

City Grace Kids Ministry Guidelines

The mission of City Grace's Kids' Ministry is to show kids that Jesus is amazing! We believe that children are a blessing from the Lord, and we want to steward the time we have with them well. To that end we expect our Kids Ministry Team members to hold to the ministry's core values that are outlined below.

KIDS MINISTRY VOLUNTEER VALUES

- Arrive on time! (40 min before service starts for pre-service prayer/huddle)
- Be prepared in heart (prayer) and mind (study) to disciple.
- See each child as a unique opportunity to disciple.
- Love kids as Jesus loves them.
- Desire salvation for all kids!

CURRICULUM

In order to help the kids see that Jesus is amazing, we use The Gospel Project curriculum. This exciting Lifeway product reviews the entire Bible over a three-year period. Children are engaged with games, activities, and a multi-media lesson with worship.

Because consistency helps children know what to expect, our volunteers will follow the classroom agenda unless another agenda has been approved.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND BACKGROUND CHECK

For recruitment purposes, if someone is still considering serving in City Grace Kids but hasn't started the application process yet, we allow people to visit City Grace Kids but only under the supervision of our Kids Ministry Director. They must stay with the Kids Ministry

Director at all times during the visit. However, in order to keep volunteers and children safe, all people volunteering in Kids Ministry must meet City Grace's Certification requirements prior to training (shadowing) or serving in City Grace Kids:

Adults (18+): Level 3 Certification Requirements

- Cleared Kids Ministry Application
- Cleared KM Director interview
- Background Check through Protect My Ministry (PMM) every two years
- Watch PMM child safety training video and exam (80% on exam is the passing minimum)
- Orientation on the Kids and Youth Ministry Handbook every two years
- Completion and maintenance of Level 3 Equipping Certification requirements

Teens (13–17): Level 5 Certification Requirements

- Cleared Kids Ministry application (**No background check for minors. PMM child safety training video deferred to caregivers discretion**)
- KM Director interview with the student and their caregiver. (Unless it's a high school student and they would prefer to interview alone with their caregivers approval.)
- Orientation on the Kids and Youth Ministry Handbook every two years

Background Check information and results will only be reviewed by appointed staff. An elder will handle any problems or concerns that arise from the screening with the applicant.

On the rare occasion that we have a volunteer who has not been through the screening process (For example: We have people out sick and ask a parent to jump into a class to help), they will have to be approved by the Kid's Ministry Director and they will never be alone with the children and will work with an approved adult Kid's Ministry volunteer until their screening is complete. They will also not assist in any toileting or diaper change duties.

You must be at least 13 years old to apply to volunteer with City Grace Kids. All youth who are under 18 years old will be required to serve with an approved adult.

TEAM MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Adult-Child Ratios

A minimum of two adults will be present at all interactions with children and students. When this is not possible a teen volunteer (13–17 years old) can serve as a second leader.

The following are the City Grace Kids classroom ratios:

- 0–18 mo.: 1 Adult – 2 Kids (Infants and Crawlers)
- 18 mo. – 36 mo.: 1 Adult – 4 Kids (Toddlers/Walkers)
- 3–4 yrs.: 1 Adult – 5 Kids
- PreK and Kindergarten: 1 Adult – 8 Kids
- 1st – 5th Grade: 1 Adult – 12 Kids

Safe Touch

These guidelines are intended to enhance adult-child/student relationships by enabling adults to offer children the physical interaction they crave, with the confidence that such touch is helpful to the child. We want every child to feel safe, valued, and respected.

Appropriate touch can communicate warmth and care, but it must always be **child-centered, public, and appropriate to the child's age and comfort level**. When in doubt, choose words of encouragement instead of physical touch. All touch must follow the guiding principle of being observable, transparent, and interruptible.

Examples of Acceptable Touch:

- High fives, fist bumps, or special handshakes
- Side hugs (brief and child-initiated when possible)
- Pats on the shoulder, upper back, or handshakes for encouragement
- Carrying a small child on your hip when necessary for care or safety
- Helping a child with tasks (tying shoes, fastening coats, etc.) in a way that's appropriate and public

Examples of Unacceptable Touch:

- Sexually or physically abusive touch
- Corporal punishment or any physical discipline
- Any touch that a child resists or indicates is unwanted (verbally or nonverbally)
- Extended hugs (side or frontal hugs)
- Tickling, wrestling, or roughhousing
- Playing with a child's hair
- Kissing of any kind
- Tapping a child's bottom (Unless soothing an infant)
- Any touch that is secretive or could not be done in public
- Touch that sexually gratifies the adult in any way
- Lap sitting for children in kindergarten and above (sitting side by side is acceptable)

Unacceptable Verbal and Non-Verbal Interaction

We believe children learn best in an environment where they feel seen, understood and loved. Our words, tone, and body language should always communicate encouragement and care. Accordingly, our verbal and non-verbal interactions should communicate that back to them. Here are some behaviors that are unacceptable and must be avoided:

- Discrimination or favoritism (e.g., serving snacks to all the children in the group except for one child or one group of children and students)
- Blaming, shaming, or unfairly singling out a child
- Belittling, insulting, ridiculing, or humiliating a child
- Threatening, intimidating, or intentionally frightening a child
- Setting unrealistic expectations or demands
- Any other non-physical forms of hostility, bullying, or exclusion

Any unacceptable behavior (physical, verbal, non-verbal) should be **immediately** reported to the Kids Ministry Staff. Reported incidents will be reviewed and brought to the elders for further assessment. During this process, the team member involved may be temporarily restricted from serving in the Kids' Ministry area while the situation is evaluated.

Under North Carolina law ([North Carolina General Statute 7B-301](#)), any person or institution who has “cause to suspect” that a juvenile (under age 18 and not emancipated) is abused, neglected, or dependent **must** report that suspicion to the Department of Social Services for their county. Therefore, at City Grace, for incidents that involve an accusation of unacceptable touching, a sufficient investigation may include involvement from Craven County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) or local law enforcement. During this period, we will follow the guidelines given to us by the CCDSS.

RESTROOM, TOILETING & DIAPERING POLICY

General Guidelines:

Caregivers are encouraged to take their children to the restroom before dropping them off in Kids Ministry. This includes any necessary diaper changes. We realize that some parents prefer to use cloth diapers. However, for the safety of our workers and other children we are respectfully requesting that parents use disposable diapers for Sunday mornings. If we have a child with a cloth diaper that needs to be changed we will notify the parent to come to the nursery.

If a child is potty training, we also ask that you send your child in a diaper or pull up. We will be happy to take your child to the bathroom when needed, but the frequent accidents that occur during potty training are a sanitation and cleanliness issue for our classrooms. If your child is already potty trained, we understand that accidents do sometimes occur. Please make sure you pack appropriate clothing and undergarments for your child, if necessary.

Restrooms will be checked to ensure they are not occupied by an unknown individual before allowing children to use the facilities. The restroom doors at City Grace Kids will be propped open for access by children only. A Level 1-2 Certified¹ person will conduct periodic checks.

¹Level 1 certification is for church staff and has all the same qualifications as Level 3 but has a more rigorous background check and includes additional training in the Church Cares curriculum. Level 2 certification is for KM captains and YM leaders; it has all the same qualifications as Level 3 but includes additional training in the Church Cares Curriculum.

All interactions with children will be conducted in a way that is observable, transparent, and interruptible. A child will never be alone in a bathroom with an adult. Another volunteer or Kids Ministry Staff will be present if assistance is needed by a child.

Diapering:

- Diapering must occur when two volunteers are present and doors are open.
- Children ages 3+ will not be diapered by anyone but their caregiver.
- Volunteers will wipe down the changing pad after each use using a disinfection wipe or the spray bottle labeled "Shaklee Organic Disinfecting Spray" located in the tub beside the changing table.
- Dirty diapers / wipes are to be disposed of in the covered trash can or can be bagged up and handed to the captain or director to be taken directly to the outside garbage.

Restroom & Toileting:

- All restroom doors remain open when providing assistance.
- Step-by-step instructions are provided aloud, so that both the child and passerby know what is happening.
- For children three years and younger who need help, two adults must be present.
(Rule of 3)
- If a child ages 4+ needs toileting assistance, a caregiver will be contacted.

Clothing Changes:

- First contact the caregiver to help their child.
- Unless absolutely necessary, volunteers will not assist in changing a child's clothing.
If assistance is deemed absolutely necessary, clothing of a non-diapered child needs to be changed or removed, two adults must be present.

Guidelines for K-5th:

- Children are escorted to the restrooms by a City Grace Kids staff member or volunteer and proceed in groups of three or more (e.g., one volunteer and two children or two volunteers and one child). (Rule of 3)

- Line-of-sound supervision (auditory supervision) is maintained while children use the restroom; staff or volunteers must be able to hear the child but not see them.
- For single toilet bathrooms only one child can use it at a time.

CAREGIVER REGISTRATION AND PICK-UP

Classroom Access:

- Only volunteers with a Kids Ministry t-shirt, Kids Ministry lanyard or Approved Access lanyard (Level 3 certification minimum) are permitted in classrooms.
- Only children with security stickers may enter classrooms.
- Caregivers must remain on the church premises while their child is in City Grace Kids.
- Caregivers are not allowed inside classrooms without their check-in sticker.

Child Safety:

- Under no circumstances should a child be left unattended in the City Grace Kids area.
- Children may only be left in their classroom when the appropriate number of volunteers are present.

Check-In and Identification:

- Check-in begins 15 minutes before service time. All children must be checked in at the kiosk before entering their classroom.
- Upon check-in, children and caregivers receive security stickers with matching codes.
- Children must have their security stickers at all times while in City Grace Kids. For preschoolers, we recommend stickers be placed on their backs.
- Caregivers must present the security sticker when picking up children, or when sent for by Kids Ministry.

Communication with Caregivers:

If a caregiver's attention is needed while their child is checked in, we will put their child's code on the screen in the adult service. Please come promptly, otherwise we may come get you in the service.

Lost Security Sticker:

If a caregiver loses their security sticker let the Captain or Director know. They will confirm their identification, verify their relationship to the child and escort them to class to approve pick-up.

Check-Out Process:

The security sticker must remain with the child while in City Grace Kids. Caregivers will show their matching sticker at the building entrance as well as the classroom entrance to receive their kids.

Before leaving the Kids Ministry building the sticker will be removed and collected by a City Grace Kids volunteer. For kids attending for multiple services the sticker will be removed and collected only after the final service they attend.

FIRST TIME GUESTS

Guests will be instructed to scan the QR code posted in several conspicuous places at Kids Ministry entrance and check-in area. A Kids Ministry team member will be available to help first time guests with the following:

- Filling out their family information on Planning Center.
- Explain the check-in and check-out procedure with the printed stickers. Include instructions for what the parent can do if they lose their sticker.
- Each guest should be escorted by a Kids Ministry Team member to the classrooms where their kids will be. After the kids have been dropped off, the KM Team member should show them how to exit the Kids Ministry area and go to the gathering space.

CRYING

It is normal for children to cry or feel anxious for a time when parents drop them off. Our team will do our best to help the child explore the room and engage in activities. If efforts to soothe or redirect fail then next steps may include:

- Occasionally the Director or Captain will take a child out of the room to comfort them; they will remain in view of other volunteers and / or security personnel.
- If our efforts to help the child through distraction, redirection or comfort are unsuccessful for 15 minutes, we will notify the parent.
- In certain situations they may be encouraged to make use of our Family Room to help their child get acclimated.

CLASSROOM CARE AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

At City Grace Kids, our goal is to provide a safe and positive environment for every child. We also want our volunteers to be able to thrive as they serve. Volunteers are encouraged to use gentle redirection and positive guidance to manage behavior concerns in the classroom.

If a situation arises that cannot be resolved through simple redirection and reminders, please notify the Captain or Director on Duty immediately. The Director will handle the next steps with the child and family as needed.

Volunteers should not administer discipline or consequences beyond redirection or reminders of our core expectations. The Director will communicate with parents and determine any necessary follow-up.

Our Core Expectations

- Be kind to everyone.
- Listen and follow directions.
- Take care of toys, supplies, and spaces.
- Use inside voices.

These expectations help every child feel safe and supported.

How We Support Positive Behavior

When a child struggles, team members can apply the following strategies:

- Get on the child's level and speak calmly.
- Acknowledge feelings, if applicable ("It looks like you're frustrated. That's okay.").
- Offer choices ("Would you like to help me pass out crayons or take a quick drink of water?").
- Remind them of expectations.
- Redirect to an engaging activity.
- Encourage and celebrate positive efforts.

If a child continues to be upset or disruptive, a team member will call the Kids Ministry Staff who will gently guide the child to a quieter space with another adult present to help them calm down. Once the child is ready, they rejoin the group and are warmly welcomed back.

If a child remains distressed or unsafe to self or others, the parent or caregiver will be contacted by the Kids Ministry Staff to assist and decide next steps.

Our Commitment

We do not use punitive discipline, shaming language, or isolation as behavior management tools. Our goal is connection, restoration, and relationship repair, not punishment. We believe every moment of challenge is an opportunity to model the grace and love of Christ.

Classrooms will have the expectations and responses posted in a conspicuous place, and teachers are expected to review the expectations with their students at the start of each class.

Physical restraint is used only if it is necessary to protect the child from harm or other children from harm, and only administered by an approved team member until the caregiver arrives, and must be documented in writing.

City Grace Kids team members are strongly encouraged to use these same guidelines with their own children while at City Grace Church, realizing that our guests and partners do not know which children belong to leaders and which do not.

Extreme Behavior Protocol:

Extreme behaviors include biting, punching, kicking, shoving or pulling hair. There will be occasional incidents that occur between children. When something concerning happens do the following:

- Take care of the victim first. Make sure they are okay and respond appropriately.
- Contact the Kids Ministry Staff who will take over caring for the child and contacting caregivers.
- The offender also will be handled directly by the Kids' Ministry Staff.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

As children enter City Grace's Kids Ministry, staff/leaders will not admit any child with any of the following conditions:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or other eye infection
- Contagious diseases such as chicken pox, measles, etc.
- Rash or open sores
- Sore throat
- Cold
- Excessive coughing
- Lice

If a child complains about not feeling well, including excessive tiredness or feeling weak, the child's parents will be notified. The child will need to be removed from the class even if there are no additional symptoms.

In addition, a child must be fever-free and have stopped diarrhea and vomiting for 24 hours before returning to Kids Ministry. A child must be lice/nit free for 48 hours.

Questions concerning any conditions will be addressed to the parent and child in a non-threatening way by the director or captain.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

In order to minimize the risk of infection and diseases, we ask that all workers in the baby and toddler areas abide by the following guidelines:

- Please use disinfectant spray on all surfaces such as trays, toys, slides, and changing pads after each service.
- Toys that go in mouths are to be set in the marked bin (in Rooms A, B & C) for a more thorough cleaning each week.

Other Health and Safety Guidelines

- Make sure choking procedures are posted in each room.
- Coffee and hot beverages must be lidded and kept out of reach of babies and toddlers.
- First Aid Kits are located in each classroom and at the front check-in desk of the Kids Ministry building.

SECURITY GUIDELINES OF THE SAFETY TEAM

- All entrance and exit doors into and out of City Grace Kids should be monitored at all times.
- Doors leading to the kids area should be closed during services to help maintain a safe and secure area.
- Only the following people should be allowed to enter the kids area unescorted:

- People with security stickers picking up or dropping off kids
- Leaders with City Grace Kids nametags and t-shirts
- People with an Approved Access lanyard from other ministries.
- If someone forgets security tags, they should be asked to present a photo ID to enter the kids area and should be escorted by Kids Ministry staff or a Captain into and out of City Grace Kids.
- If someone forgets an item in a classroom, a Safety Team member or Captain can retrieve the item for them, or they can escort them into the City Grace Kids area.
- Do a bathroom check/rooms check (upstairs included) at the start of class and after checkout finishes.

CELL PHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Cell Phones: The expectation is no cell phone usage during classroom time unless it is serving the purpose of the ministry. Classroom time includes drop off and pickup while kids are present in the classroom. Examples where cell phone usage might serve the purpose of the ministry would include using a timer for games and activities, accessing lesson plans and supplemental materials on Planning Center, contacting a KM staff member or safety person for help.

Photos and Videos: No photos or videos are to be taken of children in City Grace Kids except for agreed upon special circumstances with previous caregiver approval, and with the following limitations:

- Photos or videos may only be taken by a Kids Ministry captain or City Grace staff member.
- Images may be taken only with prior caregiver permission and for approved ministry purposes.
- If photos or videos are shared directly with caregivers, they should be sent privately (e.g., text or email), not through public channels.
- Any posting of photos or videos on social media or public platforms may only be done by City Grace staff on official City Grace accounts, and only after explicit caregiver permission has been received.

CITY GRACE EVENTS BEYOND SUNDAY SERVICES THAT REQUIRE CHILDCARE

For consistency with safety at all events the guidelines outlined in this book must be followed where childcare in the Kids Ministry space is involved.