

**element** KIDS

2 Peter 3:18

**Developing Devoted Disciples**

# Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual

Rose of Sharon Baptist

Durham, NC

Revised July 2015



# Vision / Mission / Goals

## Our Vision

To develop every child that comes through this ministry into devoted disciples of Jesus Christ that love and serve Him for a lifetime.

## Our Mission

To help, serve, and equip every child with the necessary tools and understanding to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## Our Goals

At Rose of Sharon Baptist Church, our Children's Ministry operates with goals in mind:

1. To create an environment where children can grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18)
2. To help the children hear, learn, and obey God's Word (Luke 11:28)
3. To equip the parents of Rose of Sharon to lead and guide their children to a greater knowledge of Jesus Christ within the home. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)
4. To equip children's workers in their roles as spiritual leaders of children in the church. (Ephesians 4:11-12)



# Important Policies and Procedures

These policies are intended to protect both the children and volunteer workers and are intended to be a helpful resource in addressing the issues of child safety. All volunteers are expected to adhere to the following policies, regardless of their area of ministry. ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THESE POLICIES MUST HAVE THE PRIOR PERMISSION OF THE CHILDREN'S PASTOR.

## 1. VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

- a. All volunteers shall be members of Rose of Sharon Baptist Church.
- b. All volunteer workers must be 14 years of age or older unless working under the supervision of an adult who has met the qualifications in these policies.
- c. All volunteers in our children's ministry must have a criminal background check as well as a "policies and procedures Manuel" commitment form on file.
- d. All volunteers must be approved by the children's pastor.

## 2. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- a. A Policies and Procedures Manuel is available from the Children's Pastor and church office. Every volunteer who comes into the children's ministry must complete and turn in a signed commitment form, which is located on the backside of the Policies and Procedure Manuel.
- b. Background checks, including a search for criminal history, are required for persons 18 years and older and may be conducted through an agency authorized to perform a security background check. The results of the security background checks will be reviewed.
- c. The church office will maintain a secure storage for all volunteer applications and results of all security background checks. Volunteer profiles and background checks may be required to be updated from time to time, but only if the worker is still a current volunteer. Only church staff will have access to these records.
- d. Volunteers may be reviewed at any time for re-appointment to their current or new positions.
- e. All volunteers must have the approval of the children's pastor and their program director before being placed in any position of ministry to children.
- f. Volunteers that are not approved for working with children for one reason or another will be graciously assisted in finding another place of ministry in the church.

## 3. VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION

- a. Only approved volunteers (those who have been approved by the children's pastor) will be allowed in any children's classroom. No unauthorized individuals will be admitted into a classroom. Only approved volunteers may be entrusted with the care of children.

#### 4. CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

- a. We will try to maintain the following teacher/student ratios, with the desire to have more than 1 leader in each classroom:
  - Infant (0-24 mo.) - 1:3
  - Preschool (2-5K) - 1:4
  - 1st – 6th grade 1:15
- b. All volunteers in classrooms must be 14 years of age or older unless working under the supervision of an adult volunteer.
- c. Classrooms and teaching areas should never be locked while in use, with the exception of infant care. Lights should remain on at all times unless necessary for a learning activity.
- d. Each door of a classroom should have a window. If there is no window, the door should be left open. The view through each window should remain unobstructed at all times.
- e. Any room usage must have the approval of the Children's Pastor and/or Program Director to make sure there is adequate staffing and the rooms are age appropriate.

#### 5. DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- a. All children must remain in the classroom until picked up by a parent or guardian, unless they are being led from large group worship to small group or to the playground, by an approved children's worker.
- b. Only adults and an approved individual are allowed to checkout children from their classrooms.

#### 6. VISIBLE MINISTRY POLICIES

- a. No volunteers are ever to be alone with a child.
- b. At least two workers should be present whenever possible.
- c. If a child arrives early, prop the door open and remain visible.
- d. Doors without windows should never be closed completely when children are inside with adults.
- e. When holding a private talk with a student, especially of the opposite gender, be sure to sit in view of an open door or interior window.

#### 7. PHYSICAL TOUCH / AFFECTION GUIDELINES

Physical touch and affection are important to a child's physical and emotional development. It is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. However, there is obvious danger with inappropriate touch or affection either intentionally or inadvertently in a children's ministry. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. Be aware of and sensitive to differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. The following guidelines are to be promoted for pure, genuine and positive displays of affection:

- a. All physical affection must be in the presence of other workers.
- b. Physical touch or affection should be brief in nature, and never on a child's "private" areas.
- c. Preteen and older children should be hugged from the side.
- d. Kisses should be extremely limited and rare and never on the lips of a child. As a good rule of thumb, kisses should not be given to children who are in 1<sup>st</sup> grade or older.
- e. When approached by a child physically, do not reject the child, but guide their affection to an appropriate contact. Hugs are easily shifted, as are misplaced hands. When a child touches an adult in an inappropriate way unintentionally, no reference to it should be made to the child, simply redirect their hand or body. If intentional, simply correct with the same tone as any other correction and then move on.

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## 8. RESTROOM PROCEDURES

- a. When taking a child to the restroom please stand outside. If the child needs help, please bring another adult.
- b. Women working in the classroom should have the primary responsibility of taking children to the restroom.
- c. Do not allow the children to "watch" while another child is using the restroom.
- d. Do not send very young children into the restroom with older children. Take them in age appropriate groups.
- e. Children in grades 4-6 may be sent to the restroom without adult supervision. Teachers should monitor this situation closely.
- f. When diapers are being changed, another adult should be present, if possible.

## 9. ILLNESS

- a. We have a well-child policy. We do not provide care for sick children; our facilities and staff are too limited. If a child is sick, they should not be accepted into the program. If they get sick, or are discovered to be sick, during the program, the children's pastor or leader will contact the parent. A child will not be admitted with any of these symptoms: frequent coughing, fever, and/or runny nose (anything but clear discharge). If you suspect a child is ill, please contact your program leader.
- b. Do not give children medicine of any kind. If a parent requests you give a child medication, refer the parent to the Children's Pastor.
- c. We ask you not to volunteer in any ministry if you are sick. Please notify your leaders and request a replacement.
- d. Bodily Fluid Accidents: All caregivers should wear disposable gloves when there is a possibility of contact with blood or blood-containing fluids. Blood on surfaces should be cleaned with bleach and water disinfectant solution (1/4-cup bleach, 1-gallon water). Use disposable towels and gloves for clean up. Discard all items into covered container. If vomiting occurs contact the staff member in charge.
- e. Do not serve any food, candy, or beverages unless approved by the children's pastor or program Director. All approved food and beverage products MUST be posted in a place obvious to parents.

## 10. MINOR ACCIDENTS

- a. If someone working in your area is trained in First Aid, they should be placed in charge of emergency situations.
- b. FIRST AID kits are available in the children's pastor office. Ice is also available in the gym kitchen for emergencies.
- c. Report any hazardous situations to the leadership immediately.
- d. If a child is injured in any way, please notify the child's pastor and parent immediately.
- e. Deal with injuries right away. Do not get the parent unless absolutely necessary. However, do tell the parent about the injury when they pick up their child, regardless of how minor the injury. If a parent reacts negatively, it is wise to inform the children's pastor so that he is aware of the situation.

## 11. MAJOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of a serious emergency involving broken bones, severe cuts or bleeding, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness, or other serious injury, follow these procedures:

- a. Find out if anyone in the area is trained in CPR/First Aid. If so, ask for his or her assistance.
- b. Keep calm and keep children and the injured child as calm as possible. Have children move away from the injured child.
- c. DON'T MOVE THE INJURED CHILD.
- d. Speak calmly, reassuring the child.
- e. Send a fellow leader for help. NEVER LEAVE THE INJURED CHILD.
- f. The person in charge will call 911 after assessing the situation and give the information and directions as needed.
- g. As soon as the leadership is notified, the co-worker should return to help in removing other children in the department from the scene of the accident.
- h. The person in charge (staff member) will locate the parents and advise them of the condition of the child and procedure suggested by medical personnel.
- i. Leaders will refer to the child's parents for details of preference of hospital and doctor.
- j. In case the child is transported to the hospital, a leader will accompany the child, especially if the parents cannot be located in a timely fashion.
- k. As soon as possible, the leader needs to return to his/her class to see that the other children remain calm and reassured.

## 12. CHILD CARE

When occasions arise that paid childcare is required for church a sponsored event the following standards must be met:

- a. The person in charge of childcare will have gone through the application/approval process, understand safety procedures AND must be present at the childcare site.
- b. There must be a minimum of 2 workers present, including at least 1 adult.
- c. All staff/leader personnel must be 14 years old or older or accompanied by an approved adult.
- d. High school and middle school students are allowed to be helpers only.
- e. All rooms used must be pre-approved ahead of time, and returned to a ready condition for the next ministry, which includes everything, being put away and cleaned up.
- f. All other Element Kids policies and procedures must be adhered to at all times.

## 13. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Volunteers in the children's ministry are to NEVER physically discipline a child. If your own child needs such discipline it is to be done at home or in private and never within a program (observers may not know it is *your* child).

## 14. GUIDING BEHAVIOR

Discipline is not meant to be punishment. Instead, it is a time for teaching--the very kind of teaching Jesus did with his disciples. Teaching of this kind has two purposes: first, to immediately stop inappropriate behavior; second, to help the child find another, more appropriate way to behave. Here are some procedures for correcting behavior:

- a. Go over classroom rules, before the class begins. These rules should be posted somewhere in your classroom (1. Respect God 2. Respect Leaders 3. Respect Others).
- b. Prevent problems before they occur. The best way to avoid trouble is to stop it before it happens.
- c. Set clear limits. Use the word "no" as little as possible because it does not teach the child appropriate behavior. Instead, give the child information. For example, "We don't bite Timmy." Save the word "no" for dangerous situations.
- d. Redirect behavior. Try offering the child another activity.
- e. Offer a choice. When you say, "You may play with the truck or the car. Which one do you want?" you are giving the child a choice.
- f. Acknowledge feelings. Use the words "I see" often. Show the child that you understand.
- g. Talk through problems. Here is a good example: "Ryan wants the truck. Timmy wants the truck. What can we do? Here is another truck. Which one would you like Ryan?"
- h. If you have tried redirection and talking through the problem without success, then it is time to call in the appropriate staff member (Children's Pastor). It is the staff member's responsibility to talk with the parents about behavioral issues.

A Few Tips to Keep in Mind:

1. Acknowledge a child's good behavior.
2. Talk about the action and not the child's personality.
3. Remember that seventy percent of communication is non-verbal.
4. When addressing a child's behavior, always lower your voice.
5. Realize that a child's behavior may simply be a cry for your attention.
6. Avoid hurrying a child. A hurried child is usually a frustrated child.
7. Pray for God to give you patience and show you how to best teach the child.

## 15. SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY / REPORTING VIOLATIONS OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

To maintain a safe environment for all children, all persons must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, admission, or situation, which endangers or threatens children. All questions or concerns of suspected activity of abuse or harassment by a volunteer should be reported to the children's pastor, in private. Should the activity of concern involve a paid church employee, the matter shall be reported to the senior pastor or elder. Pending the outcome of an investigation, all information pertaining to the alleged incident should be kept confidential. A mere allegation of improper behavior by a volunteer will not be treated as an actual occurrence pending the completion of the investigation, and the church will take steps necessary to protect the integrity of the volunteer involved.

- a. During services, children are not allowed to wander around the campus. If you see a child who is not in an appropriate place, please approach them or contact a staff member. They will take the child to their class or to their parent.
- b. If you see an adult wandering around the building, please ask if you can help them find their way. Otherwise, for security purposes, people are not permitted to wander around the children's classes.

- d. Reporting Abuse:
  - a. Anyone witnessing an occurrence of violation of this policy should consider the following recommendations as to how such a situation should be handled to insure the security of the child and to protect against physical, emotional, or psychological injury to all persons involved:
    - 1. All incidents shall be reported immediately to the children's pastor, if available, or to the adult leader in charge of the event or activity. If the children's pastor is unavailable, the incident must be reported to him within 24 hours of a church leader being made aware of the incident.
    - 2. The parents must be notified by the children's pastor and/or staff member within 24 hours of the staff
      - i. Member being made aware of the incident.
    - 3. The children's pastor and/or the staff member must immediately report the incident to the senior pastor.
    - 4. The notified pastor will contact the proper civil authorities, as directed by the insurance company & church attorney.
    - 5. The accused should not be confronted until the safety of the child is secured, and only upon advisement by the church attorney.
    - 6. Personally secure the safety of child/children. Do not leave the child while reporting the incident.
    - 7. Do not personally confront the alleged or accused violator of the policy unless imminent injury or damage is present.
    - 8. The children's pastor or another pastor will report the incident to the parents or guardians of the victim(s).
  - b. In the event a child reports alleged abusive conduct, regardless of where the conduct occurred, (at church, off-site church event, or non-church event.) the person initially contacted by the child must complete a written report which should include, as much as possible, the precise wording of the child.
  - c. In the event a child makes an accusation of abuse or neglect occurring in the child's home, the person initially contacted will report to the children's director for disposition of the matter.
- e. Response to the Accuser:
  - a. Allegations should be taken seriously and emotional support given to the accuser. The care and safety of the accuser is the first priority.
  - b. All efforts should be made to reach out to the accuser and the accuser's family, extending whatever pastoral and professional resources may be needed.
- f. Response to the Accused:
  - a. Treat the accused with dignity and support. He/she will be relieved of his/her duties until the investigation is finished.
  - b. Pastoral and/or professional resources should likewise be extended to the accused.

## 16. EVENT PLANNING / APPROVED ACTIVITIES

- a. All events or outings involving children from Rose of Sharon Baptist Church must be cleared through the children's pastor, even if you do not consider it a "church event." If it involves church children who you work with as a church volunteer, the leadership MUST be aware for liability reasons.
- b. Any usage of children's ministry areas should be approved by the children's pastor.
- c. Whenever moving children from the classroom, do a head count upon departure and arrival to make sure every child is accounted for.
- d. Volunteers are never to take children places in a vehicle without another adult accompanying them.
- e. Never take a child or children outside of the church building or program room without prior consent of the leadership and, in some cases, written permission from the parents.
- f. A minimum of two approved adult leaders is required for any trip or out-of-class activity.

- g. When an activity requires travel, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car should not exceed the number of seatbelts. Emergency contact phone numbers are of primary concern and shall be available to the leaders. (All drivers must be over 21.)  
At least 2 adults must stay until the last child is picked up.

## **17. IN CASE OF FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCY**

1. Line up students by the door and take a head count.
2. If possible, have at least one leader at each end of the line.
3. Know your exit route and quietly and calmly lead students out by proper exit.
4. Proceed to the front lawn of the church property.
5. Once you are clear of the building, take a head count and attendance.
6. Return to building only after the "All Clear" has been sounded.
7. Please do not dismiss any students from outside, unless you are unable to re-enter the building.
8. For the safety of the children, parents may NOT get their child/children before the class has left the building.

## **18. EXCEPTIONS**

It is understood that circumstances may arise that necessitate the need for deviating from this policy. For such infrequent and unusual situations that are not easily classified elsewhere in this policy, the standards and spirit of this policy shall be recognized as being in force. Exceptions should be cleared with the children's pastor in advance, or as soon as an unavoidable or uncorrectable deviation is observed. Please notify the children's pastor or program leadership as soon as possible, for your own protection, if an exception to a policy has taken place.

