

**Alliance Church
Children's Ministry**

Children's Ministry Policies & Procedures

2017-2018



“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:14

Children's Ministries Policies & Procedures

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CREATING A SAFEPLACE ENVIRONMENT

A. Worker Selection and Child Protection Policy

Alliance Missionary Church is committed to providing a safe place for those participating in our ministry activities, particularly children, youth and disabled adults. We seek to minimize any vulnerability to unwarranted accusations of improper behavior that our organization, volunteers and employees may experience as they fulfill their ministerial duties. To fulfill these commitments our leadership team has adopted the following procedures to be used when selecting ministry volunteers and new employees.

Employee and Volunteer Screening Procedures

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a volunteer or employed position that involves working with children, youth or disabled adults will complete and return a ministry application. This application will include information about past ministry activity, any criminal behavior, personal references and permission to perform a criminal background check.
2. A ministry leader, or designee will review the application, ensuring that the candidate is an appropriate match for the ministry position. All applications, background checks, reference checks and notes from the interview will be kept in a secure location.
3. If the individual appears to be an appropriate candidate for the ministry position a criminal background check will be secured and the ministry leader will determine which of the personal references to contact.
4. When indicated by our reference check and/or the background check that the candidate will pose a threat to others, or has a prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person the candidate will be removed from consideration for ministry positions.

Waiting Period

All volunteer candidates must be regularly involved in Alliance Church for a minimum of six months before they will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children, youth or disabled adults.



Supervision


1. **Two Adult Rule:** A minimum of two adults should be present in any room, vehicle or at any function where children, youth or disabled adults are involved. These must be adults who have been approved through the screening procedures.
2. **Open Doors:** Rooms where activities with children, youth or disabled adults are taking place are required to have windows or be kept partially open at all times.
3. **Family Protection:** We may have some situations where individuals from the same family are working together in the same classroom. We believe that a husband and wife team can make a great connection with younger students. We also recognize a potential danger which we expect will be guarded by the open door policy.
4. **Responsibility:** Workers should arrive 10 minutes prior to a scheduled activity and remain until the last individual under their care has been picked up by an authorized person. No child under the age of 10 should be released to find their parents or wait unattended.
5. **Restroom Guidelines:** We recommend that parents take children to the restroom prior to class or an activity. When restroom breaks are necessary an adult female will escort a group of girls and an adult male will escort a group of boys. For children age 5 and under an adult female will assist as needed in the restroom. Workers are to never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper, and should never enter a cubicle and close the door.

Discipline

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming himself or another individual.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the ministry activity coordinator or supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

Discipline Plan:

1. Reward good behavior:
 - Immediate praise and recognition for positive actions are effective way to encourage more of the same.
2. Remind the student of proper classroom behavior
 - Remind him/her of classroom rules and what is expected



3. Redirect the student

- Move him/her to a different situation or area. Separate the child from others when he/she is having difficulty behaving.

4. Remove the student from the group

- Using a time-out chair within the classroom and in view of both volunteers and give an appropriate explanation of what is wrong with the child's behavior. Then give him/her several minutes to sit alone (the child's age should be equal to time-out minutes) When child is settled ask him/her to rejoin the group.

5. Return the student to a parent.

- If steps 1-4 fail to change behavior the child should be taken to a parent for the remainder of the class. After class, the teacher will explain the problem to the parents and reassure the child that he/she is welcome to join the class next time. Teacher should report the action to Ministry Director.

Suggested Classroom Manners

- Be kind to one another.
- Pay attention and listen.
- Follow instructions.
- Talk one at a time.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.

Health and Safety Guidelines

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or a communicable disease that can be transmitted by cough or by touch) should not be received into the nursery or classroom.
2. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as the illness is discovered. If that is not possible they should be isolated from other participants until returned to their parent.
3. When an injury occurs workers will make sure proper medical attention is given to the injured individual and provide for continued monitoring of all other participants.
4. Persons who have received an injury that is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The individuals parents or guardian should be notified when they are picked up.

5. When an injury or accident occurs which requires medical attention the parents or guardian should be notified immediately along with the ministry leader. If warranted emergency medical personnel should be called. A report of the accident or injury should be submitted to the ministry leader in a timely manner.

Counseling

1. When workers meet with individuals for spiritual/emotional counseling it is advisable to have two adults involved in the counseling room. When only one individual is conducting the counseling session it should be in a room with a window or with the door kept partially open.
2. When counseling a minor written permission should be obtained from the individual's parent or guardian.

Notice of Injury, Abuse or Molestation

1. Volunteer or paid ministry staff who become aware of any injury, abuse or molestation occurring within any ministry activity must immediately inform their activity coordinator, supervisor or ministry leader. Information must get to the ministry leader who will fill out the appropriate Notice of Injury form.
2. Ministry leaders who become aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant must ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The Ministry leader will contact an attorney or the North Central District leadership to determine if a report of abuse or molestation should be filed with law enforcement authorities. This should be accomplished within 24 hours of the ministry leader first becoming aware of the situation.
3. Ministry leaders must also notify Alliance Church's insurance carrier upon notice of abuse or molestation and the North Central District office.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator or supervisor when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. Ministry coordinators, supervisors, and ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.



Internal Investigation

1. Alliance Church considers any allegation of abuse or molestation a serious matter. Each situation will be fully investigated by ministry leaders. District assistance, legal counsel and civil authorities will be involved as needed.
2. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from any responsibilities involving children, youth or disabled adults. They will receive their pay pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to the abuse or molestation will be terminated consistent with the established employment practices of Alliance Church.
3. Volunteers who are subject of any investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
4. Alliance Church will permanently remove any employees or volunteers from their ministerial duties if they are found guilty of abuse or molestation. Whenever termination of employment is a factor we will consult with our District office or legal counsel for advice and direction.

Dealing with Law Enforcement and News Media

1. All ministry leaders, employees and volunteers of Alliance Church will cooperate fully with law enforcement or governmental agencies investigating allegations of injury, abuse or molestation.
2. The leadership of Alliance Church will seek legal counsel and/or contact with our District leadership, as soon as possible after we receive notice of possible abuse or molestation within our organization. Their advice will be the basis for our response to the allegations.
3. One individual, a member of the leadership team or our attorney, will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. Our spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, doing so in a prudent manner to avoid compromising an ongoing investigation and to maintain the privacy of the individuals involved.

Review of Policies

Ministry leaders will seek to review these policies and procedures annually or as needed to make sure they are being carried out and to suggest necessary changes to further provide for the safety of all who attend and participate in activities at Alliance Church.



Revision of Policy and Procedures

The leadership of Alliance Church will make necessary changes to policy and procedures to stay consistent with Church bylaws and to respond to new needs we have become aware of. When changes are made, ministry leaders will communicate them to all employees and volunteers affected by the policy changes.

B. EARLY CHILDHOOD/ELEMENTARY CONSIDERATIONS

Child Registration

1. All Parents should fill out a registration form and Parents of Nursery/Preschool Childcare should have a KidCheck Account.
2. Parents should check in and Check out their children in appropriate area. KidCheck for Nursery/Preschool Childcare. Check in sheets for Preschool and Elementary Life Learning.

Releasing Children

1. The parent or guardian signing in a child is to be the one who picks up the child.
2. All children 2nd Grade and younger should not be released until parent picks them up. Children older than that should be released to find parents unless parent specifically states they want them to wait.
3. Parents may allow older children to take younger but only with written approval.

Diaper Changing

1. A diaper-changing procedure should be developed that utilizes standard precautions concerning blood-borne pathogens. The procedure should be posted clearly near changing areas.
2. The diaper-changing area should be located where at least one other worker can view the changing procedure.

Clean Hands

1. Proper hand washing is one of the basics to good health and is one of the key standard precautions in the prevention of the spread of disease. Children and adults should be taught and reminded of the proper hand-washing procedure.
2. Hand-washing posters should be posted by all restrooms and nursery areas.

C. HOUSEKEEPING

Nursery/Classrooms

All changing table surfaces and toys, cribs, table tops, etc., must be cleaned with a disinfecting solution at the conclusion of each session.

Custodial Cleaning

Proper cleaning practices using appropriate-strength cleaning agents are required.

D. PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Appropriate Touch


The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love.

- Meet children at their eye level by bending down or sitting
- Listen to individuals with your ears, eyes, and heart.
- Hold the child's hand while listening or speaking to him or when walking to an activity.
- Putting an arm around the shoulder of an individual when comforting, quieting or greeting is an appropriate way to hug. This side-to-side type of hug should only be done in public.
- A light touch to a hand, shoulder or back when encouraging is acceptable
- Gently hold the shoulders or chin of a child when redirecting the child's behavior. This helps the child focus on what you are saying, and is helpful with children who have ADHD
- Hold a preschool child who is crying.

Inappropriate Touch

The following types of touch must be avoided.

- Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
- Extended hugging and tickling, or prolonged physical contact of any kind.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (exception: properly assisting a child in the rest room.)

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- Carrying an older child or sitting him or her on your lap.
 - Being alone with a child.
 - Giving a full contact, body to body hug.

E. SPECIAL EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT POLICIES

Field Trips, Special Events and Personal Appointments

1. Off-site activities should be preapproved by church leaders who must fill out a church activity report form. Parent should be notified at least on week prior to the outing.
2. Parent consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating.
3. Parents should be well informed of the activities scheduled for each event
4. All trips and outing should be supervised by a minimum of two approved and unrelated adult leaders.
5. All one-on-one appointments should be preapproved by both a parent and a ministry supervisor. Such appointments should only take place in public places, or in an office with a window in the door, or the office door visibly open and other people near by.

Transportation

1. Any driver transporting children during an activity must have a valid drivers license and current automobile insurance.
2. The number of occupants in the vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belt. Seat belts must be worn.
3. Church leaders must contact their insurance company regarding the minimum and maximum age ranges, and other requirements, to ensure that coverage is in effect for all approved drivers.
4. As often a possible have parents transport their own children to and from ministry activities. A lone sponsor should never transport a child solo at any time.
5. Make sure all laws regarding children in booster/safety seats is followed.

Overnight Events

1. All overnight events must be preapproved by church leaders
2. Parental consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating.



3. Parents should be well informed of the activities scheduled for each event.
4. All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.
5. There should be two adults for every ten children. Every leader should have an assigned group of children they are responsible for. And appropriate male/female, leader/student ratio is required.

F. BREASTFEEDING POLICY

To better encourage and support breastfeeding mothers in our congregation, we have designated a lounge area in the women's bathroom and the napping room in the nursery as a safe and comfortable area for breastfeeding. In this space, you will have the ability to nurse your child(ren), watch or listen to the service from a live media stream, change your child's diaper, and rock or lounge in a comfortable setting.

As Christians, we remain committed to building each other up in the faith. Romans 14:13 and 1 Corinthians 8:9 remind us that there are times we give up or curb certain things with which we are comfortable (that are not inherently sinful), so as to keep from becoming a stumbling block to another (which is sinful). This policy is aimed at this part of our faith. We want to champion breastfeeding and we want to protect those who may be easily tempted or offended by uncovered public breastfeeding. This is the Christian's way of being willing to be inconvenienced for the benefit of another.



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ChildcARE MinistRIes



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