

Mission Road Bible Church

Child Care and Protection Policy

March 2023



Introduction and Purpose

The mission of Mission Road Bible Church (“the church” or “MRBC”) is to magnify God and spread a passion for His glory by making disciples and shepherding them to value Jesus Christ above all else, as regulated by the Word of God.

The Children’s Ministry of MRBC is one aspect of this mission. As such, it exists to come alongside parents in their efforts to instruct their children with biblical truth, and to provide parents with the opportunity to participate in worship services and other ministries.

The purpose of this Child Care and Protection Policy (“policy”) is to:

- Maintain a safe and secure environment for our children.
- Maintain a self-imposed level of care such that volunteers serve in a manner that is above reproach.
- Protect Children’s Ministry volunteers from false allegations.
- Establish a procedure to deal with allegations if they were to occur.

Parameters

This policy applies to children (from birth to 5th grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents into the Children’s Ministry during the church’s public worship services or specific Children’s Ministry-related or church-sponsored activities including, but not limited to: Sunday School, Kids 4 Truth, Vacation Bible School, or other activities held at the church.

Activities held at venues outside the church (e.g. Care Group) are not covered by this policy. Activities and/or ministries not directly related to Children’s Ministry are not covered by this policy.

Adherence

All volunteers in any Children’s Ministry-related activity must adhere to this policy. The following ministry procedures apply as a part of this Child Care and Protection Policy:

- MRBC Nursery Ministry Guide
- MRBC Children’s Sunday School Ministry Guide

Volunteers

Volunteers are used to staff Children's Ministry activities. All who are invited to serve in Children's Ministry, do so in accordance with the following:

Minimum Requirements

- All volunteers must attend the church for at least six months prior to serving.
- All volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. (Children or youth are welcome to volunteer alongside of adult volunteers as helpers in accordance with specific ministry procedures. See specific ministry guide.)
- All volunteers must have completed the application and screening process.

Application Process

Volunteers are used to staff Children's Ministry activities. All who wish to volunteer are required to complete the following application process:

- Request an application packet.
- Review the Child Care and Protection Policy.
- Complete and return the application to the church office.
- Complete abuse awareness and prevention training and pass the quiz.
- Complete a face-to-face interview with a designated ministry leader.

Additional Requirements

- Generally, all volunteers must be members of MRBC in good standing.
- All volunteers must complete MRBC childcare training when offered.

MRBC reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete the application process; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer's ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children.

Rules and Procedures

Check-In and Check-Out

Any parent or guardian that would like their child to participate in a Children's Ministry activity will check the child in and out in accordance with specific ministry procedures (see specific ministry guide). At Check-In, contact information must be provided that will allow the church to reach a parent or guardian in the event the child needs their attention. Any notes related to special needs or allergies should also be communicated at Check-In. Parents should not leave their children unattended in a room. They may wait with their child in the hallway outside the room or leave the area and return to drop-off after a volunteer has arrived.

Parents in the Classroom

At times a child may feel more at ease with a parent in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are going through separation anxiety. If this goes beyond a few minutes and the child cannot remain without the parents, the parents must remove the child from the classroom.

Parents are not allowed to remain in the classroom for an extended period during Children's Ministry activities. Parents of children with special needs that may require extended time in the classroom should talk to the pastor that oversees Children's Ministry.

Any parent that is causing difficulty or presenting concerns for the welfare of the class will be kindly dismissed. Parents that are not approved Children's Ministry volunteers are not allowed to serve as substitute volunteers.

Two Volunteer Rule

At least two qualified adult volunteers must be present in each room at all times during Children's Ministry activities ("Two adult rule"). When situations arise that prevent this, at least three individuals must be present, with one individual being a qualified adult volunteer and the remaining two no younger than 5 years old ("Rule of Three").

A child may be taken out of the nursery or classroom by a single volunteer only for a compelling reason, such as to use the bathroom or in cases of illness, emergency, or evacuation, and always in accordance with the rules or procedures for each case.

Visibility

As much as possible, no person should ever be alone with a child except their own. In the event a volunteer finds themselves alone in a room with a child, they should be highly visible to other adults by standing in a doorway or in the hall outside of the classroom and should communicate as quickly as possible with a nearby volunteer. This also applies to situations when the two qualified adult volunteers are related. For example, if a married couple happens to be alone with a single child who is not their own, one of the adults should put themselves into a position of visibility from outside the classroom.

Diaper Changing and Bathroom

0 Months through 3 years old:

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children *prior* to signing them into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once or as needed during activities.

- Only women are allowed to change diapers and only in the presence of another volunteer.
- Always use rubber gloves.
- Do not apply any ointment or powder.
- A cloth or wipe should always be between you and the child's genital area.

Parents should take their children to the bathroom prior to dropping them off at a room. Parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty training. In the event that a child needs to use the bathroom, one female will take the child to the Children's Bathroom and wait outside the door unless the child requires assistance. Volunteers must always use rubber gloves when dealing with bodily fluids. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer) before returning to the classroom.

At times Children's Ministry activities take place in areas of the building that are not in close proximity to the Children's Bathroom. In the event that a child needs to use the bathroom, one female volunteer will take the child to the ladies bathroom and wait outside the closed stall door unless the child requires assistance. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water.

When children as a group are taken to a multi-person bathroom, two female volunteers must accompany them to the ladies bathroom. A volunteer should verify that no other adults are in the bathroom before taking the children in and ensure that no other adults enter until the children have left the bathroom.

4 years old through 2nd Grade

Any child needing to use the rest room shall be accompanied by a volunteer who will wait outside the Children's Bathroom door until the child is finished. The child must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return with the volunteer to their room.

If a child requires assistance, a female volunteer may accompany them to the Children's Bathroom or a ladies bathroom and wait outside the closed stall door. Volunteers must always use rubber gloves when dealing with bodily fluids. Assistance should be limited for children older than 4 years of age. If direct assistance is required to clean children that have soiled themselves, the parent / guardian should be contacted.

Children that do not need assistance may go to the Children's Bathroom on their own if the bathroom entrance is visible from the classroom. A classroom volunteer may stand in the classroom doorway and watch the child as they walk to and from the Children's Bathroom.

At times Children's Ministry activities take place in areas of the building that are not in close proximity to the Children's Bathroom. If the child is accompanied to a multi-person bathroom, the volunteer should verify that no other adults are in the bathroom before sending the child in and ensure that no other adults enter until the child has left the bathroom.

3rd Grade through 6th Grade

Any child needing to use the restroom may go on his or her own. Children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return immediately to their classroom.

Allergies

Parents of children with severe allergies should talk with the pastor that oversees Children's Ministry. Upon parental request, allergy information about children may be posted in the child's classroom.

Parents are required to provide all necessary information about how to respond to an allergic reaction and provide any necessary medication or supplies (e.g. Epi-pen) that are required for their child.

Food

0 Months through 3 years old

In most rooms, plain Cheerios and water are supplied for snack time. Volunteers are *not* to feed the children with parent-supplied snacks, even with parental consent. If a parent wants to feed their child something other than what is provided by Children's Ministry that parent may check out their child, feed him outside the room and then return him to the room.

Nursery volunteers will feed children milk or formula, provided by the parents, as described in the Nursery Ministry Guide.

4 years old through 6th Grade

Normally, no snacks will be offered during Sunday School. However, at times teachers will provide snacks of various kinds to their classroom. Parents should verbally notify their child's teacher about the nature of any allergies or food limitations.

At times, snacks are provided as a part of Children's Ministry activities (e.g. VBS). Parents should verbally notify ministry volunteers about the nature of any serious allergies or food limitations.

Healthy Children

The following guidelines are intended to prevent the spread of illness and promote a healthy environment throughout the Children's Ministry. These guidelines include standard precautions and specific rules.

Medicine

- Generally, Volunteers may not give any medication to any child.
- Parents of children with special needs should talk with the Pastor that oversees Children's Ministry.

Standard Precautions

Standard precautions are always applicable and should always be used in any Children's Ministry activity. These precautions are employed such that all bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases.

- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids. Volunteers will use disposable gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, cleanup vomit, handle blood spills, etc.
- Hand washing with soap or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and Volunteers. Wash hands after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Items such as toys and linens exposed to saliva will be viewed as potential infectious agents and treated as described in specific ministry procedures (see specific ministry guide).
- At the end of the session, follow any Cleanup Guidelines posted in the room.

Communicable Diseases

- Volunteers who have contagious illnesses should refrain from serving until no longer contagious.
- Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as those listed below, the parent should keep the child home:
- Volunteers have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. Children who appear ill during a Children's Ministry activity may be kept from participating until parents have been located. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with this policy.
- A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:
 - Fever of 100 degrees or above. (Children should be free of a fever for 24 hours before participating in Children's Ministry activities.)
 - Vomiting or diarrhea lasting several hours during the past 24 hours.
 - Any symptom of scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
 - Common cold
 - Sore throat
 - Croup
 - Lice
 - Any unexplained or undiagnosed rash
 - Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
 - Pink eye or other eye infection
 - Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
 - Discharge from ears or eyes
 - Any other communicable disease

Chronic Communicable Diseases

The risk of transmission of a chronic communicable disease in the Children's Ministry is mitigated by the practice of the standard precautions listed above. As such, these precautions are employed so that all bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases and are always applicable.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to voluntarily notify the Pastor that oversees Children's Ministry if their child has a chronic communicable disease. A decision on participation in Children's Ministry will be made based on a combination of the following as applicable:

- The best medical/public health information available at the time.
- Recommendations from the child's physician.
- The ability of standard precautions to minimize the risk of disease transmission.

Health information about a child will only be shared with Children's Ministry volunteers on a "need to know" basis.

Security and Emergency Response

The Check-In Desk volunteer will be in contact with the Security Team and will be the point of contact for Children's Ministry volunteers in the case of an emergency situation.

Accidents, First Aid, and Medical Emergency

Volunteers are allowed to administer minor first aid to injuries such as small cuts, bumps, and bruises. A first aid kit is located in the basement for the treatment of minor injuries, such as cuts or scrapes. Always use gloves when dealing with bodily fluids in accordance with the Standard Precautions listed above.

In the event of a serious injury, volunteers should deal with the immediate need (e.g. apply pressure to stop bleeding) and contact a parent or guardian as soon as possible. If necessary, call 911. Immediately after calling 911, a volunteer should ask Check-In desk to contact security so they can direct first responders to the location of the emergency.

All injuries, even minor injuries, that occur during Children's Ministry activities must be documented on an Incident Report form and reported to a parent or guardian.

Fire Evacuations and Storm Shelter

In the event a fire evacuation is necessary, are responsible to evacuate all rooms. Parents will not be contacted prior to evacuation. All exits from the basement are located at the south end of the building and may be accessed through Rooms 019, 020, and 021. After exiting the building, proceed to the southwest corner of the parking lot, and take roll. Paper rosters for each group are in each room in case evacuation is necessary. Children are to remain in their groups until picked up by their parents.

Storm shelters are located in the basement and are identified accordingly. In the event that taking shelter is necessary, volunteers are responsible to take their groups to the storm shelter rooms. Children are to remain in their groups until picked up by their parents.

Use of Technology While Serving in Children's Ministry

Volunteers and helpers will only use technology that has been previously approved by the Children's Ministry Coordinator or the Pastor overseeing children's ministry. Out of respect for parents and their personal decisions related to technology, volunteers and helpers will refrain from any use of unauthorized technology in the classroom.

Volunteers are prohibited from photographing children while serving in children's ministry. This is for the protection of children and privacy of families.

Behavior and Correction

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior may include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time (particularly if the behavior is endangering or upsetting other children). During correction, a child should *never* be removed from the classroom. Correction should be discrete, within the classroom (not in the hallway), and never outside of the sight of other volunteers.

Children's Ministry volunteers are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of correction indicated above, the volunteer should ask the Check-In desk volunteer to contact a parent or guardian. Volunteers are allowed to physically restrain a child if the child is physically endangering his or her self or other children.

Physical Touch

While appropriate physical contact with children is normal and can be an effective means of showing godly love and care, it can also be misinterpreted. Particularly in our interaction with children, we want to be blameless and above reproach. The following guidance will help workers avoid any compromise or concerns in this area.

Volunteers are to recognize the following:

- Interaction with children should always be in open sight of other volunteers.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child.
- Male volunteers will need to limit physical contact more than a female volunteer in the same situation.
- Appropriate physical contact is applied to meet the needs of children and not adults.
- What is appropriate for children aged 0 months to 3 years old (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) will not be appropriate for older children.
- Appropriate areas of touch generally include hands, arms, shoulders, and upper back.
- Sitting on laps is not appropriate for school aged children.
- Rough-housing, wrestling, or other physical activity is not appropriate in Children's Ministry activities.
- A child is never to be touched out of frustration or anger.
- No inappropriate touching of any kind will be accepted.

Abuse Reporting and Response

MRBC will report all incidents required by law and will fully cooperate with child protection authorities to protect children within the care of our ministry.

Anyone in leadership at MRBC who has any reason to suspect¹ that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse. should immediately report the facts to legal authorities, either the KS Dept. of Children and Families, or local law enforcement. The Kansas Protection Report Center "hotline" number is 1-800-922-5330. Prairie Village Police may be reached at 913-642-6868 or 913-642-5151. In the event of an emergency contact local law enforcement by calling 911.

Anyone who suspects or has any reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be neglected and/or harmed or threatened with abuse in any form should immediately contact the pastor who oversees the Children's Ministry. If anyone witnesses or observes an incident that may pose imminent danger or harm, they should, if reasonably possible, intervene to protect the child and then immediately contact security. The witness of the incident should report to the pastor who oversees the Children's Ministry as soon as possible.

Any credibly accused volunteer will not be permitted to serve in Children's Ministry during investigation by the elders of MRBC or civil authorities.

In addition, MRBC requires that any employees or volunteers with reportable information contact the pastor who oversees the Children's Ministry. The pastor that oversees Children's Ministry is required to report all allegations to the entire pastoral staff, and the pastoral staff will report all allegations to the Elders of MRBC.

The situation will be investigated to determine if reasonable suspicion is warranted and next step(s) will be determined in accordance with the guidelines of Scripture, our bylaws, and the law. At times this may involve reporting to the civil authorities, whether or not others have made previous reports. MRBC has designated as its Official Reporting Agents (“ORA”) the Executive Pastor, or the Pastor overseeing Children’s Ministry, to act in an official capacity on behalf of the church regarding reportable incidents of child abuse.

KSA 38-2223 creates a legal duty for certain “mandatory reporters” to promptly notify legal authorities of any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.ⁱⁱ Minister, elders, church staff and volunteers at MRBC are not expressly included in the list of “mandatory reporters.”

See here for a list:

<http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/MandatoryReportersChild.aspx>

ⁱ For more information on “reason to suspect” see page 14 of

<http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/pps/documents/guidetoreportingabuseandneglect.pdf>

ⁱⁱ A mandatory reporter who fails to report child abuse may be guilty of a class B misdemeanor, which carries a maximum penalty of 6 months in jail and a \$1000 fine. Intentionally filing a report known to be false may also be a crime, although KS law grants immunity to a person who, in good faith, files a report that proves to be unfounded.

For more information, see <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/pps/documents/guidetoreportingabuseandneglect.pdf>