

# DOOR OF HOPE KIDS POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Welcome to Door of Hope Children's Ministry! Our goal is to nurture the life-changing power of Jesus in our children. It was Jesus that said, "Let the little children come to me." The heart and purpose of Door of Hope's Children's Ministry is to 'let the little children come to Jesus.'

The calling of the Children's Ministry volunteer is to point each child to a personal relationship with Jesus. Before beginning your role in this ministry to the children at Door of Hope, we ask that you faithfully read through and pray over the following policies and procedures for working with kids. We appreciate your heart to serve the kids, and hope that you find this training helpful to the cause.

At the end of this document you will have the opportunity to indicate that you have read and understand the policies and procedures.

## HEALTHY KIDS

Door of Hope does its best to ensure that it maintains a healthy and clean environment for its Children's Ministry classrooms. To be sensitive to the health of other children, we will not be able to accept a child with any of the following symptoms:

1. Heavy nasal discharge (clear or colored)
2. Fever, vomiting, or diarrhea (within the past 24 hours)
3. Any unknown rash

If for some reason, it is discovered that a child has any of the above symptoms during the service, the parent should be notified immediately to come and collect the child.

## ROOM OCCUPANCY

### The Two-Adult Rule

Each classroom should have at least two adults present at all times while children are present. No one adult should ever be alone with a child.

**There are three purposes for the Two-Adult rule:**

1. It protects the child from any possibility of abuse.

2. It protects the adult from any possibility of a false accusation.
3. It ensures that, in the case of an emergency, there will always be one adult to watch the children, and one adult to call for help.

#### **Exceptions to this rule:**

1. Room Leaders
2. Pastor of Children's Ministry

## **Room Occupancy Rules**

Each classroom has a limit to how many children we may serve in a specific service on any given Sunday based on how many volunteers are present, while also taking into consideration the size of the classroom. In general, the classrooms at the SE Taylor Building have the following capacity limits as a "full room":

- Nursery – Full at 18 infants (with 6 adults)
- Preschool – Full at 28 children (with 7 adults)
- Pre-K - Kindergarten – Full at 35 children (with 7 adults)
- 1st - 3rd Grade – Full at 35 children (with 7 adults)
- 4th - 5th Grade – Full at 24 children (with 4 adults)

#### **Ratios of Adults to Children are advised as follows:**

- Nursery – 1:3
- Preschool – 1:4
- Pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten – 1:5
- 1st - 3rd Grade – 1:5
- 4th - 5th Grade – 1:6

The Room Leaders reserve the right to reduce the capacity of the room in conjunction with the Pastor of Children's Ministry.

## **PERSONAL DEVICES AND MEDIA**

We kindly ask that volunteers keep their cell phones and any other electronics put away during class time. It is our hope that during time of service in the classroom, all volunteers will be fully engaged with the children and interacting through the scheduled group activities and lessons. The use of a cell phone during the class time is permitted in the event that a volunteer has a need to contact a parent on behalf of the child. In most cases, a Room Leader will make this contact when necessary.

The use of electronics (laptops, cell phone, gaming device, etc.) is not permitted in classrooms unless the Room Leader has given consent for the use as part of the lesson. If a child brings a device with them into the classroom, it will be held for them until the parent or guardian returns for the child after services.

## **APPROPRIATE TOUCH**

As part of our commitment to creating a nurturing and safe environment that protects our children from abuse and our adult leaders from misunderstandings, we require our volunteers to adhere to the following appropriate touch guidelines. Adhering to these guidelines helps the children to learn and maintain safe boundaries. Having clear boundaries also allows adult leaders to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and educates individuals who might not be maintaining safe boundaries with children.

### **Inappropriate forms of affection:**

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Allowing children over three years old on the lap
- Touching 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 restroom)
- Extended hugging; tickling or prolonged physical contact of any kind
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development
- Giving gifts or money to individual children

### **Examples of appropriate forms of affection:**

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives, hand slapping and fist taps
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, shoulders and arms of children
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Holding hands during group prayer

## **DEALING WITH INCIDENTS**

### **Disciplining Children**

**Minimal Physical Restraint:** Discipline is inevitable, but must always be done in love! Never discipline in anger, or use physical contact to discipline a child. There are no exceptions to that rule. Warnings, time-outs, and redirection are acceptable forms of discipline in the classroom, but anything beyond that is the job of the parent and not the church. Please don't embarrass a child, and never yell at a child. Always notify a parent if a child is having a difficult time in the classroom and is unresponsive to time-out or redirection. Never remove a child from the classroom unless a Special Considerations form has been filled out by the parent(s), granting permission for a helper to remove the child from the classroom in the event that the child needs time and space outside of the classroom to "cool off".

## **Biting Policy**

### **If a child bites/is bitten:**

1. Notify the parent immediately if another child has bitten their child.
  - a. Explain the situation to the parent without divulging the name of the child who bit. Assure them that the biting child's parents will be notified as well.
  - b. Severity of the bite:
    - i. If no broken skin, the child may remain in the classroom.
    - ii. If skin is broken/bleeding and cannot be remedied by a Band-Aid the child is unable to remain in the classroom due to blood borne pathogens, and must be picked up by the parent.
2. Always notify the parent of a child who has bitten (whether the child has bitten another child or an adult in the room) when the incident occurs.
  - a. Keep close watch over the child who has bitten, to ensure that no other incidents occur.
  - b. If the child who has bitten is not easily redirected and continues to display such behavior, parents will be asked to pick up their child from the classroom.
3. Room leader or volunteer must fill out an incident report and the Pastor of Children's Ministry must be informed.

## **Incident Reporting**

An incident report must be filled out for any incident that occurs while the children are in our care. A volunteer or Room Leader must fill out separate reports for both the injured child, and the child who caused the injury (if such a case occurred). Parent's signatures, as well as Pastor of Children's Ministry signature, are all needed on these reports. Room leader or volunteer should make a copy of the report for the parent if asked to do so. A report should be filled out in any case where a child is harmed or caused injury by either another child, adult, or by accident of self.

# **DISMISSING KIDS**

All children must be dropped off and picked up by an approved adult. Children must remain in the secure children's area until the appropriate adult checks them out. The adult picking up the child needs to show their child's claim tag (that has a corresponding security number) to indicate that they are authorized to collect the child.

Kids can never be taken off the grounds of the campus without the knowledge and approval of the Pastor of Children's Ministry along with expressed consent of the parent(s).

## **BATHROOM POLICY**

### **Escorting children to the bathroom**

1. The two adult rule applies when escorting children to the bathroom.
2. In a situation where two volunteers cannot be spared from one classroom, a background checked safety team member or a volunteer from another room can assist. If this option is unavailable, parents should be notified to assist their child.
3. For children who need assistance in the restroom (sitting on the toilet, etc.) one female volunteer may enter the stall and aid the child with the door wide open, while the second volunteer watches from the doorway with eyes on both the volunteer aiding the child and the other children waiting to use the restroom.
4. If the volunteer feels uncomfortable assisting the child, the parent will then be notified to assist their child.
5. For children who do not need any assistance in the restroom (6-11 years), both workers will wait outside the stall.

### **Diaper Changing**

The changing table in the Nursery room is for nursery volunteers only. For children in the preschool room and over, not yet potty-trained, parents will be notified to change the diaper.

### **Bathroom Policy Agreement**

By checking their children in, parents agree to the bathroom policy as set forth by the Door of Hope Children's Ministry.

## **REPORTING ABUSE**

Responding to Incidences or Suspected Incidents of Abuse

## **Reporting Abuse**

Oregon law requires us as a church to report any incidences, or suspected incidences of child abuse. We are responsible not only to the State of Oregon, but also to God to do all we can to protect the children from abuse. Child abuse includes any type of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse as well as neglect.

If you see or sense an incident of child abuse, contact the Pastor of Children's Ministry or another DOH staff member as soon as you possibly can. Do not wait any longer than twenty-four hours. After contacting the Pastor of Children's Ministry, you are responsible to fill out a report form and he/she is responsible to notify the authorities.

## **Q&A**

### **Who Do I contact if I Suspect Child Abuse?**

According to the ORS 418.755, "an oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise to the local office of the Children's Services Division or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of his contact."

Contact department head or Pastor of Children's Ministry if there is reason to believe child abuse. At that time those people in authority will make the decision to contact legal advisors if necessary.

### **How Do I Respond to a Child Who Reports His/Her Victimization to Me?**

Tell the child that you believe them and that you are going to contact people who will help. Respect the privacy of the child. The child will need to tell their story in detail later to the investigators, so don't press the child for details. Remember, you need only suspect abuse to make a report. Don't display horror, shock, or disapproval of parents, child, or the situation. Don't place blame or make judgments about the parents or child. Tell the child that he/she will be talking to people who will help – a CSD Child Protective Services worker or the police. Believe the child if he/she reports sexual abuse. It is rare for a child to lie about sexual abuse.

### **What Information Do I Need to Report?**

If known, reports of suspected child abuse should contain the name, age, and address of the child and his/her parents or other persons responsible for the child's care. The nature and extent of abuse, including an evidence of previous abuse and any explanation given by caretakers for injuries should also be reported. Include all information, which you believe might be helpful in establishing the cause of the abuse and for identifying the abuser.

### **Will My Report Be Confidential?**

The reporter's identity will remain confidential to the full extent allowable by law. If court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called as a witness or the court may order that the reporter's name be disclosed. Only people with firsthand knowledge of the child's situation can provide testimony proving the abuse has occurred.

### **Can I Be Sued If I Report?**

Oregon law (ORS 418.762) provides that a mandatory reporter participating in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for making the report, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to such a report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

## **PARENT POLICIES**

### **Parents in the Classroom**

As a general rule, any adult in the children's classrooms must be an approved volunteer (or ministry staff) who has gone through the application, screening, and background check procedures prior to serving in the Children's Ministry. Parents have the option to volunteer as parent helpers, where they fulfill the application process and commit to assist in the classroom at least one service every 6 weeks.

### **Parent Observers**

Parents interested in observing a classroom before leaving their child in the room for the first time are permitted to do so one time only. Beyond this first introductory observation to the room, we ask parents to not linger in the classroom beyond drop off and pick up times with the intention of classroom time staying consistent in schedule of programs, and children not becoming distracted or upset by the presence of parents in the room. When a parent is observing, we encourage the parent to refrain from interacting within the class and try to maintain a "fly on the wall" position. If the parent is unable to act in such a way and becomes a distraction to the children or in some way hinders the volunteers from managing the flow of the classroom, we may kindly ask the parent to leave the room.

### **Nursery Room(s)**

With the best intentions at heart to keep the infant room comfortable and simple, we have designed the room to be a strictly female-only environment. This simplifies specifically the cases of diaper changing or mothers needing to breast-feed. Mothers may also breastfeed in the family room where check-in is stationed, or in the breakaway room off of the rotunda on the main floor. Male presence in the infant room will be limited to father's dropping off or picking

up their child. Fathers should be asked to not linger in the infant room outside of these limitations. Male volunteers will not be permitted to work in the infant room.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Door of Hope is a community which takes seriously our responsibility to provide a safe environment for children, youth, volunteers and staff who participate in church-sponsored ministries. It is our desire to be especially sensitive to the safety needs of our children.

### Emergency Supply Kit

Each classroom is supplied with an emergency supply kit that includes snack, water, a rope to aid in keeping young children together, space blankets and a waterproof tarp.



### Evacuation

A building evacuation may be needed if a natural or chemical disaster threatens the safety of our building. In the event that an evacuation is needed:

1. Gather the children and, if necessary, use the evacuation rope located in the emergency supply kit to aid in keeping the children together.
2. Lead the children to the nearest emergency exit in a calm and orderly fashion, as indicated by the map below. Parents should not interfere with the evacuation process by trying to collect their children during an evacuation.
3. Once outside the building, everyone will make their way to the rendezvous point in the parking lot on the east side of the SE Taylor Street building.

Please carefully follow the instructions of the safety team, Door of Hope staff and emergency services.



## Unauthorized Entry

All Children's Ministry volunteers should be wearing an identification badge. If children, staff or parents express concern about a stranger loitering on or near the property, report it immediately to the safety team and the Door of Hope staff.

## In Case of Human Threat

1. **Lockdown:** The first priority is to go into lockdown or have kids hide. Place whatever barrier you can between yourselves and the threatening individual.
2. **Alert:** Call 911 if it is safe to do so. If the violent person is in sight attempt to communicate race, sex, clothing, height, weight and other distinguishing features.
3. **Wait:** Do not open the door or exit the room until law enforcement or other authorities open the door from the outside.