



Volunteer Handbook & Protection Policies

**“Let the children come to me for theirs is the Kingdom of God.”
Matthew 19:14**

Jesus says this in response to adults who tried to stop the children from running to Him. We want Hope to be a community where kids are welcomed and encouraged to grow in Jesus. We aim to have a holistic children’s ministry, showing Jesus in 3 ways.

Head:

We *teach* our children God’s Story in age appropriate and memorable ways. Each week they will learn why Jesus is the hero in every Bible passage they explore.

Heart:

We aim to engage our children’s hearts with the warmth and joy of the gospel. We want them to *experience* the welcome of Jesus.

Hands:

We engage in our kids with gospel practices, like teaching our children how to pray, showing them what obedience looks like in tangible ways at their life stage, etc. Deep practices that are in joyful response to the good news of Jesus.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are expected to practice the following:

- Arrive early and prepared for your lesson
- Have completed the mandatory background check
- Have read and agree to adhere to Hope’s Child Protection Policy
- Volunteers must have regularly attended Hope Presbyterian Church for a minimum of 6 months before being able to volunteer with Hope Kids

Procedures for working in Children's Ministries

Background Checks

In keeping with our values of protecting the children in our care, Hope Church requires the following screening procedures for any person who volunteers with the church's children or youth ministries

A background check that includes the following information:

- Local criminal record check
- State criminal record check
- FBI criminal record check
- State central child/dependent adult abuse registry check
- State sex offender registry check

Supervision

Two Child Protection approved (up to date background check) adults should always be present when ministering to children. No adult should ever be alone with a child behind closed doors. Children ages 12 through 17 working with the children must be supervised by an approved adult.

Bathroom and Diapering

For the safety and security of all our children, we require parents change diapers, or accompany their child to the restroom. Parents are encouraged to have their older aged children visit the bathroom before coming to children's church. Nursery workers can text or go get a parent for diaper changes. In the case of elementary aged children, they may go with a same gender sibling.

Food

Occasionally snacks or treats are given during Children's church. We will happily give bottles to babies. Please let us know if your child has any food allergies, both on the computer check-in system, and verbally to your child's nursery room volunteers. You are welcome to provide an alternative snack, if necessary.

Wellness

A warm welcome awaits your child in our children's church if they have been free of the following symptoms for the past 24 hours:

- Coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes
- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea

- Inflamed mouth or throat
- Non-clear nasal drainage

COVID

If your child, or anyone in your family has experienced symptoms of Covid-19, please stay home. Additionally, if your child or anyone your family has been exposed and has been asked to quarantine, please refrain from coming to children's church. Please adhere to all Hope Church policies regarding masking and distancing.

Technology

Videos that are an approved part of our Children's church curriculum, or that pertain to the Bible lesson will be shown weekly. Children are not permitted to use any device connected to internet without very specific guidance by a teacher. Videos and photos not pertaining to the weekly curriculum are prohibited.

Discipline

Our Volunteer team will conduct regular safety talks on various aspects of prevention, including appropriate boundaries and consent.

When the correction of children is necessary, adults should avoid any form of harsh language including shaming or yelling. Any serious issues of misconduct by kids should be brought to the attention of parents and church leadership. Simple redirection of a child's activity is often all it takes to correct inappropriate behavior. We may occasionally need to provide simple, natural consequences for children who persist in misbehavior (i.e. if a child is throwing blocks, he/she may not play with blocks for two minutes). If difficult behavior persists, the parents can be contacted to assist with the child.

- Hands should never be placed on another person's child in discipline (examples: spanking, grabbing arm or chin, etc.).
- Words should be used to communicate love and grace, as well as for correction. Children should never feel belittled or verbally assaulted by any volunteer.
- If difficulties arise in the area of discipline, the ministry coordinator should be contacted as soon as possible to discuss appropriate methods of behavior management.
- Reporting of any suspicious behavior should be given to the Children's Church Director (Sam VanDerPuy), or a member of the Session who will in turn follow the reporting procedures.

Child Protection

We strive to take every measure possible to ensure the complete security of your child while in our children's church ministry.

- We screen all Hope Kids volunteers in our Child Protection process, which includes background checks;
- We ensure a minimum of two (child protection approved) adults are present per room at all times;
- A check-in system provides identifying stickers so that workers can ensure that children leave only with their parents;
- We keep nursery aged children inside the nursery room at all times, unless delivering child to a parent is necessary.

** Children with specific needs, who have a "special buddy," may at times be removed from the classroom by their special buddy for their benefit and the benefit of the other children, and with permission of their parents or guardians.*

Nursery Specific Policies

Nursery Sanitation

The cleanliness of the nursery is very important to us. Small toys and table tops should be washed after every use. Larger toys and equipment and floors should be disinfected regularly. During cold and flu season the nursery rooms may go through additional deep cleanings.

Crying

If a child is upset and has been crying for 10-15 minutes and all methods of calming have been tried (diaper change, rocked, held, fed bottle, etc) the parent will be called.

Nursery check-in and safety

No one other than approved volunteers (and parents helping to settle their child) may enter the nurseries. Parents or caregivers should check their child in at the check-in station, printing identification and pickup badges for each child upon arrival. Identification stickers must be checked and matched before a child is released to an adult at pickup.

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the policies and guidelines of Hope Presbyterian Church as stated in the above Hope Kids Volunteer Handbook. Additionally, I acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and reviewed Hope's Child Protection Policy. As a volunteer for Hope Kids, I will take and all necessary actions to ensure the safety of all children at Hope Presbyterian Church.

Print Name

Signature

Date