
Grace Bible
Church of Boerne

Nursery
Policies & Procedures

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Contents

Introduction	3
General Procedure	
Staffing Structure/ Requirements	4
Nursery Volunteer Qualifications	5
Volunteer Responsibilities	6
Room Setup	6
Check-In	6
General Supervision of Children	7
Bathroom Supervision	7
Diapering Routine	7
Snack	8
Behavior Issues	8
Check-Out	9
Clean Up	9
Children Health & Safety	
Discipline	10
Incident Reports	11
Personal Contact/ Displays of Affection	11
Child Safety Reminders	11
Reporting Suspected Abuse	12
Injuries	13
Illness	13
Epi-Pen	14
Emergency Procedure	
Evacuation	14
Evacuation Map	15
Missing Child	16
Active Shooter	16
Power Outage	16
Forms	
Incident Report Form	17
Nursery Child Information Sheet	18
Epi-Pen Administration Permission Form	19
Nursery Volunteer Agreement	20
Appendix A – Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse	21

Introduction

Children are a gift from God (Ps. 127:3). The Gospels record that when the people brought the little children to Jesus, He took them in His arms and blessed them. Children are special to God and Grace Bible Church is committed to providing the best possible care for the children who are entrusted to us.

We recognize that we reflect God's love to the children entrusted to our care; therefore, we take seriously our responsibility to them. This manual has been put together to inform parents and workers of the guidelines that have been established to ensure that the children will be cared for in a safe and nurturing environment.

Each volunteer who cares for the children placed in the care of Grace Bible Church is required to adhere to the guidelines, policies, and procedures included in this manual. In an effort to continue to provide the best supervision, this manual will be updated on a regular basis.

We ask that all parents support us in our efforts by following the guidelines as they apply to you and your children. Some of the guidelines may seem excessive at first, but we are convinced that they are absolutely necessary to provide the safest conditions for everyone connected with the nursery. Your cooperation in this will be greatly appreciated. If you have any suggestions that would help us improve what we are doing, feel free to share your suggestions with us.

Our nursery is open to children from 0-3 years old. On the child's 4th birthday, the child will go to the next age up for Sunday School and join their parents for Worship Service. Children between the ages of 0-3 may be accepted into the nursery until the maximum occupancy of 22 individuals is reached. (See Staffing Requirements for child to worker ratios).

General Procedures

Staffing Structure/ Requirements

*These staffing requirements are specific to regular, Sunday services. Other arrangements made for occasional activities are at the discretion and approval of the Nursery Coordinator and/or the Elders.

Nursery Coordinator (NC)

To oversee the nursery ministry.

Assistant Coordinator (AC) - *when staffing allows*

To help the Nursery Coordinator, filling in when she is traveling/ sick.

Room Leaders (RL)

To oversee the nursery room on their assigned week.

Nursery Workers

To care for the children during their assigned week/ timeslot.

Workers in Training (WIT)

To learn alongside volunteering parent, assisting with the children (these ladies are between the ages of 12 and 14 and at the coordinator's discretion).

Substitute Workers

To be on a list to call when workers are unable to come for their shift or schedule is unable to be filled.

A minimum of two (2) non-related workers is mandatory. The nursery must be staffed by at least one adult, female church member at all times. Young ladies under 18 years of age may volunteer in the nursery on an as-needed basis under direct adult supervision and at the discretion of the Nursery Coordinator. These ladies must be children of church members. Any Worker in Training (WIT) must be accompanied by her mother.

There should be at a minimum 5:1 workers to children. If the room exceeds this ratio, contact the coordinator immediately. If there are greater than 3:1 infants (unable to walk yet) per worker, also page the coordinator.

Nursery Volunteer Qualifications

Our nursery is a ministry of service to both parents and children. To provide the best service possible, we've adopted the following qualifications for our nursery workers:

- Love for children and parents
- Desire to serve— most clearly expressed through humility, patience, and joy
- Member of Grace Bible Church for a minimum of two months
- Background check
- Signed Nursery Volunteer Agreement
- Completed Training with Coordinator and/or Room Leader

It is our normal practice that no volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been an active and participating member of the church for a minimum of two months. The volunteer must have been a regular attendee and involved in church activities for that period of time. This time of interaction between our leadership and the volunteer allows for better evaluation and suitability of the volunteer for working with the children.

The two month waiting period may be waived at the discretion of the Elders, and Nursery Coordinator per elder approval.

Background Checks

Anyone who has regular contact with children in any of our ministries must have a background check performed. Anyone who refuses to have a background check will not be permitted to continue in any activity or class with children.

In addition to the initial background check, criminal background checks may be performed on workers on an ongoing basis, randomly or as deemed necessary. All information from the background check will be kept strictly confidential.

Workers will be notified when they have been approved to serve at church-related functions. Only approved adult or teen workers are allowed in classrooms with minors. Approved workers should avoid being in the classrooms unless they are scheduled to be working in those classrooms.

There are no exceptions for substitutes or occasional volunteers – all workers must complete the entire process.

Any prospective worker that has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with minors.

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the criminal background check, any conviction or negative results will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership, sponsorship, or supervising of any activity or program involving minors.

Volunteer Responsibilities

See Training Guide for more details.

Nursery volunteers set the tone for the room through their attitude, appearance (modesty), energy, love, and demeanor. Specific responsibilities include the following (overseen by Room Leader):

Room Setup

- Contact the Nursery Coordinator as soon as possible if you are unable to serve or will be late.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the service/ event.
- Ensure the room is clean and ready for children.

Check-in

- One volunteer will be assigned check-in and check-out for the week.
- Ensure the bottom door and baby gate remain closed as much as possible. This is one of the most important times to encourage parents and guard the safety of children (the other time is check-out).
- Kindly greet parents at the door.
- To avoid distractions and for the safety of all our children, parents are requested to not enter the nursery when dropping-off or picking up children unless requested to do so. It's best, when appropriate, to pass children over the door rather than opening it.
- Have the parent sign each child's name on the sign-in sheet, give them a pager, and make sure to write the pager number by the child's name.
- Have all first-time parents fill out a "Nursery Child Information Sheet" for each child, and file into the nursery binder.
- Provide all first-time parents with a "Nursery Parent Guide", answering any questions.
- Look for any obvious signs of illness or injury as children are being checked into the room. Fill out an "Incident Report Form" with needed information and inform the coordinator.

- Graciously accommodate (within reason) the parents' special request for their child. Note these on the sign-in sheet.
- Label all personal items (bags, children's bottles, cups, pacifiers, blankets, etc.) using painters tape.
- Other volunteers are to help take children, take bags/ belongings to place on the counter, and start distracting/ playing with children.
- One of the volunteers not busy checking in children is to engage an unhappy child through activities and attention. **If a child is inconsolable (10 minutes of non-stop crying)**, please contact his parents.
- If the maximum occupancy has been reached, nursery volunteers can work with members to make room for visitor's children.

General Supervision of Children

- Interact with children, parents, and fellow workers in a kind and loving way.
- Observe all room activities related to children, ensuring a safe and enjoyable place for each child.
- Check on the safety of babies 6 months and younger every 10 minutes while they are asleep. Ensure that they are sleeping in a safe position and that their blanket is not blocking their mouth/nose.
- Immediately report all suspected abuse or inappropriate behavior to the Nursery Coordinator or elder over the nursery. Fill out an "Incident Report Form".
- Immediately report all incidents, accidents, illnesses and emergencies to the Nursery Coordinator or deacon over security. Fill out an "Incident Report Form".
- We have a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate behavior of any kind.

Bathroom Supervision

- Take potty-trained children to the bathroom each ministry hour.
- Supervise in the bathroom as needed, leaving the bathroom door cracked while waiting for the child and/or assisting in the bathroom.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to assist their children in using the bathroom prior to entering the nursery.

Diapering Routine

Check diapers of all the children at least once each ministry hour. Change diapers as needed.

Procedure:

Check the Child Information Board to see if the child is listed on the "Page for Diaper Change" sheet. If not, go ahead and change the diaper. If child is listed, this is an

indication of special instructions, or that the parent wishes to be paged for diaper changes.

- Ensure that you have the right diaper bag and supplies before you begin.
- Use the diapers and wipes the parents have provided unless parents have not provided any. If no supplies have been provided by parents, there are extra diapers and wipes under the changing table.
- Use a new changing table liner and fresh gloves with every diaper change.
- About 20 minutes before a service or function ends, workers should check to make sure every child has on a clean diaper before they are picked up. It should be changed even if they are only wet. Potty trained children should be taken to the bathroom.

Snack

- Snack is served once each ministry hour.
- High-chairs may be used for babies, especially if they are too young for snack time. This ensures little ones do not grab dropped Cheerios who are too little to eat them. Toddlers may sit at provided tables while they enjoy their snack. Children should be buckled appropriately while in the high-chairs.
- Use the cheerios provided in the room. Outside snacks are discouraged due to allergies.
- Check the pin-up board and/or "Nursery Child Information Sheet" (if new child) before giving a child snack. We need to double check we have permission to give snack in case of allergies.
- Sippy cups are for water only and should be clearly labeled with child's name. Check to see if the parent has provided water in diaper bag before assigning sippy cups.
- Give infants bottles if parent wishes you to do so. However, never mix formula yourself. Bottles need to be handed off ready for the baby to drink, otherwise page the parent to come back and mix formula/warm bottle when needed. If you are left with a bottle, note the time you are to give bottle.

Behavior Issues

- Behavior issues will be handled with gentleness and grace. Do not punish (physically, verbally, or emotionally) children for disobedience. Correction will only be given to maintain classroom safety and order.
- Redirecting a child is one of the quickest and easiest ways to handle a child demonstrating less than ideal behavior.
- If a pattern of disobedience persists, or if you are unable to control a child, or his actions are threatening the safety of other children, please contact the Nursery Coordinator.

- It's important that we have the right expectations for children. We are not looking for perfect behavior but patterns of disobedience.
- If you have a child with special needs, please seek counsel from the Nursery Coordinator when dealing with behavioral issues.
- Any incidents that result in injury are to be reported to the Nursery Coordinator immediately, and an "Incident Report Form" filled out by the end of service. This is for the protection of the church, parents, volunteers, and children. Also fill out "Incident Report Form" if a behavioral issue or issue that could lead to injury occurs more than three (3) times during a service so that the coordinator can address as needed. Any questions regarding when to fill out this form should be directed to the coordinator or room leader.

Check-out

- During the last song of the service, move all bags/ belongings to the hallway. This helps the check-out process go more quickly and smoothly.
- Ensure the bottom door remains closed as much as possible.
- Look for ways to encourage parents; thank them for the opportunity to spend time with their child. This is an incredible blessing to parents!
- Check the pager being returned and ensure that the number matches the child's assigned number on the sign-in sheet.
- Ensure that all the child's personal items have been returned to the parents before they leave the classroom. Lost and found items will be on the counter for pick-up the following week. Any items left on the counter for multiple weeks will be moved to the church's lost and found box.
- **Communicate with Nursery Coordinator BEFORE discussing any behavioral concerns or injuries with parents.**
- Our pagers are our security system. We consider anyone with the appropriate pager to have the parent's permission to pick up their child. Parents should keep a close eye on their pager for this reason.
- Remain in room until every child has been picked up.
- Parents should pick up their children within 10 minutes after the service has ended.

Clean up

- Put away toys.
- Wash sippy cups and any mouthed toys in the sink with hot soapy water.
- Place used sheets and blankets by the door for laundering.
- Empty the garbage can and leave the bag by the door.
- Wipe down counters, tables, and high-chairs with cleaning wipes or disinfectant spray.
- Ensure all pagers are returned and charging (light on).
- Turn off the TV and CD player.
- Communicate any supplies or repairs needed to Nursery Coordinator.

Children Health and Safety

The Elders, staff, and volunteers of Grace Bible Church take safety seriously and desire to have a safe and God-honoring environment where children can learn the truths of God.

To that end we have the following policies regarding the operation of, and the workers in, the nursery ministry to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. These policies are for the protection of the children, employees, volunteers, and our entire church family.

Discipline

Behavior issues will be handled with gentleness and grace. Do not punish (physically, verbally, or emotionally) children for disobedience. Correction is only permitted to maintain classroom safety and order. If a child is out of control or his actions are threatening the safety of other children, please inform the Nursery Coordinator. She will be able to help with the child or contact the parents if needed.

Please watch for repeated patterns of disobedience. Most behavior problems are sporadic and inconsistent and, therefore, are to be expected and can be overlooked. Repeated and regular disobedience (e.g. disruptive to nursery; leading to possible injury; occurring more than three times), however, should be communicated to the Nursery Coordinator and noted on an "Incident Report Form". Please communicate all behavior issues with the Nursery Coordinator.

Instances of biting or significant injury (causing bruising, bleeding, or head injury) are to be recorded using the "Incident Report Form". Ask the Nursery Coordinator for help with this, and always communicate to her when one is filed in the binder.

No physical discipline is to be used by any nursery worker or volunteer under any circumstances.

Redirection is a valuable tool when dealing with minor behavior issues.

Corporal punishment or verbal abuse is never permitted and is grounds for immediate dismissal. If you must discipline your own children, please leave the room and do so in private.

Incident Reports

- See form attached to the end of this document.
- Incident Report Forms should be filled out for the following situations:
 - Biting
 - Child pattern of behavior that needs addressing/discipline from parents (occurring more than three times)
 - Blood drawn/serious injury of child while in nursery (see Injuries)
 - Pattern of behavior leading to suspected abuse both in and out of nursery (see Reporting Suspected Abuse)
 - Inappropriate conduct with a minor (see Child Safety Reminders)
 - If there are instances that you are uncertain about, ask Nursery Coordinator
- Complete form before leaving at the end of service on the day of the incident.
- Always inform the Nursery Coordinator when this form has been completed.

Personal Contact/ Displays of Affection

Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support, or physical caretaking (diaper-changing, helping small children in the restroom) are appropriate in this community of caring Christians. Expressions of affection shall not be excessive or be imposed upon others.

Please consider giving children a “high five” instead of a hug. This is a great way to respond to the excitement of children in a way that will not be as easily misinterpreted. Volunteers shall not interact with each other or children in any way that could be interpreted as inappropriate.

Hugging a child is a natural response when children seek affection. We discourage any contact with a child that could be seen as possibly inappropriate. If a child runs to a leader for a hug, the “catch and release” method is preferred. Quickly give a hug and release from the hug gently. Side hugs are most appropriate. Instead of a body to body front hug, try a side-to-side hug.

Child Safety Reminders

The following acts or omissions are violations of this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported to leadership after the safety of the child, children, youth, or minor involved has been assured. These acts or omissions are grounds for immediate removal of volunteers

involved. Upon witnessing any of these, contact the Nursery Coordinator immediately and fill out an “Incident Report Form”.

- Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
- Physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Grace Bible Church.
- Verbal abuse of a minor.
- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Grace Bible Church.
- The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs.
- The consumption of or being under the influence of illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors at Grace Bible Church.

The nursery room is to be accessed by nursery volunteers on schedule only. No church member or visitor should access the nursery room during church hours, unless on schedule, on call, or an appointed security team member. Any other individual who needs to enter the room during church hours should be escorted by the Nursery Coordinator or appointed security team member.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

Any time a worker or volunteer suspects the abuse or neglect of a child, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Take appropriate steps to protect the child from further abuse or neglect.
2. Immediately notify the Nursery Coordinator or Elder over the nursery.
3. Fill out an “Incident Report Form”.
4. Follow all state laws on reporting child abuse or neglect. (See Appendix A)

Injuries

Any time a child experiences physical harm of the following nature the Nursery Coordinator must be contacted. The Nursery Coordinator will determine when medical help and/or parents will need to be paged. When in doubt, please err on the side of paging the Nursery Coordinator. An “Incident Report Form” may be filled out as needed.

Examples:

- * Bite marks
- * Bleeding
- * Bumps
- * Choking/ CPR used
- * Bruises
- * Scrapes and cuts
- * Sudden rash

Illness

We desire to provide the safest and healthiest possible environment for children. For the protection of all the children in our ministry we ask parents to keep children out of the nursery if they have displayed any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours. If you have any questions about the health of a child, please page the Nursery Coordinator.

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever over 100.4° (oral)
- Cold symptoms including runny nose, colored mucus, persistent cough and sore throat
- Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)
- Contagious Rash
- Communicable diseases (like chicken pox)
- Any other sign of illness

If children have non-contagious symptoms, we kindly ask parents to either obtain a note from the doctor and/or clearly describe special instructions in child’s information sheet to help us properly care for their child as well as others. If this issue should arise, please call for the Nursery Coordinator before talking with parents.

Do not give medications to children. Kindly ask parents to return to the nursery to administer medications, if needed.

Children will at times become ill suddenly. Should a child exhibit any signs of illness, please do the following:

1. Isolate child as much as possible (pack-n-play)

2. Page the Nursery Coordinator
3. Nursery coordinator will determine whether or not child's parents are to be called
4. Set aside all toys that were used or could have been used by sick child

Epi-Pen

Do not give food to children with identified allergies (unless otherwise instructed by parents). Write "A" (Allergies) on painter's tape and stick to the child's back if they are allergic to our snack. Write "EP" (EpiPen) if they have an EpiPen checked in (See instructions for this below):

Obtain an EpiPen Administration Permission Form for every child needing an EpiPen. Steps to follow should you need to check in a child with severe allergies/epi-pen:

1. Explain to parents our severe allergy/epi-pen policy located in the classroom binder.
2. Have parents fill out the EpiPen Administration Permission Form.
3. Place signed permission form and EpiPen in zip lock bag.
4. Receive the child the into the room.

Emergency Procedure

It is imperative that parents **stay on the church campus** while their child is in the nursery. Parents need to be readily available in the event of an emergency.

Evacuation

In an evacuation situation, a security team member should be there to assist workers.

When Evacuating the Room:

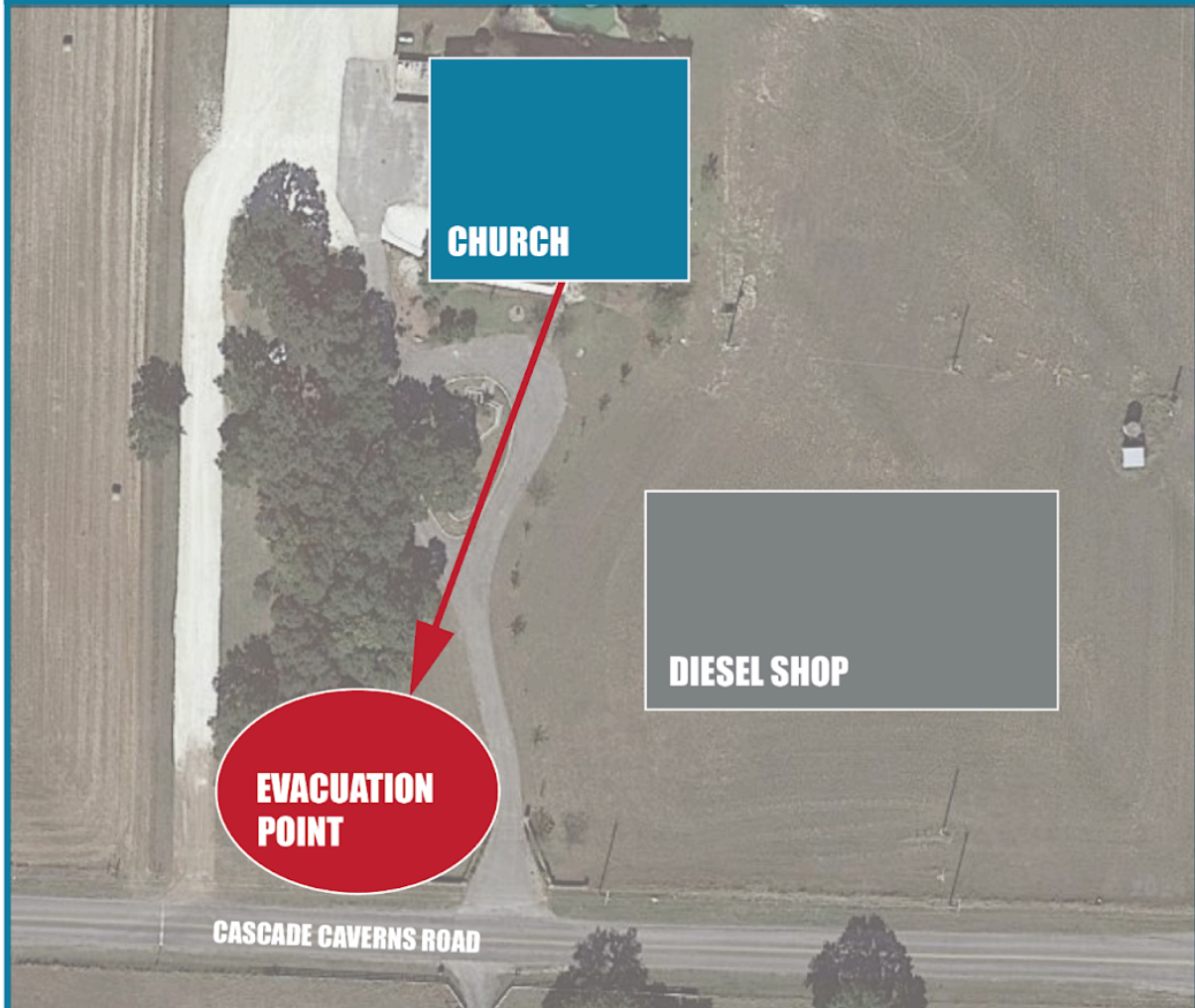
1. Grab the emergency wagon from the cabinet by the door, place in hallway and unfold.
2. Load young children into wagon.
3. Grab emergency rope, having older children grab the colorful loops - treat the rope as a game to avoid panic and increase likelihood of obedience.
4. Room leader grabs the sign-in sheet and emergency bag.
5. Count all children, making sure all on sign-in sheet are there, then calmly and quickly leave.
6. Two volunteers take the rope, two take the wagon and monitor the kids as everyone walks out of the building.
7. Follow quickest evacuation route out of the building to the Emergency Meeting Location (Evacuation Point).

8. Do not release children to parents until you have made it to the Emergency Meeting Location (see evacuation map below). Encourage concerned parents to meet you at the Emergency Meeting Location for the safety of all the children.
9. Once at Emergency Meeting Location, count them again to make sure all are there. Keep children between volunteers and fence, ensuring they do not run into driveway or road. Keep young children in the wagon, distract older children with a game.
10. Release children back to parents in an orderly fashion, ensuring they go with the proper person.
11. Stay with children until released to parent or, if parent is injured, released to Nursery Coordinator or authorities.

The Nursery Coordinator will periodically initiate a practice session using the emergency rope to help the children become familiar with holding on to the rope (as in a game).

NURSERY

EMERGENCY MEETING LOCATION



Missing Child

Steps to take if a child is missing or was released to the wrong person:

1. Confirm child was checked into the room on the check-in sheet.
2. Identify child's name and parent's pager number. Be prepared to give a description of the child (last time they were seen, clothing they were wearing, hair color, eye color, etc.).
3. Immediately alert the security team with the walkie-talkie and page the Nursery Coordinator.
4. Nursery Coordinator will be in contact with security and elder over the nursery, and page the parents. Parents will be requested to provide a picture of their child if possible to help the security team.
5. Security will be prepared to sweep the church grounds and prevent cars from leaving the church premises. Authorities will be notified as needed.

Active Shooter

When Security Team alerts you of an Active Shooter, or you hear gun shots on the church campus:

1. Lock the door immediately
2. If possible, have one of the workers stand at the door with something to try to slow down or stop the intruder if they get past the door.
3. The other workers are to work to keep the children calm and along the wall nearest the door. Do not huddle the children together. Instead, grab the emergency rope, have the older children hold the rope and play a game with them, walking them along the wall. Put the small babies in the high chairs, keeping them as calm as you can.
4. The security team will come, using the Code word, when all is clear.

Code word will be only communicated to Room Leaders by the Nursery Coordinator for security purposes.

Power Outage

When Power Outage Occurs:

1. Grab light from the emergency kit, and proceed to hand out glow sticks to older children as a distraction.
2. Room Leader is to stay at the door, to make sure no children leave while the lights are out.
3. Try to keep children as calm and distracted as you can.
4. Proceed to check out children, keeping them as calm as possible.

Incident Report Form

Date: _____

Name of Volunteer: _____

Other Witnesses: _____

Name of Child: _____

Incident Type: _____

Notes: _____

Signature: _____



Resolution Notes (Coordinator): _____

Coordinator Initials: _____

Date: _____

Nursery Child Information Sheet

Welcome to Grace Bible Church! Please fill out this sheet to help us best take care of your children in nursery during the church service. If you have any questions at all, feel free to ask our volunteers, Nursery Coordinator, or refer to our Parent Guide. Thank you for trusting us with your little ones!

Parent/ Guardian Name(s): _____

Contact Number(s): _____

Child Name: _____

Child Birthdate: _____

Allergies: _____

Can we give your child Cheerios? Yes NoCan we give your child water? Yes NoIs your child potty trained? Yes NoShould we page you for diaper changes? Yes No

Additional Comments: _____

EpiPen® Administration Permission Form

To be completed by parent or legal guardian and placed in zip lock bag with EpiPen®

Child's Name (as it appears on EpiPen®): _____

Child's Grade: _____

Child's Date of Birth: _____

Emergency Cell Phone: _____

My child is allergic to: _____

I hereby authorize the staff and volunteers at Grace Bible Church (GBC) to administer an EpiPen® to my child if he or she has known exposure and/or a severe allergic reaction. I agree to release, indemnify, and hold harmless GBC and any of its staff or volunteers from lawsuit, claim, expense, demand, or action against them for administering the EpiPen® provided they administer the EpiPen® prescribed specifically for my child. I am aware that the injection probably will be administered by a staff member or volunteer who is not a healthcare professional. I have read the GBC EpiPen® Administration Procedures and agree to provide EpiPens® as required. I understand that I will always be notified as quickly as possible anytime an EpiPen® has been administered to my child.

The following EpiPen® has been prescribed (Check as appropriate):

- EpiPen® (the premeasured dose is 0.3 mg of Epinephrine)
 EpiPen® Jr (the premeasured dose is 0.15 mg of Epinephrine)

My child has received adequate training on how and when to use an EpiPen® and can use it properly in case of emergency. He or she will carry an EpiPen® at all times.

 Parent/Guardian Signature

 Date

 Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Nursery Volunteer Agreement

I will serve ultimately for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)

I will serve in a manner that reflects the character of Christ (Phil 2:4-7)

I will serve with gratefulness understanding that ministry is a mercy from God (2 Cor 4:1)

I will serve in such a way that children are properly evangelized (Mt 28:18-19)

I will serve with a weekly goal of personally encouraging parents (1Thess 5:11)

I will serve in a manner that edifies and supports my fellow servants (Gal 5:13-15)

I will serve with an attitude that sees the needs of others greater than my own (Phil 2:3-4)

I will serve with the safety and security of our children as a main priority (Ps 127:3-5)

I will serve with humility, integrity, and purity as my hallmarks (Gal 5:22-24)

I will serve with a submissive, loving, and teachable spirit (Eph 5:19-21)

I will serve as a steward knowing I will give an account to God for my life (2 Cor 5:10)

I will serve so that I seek to fulfill my responsibilities set forth in this handbook (Heb 13:17)

Return this completed form to the Nursery Coordinator.

I acknowledge that I received and read a copy of the Grace Bible Church Nursery Policies & Procedures. I fully understand and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures while serving in this ministry. I acknowledge that a failure on my part to follow the guidelines set forth in this handbook could result in my removal from the nursery volunteer list.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Appendix A – Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

Christians are to be subject to the government that has been established and ordained by God (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13-14). God has given government the authority to enact and enforce laws for the protection and safety of the innocent. Moreover, while there is forgiveness for the perpetrator of abuse through Christ, forgiveness does not diminish or negate the state's right to seek justice. Accepting consequences is also an important part of repentance (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Therefore, it is right and biblical for teachers and those serving in the church to abide by state laws requiring the reporting the abuse of children. While GBC is firmly committed to maintaining a high degree of confidentiality, it is unbiblical and illegal to promise or to provide 100% confidentiality in cases of suspected child abuse.

The state of Texas is a mandatory report state and requires those serving in church ministry to report any manner of suspected child abuse (verbal, physical, sexual, etc., or neglect) to the appropriate authorities (Law Enforcement or Child Protective Services) within 48 hours of learning about the abuse. This includes any statements indicating an intention to harm a child (a person under the age of 18). This responsibility cannot be passed to another person. While the staff member/servant should immediately notify an Elder of GBC, this does not satisfy the staff member /servant's legal responsibility to report the abuse to appropriate authorities. See Texas Family Code Section 261.101 (a)] ([https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/ Docs/FA/pdf/FA.261.pdf](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/FA/pdf/FA.261.pdf)) ([https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Child_Safety/ report_abuse.asp](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Child_Safety/report_abuse.asp))

In Texas, there is no religious exemption for reporting abuse. Failure to report suspected abuse carries both civil and criminal consequences. Failure to report is a Class A Misdemeanor and intentional efforts to hide or conceal the abuse, is a state jail felony. [Texas Family Code, Section 261.109] **GBC teachers/servants must abide by all applicable state laws.**