

Dear Village Kids Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Red Village Church!

At Red Village Church, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for Red Village Church volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

Carefully reading this policy manual is required before signing the volunteer serving covenant.

Sincerely,

Red Village Church Staff

Red Village Church Policies & Procedures for Children's Ministries

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Overview of the Red Village Church Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Red Village Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Red Village Church policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor (Children's Ministry Director or Elder of Children's Ministry). Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Red Village Church staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Red Village Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete Ministry Safe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Volunteers are required to complete the Red Village Church Screening Process, which requires a volunteer to:

- be a member of Red Village Church or be in the membership process (be baptized, attend both Next Steps Classes, have a completed interview with an Elder) with the elder interview completed and approval to serve in the Children's Ministry.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign a serving covenant indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

Village Kids volunteers are also required to attend an in person training and review conducted by either the Children's Ministry Director or another trained individual on the Village Kids Team.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Red Village Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check.

Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children or minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving minors. Background checks are renewed every two years.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Red Village Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Red Village Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Children's Ministry Director or the Elder over Children's Ministry.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Red Village Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Elder Board, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Red Village Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Red Village Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children's Ministries – for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Elder Board.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Red Village Church staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Children's Ministry Director, or the Elder Board.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Red Village Church Children's Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at Red Village Church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Red Village Church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at Red Village Church.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

Red Village Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behavior or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services or criminal law enforcement.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible that a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. Please report 'grooming' behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, such that the church may take appropriate action to safeguard children in the program.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to law enforcement and the Dane County Department of Human Services

**Monday-Friday: (608) 261-KIDS/ (608) 261-5437
Non-Business Hours: (608) 255-6067**

Because many adults are unfamiliar with Wisconsin reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, Red Village Church utilizes a 'tandem or dual report' model, where permitted. A 'dual report' occurs when a Red Village Church supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED, OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, CPS OR THE ABUSE HOTLINE *DIRECTLY*. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED from Red Village Church before reporting to law enforcement personnel or the Child Abuse Hotline.

While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse or neglect (or any inappropriate or 'grooming' behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to an immediate supervisor,

the Children's Ministry Director, or the Elder Board. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in Red Village Church programs.

When in doubt, report.

Children's Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

BUILDING SAFETY

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes or activities.

SUPERVISION

Only parents (dropping off children), screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and children are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. All other adults should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a ministry supervisor or security team member should be notified immediately.

Two trained, screened adults should supervise children at all times.

Avoid being alone with an individual child in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another volunteer or employee must be notified so that the *Two Adult Rule* can be followed.

If two individuals serving in a room are related to one another, a third unrelated volunteer or staff member must be present. We will not schedule two volunteers that are related to serve in the same classroom on the same week.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving. Village Kids area doors should be closed and locked after use.

PLAYGROUNDS

On the playground, remember to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

Child Safety Measures

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

Red Village Church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool	2	12
K-2	2	20
VBS	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children's Ministry Director. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

Nursery: 6 weeks – 2 years

PreK: 2 years – 4K/5 years

K-2: Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

CHECK-IN

Upon check-in, each child will receive a nametag and their parent or guardian will be given a pager or a claim tag. Volunteers must check each pager/claim tag and match the number to the child's nametag before releasing a child at pick up. The child's nametag should be removed to show that they have been checked out.

If a pager or claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to the check-in/float volunteer, where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child is released. (Have the child stay in the classroom; the parent may pick up the child once cleared). If further help is needed, contact the Children's Ministry Director or an Elder.

POLICIES DURING SERVICE

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Red Village Church staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge. If a child has a hard or difficult transition from parent to classroom, volunteers will give an appropriate amount of time to help calm and comfort the child before notifying the parent, unless otherwise instructed by the parent.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. Older siblings that are minors may not check out siblings from Village Kids classrooms.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Children's Ministry Director before releasing the child.

Disciplinary Policies

DISCIPLINE

It is Red Village Church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. *When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.
2. If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others, and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.

Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. ("Terry, you didn't stop hitting Kelly when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.")

3. After a 3rd time, we will involve the parents. A staff member or float volunteer may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to ministry supervisor.

NEVER...

- Never yell at a child.
- Never grab a child.
- Never threaten a child. Always follow through with your word.
- Never hit a child.
- Never confront a parent in front of others.
- Never openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in Red Village Church ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense:* Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense:* Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with a pastor and the child's parents. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP ... be discreet.

3. *Third Offense:* Send the child to a pastor or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event. During Sunday Village Kids classes, a parent will be paged and the Children's Ministry Director and Elder Board informed.

Restroom Policies

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a bathroom in use by children. Adults should use a restroom separate and apart from restrooms used by children during weekend services or when there are children present. No volunteer OF ANY AGE should enter or occupy a bathroom while children are using it. When no child is present, adults (and young volunteers) are allowed in a bathroom (one at a time) so long as there is another adult at the doorway keeping any child from entering. Only adult females may change diapers and must do so on diaper changer stations within plain view of other volunteers.

One worker provides supervision standing near the bathroom door and the other worker stands in the doorway of the classroom – both workers can see each other, the children are all under observation, and two adults are present with every child.

NURSERY CHILDREN

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- Only adult female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- If a parent prefers to do all diapering, they must notify volunteers and place instruction under special instructions on nametag.
- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.

- Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- Children should be changed on changing stations only.
- Follow the following procedure for a diaper change:
 - Gather supplies and ready the changing area before placing child on the changing pad.
 - Wear disposable gloves.
 - Never leave a child unattended on the changing pad.
 - Wipe down the pad with a disinfectant wipe after each change.
 - Sanitize/wash hands after each change.

Toilet training

- Village Kids volunteers do not participate in toilet training, including wiping children unable to do so. Children who are not toilet trained should wear diapers or pull-ups. Volunteers do not assist in buttoning, zipping, or pulling up pants or undergarments. If any assistance in the bathroom is needed, parents will be paged during the service to assist.
- **During weekend services, only parents will participate in toilet training efforts with children. In the event that parents are not on site to assist their child (e.g. Parents Night Out, VBS) only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex. Two adult female volunteers must be present unless the adult is the child's parent.**
 - When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
 - Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
 - Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
 - Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Parents are responsible for furnishing a clothing change if needed.

GRADES 1-6

If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.

If a child requires immediate emergency assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance

with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

If restroom use is required:

- Only *adult* female workers will assist children in the restroom, unless a parent is assisting their own child.
- Only one child in the restroom at a time, in a single toilet facility.
- When a worker is assisting a child, the door must not be locked, and must remain ajar. In general, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- Be aware if a student repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor if it occurs.
- A single staff member or volunteer should never take a lone child to the restroom.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of individuals with special needs. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change the diapers of all individuals with special needs. If someone with special needs requires assistance using the restroom, a parent will be notified to assist them in the restroom.

Health

For the welfare of all, parents are strongly encouraged not to bring sick children. In order to protect all children and volunteers, we will not accept a child who has any signs and symptoms of illness such as:

- Acute Cold
- Excessive sneezing and runny nose
- Sore Throat
- Excessive coughing
- Ear infection (drainage, ear ache)
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in the last 24 hours)
- Vomiting (within the last 24 hours)
- Fever (100 degrees or higher currently or within last 24 hours)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye, red or discharging eyes)
- Unexplained skin rash or open wounds
- Head lice

In addition, anyone who has a known communicable disease (such as but not limited to: measles, mumps, pertussis, RSV, or chicken pox) won't be admitted into activities, programs, or child care where the disease could be communicated to others who aren't infected. Children being treated with antibiotics should be on the medication for at least 48 hours before coming to the children's ministry. If you have any questions, please check with the children's ministry director; the children's ministry decision will be final.

If any of these symptoms arise while a child is church, the parent will be notified and asked to remove the child from the children's area. Any toy or item used by a child who develops signs of illness while at church must be thoroughly disinfected before being reintroduced to other children.

Medication

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child while serving in ministry programs, including 'over the counter' drugs.

Verbal Interactions with Children

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Red Village Church staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

One-to-One Interactions with Children

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Red Village Church Children's Ministry program. Another adult who has completed the Red Village Church application and screening process should always be present.

Physical Contact

Red Village Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Red Village Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

- Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Elder Board.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.

- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or the Elder Board.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Red Village Church facility or while working with or supervising children.

Tobacco Use

Red Village Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Red Village Church activities or programs. Red Village Church is a tobacco-free facility.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Sexually Oriented Material

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries at Red Village Church are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers in My Church's Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Children's Ministry

Director and Elder of Children's Ministry concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

Emergency Action Plan

In the event of a building evacuation, workers will make sure all children are accounted for and escort them to the designated meeting area: In front of the blue house in the parking lot adjacent to Whitney Way.

To ensure that no child is unaccounted for, parents do not retrieve your child from the classroom – check them out with the workers in the parking lot.

Parental Involvement

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Red Village Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Red Village Church. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at Red Village Church will be required to complete the Red Village Church volunteer application and screening process.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about Children's Ministry policies, please contact one of the Children's Ministry Leaders:

Janet Click (janet@redvillagechurch.com) – Children's Ministry Director

Aaron Jozwiak (aaron@redvillagechurch.com) – Elder of Children's Ministry