

Best Practices: Procedures for the Care of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

Calvary Burlington

Children's Ministries Procedures

Teacher Responsibilities

Unless otherwise stated, ministry personnel need to be arrive a minimum of 20 minutes before the worship service begins. Classes are open 15 minutes before the worship service and run for the duration of the worship service. Ministry personnel working with children should be clearly identified with a nametag that identifies them to parents, participants and newcomers.

Sunday Morning

- Teachers arrive at 9:15 each Sunday to prep their rooms for KidsChurch, PreSchool, and small group
- Classes are open at 9:45am and run for the duration of the worship service
- Kids are received at the door closest to the stairs in the big room. Parents need to drop off their children so you can identify them if you need to find them in the auditorium
- Please ensure that nametags are located on each child, as these have parent names and phone numbers on them in the event they need to be contacted.
- Occasional Observers are to be recorded in the Guest Registration Book. See the Best Practices policy for information on Occasional Observers.

Summoning a Parent/Caregiver

In the event a parent is needed for a child, either because they will not settle down (inconsolable crying, or excessively disruptive behaviour), or because of injury or allergy concern you are to do the following:

1. On the child's name tag there is a phone number and parent name. Text that phone number and request the parent come downstairs to your classroom.
2. If no parent has arrived after 3–5 minutes, text Mike Sanders at 905-527-1448.

Receiving and Releasing of Children

The supervising parent or guardian will complete a registration form the first time a child is dropped off in the program/class and/or at the beginning of each new school year. At a *minimum*, Ministry Personnel should record participants' names and phone numbers (and home address if possible).

Babies and children are not to be dropped off in a classroom without Ministry Personnel present. Babies and preschool children will only be released into the care of the person who brought the child. No one is to enter the nursery or classroom unless scheduled to be there or requested to do so.

Kids may be either brought downstairs by a parent/guardian or met by a teacher in foyer on a Sunday morning.

If children are starting in the service (Family Sundays, Baptisms, etc.), the children will be dismissed from the worship service to meet with their teacher(s) at the back of the auditorium before being led downstairs to their classrooms.

At the end of the service parents will come downstairs to retrieve their kids. Ministry personnel will collect the security tag from parents, rip it in half, and deposit the pieces to your designated bucket.

Once all of the children have left, return your room to the state you found it in, or as directed by the ministry lead.

Youth Ministry Procedures

This section covers the procedures that specifically apply to Youth and Student Ministry events and programs at Calvary Burlington.

At the beginning of every ministry year, all youth are to submit a fully completed Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Forms, signed by their parent or guardian. Youth joining a ministry during the year are to be provided with a copy of the forms to be completed by their parent/guardian to be returned by the next gathering of the ministry. The originals of these forms are to be filed permanently in the church office. Participants who are 18 years of age and older can complete their own forms.

The Youth Ministry Authorization does not replace specific consent and authorization forms for activities that take place off-site and/or overnight.

Doors are open to participants 15 minutes prior to a Student Ministry event or program. When students arrive they are to come downstairs to the youth room. Upon arrival, students are checked in by a leader for attendance.

Occasional Observers are to be recorded in the Guest Registration Book. See the Best Practices policy for information on Occasional Observers.

If a student acts out during a program they will first be given a verbal warning to correct their behaviour. If their behaviour repeats itself after the warning they will be sent out of the room to get a drink of water and “cool down”. If the behaviour continues, a verbal warning is given privately to the student. (This conversation can be from the ministry lead, or a volunteer, but ministry lead should be made aware of the conversation in the event next steps are required). If the behaviour continues, the student and youth leader will issue the verbal warning with their parent present at the end of the night. If the behaviour repeats itself the following week, ministry lead will inform the student and parent/guardian that a 1-week suspension has been issued.

In the event that a student is behaving in a manner that is deemed egregious or dangerous by the leadership team, a parent or guardian will be called to come pick up that student immediately. Student ministry leaders will use judgement to assess the severity of offense and what further action that needs to be taken.

Dismissal from Student Ministries.

Students are dismissed from the program at 9:00 pm. Students leave through the back double doors and go to their parent's or guardian's vehicle and go home. Leaders tidy up and return rooms to how they found them.

Off-Site Events

If possible, parents should drop off and pick up at the event location. See the Best Practices Policy for more information on off-site events.

Washroom Guidelines

Communication with parents will encourage them to deal with their baby's toileting needs and to take their children to the washroom prior to each class or service. The following guidelines apply when the parent or guardian is not available to look after diapering or washroom requirements:

Nursery

Diaper changing procedures are to be clearly posted in the nursery diaper changing area. Diaper changing is to be done only by designated adult Ministry Personnel and must be conducted within view of other Ministry Personnel. Whenever possible, a female should change a diaper.

Preschool Children ages 3-5

- Preschool children are not to go to the washroom alone unless the washroom has a controlled access only from the child's classroom.
- When accompanying preschool children to the washroom other than one with a controlled access accessible only from the classroom, two Ministry Personnel will escort a group of children to the washroom. If only one Ministry Personnel is supervising, the class will travel to the closest classroom to solicit the help of another Ministry Personnel.
- Ministry Personnel are never to be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and they are never to go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- When a preschool child needs assistance in the washroom, female Ministry Personnel may enter the washroom cubicle to assist both girls and boys.
- If Ministry Personnel enter a washroom to provide assistance to a pre-school child, the outside washroom door must be propped open and a second adult must stand by the open doorway.
- Ministry personnel will take the privacy of the child into consideration.

Elementary School-aged Children Ages 6-13

- Elementary boys and girls are not to be sent to the washroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy and at least one Ministry Personnel.
- Ministry Personnel will escort the children to the washroom and perform a bathroom check. This involves knocking first, then opening the door to ensure that everything is in order and there is no present danger to the child. Prop open the door, then Ministry personnel should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the classroom.
- Ministry personnel are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- Male Ministry Personnel are not to accompany female children to the washroom.

Vulnerable Adults

- Always prop open the door of the washroom to prevent yourself from being alone with a vulnerable adult. Do not enter the cubicle.
- If the vulnerable adult is using the main floor accessible washroom, personnel can stand outside of the door and occasionally knock and ask if any assistance is needed.
- Do not enter the washroom alone; if assistance is needed another person should stand guard with the door slightly ajar while the ministry person enters to give aid.

A Note about Exceptional Circumstances

If there are exceptional circumstances that impact the church or community as a whole (i.e. COVID-19), child and youth ministries will follow all church-wide procedures and policies, including but not limited to contact-tracing, masks, handwashing, physical distancing and/or temporary suspension of in-person ministries.

Emergency Response Procedures

Head Usher & Ministry Lead Responsibilities

- If an emergency (medical or otherwise) arises on a Sunday morning, Candi Thorpe (upstairs) or Mike Sanders (downstairs) or their designate(s) will call 911.

Fire Safety

- If/when a fire occurs in the church building, elsewhere on church property or during an off-property, church-sponsored event or activity, the first priority will be to get everyone to safety. Volunteers should not attempt to fight a fire.
 - In the case of fire, Candi Thorpe or Mike Sanders or their designates will call 911. Calmly and quickly exit the building through the nearest exit.
 - Ensure all children are accounted for. Inform the Candi or Mike if any of the children are in the washroom or otherwise out of the classroom at the time of the fire alert.
 - Volunteers working with children should calmly and quickly escort children out of the building and proceed to the designated rendezvous point on the north-west side of the parking lot.
 - If at any time the door alarm is heard, Candi or Mike decrees an emergency, personnel should immediately evacuate children and youth via the nearest exit. One volunteer should lead his/her students single file while the other volunteer follows the last student out.
 - The last volunteer out of the room should close the door when leaving.
 - Once everyone has reached the designated rendezvous point volunteers should wait there with the children until they are reunited with parents and guardians. Parent(s) are responsible for meeting their child(children) at the designated rendezvous point following the evacuation of the building and are not to go to their child's program area. Once reunited with their children, parents are not to leave the church property with their children until they have checked in with their child's teacher. Congregants without children are to locate in the same general area away from the building.
 - If at all possible, Candi, Mike, or another appointed usher should check the washrooms on the upper and lower level before leaving the building.

Strangers, Threats, & Lockdowns

- Occasionally on a Sunday morning someone you do not recognize will come down from the worship service looking for the washrooms or coat racks. If you observe someone in the hallways of the Children's Ministry area, you should first acknowledge them saying "hello" and asking if you can help direct them, then close your classroom door. Direct them as needed (washrooms, church office, etc.) If their behaviour is in any way suspicious you should immediately text Candi Thorpe (289) 230-6773 or Mike Sanders (289) 527-1448.