

At Cornerstone Church, we take seriously the call to shepherd young children with the Word of God. We desire for the gospel of Jesus Christ to save and radically change their lives. It is our hope that through the teaching of God's word, seeds of truth are being planted in their hearts that will eventually bloom into their genuine repentance and trust in Christ's finished work on the cross for salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). After being radically transformed by the gospel through the Holy Spirit, it is our goal to present each of these children complete in Christ (Col. 1:28). Therefore, Children's Ministry serves as an effective vehicle through which the church is strengthened as she glorifies God through sharing the gospel, supporting parents, and strengthening the saints.

Thank you to all of you volunteers in this ministry! We could not serve God's people apart from your hard work!

## **Definitions<sup>1</sup>**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- *Child, children, youth, and minor* shall be defined as any individual *under* the age of eighteen (18).
- *Adult* shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- *Volunteer* shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors. All volunteers must have a clear profession of faith and be striving to live in obedience to Christ as defined by the Scriptures. Volunteers include both *leaders/teachers* and *assistants*.
- *Youth Volunteer* shall be defined as any volunteer at least twelve (12) years old, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
- *Child Abuse* shall be defined as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth, or minor.
- *Background Check* is the procedure used to check the background of adult volunteers for criminal activity.

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<sup>1</sup> The following has been modified from Countryside Bible Church's "Child Protection Policies and Procedures" (2018)

## **Qualifications**

The following general qualifications apply to every adult serving in Children's Ministry, whether a leader or an assistant:

- Member of Cornerstone Church, Leaders/Teachers must also have been attending Cornerstone for at least 6 months.
- Leaders must have leadership approval.
- Completed Children's Ministry Application
- Approved Background Check
- Regularly attending worship as able
- Commitment to fellowship through a GC
- A life that demonstrates the qualities of biblical character (See Character Qualities)
- Leadership approval
- Men may serve in the infant and toddler rooms as long as there is another female present.

The following general qualifications apply to every youth volunteer (ages 12-17) serving in Children's Ministry:

- Completed Youth Volunteer Ministry Application
- Regularly attending Cornerstone Church or Anchored
- An overall respectful and obedient attitude towards authority. This means your parents, your teachers, your youth leaders, pastors, and to anyone in a position of authority over you at church.
- Parent/Guardian approval and recommendation

## **Character Qualities**

- Service - We are here to provide a service of care to parents and families. We will do this best by being sacrificial and accommodating to the parents (Rom. 15:1-3).
- Worship - Our primary commitment is to the Lord Jesus Christ and His church. It is expected that every Children's Ministries servant-leader will participate in the corporate gathering of believers on Sunday morning as able (Heb. 10:25).
- Humility - We are to view others as more important than ourselves and put their needs above our own. Christ is our supreme example. Being Lord of the universe, He lowered Himself to serve the needs of others. (Phil. 2:3, 4).
- Teachability - God has graciously provided elders for the leadership of His church (Titus 1:5), and we are to lovingly submit to their rule (Heb. 13:17).
- Joy - By God's grace, we seek to reflect the joy of the Lord because of all that He has done (Ps. 5:11).

- Graciousness - With all of the grace we've received in Christ, we ought to extend grace to the body of Christ and to others who have never yet experienced His loving-kindness (Col. 4:6).
- Enthusiasm - We should be excited when we consider that God has chosen us, sinful man, to play a role in the extension of His kingdom (Matt. 28:18–20).
- Patience - We should reflect the same patience that Christ had and still has with us when dealing with parents and children (Eph. 4:1, 2).
- Gentleness - We must be gentle as Christ was gentle. He did not lash out, nor did He respond harshly when not respected or obeyed (Prov. 15:1).
- Purity - God greatly cares for the purity of His church. We should too (Eph. 4:22–24).
- Unity - We must work together with our leaders and fellow workers, not complaining, but supporting and upholding one another. Putting on all the character qualities listed above will be a great expression of love for one another in our ministry (Col. 3:12–14).

## **Expectations**

Children will act like children

- Having the proper expectations diffuses frustrations, displeasure, and discontentment.
- Understand that children occasionally have bad days like us.
- Allow room for isolated incidents of disobedience while watching for patterns.
- Sunday is a challenge for some children.
  - By the end of the service, children could have been awake for 5 or more hours.
  - Many children are hungry and haven't eaten according to their custom.
  - Misbehavior and lack of self-control are expected in this environment.
  - When children err, our response is grace.
  - For class management we utilize structure and guidelines.

Our interactions with parents will be marked by grace, patience, and humility

- We serve parents best by showing them encouragement, love, and care.
- Parents are ministered to when they see that you love their child.
- We can demonstrate humble service through joy:
  - In our labor
  - In our interaction at check-in/pick-up (greeting child by name)
  - In our attitude
- Attempt to know parents by name.
- Agree to a parent's instructions for their children and follow as best as you can.
- Recall that we are not, however, the parents of the child, nor parents of the parents.
- Encourage children regarding God's grace in their life for that time (e.g. listening well).

## **Volunteer Arrival**

- Infant and Toddler assistants should arrive 15 minutes before the start of the Sunday service.
- Infant and toddler leaders should arrive 30 minutes prior to the service to set things up and make the nursery hospitable.

## **Child Check-in and out**

- Interact with parents to encourage, answer questions, and address potential concerns.
- Each parent of children in the toddler class must initial to check their child in and out of Sunday School. Each visitor in the toddler/infant classroom will have a sticker with their name, the date, and parent's contact placed on their back. The parent will receive a copy that they must return in order to pick up their child.
- The kindergarten and elementary age children (ages 4-11) will be dismissed from the service after singing to go to Sunday school. Upon arrival in the Sunday school room after the bathroom break, children should be checked in by volunteers on a check-in sheet. After the main service is over, parents must initial to check their child out of Sunday school.
- If anyone other than a child's parent (or the person who checked a child into Sunday school) plans to check a child out of Sunday school (even if it is a familiar person), that child's parent/person who checked the child in must communicate this to the Sunday school teacher. For any exceptions to this, teachers must have approval of Matt Mumma, Tina Hayes, or Jill Freeman.
- One teacher from children's ministry may oversee the checkout process; however, all other teachers must stay until their class has been checked out. Assistants should also stay until they are released by the teacher.
- In the case of children's choir, the children's choir teacher will initial to sign out any children who are taking choir, and after choir, parents will initial kids out of choir practice.

## **Ratio of Adults to Children** (following some of the parameters of the State of Wyoming regulations for child care<sup>2</sup>)

- There must always be at least two (2) adults in the infant/toddler room, the kindergarten room, and the elementary Sunday school room (except for isolated

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<sup>2</sup> Wyoming Department of Family Services Licensing Rules, Chapter 4 Section 2.  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FZgAxarFCOsZDYNarber0XVAoQ6avk3q/view>

instances when it is absolutely necessary that a child in the elementary or kindergarten class use the restroom during class time, as described below).

- One female will oversee the infants while the other will oversee the toddlers.
- At least one (1) adult for every four (4) infants, one (1) adult for every five (5) toddlers (ages 1-3), one (1) adult for every twelve (12) children in the kindergarten class, and one (1) adult for every eighteen (18) children in the elementary class must always be present.
- The number of volunteers scheduled for the infant and toddler rooms will be determined by the needs of our kids and the above ratios. If we have adequate staff, one of the leaders can determine if any extra volunteers are free to leave and attend the service.
- Volunteers who are relieved of their shift to attend the service should communicate this to the nursery scheduler so that he/she can re-schedule them accordingly.

### **Diaper Changing**

- There must always be two (2) adults in the room when changing diapers.
- Gloves must be worn while changing diapers.
- Only women will be allowed to change diapers.
- Exception: If a dad is helping in the toddler room, he may change his own child's diaper.

### **Cleaning Toys**

- All toys that have touched a child's mouth will be put into the "mouthed toy bin" to be disinfected before use by another child
- These toys should be sprayed down by volunteers after the service

### **Bathroom Breaks**

#### **Toddler Class:**

- During class, two female volunteers may bring any children to the restroom who need to go, while the rest of the class stays behind with the remaining two volunteers.
- The toddler class should only use the women's restroom for bathroom breaks, and both volunteers should remain in the restroom with the children during the bathroom break.
- If a child needs assistance inside the bathroom stall, one volunteer (an adult female) will assist the child while the other volunteer (another adult female)

will visually observe the same child while holding the stall door slightly open for accountability.

- If a parent is not comfortable with volunteers assisting their child in the bathroom (helping with pulling up and down of clothing, wiping, etc.), they may request to instead be texted/pulled from the service if the child needs to use the bathroom.
- If there are only three total volunteers serving in the infant/toddler room that day, two volunteers may remain in the classroom, and the other volunteer may take children to the bathroom, following the normal protocols, with the assistance of the extra female who is schedule that day to assist with bathroom breaks (see more under “Kindergarten and elementary classes)
- We encourage parents to take any child that is potty trained to the bathroom before dropping them off for Sunday School

#### **Kindergarten and Elementary Classes:**

- At the beginning of Sunday School (right after singing), the entire Elementary and Kindergarten classes will take a bathroom break together.
- A volunteer (female for the women’s restroom, male for the men’s restroom) should sweep the bathroom before children enter and should stay in the bathroom if anyone from outside the class is in the restroom. Another volunteer should stand in the entryway, within eyesight of the first volunteer.
- If there is no one from outside the class in the restroom, volunteers may stand outside the restroom, or enter the restroom to assist with hand-washing and keeping the line moving. Both volunteers must always remain outside bathroom stalls and within eyesight of one another.
- If a child in the kindergarten or elementary class needs help using the restroom, teachers should not help – instead, the child’s parent must come to help.
- Each week, children’s ministry coordinators will assign an additional qualified female to be on duty to help with bathroom breaks as needed, for times when the following circumstances arise:
  - 1) If there are no females scheduled in either the elementary class or the kindergarten class, this female should assist with the bathroom break at the beginning of class.
  - 2) If there are only three volunteers scheduled in the infant/toddler classroom, and a bathroom break is needed during class (as described above).
  - 3) Only when absolutely necessary, if a child has to use the restroom during class, this female can be the second designated adult to

help with bathroom breaks, along with the assistant from that same classroom.

\*\* We want to encourage kids to use the restroom at the start of class, and usually kids will be able to hold it until the end of class.

### **Additional Safety Measures**

- Workers should keep their shoes off, if possible, in the infant and toddler rooms. Moveable barriers will be set up to divide the infants and toddlers.
- There will be no food allowed in the infant, toddler, kindergarten, or elementary Sunday school rooms. This is to help prevent the possibility of choking, and any incidents or emergencies if a child has any allergies.
- A first-aid kit and an AED device are located in the red First Aid tote. Only those certified are permitted to administer CPR, first-aid, and the AED, respectively. We encourage all volunteers to be CPR, first-aid, and AED certified, and to renew their certifications as needed.

### **Sickness**

Cornerstone's desire is that every family is served not only by the childcare available during the Sunday service, but also by having their children in a healthy and safe environment. In a Genesis 3 world, we cannot guarantee or ensure that your child will not be exposed to illnesses while in these settings, but our goal is to minimize that exposure.

Here are some simple guidelines for when to keep your child out of Nursery or Sunday School:

- Known or suspected infectious illness.
- Unexplained vomiting in the last 24 hours (or if anyone in the household has unexplained vomiting in the last 24 hours).
- Unexplained rash, or skin infection.
- Strep Throat and Pink Eye, if taking antibiotics < 24 hours.
- Temperature above 100.4° in the last 24 hours. In cases of teething, the child's temperature must be below 101°. Cases of teething with fever below 101° will be determined by parental discretion.
- Active signs and symptoms of the common cold/flu: nasal drainage, cough, malaise and fatigue, headache, sore throat, or if child is feeling unwell.
- In cases of allergies: Some children legitimately have a runny nose (with clear drainage), or cough when they do not have a viral illness. Please use wisdom and seek to prefer

others in these situations. If your child has a cough due to allergies, it might be a good idea to give them cough syrup/allergy meds before church, just to minimize the risk of coughing on other children.

- In general, if your child does not seem well enough to participate in activities without being a distraction to the activities or a disruption to the environment of Nursery and Sunday school, it is probably best to refrain from placing them in these settings for the time being.

In an effort to love and serve one another in the body at Cornerstone, let's please believe the best about other parents and their efforts to maintain a sick-free environment in Sunday School and Nursery (1 Cor. 13:7). Despite the greatest efforts of parents, remember that we live in a fallen world where sickness abounds no matter where we take our kids. Therefore, let's all trust in God's good, kind, and sovereign hand when our kids get sick, regardless of the circumstances.

**Discipline**

Behavior issues will be handled with gentleness and grace. Do not punish (physically, verbally, or emotionally) children for disobedience. Below is a list of several common issues that may require discipline and suggested actions for volunteers to take. Any questions regarding discipline and contacting parents can be directed to the classroom teacher, or to Matt Mumma.

Issue	Recommendations
Physical Conflict (hitting, pinching, biting etc)/ Verbal Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Separate Children</li> <li>○ Speak to each child individually</li> <li>○ Questions to ask:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What was going on?</li> <li>○ What were you thinking/feeling when it happened?</li> <li>○ What did you do in response?</li> <li>○ Why did you do it?</li> <li>○ What was the result?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ If the child sinned against the other child, they should ask forgiveness</li> <li>○ Other child should be encouraged to forgive them</li> <li>○ Hitting is not biblically permissible even if a child was hit first, had a toy taken, etc. (Matt. 5:39-41, Rom. 12:19-21).</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parents should be told at the end of class in gentleness, humility, and without a spirit of judgment (Phil. 2:3-4).</li> </ul>
Disobeying authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child taken aside by teacher/assistant spoken to about the behavior and told their parents would be informed</li> <li>○ If behavior continues, the child should be taken to the side and made to sit out (potentially with an assistant)</li> <li>○ If behavior continues, the child's parents should be contacted and asked to come to the class</li> <li>○ Parents should be told at the end of class in gentleness, humility, and without a spirit of judgment (Phil. 2:3-4).</li> <li>○ Parents should encourage their children to ask forgiveness from the teacher/volunteer (Rom. 12:18).</li> </ul>
Breaking a Class rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make sure the child knows the rules of the classroom</li> <li>○ If they continue to break the rule, follow the recommendations for disobeying authority</li> </ul>
Not Listening to Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Get down on the child's level, make eye contact, say instructions</li> <li>○ Gently ask what God and their parents would prefer they do right now</li> <li>○ If the child continues to ignore instructions, follow the recommendations for disobeying authority</li> </ul>
Grumbling/ Complaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speak to the child individually</li> <li>○ Explain that when we grumble/complain we are not following God's word (Phil. 2:14), focused on themselves and what they want, ask them what they could be grateful for instead</li> <li>○ If behavior continues, follow recommendations for disobeying authority</li> </ul>
Outbursts of Anger/Throwing Fits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remove the child from the area with other kids</li> <li>○ Explain to the child that this is a fit, not glorifying to God, they will not get what they want by fussing, encourage them to pray to God and ask for self-control</li> <li>○ If they cannot regain self-control after a few minutes, parents should be called</li> <li>○ Parents should be told at the end of class</li> </ul>

Taking turns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explain to both parties that the desired object is a gift from God and not the property of any one person and they are expected to prefer one another with that object.</li> <li>○ Ask the child what God the Father gave to us (cf. John 3:16). Then ask if, in light of giving us Christ, they could share.</li> <li>○ If they do not follow your instructions with taking turns then follow recommendations for disobeying authority.</li> </ul>
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### **Child Safety Reminders**

The following acts or omissions are violations of this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported to leadership after the safety of the child, children, youth, or minor involved has been assured.

- Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
- Physically abusive behavior or infliction of bodily injury to a minor.
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Cornerstone Church.
- Mental or emotional injury to a minor.
- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Cornerstone Church.
- The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs.
- The consumption of or being under the influence of illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors at Cornerstone Church.

### **Reporting Suspected Abuse**

Any time a worker sees something at a church-related activity or program that creates a concern regarding child abuse, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Intervene as necessary to halt the suspected abuse.
2. Immediately notify one of the Pastoral Staff.
3. Immediately report the incident or concern to the Teton County Sheriff. If for any reason the worker is unwilling to do so, a Pastor will do so.

NOTE: All allegations of reasonably suspected child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities in accordance with the mandatory reporting laws.

### **Missing Child**

Steps to take if a child is missing:

1. Confirm child was checked into the room in attendance roster.
2. Identify child's name and parent's cell phone numbers if possible. Be prepared to give a description of child.
3. The Leader of the room the child was in will contact usher/safety team. The head usher will then contact the child's parents and one of the elders to help search for the child.
4. Assist leadership and safety team in whatever way necessary.

### **Classroom Evacuation**

It is imperative that parents stay on the church campus while their child is in Sunday school. Parents need to be readily available in the event of an emergency.

When evacuating the classroom:

1. Count all the children in the room
2. Line the children up
3. Grab the attendance roster
4. Lead the children out to the parking lot
5. Count children again after having arrived
6. Go through the room roster to ensure all children are accounted for

Thank you again for serving sacrificially in the Cornerstone Church Children's ministry. We are grateful for all of you!

## Appendix 1

**Toddler Schedule:** For the purpose of consistency among teachers and for the kids, we are proposing this schedule to be followed each Sunday.

**Sign In / Books & Puzzle time** (10:00-10:15/10:20)

**Praise and Worship** (10:20-10:30)

- Seeds, Gettys Hymns on cd player
- Live music by teacher or volunteer

**Lesson** (10:30-10:45)

- Seated on spaced out squares
- Illustration, game, puppet show that supports your Biblical truth

**Craft/ Coloring** (10:45-11:00)

**Bathroom break** (11)

**Station play time** (11-11:25)

- Lists of station will be available inside closet door, chose 3 for the day and pull out appropriate bins, playing background music?)

**Clean up toys** (11:25-11:30)

- Consistent clean up song?

**Bible verse memory and songs/games** (11:30 +)

- Bible verse with hand motions
  - Songs and games until parents come (list posted inside closet door of ideas)

## Appendix 2

### Children's Ministry Sunday School Handbook Service Agreement

By God's grace...

I will serve ultimately for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31).

I will serve in a manner that reflects the character of Christ (Phil. 2:4-7).

I will serve with gratefulness understanding that ministry is a mercy from God (2 Cor. 4:1).

I will serve in such a way that children are properly evangelized (Matt. 28:18-19).

I will serve with a weekly goal of personally encouraging parents (1 Thess. 5:11).

I will serve in a manner that edifies and supports my fellow servants (Gal. 5:13-15).

I will serve with an attitude that sees the needs of others greater than my own (Phil. 2:3-4).

I will serve with the safety and security of our children as a main priority (Ps. 127:3-5).

I will serve with humility, integrity, and purity as my hallmarks (Gal. 5:22-24).

I will serve with a submissive, loving, and teachable spirit (Eph. 5:19-21).

I will serve as a steward knowing I will give an account to God for my life (2 Cor. 5:10).

I will serve so that I seek to fulfill my responsibilities set forth in this handbook (Heb. 13:17).

#### Cut off this portion and turn it in to Jill Freeman

I acknowledge that I received and read a copy of the Cornerstone Church Children's Ministry Sunday School Handbook. I fully understand and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures explained throughout the handbook while serving in this ministry. I acknowledge that a failure on my part to follow the guidelines set forth in this handbook could result in my removal from Children's Ministry.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_