

# "Safe Kids" Policy at Crossroads Bible Church

## 1. Statement of Vision and Purpose

As a Ministry of Crossroads Bible Church, the Children's Ministries Department strives *to build relationships with children and parents to help them TRUST God, LOVE people, and make WISE choices.*

This Policy is intended to ensure that all Church activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and well being of children by providing clear instructions about the operation of Children's Ministries at Crossroads Bible Church.

**Child Safety Takes Priority** - The greatest priority of CBC's Children's Ministries is to assist kids in receiving the message of the Gospel and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse or endangerment directly contradicts this priority and the values of CBC. Therefore, workers and supervisors who nurture and teach our children must keep this priority in mind: adults do **not** have a **right** to serve as workers. Adults merely have an **opportunity** to serve when selected by the church.

**A Higher Standard** - As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every worker must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

## 2. Touching

We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church should deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. CBC has implemented a touching policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children.

- Loving contacts between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our church setting. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child, and may include hugs, affectionate kisses on the cheek or forehead and other forms of **appropriate** physical affection.
- Touching should be initiated by the child. It should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should **not** be based upon the adult's emotional need.
- Ideally, touching and affection should **only** be given when in the presence of other Children's Ministries workers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers are present and the touching is open to observation.
- A child's preference **not to be touched** should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
- Church workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by **others**.
- Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their ministry leader, staff member, or Pastor.

## 3. Safe Restroom Trips

Restroom safety procedures must be followed to protect the child's safety and sense of well being, as well as to protect the teacher/helper from any false accusations. There must not be even a hint of impropriety.

- Children of Elementary-age or older may visit the restroom without a teacher/helper, but must go in groups of two or more. When possible, it is best to have a teacher/helper accompany them.
- Lead teachers will assign a responsible helper to supervise and assist children's trips to the restroom. A helper should **never** take a single child to the restroom; a group of two or more is preferable. The Director or Supervisor will also be available as a second adult present during restroom trips.
- When taking a Preschool child to the restroom, a teacher or helper should stand **outside** of the restroom stall and hold the door closed for the child. If the child is potty training and needs assistance, **talk** the child through the process. **Do not** assist the child with wiping or redressing, unless the child is completely incapable of doing these things for his/herself.
- When taking a Preschool child to the restroom, the main door to the restroom must remain open at all times, so that teachers/helpers are clearly visible to anyone passing by.
- Adults who are not accompanying children to the restroom do **not** belong in or around this restroom. If you see someone who does not belong, please approach them and tell them they cannot be there. Stay until you see them leave the area, and notify the Director or Supervisor immediately.

**Goals For Worker to Child Ratios** - CBC has a goal of maintaining the following ratios of ministry workers to children whenever feasible. These ratios are goals. The church recognizes that in some circumstances achieving these ratios may not be feasible, such as an unexpected number of children showing up for an event.

| <u>Program</u> | <u>Workers</u> | <u>Children</u> |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Nursery        | 1              | 3               |
| Preschool      | 1              | 5               |
| Elementary     | 1              | 8-12            |

### 3. Off-Campus Activities

- At **no time** may an **individual** adult take a **single** child on an outing.
- Off-Campus Activities will only occur when more than two (2) leaders are present, four (4) or more children are present and some or all of the parents recruited, as well.
- Parental permission in writing and medical release forms are needed before departure.
- These Off-Campus Activities should be in agreement with the Ministry Team (Awana, Kids Club, Sunday School and the Director of Children's Ministries).

### 4. Selection of Children's Workers

**Minimum Age** - All teachers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but they may not take the place of adult workers.

**Six-Month Rule** - If applicants have been attending CBC less than six months, they will not be allowed to serve in a Lead Teaching position. Instead they will be placed in a Helper position to better evaluate the suitability of gifts and talents for children's work.

**Application Forms** - Applicants must complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information. All applicants must agree by signature on their application that they understand the CBC policies and guidelines and that they agree to abide by them. The Church will keep confidential all information received in the selection process. Selection information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to church staff.

**References** - Church leaders will check at least three references for each worker. The references will be checked by phone, mail, or in person.

**First Aid Training** - *Church employees* who supervise young people must maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR. Other workers are encouraged, but not required to maintain a current certificate. Nursery workers and others serving young children may want training in infant and toddler CPR.

### 5. Survivors of Child Abuse

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs the love and acceptance of the CBC family. A person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as Children's Ministries workers. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should discuss this with the Children's Director in a **confidential** interview.

### 6. Child Abuse Convictions

Anyone who has maltreated children or has been convicted of child abuse may **not** serve in or around CBC Children's Ministries.

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**Violation of any aspect of this policy is grounds for immediate dismissal and disciplinary action. Supervisors and all children's workers who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activities must discuss their suspicions promptly with the Children's Director.**