

Kid Zone Volunteer Policies

VictoryPoint Ministries



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Our Purpose:

Our children's ministry is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn to be like and live like Jesus.

As volunteers we have the opportunity to change kid's lives, to build relationships, and to have fun. These procedures help us to accomplish that in an accountable and trustworthy manner.

Why We Have Policies:

To protect the children...

- 1) From physical harm. Procedures help to insure that kids stay physically safe from the volunteers who serve them, as well as unrelated adults who may attempt to gain access to the child.
- 2) From emotional harm. Volunteers or other children could cause emotional harm to a child. While often unintentional, procedures help to lessen the chance a child could get emotionally hurt in classroom situations.
- 3) From dangerous situations: Procedures insure that every effort is made to protect the child from fire, tornado, or injury within the classroom.

To protect the volunteers...

- 1) From accusations. Procedures help to insure that we document incidents and accidents. In this way we make every effort to insure volunteers and the church are protected from false accusations and/or legal liability.

Reducing the Risks of One-to-One Contact

Two Person Rule:

In any classroom environment, at least two unrelated adult volunteers must be present with minors. This not only protects us from accusations involving the children but also the minors who volunteer.

Unobstructed Views:

In any classroom environment, each door should allow for an unobstructed view of the room. This could mean an unobstructed window within the door, or an open door.

Physical Contact

- While the appropriate display of affection between volunteers and children is often part of conveying support and encouragement, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug (if initiated by the child), an arm around the shoulder, a pat on the back or a light touch to the forearm. A volunteer or child's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
- Volunteers ordinarily should not physically restrain a child in their care. Other disciplinary options are discussed on the next page, but should restraint becomes necessary, it is best to call in the parents immediately and have them deal directly with the situation.

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Misbehavior

- Parents should be informed whenever a child misbehaves beyond minor correction, or if a pattern of misbehavior increases.
- Concerns about a child's behavior or the appropriate response to a child's behavior should be reported to the team leader.

Discipline

Connect and Redirect:

- Addressing misbehavior will begin with turning attention to the child, listening, and empathizing. Depending on the age of the child, the child can then be redirected to another activity or engaged in “problem-solving” to amend the situation.

Time Outs:

- For young children (ages 2-5), time-outs should not last longer (in minutes) than the age of the child. For example, a three-year-old should not have to sit for a timeout longer than three minutes.

Other Options:

- Distract the child with another activity.
- Help the child focus on another more acceptable behavior.
- Isolate the child from others if another volunteer is available to assist.

Unacceptable Discipline:

- Physical punishment (slapping, hitting, and pushing) is not permitted.
- Abusive verbal discipline (yelling, hurling insults, threatening) is not permitted.

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Check-in and Text-Alerts

When a child is checked-in the parent/guardian is given a nametag with a number for each child they sign in at Kid Zone. When a parent comes to pick up that child they must have the security number they were given in order to sign their child out. The child must not be released to the parent without the assigned number even if the person signing the child out knows the parents.

Children that cry for extended periods, inconsolable, combative, or ill children are all examples of when you should consider text-alerting a parent. Keep in mind that permitting the child to leave with the parent still requires the security number in order to be released.

If you need to text a parent, use the cell number listed on the child's nametag for the best adult to contact. In the event the parent is unresponsive, check the emergency contact for the child, if appropriate.

Fire Escape Routes

- There are fire escape routes posted in each Kid Zone room. Please make yourself aware of these routes and any specific instructions for your room.

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Physical Injuries

- If a child gets hurt during Kid Zone and it is a non-emergency (small cut or bump), the parent does not have to be texted. But if the child is in anyway upset or crying and needs a parent to console him then the parent should be called. Make sure if the parent is not called, at the time, that they are informed about what happened when they pick up their child.
- There have been times when one child has hurt another child during Kid Zone. In that event the parent should be called if the child that was hurt or needs their parent. Both sets of parents should be told, and an incident report needs to be filled out by the team leader and/or persons leading the room that day.

Medical Emergencies

Medical emergencies can involve any of the following:

- A broken bone or severe cut.
- A diabetic child needs a parent to administer insulin.
- An allergic reaction that requires a parent to use an EpiPen. Be aware of any child allergies so emergencies can be responded to quickly. Specific allergies are listed on the sign-in sheet.

Should medical emergencies warrant, additional help can be accessed by:

- Texting the parent
- Paging 999 for the VP Medical Team
- Dialing 911. Specific instructions are listed by the phone in your Kid Zone room.

The severity of the emergency will determine if a call to a parent, 999, or 911 is warranted. Please use your best judgment and common sense in each situation.

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Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

Child abuse is physical, sexual, or psychological mistreatment or neglect of a child, especially by a parent or other caregiver. It may include any act or failure to act by a parent or other caregiver that results in actual or potential harm to a child, and can occur in a child's home, or in the organizations, schools or communities the child interacts with.

As a church we are *mandated reporters*, which means we are obligated by law to report suspected abuse. Not only do we have a moral obligation to report suspected abuse to authorities, but because the church can be held liable, we have a legal obligation to do so.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

OUR PROCESS

- If a volunteer or staff suspects that a child in Kid Zone has been abused (by another volunteer/staff or outside of VP), the following steps are to be followed:
 - Do not interview the child regarding the suspected abuse. When a person observes what may be a sign or symptom of abuse, it is natural to ask the child how the sign or symptom appeared. Do not, however, interview the child in great detail about the sign or symptoms, or suggest that he or she has been abused.
 - Do not discuss the suspected abuse with the other volunteers. All information should be kept confidential with your ministry leader and the proper authorities.
 - Immediately report your suspicions to your team leader or Kid Zone Director.
 - Your Team leader/Kid Zone Director has a list entitled "Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse", which will help everyone involved to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with your suspicions.
 - Your Team leader/Kid Zone Director will help with the filing of a "Incident or Suspected Child Abuse Report" and they will insure that the suspected abuse is turned over to the designated reporting agency.