



MEMORIAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

10.10.2023

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Revised by S. Dolby, K. Dolby, and K. Kinney Oct. 2023

INTRODUCTION: THE FOUNDATION FOR CHILD SAFETY

Memorial Presbyterian Church is intentionally pursuing the establishment and maintenance of safety for children and adults who serve them. To this end, the Family Ministry staff of Memorial Presbyterian create, approve, implement, and maintain the following policies and procedures.

The Family Ministry staff including the Youth & Family Pastor and Children's Ministry Coordinator operates under the oversight and approval of the Session and with the advice of members of the congregation with expertise in related fields, such as mental health, childhood trauma treatment, education, and child abuse prevention.

Child Protection Documents

Memorial Presbyterian Church will maintain four guiding documents. The four documents are:

Document #1: The Policy Document: This document encompasses the administrative actions the staff and Session are bound to follow regarding such matters as who will be allowed to serve children, when permission to serve is revoked, following MO mandated reporting laws, communications to the congregation and community if there is ever an incident, and any other administrative matter revolving around children's ministry. This is primarily a Sessional document but will be made available for anyone to read.

This document can only be edited by a vote of the Session.

Document #2. The Code of Conduct: This document describes the boundaries adults are to maintain when working with children. Every staff person working with children and all regular volunteers will be required to read the Code of Conduct and sign an acknowledgement form every year.

Revisions to the document must be approved by the Session.

Document #3. Reporting Protocol/Incident Report: The Reporting Protocol documents defines who is a mandated reporter in the children's ministry program (all "person[s] with responsibility for the care of children" are mandated reporters under current MO law¹), what forms of abuse are required to be reported, and the steps the individual and church leadership will take in making that report. In addition to the Reporting Protocol there is a companion document called the Incident Report. This document is to be completed prior to a report being made to the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division (DSS). It is designed to collect important information prior to that report being made so that the DSS can better determine if the child is at risk and how to proceed with the information. Once anyone fills out an Incident Report, a report to the DSS must be made. Missouri requires that reports to DSS be made "immediately" when a mandated reporter "has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may

¹ Title XII Public Health and Welfare 210.115,
<https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=210.115&bid=49904&hl=>

be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.”²

Revisions to the document must be approved by the Session.

Document #4. Procedures Document: The Procedures Document outlines how ministry to children and youth will be carried out. This document deals with the practical matters such as how we screen and train volunteers, diaper changes, bathroom breaks, adults-child ratios, discipline, and off-site activities, etc.

The Procedures Document will be under constant review and revision as we learn new or better ways to carry out ministry to children and youth. Changes to this document can be made by the Family Ministry staff without Session approval unless it involves a change in the Policy Document, Code of Conduct, or Reporting Protocol.

² Title XII Public Health and Welfare 210.115,
[https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=210.115&bid=49904&hl=.](https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=210.115&bid=49904&hl=)

DOCUMENT #1 CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

We at Memorial Presbyterian Church have these policies because we are compelled by the Word of God and the Love of Christ:

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches that all the law and the prophets hang on two commandments: love the Lord God and love your neighbor. Deuteronomy 22:8 reveals that love for neighbor is a proactive command. We are called, as the people of God, to care for the lives of our neighbors, our brothers and sisters, through precautionary methods. This policy is intended to be such a precautionary method.

Peter, in his sermon in Acts 2, emphasizes that the people of God includes not the adults only, but their children as well. As the members of the church, therefore, they need instruction and encouragement in the Faith. The church is called to encourage its children's love for God, His Word, His Body, and His Kingdom (Deuteronomy 6:20-22). This calling requires the whole church community to be in a child's life, and thus the church community must be engaging, loving, and shepherding even its youngest members.

We, as members and leaders of Memorial Presbyterian Church, are not above lording over one another or taking advantage of one another, and so these policies are in place to check such temptations and to warn those who are prowling that this community loves and will tenaciously defend its younger members.

It is our constant hope and prayer that the Lord will defend His lambs as the Good Shepherd who fights off the wolves and robbers. This policy is our offering to Him declaring that we too love His little ones that He has placed in our care, and we will stand with Him and be an extension of Him in defending them. May the Lord bless this policy and His flock at Memorial Presbyterian Church.

We are aware that for too many children, safety and security have not been part of their lives. There is an epidemic of child maltreatment that impacts hundreds of thousands of children every year. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have profound impacts on the lives of children physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Memorial Presbyterian recognizes that child sexual abuse has been a major problem in our culture for decades. The adults in our congregation grew up at a time when 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys were sexually abused before their 18th birthday. This means that among our adult members and visitors there will be survivors of child sexual abuse. It is also our responsibility to minister to children in such a way that it reaffirms for these survivors that this church is a safe place that offers hope and healing to everyone whose life has been impacted by sexual abuse.

Our policies and procedures are established on these core beliefs:

- The Word of God and the Love of Christ compel us to proactively protect children who are guests and members of our community.
- No child should ever experience abuse in any form.

- It is not acceptable that a child could go through our children's ministry program while being abused and never find a safe adult to tell.
- Adults should always act in the best interest of a victim and survivors of abuse.

Therefore, we have established the following policies:

1. Memorial Presbyterian requires screening of all children's ministry staff and volunteers and maintains a two-adult policy in all activities where children and/or youth are present whether located on church property or offsite except when stipulated below.
2. Anyone who is known or determined to have committed abuse of a child under the age of 18 or of a person with an emotional or mental disability at any time during his/her adult life is not eligible for service either as employee or a volunteer in children's ministry and, if already serving, will have his/her service with Memorial Presbyterian terminated immediately, with no later opportunity to serve as an employee or volunteer to work with children or youth. Memorial Presbyterian will not knowingly allow anyone who has been convicted of child abuse to participate in any children's ministry, either as a staff or volunteer.
3. Anyone who committed child abuse or neglect before the age of 18 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, considering such factors as age, seriousness of the offense, acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment.
4. Any employee or volunteer whose dependent children have been determined to have committed child abuse will be asked to follow through with an action plan put in place to resolve the causes and effects of the abuse, considering such factors as age, age difference between offender and victim(s), developmental differences, seriousness of the offense(s), acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment. Failure to follow the action plan will lead to termination of their service with Memorial Presbyterian. Reapplication would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and involve effective treatment and other factors listed above.
5. If Memorial Presbyterian is asked for a reference for anyone whose service or membership was terminated due to a violation of our Code of Conduct, Memorial Presbyterian will generally disclose the reasons for termination. Further, if Memorial Presbyterian becomes aware that a former employee or volunteer of Memorial Presbyterian who was dismissed becomes employed by or volunteers to work with children or youth in another organization, Memorial Presbyterian will seek legal counsel on our duty to warn the organization by making that organization aware of the reasons for Memorial Presbyterian's termination of employment of the individual. A pastoral staff member will contact the new employer.
6. Failure to follow the Child Protection Policy or the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, if on staff. If a volunteer, such failure will result in the termination of volunteer status and would be directed to the Session for further

engagement according to the Book of Church Order.

7. If it is determined that a staff person has violated our Code of Conduct or willfully harms a child, they will not be allowed to voluntarily resign but will have their employment terminated.
8. In cases where corroborating evidence shows that a person previously employed by Memorial Presbyterian committed child abuse while in the employ of Memorial Presbyterian, their personnel file will reflect such, and they will be considered ineligible for re-hire.
9. Memorial Presbyterian staff and volunteers will comply with all Missouri Mandated Reporting laws. Staff and volunteers are required to follow the Memorial Presbyterian Church Mandated Reporter Protocol.
10. Once an Incident Report has been filed by a staff or volunteer, according to our Reporting Protocol, a report must immediately be made to The Department of Social Services.
11. Memorial Presbyterian will deal with all concerns and issues of child safety in our children's program with full transparency. When a report is made to Child Protective Services involving a member of staff or a volunteer at Memorial Presbyterian, our Church leadership will communicate to the congregation the fact that an incident has occurred, that the appropriate authorities as required by law have been contacted, and that steps to protect children have been taken. All communications must be as transparent as possible without violating the rights of privacy of those involved and without interfering with law enforcement's investigation of that incident.
12. No portion of this policy can be amended by any individual, nor can any individual grant permission to deviate from this policy. Any change to this policy may be granted only by a vote of the Session and no one else.

Approved by the Memorial Presbyterian Session

Date: 12/05/2023

Document #2 Code of Conduct

Adult Volunteer Code of Conduct

WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

All staff and volunteers who work with children are expected to interact with children in a mature, capable, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. This Code of Conduct describes how adults will interact with children and the boundaries they are expected to observe. By being vigilant in following the Code of Conduct, we will help protect children from abuse. The most effective way to reduce abuse of children is to be vigilant.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All adult staff and volunteers are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain our high level of professionalism. As an adult working with children, you agree to interact with the children by observing these principles. It is our expectation that you understand your responsibility to observe the interaction between adults and children and when you see interaction that is questionable, inappropriate or crossing a child's boundaries, you will intervene on behalf of the child. Such intervention may include:

- Remaining present with the child in order to provide him/her a sense of safety;
- Redirecting the child to join other children in a different area;
- Speaking to the adult and stating the boundary violation you have observed and reminding them of the responsibility to abide by this code of conduct.

In all cases violations of this Code of Conduct will be reported to the direct head of the ministry who also reports the violation to the Youth and Family Pastor. If a ministry head, the Youth and Family Pastor, or a relative of the ministry head or pastor is involved, another member of the pastoral staff will receive the report. Such a report will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You also give permission to the other adults in our programs to take these intervening actions if you are seen crossing safe boundaries or violating this code of conduct.

VISIBILITY/TWO-PERSON RULE

At least two approved and screened adult staff and/or volunteers will be present at all gatherings of children and youth. At no time will an adult be alone in a room with a child with the door closed or in any secluded location. All adult volunteers and staff working with children must be visible to another adult when working with children. It is permissible for these two staff and/or volunteers to be a married couple if both have been screened in accordance with our policy. The Family Pastor will make routine unannounced visits to any or all Children's Ministry events and classes to verify the Two-Person Rule is enforced.

Exceptions to the Two-Person Rule include church-sanctioned one-one meetings with children ages 11-18 including pastoral counseling and engagement. On these occasions the following procedures will be followed, as applicable:

- Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with youth by informing the Family Pastor and/or parents when, where and for how long your one-on-one interaction will be before it takes place.
- The activity must be in a public place that is visible to others, never in a private or secluded location, such as a room with the door closed or in a home alone with the child.
- Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with youth will be done in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed; and
- Parents and/or the Family Pastor are to be notified beforehand of any activities with youth.

In an unexpected situation when you find yourself alone with a child, find someone to join you if at all possible, or notify any available adult. Redirecting to a different location as quickly as possible is also an option.

The church will uphold the following state guidelines for classroom ratios in unison with the Two-Person Rule stated below.³ Interns (volunteers under the age of 18) do not qualify as adults for the purposes of the Two-Person rule

Classroom	Age Group	Ratio
Zoo*	6 – 24 months	1:4
Forest Park	2 – 3 years	1:6**
Children’s Church	Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	1:10
Juniors Dept	3 rd – 5 th Grade	1:16
Youth Group	6 th – 12 th Grade	1:16

*The Zoo ratio of 1:4 is based upon babies who are capable of sitting. If we have babies who are not able to do so, the ratio will adjust to 1:2.

³ <https://www.daycare.com/missouri/>; Brotherhood Mutual Child Protection in Ministry, page 22.

** The legal ratio for the Forest Park classroom is 1:8, but to maintain the best care for that age group, we will strive to maintain a 1:6 ratio when possible.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents will be informed of planned activities. Parents are welcome to make unannounced visits to program activities as a way of reducing isolation and monitoring the interaction between adults and children. Parent visitors, who may be unscreened, may be asked to remain in designated areas of the classrooms while children are present.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. Volunteers and staff will not engage in social networking, texting, or any other means of private communication with children without the permission of the parents or guardian. Any technological engagement must be done with supervision of another adult. Electronic communication with children must not be erased or deleted and must be made available for review upon request by a parent or the Family Pastor.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline, meaning teaching, should be used to train and correct rather than punish. Grace-filled verbal correction is the only method of discipline staff and volunteers may use. Discipline will not include slapping, hitting, shaming, yelling at, or belittling a child.

TOUCH

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children, but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch will be open rather than secretive.
- Touch should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child.

Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including personal hygiene and bathroom breaks, dressing, bathing, etc.

Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. Some children with special needs may exhibit more aggression than other children as part of their developmental progress. When such aggression is exhibited by a child with a disability the behavior is likely not intentional or willful. Care will be given in these situations to make sure all children are safe and cared for.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts:

- verbal praise,
- side hugs,
- shoulder to shoulder hugs,
- pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate).

For smaller children:

- touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms,
- hugs,
- or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors between staff or volunteers and children are inappropriate and will not be tolerated:

- touching buttocks,
- chests,
- genital areas,
- or thighs;
- showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child;
- sleeping in bed with a child;
- inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development;
- flirtatious or seductive looks;
- any form of affection that is unwanted by the child;
- showing sexually suggestive videos or playing sexually suggestive games with any child;
- any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

Adult members will monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

SHOWING FAVORITISM

Adults will avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to a particular child or youth to the exclusion of others.

For children and adults with disabilities it is more natural that a child will form meaningful attachments to 1 or 2 individuals. The interaction or attention given by the adults a child has made a connection with could appear to be showing favoritism or singling out these children. When such attachments are created it is important to monitor those interactions to make sure proper boundaries are maintained.

VERBAL INTERACTION

Verbal interactions should be used to support and encourage a child, such as

- praise,

- positive reinforcement,
- and appropriate jokes.

Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following:

- shaming,
- belittling,
- humiliating,
- name calling,
- using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate the child,
- cursing,
- making derogatory remarks about the child.

Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-color or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

REPORTING OF ABUSE

When anyone has reason to suspect, receives a disclosure of, or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of Memorial's work and ministry, he or she must make a report according to our Reporting Protocol. This includes abuse that happens while engaged in church activities or abuse that takes place outside the church, such as at home, school, or a youth serving organization. The Reporting Protocol is attached.

Approved by the Memorial Session

Date: 12/05/2023

CODE OF CONDUCT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to follow the Memorial Code of Conduct. I have read and agree to abide by the Memorial Reporting Protocol. In addition, it is my responsibility to read and comply with any future updates to any and all of our child protection documents.

I affirm that I have never engaged in any inappropriate activity according to the code of conduct with a child, including child abuse. I affirm that if I have been accused of and/or investigated for child abuse, I will disclose this to a pastoral staff member and will provide documentation of the outcome of the accusation and investigation. I understand that this disclosure will be shared with the Session as confidential information.

I agree not to engage in any such behaviors.

I further agree that as an individual who has engendered trust from a child, I will not tolerate neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse.

I understand the importance of accountability to the other adults who work with children. Therefore, I give my permission for anyone who observes any inappropriate or questionable interaction between me and a child to speak to me regarding their observation. I will not take offense when approached by someone with concerns about my interaction, because I understand that the protection of each child must be my first priority.

I agree to immediately report to the appropriate leadership any reasonable suspicion of or disclosure of inappropriate behavior between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one has power over the other by virtue of age, development, or physical abilities, in accordance with our Reporting Protocol.

Name

Date

Position

Youth and Family Pastor's Signature

Form approved by the Memorial Session on [INSERT DATE]

Child Volunteer (Intern) Code of Conduct

WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

All staff and volunteers who work with children are expected to interact with children in a mature, capable, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. This Code of Conduct describes how our interns will interact with children and the boundaries they are expected to observe. By being vigilant in following the Code of Conduct, we will help protect children from abuse. The most effective way to reduce abuse of children is to be vigilant.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All adult staff and volunteers and all family ministry interns are expected to maintain our high level of professionalism. As an intern with children, you agree to interact with the children by observing these principles. It is our expectation that you understand your responsibility to not only follow this Code of Conduct but to intervene when you see anyone crossing a child's safe boundary or violating the Code of Conduct. Such intervention may include:

- Bringing the behavior to the attention of an adult;
- Remaining present with the child in order to provide him/her a sense of safety;
- Redirecting the child to join other children in a different area.

In all cases violations of this Code of Conduct will be reported to the direct head of the ministry who also reports the violation to the Youth and Family Pastor. If a ministry head, the Youth and Family Pastor, or a relative of the ministry head or pastor is involved, another member of the pastoral staff will receive the report. Such a report will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You also give permission to the adults in our programs to take these intervening actions if you are seen crossing safe boundaries or violating this code of conduct.

VISIBILITY/TWO-PERSON RULE

All work with children will be planned and carried out in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other adults when working with children. Adults and interns will not be in a room alone with a child with the door closed, or in any area of our property that is secluded or hidden from view.

In an unexpected situation when you find yourself alone with a child, find someone to join you if at all possible, or notify any available adult.

The church will uphold the following state guidelines for classroom ratios in unison with the Two-Person Rule stated below.⁴ Interns do not qualify as adults for the purposes of the Two-Person rule

Classroom	Age Group	Ratio
Zoo*	6 – 24 months	1:4
Forest Park	2 – 3 years	1:6**
Children’s Church	Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	1:10
Juniors Dept	3 rd – 5 th Grade	1:16
Youth Group	6 th – 12 th Grade	1:16

*The Zoo ratio of 1:4 is based upon babies who are capable of sitting. If we have babies who are not able to do so, the ratio will adjust to 1:2.

** The legal ratio for the Forest Park classroom is 1:8, but to maintain the best care for that age group, we will strive to maintain a 1:6 ratio when possible.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. Volunteers and staff will not engage in social networking, texting, or any other means of private communication with children and youth without the permission of the parents or guardian. All electronic communication must not be erased or deleted and must be made available for review upon request by a parent or the Family Pastor.

TOUCH

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children, but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch will be open rather than secretive.
- Touch should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child.

⁴ <https://www.daycare.com/missouri/>; Brotherhood Mutual Child Protection in Ministry, page 22.

Adults and interns should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including personal hygiene and bathroom breaks, dressing, bathing, etc.

Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. Some children with special needs may exhibit more aggression than other children as part of their developmental progress. When such aggression is exhibited by a child with a disability the behavior is likely not intentional or willful. Care will be given in these situations to make sure all children are safe and cared for.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts:

- verbal praise,
- side hugs,
- shoulder to shoulder hugs,
- pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate).

For smaller children,

- touching their hands, faces,
- shoulders and arms,
- hugs,
- or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors between staff or volunteers and children are inappropriate and will not be engaged in:

- touching buttocks,
- chests,
- genital areas,
- or thighs;
- showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child;
- sleeping in bed with a child;
- inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development;
- flirtatious or seductive looks;
- any form of affection that is unwanted by the child;
- showing sexually suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with any child;
- any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

Adult members will monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

SHOWING FAVORITISM

Adults and interns will avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to a particular child or youth to the exclusion of others.

Adults and interns will not give gifts to any child or youth without requesting and receiving permission from a parent or legal guardian.

For children and adults with disabilities it is more natural that a child will form meaningful attachments to 1 or 2 individuals. The interaction or attention given by the adults a child has made a connection with could appear to be showing favoritism or singling out these children. When such attachments are created it is important to monitor those interactions to make sure proper boundaries are maintained.

VERBAL INTERACTION

Words can also be used to support and encourage a child, such as

- praise,
- positive reinforcement,
- and appropriate jokes.

Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following:

- shaming,
- belittling,
- humiliating,
- name calling,
- using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate the child,
- cursing,
- or making derogatory remarks about the child.

Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-color or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents will be informed of planned activities. Parents are welcome to make unannounced visits to program activities as a way of reducing isolation and monitoring the interaction between adults and children. Parent visitors, who may be unscreened, may be asked to remain in designated areas of the classrooms while children are present.

REPORTING OF ABUSE

When anyone has reason to suspect, receives a disclosure of, or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of Memorial's work and ministry, he or she must make a report according to our Reporting Protocol. This includes abuse that happens while engaged in church activities or abuse that takes place outside the church, such as at home, school, or a youth serving organization. The Reporting Protocol is attached.

Approved by the Memorial Session
Date: 12/05/2023

FAMILY MINISTRY INTERN
CODE OF CONDUCT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to follow the Memorial Code of Conduct. I have read and agree to abide by the Memorial Reporting Protocol. In addition, it is my responsibility to read and comply with any future updates to any and all of our child protection documents.

I further agree that as an individual who has engendered trust from a child, I will not tolerate neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse.

I understand the importance of accountability to the adults who work with children. Therefore, I give my permission for anyone who observes any inappropriate or questionable interaction between me and a child to speak to me regarding their observation. I will not take offense when approached by someone with concerns about my interaction, because I understand that the protection of each child must be my first priority.

I agree to immediately report to the nearest adult volunteer and then to a member of the family ministry staff any reasonable suspicion of or disclosure of inappropriate behavior between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one has power over the other by virtue of age, development, or physical abilities, in accordance with our Reporting Protocol.

Intern's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parental Approval Signature:

"I have read and discussed this Code of Conduct with my child and approve their participation."

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved for Service by _____ Date: _____

Document approved by Session
Date: 12/05/2023

DOCUMENT #3 REPORTING PROTOCOL

Missouri law states that anyone with responsibility for the care of children is a mandated reporter. This includes clergy, staff, and all volunteers in a church.

A mandated reporter is anyone who is required by law to report to the Department of Social Services (DSS) any reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect.⁵

Therefore, Memorial has established the following Reporting Protocol.

What am I required to report?

The minimum standard for a report to be made to DSS is any “reasonable cause to suspect” abuse. Reasonable suspicion does not mean you have proof that abuse has occurred.

There are three ways you will learn about abuse:

1. A child discloses abuse
2. You observe abuse
3. You have reasonable suspicion of abuse

When a child discloses abuse or you observe abuse, you must report the abuse by following the reporting protocol below.

Reasonable suspicion is harder to determine than receiving a disclosure or observing abuse. At Memorial, we have a Code of Conduct that describes the boundaries adults are to maintain when interacting with children. Every adult who works with children must sign our Code of Conduct, acknowledging they agree to abide by the Code of Conduct when interacting with children. When an adult agrees to our Code of Conduct, he/she gives permission to any adult who observes any inappropriate or questionable behavior to speak to him/her about what has been observed and to remind them of the commitment we have made to maintain safe boundaries between adults and children.

It is our expectation that you understand your responsibility to observe the interaction between adults and children and when you see interaction that is questionable, inappropriate, or crossing a child’s boundaries, you will intervene on behalf of the child. Such intervention may include:

- Remaining present with the child in order to provide him/her a sense of safety;
- Redirecting the child to join other children in a different area;

⁵ When a mandated reporter “has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183. No internal investigation shall be initiated until such a report has been made. As used in this section, the term “abuse” is not limited to abuse inflicted by a person responsible for the child’s care, custody and control as specified in section 210.110, but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person.” From Title XII Public Health and Welfare 210.115.

- Speaking to the adult and stating the boundary violation you have observed and reminding them of the responsibility to abide by this code of conduct.

In all cases violations of this Code of Conduct will be reported to a member of the family ministry staff or the senior pastor if a member of the family ministry staff is involved in the violation. Such a report will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality.

If there is reason to believe the child is at risk or the response by the adult when held accountable for their actions causes concern, a formal Incident Report described below must be completed.

It may also be determined that there is reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused outside of any church event, such as in the home. In such a case you are still a mandated reporter, even though the abuse is not related to a program or ministry of the church.

Making a report to DSS does not constitute an accusation of abuse. Making a report means we are requesting that a professional service be performed to determine if a child is at risk and if abuse has occurred.

To whom in the Church is a report made?

If the child is in immediate danger, call law enforcement or 911 immediately. Once law enforcement has been called, you then follow the reporting protocol below.

PROTOCOL FOR ADULT STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

If you have received a disclosure of abuse, you have observed abuse, or you have reasonable suspicion of abuse, you must verbally report it immediately to a member of the family ministry team. The person making the report will be referred to here as the "Reporter." If a ministry head, the Youth and Family Pastor, or a relative of the ministry head or pastor is involved or are not on site to hear the verbal report, another member of the pastoral staff will receive the report.

The Incident Report

After the verbal report has been made, the Reporter must complete an Incident Report (available at the Children's Ministry Check-in desk) and submit the completed, signed, and dated form to the person to whom it was verbally reported. The Incident Report must be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than 6 hours after the verbal report was made.

If the verbal report was given to the individual in charge of the event (if neither the ministry head nor the Pastor was on site to receive the verbal report), the Reporter then is responsible, as soon as practically possible, to contact the ministry head or Pastor as well as to initiate the Incident Report completion.

The Reporter and the person receiving the Incident Report (ministry head or Pastor) must each sign the Incident Report, noting the dates and times the Incident Report was signed. Both the Reporter and the person receiving the report must retain a copy of the Incident Report with both signatures showing dates and times.

Any ministry head who receives an Incident Report must forward the original Incident Report to the Pastor (or the person designated by the Pastor to receive these reports). The Pastor must sign the Incident Report, indicating the time/date signed.

All Incident Reports received by the Pastor or his designee MUST be reported to DSS. The Pastor does not have the option of bypassing this step of making the report to DSS. The date and time the incident was reported to DSS or law enforcement must be noted on the Incident Report, which will be kept in the church office in a secure file.

Missouri law requires that all reports of abuse must be made to DSS immediately after the original disclosure, observation, or suspicion of abuse.

HOW IS A REPORT MADE TO DSS?

To make a report, call the Missouri Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline:

1-800-392-3738.

The Children's Division of the Missouri Department of Social Services is responsible for receiving and responding to reports of abuse. You can also make a report of suspected abuse online at:

<https://apps.dss.mo.gov/OnlineCanReporting/default.aspx>

Mandated reporters are encouraged to make a report online when possible to keep the hotline open for the general public.

Approved by the Memorial Session

Date: 12/05/2023

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Confidential

Name of staff or volunteer receiving a disclosure of child abuse or has reason to suspect child abuse has occurred:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

CHILD INFORMATION:

Child's Name:

Child's Age:

Date of Birth:

Class grade:

Parent(s) or legal guardian name(s) and contact information (phone and email):

Address where the child resides:

INCIDENT INFORMATION

Are you reporting a disclosure or suspicion of abuse?

Disclosure

Suspicion

DISCLOSURE:

Date you received the disclosure:

Time of day you received the disclosure:

Where did you receive the disclosure?

How did the child disclose to you (verbally, text message, etc.):

Provide the child's statement if you received a disclosure (as best as you remember, use the exact words the child said or communicated; continue on back of page if necessary. If the child communicated electronically, please provide a copy of the communication.

(DO NOT INTERROGATE OR QUESTION THE CHILD!)

Continue on next page

Name of person accused of the abuse:

Relationship of accused to the child (Paid staff, volunteer, family member, other (specify)):

Contact information of the accused:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE ACCUSED!

SUSPICION:

Name of the adult you suspect:

How is this person engaged in ministry at Memorial: (Paid staff, volunteer, family member, other (specify)):

If the person suspected is not engaged in the ministry of Memorial, what is this person's relationship to the child:

Contact information of the accused:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THIS ADULT!

Describe in detail the behavior you observed or the boundary violation of our Code of Conduct that causes your suspicion:

Continue on next page

Report Information

Name of the person receiving the report:

Position held in the church:

Date of this Report: _____

Time this Incident Report was received by church leadership:

Signature of the reporter: _____

Signature of the one receiving the report: _____

Child Protective Services Contact information

How was DSS contacted (phone call, email, or digital form)?

If the report was made via a phone call, list the names of all those from Memorial on the call:

Date and time report was made to DSS:

Signature of the person(s) who completed this portion of the incident report:

Document #4 Procedures Document

The Procedures Document is divided into 2 parts. Part One covers the procedures that apply to all programs in our children's ministry. Part Two contains procedures specific to each age group or program we provide. Everyone must read and understand all of Part One. In Part Two identify the section that applies to the age group you will be working with to learn what is expected.

Part One: Universal Procedures:

The following procedures serve as the overall structure for children's ministry.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Staff: Anyone who is employed by Memorial Presbyterian Church, either part-time or full-time.

Youth & Family Pastor: The person on staff who directs and manages all family, youth, and children's ministry programs, activities, and volunteers. The current Youth & Family Pastor is Sam Dolby.

Children's Program Coordinators(s): The person(s) who manages a specific age group within the children's program. We currently have one children's program coordinators: the children's ministry coordinator.

Family Ministry Team: The Youth & Family Pastor and the Children's Ministry Coordinator constitute the Family Ministry Team.

Volunteer: Any adult (aged 18+) who freely offers to work with children on a regular basis and who has received permission to volunteer after completion of the application process.

Youth Intern: A youth intern is a youth (ages 11-17) who assists in the children's ministry. An intern must have parental permission to work with children and complete the youth intern application process. Interns will never be allowed to supervise children or be alone with a child. Upon turning 18, youth interns undergo a background check and become adult volunteers.

Mother's or Father's Helper: A child between the ages of 6-11 who wishes to serve alongside a parent or guardian in the nursery or 2s&3s classroom. These children serve with the permission of a Family Ministry Team member and do not undergo an application or screening process.

Outsourced childcare worker: An adult hired to supervise and care for children. These adults are either screened by a reputable childcare company such as STL Sitters or have undergone the application and screening process.

Child: A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Mandated Reporter: A mandated reporter is anyone required by MO law to report to the Department of Social Services (hereafter known as DSS) any disclosure of or reasonable suspicion of abuse. All church

staff and volunteers at Memorial are mandated reporters. Definitions of child maltreatment that are to be reported are found in the Mandated Reporting section of this document.

Incident: An "incident" refers to any action or suspicion of violating our Code of Conduct, inappropriate behavior, or a disclosure of or suspicion of abuse.

Incident Report: The incident report is the document that, once completed, will automatically activate the reporting protocol and a call to DSS.

Violation Report: Any time an adult crosses a boundary or violates our Code of Conduct that action will be noted in a report, called a Violation Report. The Violation Report is different from the Incident Report in that it keeps a record of violations that do not rise to the level of making a report to DSS.

Medical Event: A medical event refers to any physical injury or any other situation that involves the physical health of a child. Medical events should be communicated to the parents or caregiver.

SCREENING

Memorial will screen every person who works with children using the following tools.

Written Application:

Anyone seeking permission to work with children must complete a written application. Usually, the applicant should have been a church member and regularly participated in Memorial worship and programs for 6 months. One reason for a waiting period before working with children is to give the church an opportunity to get to know a new person to determine if children's ministry is the best fit for her/him and to make sure their interactions with children and other adults will make a positive contribution of our children's ministry. There will be occasions when someone is new to the church but very well know from a previous association and their suitability for children's ministry has clearly been demonstrated. An exception to the 6-month rule can be granted by the Youth & Family Pastor. All other aspects of the application process must be followed in this situation.

References:

The applicant must provide between 2-3 professional and personal references. All these references will be contacted as part of the approval process.

Background Checks:

Background checks are necessary for creating a safe environment for children and the adults who work with them. The purpose of a background check is to exclude anyone who poses a risk to the safety of our children.

All adult volunteers who work regularly will undergo a background check.

Background checks will be repeated at a frequency determined by the Youth & Family Pastor drawing on examples set by local school districts and licensed childcare facilities.

The following statements are included in our Policy Document and will serve as the basis for granting or denying permission to work with children in reference to information obtained in a background check.

1. Anyone who is known or determined to have committed abuse of a child under the age of 18 or of a person with an emotional or mental disability at any time during his/her adult life is not eligible for service either as employee or a volunteer in children's ministry and, if already serving, will have his/her service with Memorial Presbyterian terminated immediately, with no later opportunity to serve as an employee or volunteer to work with children or youth. Memorial Presbyterian will not knowingly allow anyone who has been convicted of child abuse to participate in any children's ministry, either as a staff or volunteer.

2. Anyone who committed child abuse or neglect before the age of 18 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, considering such factors as age, seriousness of the offense, acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment.

3. Any employee or volunteer whose dependent children have been determined to have committed child abuse will be asked to follow through with an action plan put in place to resolve the causes and effects of the abuse, considering such factors as age, age difference between offender and victim(s), developmental differences, seriousness of the offense(s), acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment. Failure to follow the action plan will lead to termination of their service with Memorial Presbyterian. Reapplication would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and involve effective treatment and other factors listed above.

Before anyone can be approved for service, all "red flag" issues need to be addressed. Such "red flag" issues might be vague or evasive responses to questions on the application, inaccurate, incomplete, or false information, or gaps in time that are not accounted for or verifiable.

OUTSOURCED CHILDCARE WORKERS

If, for a specific event or ministry, ministry heads and full-time staff deem it necessary to hire or use individuals who are not attenders of Memorial to work with children, they may do so. These non-attending workers may be contracted through an agency or hired directly by the ministry head with approval of the Family Pastor.

a. If hired directly by ministry head (Children's Ministry Coordinator or Youth & Family Pastor):

An individual hired directly by the ministry head must complete the Memorial Childcare Application and Background Check process and will be required to read the applicable sections of the policy.

b. If employed through an agency by ministry head:

An individual contracted through a separate agency will not be required to read Memorial's Child Protection Policy.

TRAINING

Memorial believes thorough training is necessary to create a safe environment for children and the adults who work with them. We understand that busy adults often resist investing their valuable time to attend training sessions. When an adult agrees to work in our children's ministry program, they commit to participate in all training activities.

Initial training for new staff and volunteers:

Before a volunteer begins serving in children's ministry, they will undergo an initial training. The initial training includes a tour of the relevant ministry space(s) including an overview of emergency procedures such as sheltering and/or evacuating children in case of fire, tornado, or other threats. Also included in this initial training will be a thorough review of all our child protection documents, especially the Code of Conduct and Reporting Protocol. Acknowledgment of the completion of all required trainings will be kept on file.

Refresher training:

When a volunteer's background check is repeated, they will also review the Code of Conduct, the Reporting Protocol and Incident Report form, and any other necessary reminders and updates to our documents.

SUPERVISION AND OVERSIGHT

Supervision and oversight of all interaction between children and adults and between children is necessary in creating a safe environment for children and the adults who work with them.

At all times, the interaction between adults and children and between children must be observable to other adults. Those with supervisory roles will ensure that all activities are planned and carried out in an open area, visible to others, not in an isolated or secluded location. Ministry leaders will monitor the interaction of volunteers to make sure all procedures and boundaries outlined in the Code of Conduct are maintained.

The following comes from our Code of Conduct and will be the guiding principles in this area.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All adult staff and volunteers are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain our high level of professionalism. As an adult working with children, you agree to interact with the children by observing these principles. It is our

expectation that you understand your responsibility to observe the interaction between adults and children and when you see interaction that is questionable, inappropriate or crossing a child's boundaries, you will intervene on behalf of the child. Such intervention may include:

Remaining present with the child in order to provide him/her a sense of safety;

Redirecting the child to join other children in a different area;

Speaking to the adult and stating the boundary violation you have observed and reminding them of the responsibility to abide by this code of conduct.

In all cases violations of this Code of Conduct will be reported to the direct head of the ministry who also reports the violation to the Youth and Family Pastor. If a ministry head, the Youth and Family Pastor, or a relative of the ministry head or pastor is involved, another member of the pastoral staff will receive the report. Such a report will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You also give permission to the other adults in our programs to take these intervening actions if you are seen crossing safe boundaries or violating this code of conduct.

VISIBILITY/TWO-PERSON RULE

At least two approved and screened adult staff and/or volunteers will be present at all gatherings of children and youth. At no time will an adult be alone in a room with a child with the door closed or in any secluded location. All adult volunteers and staff working with children must be visible to another adult when working with children. It is permissible for these two staff and/or volunteers to be a married couple if both have been screened in accordance with our policy. The Family Pastor will make routine unannounced visits to any or all Children's Ministry events and classes to verify the Two-Person Rule is enforced.

Exceptions to the Two-Person Rule include church-sanctioned one-one meetings with children aged 11-18 including pastoral counseling and engagement. On these occasions the following procedures will be followed, as applicable:

Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with youth by informing the Family Pastor and/or parents when, where and for how long your one-on-one interaction will be before it takes place.

The activity must be in a public place that is visible to others, never in a private or secluded location, such as a room with the door closed or in a home alone with the child.

Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with youth will be done in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed; and

Parents and/or the Family Pastor are to be notified beforehand of any activities with youth.

In an unexpected situation when you find yourself alone with a child, find someone to join you if at all possible, or notify any available adult. Redirecting to a different location as quickly as possible is also an option.

RESPONDING TO SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR OR VIOLATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The primary purpose of supervision and oversight of interactions between adults and children is to interrupt any pattern of behavior that puts a child at risk. "Grooming" takes place when an adult attempts to manipulate the organization, parents, and a child to gain access to children for the purpose of abuse. Grooming begins with building trust. Once trust is established, the adult begins to cross boundaries. At first, the boundary violations may appear to be insignificant or isolated. But left unchecked, the boundary violations increase until the adult has access to a child.

The best way to deter and prevent grooming behavior is to address all boundary violations directly with the adult who is seen crossing a boundary or violating our Code of Conduct.

The following steps will be taken when you observe a boundary violation or a violation of our Code of Conduct.

- You are to report your observation directly to the Youth & Family Pastor. If the Youth & Family Pastor is not available, report to the Children's Ministry Coordinator. Memorial staff will complete and file a Violation Report.
- One boundary violation will not automatically disqualify a person from continuing to serve in the Children's Ministry. But multiple violations, especially after being warned, will result in revocation of permission to serve, and if warranted. If the initial violation is severe enough, permission to serve will be revoked.

All documentation of boundary violations must be kept in a secure and locked file.

MANDATED REPORTING

The Mandated Reporting Protocol Document explains the Missouri law regarding who is a mandated reporter and how a report is to be made. This document will be reviewed in our annual training. We expect that every adult who works in the children's ministry understands this protocol and agrees to abide by it.

Missouri has designated anyone who works or volunteers in an organization that serves children as a mandated reporter. Disclosures of and "reasonable suspicion" of abuse must be reported immediately and directly to the Department of Social Services (referred to as DSS.)

Definitions of Abuse

Abuse includes "any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child's care, custody, and control, except that discipline including spanking, administered in a reasonable manner [...]. Victims of abuse shall also include any victims of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking as those terms are defined in 22 U.S.C. 78 Section 7102(9)-(10).⁶

Physical Abuse:

Any non-accidental physical injury suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions by a person responsible for the care of a child. **O.C.G.A. 15-11-2**

In Missouri, physical forms of discipline may be used by a caregiver if administered in a reasonable manner. Memorial Presbyterian will never under any circumstance include any form of physical discipline on a child.

Neglect:

The failure to provide parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law or other care or control necessary for a child's physical, mental, or emotional health or morals; the failure to provide a child with adequate supervision necessary for such child's well-being; or the abandonment of a child by his/her parent, guardian, or legal custodian. **O.C.G.A**

49-5-180

Emotional Abuse:

Behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Repeated patterns of damaging interactions between caregivers and child. Examples of emotional/psychological abuse are name calling, belittling, shaming, rejection, withholding love, threatening, etc.

Sexual Abuse:

The exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Child sexual abuse includes fondling, sodomy, rape, commercial sexual exploitation of a child (sex trafficking), indecent exposure and exhibitionism, exposure to pornography or utilizing the internet as a vehicle for exploitation.

Child Endangerment:

The following is considered child endangerment and must be reported:

⁶ Title XII Public Health and Welfare, Chapter 210.110.
<https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=210.110&bid=47877&hl=>

- Intentionally allowing a child to witness or has knowledge that a child is present during a forcible felony, battery, or family violence battery
- Driving under the influence with a child in the vehicle
- Prenatal abuse (such as exposure to chronic or severe use of alcohol or the unlawful use of any controlled substance). Prenatal abuse can only be reported at the time of birth by a medical professional. However, if a non-medical person sees any of these behaviors in an expectant mother, they should call Child Protective Services for help on how to move forward.

Communications

Communication to the congregation after an incident:

The following standard for communicating with the congregation is found in the Policy Document:

Memorial will deal with all concerns and issues of child safety in our children's program with full transparency. When a report is made to the Department of Social Services involving a member of staff or a volunteer at Memorial, our Church leadership will communicate to the congregation the fact that an incident has occurred, that the appropriate authorities as required by law have been contacted, and that steps to protect children have been taken. All communications must be as transparent as possible without violating the rights of privacy of those involved and without interfering with law enforcement's investigation of that incident.

Communication to the general public or media after an incident:

If an incident results in media attention, only a Pastor or his designee will be the "official spokesperson." Only the official spokesperson will respond to media inquiries or make any public statement. Everyone else should refrain from making a public statement and should refer any questions to this spokesperson. Misinformation or misspoken words can bring further harm to a victim and family. There are issues of privacy and confidentiality of a minor that must be protected. Having one official spokesperson will help us avoid improper or unlawful comments to the general public.

Investigation procedures:

Memorial will fully co-operate with any investigation by law enforcement. We may also need to initiate our own investigation to understand how the incident took place, if any others may have been harmed, or to collect information that will help us provide thorough care for those impacted and what we need to do in the future to prevent a repeat of this type of incident. Any internal investigation by Memorial must be done in full cooperation with law enforcement and must not interfere in any way. Memorial will rely on the investigation by law enforcement to help discover the facts surrounding the incident.

If an incident has occurred, and an internal investigation is inadequate to discover all the facts without bias, the church will hire an independent investigator. The church will fully co-operate with the work of an independent investigator and will make known to the congregation the full report once it is submitted.

All staff, volunteers, and members will fully co-operate with any investigation that is done, whether by DSS, law enforcement, our own internal investigation, or an independent investigator.

Follow-up Care

Memorial will provide follow-up care after an incident, giving primary attention to the needs of victims and their families.

Part Two: Specific Procedures:

The following procedures are specific procedures applying to the nursery, toddler, and children's areas at Memorial.

SECURE CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

- Check-in takes place at the Children's Ministry Check-in Desk. **Only parents, guardians, or adult caregivers are authorized to register children into Children's Ministry.**
- For new families, all information should be gathered at this time, including parent contact information, allergies, and any special instructions from the parent (such as feeding a snack).
- Once checked in, nursery and 2s&3s parents may drop children off in their classroom. At this time, they should make the nursery workers and classroom teachers aware of any special instructions. Children's church children may walk as a group to their classroom accompanied by teachers when dismissed during the service. If a child is to arrive late, a parent should accompany them to the children's church classroom.
- No one other than approved volunteers and staff members may enter the nursery. Parents should hand their child and necessary supplies over the door to the nursery worker. If the parent would like to change their child's diaper, he/she should use the changing table in the family restroom or any women's restroom.
- If desired, parents, caregivers, and church members may visit a classroom to observe. Reasons a visitor may wish to observe include helping their child adjust to a new classroom after promotion, assisting volunteers in addressing their child's behavior, learning more about our programming, or discerning their interest in volunteering with children's ministry. Parents, caregivers, and church members must notify the ministry head before visiting. Visit requests may be denied. Parent visitors, who may be unscreened, may be asked to remain in designated areas of the classrooms while children are present.
- Check-in desk workers should remain at the desk until all children have been picked up by a parent or approved caregiver.
- **Only parents and caregivers are authorized to check children out of the nursery.** A child must not be removed from the nursery classroom and check-in suite for any reason other than

when he or she is picked up by an adult caregiver. If a child needs to leave the room for any non-emergency reason, the parent must be brought to the child.

- Exception 1: If the child is in need of urgent medical care.
- Exception 2: If emergency protocols go into effect.

PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents/Caregivers are responsible for providing their child(ren) with diapers and bottles.
- Parents/Caregivers also assume the sole responsibility in pick-up and drop-off of the child.

PROMOTION

- When a nursery child approaches his / her second birthday, the Children's Ministry Coordinator will talk to the parents about transitioning to the next classroom to ensure that the child and all classrooms are prepared for the change. If the parent requests an early transition, the child will need to meet all of the following prerequisites:
 - Be at least 21 months (so that they're almost there).
 - Be able to follow simple instructions from a teacher.
- When a 2s&3s child approaches his / her 4th birthday, the Coordinator will talk to the parents about transitioning to the next classroom to ensure that the child and all classrooms are prepared for the change.
- Children's church children graduate out of children's church at the beginning of 3rd grade.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities listed here are a partial list of expectations for adult volunteers and interns.

- It is our desire to create an environment in which both children and parents feel welcome and safe. Please strive toward this end in the following ways:
 - Talking to the parents at drop off and pick up;
 - Engaging the children by playing with them or directing their attention to the lesson by participating with them when you are not teaching;
 - Refraining from using your phone or any other form of technology while you are on duty, unless it is to notify a staff member of any issues that may have come up;
 - Waiting till after class has concluded to socialize with friends.
- To provide our children with the optimal learning experience, please prepare your lesson beforehand. When applicable, your ministry head will be responsible to provide you with the lesson in advance.
- Scheduling
 - You are responsible to communicate with your ministry head how often you are able to serve and to show up when scheduled. When applicable, your ministry head will send you a reminder the week of your commitment to serve.
 - When a scheduling conflict arises, please take the initiative to swap with another volunteer (adult volunteer for adults; youth intern for minors), preferably someone who serves in the same classroom and is also familiar with the children and classroom

procedures. When swapping or finding a substitute, it is your responsibility to make the ministry head aware of changes.

- Please plan to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to when parents may arrive to allow time for you to get situated.
- If you are delayed, please contact your ministry head (preferably by text) with your estimated time of arrival.

BATHROOM PROTOCOLS

- **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should there ever be an adult volunteer or intern alone in the bathroom with a child. In the 2s&3s classroom, a female volunteer may assist a child in the curtained bathroom. The bathroom curtain must be left half open if a volunteer is inside with a child. If the bathroom is unoccupied, the curtain must be left open.
- Please ensure all children and adults wash their hands before exiting.

DIAPERING PROTOCOLS

- Only adult women are allowed to change diapers under all circumstances. Interns should never be assigned to diapering.
- The child should be laid on a disposable changing sheet at the designated diapering area. Hand sanitizer should be used before and after diapering.
- Note on potty training in the nursery: A training potty is available for potty training nursery children. The potty should be sanitized after every use. As with diapering, only women should assist a potty training child on the toilet.

HYGIENE AND HEALTH

- If a child has recently been ill, they should not be permitted to attend children's ministry unless they've been fever, vomit, and diarrhea free *for at least 24 hours*. Should a volunteer notice that a child is experiencing vomiting or diarrhea or suspect that the child has a fever, the parent should be contacted immediately and the child dismissed from the classroom to the parents or guardians care.
- If a child has yellow/green discharge from the nose or eyes, chest congestion or cough, or a rash, they should not attend children's ministry. If a child exhibits these symptoms, radio the check-in desk volunteer to contact the child's parent or guardian.
- Volunteers should apply the same standard of wellness described above to themselves when serving. If necessary, inform your ministry head and arrange for a substitute volunteer to fill your place.
- There are a First-Aid Kits located in each classroom and at the check-in desk. The nursery kit is located in the nursery laundry and storage room. The 2s&3s kit is located in the classroom snack cabinet. The children's church kit is located on the counter.
- If First-Aid kit supplies are used, the volunteer should contact the Children Ministry Coordinator who will restock the kit.

- If first aid is needed, the adult tending to the child needs to be gloved and hands should be sanitized before and after administering aid. The parent or guardian should be made aware of the situation as soon as possible, even with minor injuries or ailments.
- In an emergency, one adult should tend to the injured or sick child, while another call for the parent or guardian. The Youth & Family Pastor or another available Memorial staff member will be made aware of the emergency as soon as possible. If teachers are present in a nearby classroom, one of those teachers should provide assistance with the remaining children. The secondary adult should also be prepared to call 911, if necessary.

IDEAL ADULT-CHILD RATIOS

- The church will uphold the following state guidelines for classroom ratios in unison with the Two-Person Rule stated below.⁷ Interns do not qualify as adults for the purposes of the Two-Person rule

Classroom	Age Group	Ratio
Zoo*	6 – 24 months	1:4
Forest Park	2 – 3 years	1:6**
Children’s Church	Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	1:10
Juniors Dept	3 rd – 5 th Grade	1:16
Youth Group	6 th – 12 th Grade	1:16

*The Zoo ratio of 1:4 is based upon babies who are capable of sitting. If we have babies who are not able to do so, the ratio would adjust to 1:2.

** The legal ratio for the Forest Park classroom is 1:8, but to maintain the best care for that age group, we will strive to maintain a 1:6 ratio when possible.

- Two-Person Rule
 - Two approved and screened adult workers / teachers / leaders will be with any gathering of children and youth at all times. It is permissible for these two workers / teachers / leaders to be a married couple, as long as both have been screened in accordance with this policy. The Family Pastor will make routine unannounced visits to any or all Children’s Ministry events and classes to verify the Two-Person Rule is enforced.
 - Exceptions to the Two-Person Rule:
 - Counseling sessions

⁷ <https://www.daycare.com/missouri/>; Brotherhood Mutual Child Protection in Ministry, page 22.

- One-on-one meet ups with children who are Youth Group aged (11-18).

BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

- Behavioral concerns are defined as behavior that interrupts the environment, or puts at risk the child, or their neighbor.
- At Memorial, all behavioral concerns should be looked at not as an excuse to punish, but as ***an opportunity for discipleship.***
 - What it is NOT: There is NO slapping, hitting, shaming, yelling at, or belittling a child under any circumstances.
 - What it IS: An opportunity to show a child the love of Jesus, through gentle conversation and discipleship.
- Should a behavior concern arise, we ask that volunteers take the following three steps with the child:
- **Correction and Redirection-** Clearly and confidently state what the child should NOT be doing. Then redirect the child to what they SHOULD be doing. Any distractions or disruptions keeping them from the goal should be removed at this time.
- **Connection Time-** If step 1 has proved ineffective, the child should be removed from the area of play. The volunteer should gently and quietly speak to the child in another area of the room, seeking to understand what is going on in the child's heart and mind. The goal is always to make them feel safe, cared for, and loved.
- **Parental/Caregiver Contact-** If steps 1 and 2 have proven ineffective, the parent or caregiver should be contacted and asked to come to the classroom. The parent/caregiver and the volunteer should together speak to the child about what is going on in their heart and mind. This is a time for the parent and volunteer to come alongside each other in the teaching and training of the child.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** If the behavior of the child is posing an immediate risk to the safety of themselves or others, one volunteer should remove the child from the area immediately and radio for the parent or caregiver and on-call staff member, asking them to please come to the area immediately. The check-in desk person will contact the parent or caregiver.
- If habitual difficulties occur, the Family Pastor and Children's Ministry Director will talk with parents to gain further information and strategies that might be beneficial for the child.

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION

- In the nursery area, volunteers should make contact with each parent or guardian upon pickup, letting them know how the child fared.
- For children ages 2 and up, the Children's Ministry Coordinator will periodically post information about the current curriculum on a bulletin board in the church building. Parents may also request information directly from the Coordinator.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Pictures and videos of children will only be posted to Memorial's social media platforms with the consent of the parent or caregiver.

SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

- The primary purpose of supervision and oversight of interactions between adults and children is to interrupt any pattern of behavior that puts a child at risk. "Grooming" takes place when an adult attempts to manipulate the organization, parents, and a child to gain access to children for the purpose of abuse. Grooming begins with building trust. Once trust is established, the adult begins to cross boundaries. At first, the boundary violations may appear to be insignificant or isolated. But left unchecked, the boundary violations increase until the adult has access to a child.
- The best way to deter and prevent grooming behavior is to address all boundary violations directly with the adult who is seen crossing a boundary or violating our Code of Conduct.
- The following steps will be taken when you observe a boundary violation or a violation of your Code of Conduct.
 - You are to report your observation directly to the Youth & Family Pastor. If the Youth & Family Pastor is not available, report to a ministry coordinator.
 - Every violation should be documented and held in a secure file. Code of Conduct violations that do not reach the threshold of abuse will be documented by Memorial staff in a Violation Report, a document distinct from the Incident Report.
 - The appropriate staff person, usually the Youth & Family Pastor, will speak to the adult whose behavior is being reported. The boundary violation should be explained with the expectation that the behavior will cease. A summary of that conversation and the reaction/response of the adult will be attached to the documented violation.
 - One boundary violation will not automatically disqualify a person from continuing to serve in the Children's Ministry. But multiple violations, especially after being confronted, will result in revocation of permission to serve. In any case of observed abuse, disclosed abuse, or suspected abuse, a report to Child Protective Services must be made. If the initial violation is severe enough, permission to serve can be revoked, and Child Protective Services must be contacted.
- All documentation of boundary violations must be kept in a secure and locked file.

OBSERVATION AND MONITORING

- Windows to any classrooms being utilized by Memorial volunteers and children should not be obstructed in any way.
- The Youth & Family Pastor or designated staff member should check in at unannounced times during the worship service or special events as a way to observe and monitor the children and volunteers.

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

- The Memorial Family Ministry team will periodically review the facilities for any safety concerns. They will ensure that we remain in compliance with the best practice standards for safety.
- The children's ministry rooms, stairwell, hallways, play garden, sanctuary, student center, and check-in area should be all that are utilized for childcare under Memorial volunteer supervision. Should you see an adult volunteer leading children elsewhere, please contact the Youth & Family

Pastor or any staff member immediately. It is recommended the observer remain present with the volunteer and child(ren).