

Nazarene Safe

Bethany First Church Of the Nazarene CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Dear Children's Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Bethany First Church of the Nazarene!

At BFC, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for BFC volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of BFC. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Dave Mowry, Children's Pastor

Bethany First Church of the Nazarene

Policies & Procedures for Children's Ministries

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Overview of the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene requires all staff members and Level 1* volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

BFC policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a Ministry Director, Children's Pastor, Safe Kids Director, or Executive Pastor. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip BFC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, BFC requires all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's activities or programming to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers who are working or volunteering in children's ministry are required to complete the BFC Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an Employment Application (employees only)
- complete the Safety Application (employees and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

*a volunteer must attend BFC for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and 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.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

BFC requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

*Level 1 volunteers are those whose assignments are ongoing: Sunday school teachers, Caravan workers, Children's Church workers. Non-Level 1 volunteers have very short term assignments such as VBS workers or Harvest Celebration workers.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Bethany First Church of the Nazarene has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at BFC to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

BFC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Police Department, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a Ministry Director, Children's Pastor, or Safe Kids Director. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a Ministry Director, Children's Pastor, or the Safe Kids Director.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

BFC staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all BFC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children's Ministry's positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Executive Pastor, Senior Pastor, and the Church Board.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Children's Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be banned from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at BFC. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from BFC.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at BFC.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at BFC are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

Oklahoma law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor, and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to the Ministry Director as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Children's Ministries, the Children's Pastor or Executive Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Executive Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, the Children's Pastor or the Executive Pastor will inform the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services. The statewide child abuse hotline is 1-800-522-3511. The Oklahoma County child abuse hotline is 713-6800.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The Executive Pastor's Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable BFC Children's Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. Executive Pastor
2. Children's Pastor
3. Youth Ministries Pastor(s)
4. Safe Kids Director

MEETINGS

The Safety Committee will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates and will be chaired by the Safe Kids Director. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing BFC policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the BFC Church Board regarding safety issues.

Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide directors the opportunity to observe staff members and volunteer interactions with children.

1. **Each Ministry Director** conducts ongoing and unscheduled observations for programs that occur weekly.
2. **The Children's Pastor** conducts written performance evaluations every 12 months for individuals in paid staff positions.
3. **The Children's Pastor** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
4. **The Executive Pastor of Age-Group Ministries** conducts an unscheduled observation of a Children's Ministry program at least once each quarter.
5. **The Executive Pastor of Age Group Ministries** meets with the Children's Pastor once monthly to discuss Children's Ministry.
6. **The Children's Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Children's Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Children's Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and children in children's classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the Children's Building or on the children's playground during children's ministry programming or classes. Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children's Ministries staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the children's playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

BFC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery: Crib	2	8
Nursery: Toddler	2	15
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	20
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	25
Elementary	2	20-40
Kids Camp	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Ministry Director or the Children's Pastor. Directors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with BFC policy.

DISCIPLINE

It is Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) 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).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group within the same room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, since being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes), with a maximum of 5 minutes.
- 6) Stay aware of the child through the entire time-out.
- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that they are welcome to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Ministry Director and the Children's Pastor. They will decide if it's necessary to report to parents.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the medication cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the sign-in sheet ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Pull-ups are required in the nursery until the child has been accident free everywhere for a month.
- 7) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 8) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from BFC in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

Early childhood

- 1) During toilet usage the window shade in the restroom will be in the "up" position when a child is in the bathroom.
- 2) No adult will ever be in the restroom with the child with the door closed.
- 3) Adults may assist early childhood children in the restroom with the door open when another adult is present within the classroom.

School age children

Teachers are encouraged to take their classes to the restroom as a group. When this is not possible, school age children should be accompanied to the restroom at least two at a time for supervision and assistance when needed. Only one child will be allowed in a stall at a time.

The adult must remain outside of the restroom in the hallway. The outside restroom door must remain open at all times. If a child needs help, the adult must have another approved adult accompany them into the restroom to assist the child. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance based on their individual capabilities and needs. At no time may one adult be alone with any number of children in the restroom.

Adults must not use the children's restrooms when children are present.

Special Needs

Trained, adult leaders are the only ones authorized to change diapers or assist with accidents for special needs children.

If a special needs child or youth needs assistance with going to the bathroom then two adults or one adult leader and the child's buddy go to the restroom together. The adult leader assists as needed to undo clothing and help the child to be seated in the stall. The staff person holds the stall door shut for privacy. Once the child is done, the adult leader makes sure the child is clean and then helps with clothing. The leader and child wash hands and leave the restroom with the child's buddy.

If a student is able to go to the bathroom independently, he/she enters the restroom and the buddy stands outside in the hallway until the child is done. Bathroom doors are to always be propped open to provide assistance if necessary.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Bethany First Church of the Nazarene facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

MEDICATION

BFC staff and volunteers are not responsible for dispensing medication to any child. The only exceptions to this policy are:

- 1) Diaper rash ointment, Mylicon, Orajel, EpiPens, and inhalers.
- 2) With special needs children, medication must be in original container. Instructions are given and signed by parent or guardian each time child is left.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers in BFC's Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, camp, etc.), specific measures should be taken to adhere to policy.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in BFC's Children's Ministry program. Another adult who has completed the BFC application and screening process or parent/legal guardian should always be present.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving BFC vans, or vehicles owned or rented by BFC, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive BFC owned or rented vehicles.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at BFC. Parents of elementary age children 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 their children's programs at BFC will be required to complete the BFC volunteer application and screening process. Parents are welcome to observe Nursery and Early-childhood children from the hallway only.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

BFC is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, BFC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to a Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.

4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director or the Executive Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Purity programs may be available with approved curriculum and parental consent.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (including magazines, cards, images, videos, films, phones, electronics, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

The use of movies in children's ministries at BFC must come from the ministry library or be approved by the Ministry Director.

TOBACCO USE

BFC requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during BFC activities or programs. BFC is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. BFC staff members and 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.

To this end, staff members and 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, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to BFC staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. They must show a matching security receipt. Staff or volunteers may ask for a valid driver's license or refer to a Ministry Director.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

If a parent or legal guardian who has custody of a child has a court order for the non-custodial parent or anyone else to not have access to the child, a copy of the court order is requested. A court order gives the staff and volunteers at BFC the power to protect the child.

If the person picking up a child, whether it is parent, grandparents, friend, or legal guardian appears to be impaired either mentally and/or physically, the child will not be released. This will be a decision between the Ministry Director and/or Children's Pastor. Every effort will be made to contact the child's other parent, grandparent, or friend. If the child appears to be in danger and no contact can be made, the Department of Human Services will be called for assistance in the situation.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate Ministry Director or the Children's Pastor before releasing the child.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at BFC.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by BFC.

I also acknowledge that I have agreed to fulfill the duties asked of me in my ministry position. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at BFC at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between BFC and me. 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 Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures Manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Policies and Procedures.]

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to the BFC Administrator]