



CITY CHURCH

ST. LOUIS FALLS

---

---

# CITY KIDS

## SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

*Adopted 1/1/19*

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of implementing and adhering to these policies and procedures is first and foremost for the utmost care and safety of our children.

Additionally, this document serves as a protection of our staff and volunteers from being unfairly accused of any form of abuse.

We take the responsibility of care, safety, and nurturing trust in City Kids seriously, enabling us to create an environment in which children can encounter the Gospel of Jesus.

This document is to be reviewed annually for clarity and accuracy revisions by the City Kids Advisory Board.

### **POLICIES**

- 1. Background Checks** | All Team Members must have a completed and cleared background check before serving in City Kids. All information collected will be maintained in confidence. Only background-cleared Team Members may serve in City Kids. If a parent desires to participate in any City Kids classroom (including their own child's) they will be required to complete the screening process.

- 2. Two-Adult Policy |** A minimum of two Team Members must be present with any number of children at all times. No child will ever be left unattended in the kids classrooms during children's ministry programming or classes.
- 3. Roster |** Team Members are responsible to know which and how many children they are responsible for in their classroom through the Check-ins Roster app.
- 4. Doors |** Team Members are responsible to keep an eye on the doors that lead into and out of the children's classrooms. Children may not leave the classroom at any time without an adult (parent or serving team member) with them. In the case of an older and reasonably responsible child using the restroom, the child may go alone to the restroom provided that the Host is monitoring the hallways.
- 5. Cell Phones |** Cell phone use is not permitted in City Kids classrooms by staff members or serving team members, except in the cases of emergencies or contacting the Host. In the case of an emergency, you may excuse yourself from a classroom to use your phone, as long as you are not leaving a serving team member alone with children (in this case, contact the Host to take your place). In the case that you need to text the Host for assistance of any kind, be clear with your partner team member about the nature of your text, and be as quick as you can to give your attention back to the kids. It is never appropriate for a serving team member or staff member to allow a child to view or use their phone. Additionally, cell phone use is not permitted by kids during program hours.
- 6. Worker-to-Child Ratios |** City Church is committed to providing safe ratios in all City Kids programs. Accordingly, the following South Dakota child-care guidelines for worker to child ratios will be observed:

Team Members : Children

- Infants/Toddlers (up to age 3) 1:5
- Preschool (3-6yrs) 1:10
- School Age 1:15

*\* The above ratios are minimum recommendations. Each self-contained classroom must have a minimum of 2 background checked, non-related adults.*

If a classroom is out of ratio, immediately notify the Host. They will

make diligent efforts to find workers to immediately bring worker-to-children ratios into compliance with church policy.

**7. Contingency Policy |** Given a shortage of adult Team Members or uneven distribution of children the following contingencies are approved:

- Children on the border of age/ability groups may be moved to an appropriate room with consent of a parent/guardian and the receiving adult Team Members.
- Classrooms may be combined into one room, as long as room capacity and ratios are maintained.
- With parent/guardian consent, older kids may be invited to participate in the adult service.
- Host will use discretion and knowledge of Team Members and children to determine the best course of action.

**8. Sick or Unable to Serve |** If you are sick or unable to serve, please observe the following guidelines for finding a replacement. See “Preventing Sickness” procedure for details on which sickness will prevent you from serving.

- If you know 24 hours or more in advance that you will be unable to serve, please ask (through text or email) other team members to trade a serving date with you. Notify the City Kids Coordinator of this change.
- If you are unable to serve due to sickness or emergency on the morning-of or within 24 hours of your scheduled serving time, please notify the City Kids Coordinator as soon as possible so they can find a replacement as needed.

**9. Alcohol and Tobacco |** Staff and serving team members are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under any influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with or supervising children at City Church. For the safety of the kids, City Church requires staff and serving team members to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities while in the presence of children or during City Kids activities or programs.

**10. Bathroom and Diapering Policies |** Bathroom and Diapering procedures, as outlined below, must be carefully and diligently observed for the protection of our children and team members. If any assistance is needed, contact Host promptly. The Host will contact the parents via a verbal message or notification on the sanctuary screen to notify them that their child needs diapering. Only the parent may

diaper the child.

**11. Sexually Oriented Materials |** Staff and serving team members are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc) on church property or in the presence of children. Staff and serving team members are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in City Kids.

**12. Verbal Interactions |** Staff and serving team members should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of creating an environment for children to encounter Jesus. This applies to conversations with other serving team members and with children. To this end, staff and serving team members should not talk to children in a way that is, or could be construed by any reasonable observer, as threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

**13. Physical Contact |** The following physical contact guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in City Kids:

- Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff/serving team members and children are important for children's development and are generally suitable and encouraged in the church setting. □
- Touching and/or displays of affection that are of a sexual or violent nature are inappropriate and therefore forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching, or displays of affection or the suspicion of any of the above should be immediately reported to the Host and City Kids Staff (or other City Church Staff if Director is not immediately available).
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of staff or serving team members.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Staff and serving team members are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by other children or adults.

**14. Physical Discipline and Abuse** | It is never appropriate for staff or serving team members to engage in physical discipline of a child. Staff and volunteers may not abuse minors in any way, including, but not limited to, physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.

**15. Preventing Sickness** | We want to do all we can to prevent the spread of sickness in City Kids. We request that parents do not drop off children in City Kids if they have the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher in the last 24 hours.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe Coughing
- Pinkeye
- Head Lice
- Open Skin Lesions
- Any Communicable Disease

In addition, we ask that serving team members require all children to wash their hands after using the restroom.

We require serving team members to refrain from serving when sick with a contagious illness. If a Serving Team Member is sick on a day they are scheduled to serve, they must follow the procedures for finding a substitute (detailed in “Sick or Unable to Serve”).

## GENERAL PROCEDURES

### 1. Check in |

- a. A parent, older sibling (with permission) or legal guardian of a child can check their child into City Kids at a check-in station.
- b. Each child must have a nametag and the parent/guardian must have the security tag (printed after the children’s tags).
- c. Children must wear their nametag the entire time they are in our care. If the child loses his or her name tag contact the Host to reprint the tag. We use name tags for the following:
  - i. Security (code on child’s name tag matches parents tag)
  - ii. Allergies or special needs printed on tag
  - iii. Contacting parents during service
  - iv. Check-out
- d. Infants/Toddlers (ages 0-2) and ages 3-PreK can be immediately brought into their classrooms by their parent.
- e. Grade school children will stay with their parents during worship and will be dismissed to meet their teachers at the side of the sanctuary after worship.

- 2. Check out |** At the end of the Sunday Gathering service, parent, older sibling (with permission) or legal guardian can pick up their children at the door of their child's classroom. Be sure to present your matching security tag to your child's teacher upon pickup. If you have lost your tag, inform the Host or City Kids Staff before picking up your child.
  
- 3. Contacting Parents during the service |** We strive to create a safe and welcoming place for every child, regardless of their needs. However, in the case that a parent needs to be contacted, a serving team member will contact the Host to inform the parents. The follow are are scenarios in which we will contact the parent of the child for assistance:
  - a. An infant or child is crying for 5 minutes consistently, or off-and-on for 15 minutes (unless with other clear instructions from the parent). Team members are encouraged to first try as many solutions as possible - engaging the child in play, offering water, offering an infant his or her own pacifier, rocking and singing, taking a walk in the hallway, and, especially, praying for the child.
  - b. An infant needs to have a diaper change.
  - c. Bathroom accidents in potty-trained children
  - d. A child is endangering him or herself or other children without any responsiveness to redirection or conversations with the teacher.

The Host will display the child's security number on the screen if the assistance of a parent is needed. If the parent has not seen or responded to the display security number within 5 minutes, the Host will locate the parent in the service.

## **BATHROOM AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES**

### **Diapering**

If an infant is in need of a diaper change, contact Host to display the security number on screen. Parents will change infant diapers.

### **Toilet training**

1. No child should ever be forced to use the toilet.
  
2. When children are taken into bathrooms the door to the bathroom will be left partially open (stall door closed), and a second serving team member will be within eyesight.

3. Children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
4. Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with serving team members or staff members (i.e. "Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded— ask her if she needs to go.").
5. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.
6. Ensure that each child washes their hands after using the toilet.
7. "Accidents" should be handled by first compassionately reassuring the child and then completing the changing clothing with those provided by the child's parent. If no change of clothing has been provided, the parents will be contacted.

### **Toilet trained**

1. When children are taken into bathrooms the door to the bathroom will be left partially open (stall door closed), and a second serving team member will be within eyesight.
2. Children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
3. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.
4. Ensure that each child washes their hands after using the toilet.

### **School-Age Children**

1. School-age children will use the individual bathrooms at the end of their classroom hall. One teacher will stand by the classroom door to monitor the hallway until the child comes back.
2. Staff members or serving team members should never be in a restroom alone with a child. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or Serving Team Member.
3. No child over the age of five shall be assisted in the restroom unless he or she is physically, mentally, or emotionally disabled. In the case that a child needs assistance, contact Host.

## Special Needs Children

For children with special needs, parents should be encouraged to speak with the City Kids Staff to make arrangement for appropriate diapering or bathroom visits.

## DISCIPLINE

It is City Church's policy that staff members and serving team members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of shaming or physical discipline is permitted.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, pushing, grabbing, holding down or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Refusing to speak to a child as a form of discipline is not permitted. Children are to be disciplined using redirection, time-outs, and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and serving team members should observe the following guidelines:

1. Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some gentle physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
2. If the behavior does not change, engage the child in a simple conversation about their hurtful behavior ("Dan, when you hit Sam with the car, you are hurting his body.")
3. If the behavior continues, remove the child to a different part of the room and attempt to engage them in a new activity, or help to calm them by participating in calming behaviors with the child (deep breaths, practicing kind words and kind touch,
4. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Host.

## REPORTING ABUSE

All volunteers and church staff are required by this policy to report any alleged or suspected abuse. The law protects permissive and mandatory reporters who make a good faith report of suspected abuse.

Whenever abuse is suspected or known, steps must be taken to report abuse and protect the vulnerable. Silence and uncertainty have often kept persons from reporting alleged abuse. Reporting alleged abuse is the best step toward terminating the abuse when it is occurring, and it also removes suspicion when abuse is not occurring. In this case we follow a “better safe than sorry” rule.

**During City Kids Program** | If abuse is observed or suspected during City Kids programming time, take immediate steps to intervene in the abuse and ensure the child(ren) are safe. Immediately contact City Kids Staff and Host.

**Outside of City Kids Program** | If abuse is suspected to be occurring at home/school/etc, contact the City Kids Staff as soon as possible after programming is complete and all children have gone with their parents.

**Order of Reporting an Allegation** | In the event an allegation of abuse occurs, the following order will be followed:

1. The accuser makes a report to the City Kids Staff (in the case that the Staff is the suspected abuser, the report will be made to another serving City Church Pastor).
2. Staff confers to determine whether this is a serious abuse allegation (parent has a bad day vs. pattern of abuse).
3. In the case that the reported abuse is an isolated incidence, City Kids Staff is responsible to have a conversation with the parent(s) regarding the incident.
4. In the case that the reported abuse is determined to be a pattern of abuse, or is a report of any type of sexual abuse, the Staff (or other Pastor) would immediately convene the Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Team (CYAP).
5. The CYAP is responsible to diligently pursue the reported abuse or indicators of abuse to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe abuse may be occurring.
6. In the case that reasonable cause of abuse is determined, the CYAP must follow the Child Abuse Prevention Procedures to notify alleged perpetrator, notify parents of alleged victim and those possibly affected by alleged perpetrator, and contacting civil authorities.

**Suspension of Alleged Perpetrator** | The alleged perpetrator will be suspended from his/her ministry immediately upon CYAP Team finding that there is some basis to the charges. During the State's investigation, the alleged abuse will be kept as confidential as possible. If the alleged perpetrator is found to be guilty by State authorities, he or she will be permanently removed from his/her ministry position.

**Exoneration of Falsely Accused** | If the alleged perpetrator is found to be not guilty, every effort will be made to exonerate the falsely accused.

**Confidentiality and Disclosure** | Every reasonable effort will be made to keep all allegations confidential and out of the space of gossip and speculation. In the case that the suspicion of abuse is confirmed through proper authorities, a careful statement of disclosure will be made by the CYAP team to all of those directly affected by the abuse, which may include children or parents involved in City Kids.

# **CITY KIDS SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Acknowledgment**

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. City Church reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with proper notice to the City Kids Advisory Board and Volunteers.

I have received a copy of the City Kids Safety Policies and Procedures. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of City Church.

---

Print Name

---

Signature

---

Date