

Children’s Safety Policy Handbook
Discovery Church of the Nazarene

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Vision and Values - Policy Against Abuse

Discovery church supports and maintains a zero tolerance policy against child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct) for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution, or incest with children.

It is against the law and against Discovery's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, spiritually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

Discovery reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss, or to exclude from affiliation with Discovery any volunteer or employee who is or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect of any child.

Discovery Church will neither condone nor tolerate:

1. Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically or sexually abusive behavior towards a child.
2. Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to church activities.
3. Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Discovery staff members, Board members, and volunteers are trained yearly to recognize behaviors intended to "groom" children for sexual abuse. These behaviors will be immediately investigated and reported to the appropriate authorities. A signed and dated "acknowledgement and agreement" (page 13 of this document) shall be kept on file for all Discovery staff members, Board members, and volunteers working with children.

Ages for children's ministries

1. Nursery ages- Birth up to 4 years old
2. Children's church ages- 4 years old through 3rd grade
3. Promotion- Discovery promotes children to the next class level once each year at the beginning of the school year. Children remain in their class level until the next promotion date unless given specific permission by the Children's Ministry Team Leader(s).
4. Age limits- Only children of the appropriate age are allowed in the nursery rooms. No child over the age of four should be in the nursery rooms. For special events where a wide range of children are present, the children should be separated into similar age groups and appropriate activities provided for them.

Volunteer to child ratios

1. There must always be two volunteers (at least one over 18 years old) in the nursery or Children's Church, even if there is only one child.
2. The rooms will be staffed according to the following ratios:
 - a. 1 adult volunteer to 3 infants (birth to 18 months)

- b. 1 volunteer to 4 toddlers (18 to 36 months)
 - c. 1 volunteer to 8 preschoolers (36 months to enrollment in kindergarten)
 - d. 1 volunteer to 14 children kindergarten through graduation from children's church
3. Two volunteer policy
 - a. Two volunteers should remain together with children at all times. If a volunteer needs to leave a group of children, another volunteer must be notified so that the two volunteer policy can be upheld.
 4. Bathroom policy
 - a. The two volunteer policy must be followed when taking children to the bathroom.
 - b. For children leaving a classroom to go to a bathroom down the hall, at least two volunteers must go with any children going to the bathroom while at least two volunteers remain with any children in the classroom.
 - c. Volunteers may contact additional available volunteers for extra help for bathroom breaks to maintain the necessary volunteer:child ratios.
 - d. Alternatively, the volunteers may take the entire class to a bathroom at the same time.
 - e. In either of the nursery rooms one volunteer may assist a child in the adjoining bathroom while another volunteer stays with children in the nursery, as long as the door remains open.
 - f. A single volunteer should never be in a restroom with any children with the door closed.

Volunteer requirements

1. Volunteers must wear identification tags when serving with children. They should not wear their volunteer tag unless they are serving.
2. Background check forms must be completed prior for volunteers 18 years of age or older to being considered a volunteer available to serve.
3. Volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult volunteer 18 years of age or older.
4. Minors over the age of 15 may be volunteers, provided that they are accompanied by a non-related adult and are approved by the ministry team leader.
5. A husband and wife shall not work together without at least one additional volunteer in the room.
6. Volunteers should not be scheduled to serve more than twice in one month.

Volunteer application and screening process

1. Application
 - a. All children's ministry volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application, including providing references and signing the Consent to Background Checks.
 - b. The administration of the application will be handled by the office assistant. The application with references, background check, and any other notes, will be

locked in a confidential file accessible only by the pastor, office assistant, and Ministry Team Leader.

- c. All volunteers must submit to a new background check every three years.
 - d. All documents related to the volunteer application will be kept for one year after their validity. After one year they will be destroyed.
2. Reference Check
 - a. All references will be contacted and asked to assess the applicant's suitability/capability for working with children.
 3. Policies & Procedures
 - a. Volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.
 4. Criminal Background Check
 - a. Discovery uses the services of a reputable public data screening firm in order to check the background of all volunteers and employees for possible criminal history and/or registered sex offender information.
 - b. Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on deferred adjudication or regular probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes, either misdemeanor or felony, cannot serve in any area of children's ministry.
 - c. Discovery uses a comprehensive background check and relies upon the truthful answers of applicants and their references for this information.
 5. Discovery reserves the right to revoke any volunteer's ability to serve in the Children's Ministry with or without notice at any time for any reason or for no reason at all.

Volunteer training

Ongoing training is an important, effective, and required step in fulfilling your responsibility as a volunteer.

1. New Volunteer Training- Each new volunteer shall attend one informational meeting regarding his/her area of ministry.
2. Ongoing Training- Volunteers are required to attend any ongoing training sessions as designated by the children's ministry team leader.
3. Periodic Training - From time to time, Discovery will provide training sessions to address specific needs and/or topics of interest for volunteers.

Sunday morning volunteer responsibilities/Duties

The nursery caregivers will provide proper care and nurturing to babies/toddlers during church services and special church events.

1. Arrive at least 10-15 minutes prior to service or event- earlier if expecting a larger crowd for special services or events.
2. Be familiar with nursery policies and facilities.
3. Greet parents and sign in/out babies/toddlers.
4. Take care of babies/toddlers in the nursery, following nursery policies for safety and proper care:

- a. Rock, play with, sing to, play music for, show picture books, and read the Bible to babies/toddlers.
 - b. Feed babies when needed or as requested by parents.
 - c. Give snacks to toddlers.
 - d. Children wearing diapers should be wearing a clean diaper when they leave the nursery. Check diapers as necessary or 15 to 30 minutes before service is over.
 - e. Take toilet trained toddlers to the bathroom as necessary. Leave the bathroom door ajar if you enter the bathroom with the child. Place your hand over the child's hand to assist with wiping.
 - f. Inconsolable children- volunteers should make every effort to engage unhappy children in play or rock them. Sitting on the floor with the children is very effective and calming. If a child is inconsolable (15 minutes of non-stop crying), the parents are to be notified immediately. Under no circumstances should you let a child "cry it out."
5. Clean up - Toys shall be put away in their proper places. Labels and pens will be put away in the cabinet drawer.
 6. Wipe down all surfaces (tables, trays, etc.) with provided disinfectant wipes.
 7. Place dirty toys in container to be cleaned/disinfected.
 8. Tie-up diaper trash and throw away after your shift. The diaper pail must be emptied into the outside dumpster at the end of each nursery session.
 9. Vacuum crumbs or debris as needed with the provided vacuum in the nursery.
 10. Make sure that the bathroom toilet is flushed and bathroom trash is emptied.
 11. All lights should be turned off.

Interactions

Discovery is committed to protecting children in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy children's ministry. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by Discovery's volunteers.

Physical contact

1. Using good judgment, the following are appropriate ways to touch kids:
 - a. an arm around the shoulder, walking hand in hand, carrying small children piggy-back, short congratulatory or greeting hugs, an assuring pat on the back or shoulder, handshakes, high-fives, and knuckles
2. The following are actions a volunteer should NEVER take:
 - a. never touch a child in anger or disgust, never touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive, never touch a child between the navel and the knee, never touch a child's private parts (with the exception of diaper or bathroom procedures)
3. Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of staff members and volunteers must foster trust at all times.
4. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

Verbal interactions

1. Verbal interactions between volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Discovery volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.
2. To this end, volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Visibility & Security

1. It is important that all interaction between children and volunteers happens in a location where others can observe what is going on for safety and accountability purposes. At no time should a child and volunteer disappear behind a closed door with no visibility to outsiders.

Check in and check out procedures

1. Access to the Nursery
 - a. No one, except staff or on-duty volunteers, should be entering the nursery without either a child or a parent's tag matching their child. Keep our children safe.
 - b. Usually, we ask parents to stay outside the nursery, but if the child needs some comforting reassurance from a parent or guardian they are welcome to enter the room. Particularly, inform first time visitors that they may stay. Also, assure them that we will call them if their baby gets upset.
 - c. Only one adult should drop off or pick up the child. Please have other family members wait outside the gate in order to avoid congestion and confusion.
2. First time visitors
 - a. Fill out an information form for each child participating.
 - b. Receive welcome packet.
2. Check in
 - a. Each child receives two tags with matching numbers. The child wears one tag and the parent keeps the other.
 - b. Masking tape will be provided if a parent wishes to write their child's name on their back and/or label bags and cups.
 - c. The parent initials that their child is checked in.
 - d. No one will be admitted to the nursery or children's church without being checked in.
3. Special procedure for children's church
 - a. The children's church volunteers will have a list of checked in children for that morning prior to the release of the children from worship. They will match the children leaving for children's church to the list to ensure all are accounted for.
4. Check out procedures-nursery
 - a. Children are only released to their parents (or guardians) at the end of service unless the parents inform the nursery staff otherwise.
 - b. Parent brings the numbered tag matching their child, initials them out, and takes their child.

5. Check out procedures-children's church
 - a. The children's church volunteers will escort the children to the entrance of the sanctuary. Parents will then come and sign out their children and give the volunteers their numbered tags. At this point the children will join their parents for the remainder of worship.
6. Parent involvement
 - a. Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Discovery. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with the children's programs will be required to complete a volunteer application and screening process.

Expectations

1. Nursery Rules/Expectations
 - a. Use inside voices to create a calm environment
 - b. No Yelling or Screaming
 - c. No Running
 - d. No Throwing
 - e. No Climbing on Equipment
 - f. No Rough-Housing
 - g. No Pushing or Hitting
2. Consistency
 - a. Volunteers must be consistent to be effective. Do not threaten a consequence without the intention to follow through.
3. Discipline
 - a. Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted and may, in some instances, be necessary. Affirmation and encouragement is always preferred. Yelling at a child is never permitted.
 - b. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management.
 - c. Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
 - d. Set the Standard
 - i. Clearly communicate expectations and rules so that boundaries are established.
 - ii. Clearly communicate the consequences of behavior to the contrary. For example, make sure the children know that a 1 count is a warning, a 2 count is a "time out", and a "3" count means they have to leave and meet with their parents.
 - e. Follow Through

- i. If a child breaks an expectation or rule that has been communicated, it is vital that the leader address the behavior to ensure consistency for the children, as well as the staff.
- f. 1, 2, 3
 - i. Upon the first occurrence, the leader will say the child's name followed by a reminder of the rule that the child has broken and "that's one".
 - ii. If there is a second occurrence the leader will repeat the child's name and the rule that has been broken followed by "that's two...time out."
 - 1. Time outs should be appropriate for the age of the child, no longer than 1 minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes)
 - 2. Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
 - iii. If after the "time out" the child continues a third time with unacceptable behavior the leader will repeat the child's name then say, "that's three...let's contact your parents" and contact the child's parent to pick up their child.

Illnesses

1. We kindly ask that you do not put your child in the nursery or children's church if they have experienced any of the following within 24 hours:
 - a. fever (higher than 100.0)
 - b. diarrhea or vomiting
 - c. severe runny nose (colored discharge) or sore throat
 - d. strep throat
 - e. rash of any kind (other than diaper rash)
 - f. Any childhood disease – measles, mumps, rubella, scarlet fever, chicken pox, or fifth disease
 - g. pink-eye
 - h. croup or bad cough
 - i. ear infection
 - j. lice
2. If your child is on an antibiotic, he/she must be on it for at least 24 hrs before coming into the nursery or children's church room.
3. Parents should notify the church office if their child develops any communicable disease after being in the nursery within the 24-48 hours after exposure. (Ex. Chicken pox, pink eye, fifth disease, etc.)
4. Children's workers must follow general hand-washing guidelines posted in the bathrooms and sink areas in the nursery. Workers should wash their hands after each diaper change or cleaning any bodily discharge, such as wiping noses.

Room safety

1. Nursery door monitoring
 - a. The child gate at the sign-in entrance will remain closed during nursery time.
 - b. The door adjoining the nursery room and the children's church room will remain locked or gated when both rooms are not in use simultaneously with at least one volunteer in each, 18 years of age or older.
2. Children's church door monitoring
 - a. There are two doors into the room used for children's church. Once everyone has entered the first door, it will be closed. The second door will remain closed at all times.
3. Nursery snacks will be provided. Volunteers must refer to the allergies section on the sign in sheet.
4. Children's church snacks will be provided. Volunteers must refer to the allergies section on the sign in sheet.
5. Nursery diaper changing
 - a. Volunteers will change diapers and accompany potty-trained children to the restroom (the door must be left ajar unless otherwise indicated by the parent).
6. Children's church bathroom use
 - a. A volunteer *should never* be one-on-one in the bathroom with a child and the door closed.
 - b. A volunteer *should never* leave the other volunteer alone in the class with other students.
 - c. Children *should never* leave a children's room unaccompanied by an on-duty volunteer or their parent/guardian.
7. For the safety of our children and to protect children who have allergies, the nursery and children's church rooms will be "nut free zones". Parents are to refrain from bringing outside snacks into nursery or children's church. Nut free snacks will be provided by teachers/volunteers in either room.
 - a. If a parent wishes to bring a treat for the entire class it should be approved by the children's ministry team leader.

Nursery and children's church incident and/or injury

1. If a non-emergency incident occurs, please fill out the incident report form found in the appropriate nursery or children's binder. Give the form to the Children's Ministry Team Leader(s).
 - a. These may include (but aren't limited to) a conflict between children and/or adults, a non-emergency injury, etc.
2. First Aid kits can be found in both rooms in their respective locked (but open during class times) cabinets.

Parent Contact

1. If a volunteer needs to get ahold of a parent, they will contact a designated volunteer via cell phone, and the volunteer will contact the parent and send them back to children's church or the nursery.

2. There are 3 children's church volunteer teams. The off-duty teams will have their phones on vibrate while in worship during the weeks they are not teaching.
3. Nursery/children's church workers can find a list of cell phone numbers in the children's church binder on the inside cover.

Emergency procedures

1. In an emergency, the safety of the children is first priority. Volunteers shall keep their cell phones on in order to be notified of an emergency.
 - a. **Medical emergency: There is a landline in the reception area for use in calling 911 quickly. Contact one of the other teachers via cell phone for additional help.**
 - b. Earthquake: duck and cover. When safe, evacuate the building. Keep the children with you. Do not release children to their parent until the badges can be matched.
 - c. Fire: Evacuate the building. Keep the children with you. Do not release them to the parent until the badges can be matched. Fire extinguisher locations are shown on the evacuation map.
 - d. Gunman on campus: Turn off the lights. Lock the door immediately. Keep the children sitting on the floor, away from the doors or windows. Reassure the children that they are safe and you are in charge. Keep the check-in sheet with you. Ignore any fire alarm activation. Doors are not to be opened for anyone. Wait for one of the other teachers or staff to alert you via phone that it is all clear. Keep the children with you. Do not release them to the parent until the badges can be matched. Follow normal checkout procedures.
 - e. In the case where an emergency evacuation resulted in parents or guardians leaving their badge tags in the building, volunteers, with the help of the Children's Ministry Team Leader(s), may determine an alternative form of identifying and releasing children.
2. Evacuation notes:
 - a. Nursery
 - i. Exit through the main lobby and out into the parking lot.
 - ii. There should be a pack 'n play with functional wheels set up in the nursery. You can place approximately 4 children inside one and wheel it out for a quick exit if needed.
 - iii. Take the sign-in sheet with you.
 - b. Children's church
 - i. Exit through the office side (Las Positas Rd.) of the building and head across the parking lot onto the grassy area across the parking lot from the office doors (see evacuation map).
 - ii. Take the sign-in sheet with you.
 - c. Release children only to parent/guardian or person previously designated by parent/guardian to check child out.
 - d. Have the person picking up the child sign the sign-in sheet and indicate what time the child was picked up.

Reporting and investigation procedures

Child abuse is a serious crime, and Discovery Church intends to subject any accusation of child abuse-in any form-to prosecution within the fullest extent of the law. You are under these obligations as a volunteer:

1. Reporting requirements
 - a. All volunteers and employees shall immediately document and report any incident of abuse to the senior pastor. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.
 - b. All volunteers and employees shall immediately report (verbally or in writing) any violation of this Child Safety Policy (that does *not* involve abuse) to the Children's Ministry Team Leader(s). It is the Team Leader(s)' responsibility to follow-up with the violation, understand why it happened, and make sure volunteers are trained, equipped, and capable of meeting all policy requirements.
2. An "incident of abuse" means any occurrence in which any person:
 - a. Has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, youth worker, or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
 - b. Commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
 - c. With respect to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
 - d. Exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
4. Imminent threat
 - a. In all cases where an imminent threat of abuse exists, any witness shall immediately contact the senior pastor in order that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing or with knowledge of the incident of abuse shall complete a written report of the incident of abuse and submit the report to the senior pastor.
5. Obligation to report to Law Enforcement
 - a. In all cases where any volunteer or staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child, known to the volunteer or staff member in a professional capacity, has been or may be abused or neglected by either known or unknown persons inside or outside of Discovery, the worker shall make a report to the senior pastor. The pastor will contact Child Protective Services and/or local law enforcement (as directed by CPS).
 - b. If the volunteer or staff member is in doubt regarding whether a report should be made, he or she shall telephone the agency anonymously and discuss the situation with an investigator to determine whether the report should be made. The volunteer or staff member shall make a written record of the name and the title of the investigator with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation

made by the investigator, then submit a copy of the written record to senior pastor. This report can be submitted anonymously if so desired.

6. Reporting Procedure

- a. The person reporting an incident of abuse shall contact the senior pastor. In the pastor's absence contact should be made with the church board secretary.
 - i. The reporter shall provide information regarding all relevant facts with respect to the incident of abuse. Upon receiving a report of an incident of abuse, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall complete a written report of the incident. The pastor will contact Child Protective Services (or local law enforcement). The pastor will submit a copy of the report to Discovery's legal counsel and insurance agent.
 - ii. In all cases where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom a report should be made, he or she shall be considered absent for the purposes of this reporting procedure and the report should be submitted to the church board secretary. The secretary will follow the above procedure.

7. Responding Internally to the Report

- a. When the pastor receives a report of an incident of abuse, he or she shall immediately take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured and after the abuse has been appropriately reported to authorities, the pastor shall:
 - i. Immediately contact the Children's Ministry Team Leader(s) and the church board secretary.
 - ii. Immediately contact the parents or guardians of the alleged victim, as long as they are not the accused, to inform them of the reported incident.
 - iii. Immediately identify a single person who will handle all external requests for information. This person will be the only person authorized to speak on behalf of the church regarding the investigation.
 - iv. Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending investigation.
 - v. Take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults pending the investigation.
- b. Conclusion of no abuse
 - i. If Discovery legal counsel concludes that there is not reasonable cause to believe the abuse may have occurred, Discovery legal counsel shall provide a written report to the church Board documenting the conclusions reached and the basis for those conclusions. The contents of the report presented by legal counsel where no abuse was found shall be confidential unless requested by law enforcement officials.
- c. Conclusion of abuse
 - i. If Discovery's legal counsel concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse may have occurred, Discovery's legal counsel shall provide a written account to the church Board

- ii. The written report shall: Identify the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and all witnesses identified and contacted. Set forth the allegations and the steps taken to investigate the allegations. Set forth the facts revealed by each significant witness. Set forth the temporary actions to be taken by the church Board as well as a recommendation of additional actions to be taken by the church Board.
- d. In addition, Discovery's legal counsel shall:
 - i. Report the incident of abuse to any other appropriate authorities. Conduct all further investigations as directed by the church Board.

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Discovery Church of the Nazarene's Child Safety Policies and procedures and understand the importance of the material. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving with Discovery Church.

I understand the policy may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Discovery Church.

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and Discovery. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines, which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the Discovery policies and procedures manual.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Printed Name

Children's ministry team leader signature

Date