

# 2023-2024 Kids Ministry Safety Policies & Procedures For Heritage Baptist Church

**POLICY** – Recognizing that the safety and well-being of the children entrusted by the LORD to Heritage Baptist Church is of the highest importance, it is therefore the policy of HBC that these children be protected by all practical means. This would include, but not be limited to, continuous supervision by screened, qualified, and trained adults, video-taping of activities in the kids' classrooms, real-time monitoring by remote cameras and adult hall monitors where deemed necessary.

**ACTION** – It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to ensure that the actions detailed below are routinely carried out. Any deviation from the requirements below should be brought to the attention of the Kids Ministry Team, and, if necessary, elevated to the attention of the Executive Pastor.

**The Kids Ministry Team includes:**

Pastor Joshua Hankins, Pastor of Kids Ministry

Pastor Tony Mitchell, Program Coordinator

Chelsea Barnwell, Volunteer Coordinator

Regina Case, Assistant

## VOLUNTEER SELECTION

### Qualifications

- Knows Christ personally as Lord and Savior.
- Models Christ-like character, a Christian life-style and evidence of continuing spiritual growth.
- Agrees to uphold the ministry in prayer.
- Commits to conscientious preparation and carrying out of responsibilities.
- All volunteers are required to attend the worship service at Heritage regularly (at least twice a month).

### Application/Screening of Volunteers

- Complete online application.
- Applications are reviewed by the Kids Ministry Team.
- A background check is conducted.
- The Kids Ministry Team will conduct an interview.
  - Approved applicants will receive information on procedures, policies, and specific ministry information.
  - Applicant signs a statement agreeing to abide by the Kids Ministry Safety Policies and Procedures.
  - Applicant completes MinistrySafe training.

An observation period may be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the ministry fit. Observations may be evaluated and discussed with the volunteer as a helpful learning experience.

## VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

### General Security

During services, children birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade are to be in the appropriate classroom or with their parent(s). No child should be wandering the halls unsupervised. In general, only those who are serving are allowed in Kids Ministry areas during services. Staff members and volunteers will redirect people when necessary.

Most rooms and hallways have video camera surveillance that not only records, but is monitored live.

Classroom lights should remain on, even when watching a video.

Only authorized volunteers are allowed in the classroom. An exception may be made by a Kids Ministry staff member to allow a parent or potential volunteer to observe a class one time without interacting with the children. For children who may require extra parental assistance in the nursery or classroom, a special request may be submitted to the Kids Ministry Team. The Kids Ministry Team reserves the right to make the final decision on a case by case basis. Family members of the volunteer need to wait outside the classroom until all children have left.

**No child can be received into a nursery or classroom (up to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) until a second volunteer is present. At least two volunteers must remain in the nursery or classroom (up to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) until all children have left. At least one of the volunteers must be an adult female.**

**For the 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms there must be at least two children in the room before an individual adult (male or female) can be in the room with the children.**

Please keep general security in the forefront of your mind at all times. Be observant. Contact the Kids Ministry Team with any concerns. Let's work together to keep our environment safe and secure.

## Emergency Contact Person

- A Kids Ministry Team member will be available each Sunday and Wednesday night. The on-call phone number is (434) 882-7590.
- A Nursery Supervisor is available in the nursery hall.
- A Preschool Supervisor is available in the preschool hall.

## Identification

- Nursery and Preschool
  - All volunteers will wear a name badge and Adventure Kids T-Shirt while serving.
- Elementary
  - Teachers and helpers are required to wear a name tag while serving.
- Awana
  - Directors and secretaries are required to wear a name badge while serving.

## Check-in and Dismissal

### *Nursery and Preschool:*

Parents dropping off their children in the nursery/preschool will use the computerized check-in system to receive a name tag for the child and a printout of the matching code that is on the child's name tag for the parent/guardian to keep. No child can be received into the nursery or preschool class unless they are wearing a name tag. When a child is being picked up, the matching code must be presented for the child to be released. We recommend that the teacher or care leader be the one to release the child. If needed, another adult volunteer may assist. Volunteers under 18 should not dismiss a child. If a parent does not have the matching code, the volunteer should notify the supervisor. If the supervisor is not confident that they know the child belongs to the parent, they will ask for their driver's license and verify that the name on the license matches the parent name on the child's name tag. **No volunteer other than the supervisor has the authority to release a child without the code.**

### *1<sup>st</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School (9:00):*

Attendance for Sunday School is taken electronically for 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade. Children should be asked upon arrival if they will be attending Blast Zone or Team 56.

Sunday School ends at 10:15, after which 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> children are escorted to the gym for Blast Zone or Team 56 (kids' worship time). Any visiting child should be escorted directly to the Blast Zone or Team 56 supervisor to be introduced.

### *1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> Grade Blast Zone (10:30):*

Children can enter the gym starting at 10:15.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are retrieved by parents, unless accompanied by an older sibling. 3<sup>rd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> graders are dismissed to meet their parents, unless the parent has requested that they stay in the gym to be retrieved or if they are visitors.

### *5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team 56 (10:30):*

Children can enter the gym starting at 10:15. 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders are dismissed to meet their parents, unless the parent has requested that they stay in the gym to be retrieved or if they are visitors.

*If siblings of different ages request to be in the same classroom, the older sibling may join their younger sibling's class.*

## Discipline Procedures

Discipline should be carried out through instruction, training, and correction. Physical punishment, such as spanking or hitting, is never appropriate in Kids Ministry. Teachers are encouraged to consult with the Kids' Pastor and parents regarding discipline issues.

Suggested measures:

- Remind – Remind the child of the posted classroom rules.
- Positive Reinforcement
  - Use positive words to encourage appropriate behavior.
  - Use non-verbal actions like high-fives or a pat on the back.
  - Consider using a tangible reward like stickers or a small piece of candy.
- Clarify – Make certain the child understands the rules and expectations.
- Proximity – Stand by the child.
- Redirect – Suggest or offer an alternative action and remove distracting objects.
- Time-Out
  - Let the child consider his/her actions and try to regain self-control.
  - Discuss the action that has caused the time-out.
  - Let the child remain in time-out for no longer than one minute per year old. (For example, a 4-year-old would only sit in time-out for 4 minutes.)
  - Time-outs should occur in the classroom under your supervision. Never place a child in the hallway.
- Separate – If two children continue to talk, separate them.
- Remove – There may be a time that a child's behavior is out of control and would warrant immediate removal from the class. Cause for removal includes hitting or kicking. At this point, the supervisor will contact the Kids Ministry Team immediately. If needed, the supervisor or Kids Ministry Team should be the only ones to contact parents.

## Restroom Use

Female Hall Monitors are available to assist children in Africa who need to use the restroom during class time. Leaders will place a flag outside the room to gain the Hall Monitor's attention before sending a child into the hall to go to the restroom. The Hall Monitor should not go into the bathroom, unless a child requires assistance. If so, the supervisor or another adult female will go in with them. If a child in the 2's classroom needs assistance in the shared bathroom in the classroom, an adult female should assist with the door open. Restrooms in Africa are only available to children during service times.

The shared restroom between the 1st & 2nd grade rooms is available only to children. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders should be escorted to the bathroom in pairs by a volunteer. The volunteer should closely monitor activity in the bathroom while remaining outside, propping the door open if possible. Please ask adults and teens to wait outside the bathroom until all children have left the bathroom. Volunteers should never take one child to the bathroom alone.

During Blast Zone, the gym bathroom is for children only. Parents and volunteers should use the restroom in the gym lobby if needed.

## Physical Contact

Physical contact with children is an aspect of communicating God's love and is an essential part of the nurturing process of our ministry. Volunteers need to be sensitive to the needs and preferences of each child. Physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate.

### Examples of Appropriate Touch

- Meet the child at eye level by bending down or sitting
- Hold the child's hand while listening or speaking or when walking down the hall
- Put your arm around the shoulder of the child when comforting or quieting is needed
- Pat the child's head, hand, shoulder, or back
- Gently touch the child's shoulder when redirecting behavior
- Holding a child while standing to comfort the child in the 3-year-old classes or younger
- Females holding a preschooler or infant on their lap
- High fives, handshakes, and fist bumps

### Examples of Inappropriate Touch

- Males sitting a child on any part of their body
- Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you
- Extended hugging or tickling
- Picking up and holding a child in the 4-year-old classes or older
- Piggy-back rides or riding on shoulders

### Child Abuse or Inappropriate Behavior

Kids Ministry volunteers will be accountable to the Kids' Pastor or Executive Pastor.

#### Types of Abuse:

- Sexual abuse includes inappropriate touch, inappropriate talk, or sexual activity.
- Physical abuse is assault that could cause injuries such as burns, bruising, and/or broken bones.
- Neglect is parental disregard of basic needs.

#### Indicators of Abuse:

- An unexplained injury—patch of missing hair, burn, bruise, limp, abrasion.
- An inordinate number of unexplained injuries over a period of time.
- Verbal or written testimony.
- Complaints about others doing harmful things to them.
- Consistently dirty, smelly, not dressed appropriately for weather—physical needs not cared for.
- Pain with urination.
- Premature sexual knowledge.
- Excessive fear or repulsion when touched.

### Steps of Reporting Abuse

#### A. Abuse occurring outside HBC

- Respond to the child: Take the child seriously. Stay calm and listen. Tell the child that he/she is not at fault and was right in telling you. If asked, indicate to the child that you may need to relay this information to someone. (Make no promise of "not telling anyone else.")
- Report your concerns to the Kids' Pastor. The Kids' Pastor will discuss the situation with you.
- If it is determined that there is a suspicion of child abuse, HBC staff will contact the local child protection authorities. The identity of the initial reporter will remain confidential with the Kids' Pastor and Executive Pastor.
- HBC staff will keep documentation on file.
- Confidentiality of everyone involved will be maintained as much as possible.

## B. Abuse occurring inside HBC

- Respond to the child: Take the child seriously. Stay calm and listen. Tell the child that he/she is not at fault and was right in telling you. If asked, indicate to the child that you may need to relay this information to someone. (Make no promise of "not telling anyone else.")
  - If you **witness** the abuse and can safely remove the child, then do so. Call 911 and then notify the Kids' Pastor immediately.
  - If you **suspect** the abuse, but you did not witness the violation, notify the Kids' Pastor immediately.
  - If it is the Kids' Pastor that is suspected, notify another pastor immediately.
- All allegations will be reported to the proper authorities in a timely manner by the Kids' Pastor.
- Confidentiality of everyone involved will be maintained as much as possible.
- The pastoral staff and Chairman of the Board of Deacons will determine the course of action as directed by church policy, but the following guidelines apply:
  - Care and support of the victim and the victim's family will be a top priority.
  - The accused will be treated with dignity and support. If the accused is a church volunteer or staff member, that person will be relieved of duties until the investigation is complete.
  - All efforts involving handling the allegation will be documented.
  - In the case that we are contacted by the media, the Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor will be the only ones to address their questions.
  - The privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be maintained as much as possible.

## Safety Team

The Safety Team assists as needed based on the situation. Their mandate is to develop and oversee overall safety for Heritage Baptist Church. The Safety Team operates under the direct supervision of the Executive Pastor. They provide direction and assistance relating to threats and emergencies **until the appropriate police, fire, or medical personnel arrive.**

## Photography/Social Media

No photos can be taken with a personal camera unless permission is given by the Kids Ministry Team. Do not post any photos of Heritage children on social media or mention them by name.

## Playground

Classes choosing to use the playground must have at least two volunteers present. Should a child need to use the restroom, an adult female volunteer is allowed to escort the child to the restroom in Africa. While our playground is open to the public, if a class is using it, volunteers have the authority to request guests to leave. Volunteers may ask the supervisor to address the guest.

## Extracurricular Student Events

Outside activities must be approved by the Kids' Pastor. Children are not to be taken off the premises without written parental approval.

## MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Sick Children

- A child who is ill and contagious should not be brought into the classroom. Symptoms include a fever during the preceding 24 hours, diarrhea, vomiting, and extreme cold symptoms.
- When a child becomes ill at church, the child needs to be isolated from the rest of the class. The supervisor will contact the parents.
- Body fluids should be cleaned up immediately utilizing the body fluid kit located in the facilities closet. Contact the supervisor if you are unable to locate it. Once the fluids are cleaned up, scan the maintenance request QR code located under the nearest thermostat to inform the facilities team so that they can deep clean.

### Medications and Allergies

- Volunteers do not give or apply any medications (other than diaper cream if needed). If a child needs medication, the parent must give it.
- In extreme cases, such as allergies or asthma, arrangements should be made with written instructions from the parent allowing the volunteer to administer medication (such as the epi-pen).
- Nursery and Preschool age children with allergies should wear an allergy sticker every time they attend class. The sticker should indicate their allergy, treatment, and location of epi-pen.
- Parents of children with severe medical conditions should describe the condition in the check-in computer when creating the child's profile. This information will show on the child's sticker.

### Universal Precautions for Disease Control

Universal precautions are observed in order to prevent contact with bodily fluids since they may be potentially infectious.

Precautions include:

- Careful hand washing with antiseptic soap or hand sanitizer before and after contact with individuals or belongings. Volunteers must wash hands:
  - Before any food preparation.
  - After assisting a child with wiping their nose.
  - After changing a diaper or assisting a child in the restroom.
- When there is contact with blood or body fluids (assisting a child in the bathroom; changing diapers; where there is blood, vomit, contaminated clothing or articles).
  - Wear gloves
  - Follow instructions on the bodily fluid bucket if needed.
  - Wash your hands.
- Change gloves between each new child contact.
- Diapers and trash contaminated with blood, urine, and feces are placed in lined trash cans.
- Disinfectant solution is used to clean diaper-changing tables after each child.
- Volunteers who are concerned about a blood exposure should immediately contact a member of the Kids Ministry team for further procedural instruction.

### First Aid

There are band aids and gloves in each classroom. Contact the supervisor if you need ice or other medical supplies.

Record accidents or injuries on an incident report form.

### Biting

If a child in nursery or preschool bites another child or volunteer, the supervisor must contact the parents immediately for pick up. The parents of the child who was bit also need to be notified. If a child bites a second time within three months, parents must be contacted immediately. Additionally, the child will not be allowed back in class for a full month unless they are young enough to remain in a crib/carrier/etc. Upon returning to class, we encourage a volunteer to shadow the child closely.

### Medical Emergencies

If a medical emergency occurs,

Volunteers will:

- Dial 911.
- Press the “safety” button.
- Notify their supervisor.

The Kids’ Pastor or supervisor will:

- Have child’s emergency information available for medical personnel.
- Verify that 911 has been called.
- Notify the parents/guardians.
- Notify the Safety Team.
- Ensure the incident report is completed.
- Follow up as needed.

The Safety Team will:

- Make sure 911 emergency personnel are directed to the appropriate location.
- Assist as needed.

### Non-emergency Situations

For any situation where children are involved in any type of accident where they are injured, however they are completely coherent and an emergency response is not needed, volunteers will:

- Notify the supervisor who will first locate the parents and then notify the Safety Team and seek medical advice if deemed necessary.
- The supervisor will assist in obtaining information to complete an incident report form.
- The Kids Ministry Team will be responsible to determine the cause of the accident and determine if any corrective measures can be taken to prevent further incidents from occurring.

### Documentation of Child Information

Documentation will be maintained on all children in Kids Ministry according to information provided by parents.

- Allergies - Parents should communicate allergies to the teacher and, in nursery and preschool, write allergies on the red allergy tag.
- Special Needs - If a child has special needs, parents can share these details with the Kids’ Pastor in order to better provide support and care for the family.

## Child Custody/ Safety Policy

If a volunteer in Kids Ministry is notified of a potential hostile custody issue with a child the volunteer will immediately notify the Kids' Pastor. The Kids' Pastor will meet with the parent, assess the situation, take appropriate action, and will notify the Safety Team and supervisor.

## Child Abduction

If a child is abducted or there is an attempted abduction then volunteers will:

- Protect the child in all ways possible that will not jeopardize their own safety.
- Call 911 and report the incident to the police.
- Attempt to keep the door of the classroom locked to prevent access.
- Activate the safety button located in the room by the door.
- Be a good eye-witness by obtaining the description of the individual(s) involved including the make, color and license number of a vehicle if possible. A description of the child and what the child is wearing should also be noted. At no time should the volunteers endanger themselves to do this.
- Call 911 and report updated information (description of persons involved, vehicle, license number, direction of travel).
- Contact the Kids' Pastor who will notify the parents.

## **CHURCH WIDE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### Bomb/Terrorist Threat

In the event of a bomb/terrorist threat, the following procedure will be followed:

- Pastoral leadership and the Safety Team will be notified immediately.
- 911 will be called.
- In cooperation with the proper authorities, an evaluation will determine the legitimacy of the threat, probable location of the bomb/terrorist, and subsequent action to be taken.
- Everyone will be notified in the event of a lock down. The teacher will lock the doors and move everyone to an area of the room where someone looking in the window in the door cannot see them. If there are shades, pull them down over the windows.

*No child or youth is allowed to bring any type of weapon (gun, rifle, pellet/BB gun, knife, etc) or any instrument resembling a weapon on campus without the permission of the pastor in charge of that area.*

### Fire Alarm

Should the fire alarm sound, each class needs to exit their room following the evacuation plan that is posted in the room. Become familiar with the exit plan, so that you know what direction you are to take once you exit the room and to what location you are to take the class after leaving the building. Take the laptop or notebook used for attendance with you so that attendance can be taken once the class reaches its destination. Children three and up should keep their shoes on to be able to exit if needed. For elementary S.S., the teacher should take a head count as children exit the classroom and count again in a safe area. An adult should be the last one to leave the classroom, checking that no child is left behind. If a parent comes to pick up, ask them to walk with you to the evacuation area before releasing the child.

- Nurseries will use "escape cribs" to evacuate children.
- Preschool will evacuate using the looped walking ropes where available.
- 1st-6th grade students should walk silently in a single file line using the evacuation route for their classroom.

- 1st-4th grade students in Blast Zone should walk silently using the evacuation route starting at the door to the right of the gym stage.
- 5th-6th grade students in Team 56 should walk silently using the evacuation route starting at the door to the right of the gym stage.

Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado Warnings

If there is knowledge that a severe storm or a tornado watch has been issued while services/activities are taking place, the Safety Team will be notified. A member of the Safety Team will monitor the weather radar to determine the location and direction of the storm. Based on that information, a decision will be made by the Executive Pastor regarding what action needs to be taken.

The safest areas in the building are identified by “Severe Weather Shelter” signs. All classrooms have signs posted indicating the closest designated safe area in case of severe weather and will be notified if they should move to this safe location. The Safety Team will assist pastors in notifying all teachers/leaders to evacuate to the closest designated safe area.

*I have read and agree to abide by the policies and procedures in this document.*

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date