the custody of their parents or a parent-approved individual, even past normal dismissal. Never dismiss children early.

NOTE: *Church workers should be notified by the child's parent or legal guardian if another person will pick up their child from church activities.*

Staffing Ratios

In order to best serve those young lives entrusted to our care, all CGC ministries to minors will strive to have the following ideal Child : Staff ratios whenever possible:

- Infant and Toddler ministries: three to one (3:1)
- Preschool ministries: four to one (4:1)
- Children's ministries: seven to one (7:1)
- Middle / High School ministries: ten to one (10:1)

NOTES: *At no time is a child to be unattended. Do not allow a child to be anywhere he/she cannot be seen.*

Staff should strive to never be alone with any child.

Student workers are never to be alone in supervision.

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Team Rule

All children's ministries (including counseling, praying, etc) strive to have at least two (2) adults present at all times. Couples or families may minister together; however, it is best that if there are only two church workers that they not be related.

NOTE: *When dealing individually with a minor:*

- 1] find another adult who can be present (in visual and listening contact) during your meeting / conversation,*
- and -*
- 2] meet with the child in a public area.*

Whenever possible, blinds should be left open. If they need to be closed, available doors must be opened.

SECURITY and SAFETY

Adult volunteers or workers are expected to provide safe environments so as not to create substantial risks to children or themselves.

During activities (apart from regular church services), lock all outside doors.

Outside lights must be turned on for all activities occurring during darkness. Properly lighted interior areas (including restrooms and hallways) help ensure safety.

RESTROOMS

Children older than toddler age should not be permitted to go to the restroom during your ministry. Teach them the responsibility of caring for this before or after the ministry. If an emergency or necessity dictates, seek another adult to supervise the child. (See specific guidelines for younger children under *Infant and Toddler Guidelines*.)

With any restroom duty, the supervising adult should not be in the restroom alone with the child. Keep the restroom doors open if it is necessary for you to be in the restroom to provide verbal assistance.

If an accident occurs, do not directly assist the child. Provide verbal instructions to assist the child in cleaning him / herself. If this is insufficient to solve the problem, parents/guardians will need to be located to assist the child.

DISCIPLINE

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Our goal is to provide a positive experience for all children at Community of Grace Church. Follow these guidelines:

- Workers should define group rules both verbally and visually. Teaching teams should adopt the same rules so that when leaders change, the rules don't.
- Lead consistently – follow your own rules.
- Have a schedule and keep it flowing – always have more activities than needed in case you have more time than what you were expecting.
- Recognize and praise good behavior.
- If a child becomes disruptive:
 - NO corporal punishment or striking of a child at any time.
 - Instead, separate the child and ask what he/she did. Seek to create understanding of why this behavior is unacceptable (refer child to group rules).
 - If the child persists in the disruptive behaviors, remind him/her that his/her parents will be asked to come for the child if behaviors continue.

NOTE: *Be prepared to follow-through on all stated rules and their consequences. Unenforced rules will lead to disrespect and disruption, and it will teach the child to persist in his/her negative behaviors in the future.*

- If the behavior continues for 2-3 weeks, contact the parents to learn if home circumstances may be affecting behavior.

NOTE: *Be sensitive and tactful. Look for ways to help. Say something like, "I am having a hard time ministering to your child. There are obviously some things that I need help with. What can you tell me about your child that will help me serve him/her better?"*

Handle all disciplinary problems as sensitively as possible, remembering that many (if not most) parents feel some sense of inadequacy in how to address their child's behaviors. Treat everyone with respect, and show discipline in a fair and consistent manner.

EMERGENCIES

If someone becomes ill or has an accident, send your teammate (or other available adult / staff) for additional help. Always:

- Stay calm.
- Keep all the children calm.

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- Seek to keep children away from the sick or injured individual.
- Make sure all children are close to you and account for each one.

First Aid

The location of the first aid supplies is clearly marked above the refrigerator in the church kitchen. Two adults should attend any child needing first aid care.

Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning any cuts or open sores.

We encourage all workers to learn first aid and CPR procedures.

9-1-1

9-1-1 is the local telephone number for all emergency personnel. Know where phones in the church are located or use a cell phone. Land lines in the church building require the dialer to press "9" before entering the number to access an outside line.

Emergency Equipment and Exits

Know the location of the fire alarms, fire extinguishers and emergency exits. Exterior doors marked by lighted "EXIT" signs above them may be used as emergency exits.

Evacuation

Anytime the fire alarm sounds, the building is to be evacuated as quickly as possible. Please take these safety precautions:

- Lead your group to the nearest exit.
- Walk – don't run.
- Proceed quickly and quietly without talking (so instructions may be easily heard).
- Coats, etc. may be picked up only if they are located along the direct route to the exit.
- Doors and windows are not to be opened. If possible, close all doors and windows.
- Direct all individuals to designated assembly areas away from building/parking lot.
- No one is to leave church property as emergency vehicles will enter parking lots.
- Everyone is to remain outside the building until permission to re-enter is given by a church official and/or an Emergency Department official.

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NOTE: *Check restrooms before evacuation is completed. When you are safe, make sure everyone is accounted for.*

Incident Reports

“Incident Reports” are to be filled out for any known mishap whether or not it causes injury or whether or not it needs medical attention. Forms are available in the main office.

Any accident, injury, or suspicion of such is to be reported immediately to the parent(s) AND to a church official. All accident/injury reports are to be documented on the Incident Report form in writing by the supervising church worker the same day of the occurrence.

A completed form answers at least these three questions:

- 1) How did the accident occur?
- 2) Who attended the injuries?
- 3) What is the extent of injury and treatment?

Complete the “Incident Reports” with your signature.

Inspect the area where the accident took place. If the accident was caused by a defect (e.g. a cracked floor or uneven sidewalk), rope off the area to avoid further accidents.

NOTE: Do not admit liability or make any commitment to pay expenses, either personally or in speaking for Community of Grace Church. While it is natural to express concern, avoid making any comments regarding fault or negligence.

SICKNESS and DISEASE

General Hygiene and Health

Strict hand-washing is of utmost importance in the protection of good hygiene and the prevention of the spread of sickness and disease. This applies to both child and worker.

All workers should wash their hands before beginning ministry to children, before food preparation or eating, and after restroom or healthcare activity [any contact with body fluids, even if you think you did not touch any of the fluids]. All rooms should have anti-bacterial hand gel available.

Children’s hands should be washed whenever appropriate. Children should be kept from touching other children’s food during eating times.

Wear disposable gloves when attending any hygiene issues. Only disposable towels should be used for any cleaning or washing. Be especially sensitive to cleanliness during cold and flu season.

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Immediately clean with disinfectant any place where body fluids (vomit, blood, urine, bowel movements, diaper changing, etc.) have been present. Inform the custodial staff if a soiled area needs extra attention.

Sickness

Parents will be contacted if there is any suspicion of sickness or to administer medications and first aid. Workers are not permitted to dispense any medications. Children who are exhibiting demonstrative signs of sickness are to be returned to their parent and encouraged to go home.

For the protection of all children and workers, no worker or child should be present if:

- Fever greater than 99.9 degrees. (Scanners are with the first aid supplies.)
- Nose drainage other than clear.
- Loose bowel movements different from child's normal bowel movements.
- Unusual coughing, sneezing, or vomiting.
- Unexplained rash or eye drainage.
- Unusual lethargy or difficulty in breathing.

Procedure in handling blood and other bodily parts:

- Anyone with open sores is not to handle any situation involving potential blood or body fluid contact.
- Soiled surfaces should be promptly cleaned with disinfectants.
- Any item used in clean-up should be cleaned in disinfectant or discarded.
- Blood-contaminated material should be disposed of in plastic bin with a secure tie.
- Wash hands thoroughly after all exposure to blood, even minimal amounts.

Diseases (General)

The following are guidelines for early childhood diseases. Children may be brought to the classroom when the following criteria are met and/or when cleared by their physician:

- Chicken pox - vesicles dried and crusted, approximately 6 days
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) - 24 hours after treatment begins or clearance from physician
- Cylomegalovirus (CMV), Fifth Disease - inform supervisor
- Diarrhea - normal bowel movements or bowel free of parasite
- Coxsackievirus - no fever present
- Haemophilus influenza - completion of treatment
- Hepatitis A - immune globulin given
- Hepatitis B - clearance from physician
- Impetigo - 48 hours after antibiotic treatment and open sores healed or can be covered
- Lice - after treatment and free of the lice
- Roseola - 24 hours after no fever present
- Measles – 4 days after rash appears

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- Rubella (*German measles*) - 6 days after rash appears, inform Director
- Meningococcal disease - clearance from physician
- Mumps - 9 days after swelling begins and/or 24 hours after swelling subsides
- Mouth herpes (*cold sore*) - inform child care staff
- Pertussis (*whooping cough*) - 8 days after antibiotic treatment
- Scabies or Pinworms - 24 hours after treatment started
- Scarlet fever - 24 hours after no fever present and/or two days after treatment started
- Yeast mouth (*thrush*) – clearance from physician after treatment started
- AIDS – Active infections, clearance from physician

Diseases (AIDS)

AIDS is caused by a virus, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), that attacks a portion of the immune system. The body is then unable to fight certain infections and cancers that a normally healthy immune system is easily able to control. It is possible for one to be infected with HIV for many years without symptoms or without having AIDS.

The most recent research published indicates that HIV is spread from one infected individual to another in the following ways:

- Intimate sexual contact
- Contaminated needles used for injections
- Transfusion of blood or blood products before precautions were initiated in 1985
- Mother to infant before or at the time of birth (prenatal)
- Exchange of bodily fluids that contain blood
- *AIDS is not transmitted by casual contact (usual contact between people).*

After review of current medical research we have established the following guidelines:

- Parents of an HIV-infected child should be aware that any children's program is a potential contact point for diseases dangerous to their child but not discernable to the staff. HIV-infected children will not be allowed in our children's programs if any of the following are present:
 - Open sores – not coverable
 - Biting or aggressive behavior
 - Cannot benefit from nursery/preschool setting
 - Require care or observation exceeding usual level.If these factors / behaviors are not present, he/she may participate in normal activities with other children in church activities.
- Those parents bringing a child for the first time will be asked to complete a registration card which includes a question as to whether the child has any communicable diseases, other than the common cold or flu (such as Hepatitis B or HIV infections and any condition that predisposes them to infections).
- When a child is known to have tested HIV positive, the parents are expected to inform Community of Grace Church so proper care for that child can be assured

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and risk factors can be reduced. The church will strive to share this information only with those who need to know.

- No adult who has tested HIV positive can be involved in food preparation or in ministry of any kind to children. Other ministries are available for these individuals to make use of their abilities.
- Church officials will individually notify parents if an HIV-infected child of known infectious exposure has been involved with their child in any circumstances.

No child or adult will be denied involvement in our children's programming unless medically necessary. The request for identification of children with communicable diseases is a means for both parents and church to provide everyone with the fullest experiences in a responsible manner.

ABUSE and NEGLECT

Community of Grace Church has a *zero-tolerance* attitude toward any abuse or neglect. Incidents or suspicion of child abuse or deviant behavior involving church workers apply to the worker's activity/lifestyle at all times, including both official church activities/events as well as non-church related functions..

All adults need to learn how to recognize child abuse and to deal with it appropriately. In her book *Understanding Your Child's Problems*, Dr. Grace H. Ketterman defines child abuse as "any treatment of a child that threatens his/her safety or leaves in his/her life physical or emotional scars." Child abuse is an intentional destructive act which has three forms:

Child Abuse

- 1) **Physical abuse** occurs when someone harms a child's body, resulting in scrapes, bruises, welts, or broken bones, etc. Physical abuse also includes inappropriate touching or fondling which is sexual, suggestive, irregular, demanding, aggressive, or questionable.
- 2) **Emotional abuse** occurs when someone harms a child using critical words, threats, demeaning terminology, sexual or sensual words, etc.
- 3) **Sexual abuse** occurs when someone violates a child's sexual privacy in any way either physically or through any exposure.

NOTE: *Nothing wrong needs to happen at our church for allegations of sexual abuse to be made. Any disgruntled person can bring an accusation. And often in matters dealing with child abuse, one is considered "guilty" until proven innocent. It only takes one instance to ruin the reputation (and finances) of an individual or a church.*

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Any questionable or notable matter/event/abuse (or suspicion thereof) – whether occurring during church ministry or not – is to be communicated to a church official to discuss what specific communication and solution is necessary.

NOTE: *According to the Virginia Code (§ 63.2-1509, Section A, Paragraph 11), our ministries to children fall under specifically highlighted mandatory reporting regulation for everyone involved in the ministry in any fashion.*

If a violation occurs, insure that the children are safe by removing them from the situation or by removing the violating person from the room. Then, immediately find assistance to supervise the class and bring the situation to the attention of a church official. Be willing to talk frankly and to explain what you saw and/or heard.

Child Neglect

Neglect is failure to act on behalf of a child. A neglected child is one:

- 1) Who has been abandoned.
- 2) Who lacks proper parental care because of faults or habits of his/her caregiver(s).
- 3) Whose caregivers do not provide necessary food, clothing, education, medical, or other care.
- 4) Whose caregivers do not provide the support or special care made necessary by the child's mental health or physical disability.

The Signs of Neglect and Abuse

If you note any number of the following signs, you have reasonable cause to suspect some form of abuse or neglect. A proper church official should be notified.

- Physical injuries, including bruises, cuts, burns, welts, patchy hair loss, etc.
- Shifts in personality – out-going to withdrawn or vice versa
- Regression to earlier behaviors – thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, etc.
- Difficulty with urination, discomfort when sitting, unexplained pain, etc.
- Nervousness, depression, aggression, hostility, withdrawal, lack of concentration, sleeping problems, excessive fatigue, vomiting without cause, fear of being alone, etc.
- Inappropriate sexual behavior with peers, unusually sexually explicit language, sexual knowledge beyond developmental age
- Poor hygiene, unattended physical problems
- Poor or inappropriate clothing
- Hoarding/hiding food or other items

In addition, try to be aware of the child's home environment. To know of any abusive family history or behavior and to know of any family stresses (loss of job, financial difficulties, marital problems, rigid discipline, etc.) may be helpful in understanding and helping the child.

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Proper Adult Behavior

Though touch is a powerful form of communication which is exceptionally effective in getting a child's attention, comforting a child, or communicating approval, it can be abused. The following serve as guidelines on touching for workers:

- Never strike or use corporal punishment on anyone, even if authorized or encouraged by a child's parent/guardian. If parents/guardians discipline in this way, they are requested to care for this at home or in a private area.
- Be cautious of the appropriate use of touching with children.
 - Sometimes children seek physical affection. While usually harmless, a hug, rub on the back or other form of affection may appear questionable to others; therefore, we request that these acts be done rarely and always in public.
 - Any and all kissing is off-limits.
 - Children beyond nursery age are not permitted to sit on any church worker's lap, even if they initiate the contact.

If any children's worker is accused of abuse, an attorney will be contacted, and the accused will be suspended or assigned to a position with no contact with children.

PERMISSION FORMS and DOCUMENTATION

Activities are encouraged; however, proper forms must be distributed, collected, and filed. See the forms included in this manual. Copies are available in the main office.

The following are church forms:

- Attendance Sheet (completed for every church-sponsored event)
- Accident Report
- Community of Grace Church Permission Form
(applies to involvement in any church event)
- Nursery and Toddler Information Sheet
- Medical Permission and Release Form
- Worker Application
- Background Check

OTHER LEADING RESPONSIBILITIES

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If you are sick or will be absent from your duty, it is your responsibility to arrange for a suitable **substitute**. Please see the church office or contact your ministry leader for a list of approved substitutes.

All church rooms are multipurpose. It is the responsibility of each worker to leave each room clean and returned to its original configuration.

It is each worker's responsibility to make sure the needed materials are available before the assigned ministry time. Check the CE Cabinet for supplies.

Workers should highlight the spiritual aspect of special calendar celebrations. Our goal is a Christ-centered approach in all our teachings; consequently, do not make use of secular symbols, such as Santa Claus, jack-o-lanterns, witches, Easter bunny, astrology, etc. If you have any concerns that an activity may be inappropriate, speak with your ministry leader or the pastor.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexual harassment is illegal behavior that harms the victim and negatively impacts the Community of Grace Church (CGC) by creating an environment of fear, distrust, and intolerance. This abuse also damages the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the church upholds.

CGC is committed to providing a safe, healthy, Christ-like environment for all who attend, that is free from unlawful sexual harassment and discrimination. Therefore, CGC strictly prohibits all forms of sexual harassment on church grounds, at church sponsored events, and on route to such events (in cars/vans/buses). It is in violation of this policy for any student, adult, employee, staff person, or any third party (visitors, workers, vendors, etc.) to sexually harass any student or adult.

Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communications of a sexual nature, and any other gender-based harassment, whether initiated by students, adults, or third parties when:

- Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly.
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for decisions regarding, attendance, participation in activities or any other aspect related to CGC activities.
- It creates an intimidating, hostile and offensive environment at CGC.

Victims of sexual harassment should document the harassment as soon as it occurs and with as much detail as possible, including the nature of the harassment, dates times and places it occurred, name of the harasser(s), witnesses, and the victim's response to the harassment.

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To the extent that they feel safe, the victim is encouraged to confront the harasser. A pastor or elder can be present as well to assist the victim and harasser. Resolution and healing is desired by CGC. If harassment continues the church may dismiss the harasser and/or the authorities may be contacted.

NOTE ON THE DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

At Community of Grace we do not baptize infants. According to the Word of God, baptism is to be experienced only by a person who understands the Gospel and who by faith receives Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Acts 8:37). Any person, regardless of age, can be baptized after making that decision.

We understand from the Bible that parents are primarily responsible before God to guide their children in spiritual truth both by instruction and by example (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 1-9; 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4). More specifically, the parents are to lead the child in the study of God's Word so that he/she will receive Jesus Christ as Savior at an early age (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

We do encourage parents to publicly present their child to God during a church service for His direction and blessing on the child's life (1 Samuel 1:21-28; Luke 2:21-24). It is important to add that at this same time the parents are "dedicating" themselves to fulfill God's will of training their child how to know God and how to experience His eternal salvation. If you desire to do this as a family, please contact one of the pastors.

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SPECIFIC INFANT and TODDLER GUIDELINES

The Infant and Toddler rooms should strive to be staffed by a team of at least two individuals with a minimum of one (1) adult (at least 21 years of age). A person at least 12 years of age may aid the adult in infant and toddler care. Our infant and toddler ministries strive for an ideal worker/child ratio of 1:3.

NOTE: *All staff serving in the infant nursery are to remove their shoes and wear provided footies at all times while serving.*

Please keep children in their age-appropriate rooms:

Infant Nursery: Newborns and crawlers
Toddler Nursery: Walkers and toddlers
Pre-School Room: Potty-trained through pre-Kindergarten

Please minimize any unnecessary traffic in the infant and toddler areas from non-staff adults or children. We want to keep these rooms as clean as we possibly can.

At the end of each church program, wash any dirty toys, sort the toys in their bins, place dirty linens in bag, and empty wastebaskets outdoors.

Attendance and Information

Each child is to have a completed Information sheet found in the notebook for their room. Please check every time a child is checked-in that this form is on file.

NOTE: *This form must be updated every six (6) months for every child – no exceptions. Completion date and renewal date is found on the top of every form.*

List all children and workers on the attendance clipboard each and every time any infant and/or toddler nurseries are occupied, regardless of the number of persons present.

Before the end of every ministry activity/event, fill out an *Events of the Day* card for each child and place in his/her diaper bag.

Diaper Bags

Parents, please include the following items in your diaper bags:

- Approximately 4 diapers (disposable only, please)
- Extra undershirt or equivalent
- Powder or lotion (if desired to be used; please state on Child Information Sheet)
- Bottles of milk, juice, or water; baby food as needed

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- Bib(s)
- Pacifier (Please place these on a ribbon that is attached to your child's clothing. This prevents pacifiers from falling to the floor or being misplaced)
- Washcloth

Workers, please ask each parent to label their child's diaper bag immediately.

NOTES: *No items will be shared among the children, so please label all personal items.*

Tiny babies and children starting potty training need a complete change of clothes available.

Those with more than one child in the nursery ministry do not need separate bags for each child.

Diaper Changing

Infant and toddler ministry staff are expected to change diapers as necessary. Always wear NEW disposable gloves when changing any child's diaper and when applying lotion, powder, ointment, etc. (Use diaper care products according to parental instructions.)

Diapers should be changed in the child's own crib or on a non-porous surface. Disinfect the non-porous surfaces after each changing by cleaning with a germicide and drying with a paper towel. Please dispose of used items in the secured container.

NOTES: *It is considered best practice to have these supplies ready before your ministry begins.*

Check all children's pants every hour. Have children ready for dismissal with clean pants.

Potty-Training Children

Parents

- Please inform the staff of your child's progress in potty-training.
- Please take your child to the restroom before dropping them off.
- Because of the larger number of children for which to care, infant and toddler ministry staff cannot care for potty training as the parent can at home. Please do not bring your child in training pants until he/she can clearly tell the worker.

Staff

- Attempt to take each child to the restroom approximately every hour.
- Never enter the restroom or toilet stalls alone with a child. If you are alone with restroom duty, prop the restroom door open for a safe environment.

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- Avoid assisting a child who has wet or soiled his/her clothing. Seek the parent for the child's care or instruct them on how to clean themselves without direct assistance.
- Disinfect the toilet seat whenever used.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Minimize mouth-to-skin contact. Do not allow children to suck on your skin surface. We encourage appropriate holding and cuddling; however, kissing is not permitted.

Immediately clean with disinfectant any place where body fluids (vomit, blood, urine, bowel movements, diaper changing, etc.) have been present. Inform the custodial staff if a soiled area needs extra attention.

NOTES: *Disposable towels are to be used for any cleaning.*

Use disposable gloves when attending any sickness, disease, or cleaning.

Discard all cleaning materials properly in the secure waste receptacle.

All linens are to be changed and replaced with new linens after use by a child. Babies are not to share cribs or linens at any time. Place all dirty linens in the appropriate covered bin.

Feeding

Children will be fed according to the parent's instructions.

Parents

- Please bring extra bottles of water, juice, or milk in case of a hungry baby even between regular feedings.
- Animal cookies or Cheerios may be provided for snack. If parents do not desire this (or you prefer to provide your own), please state on the Child Information Sheet.

Staff

- Heat no food (including bottles) in a microwave oven, on the stove, or in a bottle warmer. Hold the item under running warm water or set it in a container of warm water. If parents feed their own child, heating instructions are at their discretion.
- Return all food/empty containers to the child's bags when finished.

Children are to be kept from touching other children's food during eating times.

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NOTE: *A private nursery area is available for breast-feeding mothers.*

Toys

Toys are provided in the nursery and toddler rooms. They are carefully chosen and age-appropriate for safe play. They are also disinfected routinely for healthy play.

- Workers: Please keep the appropriate toys in the proper rooms.
- Parents: Toys are provided in the infant and toddler rooms for all to use; however, feel free to include a soft “huggie” or familiar item of comfort.

Toys which have been in a child’s mouth will be washed immediately with soap or water or put in the “dirty toy” bin to be disinfected at a later time. All other and play equipment will be washed with a disinfectant on a regular basis.

Supervision and Safety

No child under 3 years of age is to be on the church property without a parent present.

Children will only be released to parents (or other authorized adults), not to older siblings.

Infant and toddler rooms are off-limits to those not registered as children, parents, or staff, including staff not scheduled and/or serving at a particular time.

To prevent safety hazards:

- Jewelry is discouraged due to risk to child safety.
- Please keep all purses (including diaper bags, satchels, etc.) out of reach of the children.
- All electrical outlets are to be covered with plastic inserts.
- Pay special attention to any small items which could cause a choking hazard or sharp items which could cause lacerations.

Sickness

Parents will be contacted to administer medications and first aid. Infant and toddler staff are not permitted to dispense any medications.

For the protection of all children and staff, no staff or child should be in either the infant or toddler rooms if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever greater than 99.9 degrees rectally or fever within the last twenty-four hours.
- Nose drainage other than clear.

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- Unusual coughing or sneezing.
- Loose bowel movements that are different from the child's normal bowel movements.
- Vomiting, except normal regurgitation of feedings by babies.
- Generalized rash, except prickly heat, diaper rash, eczema, etc.
- Eye drainage (should be evaluated by a physician).
- Open sores.

If a child has or develops any of the above symptoms, the parents will be contacted immediately.

NOTE: *During cold and flu season, anti-bacterial hand gel may be used on toddlers' hands before they enter the toddler room.*

Child Emotions

Workers: Parents are to be alerted immediately whenever there is a question about their child. Parents are sensitive to their child's emotions. They should not come and find their child hot, sweaty, and exhausted from crying.

Parents: As at home, children do experience periods of fussiness; and, as at home, such periods will be met with every attempt at tender loving care. Please alert the infant and toddler workers to times of fussiness with your child (teething, shots, etc.) as well as to possible means of comfort. If for any reason your child is agitated for a prolonged period of time (no more than 10 minutes), parents will be called to soothe the child.

Child Behavior

If a child hits or grabs toys away from others, gently say "No" or "You may have a turn in a moment" and then distract them with another activity.

If any child exhibits persistent biting behavior (and one-on-one supervision cannot be provided) his/her parents will be asked to remove that child from all infant and toddler activities until such behavior ceases.

NOTES: *Church guidelines prohibit administering any spanking, striking, or other corporal punishment of and kind and with any child.*

Parents will be asked to supervise their children who repeatedly show aggressive behavior.

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SPECIFIC MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL GUIDELINES

CGC also has specific guidelines in dealing with those who are in Middle & High School that are differentiated from some of the guidelines already expressed herein. Some of these specific guidelines are exceptions to previously stated policies and some are additional procedures, all specific to the developmental stage of these students.

Check-In / Check Out Procedures

Given the nature of our ministries, check-in / check-out policies are not in place on a regular basis.

NOTES: *CGC staff should never leave any activity (either a regular meeting or special event) without all students having obtained a ride home.*

CGC staff will fashion appropriate check-in / checkout policies for specific activities as situations warrant.

Restroom Policies

Staff involved in Middle & High School ministry will NEVER assist ANY youth in restroom activities.

While students will be encouraged not to disrupt events and activities with excessive bathroom breaks, the students will be allowed to make their own decisions as to when it is appropriate to utilize these facilities. If a student's behavior in this regard becomes inappropriate or disruptive, the situation will be addressed on an individual basis.

Sickness and First Aid

Whereas youth staff reserve the right ask students to return home because of issues of sickness / illness in a given situation, the general guidelines abovementioned (Section: SICKNESS and DISEASE) will not apply to ministries to Middle & High School students.

Youth staff of CGC are not permitted to dispense any medications without specific written release and direction from parents / guardians, which will only be valid for any one given calendar year.

Staffing Policies

Whereas youth staff will always attempt to maintain ideal Student : Staff ratio (10:1), some situations will arise that will require either a tightening or a loosening of this ratio. These situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will always take the safety and security of our youth into primary consideration.

Youth staff will always strive to maintain the standard of never having a singular staff alone with one student as well as to maintain the Team Rule, but it is noted and understood that some situations – such as the transportation of students – will result in a staff being alone in a vehicle with

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a youth. Staff will strive to communicate this with both parents and other staff when such a situation arises.

As a general rule, CGC youth staff will strive to minister in gender specific fashion across the scope of Middle & High School Ministries (*ie* – male staff members will seek to minister to male students, and female staff members will seek to minister to female students).

Youth Ministry & Parents

It is the policy of CGC – in regard to Middle and High School students – that parents / guardians be involved in every aspect of our ministries; namely, they are to be actively engaged in planning, orchestrating, and facilitating the various ministries and activities made available for our youth. In essence, CGC will only be able to provide those opportunities to the students that are so supported by the parents / guardians of the students involved.

Further more, it is not the goal of CGC to supplant the role of parents / guardians; rather, Middle and High School ministries exist to support the God-given role of parents / guardians as the primary responsible agents in the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical development of their children. Our efforts will be to continually reflect this responsibility back to parents / guardians and to support them as they seek to own this Biblical charge.

Conduct Expectations

CGC ministries to Middle and High School students include (both are not limited to) the following conduct expectation for students, for a regular meeting or special event:

*Students **are** expected to:*

- Be considerate of & respect others/their property
- Demonstrate the values of a Christian by word and deed
- Respect & comply with any stated or established rules
- Respect & obey adult leaders

*Students are expected **not** to:*

- Possess or use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco
- Possess weapons, fireworks, lighters, or explosives
- Attack another person physically / verbally
- Play music or other media that includes profane or offensive content
- Wear offensive or immodest clothing
- Enter the sleeping quarters of anyone of the opposite sex
- Demonstrate inappropriate or unwanted affection

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CONCLUSION

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between an adult and a child will be confronted immediately and investigated. Written documentation of such will be placed into permanent files. Any church workers' services can be terminated immediately for continued violation of these procedures or for a single violation of sufficient gravity.

All the policies and guidelines contained in this manual are expected to be read thoroughly and followed by all church workers. Any adult or worker who violates these policies will be held solely responsible for his/her actions, and appropriate action will be taken by ministry leaders / church officials to correct infractions.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All church workers, compensated or volunteer, including clergy, must follow the guidelines below in order to work/serve with children in our church.

- Know Jesus Christ personally as their Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9-10).
- Accept the Bible as the inerrant Word of God and the final authority in matters of faith and practice.
- Is not participating in any illegal or Biblically immoral behavior. (Any worker with incidents or suspicion of child abuse or any deviant behavior – whether past or present – will not be permitted to work with children at Community of Grace Church. This applies to the worker's activity/lifestyle at all times. Workers are expected to release this information honestly to the proper church official.)
- Complete a "Worker Application."
- Give approval for a criminal reference check (to be conducted when considered appropriate).

Copies of this policy manual are available in every church classroom.

Our policies and manuals are open for review and suggestions at any time from parents, guardians, and staff alike.