



REDEEMER CHURCH

# Child Protection Policy

---

Redeemer Church (PCA), Hudson, Ohio

*Revised, August 26, 2019*

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>WHY A POLICY?</b> .....  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>WHAT'S THE BIG PICTURE?</b> .....  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>HOW CAN WE KEEP CHILDREN SAFE?</b> .....   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>WHEN DOES THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY APPLY?</b> .....                           | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>WHAT IS THE TWO ADULT VOLUNTEER RULE?</b> .....                                  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>CHILD-TO-VOLUNTEER MINIMUM RATIOS:</b> .....                                     | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>WHO CAN SERVE IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY?</b> .....                                  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>WHAT IF I CAN'T MAKE IT TO SERVE?</b> .....                                      | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>WHAT IS A HALL MONITOR?</b> .....  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>WHAT ARE ON-CALL VOLUNTEERS?</b> .....   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>HOW WILL VIDEO SURVEILLANCE HELP?</b> .....                                      | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>WHAT ARE THE DIAPER CHANGING AND RESTROOM PROCEDURES?</b> .....                  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>WHAT IS APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE?</b> .....  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>WHAT IS OUR PHYSICAL TOUCH POLICY?</b> .....                                     | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>WHAT ARE SUNDAY MORNING PROCEDURES AND DUTIES?</b> .....                         | <b>8</b>  |
| VOLUNTEER ARRIVAL.....  | 8         |
| CHECK IN/CHECK OUT PROCEDURES:.....   | 8         |
| SLEEPING BABIES .....   | 8         |
| WHAT ABOUT SNACKS? .....  | 8         |
| WHERE ARE EXTRA SUPPLIES? .....   | 8         |
| CLEAN-UP:.....  | 8         |
| <b>WHAT IF CHILDREN ARE SICK?</b> .....   | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>HOW CAN I DONATE ITEMS TO THE NURSERY?</b> .....                                 | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>HOW TO REPORT CONCERNS?</b> .....  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX: COMMON CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES AND THEIR COMMUNICABILITY PERIODS</b> ..... | <b>12</b> |

## Why A Policy?

The children of believers are, through the covenant and by right of birth, non-communing members of the church. They are entitled to Baptism and to the pastoral oversight of the church. The Session has vowed to nourish and guard the children of Redeemer Church. The following procedures have been developed to help our church guard them.

## What's the Big Picture?

All children's ministry staff and volunteers share a special responsibility to:

- Love children as Christ loves them
- Set an example of proper Christian conduct
- Minister to the children
- Consider the care of children a privilege and duty, not a right or drudgery

## How Can We Keep Children Safe?

Our first concern is to prevent any real or perceived threat to the children in our care. We will:

- Screen all church staff, elders, and deacons, regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children, including a background check
- Screen all children's ministry volunteers, including a background check
- Repeat background checks every three years
- Adhere to a two adult-volunteer per room policy.
- Use volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Educate staff and volunteers to recognize suspected child abuse and report it appropriately
- Obey reporting laws
- Train all children's ministry staff and volunteers on nursery procedures
- Train volunteers to evacuate children safely in an emergency
- Use parent/child identification system
- Use hall monitors and video monitoring for safety and accountability
- Adhere to a healthy child admittance policy

## When Does the Child Protection Policy Apply?

**This policy applies to** children from birth through 5th grade (volunteers for children ages 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 18 years are still required to pass background check) who are placed under the responsibility of the church during **public worship, Sunday school, and Bible studies** held at the church. Other than these specific times, it is primarily the parents' responsibility to guard and protect their children on church grounds.

(Occasional gatherings such as Community Groups, when childcare is organized and provided at individual's homes, do not fall under this policy. American Heritage Girls and Trail Life have their own policies.)

## What is the Two Adult Volunteer Rule?

At least two qualified, adult volunteers\* must be present in each classroom at all times. One volunteer must be female. The only exception to this rule is when a male Hall Monitor temporarily substitutes for a female volunteer who is taking children to the rest room. Only women may provide diaper or restroom assistance to children.

\*If video monitoring is not in use, two adult volunteers must be unrelated. We anticipate video monitoring being in use in rooms which would be used for children 5<sup>th</sup> grade and under.

## Child-to-Volunteer Minimum Ratios:

- Nursery & Sleeping Babies (<2 years old): 3-to-1
- Toddler Room 2-3 years of ages: 4-to-1

| Babies | Toddlers | Minimum # of Adults | Notes            |
|--------|----------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1-8    | 1-11     | 2                   | 1 must be female |
| 9-11   | 12-15    | 3                   | 1 may be teen    |
| 12-14  | 16-19    | 4                   | 2 may be teens   |

- Nursery is for children under 2 years old and not yet walking.
- If volunteers feel overwhelmed or unable to provide enough care and calming on-call volunteers can be asked to serve. These guidelines are minimums for safety.

## Who Can Serve In Children's Ministry?

Child Ministry Volunteers include Sunday School teachers, Nursery/Toddler Room volunteers, and Hall Monitors. Nursery volunteers and hall monitors will be organized into teams and will serve together on a rotating basis.

What is a qualified **adult volunteer**?

- 18 years of age or older
- Completed the Redeemer nursery volunteer application
- Passed background check
- Completed Redeemer nursery training
- Member of Redeemer

What is a qualified **teenage volunteer**?

- 11-17 years of age

- Completed the Redeemer nursery volunteer application
- Completed Redeemer nursery training
- Signed parental approval via Redeemer nursery volunteer application

Teen volunteers do not count toward the two-adult minimum but they count toward the child-to-volunteer ratio and may be an “on-call” volunteer.

Can **children 4-10** years old help when their families serve?

Parents who are volunteering in the nursery are encouraged to allow their 4-10 year olds to attend worship with a family member or friend. Younger children may assist parent volunteers but sometimes are more distracting than helpful and volunteer parents are encouraged to assess this conservatively. Children of volunteers serving in the nursery will be counted towards the ratios of children:adults.

## What If I Can't Make It to Serve?

If you need to switch weeks with someone make sure you are switching 1 adult for 1 adult. Youth may not sub for adults. Please ***notify everyone on the Nursery Committee by text*** when you have made a substitution or need to make a last-minute cancelation.

## What Is A Hall Monitor?

The Hall Monitor is an **adult volunteer** serving during Sunday School or Service who will:

- Be present at the check-in station 15 minutes prior to the start and end time of Service/Sunday School to assist visitors and students in locating classrooms.
- Maintain the check-in and checkout records, provide, and collect nametags.
- Track attendance of all volunteers.
- Locate an on-call volunteer if child:volunteer ratios are exceeded.
- Patrol the hallways during scheduled times to observe and report any unusual activity
- Help classroom volunteers by locating parents or substituting temporarily for another volunteer
- Monitor the video stream of sleeping babies.
- Escort a child to the bathroom when necessary. Refer to restroom procedures.
- Check all occupied rooms following class time to ensure that all students have vacated.
- After an emergency evacuation, checks all rooms after everyone has left and compares headcount attendance

## What Are On-call Volunteers?

On-call volunteers serve the same role as the traditional nursery volunteers but are willing to be called upon, unexpectedly, on Sunday mornings when the scheduled volunteer is unexpectedly absent. In addition, they may be used when child:adult ratios are exceeded, and the hall monitor will find additional volunteers from the list of on-call volunteers. All volunteers for the nursery will be placed on the on-call list unless they request otherwise. A volunteer can be on either the regular roster, the on-call roster, or both.

The on-call volunteers farthest in time from normally scheduled volunteer time will be asked first. On-call volunteer duty will be tracked so that the same people are not over utilized.

## **How Will Video Surveillance Help?**

Video monitoring enables us to only need one hall monitor. The recordings will be archived and randomly examined.

The Nursery, the Toddler Room, Sunday School rooms, and each room that could possibly be used for sleeping babies, will be under recorded video monitoring. In addition, the hallways under the sanctuary will also be under recorded video monitoring.

## **What Are the Diaper Changing and Restroom Procedures?**

0 Months through 2-3 Years Old

- Parents are asked to change dirty diapers prior to signing children in.
- Female volunteers will change diapers as needed.
- Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.

2 Years Old through Pre-K

- Parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class.
- At check-in parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty trained.
- When a child needs to use the restroom:
  - Volunteers call the Hall Monitor who steps to maintain appropriate ratios.
  - Female volunteer takes the child to the restroom, leaving the door open.
  - The child and volunteer wash or sanitize hands before returning to the classroom.

## **What Is Appropriate Discipline?**

All volunteers can help create a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere where children can learn and play together.

Volunteers should pray individually or as a team before children arrive. During their time with the children, volunteers are to proactively direct children to play appropriately.

If discipline is required, volunteers are to follow these steps:

1. Redirect inappropriate behavior
2. Model and lead repenting and reconciliation
3. Warn unresponsive children
4. Use a "time out" in the classroom on a chair
5. Restrain a child if they are endangering him/herself or others
6. Remove child and return to parents if misbehavior continues or is harmful or is disruptive.

Volunteers must not:

- Use any form of corporal punishment: slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting.
- Speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening or humiliating words
- Shun children for unacceptable behavior.

## **What Is Our Physical Touch Policy?**

While appropriate physical contact with children can be loving and helpful it can also be misinterpreted. When caring for children, we must be blameless and above reproach. The following will help volunteers to avoid any concerning behavior.

- Maintain the two adult minimum and remain in sight of each other.
- Use only “Appropriate Touches”
- Men need to limit physical contact more than women.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else’s child.

### **Appropriate Touch**

Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children. It is applied to meet the needs of children and not the adults and will vary according to the age of the child.

- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 to 5.
- A comforting pat on the shoulder and back
- Allowing a distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder.
- High-Fives, handshakes, or “fist bumps”
- Holding hands with children <10 years old when child initiated
- Helping a child to walk, climb stairs, etc.
- Holding a child firmly to prevent him/her from hurting himself or others.

### **Inappropriate Touching**

Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to coercion, exploitation, sexual or physical contact, and attempting to modify behavior with physical force.

- Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reason.
- Squeezing of arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body.
- Children (age 6 and older) sitting on laps of adults
- Touching a child in the genital areas except while cleaning them during a diaper change, or assisting with toileting.
- Kissing a child anywhere.
- Children should not be encouraged or allowed to kiss a staff member, volunteer, or church officer or another child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else.
- Fondling children, even in non-private areas.
- Rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable

# What Are Sunday Morning Procedures and Duties?

## Volunteer Arrival

1. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time for Sunday school or worship service.
2. Volunteers are encouraged to pray for their time with the children individually or as a team.
3. Put out fresh sheets on packNplays and on changing pads.
4. Put away toys from the cleaning bin.

## Check In/Check Out Procedures:

Steps for check-in (1-3,7 @ Hall Monitor Station, 4-6 @ Nursery/Toddler Room):

1. Parents sign-in child on appropriate sheet
2. Parents check for correct contact information
3. Hall Monitor hands parents child/parent photo badges
4. Parents leave one badge with volunteer in room, keep the other badge
5. Parents give any snack or toilet instructions to volunteer in room
6. Only a parent or other adult family member with the badge can pick up the child
7. Parent signs-out and returns both badges to the Hall Monitor Station

A parent may walk a distressed child into their room and help them find a transition activity. Parents should be assured that if the child does not calm down, they can be notified to come back for their child, but they may not stay in the nursery.

If at any point during the service there is a problem, or a parent needs to be reached, the Hall Monitor will text them or personally notify them.

## Sleeping Babies

If a baby needs to take a nap, the Hall Monitor can direct a parent to an available room and put a "Sleeping Baby" sign on the door.

## What About Snacks?

If a parent leaves a snack for a child in the nursery it must be eaten in a high chair. No child may be given a snack unless it is directed or permitted by the parent.

Parents are asked to not provide snacks for their children while they are in the toddler room because snacks will be provided.

## Where Are Extra Supplies?

- Extra diapers, wipes, and all the fresh linens are in the changing table in Nursery.
- Snacks, cups, trash bags, crayons, and paper are in the cupboard in the Toddler Room.
- If you run out of any supplies please write it on the Supplies List on the bulletin board.

## Clean-Up:

1. Put away toys
2. Combine trash and leave it in the hallway to be picked up. Put new liners in trashcans.
3. Strip all sheets and changing pad covers, put in laundry bag, and put laundry bag in the hallway. Then get new sheets out of the changing table and put them on

4. Wash any cups from the toddler room that were used and leave on the counter in the bathroom.
5. There is a tub with disinfectant Spray in each room. Any toys that spend time in a child's mouth should be put in the bin when that child is finished with it. At the end of worship, spray/wipe them down, and leave in the bin. Will be put away the following week.

## **What if Children are Sick?**

Parents are the first line of defense when it comes to preventing the spread of illness in our classrooms. We ask parents to please not send their child to nursery or Sunday School if you suspect they are ill or exhibit any of the following symptoms (based on recommendations from the Center for Disease Control):

- Runny nose or sore throat that is accompanied by fever or uncharacteristic behavior (lethargy, loss of appetite, irritability)
- Eye or skin infection that has not been treated by antibiotics for a full 24 hours
- Cough that is accompanied by fever or uncharacteristic behavior (lethargy, loss of appetite, irritability)
- Any vomiting OR diarrhea in the past 48 hours
- Fever of 100.4 or higher - all fevers must be below 100.4 for at least 24 hours
- Any undiagnosed skin rash

As a reference for parents, the appendix to this policy describes the communicability periods of common childhood illnesses. This information is provided for only as a reference and is **not** part of this policy.

## **How Can I Donate Items to the Nursery?**

To donate items (toys, furniture, bedding, etc.) to the nursery, please contact a member of the Nursery Committee. Please do not drop off any items without approval.

# How to Report Concerns?

## Suspected Abuse

Protecting individuals who may be experiencing abuse or violence is everyone's business, but Ohio law mandates some people to report suspected abuse and violence against any person under the age of 18 or any person under the age of 21 with a developmental disability or physical impairment. These individuals are known as "Mandated Reporters".

### Who is a mandated reporter?

A mandated reporter is someone required by law to report if they suspect or know that child abuse is occurring. A list of mandated reporters for Ohio includes:

- Attorneys
- Audiologists
- Childcare workers
- Children Services personnel
- Clergy (church officers)
- Coroners
- Day care personnel
- Dentists
- Nurses
- Physicians including hospital interns and residents
- Podiatrists
- Psychiatrists
- School authorities, employees, and teachers
- Social Workers
- Speech Pathologists
- Animal Control Officers/Agents

### How to report suspected abuse

The Ohio Revised Code section 2151.421 mandates that certain people (Mandated Reporters) are required to make a report to child protective services or law enforcement if they suspect that abuse is taking place. You do not have to provide proof when making a report of abuse. It is not your responsibility to conduct an investigation. In fact, questioning too many individuals regarding your concerns may interfere with a formal investigation.

When making a report, you should try to include the following information:

- The name and address of the victim you suspect is being abused or neglected
- The age of the victim
- The name and address of the parent(s), guardian or caregiver
- The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the victim and the address, if available
- The reason you suspect the victim is being abused or neglected
- Any other information that may be helpful to the investigation

You should report abuse or neglect even if someone tells you that it has already been reported. You may have additional information that was not previously reported to the child protective services agency.

***Can I go directly to the authorities?***

All persons may report suspected abuse directly to Child Protection Services. If a person makes a report they are asked to notify Session.

If the person is uncertain or uncomfortable to report suspected abuse, they should notify the suspicion to, at least, two church officers immediately, at least one being a member of session.

***References***

Ohio Law: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/ReportChildAbuseandNeglect.stm>

Tips for how to help: <http://www.familysafetyandhealing.org/how-to-help/an-abused-or-neglected-child-teen/>

***Required Training on Abuse Awareness***

Training on Abuse Awareness is required of all officers, staff, and adult volunteers that work with Children. This training will be provided through [ministrysafe.org](http://ministrysafe.org).

**Disciplinary issues**

Volunteers are to report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to the children's ministry elder (currently Mark Schubert). If a child needs to be removed from children's ministry, as described on page 6, reinstatement is possible at the determination of the elder who oversees children's ministry and the teacher.

## **APPENDIX: Common Childhood Illnesses and Their Communicability Periods**

### **For Parental Reference Only**

**Chicken Pox** - contagious until all lesions have scabbed/no new appearances for 24 hours

**Common Cold (upper respiratory)**- contagious for 7-10 days

**Croup (lower respiratory)**- most contagious in early days of infection, but can be contagious for duration of the cough

**Diarrhea** - contagious for 48 hours after symptoms stop

**Ear Infection** - not contagious, but cold causing the infection can be if fever is present

**Fifth Disease** - most contagious during early fever stage, normally not contagious after rash appears

**Influenza (flu)** - contagious one day before symptoms start, and 7 days after first symptom

**Hand Foot & Mouth** - most contagious for first full week (7 days) of illness

**Head Lice** - contagious only before treatment, nits may remain after treatment but are not normally viable

**Impetigo** - contagious until 24-48 hours after starting antibiotic

**Measles** - contagious for 4 days before symptoms develop and 4 days after appearance of rash

**Meningitis (bacterial)** - normally contagious until antibiotics have been given for 24 hours

**Meningitis (viral)** - contagious 10 days before the first symptom and 10 days following first symptom

**Mumps** - contagious 1-2 days before inflammation of salivary glands and 5 days after

**Pink eye** - contagious until antibiotics have been in the system for 24 hours (for bacterial infection), or after the infection has run its course (7-10 days from onset)

**Ringworm** - contagious once lesions appear, and lessen once treatment begins

**RSV** - contagious for 3-8 days, but sometimes can spread the virus for weeks after symptoms stop

**Strep Throat** - no longer contagious after 24 hours on antibiotic