

**Tri-County Baptist Church
Children's & Youth Ministry
Policies & Procedures**

Tri-County Baptist Church Policies & Procedures for Children's & Youth Ministries

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Overview of Tri-County Baptist's Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Tri-County Baptist Church (TCBC) 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

To equip TCBC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, TCBC requires all staff members and volunteers working directly with children and youth to complete Ministry Safe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training will be renewed every **three** years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers* are required to complete the TCBC Screening Process, which requires them to:

- complete a Safety Application
- complete a face-to-face interview (new staff and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (new staff and volunteers)

A volunteer must attend TCBC for **six months before being eligible to serve in volunteer positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.*

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

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

STEP FOUR: Background Check

TCBC requires that all staff members and volunteers 18 years and over, working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a background check. 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.

YOUTH AGED VOLUNTEERS

TCBC encourages youth (ages 13-17) to serve as an exercise of their spiritual gifts. Youth who regularly attend TCBC may serve in children's ministry under the supervision of at least one adult, Ministry Safe approved staff or volunteer. Youth are not subject to background check, however, will be required to complete a Youth Safety Application. The Sexual Abuse Awareness training is optional for youth and will be made available to the parent or guardian to view together under their discretion. Youth volunteers must review and agree to the written policies and procedures of the children's ministry.

VOLUNTEER ATTENDANCE

Every volunteer must arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of their service or as otherwise instructed by the Children's Ministry Director (CMD). Volunteers must remain in the classroom until a parent, guardian or approved pickup person has picked up the last child or until relieved by another volunteer or staff person. Volunteers are responsible for their assigned time slots. Should the need arise for a volunteer to be absent, it is the volunteer's responsibility to secure a substitute or swap or to give the CMD ample notice of the upcoming absence. The CMD will provide a contact list of approved substitutes.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

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

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

TCBC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. 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 Senior Pastor. 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, the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency. 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 TCBC.

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to the Child Welfare Services Screening Unit of Montgomery County (240-777-4417) and/or the Montgomery County Police department.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children's and/or Youth Ministries – for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor.

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 TCBC Children's and Youth Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

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

Children's Ministry Monitoring Plan

SUPERVISION

Only parents (dropping off or picking up children) and Ministry Safe approved volunteers are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. All other adults should be asked to leave the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, the CMD or Senior Pastor should be notified immediately. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes or activities. On the playground, ensure all children are visible at all times.

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

Maintain appropriate and reasonable child to worker ratios in all ministry settings. Avoid being alone with an individual child or group of children in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another Ministry Safe approved 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 should be present.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Disciplinary Policies

DISCIPLINE

It is TCBC'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. Calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior and redirect toward positive behavior.
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 and provide them with a simple explanation of expectations. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.
3. After a 3rd time, refer to the CMD or the child's parent who may need become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the CMD.

Acknowledge and reward positive behavior. Encourage children who are following classroom rules and behaving positively. Often the best deterrent to discipline problems is a confident, prepared teacher!

NEVER...

- Never yell at a child.
- Never grab a child.
- Never threaten a child.
- 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 TCBC ministry programs. Bullying is when a child persistently seeks to harm, intimidate or coerce another child. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively and follow the disciplinary policies.

Restroom Policies

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a bathroom in use by children. No volunteer OF ANY AGE should enter or occupy a bathroom while children are using it. Only adult females may change diapers and must do so on diaper changing stations within plain view of other volunteers.

NURSERY DIAPERING RESTROOM POLICY

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

- Only female nursery workers over the age of 18 or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 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.
- The changing pad must be wiped clean with disinfectant after each use.

PRESCHOOL AGE RESTROOM POLICY

- Parents are encouraged to take their children to the restroom prior to the start of class. If children are potty training, parents are encouraged to provide at least 2-3 changes of clothes in a backpack.
- Preschool children should only use the preschool bathroom located between the two classrooms.
- When preschool children are taken to the "adult" bathrooms (located in the foyer) by an approved Ministry Safe leader, the door will be left partially open. Before allowing the child to enter, make sure the restroom is free of any other adults.
- Allow the child to enter the restroom while the volunteer stands outside by the door. Do not allow any other adults in while the child is in the restroom.
- Children can be assisted in straightening their clothing only when in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.
- Should a child have an accident, contact the CMD or the parent. When possible, the child should be changed into dry clothes and the soiled clothes should be bagged for pick up by the parents. Changing of clothes should be done by the child in the bathroom without adult assistance. Extra clothing and diapers are available from TCBC in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

ELEMENTARY AGE RESTROOM POLICY

Children ages five and up may enter and use any restroom as needed. If accompanying a child to the restroom, do not enter the restroom.

If a child requires emergency assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

- Only one child in the restroom at a time, in a single toilet facility.
- Be aware if a student repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time.
- A youth volunteer should never escort a lone child to the restroom.

SPECIAL NEEDS RESTROOM POLICY

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, his/her parent will be asked to assist.

Medication & Medical Policies

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child while serving in ministry programs, including 'over the counter' drugs. The parent or guardian is the only one allowed to administer any form of medication to the child. While away at camp or mission trips, an adult must be in possession of all medications a child may need while away for extended periods of time unless an exception is made in the case of EpiPens or asthma inhalers. While away at camp, should a child need an over-the-counter medication, the parent must be contacted first for approval.

We can administer band aids and ice packs. If there is an injury that exceeds the use of band aids or ice packs while in our care, the staff or volunteer should notify the CMD immediately. Any injuries of these kind must be reported to the parent. The staff member or volunteer should complete an Incident Report as soon as possible (located in each classroom).

WELLNESS

Children must be symptom free from the following illnesses without medication for at least 24 hours before entering a group of children or classroom:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye or other eye infections)
- Rash
- Nasal drainage which is green or yellow
- Sore throat
- Open sores
- Excessive coughing
- Parasites of any kind: lice, mites, ringworm, bedbugs, etc.
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Please note: We do not recognize teething as being a cause of fever or diarrhea.

If any child is observed as developing these symptoms or issues while in our care, please, immediately contact the CMD who will contact the parent.

Allergies & Snacks

Volunteers should take extra precautions when feeding snacks to children. DO NOT bring in unapproved snacks. Due to potential, life threatening reactions, TCBC is peanut and tree nut free in all of our children's ministries (excluded youth ministry). Volunteers and parents are strongly encouraged to carefully read all package ingredients before bringing snacks or treats for the children or classroom.

NURSERY

Parents are NOT encouraged to bring alternative snacks to the nursery due to food preferences and potential allergies. Parents are welcome to bring labeled sippy cups from home if they want their child to drink something other than water.

Safety & Security

LOCK DOWN

In the event of someone suspicious or a gunman entering the building, volunteers will immediately take the children out the children's wing door to the "Safety Zone" (tree located to the left of the playground). If exiting the classroom is not possible, volunteers will move all children out of visibility of the door and lock the door if possible. If children are in the sanctuary, help them take cover underneath chairs immediately.

FIRE

In the event of a fire or should the fire alarm sound, children should be moved orderly and immediately out the children's wing door and to the "Safety Zone" (the tree to the left of the playground). Volunteers need to take a head count to ensure all children are accounted for.

SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of severe weather or power outage, within the classrooms, move children away from exterior windows and shelter behind a table. If a power outage occurs, remain calm and locate a flashlight (one should be in each room – or use your phone). Gather children in one area, take a head count to ensure all are accounted for and remain in place until further instructed.

CHECK IN/OUT

Due to the nature of child custody laws, volunteers must act diligently in making sure the correct people are picking up their children. Please be aware that only parents (or another approved adult) may pick up the child. If staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should

immediately locate or contact the Senior Pastor or CMD before releasing the child.

During Sunday Morning QUEST, for the NURSERY, children may be dropped off by a parent starting at 10:00AM. For PRESCHOOL and ELEMENTARY, children will be dismissed following the worship portion of the service. The QUEST rooms will not be staffed until that time. Parents should not leave their children unattended in any room, during the service. New children must have the yellow QUEST card completed and given to the volunteer before exiting the sanctuary with the child. It is preferable that a parent accompany a new child to the back of the sanctuary for the first time.

Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be able to provide transportation for children. Only Ministry Safe approved leaders will transport children or youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving TCBC vans, or vehicles owned or rented by TCBC, unless in an emergency.
- No drivers under age 25 may drive TCBC owned or rented vehicles.

Physical Contact & Gifts

TCBC is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, TCBC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our ministries while protecting children and youth. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in our ministry programs:

- Acceptable forms of physical touch are an arm around the shoulder (side hug), handshakes, high-fives, fist or elbow bumps.
- Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the CMD or the Senior Pastor.

NEVER take the following actions:

- NEVER touch a child in anger or disgust.
- NEVER touch a child in areas typically covered by a bathing suit.
- NEVER touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- NEVER place a child (over 5) on your lap, back or on your shoulders.
- NEVER give gifts to a child unless you have enough for the whole class. If you seek to give a personal gift (outside of class) please seek prior approval of the CMD and the parents.

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 TCBC facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

Tobacco Use

TCBC 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 TCBC activities or programs.

Cell Phones & Social Media

Staff and volunteers' cell phones should be silenced and not in use unless being utilized for learning purposes. Do not take photos of children under any circumstance.

Refrain from posting any pictures you may have taken on social media that contain children's faces. Do not "friend" children in TCBC's ministry programs. Do not send private texts or private messages to any child in our program.

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 TCBC are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Staff members and volunteers in TCBC's Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

Parental Involvement

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child/youth in the care of TCBC staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if he/she becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in our programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at TCBC. 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 TCBC will be required to complete the TCBC volunteer application and screening process.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the CMD.

I have received and read a copy of TCBC's Children's & Youth Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at TCBC.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by TCBC.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at TCBC at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and TCBC. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of TCBC policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____