**Policy, Procedure, and Protocol Manual for Ministry**

**1. CHILD SAFETY & PROTECTION PROTOCOLS**

* **Policy:** We must do our best to keep children safe from physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual harm.
* **Biblical Rationale:** Matthew 18:5-6
* **Procedural Steps:**
  + Reporting Procedures:
    - How a Report is made when questionable behavior occurs:
      * Accident – Witness gives written report to Staff member, who takes appropriate action, giving the parents a copy of the form
      * Incident – Witness writes report.  Staff speaks with involved parties, offering training or counseling if appropriate
      * Suspected Abuse –
        + Report is filed with Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFACS), the agency responsible for investigation alleged incident.
        + Police are called if immediate danger is suspected
        + Pastor and Elders are informed
        + Elders notifies Church Attorney and Insurance Company
        + Only pre-designated person speaks with the media
        + All information should be kept confidential to protect involved persons
        + Pastoral support should be offered to both the victim and the accused
        + Procedures to protect children and those who work with them (see below)
        + Each volunteer will read and sign a statement of agreement with the above information and signed document will be kept on file
    - A Copy of Accident/Incident Form (attached) must be present for all children’s ministry events.
  + Rule of Three: Volunteers and leaders should never be alone with a child. Always have 2 leaders per child or at least 2 children per leader.
  + Open Door Policy: All activities should be done in open or clearly visible places. Children should never be in a closed room alone with one adult (“Child Protection,” n.d.).
  + Maintain proper ratios for each age group:
    - Nursery – 1 adult: 3 children
    - Preschool/Elementary – 1 adult: 5 children (of same gender)
    - Middle School 1 adult: 7 students
    - High School – 1 adult: 7 students
  + Cleanliness Procedures: Every effort is made to ensure that the children’s ministry rooms are the cleanest rooms in the church. Procedures include sanitizing toys and surfaces of all floors and equipment used before Sunday morning service. Infant rooms require that no shoes be worn on the mats at any time.
  + Medical and Media Release Forms: All parents who leave a child in the care of a Deeper KidMin MUST have a Deeper KidMin Medical and Media Release Form (attached) on file with the Deeper KidMin office.
    - These forms a) grant permission for agents of Deeper KidMin to seek and secure any needed medical attention or treatment for the child(ren) named above, b) release Deeper KidMin, its staff and volunteers, of responsibility for any accidental injury, c) grant authority to the Deeper KidMin leadership for the non-physical discipline of the above named children, and d) give Deeper KidMin permission to use photos, videos, and audio captured by our staff and volunteers that may include your child, for use by Deeper KidMin.
    - All new/visiting families leaving their children with Deeper KidMin must complete a Medical and Media Release Form before leaving their child in our care. These forms are located at all check-in locations and should be turned into a Deeper KidMin staff member.
  + Bathroom & Diapering Procedures:
    - Diapering:
      * Done by the designated Nursery Lead Volunteer
      * Changing table will have a plastic covering and then covered with a square of wax paper.
      * Nursery Lead Volunteer will always wear gloves and gather supplies before placing child on table.
      * At no time is a child left on a table without an adult standing at the table.
      * Diaper will be changed, baby’s area cleaned with a wipe and powder or lotion applied only if parents provided for it.
      * Old diaper will be folded and covered with a glove and discarded into a diaper pail kept in the changing room. Other glove will be discarded at this time.
      * A fresh diaper will be applied and the child will be redressed.
      * Wax paper will be removed and replaced with new wax paper for next child
      * Another adult (age 18 or older) present
      * Done in a visible area
    - Toddlers/Preschoolers:
      * Adult supervises, but allows child independence
      * Potty “accidents” requiring helping with two adults witnessing
      * Open door/open stall
      * 2 adults at all times
      * Ensure proper handwashing
      * Inform parent of bathroom use
    - Older Elementary Children:
      * Do not allow child to go to restroom alone. TAKE at least 2.
      * Tell other adult (Leave classroom door open!)
      * Do not assist child unless there is an emergency
      * A group of 3 at all times (2 children & 1 adult or 2 adults & 1 child)
      * Inform parents of accidents/assistance
  + Confidentiality: All information about the children in our program and their families shall remain confidential unless it is determined that harm may come to the child and in that event, the Director of Children’s Ministry should be notified immediately, and actions will be taken in line with Church procedures.
  + Wellness: Deeper KidMin runs a “well child” ministry. Children may not enter the ministry area if he/she has any of the following illnesses or symptoms:
    - Fever over 100
    - Runny nose/sore throat
    - A persistent or heavy cough
    - Questionable rashes
    - Stomach ache
    - Vomiting or diarrhea
    - Red, swollen or crusty eyes
    - Other communicable diseases
    - If a child is being treated with an antibiotic, he/she must have been on the medication a full 24 hours before coming to the children’s ministry.
    - Ministry volunteers and leaders will assess each child as he/she enters the ministry. If any symptoms are in question, the Children’s Director will direct parents to the posted policy. We do not administer medicine in the children’s ministry.
  + Check-In/Check-Out Procedures:
    - Check-In begins at 10:10 AM. Each child should check in at the Deeper KidMin kiosk stations just outside the child’s classroom. Parents will complete the name tag label and place the completed name tag label on their child’s shirt in a visible location. Parents will keep the matching numbered stub for check out time and walk their child to their classroom.
    - For check out, parents can pick up their child in the child’s classroom and must present the stub that matches the number on their child’s name tag. Children should only be released to an adult with the matching numbered stub. Only a parent or legal guardian may pick up a sibling; youth under 14 will not be allowed to pick up or drop off a child.
  + Emergency Procedures:
    - If we lose running water or electricity, we may contact parents to come pick up their children. We will send an email/text if necessary.
    - In the case of an intruder in the building or notification of a need for a lockdown from authorities because of an emergency in the area, we would follow our lockdown plan. The volunteers are to take their class to the designated classroom and lock the door. 911 is called if necessary.
    - Each room has an emergency plan route to go outside if there is a fire. The director will make sure all classes are accounted for.
    - In case of a medical emergency: The volunteer will secure the area and have another volunteer or staff member contact help. 911 will be called if needed.
    - In the event of severe weather, each class goes to a designated area with no windows.
* **Responsible Parties:** Church Staff, Volunteers, Parents

**2. CHILD DISCIPLINE PROTOCOLS**

* **Policy:** We must help children learn and grow through positive, corrective discipline when necessary.
* **Biblical Rationale:** Proverbs 29:17, Hebrews 12:10-11
* **Procedural Steps:**
  + Use positive words
  + Establish rules and expectations
  + Tell parents the good, the bad, the good (Sandwich Rule)
  + Involve church staff when necessary
  + 3 strikes and you’re out policy for disruptive or inappropriate behavior
    - 1st offense – 1 to 2 verbal warnings
    - 2nd offense – If they keep being disobedient, they will have to sit out of an activity (at this point let the Director know this action had to be taken)
    - 3rd offense – Send the child to the director where they may be sent home or will sit out of the rest of the morning; they will also fill out an accident/incident form describing their offense, why it was wrong, and how they can make better decisions next time.
  + Parents must grant authority to the Deeper KidMin leadership for the non-physical discipline of their children, including removing the children from programs, activities and trips, if necessary. In the event a serious behavioral incident does occur with a child named above on any trip or activity, the leadership team will assess the situation, make a decision, call the parent and give options to what action will then take place including removing the child at the parent’s expense. Examples may include, but are not limited to, fighting, vandalism, violent behavior, and disobedient behavior.
* **Responsible Parties:** Children’s Ministry Staff, Volunteers, Parents

**3. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & TRAINING PROTOCOLS**

* **Policy:** We seek to invite and equip passionate people to serve and lead the children in our ministry (Reiland, 2011).
* **Biblical Rationale:** James 3:1, 1 Timothy 3:2
* **Procedural Steps:**
  + Requirements for serving:
    - Consent to run background check
    - Complete background check authorization
    - Pass the background check with no red flags
    - Attend Training on church policy and procedures
    - Join the church as an active member
    - Be an active member at the church for at least 6 months (“Child Protection,” n.d.)
  + Background checks: All volunteers and staff over the age of 18 must pass a state background check with no flagged incidents.
    - All Staff and Volunteers will be required to submit to a periodic background with a frequency as required by Church Elders.
    - Any individual with a molestation inquiry or charge will be deemed unable to volunteer with Children or Youth at Church.
    - Any individual with an alcohol or drug-related charges on their criminal history check in the previous 3 years will be deemed unable to volunteer
  + Attend the annual training event
  + Participate in on-going training, including shadowing a veteran volunteer
  + No one under 18 can be in charge in a classroom – an adult 18 or over must be present at all times.
  + Volunteers must be at least 4 years older than the group they are serving
  + Volunteers must wear nametags and/or identifying lanyards
* **Responsible Parties:** Church Staff, Ministry Leaders, Elders, Volunteers

**4. TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOLS**

* **Policy:** Ministry extends beyond the walls of the church, and we must do our best to continue placing child safety as a top priority even while traveling.
* **Biblical Rationale:** Mark 16:15-18, Matthew 28:18-20
* **Procedural Steps:** 
  + The church does not have a vehicle of its own, so ministry leaders must rent vans or ask volunteers to use their cars for events located off-campus.
  + Parents must provide the appropriate car seat
  + Written permission must be obtained by parents
  + All drivers must be at least 21 years of age, and no child or student may drive themselves to an event more than 1 hour away from the church.
  + All drivers must pass a background check and have a clean driving record.
    - Any Individual with more than three incidents on their Motor Vehicle Report in previous 3 years will not be allowed to drive children and students
    - Any individual with an alcohol or drug-related Motor Vehicle Report violations in the previous 3 years will be deemed unable to drive our children/students
  + Drivers will enforce seat belt policies and follow all rules of the road while driving children/youth.
* **Responsible Parties:** Church Staff, Parents, Volunteers

**5. PURCHASING & REIMBURSEMENT PROTOCOLS**

* **Policy:** We must be good stewards of our resources by documenting all transactions and expenses.
* **Biblical Rationale:** Romans 13:8, Matthew 25:20-21, 1 Peter 4:10
* **Procedural Steps:**
  + No purchase over $3,000 may be made without prior approval. Approval can be obtained from the head finance leader and the senior pastor. All other expenses can be reimbursed after purchase.
  + For staff members: An expense report form must be properly completed and submitted each month. Documentation for all expenses is required. Any item not accompanied by a receipt or if the expense is not an approved/budgeted item it will not be approved. A monthly check will be mailed upon approval. Staff members are responsible for following the budget set at the beginning of each fiscal year.
  + For volunteers: Complete the reimbursement request form (attached) and turn it in to the ministry director with a copy of the receipt. A check will be mailed upon approval within 2 weeks of submission.
* **Responsible Parties:** Church Staff, Finance Team, Volunteers

**6. CALENDAR PLANNING PROTOCOLS**

* **Policy:** Just as we are good stewards of our finances and resources, we will be good stewards of our time, and we will respect the time of the families we serve. don’t overload families but provide ways for them to fellowship and connect outside of Sunday mornings
* **Biblical Rationale:** Ephesians 5:15-16, Colossians 4:5
* **Procedural Steps:**
  + The staff will meet twice a year for the sole purpose of planning, managing, and balancing the calendar.
    - These calendar planning meetings are also where ministry leaders will share the specific goals for their ministry that are measurable, consistent, feasible, actionable, and controllable (McIntosh & Arn, 2013).
    - Each event on the calendar must help meet a specific goal and have a specific purpose.
  + The Associate Pastor will maintain the calendar between these two meetings, and all major calendar changes must get his/her approval.
  + Master Calendar will be displayed in the church office as well as in a Google Calendar online (Anthony & Estep, 2005).
  + Use the Calendar Planning Checklist (attached) to create a balanced ministry year for children’s ministry.
* **Responsible Parties:** Church Staff, Ministry Leaders, Elders