

WALLERS BAPTIST CHURCH

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Welcome!!!

Welcome to children's ministry at Wallers Baptist Church (WBC). It is our goal to create a safe and loving environment in which the children entrusted to our care are able to learn about the character of God, discover biblical truth, and learn what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

This handbook is designed to familiarize parents and caregivers with our childcare procedures and our Child Protection Policy. The specifications contained in this handbook apply to official children's ministry occurring during the regular scheduled weekly meetings of the church including, but not limited to, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. "Children's ministry" refers to classes and programs for children aged newborn to and including Senior High School.

If you have any questions or comments, please speak with the Director of Children/Youth Ministry at the Church.

MISSION

The children's ministry of Wallers Baptist Church exists to glorify God by:

- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1Corinthians 11:1)

CAREGIVER EXPECTATIONS

All caregivers (teachers, nursery volunteers and hall monitors) share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them
- Setting and example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Ministering to the children
- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our first concern is that the children be safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all children's ministry volunteers
- Require training for all children's ministry volunteers
- Utilize a wristband identification system
- Employ scheduling procedure and caregiver/child ratios that optimize safety
- Equip each room with a first aid kit
- Educate our volunteers about recognizing child abuse and encourage them to report any known or suspected abuse to church officials and/or to appropriate governmental authorities consistent with applicable laws
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to children's ministry

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN BEFORE THEY ARRIVE

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday morning. Every applicant who wishes to serve in children's ministry is required to go through a screening process and attend childcare training.

Screening Procedure:

To ensure safe and quality care, Wallers Baptist Church has established several criteria that all caregivers must meet in order to work with our children:

- All caregivers must be members in good standing of Wallers Baptist Church for at least six (6) months
- All caregivers must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. Youth who are at least eleven (11) years of age are welcome to assist (subject to the approval and direction of the Director of the Children/Youth Ministry), however they are always in addition to the adult caregivers.
- All caregivers must have completed childcare training
- All caregivers must have completed the caregiver application and been recommended by or in consultation with the Pastor responsible for children's ministry.
- All reference checks must be satisfactorily completed. Criminal record checks and other appropriate screening checks will be completed.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.
- Caregivers are to be approved by the Director of Children/Youth Ministry in consultation with the Pastor.

TRAINING

All caregivers must attend childcare training before they are allowed to work with the children. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing caregivers to update them on policies and procedures. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN AS THEY ARRIVE AND DEPART

Arrival and Departure Times

Caregivers should be ready to accept children fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of any session, so that parents have enough time to transition their children before the session begins.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the session. In the event that a child is not picked up within fifteen (15) minutes of the end of the session, caregivers will ask the Hall Monitor to locate the parents.

Signing a Child into Children's Ministry

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a children's ministry program will sign the child in to the appropriate classroom, nursery, or activity when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in the Wallers Baptist Church event or program. This will authorize Wallers Baptist Church to secure medical services for the child in the event of accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable.

The parent should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have.

Wristband Identification System

In order to protect the children in our care, each child must be signed into his/her class by a parent or guardian. Upon signing the child in, the parent/guardian and the child will receive wristbands with matching numbers. Both the parent/guardian and child must put the wristband on immediately and wear it for the duration of the session.

At the end of the session, when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

1. The parent/guardian will sign the child out.
2. The volunteer will bring the child to the door and remove the child's wristband. If the child or parent is unknown to the volunteer, the volunteer will check the numbers on the parent's and child's wristbands to ensure that they match.

Ordinarily, only the parent/guardian who signed the child into the class and is wearing the appropriate wristband will be permitted to retrieve the child. There are three (3) exceptions to this rule:

1. In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of an elder of Wallers Baptist Church.
2. A parent may make prior arrangements with the Director of Children/Youth Ministry or her designate to allow for someone other than himself/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of the session.
3. Members of the church who sign in their children will have the option to initial a column on the sign in sheet that will grant permission to their spouse (and only their spouse) to pick up their child in the event that the parent/guardian who signs in the child is unable to sign the child out.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN WHILE THEY ARE IN OUR CLASS

Two Caregiver Rule

Two (2) qualified adult caregivers must be present in each classroom at all times. We consider adults to be age eighteen (18) and older. Youth that are at least eleven (11) years of age are welcome to assist (subject to the approval and direction of the Director of Children/Youth Ministry), however they are always in addition to and supervised by the two (2) adults.

Two (2) male caregivers may not serve together without a female caregiver also being present. The only exception to this rule is when a Hall Monitor temporarily substitutes for a female caregiver.

Hall Monitors

The Hall Monitor is a qualified caregiver whose duties are not limited to any one classroom. Hall Monitors generally move about the hallways and building during the scheduled session times to observe any unusual activity and be of service to the other caregivers (e.g., locating parents or substituting temporarily for another caregiver). The Hall Monitor and each classroom are equipped with a walkie-talkie to facilitate communication. A Hall Monitor is on duty during the regular scheduled meetings at the church.

Child-to-Caregiver Ratio

In addition to always having two (2) caregivers present, the following ratios are maintained during the three (3) regularly scheduled weekly meetings of the church:

- Children ages 0-2 One (1) adult for every three (3) or four (4) children, depending on their ages
- Children ages 3-5 One (1) adult for every eight (8) children
- Children ages 6-12 One (1) adult for every twelve (12) children

The Director of Children/Youth Ministry or Hall Monitor should be notified if more caregivers are needed in order to maintain these ratios.

Rest Room Procedure

Parents are asked to take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class.

Classes for ages 18 months to 4 years

In the event that a child needs to use the rest room, the caregiver will call the Hall Monitor who will step into the classroom (to maintain the appropriate child to caregiver ratios) while a female caregiver takes the child and one (1) other child of the same gender to the rest room. The caregiver should wait outside the closed restroom stall door unless the child requires assistance. The child and the caregiver must wash their hands with soap and water before returning to the classroom.

Other Classes

For all other classes up to (but not including) Junior High School, any child needing to use the rest room shall go with another child of the same age and gender. A female caregiver will accompany girls and a male caregiver will accompany boys. The caregiver will accompany the pair to the rest room and wait outside to closed bathroom door until the children are finished. The children must wash their hands with soap and water and return with the caregiver to their classroom. The Hall Monitor will be available to step into a classroom temporarily to maintain appropriate child to caregiver ratios.

Junior and Senior High

Students in the Junior High or Senior High class shall use the appropriate restroom on their own. No caregiver or other child should accompany him/her.

Appropriate Discipline

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly, atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).

Children's ministry volunteers and staff members should never yell, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, ask the Hall Monitor to call the parents.

For further information regarding discipline please speak with the Director of Children/Youth Ministry.

Accidents and First Aid

All classrooms are equipped with basic first aid kits. Caregivers should be familiar with their contents and uses. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called first and the Hall Monitor will locate and inform the parents immediately. Caregivers will complete an Accident Report Form for all injuries, whether major or minor.

Snacks

Snacks are sometimes served in the classes. If parents have not provided a snack for their child, snacks are available for the caregivers to give the children. Parents should be careful to note on the sign-in sheet any food allergies, as well as if snacks have been provided for their children. Parents should note if they do **NOT** want a snack to be given to their child. Caregivers should always check the sign-in sheet for any allergies before serving a snack to the children.

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) consists of the Pastor overseeing children's ministry and the Director of Children/Youth Ministry. All members of the CPC stand ready to receive information related to suspected child neglect, abuse, or molestation. They are committed to addressing all allegations in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18 and in harmony with the Wallers Baptist Church covenant and the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Any children's ministry volunteer or staff member, who witnesses a violation of the Child Protection Policy short of abuse, should first notify the person violating the

policy and encourage compliance. If the person violating the policy refuses to comply, a member of the Child Protection Committee should be notified immediately.

Any children's ministry volunteer or staff member who witnesses or suspects neglect, abuse or molestation should report their concerns immediately to a member of the Child Protection Committee.

Healthy Child Policy

Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, four (4) rules are in place concerning disease. Both parents and caregivers must be familiar with these policies.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or colored nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
2. Caregivers will use latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills.
3. Hand washing is a regular habit for both children and caregivers.
4. Toys and equipment are washed and disinfected regularly.

Waller's Baptist Church is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. Caregivers do have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the following guidelines:

1. A child should be kept at home when any of the following exist:
 - Fever (children should be free of a fever for 24 hours after a contagious disease before coming back to church)
 - Vomiting or diarrhea

- Any symptom or childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
 - Common Cold-from onset through one week
 - Sore throat
 - Croup
 - Any unexplained rash
 - Any skin infection - boils, ringworm, impetigo
 - Pink eye or other eye infection
 - Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
 - Any communicable disease
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2. Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the nursery sign-in desk with a caregiver while the Hall Monitor locates the parents.
 3. Please inform the Director of Children/Youth Ministry if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending a Wallers Baptist Church event so that other parents may be notified if necessary.
 4. Neither caregivers nor church staff is allowed to give any medication to any child.
 5. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Director before signing the child into class.
 6. The parent(s) or other guardian(s) of children with any serious allergies, feeding peculiarities, or other noteworthy issues should note these issues on the sign-in form and alert the caretaker verbally.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are employees such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in a nursery setting and should be utilized. The method is very effective for protecting both the children and caregivers in the nursery from illness. This is not to imply that any children or caregivers in the nursery are carrying infectious diseases. By treating all bodily fluids as if they are infected, any infectious or contaminants can be avoided at all times, providing a safer and healthier environment for caregivers and children alike.

Important points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- Remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Set them in the container by the sink and wash.
- At the end of the session, disinfect the room with bleach-water solution. Wipe down all surfaces thoroughly.

General Information

Lost and Found

There is a lost and found box in the _____ room for children's items left in children's classrooms. Please check those place if an item is left behind in one of the classrooms.

Parent Orientation

A parent orientation potluck will be held periodically. This will be a time for a brief presentation on Children's Ministry and a chance for parents to ask questions or give feedback.

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