

Policies and Procedures for Children's Ministry at First Presbyterian Church/Nashville

Allergy Aware Environment

Because we want to treat all God's children with respect and meet the needs of all children, our Children's Ministry has adopted the policy to be an Allergy Aware Environment. All food served in Sunday School or during nursery hours will be safe for all children to eat.

- Parents are requested to alert the Children's Ministry staff of any food allergies children have and to let us know if they are life threatening. This information is shared with Classroom teachers, and when appropriate, peer families.
- To assist teachers in compliance of this policy, Children's Ministry Staff will purchase food called for in the curriculum that will enhance the lesson. Children's Ministry Staff will suggest adaptations for the activity if needed to accommodate food allergies. Teachers are asked, when providing treats or candy, to provide something that all children in the class can consume safely.

Allergy Plan

- Parents with children with Life Threatening Allergies are asked to complete an Allergy Plan and provide needed life saving medications (epi-pen) to the church in case of need. Karen Fitts, nursery coordinator, keeps the Allergy Plan and medications updated. A copy of the Allergy Plan is provided to the teaching team; one copy in the Attendance folder and one copy taped to inside of closet door.
- In case of emergency, teachers are asked to grab the allergy plan from either location and quickly take the child to Karen Fitts. If child cannot be moved, use the walkie talkie at the closest Hospitality Center to communicate with Karen and the Children's Ministry staff.

Bathroom breaks

Classrooms with bathrooms in the hallway.

- 2nd grade and younger: One adult should walk child to the bathroom and wait in the hall for child to finish.
- 3rd grade and older: Older children may walk to the bathroom by themselves, but one adult should be in hallway to monitor who goes in and out of the bathroom.

Classrooms with bathrooms inside the room.

- When a child is in the bathroom, you need to provide supervision while still providing the child the privacy appropriate for the age level. Asking the child to keep the door ajar a little allows you to hear if the child needs your assistance.
- If your assistance in the bathroom is needed, open the door wider and be sure another adult in the room knows you are helping a child.

Disability Awareness

Our Vision: First Presbyterian Church is committed to being an inclusive, hospitable, Christ-centered community of faith filled with grace and compassion. Our members value each individual's gifts, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in the life of the church. Our church family will eagerly learn how to recognize the image of God in everyone.

As part of our church staff, we have a Disability Supports Coordinator who works collaboratively with families with special needs and other church staff to provide direction and coordination for all services and supports that are necessary to insure that each child, youth, and young adult with special needs has the opportunity to participate fully in our ministries as a member of First Presbyterian Church Nashville.

Our approach to working with families who have members with special needs is an individualized approach. We meet personally with families to create a plan that is most appropriate for the family and the person with special needs. We support and advocate an inclusive approach – for example, having typical children and children with special needs remain together during Sunday School. When appropriate, we use a “Buddy” system to provide additional support to a child, youth, or young adult. Buddies may be church members or interns from the community. We will also implement accommodations or adaptations that provide additional support.

Dismissal

- Children in Grade 2 or under should be dropped off at classroom by parent or older sibling and picked up by parent. If an older sibling will be picking up each week, teachers should ask the parents to put in writing permission for this sibling to pick up.
- If parents wish their 2nd graders to meet them at a pre-determined location, parents should put this request in writing and note the meeting place so the teachers can help the child remember where to meet parent. Teachers should keep this note in the attendance folder during the school year.
- Children grades 3 and up may be dismissed to meet parents. Some parents may continue to stop by class to pick up third graders; teachers will discover a rhythm of who does this.

Suggestion: Ask each child who plans to leave the classroom to meet parents where their meeting place is. If a parent comes to the classroom to find their child, you have information to share with the parent.

Emergency Drills

- Emergency Drills will be held at minimum of twice a year. Typically a fire drill will be held in the fall and a severe weather drill held in the spring. An intruder/lock down drill will be practiced at the Leadership Summit each fall.
- Refer to the Emergency Plan for Sunday morning for details on teachers' roles in keeping children safe during emergencies that occur.
 - Teacher checklist is provided in each Attendance folder to help you.

- Emergency contacts for parents are in the attendance folder
- Emergency bags are provided in the closet of each classroom and should travel with the class in case of emergency.

Field Trips

Often the curriculum suggests the class go to a different location on our campus to explore and provide a different setting for the lesson. When you take a “field trip:”

1. Take your attendance folder with you as a way to check head count and role call to be sure you have all the children. The folder has parent contact information in case of emergency.
2. Role call and count the children before you leave and when you come back to be sure you have all the children. Counting alone does not ensure you have the same children.
3. One teacher should lead the class and one teacher should be the tail end of the line for security.
4. Put a note on your door so late comers know where to locate your class.
5. Tell the greeter in your area where the class is headed.

Ratio

- We strive to have a ratio of 1 adult to five children in our educational settings. This low adult to child ratio provides the opportunity for faith conversations between adults and children and children and peers. Relationship building is key in faith education.

Injuries: If a child is injured while in your care

For minor cuts, there is a simple first aid kit located in the classroom cabinet marked with the red X. Be sure to inform the parent.

If a child’s injury requires more than a band aid (i.e. broken bone, blood gushing, etc), keep the child calm and send an adult leader to the nearest Hospitality Center where help can be requested by walkie-talkie and parents can be located. .

If 911 is needed: OHS classrooms do not have phones. Send an adult leader to C-111 to use the phone there. Classrooms in the Children’s Ministry Wing are equipped with phones in each room on which 911 can be dialed directly. Follow directions posted on the phone.

For these types of injuries, the church insurance requires us to complete an injury report. Children’s Ministry staff members have these forms and will need your assistance in completing the form based on your eyewitness account of the injury (or what you experienced and actions you took once the child brought the injury to your attention.) This form is not designed to place blame but to record information as close to the time of the injury as possible.

Sick Child

- If a child becomes sick during Sunday School, take the child to the nearest Hospitality Center; the Greeters can use our walkie talkies to contact a staff member to help locate a family member. The Greeter may walk the child to Karen Fitts in the nursery if this is warranted.
- If the child's illness is life threatening, use the phone in your classroom or in C 111 to call 911. Be sure to tell the operator First Presbyterian Church of Nashville on Franklin Rd. and tell them the closest, well marked entrance to your location. Send an adult/greeter to walk the emergency personnel to your location. Staff will help locate a family member.