



## **Safety Policy Guidelines for Children and Youth Ministries**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The ZPC children ministry is committed to partnering with families to help children know love and serve Jesus and youth ministry at ZPC exists to BRING non-believing students the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, to help believing students GROW in their faith, and to CONNECT with the growing students to live a lifestyle of SERVICE and WORSHIP. We are so glad that you have made the decision to change lives of children and youth at ZPC by volunteering.

In order to create an environment where children experience the love of Christ and grow as His disciples, Zionsville Presbyterian Church seeks to establish and promote policies that will protect the safety and well-being of all our children and youth. We wish to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of Matthew 18: 1-10, preventing any harm that could come to children during our activities. We value our volunteers and we desire to protect their integrity. We seek to honor the trust that parents place in us when they place their children in our care. Finally, in the process of providing a safe and secure environment, we reduce the risk of needing to use church resources for liability purposes.

### **Application Process**

1. Attendance at a "ZPC Children and Youth Ministry Volunteer" class.
2. Completion of a volunteer application form.
3. Applicants will give ZPC permission to conduct background checks with law enforcement agencies.

\*People younger than 16 will be considered teens and must always be teamed with adults in service.

### *Volunteer Safety Guidelines*

#### **Access Policy**

All who are approved to regularly serve in our children's ministry will wear approved identification badges.

#### **Discipline Policy**

Everyone who serves in our children and youth ministry are require to create and preserve an environment in which all children and youth feel safe, secure and loved. This process will involve the following elements:

1. Make every child/youth feel loved and welcome.
2. Clearly state expectations or classroom behavior standards in a positive manner.
3. Reinforce positive behavior often.
4. Communicate with the parents regarding a child's negative behavior, doing this in a positive, hopeful and truthful manner. Work to identify corrective steps together.

Parents are expected to communicate any special needs and concerns to teachers and staff. Parental insight is invaluable in helping ZPC minister appropriately to their children and youth.

#### **Inclement Weather Procedures**

1. If notified of severe weather, immediately move away from outside walls and any area of glass.
2. Move to closest lower level enclosed areas, such as restrooms.
3. Do not go to, or remain in, the gym, sanctuary, or gathering space.
4. Have children sit on the floor with their knees pulled up and their head and face on their knees.
5. Keep everyone calm and take attendance as soon as safely possible.

### **Reporting Policy**

Any volunteer that suspects any form or evidence of child abuse and/or neglect must confidentially report it to a ministry staff member or to a pastor of the church immediately.

### **Supervision Policy**

1. All who serve with children and youth are required to serve as part of a team of at least two unrelated adults at all times.
2. Supervision in areas where children and youth are present must not be hindered in any way, such as by covering windows or locking doors.

### **Touching Policy**

We wish to promote an environment where appropriate affection is provided for the purpose of nurturing our children. In order to avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior, all who serve in our children and youth ministry will carefully follow the guidelines for practicing appropriate touching, as identified below.

Appropriate touching includes:

1. Expressing God's love to the child/youth.
2. Touching that occurs on the child's/youth's shoulders, arms, hands, upper back or head.
3. Giving sideways hugs.
4. Holding and comforting a preschool child or baby who is crying or is afraid.
5. Gently and calmly holding the shoulder or chin of a child when redirecting the child's behavior, especially with children who have attention issues.

### **Family Number**

When a child registers, each family is mailed a family number which will help us locate and summon a child's family while they are in the sanctuary. Parents are given a key ring tag to help them recall their family number easily. Children's ministry staff carries an updated list of all the families who are registered and their assigned family number.

## **Protective Health Measures**

1. We will use "universal precautions" which means the blood and bodily fluids of everyone are considered potentially infectious. Disposable gloves should be worn whenever a teacher or worker is handling blood, open sores, cuts, the inside of a person's mouth, or any other bodily fluid such as vomit. These gloves and other first aid items should be available in each classroom cabinet in a clear plastic bag.
2. Wear disposable gloves to clean up areas that have been exposed to blood or other bodily fluid spills. Disinfectant spray is stored in the housekeeping closet next to the Noah's Ark office. This should be used to sanitize all areas exposed to any bodily fluid spills.
3. To dispose of gloves, paper towels, and other potentially contaminated materials, place such items in one of the plastic bags in the wastebaskets and securely close with a knot. Remove from the classroom as soon as possible. Wash your hands.
4. Wash your hands before handling or serving all food products.
5. Encourage children to wash their hands after using the bathroom.
6. Children who are ill should be removed from the classroom and into the care of parents as soon as possible. Seek assistance from a children's ministry staff person in the hallway.

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