



Grace Kids Policy Handbook

Vision

The greatest need of the next generations is to know and cherish the infinite value of God. Therefore, we want them to become so saturated with the Word of God that they treasure Jesus alone as the One who saves and satisfies the heart. The goal of this ministry is to fuel spiritual desire by exalting the greatness and worth of God and His glorious work through Christ.

Purpose

The safety policies and procedures we have put in place are designed much like a skeletal structure. They function to support our Church body to fulfill the vision of this ministry. The purpose for the policies and procedures in our handbook are as follows:

1. To protect children from abuse
2. To protect workers from false accusation.
3. To protect Grace Fellowship from litigation, loss of testimony, loss of ministry/careers
4. To prevent the reputation of Jesus' Gospel from being distorted to those we are trying to reach.

In order to ensure that we fulfill our vision for this ministry and purpose for this handbook we have carefully laid out the following policies and procedures that everyone working in Grace Kids must adhere to:

Volunteer Application/Screening¹

1. Partnership with Grace Fellowship
2. Application Form that includes 2 references from within Grace Fellowship
3. Criminal Record Check (every 3 years)
4. Read the Grace Kids Handbook
5. Interview with the Grace Kids Director
6. Orientation of Handbook with the Grace Kids Director

¹ When reviewing a volunteer's application, if any questions on page 3 under the heading, "Have any of the following circumstances ever applied to you?" section are answered "yes" or if the applicant's criminal record check does not come back empty, the application is initially denied. If they wish to proceed, there needs to be an interview with one or more elders of Grace Fellowship. After the interview, a report with a decision as well as reasons for the result will be written and signed by at least 3 elders. The remainder of the eldership team will be made aware of the report and its results. If a decision is made to approve the individual for continuing in the application process, the report will be additionally given to the local Grace Kids director.

Character Expectations

Outward actions and attitudes are evidence of inward conditions. As believers in Jesus, we are reflections of God's glory, living out a Gospel identity, and as such, Grace Kids' workers are expected to hold to the following:

Believe the Gospel²

Pray and refresh your own heart in the Gospel so that you serve in joy and love – from a heart satisfied in Jesus.

Walk in Integrity

1. Faithfulness in time.

Fulfilling ministry commitment by showing up when scheduled, arriving on time. If you are not able to make a scheduled commitment, it is expected that you will initiate and make a switch with another server in order to ensure coverage for your spot.

2. Faithfulness in preparation.

Administering the Word of God is a weighty thing. Whether you are teaching 2 year olds, leading small group discussion for 6 year olds, the word of God is living and active, and there is great responsibility that goes with handling it. You are expected to be prepared to execute your ministry commitment with excellence and sincerity.

3. Faithfulness in stewardship.

Treat all church property, equipment, resources and supplies with respect. At the end of each Sunday please ensure that you put everything back into the proper containers in an organized, neat and orderly fashion. If materials are needed, please tell your coordinator so they can be picked before the next class.

4. Faithfulness in small things.

Keep your word, fulfill requests on time, follow through with commitments to students or ministry leaders, and respond to email or online communication.

Be Teachable

Grace Fellowship is a safe place to not be okay, to be honest about brokenness and struggle, but it is not a safe place to be complacent about sin or abuse grace. Workers are expected to be open to accountability and correction. Workers are expected to pursue godliness, wise living and to fight sin according to the scriptures.

Be an appropriate Role Model

Be mindful that our children will emulate you – from the jokes you tell, to the way you speak about others. When interacting with children or youth, whether during planned or unplanned activities, use discretion in your conversations and actions. Refrain from gossip and slander.

² The one exception to our helpers being believers, is when a person who is seeking and learning of Jesus, and who is an active part of community and known. If they desire to serve, they may do so as a helper, but not a teacher. They must be appointed to a Christian leader who they will serve alongside, so they can be discipled as they serve.

Develop a Servant's Heart

We are not concerned with rank or position but rather humble service (Philippians 2:3-8). As we faithfully serve one another within the ministry, the Lord expands our outreach and provides opportunities to serve those outside of the ministry. In homes, at church gatherings, and in the community, others should remember us by our willingness to serve them.

General Security

Dress Code

All workers are to wear their "Grace Kids" T-shirts. In the event that the shirt is forgotten at home, the worker will wear the Grace Kids name tag around their neck.

Sign In/Out

- If for any reason a worker needs to exit they need to sign themselves out and sign back in.
- Children need to be signed in and out of Grace Kids.
- Ask every parent signing in their child/children to print their complete information on the sign in sheet. Cell phone numbers must be given so that the parent can be contacted in the event of emergency.
- Parents are responsible to pick up their children immediately after the service. A Grace Kids leader will ensure that children are "passed off" to their parents.
- At sign out ensure that only the parent(s) or the alternate guardian written on the sign in sheet, pick up their child. No siblings or anyone else is allowed to pick up the child.

Relationship and Interaction With Children

Discretion in workers' personal lives is fundamental to both spiritual integrity and ministry among children and youth and their families (Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-16). In regard to relationships with minors, Grace volunteers are expected to:

1. Behave toward a minor in the same way you would if their parent or guardian were present. Live wisely, without any hint of misconduct.
2. Never engage in any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction with any minor. Any such interaction is inappropriate and prohibited.
3. Never be alone with any minor. If you find yourself in a situation where you are alone with a minor, especially one of the opposite gender, quickly move to a public setting. Spouses may not serve together alone. There needs to be at least one additional adult present.
4. Promptly report any knowledge or suspicion of any worker having an inappropriate relationship with a minor to your Grace Kids director especially if the person in question is one of the church leaders, the report should be one of the other leaders to whom that person is accountable (Grace Kids Director).

Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact with children should be minimal and only in the presence of other adults. Appropriate touching should be limited to handshakes, “high fives”, brief hugs or a brief touch on the shoulder. Encourage children to sit beside you, rather than on your lap. (The exception to this is in the nursery where infants and toddlers need extra care and consoling.)

Under no circumstances will workers will be involved in any of the following activities: kissing on the lips, extended hugging, inappropriate touching or being alone with a child behind closed, windowless doors.

Discipline

When correcting a child:

1. It should be handled in a loving, firm manner
2. Be aware of facial expression – do not scowl when you speak
3. Do not yell; speak with a controlled or soft voice
4. Avoid demeaning a child
5. Never grab, push, shake, slap, or hit a child
6. Affirm and pray with the child after you have disciplined him or her

If the child persists in uncooperative behavior, the parent should be called out of the service. Talk with the parent and ask the parent to keep the child with them for the duration of the service.

If correction was made and the parent didn't need to be called, it may be wise to have the leader inform the parent of the action that needed to be corrected when they arrive for sign out.

Washroom Guidelines

These guidelines are mandatory to ensure the safety of both children and workers.

1. Encourage parents to accompany their child to the washroom before signing in or let them know that they will be asked to return if their child needs assistance in using the facilities during class time.
2. In the event that a child needs to use the washroom. The leader is to be notified and a worker will be designated to contact the parent of the child. The same procedure as sign out must be applied so that any child who leaves the kids area is documented and accounted for.
3. If for some reason the parent cannot be reached, please follow the procedure based on location guidelines.

Medical Emergency

In most cases, a minor injury can be treated with a little loving attention, a cool cloth, a little first aid cream and/or a Band-Aid. First Aid kits are to be located in the Grace Kids rooms. Please notify the child's parent of any minor injuries so that they can be aware if any further treatment is necessary. Also, notify your ministry coordinator so they can be aware of any possible safety changes that need to be made for the following week.

In the event of a serious accident or injury where there are marks, bruising, or blood, an Incident report must be filled out, given to your ministry coordinator, and filed. The incident form needs to be completed before the parent comes for their child. Ensure that you speak to the parent and let them know what happened. The leader needs to show them the incident form. It is mandatory that the parent understands the events which took place and signs the incident form before they leave that day with their child. If the injury is serious and requires immediate medical attention, please contact the child's parent immediately.

Fire Emergency

All workers need to be aware of the nearest exit and the evacuation procedures for your facility.

1. One adult needs to be the last to leave the room, following a complete check of the room to ensure all children have exited. The doors to the room must be closed once all have exited.
2. One leader is to take all children to the designated gathering point and do a head count to ensure all children are accounted for. This individual needs to stay with the group.
3. Do not allow parents to leave with any children unless documented/signed out and steps are taken to ensure the right child is returned to the right parent.
4. Do not go back into the building until it is safe to do so.

Reporting Child Abuse

If you suspect that a child involved in Grace Kids has been, or is being abused, or a child discloses abuse, it is important that you report directly to the Grace Kids Director.

Suspected sexual abuse has its own inclusive paperwork to be done by the Director. Please speak to your Grace Kids Director for more details.

Incident Reporting

It is very important that any accident/injury, inappropriate behavior of a child, policy violations, or suspicious activity be reported to your ministry coordinator or director and recorded in an incident report. This will ensure that all incidents are investigated that appropriate next steps are taken.

Post-Incident Procedures

1. The Grace Kids Director will conduct and complete investigations for all serious reported incidents.
2. The pastors of your particular congregation need to be made aware that an investigation is ongoing.
3. Witnesses and those involved will be required to make statements for serious incidents that need to be resolved.
4. It is important that only those involved are aware of the incident to prevent gossip and defamation of any person's character.
5. Only the lead pastor of the congregation will communicate with media.
6. Appropriate action will be taken to resolve the incident, reconcile any/all parties involved, and ensure that necessary steps are taken to prevent any further incidents.
7. A summary statement will be completed and disclosed to necessary parties, Grace Fellowship Pastors, as well as Grace Kids Coordinators.
Changes to the Grace Kids Handbook: Policies and Procedures will be made if necessary.
8. All Grace Kids Leaders and Helpers will be made aware of and trained in any policy changes.
9. If changes are unnecessary, all Grace Kids Leaders and Helpers will be refreshed in policies pertaining to serious incidents to ensure that they are not repeated.

General Information

Sundays need to be amazing: every Sunday, every time.

In order for us to provide the highest quality care for every child and their parents we must all work together, be at our best, and remember who we are doing this for Jesus. You may never know what has happened to those whom you are greeting and ministering to (a child dealing with the divorce of his parents, or a mom/dad that is going through a difficult time). Therefore, what you do and how you do it are significant...they are everything.

Remember, while you are there, you are serving the NEEDS of the PARENTS and the CHILDREN. So, consider both of them in everything you say and do.

On your Sunday to serve, follow these simple guidelines to ensure we provide the most amazing care possible.

1. PREPARE. The primary preparation needed for each lesson is spiritual preparation. If you shortcut the spiritual preparation, you may end up teaching from your head rather than your heart. In addition, considerable time should be spent in prayer. Preparation of materials is often minimal but very necessary. For those of you in the Gospel Project, study the scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well.

Pray for the children in your class.

The goal of each study is to awaken and feed spiritual hunger in children by focusing on the greatness and worth of God in and through Jesus and His work in salvation. We do not encourage children to "make a decision", but seek to impart to them a hunger for spiritual truth.

2. MEET. All workers meet for briefing and prayer with the Ministry Coordinator or Director before the service at least 30 minutes before the service.

3. READY. After the morning briefing, everyone should be in his or her place of service at least 30 minutes before the service.

4. WEAR. Wear your T-shirt so that you are identified as a Grace Kids worker.

5. SMILE. This is huge. You would be surprised by what a difference it makes in their life now, and whether or not a family may ever come back!

6. GREET. Every child AND parent receives a warm, friendly, and sincere greeting: "Welcome, we are so glad you are here. We are going to have an amazing day."

7. ASK. Ask the parent the name of their child and help them fill in the sign-in sheet. Make sure to ask if their child has any special needs.

8. SAY. Tell every child and their parent. "You were awesome! We will look for you next Sunday!" Even though you will not be serving in Grace Kids that week, seek out those children before the service on the following Sunday to build relationship.

9. IMPRESSION. You are perhaps the first and last point of contact on Sunday. So, be sure that every child is returned to his or her parent in the most caring and exciting way. Let your love shine!

10. CLEAN. Make sure your area gets cleaned up and packed away for use next week. Be sure you put things back correctly.

Communication

Communication and scheduling will primarily be done through “Grace on the City”. Please create an account and be a part of the “Grace Kids” group. Be sure to check “The City” at least once a week to be aware important information regarding Grace Kids.

Either the Coordinator or the Leader for any particular week will make sure to contact each member of their “team” at least one week in advance of their service date, and provide them with any information they need (i.e. lesson topic, Scripture etc.)

Ratios

We desire to see:

1 worker – 3 Infants (0-24 mos)

1 worker – 4-6 toddler/preschoolers

1 worker – 8-10 schoolers (Gr.1-6)

Scheduling

All children’s ministry teams are set up in a rotating schedule (usually serving once every 4-6 weeks). Please be aware of your turn. If a conflict arises with a service date, please find a replacement or make a switch for that date. Make sure to indicate this on “the city” so that everyone is informed and your coordinator can update the schedule with any changes.

Changes to this policy

Any changes to this policy or the appendices that follow for particular congregations must be pre-approved by the Grace Fellowship leadership team. Suggested changes may be made in writing and presented to one of the pastors for approval by the entire leadership team.