



## Children's Ministry Volunteer Handbook

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you so much for your interest in serving in the Children's Ministry! I'm convinced that this is one of the most important areas of ministry for our church because we lay the foundation for a lifetime of faithfulness to Christ. If our children are going to be faithful disciples, the odds are highest that they will be saved before they reach high school. So not only is it important for each individual child, but we are also raising up the next generation of the church and church leadership as well. The church is always one generation away from going extinct, so we must pass on the faith to the younger generations. How awesome is it that we get to take part in something so wonderful?

Our mission is to partner with parents to grow lifelong, faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this by:

- Building loving and joy-filled relationships with children and their families.
- Teaching God's Word at a level the children can understand and relate to.
- Communicating with parents to keep them informed about what their children are learning so they are able to be the most effective disciple-makers at home.
- Working together as a team to effectively minister to all of our families.

Thank you so much for partnering with us in this weighty task. Please read through this handbook. It contains important policies and procedures used in our classrooms for the protection, safety, and well-being of each child. A safe and loving environment is the most important thing we can offer our children for their growth and our parents for their trust. If you have any questions, please contact me at any time.

In Christ,

Drew McKay  
Director of Family Ministries

# GCC Children's Ministry Values

- **Safety and Security** – The protection of our children is critical to their well-being. We have established policies and procedures to ensure their safety.
- **Biblical Teaching** – A dependence on God's Word is essential to our lives. It is our source for daily living and a foundation to the lives we live. We believe that it is very important for children to have a strong Biblical foundation in their lives.
- **Parents As Primary Disciple-Makers** – Our role is to help support parents as they work daily to pass on the message of the Gospel to their children. We provide daily lesson reviews to encourage families to discuss the lessons together at home.
- **Worship** – We seek to love God through engaging worship as a regular practice in our lives. We encourage corporate worship and believe that children should have opportunities to participate alongside their parents with the local body of Christ.
- **Christ-Centered Community** – Life change happens best in the context of spiritually authentic relationships. We intentionally create opportunities for children to feel like they belong and can grow through spiritual discipleship
- **Sharing the Gospel** – We provide opportunities for children to learn how they can play a part in spreading the gospel, as well as participate in a hands-on activity to serve those who are lost.

## Volunteer Commitment

A children's ministry volunteer agrees to adhere to the standards and policies set by Grace Community Church, participate in training, execute thorough preparation, and present or encourage gospel truth to children through acts of service or direct discipleship.

## Volunteer Requirements

Requirements to serve in Children's Ministry are as follows:

### **Volunteers 18 and Older:**

- Minimum of 6 months attendance at GCC
- Application submission and acceptance
- Background check (in accordance with GCC Background Check policy)
- Ministry Safe Training online, including Sexual Abuse Awareness Training
- In-person training

**Volunteers 17 and Younger:**

- Minimum of 6 months attendance at GCC
- Application submission and acceptance
- Ministry Safe Training
- In-person training

*Volunteers may not bring unapproved friends to volunteer with them.*

## Volunteer Expectations

**Arrive on Time**

Out of respect for others and to keep the classes on schedule, please arrive at your committed volunteer time.

**Be Prepared**

Please come fully prepared to serve and lead your class or group. Be sure to have supplies, teaching materials, or other content ready to go.

**Communicate**

Clear and frequent communication is essential for a positive ministry experience for everyone. If you have questions regarding your role, responsibilities, or logistics, please contact your Children's Ministry Leader (or Volunteer Coordinator), the Director of Family Ministries, or if you are an assistant volunteer to a teacher, your head volunteer teacher. If you're going to be absent or late, please inform the Children's Ministry Leader that coordinates with your area of ministry as soon as possible.

**Grow**

In the same way that Children's Ministry is a place where kids are spiritually growing, we expect all of our volunteers and leaders to be growing spiritually as well by:

- Attending Worship Gatherings – Serving and volunteering doesn't take the place of corporate worship. Stay connected to how God is leading our church by participating in the worship gatherings.
- Being Connected – We believe that life-change happens best in the context of relationships. Join a small group, a Sunday School class, a Bible study, or have a spiritual accountability partner.

# Children's Ministry Policies

## Check-in

- All children must be checked in using Planning Center Check-in module at either a permanent self-checkin station (wall iPads,) a Children's Ministry Leader's mobile station (smart phone, iPad), or by a Children's Ministry Leader at the office check-in station. A child may not participate, unless otherwise directed by a Children's Ministry Leader, in a class, group, or event, if not checked in.
- First time guests and visitors should be connected up with a Children's Ministry Leader who is trained to quickly and manually checkin the children via the office check-in station. This removes bottlenecking at the wall checkin station, creates space for introductions, and allows important info to be added to the check-in system.

## Drop-off & Pick-up

- All children should have a visible check-in sticker printed for that day. Parents should be encouraged to show their corresponding printed ticket (child ID) when picking up their child. If any exceptions are to be made, the Children's Ministry Leader will use discretion in doing so and communicate this to volunteers at that time.
- Parents are responsible for their children after they have been picked up and an event has ended. This brings clarity and closure to a volunteer's responsibilities for that day and respects the volunteer's time.

## Overnight Events

GCC is not facilitating overnight events for 6th grade and under at this time. For questions regarding overnight events for 7th grade and up, please see the Director of Student Ministry.

## Computers and Cell Phones

- Please limit the use of these devices to only necessary communication, and save social media, web surfing, app usage for after volunteer hours.
- Cell phones may not be out or in use teaching lessons, activities, or around children. If you need to make an important call or text, please do so outside of your class or group.

## Dress Code

All volunteers should dress in a way that is respectful and undistracting to everyone they are serving. This includes clothing accessories. Children's Ministry Leaders reserve the right to require any volunteer to change clothes if the clothing is deemed inappropriate.

The dress code standards below are for on-campus and off-campus events.

- Shorts should be modest, fingertip length when arms are straight down at sides. Shorts that are too short to be seen underneath a t-shirt are not acceptable.
- Shirts should be modest, not tight and/or revealing.
- Pants and shorts should come up to the hipline (underwear should never be seen).
- No clothing advertising alcohol, tobacco, suggestive sayings, secular music personalities, etc. will be permitted.
- Swimming events:
  - Males: No short swim trunks or speedos
  - Females: One piece or tankinis only

## Hygiene

Volunteers should practice good personal hygiene, including helping to prevent the spread of illness by washing hands regularly. Handwashing should include, but not be limited to:

- After a diaper change (*see diaper-changing policy*)
- After accompanying a child to the restroom (*see bathroom policy*)
- After contact with bodily fluid (wiping a child's nose, etc.)
- Before handling food

Volunteers should instruct children to wash their hands:

- After using the restroom
- After wiping their nose
- Before eating

Nursery & 2's/3's volunteers should:

- Disinfect and wipe down the diaper changing area after each diaper is changed
- Disinfect swings, jumpers, and toys at the end of the day
- Follow additional cleaning policies set by the Nursery Coordinator

## Behavior

Volunteers are expected to:

- Maintain a positive attitude while serving.
- Use appropriate language (no profanity, sexual or racist topics).
- Avoid language or behavior that diminishes others.
- Be flexible and cooperate with Children's Ministry Leaders.
- Respect children, staff, equipment, facilities, and themselves.

# Safety

## General

- A child should never be left alone without supervision. This does *not* include when a child is using the restroom.
- A volunteer should never be alone with a child.

## Bathrooms

### Main Bathrooms (Lower Level)

Both the women and men's bathroom doors should be propped open on Sunday Mornings and Wednesday nights. This allows for verbal communication, if necessary, between a volunteer near the door and a child using the bathroom.

Volunteers are not allowed into the bathroom when children are using the bathroom. Check the bathroom to see if anyone is present before entering or sending a child in. Follow the steps below if assistance is absolutely necessary:

1. If a child needs help or hasn't finished up after some time, try to resolve the issue first by talking to them from the main door, at a distance.
2. If your assistance is absolutely necessary, ask another volunteer to stand at the door and watch you as you assist the child.
3. Follow up with the appropriate Children's Ministry Leader for your age category and let them know you had to assist a child. Provide a name and information on how it was resolved.

### Main Bathrooms (Upper Level)

Upper bathrooms follow the same standard as Lower Level bathrooms during Wednesday evening ministry.

### 2's & 3's Bathroom (located between Greenhouse A & B)

This bathroom is a shared bathroom between classrooms and utilizes split (Dutch) doors on both sides.

*Only 2's & 3's children should use this bathroom, unless otherwise directed by a Children's Minister Leader.*

Check the bathroom to see if anyone is present before entering or sending a child in. Follow the steps below in managing this bathroom.:

1. If a child can use the bathroom on their own at this age then let them.
2. If the child needs help or hasn't finished up after some time, try to resolve the issue first by talking to them through the door.

3. If the child does need assistance, open the top half of the door first and communicate with the child to resolve the issue. This provides privacy for the child since the lower half of the door is still closed.
4. If you must enter to assist a child be sure to keep the upper half of the door open and ensure another 2's & 3's volunteer is in the main room.

## Changing Clothes

If a child needs to have a piece of clothing changed, follow the bathroom assistance policy for each age-appropriate bathroom above.

## Diapers

- Diapers need to be changed in the presence of another volunteer and may not be changed by a male volunteer.
- Only diaper changing stations should be used for changing diapers unless otherwise directed by the Nursery Coordinator.
- Only female volunteers 16 years of age or older may change diapers

## Appropriate Touch

Physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate and is only appropriate when done publicly. Failure to comply with these guidelines are grounds for corrective action or immediate dismissal. This policy protects both the children and volunteers.

- Hugging may only be done if the child initiates the contact. Never allow full contact (body-to-body) hugs. Rather, distance your body from the hug or give the child a side-to-side hug. Sometimes it may be best for you to initiate a high-five rather than invite a hug.
- Extended hugging, tickling, or prolonged physical contact of any kind is not appropriate.
- A light touch to a hand, shoulder and back when encouraging or gaining a child's attention is acceptable.
- Lap sitting is only appropriate for nursery aged children. If a child is insistent in sitting in your lap, move them to sit next to you or sit on your knees so they are not able to sit in your lap.
- Carrying children (or piggy back rides) is discouraged, except for nursery aged children.
- Never touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit except when changing a diaper or properly assisting a child in the bathroom. (see *bathroom policy*)
- Never kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you.
- Never allow a child to touch you in a way that is inappropriate.

## **First Aid and Injuries**

First aid kits for small scratches and cuts can be found at the following locations:

- Children's Ministry Office (lower level)
- Kitchen (upper level)

For larger injuries, stabilize the child and ask another volunteer to notify a Children's Ministry Leader. The leader or another volunteer will notify the child's parent(s). Larger injuries are defined as, but not limited to: fainting, allergic reaction, broken bones, vomiting. If there is a spill of body fluid (due to cuts, nosebleeds, vomit, etc.), latex gloves should be worn by all assisting volunteers. Gloves are available in the nursery and in the first aid kits.

An Incident Report Form must be filled out for larger injuries. See a Children's Ministry Leader for a blank IR Form.

In the event a child needs more attention than we can provide, the parent will be notified and appropriate action will be taken, which may include calling 911.

## **Wellness**

To ensure the well-being of all children, volunteers must be in good health. Therefore, if a volunteer person exhibits any of the symptoms below, they may be asked to leave until they are recovered.

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained or contagious skin rash
- Cough
- Runny nose (green/yellow discharge)
- Eye/Ear infections
- Pink Eye

## **Emergencies**

### **Evacuations and Planned Procedures**

- In the case of a building fire, the safe zone to evacuate to, if possible, is the Playground.
- In the case of a tornado, the safe zones are the Grace Studio, Grove B, Men's Bathroom(lower level), and the hall by the Library.
- Before evacuating, count the number of children in your group/class. Call roll again when you arrive safely to the safe zone.
- For babies, if possible only carry two per volunteer.



- For toddler-preschool ages, if possible have children create a line by holding hands while evacuating.
- Once evacuated, please wait for further instructions from a Children's Ministry Leader or GCC Leadership.
- Stay with your group at all times. Do not leave to obtain first aid or for any other reason. First Aid and additional help should be brought to the safe zone.
- Release children only to their parents and only after you have been given the "go ahead" by a Children's Ministry Leader or other GCC Leadership. Do not dismiss any children on their own. Do not allow parents to take their children from your care during the process of your evacuation. Remind the parents they can walk with you but cannot release a child until you have arrived at the safe zone and have been authorized to release children.
- In case of an active shooter, first see if there is an accessible exit and attempt to evacuate with your children. If that isn't possible, find a place to hide out where the shooter is less likely to find you, keeping everything silenced and everyone quiet around you, and doors locked or barricaded. As a last resort, fight back, throw anything you can, improvise weapons, and yell. (Per DHS.gov)

## Acknowledgement of Receipt & Volunteer Agreement

I acknowledge that I have received the Children's Ministry Volunteer Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook, know its provisions, and agree to its policies and standards. I understand that this Handbook and its provisions are subject to change at any time.

Volunteer Name (Printed):

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Volunteer Signature Date):

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This form should be signed and returned to the Director of Family Ministry.