



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

ALETHEIA JR. VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Dear Aletheia Jr. Volunteer,

Thank you so much for your willingness to serve our families in Aletheia Jr. I want you to know how much your dedication to the children and families in our church means to our church family. Your investment in this ministry will impact the Kingdom by influencing the lives of our children. I hope it enhances your own walk with the Lord. Thank you and I look forward to serving with you!

Sincerely,

April Cosner, Director of Aletheia Jr.

Our Promise to You

- We will pray for you.
- We will seek to put you in your gifted area.
- We will honor you in our speech and actions.
- We will offer training for your growth.

Becoming a Volunteer in Aletheia Jr

We value our children and know that the impact we make in their lives today will directly affect the church for decades to come. In order to ensure that volunteers are encouraged in their ministry opportunity, trained, and well prepared for their involvement with children, we have instituted the following steps to become an Aletheia Jr. Volunteer:

1. **Fill out the Volunteer Interest Form (Planning Center)** - This will be emailed to you.
2. **Attend a scheduled meeting with Aletheia Church Staff** - This mandatory meeting for all volunteers includes some time for us to get to know each other, to explain our heart and vision for this ministry, and to explain our safety and security procedures.
3. **Complete a Background Check (Checkr)** - Fill out a background check via the link emailed to you.
4. **Assignment & Implementation** – Volunteers work with their assigned Team Shepherd to learn the specifics of their classroom assignment. Review the Handbook and get any questions answered. Turn in the accountability sheet before serving (found at the end of this handbook).
5. **Start Serving!**

It is our mission in Aletheia Jr. to partner with families to support children in the love and knowledge of Jesus.

Aletheia JR- Core Values (in no particular order)

1. Partnering with families

- a. The church partners with families, because God intends kids to learn in the context of family relationships.
- b. Two combined influences make a greater impact than two separate influences.

How we accomplish this:

We connect with parents intentionally in the hallway and at the door of classrooms. We provide resources (take home sheets, a monthly newsletter, a devotional that parallels the curriculum, and various kinds of Bibles). We provide resources for parents (a book we're reading that month, worship music playlists, etc.). Our servers intentionally reach out beyond Sunday mornings to maintain and grow relationships with families.

2. Targeting the heart

- a. God's word teaches that behavior is rooted in the heart. Therefore, we want children to have a heart to follow God, not just go through outward motions.
- b. Teaching focuses on cultivating a heart that loves God and trusts His promises above all else.

How we accomplish this:

Our curriculum focuses on individual hearts! We provide parents with resources that reinforce this. When we talk with children, even in moments of discipline, we are targeting their heart, not just the behavior.

3. Gospel centered, grace centered teaching

- a. Teaching is centered on God's word
- b. Teaching focuses on the gospel of God's grace as the primary motivation for obeying Christ—A RESPONSE to the love that He has already shown us.

How we accomplish this:

We chose a curriculum that meets this criteria and ensures our conversations with kids reflect this.

4. Relationships with others

- a. Relationships with others in the church are an essential component of spiritual growth.
- b. Learning and relationships are always in a safe, caring, and comfortable environment for children.

How we accomplish this:

We recruit volunteers that love to invest in the personal lives of children and who understand discipleship (or who can be taught about discipleship! ☺). We provide opportunities for kids to develop relationships with other kids in their class through being in small groups, playing games together, etc.

5. Serving

- a. We teach children that everything we have is given to us from God and should be used to bring Him glory.
- b. We provide opportunities for children to express their faith through serving, giving, and reaching out to others both inside and outside the church.

How we accomplish this:

Mission highlights for each class, food drives, etc. We encourage kids to help with teardown after the service. Interactive curriculum provides crafts that require service action points (homeless care packages, gospel story sharing at school, etc.)

6. Kid- Relevant teaching

- a. Teaching is always appropriate to a child's physical, social, cognitive, and spiritual development.
- b. Different children have different learning styles, so we teach in a variety of creative ways.
- c. We seek to understand a child's cultural influences and relate to that culture, while never compromising biblical truth.

How we accomplish this:

A Gospel centered curriculum is provided. Large group/small group format (Large group- fun, upbeat music and worship made just for kids; Small group- interactive curriculum where kids are a part of the learning process).

Aletheia Jr “Job Descriptions” - Volunteers are the heartbeat of Aletheia Jr. They are the hands and feet of Jesus to our children each week.

Team Shepherd –Touches base regularly with the Aletheia Jr. Director(s) for vision casting and to be equipped to lead the classroom through shepherding, training, and encouragement. Also responsible for scheduling the volunteers in their respective classrooms.

- Toddler Room - Becky Knighten & Sarah Keegan
- 2s & 3s Room - Samantha Weaver
- Pre-K / Kindergarten - Robin Lauber & Rebecca Pflugradt
- 1st & 2nd - Caitlyn Criner & Joanne Robbie
- 3rd - 5th - Melissa Zook

Classroom Greeter - Welcomes kids into classrooms, greets parents, and serves as the front line of safety and security as kids are checked in and dismissed. In charge of the classroom roster being filled out. In the event of a fire, this person is to grab the class roster.

Classroom Teacher - Responsible for the overall flow of the class on a Sunday morning: reads over and prepares the lesson prior to Sunday. Is a point person for other volunteers in the class.

Classroom Assistant - Builds intentional relationships with the kids and assists the classroom teacher in any way needed.

Youth Volunteers - Middle and high school aged kids who serve alongside a designated volunteer. These volunteers, because they’re under 18, **do not** count as a second adult in the room.

Aletheia Jr. Greeter - Operates check in kiosks. They are to welcome new families and escort them to classrooms. Collects names, ages, and grades of new children and the contact info from their parents and sets them up within Planning Center. Notifies new families of the check out procedure. Informs Aletheia Jr. directors of new families.

Aletheia Jr. Security - Keeps the Aletheia Jr. hallway safe and secure. Contact the appropriate personnel when parents are needed from the service.

Commitment Terms

- We ask that our volunteers serve one Sunday per month. There may be occasional months where you may be asked to serve twice.
- If you need a break from serving in AJR:
 - Give a month’s notice to your team shepherd
 - We encourage you to recruit someone to volunteer for you and take your place whether indefinitely or for a certain amount of time
 - PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:
 - We want to prevent our volunteers from feeling burnt out and provide freedom for anyone to take a break from serving; we want everyone to be energized by serving our children

- Helps maintain the current number of volunteers in AJR so fellow volunteers aren't asked to serve more than once a month

Ministry Expectations of Our Volunteers

Attend Church Regularly. We believe that service comes out of the overflow of the spiritual nourishment we get from God and other believers. Therefore, it is important for each volunteer to attend the worship service each week.

Be on Time to Serve. Being on time is necessary for us to have a time of team building through prayer and to be ready when students arrive. You should be checked in at the check in kiosk and *ready to serve* by 8:55 a.m.

Prayer. Prayer is foundational to our ministry. We ask that volunteers regularly pray together in teams, and also that you support the ministry and children by praying throughout the week. We will pray together in the hall at 9 a.m.

Support Aletheia. In this volunteer role you are expected to be supportive and honoring of Aletheia and its leadership in speech and action. If you have concerns that need to be raised, please bring it to the attention of your Team Shepherd who will help you follow the appropriate forms of conflict resolution.

Be Open for Growth. In order to grow in the position where God has placed you, plan to attend training events that will include time to grow with your team both in community and skills.

Wear your name tag and Aletheia Jr. t-shirt. To help parents know that you are an approved leader of children, please wear your name tag and Aletheia Jr. t-shirt while serving.

Attendance. We expect regular attendance for volunteers, as they are scheduled. When you need to be away, please follow the following procedure to find a sub:

1. You will be given a contact list of the other volunteers in your classroom. Please contact one of them, as soon as possible, to find someone to switch with you. **Once your monthly schedule has been released, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to find a sub!**
2. Contact your team shepherd to let them know of your trade.

Be Honoring to One Another. We recognize that even in the best of environments, people will sometimes disagree with one another. In Aletheia Jr, we advise that disagreements be kept private between the parties directly involved and not displayed in public ways. If you have a disagreement with another person, go to that person privately and discuss it together. (See Matthew 18:15). If this does not resolve the issue, contact your staff director for help resolving the situation. Our goal is to eliminate gossip and resolve the issue while honoring all parties involved.

Confidentiality. As you shepherd children, you will be serving in a unique capacity that demands carefully handling the information they may share regarding their family lives, things they are feeling, and their behaviors. If you feel it is important that another person has this information, please talk to the Team Shepherd or an Aletheia staff member.

Discipline. Discipline helps to maintain a positive learning environment and it is everybody's responsibility to respond to and redirect misbehavior. See Classroom Discipline Ideas on Page 14.

No phone usage. Your role as a volunteer will require your full attention. Please do not use your cell phone during class. Volunteers are not permitted to take any pictures of the children! Aletheia Staff are the only ones approved to take pictures.

Health and Safety

Health and safety are among our top priorities in Aletheia Jr. We always seek to maintain a clean, safe, and welcoming atmosphere for our children. If any situation should arise where a volunteer or parent doesn't follow one of the following criteria, contact the Aletheia Jr. director(s) or security. If there's a medical emergency, call 911.

- EMHS Address: **801 Parkwood Drive**

Help us keep the environment healthy for all children. Please do not check in children who:

- Have had diarrhea, fever (100.4 or higher), or vomiting within past 24 hours
- Have a persistent cough
- Have excessive runny nose
- Have discolored discharge from nose or eyes
- Have had a communicable disease within past 24 hours

If any of these circumstances arise, either page a parent to come get their child, or ask that the parent look out for the safety of their child and keep them in the service. If there are any further issues, contact the Aletheia Jr. Director(s).

Follow Universal Precautions. Wear vinyl gloves, available in the first aid kit in each classroom for handling any body fluid i.e., bloody nose, bleeding cut, vomit, urine, or feces.

"Two-Adult Rule." No volunteer should ever be with a child outside the visual presence of another volunteer. This is for the safety of the child and the volunteer. Please keep the bathroom doors in the Aletheia Jr. hallway open. (The men's bathroom door may be closed if the child is able to use the bathroom with complete independence.)

Incident Reports. In each room's binder, there are several copies of an incident report form. In the event a child is injured, there's a fight between children, something is broken in the room, etc. one of these should be filled out and signed by the involved volunteer and if possible, by a witness to the situation. There are additional forms located in a labeled bin in the cabinets at the end of the hallway. This form should be given to the AJR Director at the end of that day's service.

Ratios. In addition to the two-adult policy, we have set ratios for each classroom to ensure the safety of volunteers and children. The ideal ratios for each classroom are as follows:

Infants- 1 to 3

Toddlers- 1 to 4

2s & 3s- 1 to 5

4s & 5s- 1 to 7

K & 1st- 1 to 8

2nd & 3rd- 1 to 10

Bathrooms/Diapers

- Due to parental preference, men should not change diapers or help with bathroom assistance.
- Diaper changes must be done with two adults present and open doors.
- Children who need help may be accompanied by two adults to the bathroom. (One adult may be a security guard).
- The adult who assists personally in the bathroom must be a woman.
- The woman who assists personally must keep the stall door open while assisting to keep a clear line of sight with another adult. (The other adult may be the security guard).
- For children who do not need assistance, one adult will accompany them to the bathroom door. The child will wait outside while the adult (preferably the security guard) checks VISUALLY to make sure the bathroom is empty. The child may then proceed into the bathroom while the adult waits outside the door and stops anyone else from entering.

Food/Snacks in the Classroom

We maintain a nut-free environment in Aletheia Jr. classrooms. Snacks include pretzels, goldfish, or animal crackers for ages two and older, and Cheerios for children under the age of two. We do not offer snacks that contain peanuts/tree nuts or that have been processed on machinery that also had processed peanuts/tree nuts. Parents may provide snacks for kids with special dietary needs.

Water Fountain

Classroom teachers and security guards will keep the area under the fountain dry. For trips to the water fountain, the Two-Adult Rule still applies.

Affirming Touch Only

- DO: High-fives, pat on the back or shoulder, side or brief hugs.
- DO NOT: ask for or expect hugs, wrestle, tickle, hug tightly, spank, kiss, etc.

Mandatory Reporters: All Aletheia Church staff and Children/Youth volunteers are “mandatory reporters,” obligated by the law of Virginia [§ 63.2-1509](#) to report suspected neglect or abuse of a child. Child abuse includes: physical abuse; physical neglect; sexual abuse; and emotional/mental maltreatment. This is in accordance with Section 63.2-100 of the Code of Virginia. Please follow [this link](#) [DSS of Virginia] for guidelines, definitions, and clarifications on what may constitute neglect or abuse.

1. Accusation is reported the day of to the Aletheia Jr or Youth staff and the lead pastor. The staff will complete an Incident Report Form documenting the accusation.
2. The staff will report the accusation to Child Protective Services (CPS) within 24 hours of the initial accusation. All conversations with CPS are to be documented on the same Incident Report Form.
3. If the accused is a volunteer, they will be removed from working with minors. This protects the child, as well as the reputation of the accused.
4. Await the report from CPS as necessary.
5. Reports will be kept in absolute confidentiality between the reporter, staff and the pastor, with no exceptions.

General Security.

The person working security for the day should introduce themselves to you. If they don't, make an effort to find out who is serving that day. Maintain situational awareness, know where your exits, fire extinguishers, and students are. If someone seems suspicious or makes you feel uneasy, let security know.

Evacuation Procedure:

Aletheia Jr. Director(s) or Security are to grab the iPad (for rosters) and the first aid kit.

Volunteer Staff should take their roster with them and continually do a headcount. Make sure you have all your children during any type of evacuation.

Fire or fire alarm. In the event of a fire or fire alarm activation getting the children out quickly and in an organized fashion is of utmost importance. Remain calm and give firm, clear directions.

- If the fire alarm sounds, evacuate the building unless there is a good reason to shelter in place (i.e. active shooter situation, heavy smoke in the hallway, security advises you to shelter in place, etc.)
- If you are sheltering in place, keep the door shut and attempt to signal the Fire Department from the windows. Be aware that fire alarms will be very loud and will be accompanied by flashing lights.
- The primary route is to go down the hall toward the elevator, take the stairs down (do not use the elevator), make a 180 degree turn and exit the building through the double doors then proceed to the soccer field.
- The secondary route is to continue straight at the bottom of the stairs and go out the double doors to the parking lot that fronts Parkwood Ave.
- The tertiary route is down the steps by the main entrance and out the glass door at the bottom by the restrooms. If one exit is not accessible due to smoke or fire conditions, attempt the next exit.
- Parents should meet you on the soccer fields.
- There should always be a member of the security team present on the floor and they will be available to assist with determining the best route.
- Adults from classes with older kids should assist the younger classes with carrying and directing children as possible/needed. Adults from younger classes should request help from other adults, if needed.

Active shooter or other physical threat. If at all possible, notify a member of the security team if they are not already aware, the team has protocols in place to assist, however, they must know there is a problem before they can be implemented.

- Remain calm in an effort to keep the children calm.
- Shelter in place - Move the children to a far corner and provide shielding with furniture. Close the door, lock it and secure it with a wedge. Stack as much as you can in front of the door; chairs, desks, filing cabinets, bookshelves, etc.
- Turn off lights, silence cell phones, maintain silence to the extent possible.
- Call 911 and give the dispatcher as much information as you can, remain calm and realize that they are going to be receiving multiple calls and they may ask you for a lot of information that does not seem relevant, trust them and their training to get you the help that you need.
- If the threat enters the room, fight back with whatever is available; hands, feet, broomsticks, chairs, books, etc... Attack as a group as violently as possible.

First Aid Kits. These are located in the classroom supply tubs. Please let the Operations Director know when supplies are used from these kits so a replacement can be made.

Check In/ Check Out Procedures for Children.

All children attending Aletheia Jr. classes will be checked in by their parents at one of the computers at the Aletheia Jr check in table. This process will produce an adhesive name tag for the child with their name, class, and a security ID number. Parents will receive a badge with matching security ID numbers which must be presented and matched to the numbers on the child's name tag at dismissal. Each family will receive one security sticker to check out all children in their household.

Parents will walk their child to the classroom where they will be greeted by the classroom staff and join the learning activities available. There must be at least two adults present to welcome children into the classroom. In the event that two volunteers aren't present, that classroom will be shut down for the day and children will participate in the service with their parents. If it's the case that a volunteer is on their way but has yet to arrive, parents may proceed to check in their child(ren) and **wait with them** until the volunteers are both present.

At dismissal, parents will present their security ID badge as they give the first and last name of the child they are picking up. The security numbers on the security sticker must be matched with the ID number on the child's name tag. Volunteers should check out children on their roster and remove the sticker from the child.

Once parents have collected all of their children, they should scan their security sticker to check out at the station at the end of the hallway. Once children have been checked out, they should not be permitted to return to the Aletheia Jr. hallway without an adult.

A child may NOT be released to anyone who does not display the matching security badge. In the case of a lost badge, please call for a staff member to release the child. The staff member will require and record the details of sufficient adult identification to safely release the child. Please always remove the child's name tag as they are released to their parents. There must be 2 adults present until the last child is released from the room.

Paging a Parent. In cases of emergency or illness, a notification will be sent to a parent via text message. To activate this option, notify the Aletheia Jr. security volunteer. He will send the text from the check in station.

Classroom Discipline

Our goal in shepherding children is to lead their hearts to know and love Jesus. Discipline provides a wonderful platform to explain the gospel, which is the central focus of our classrooms.

I. Be Sure God and the Gospel are the center of your classroom.

Pray and rely on Holy Scriptures. God desires success for each child. He wants adults to turn all things over to Him. We must let the Word influence us with love and joy for children. Pray over each class session. Ask for wisdom with special needs children. Allow your co-workers to pray with you and to pray for you. The scriptures are full of illustrations of individuals who were used by the Lord to bring about changes in people or nations. *“Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs 16:3* Remember that behavior is not the main issue. The main issue is always the heart. We want to ask the Holy Spirit to expose the sin in the hearts of our children that lead to the negative behavior, help them understand their need for a Savior, and share with them the awesome news that Jesus has died for them!

II. Principles for Positive Discipline

Plan for every child to succeed. All children are unique and need to experience success at their own levels of interest and development. Home environment and past discipline habits influence self-discipline in the classroom. Expectations should be realistic for age characteristics. Avoid setting standards or conditions that will cause a child to fail. Read 1 Cor. 13:11. Motivate the child by arousing curiosity. Boredom will discourage participation. Reinforce positive behavior. Notice each child’s accomplishments and encourage repeated positive behavior. Above all, remember God’s love does not depend on our good behavior. Love each child as he is and resolve to be a wise teacher who makes learning a joy.

III. Basic Discipline Policy

Separate a child in a loving, calm, matter-of-fact manner from the activity or incident causing the problem. Use a firm but soft voice. All disciplinary guidance must take place immediately. Acknowledge the child’s feelings without censure. Then tell the child how much he is loved and liked, but that he must cooperate with acceptable behavior. If the child is old enough, be sure the child understands clearly what behavior was improper and have the child repeat verbally what behavior was incorrect. At no time is spanking, pulling, yelling, grabbing, or any other form of physical and/or mental abuse permitted. Discuss any special problems with the Team Shepherd or the Director(s).

IV. How to Prevent Problems

Love and accept each child, even when the behavior is not acceptable. Provide meaningful activities and choices. Is an activity too difficult, too easy, boring, or inappropriate for the age? Discipline is minimized when children work at tasks that have meaning and purpose. Be prepared. Have all lesson plans and materials ready and at hand. Losing eye contact results in losing the children's attention. Monitor group behavior constantly, and redirect potential negative situations. The emphasis is on redirection, not repression. Identify limits, which are appropriate and necessary. Once limits have been established, they should be clearly defined and consistently maintained. Only give children choices where you can accept their decision. Know your own limitations. Teach children to finish what they start - even the very young. Understand clearly the age characteristics of the children in your care. Never expect young children to sit still for very long. Focus attention on the child's positive behavior and give honest praise where warranted. Children desire attention and a feeling of importance. Model the behavior expected from the children. If children are not to sit on shelves or tables, adults should not sit on shelves or tables. Check your own level of anxiety and tenseness. Be a good listener and observer. Talk less; listen more. Identify what is important and emphasize it. Forget the rest. Maintain a sense of humor. Most behaviors will be temporary.

V. Specific Redirections:

Help children to recognize and accept logical consequences of their behavior. Avoid building classroom discipline around bribes or rewards. Redirect children into positive behavior by using positive action words. Example: rather than saying, "don't hit", try saying, "use your words to say how you feel, not your hands." It cannot be overstressed how important interesting and stimulating activities are to the management of a classroom. Children who are not bored, frustrated, or under-supervised will rarely be mischievous. Children who are able to play at activities that satisfy their own performance levels will continue with that activity and return to it time and again. If children tend to run in the room, rearrange centers to discourage that behavior. Isolate the block area to prevent children who are not playing with the blocks from coming into the activity area and kicking another child's block creation. Introduce new activities with instructions for use and how to put it away. Arrange seating of children so that incompatible children are never seated together. It is often wise not to let children choose where they will be seated. In the case of biting: Firmly isolate the biter immediately and give attention to the child who has been bitten. The Operations Director should talk with the parents of the biter and the parents of the child who was bitten. It is very important not to disclose names of the children and save lengthy discussions for later in the week, not Sunday morning. Disarm poor behavior caused by low blood sugar levels with light snacks. Check room conditions - is it too hot? Over-crowded? Is a child overly tired?

Follow Up

If a student has had a bad day and been redirected several times, please inform your Team Shepherd or Aletheia Jr Director(s). We will be happy to call the parents to see if there is some reason or some need that we can assist with. Often, it has to do with things outside of the classroom that sometimes is affecting a student's behavior and this is an opportunity for us to minister to the family in some way.

Curriculum and Supplies

Curriculum

Aletheia Jr. uses an age appropriate curriculum that seeks to meet the needs of the learners in each age group. We have chosen a curriculum that is Gospel oriented and grace-centered, kid relevant and fun! The Director of Operations and Classroom Management will give you the curriculum to be used in your classroom.

Supply Closets/Supplies

Your Team Shepherd will show you where all supplies are kept for your class. If you need special supplies, let the Aletheia Jr. Director of Operations and Classroom Management know ahead of the time they're needed, and the items will be purchased for you.

Reproduction of Materials

Notify the Aletheia Jr. Director of Operations and Classroom Management if you need any materials copied. We do not copy materials that are copyrighted.

Accountability

The policies above are taken directly from the Aletheia Jr. Handbook.

I have read, affirm, and will abide by the ministry expectations, health/safety, and discipline policies while in Aletheia Jr.:

Print Name: _____

Sign Name: _____

Date: _____

Please read your handbook thoroughly, sign and date this page, and return only this sheet to the director of Aletheia Jr. Keep your handbook for future reference. If you have any questions, please contact the Aletheia Jr. Directors.