

King of Grace Church Child Protection Policy 2013

Welcome!

Welcome to Children's Ministry at King of Grace Church!

It is our goal to create a safe and loving environment in which the children entrusted to our care are able to learn about the character of God, discover biblical truth, and learn what it means to follow Jesus Christ. This document is designed to familiarize parents, Teachers, and Helpers with our child protection procedures which apply to our Children's Ministry program occurring during the Sunday service.

Children's Ministry refers to all our programs for children. These programs include:

- "Nursery" for children infant to 5 years old
- "Sunday School" for children attending 1st to 6th grade.
- "Youth Group" for children attending 7th to 12th grade.

If you have any questions or comments regarding Nursery and Sunday School, please call the Children's Ministry Directors Heidi Parisi (508) 932-9803 or Paul Parisi (508) 932-9802. If you have any questions or comments regarding Youth Group, please call the Youth Director Steven Miller (412) 860-9362.

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Mission

The Children's Ministry of King of Grace Church exists to glorify God by:

- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Deuteronomy 6, Ephesians 6:4)
- Building the children into Christ and into His Church, which is God's vehicle for gospel transmission (Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31).
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)

Child Protection Policy

Our first concern is that the children be safe while they are in our care.

To this end we:

- Screen all Children's ministry volunteers
- Require training for all children's Ministry volunteers
- Utilize identification systems for the Nursery and Sunday School
- Employ scheduling procedures and Teacher/child ratios that optimize safety
- Educate our volunteers about recognizing child abuse and encourage them to report any known or suspected abuse to church officials and to appropriate governmental authorities consistent with applicable laws
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to Children's Ministry

Caregiver Expectations

All Children's Ministry volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Ministering to the children according to their assigned roles

Protecting the Children Before They Arrive

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday morning. Every applicant who wishes to serve in Children's Ministry is required to go through a screening process and attend Teacher/Helper training.

Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, King of Grace Church has established several criteria that all Teachers (18 years or older) and Helpers (12 years or older) must meet in order to work with our children:

- All Teachers must be members in good standing of King of Grace Church who have completed the *Exploring King of Grace* membership class and the Pastoral interview.
- All Teachers must be eighteen years of age or older. Youth who are at least twelve years of age are welcome to assist as Helpers (subject to the approval of the Pastor(s) and the Children's Ministry Director(s)).

- All reference checks and Criminal records checks (CORI) must be satisfactorily completed. Other appropriate screening checks may be completed subject to the discretion of the Pastor and/or the Children's Ministry Director.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.
- Teachers will be approved by the Children's Ministry Director in consultation with one of the Pastors.

Training & Requirements

- All Teachers must complete childcare training with the Children's Ministry Director, which includes review of this King of Grace Child Protection Policy. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing Teachers to update them on policies and procedures. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.
- All Teachers must complete the Children's Ministry Volunteer's application.

Children's Ministry Volunteers (Teachers and Helpers)

- Only female volunteers will serve in the Nursery.
- A minimum of two Children's Ministry volunteers (one adult and one Helper age 12 years or older) will be present in each classroom at all times.
- A male Children's Ministry Teacher will always be assisted by one or more female Helper(s).
- Children's Ministry volunteers are not permitted to take children from the premises except with parental permission, for medical services if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable, or during an emergency evacuation.

We consider:

- Adult to be anyone 18 years old or older
- Youth to be anyone 12-17 years old
- Child to be anyone 6-11 years old
- Preschool to be anyone 3-5 years old
- Toddler to be anyone 18 months-2 years old
- Infant to be anyone 0 -18 months old

Child-to-Caregiver Ratios

In addition to always having two caregivers present, the following ratios are maintained during Children's Ministry:

- Children ages 0-2 years old: One adult for every two to four children, depending on their ages
- Children ages 3-5 years old: One adult for every eight children
- Children ages 6-11 years old: One adult for every twelve children

The Children's Ministry Director should be notified as soon as possible if more caregivers are needed in order to maintain these ratios.

Protecting the Children While They Are In Our Care

The loving care and safety of children while in our care is extremely important to us. With that goal in mind we have made every effort to prayerfully design and implement an age-appropriate protection policy for all children. We provide a Nursery, Sunday School, and a Youth Group. Safety policies for each educational program are described in a detailed manner in Appendices A-C. These policies include: Signing children in/out; restroom/diaper changing procedures; snacks and allergy awareness; appropriate discipline; accidents and first aid; and emergency/evacuation procedures. The intent of each of these appendices is to include all information/procedures

specific to our programs. If your family has children in multiple programs, please be sure to read all applicable sections. All Teachers and Helpers will comply with the procedures for the program in which they are working.

Families with children attending King of Grace for the first time will receive a copy of this King of Grace Church's Child Protection Policy and a Children's Ministry Parental Consent Form for each child. Any parent who would like his/her child(ren) to participate in a Children's Ministry program will sign the child into the class when s/he arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that class, will authorize King of Grace Church to secure medical services for the child in the event of accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable, and will allow Teachers and Helpers to evacuate children from the building in an orderly manner in the event of an emergency in the building.

Protecting the Children As They Depart

Custody & Visitation for Divorced or Separated Parent(s)

In a situation where a child(ren)'s parents are divorced or separated, caregivers or Teachers of any age child should only release the child to the parent who brought the child(ren). If the other parent or anyone other than the parent who checked the child(ren) in desires to check the child(ren) out, we should contact the police immediately and have them present at the church. In this case, we should release the child(ren) directly to the police, who will take custody of the child(ren) and turn them over to the appropriate parent or guardian. Should a parent come in with a court order for visitation/custody demanding that we release the child(ren) to him/her, the police must also be present and we will release the child(ren) into police custody. In either circumstance, the Teacher(s)/caregiver(s) must immediately contact the Children's Ministry Director or Youth Director, a Pastor, AND the parent who brought the child to church (i.e., 3 parties total). The Teacher(s)/caregiver(s) should ask the police to wait until all necessary parties are present before releasing the child(ren) to the police, or to a parent or guardian, should the police approve of such.

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) consists of our Pastors, Youth Director, and the Children's Ministry Director. All members of the CPC stand ready to receive information related to suspected child neglect, abuse, or molestation. They are committed to addressing all allegations in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18 and in harmony with the King of Grace Church covenant and the laws of the Massachusetts. Any Children's Ministry volunteer, who witnesses a violation of the Child Protection Policy or other questionable behavior short of neglect, abuse, or molestation should first notify the person violating the policy and encourage compliance. If the person violating the policy refuses to comply, a member of the Child Protection Committee should be notified immediately. Any Children's Ministry volunteer who witnesses or suspects neglect, abuse, or molestation should report their concerns immediately to a member of the Child Protection Committee, who will then document the case and serve as mandatory reporters for the case and call the Child-At-Risk Hotline at (800) 792-5200.

Physical Touch Policy

Caregiver-to-Child

Appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or of showing godly love and care. However, it can also be easily misinterpreted. Therefore, the following policy is in place to protect our workers and the ministry of the gospel.

- Always remain in open sight of other church volunteers and/or adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting in laps, diapering, assisting in the potty, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.

- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 through pre-K.
- In some situations, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- All caregivers should refrain from the following activities: rough-housing, wrestling, or giving shoulder or piggy back rides to children. Physical contact in group activities such as ultimate Frisbee, touch football, etc., is reasonable and understandable, but the principle is to be above reproach in all relationships.
- Use care and discernment when hugging a child. Brief side-hugs when greeting or comforting a child are generally appropriate. Prolonged, frequent, or frontal hugs are not appropriate. In older classes, workers should not initiate hugs, particularly towards children of the opposite sex; if an older child initiates a hug, redirect them to a more appropriate contact, such as a brief side hug or a gentle "high-five," etc.
- Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief times, with no rubbing or massaging. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of a child's head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is considered private or personal.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child!
- If there are any questions about how to interact with children in an appropriate manner, feel free to direct your concerns to the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Director, or a Pastor.

Child-to-Child

No male and female under 18 should ever be alone together. No inappropriate touching of any kind will be accepted (i.e., no physical display of affection.) Fighting will not be tolerated and any child participating in violent action will be dismissed from class and placed into their parent's care. A Pastor will be called if necessary.

Healthy Child Policy

Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, four rules are in place concerning disease. Both parents and Teachers must be familiar with these policies.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
2. Caregivers will use latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to handle blood spills.
3. Hand washing or usage of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and Caregivers.
4. Toys and equipment are washed and disinfected regularly. King of Grace Church is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. Children's Ministry Director and Teachers have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the following guidelines:

A child may not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever (Note: Children should be free of a fever for 24 hours after a contagious disease before coming back to church.)
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough
- Sore throat
- Croup, persistent cough or "wet cough"

- Any skin infection – boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept with a caregiver while one of the Helpers locates the parents.

Please inform the Children’s Ministry Director if your child appears to have contracted an illness while participating in Children’s Ministry so that other parents may be notified if necessary.

Neither Teachers nor Helpers are allowed to give any medication to any child.

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Children’s Ministry Director before signing the child into class.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in a nursery setting and should be utilized. The method is very effective for protecting both the children and caregivers in the nursery from illness. This is not to imply that any children or caregivers in the nursery are carrying infectious diseases. By treating all bodily fluids as if they are infected, any infections or contaminants can be avoided at all times, providing a safer and healthier environment for caregivers and children alike.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- Remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Set them in the container by the sink and wash.
- At the end of the session, disinfect the room with Lysol wipes.

General Information

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found box is under the coat rack located in the hallway to the driveway entrance of the church. All lost items will be placed there after services. Please check there if an item is left behind in one of the classroom.

Appendix A, Nursery

Arrival and Departure Times for Nursery Teachers and Helpers

Nursery Teachers and Helpers should leave the service during the prayer before the dismissal of children so they are ready to receive children into the nursery ahead of parents. Nursery Teachers and Helpers must remain in the nursery until all children have been picked up.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the service. In the event that a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session, a Nursery Teacher will ask one of the Helpers to locate the parent.

Signing a Child in and out of the Nursery

Families bringing children to Nursery for the first time will receive a copy of this King of Grace Church's Child Protection Policy. Any parent/guardian who would like his/her child to participate in a Children's Ministry program will sign the yearly Parental Consent Form prior to bringing the child in to the nursery. This will inform the nursery Helpers and Teachers of the child's allergies, medical alerts, and/or special need, and authorize King of Grace Church to secure medical services for the child in the event of accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable. Using the information on the Parental Consent Form, the nursery Teachers will fill out the **Name and Information Sticker** for each child and apply it to the child's clothing. Children with allergies, medical alerts, special needs and specific directions will have a red, round sticker on the Name and Information Sticker. Furthermore, In order to protect the children in our care, each parent/guardian will receive a unique stamp on their hand upon arrival. The same stamp will be applied to the parent/guardian's child, and this will be used to match parent/guardian to child at the end of the worship service.

Ordinarily, only the parent/guardian who brought the child into the Nursery and received the matching stamp will be permitted to retrieve the child. Youth are not permitted to sign a child out of class. There are 2 exceptions to this rule:

- In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of a Pastor or Children's Ministry Director.
- A parent may make prior arrangements with the Teacher to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a session.

Rest Room Procedure

Parents are asked to take their preschool children to the restroom prior to signing them into the Nursery.

Infants and Toddlers

If a child needs a diaper change, a Nursery Helper will be sent to inform the child's parent. For the protection of all involved, Nursery volunteers will not change diapers.

Preschool Children

Any child wishing to use the bathroom while signed into the Nursery must be attended by their own parent(s). If a parent must be retrieved from the service, a Nursery Helper will be sent to notify the Usher or the Greeter in the main sanctuary, who will then alert the child's parent(s).

Toddler and Preschool Snacks & Drink

One of the ways we protect children is to regulate the food & drink allowed in classrooms. Nursery volunteers will not bring food or beverage for personal consumption into the classrooms when they serve.

Before offering snacks to the children, the Teacher MUST check each child's badge. If the child has a red Allergy Alert circle on their badge, the Teacher MUST check the attendance book to determine the nature of the allergy. If

instructions are not clear, no food should be given to the child without clarification from the parent/guardian. The Teacher should send a Children's Ministry Helper to clarify with the child's parent or guardian.

Parents of children with allergies who attend regularly should talk with the Children's Ministry Director about how to handle any unexpected allergic reactions. Upon parental request and consent, allergy information, concerning the regularly-attending child may be posted in the Nursery.

Appropriate Discipline

All Nursery volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children toward acceptable activities (i.e. Tell a child what he can do, not what he cannot do. e.g. "Here is a paper for you to color on," not, "Don't color on the wall."), verbally encouraging positive behavior, offering choices only if they exist (e.g. If the child is expected to sit at the table, say "Here is a chair for you to sit on," not "Would you like to sit at the table?"), and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior verbally.

Specifically, try the following steps to correct a child:

1. Remove the child from the situation and speak to him privately.
2. Point out the problem simply and gently, requesting that she stop the behavior. When appropriate, have the child apologize. Example: "Abby, you took the toy away from Beth. We do not take. Please give it back and ask Beth for forgiveness." Encourage the offended child to say "I forgive you." If a child is unwilling to repent, a brief time out may be used at this time. Time out should be in a chair and should be about 1 minute for each year of the child's age.
3. Pray with the child briefly, and direct her to a new activity. Make sure to interact normally with her afterward so she understands that you still "like" her.
4. Be consistent with that child and all the others in your care.

Nursery Teachers and Helpers should **never** yell, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to verbal correction, a Helper will be asked to get the parents.

For further information regarding discipline please speak with the Children's Ministry Director.

Accidents and First Aid

A basic First Aid kit is located in the Nursery. Nursery volunteers should be familiar with the locations of the First Aid kit, its contents, and use. They are expected to treat minor injuries with appropriate measures available in the First Aid kits. In the event of serious injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called first and the Nursery Helper will locate and inform the parents immediately.

Nursery Teachers will complete an Accident Report Form for all injuries, whether major or minor and turn it in to the Children's Ministry Director.

Appendix B, Sunday School

Arrival and Departure Times for Teachers and Helpers

Teachers and Helpers should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the worship service so they are ready to receive children into their classrooms ahead of the parents. Teachers and Helpers must remain in the classroom until all children have been picked up.

In the event that a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session, Teachers will ask one of the Helpers to locate the parent. Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the service.

Signing a Child in and out of Sunday School

Families bringing children to Sunday School for the first time will receive a copy of this King of Grace Church's Child Protection Policy. Any parent/guardian who would like his/her child to participate in a Children's Ministry program will sign the yearly Parental Consent Form prior to bringing the child into Sunday School. This will inform the Sunday School Helpers and Teachers of the child's allergies, medical alerts, and/or special need, and authorize King of Grace Church to secure medical services for the child in the event of accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable. Using the information on the Parental Consent Form, the Sunday School Teachers will fill out the **Name and Information Sticker** for each child and apply it to the child's clothing. Children with allergies, medical alerts, special needs and specific directions will have a red, round sticker on the Name and Information Sticker. Furthermore, In order to protect the children in our care, each parent/guardian will receive a unique stamp on their hand upon arrival. The same stamp will be applied to the parent/guardian's child, and this will be used to match parent/guardian to child at the end of the worship service.

Ordinarily, only the parent/guardian who brought the child to Sunday School and received the matching stamp will be permitted to retrieve the child. Youth are not permitted to sign a child out of class. There are 2 exceptions to this rule:

- In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of a Pastor or Children's Ministry Director.
- A parent may make prior arrangements with the Teacher to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a session.

Appropriate Discipline

All Sunday School volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children toward acceptable activities (i.e. Tell a child what he can do, not what he cannot do. e.g. "Here is a paper for you to color on," not, "Don't color on the wall."), verbally encouraging positive behavior, offering choices only if they exist (e.g. If the child is expected to sit at the table, say "Here is a chair for you to sit on," not "Would you like to sit at the table?"), and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior verbally.

Specifically, try the following steps to correct a child:

1. Remove the child from the situation and speak to him privately.
2. Point out the problem simply and gently, requesting that she stop the behavior. When appropriate, have the child apologize. Example: "Abby, you took the toy away from Beth. We do not take. Please give it back and ask Beth for forgiveness." Encourage the offended child to say "I forgive you." If a child is unwilling to repent, a brief time out may be used at this time. Time out should be in a chair and should be about 1 minute for each year of the child's age.

3. Pray with the child briefly, and direct her to a new activity. Make sure to interact normally with her afterward so she understands that you still "like" her.
4. Be consistent with that child and all the others in your care.

Sunday School Teachers and Helpers should **never** yell, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to verbal correction, a Helper will be asked to get the parents.

For further information regarding discipline please speak with the Children's Ministry Director.

Accidents and First Aid

A basic First Aid kit is located in every classroom and in the basement kitchen. Sunday School volunteers should be familiar with the locations of the First Aid kits, their contents, and their uses. They are expected to treat minor injuries with appropriate measures available in the First Aid kits. In the event of serious injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called first and the Children's Ministry Helper will locate and inform the parents immediately.

Teachers will complete an Accident Report Form for all injuries, whether major or minor and turn it in to the Children's Ministry Director.

Food & Drink

One of the ways we protect children is to regulate the food & drink allowed in classrooms. Children's Ministry volunteers will not bring food or beverage for personal consumption into the classrooms when they serve.

Snacks for 1st – 6th grade

Periodically, snacks will be offered to the children in our 1st -6th grade Sunday school classes.

Teachers should always check each child's Name and Information Sticker before serving a snack. If the child has a red Allergy Alert circle on their Name and Information Sticker, the Teacher **MUST** check the attendance book to determine the nature of the allergy. If instructions are not clear, no food should be given to the child without clarification from the parent/guardian. The Teacher should send a Children's Ministry Helper to clarify with the child's parent or guardian.

Parents of children with allergies who attend regularly should talk with the Children's Ministry Director about how to handle any unexpected allergic reactions. Upon parental request and consent, allergy information, concerning member's children, may be posted in the child's classroom.

Appendix C, Youth Group

Arrival and Departure Times for Youth Directors and Helpers

The Youth Directors and Helpers should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of Youth Group so they are ready to welcome the youth. Youth Directors and Helpers must remain in the classroom until all youth have been picked up.

In the event that a youth is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session, a Youth Director or Helper will contact the parents via phone.

Signing a Youth into Youth Group

Families bringing youth to Youth Group for the first time will receive a copy of this King of Grace Church's Child Protection Policy. Any parent/guardian who would like his/her youth to participate in Youth Group will sign the yearly Parental Consent Form prior to bringing him or her to Youth Group. This will inform the Youth Directors and Helpers of the youth's allergies, medical alerts, and/or special need, and authorize King of Grace Church to secure medical services for the youth in the event of accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable.

Ordinarily, only the parent/guardian who brought the youth to Youth Group will be permitted to pick up the youth. There are 2 exceptions to this rule:

- In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of a Pastor or the Youth Director.
- A parent may make prior arrangements with the Youth Director to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a session.

Appropriate Discipline

Youth are expected to show respect toward their peers and to those in authority over them. Any youth who displays rude or disrespectful behavior will be given a verbal warning/admonition. If the behavior continues, the youth will be asked to leave and the parents will be notified. A Pastor will be called if necessary.

For further information regarding discipline please speak with the Youth Director.

Accidents and First Aid

A basic First Aid kit is located in every classroom and in the basement kitchen. Youth Group volunteers should be familiar with the locations of the First Aid kits, their contents, and their uses. They are expected to treat minor injuries with appropriate measures available in the First Aid kits. In the event of serious and/or life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called first and a Youth Group Helper will locate and inform the parents immediately.

The Youth Director will complete an Accident Report Form for all injuries.

Food & Drink

One of the ways we protect children is to regulate the food & drink allowed in classrooms. Children's Ministry volunteers will not bring food or beverage for personal consumption into the classrooms when they serve.

Snacks

Regularly, snacks will be offered to the youth in Youth Group. The Youth Directors should always check for allergies prior to serving snacks.

Parents of youth with allergies who attend regularly should talk with the Youth Director about how to handle any unexpected allergic reactions. Upon parental request and consent, allergy information, concerning member's children, may be posted in the child's classroom.