

Guidelines for Children's Ministry Workers

Visibility and Security – It is our objective to have at least two approved adults working with children at all times. However, we understand that there may be times (Sunday School) and situations that this is not feasible. If a single worker is needed, the worker must be female. This policy accomplishes two important objectives: first, it reduces the risk of child abuse; second, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse.

Workers are never allowed to be completely alone with a child behind closed doors, including restrooms. Classrooms are equipped with a windowed door.

It is important that all interaction between children and volunteers happen in a location where others can observe what is going on for safety and accountability purposes.

Church staff, ministry supervisors, and the parents of the children in any ministry have the right to visit and observe the program at any time unannounced. (This does not include the right to disrupt or interfere with the administration or functioning of any ministry.)

Discipline/Punishment – Volunteers should accept their responsibility to enforce appropriate behavior to ensure the safety of other children and adults

Volunteers should be fair and consistent in what they discipline for, when they discipline, and how they discipline. Do not show favoritism.

Volunteers should avoid ultimatums, threats, yelling, and belittling a child.

Volunteers should follow the discipline guidelines that are posted in each classroom. If help is needed with misbehaving children or discipline techniques, please consult the area director.

Verbal Interactions – Verbal interactions between volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

Physical Affection – Love and affection are an essential part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children in public ways. Below are some appropriate and inappropriate forms of affection.

Appropriate Forms of Affection:

- An arm around the shoulder
- Holding hands while praying or walking
- Verbal praise
- Brief hugs
- A brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- Handshakes, "high-fives"

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Inappropriate Forms of Affection:

- Touching a child in anger or disgust
- Touching a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- Touching a child's private parts
- Any type of physical action that will cause harm

Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of staff members and volunteers must foster trust at all times. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

Child Abuse - Child abuse is defined as any willful or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual abuse, injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental or emotional health to be significantly impaired.

Any volunteer who witnesses or suspects abuse will report it to the pastor immediately and then to child protective services within 24 hours. The pastor will also contact child protective services within 24 hours. It is the policy of Daniels Road Baptist Church to take all allegations or complaints seriously.

It is Florida law that any known or suspected child abuse must be reported to child protective services. A person, who knowingly and willfully fails to report or prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a 3rd degree felony.

I have read the guidelines above. I understand them fully and agree to observe them faithfully.

Signature

Date