

**WOODCREEK CHURCH
CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM
2015**

Woodcreek Church
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Woodcreek Church Child Safety Program

*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*

Matthew 19:14

One of the largest and most important ministries at Woodcreek Church is our children’s and youth program. Because we recognize that we are a reflection of God’s love to those in our care, we take very seriously our mission to provide an environment where we can bring our children and youth to the Savior and allow them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Not only does this environment need to be nurturing, caring and loving, but it also needs to be safe. Woodcreek Church values children and youth, and desires to provide a safe place for all who attend. We believe that preventative procedures and policies need to be taken to safeguard our children, our youth, and our staff. We are exercising a high level of care in hiring, selecting and supervising volunteer and paid staff personnel for all programs which involve our children and our youth.

We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our children’s and student ministries. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child, student, and adult involved.

Just as a shepherd cares for and protects his flock of sheep from lions, bears and other predators, we want to protect our “lambs of God” from any harm that might come to them while they are in our care. By implementing an effective, prevention program within our church, we create a safe place for all who attend.

*“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit
has made you overseers.*

*Be shepherds of the church of God which He bought
with His own blood.”*

Acts 20:28, 29

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Ministry Safety Guidelines, Policies & Procedures

As we strive for excellence in our children's and student ministry at Woodcreek Church, we desire to provide a safe and nurturing environment where our children and youth feel comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore, one of our highest priorities is the safety of the children and youth in our care. At the same time, we are concerned about the safety and reputation of the adults and students who volunteer or are paid to make these ministries possible. It is the responsibility of the parents to supervise their own children and youth when children's and student activities are not in session. However, we have developed these goals for everyone who volunteer, or is compensated, to direct, lead, teach, help or care for children (0 through 12) under children's ministries and youth (18 and younger) involved in student ministries.

I. Classroom and Small Group Supervision

A. Personnel

1. There will be a minimum of two adults (minimum 18 years old) in any room with children and youth **AT ALL TIMES**, except in the event of an emergency situation. Student helpers (must be entering 6th grade) will also be in attendance to help teachers and assist children. When youth small groups meet, an adult woman will lead girls, and boys will be led by an adult male.
2. When two adults are not present in a classroom, leaving only one adult to receive children or youth, the classroom door will remain open until the second adult arrives or a parent or other adult volunteer is enlisted.
3. Children's and Student Ministry personnel will be approved by the Executive Pastor. Every adult must complete the Child Safety Program Evaluation, must have attended Woodcreek Church for six months, completed Discovery Class, and have signed and returned an Woodcreek Church Membership Covenant. Every student (under 18 years of age) will need to obtain parental permission, complete the Child Safety Program Evaluation and have been in attendance for 6 months.

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4. Whenever church facilities are used for babysitting for church-sponsored events, the following staffing guidelines should be followed:
 - a. An approved adult (an applicant who has completed the screening process) must be present to ensure that the child protection policies and procedures relevant to the situation are followed.
 - b. Two adults per classroom will be needed as well as adherence to the guidelines listed.

- B. Drop-off policy

Supervision will be provided 15 minutes before a program begins. Children and youth should not be dropped off in a classroom without one approved adult present.

- C. Staff identification policy

So that our parents have an opportunity to know who is working with their children and youth, all staff personnel will wear a nametag or other designated outerwear – ex: t-shirt with ministry logo. **You will need your approved nametag to enter Kidcreek.**

- D. Registration policy (0-12 years old)

Parents must check in with a Checkpoint Team member at a kiosk to register their child (ren). They will need to show their claim tag in order to enter Kidcreek and show to Kidcreek Team member in their child's classroom.

- E. Registration policy (13-17 years old)

Students are responsible for getting to and from their meeting place. Adult staff personnel will be responsible for making sure that an adult is present when students meet, and that at the end of each meeting, the adult staff personnel will make sure that there are no students left in the building before leaving.

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II. Restroom Supervision (ages 2 – 12)

The following steps will be taken to make this a safe and private time for the children in our care. We will encourage parents to have their children visit the restroom prior to class.

1. Whenever possible, children should be taken to the restroom as a group rather than taking them one at a time.
2. Restrooms need to be secure before children are allowed to enter. **The approved adult will need to visually check the area before allowing children to enter.**
3. When escorting an individual child to the restroom, the approved adult will stand in the open doorway only. If a young child needs assistance, an approved **female** adult may assist the child. **Youth are not allowed to escort or assist with children going to the restroom.** In most situations it should not be necessary for an approved adult to go into a restroom stall with a child and shut the door.

III. Diaper Changing Policies

Each Early Childhood classroom is equipped for diaper changing. Latex gloves will be provided for the caregiver's use. Diaper changes should be done with another adult present. **Adult males, youth males and youth females should not change diapers.** Disinfectant procedures will need to be followed.

- You must wash your hands and change gloves between each diaper change.
- Use a clean changing pad for each child.
- After diaper changing, wipe down changing pad with Clorox Anywhere.
- Stinkies should be wrapped in a stinky diaper bag and after all diaper changes take to the diaper trash can located in the Resource Room.

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IV. Staff Behavior

- A. Staff personnel should always conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect and honesty to everyone, including our children and students.
- B. No one should do anything, or be involved in anything that someone could easily misinterpret as inappropriate behavior. Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Physical contact with children and students should be age and developmentally appropriate. Awareness and sensitivity will be given to cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs. **NOTE: Avoid having children in laps.**
- C. When a child or student begins disruptive or inappropriate behavior, an approved adult should state clearly and simply the rules for classroom and small group behavior. The adult should identify the **BEHAVIOR** as negative or wrong, **NOT THE CHILD OR STUDENT.**

Adult Staff Personnel may use the following discipline:

1. Positive reinforcement
2. Loss of privilege
3. Time out (one minute for every year of age)
4. Removing the child from the classroom to their parent's care
5. Removing the student from small group or activity

Staff personnel should not discipline by any means of corporal punishment, spanking, pinching, and yelling, pushing or shoving, belittling, swearing or abusive language.

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V. Emergencies

Although we cannot prepare for every possible emergency, we can be wise as we prepare for some common occurrences. Staff personnel should become familiar with the procedures for simple first aid as well as steps in dealing with an emergency. This should be done often and long before an incident occurs. These policies will be updated and reviewed annually with all personnel working with children and students.

A. Simple First Aid

Simple first aid kits (band aids only) are available in each classroom cabinet as well as in the Resource Room. Latex gloves are available for volunteer's use and will be located in the nursery or toddler rooms. Ice and zip-lock, plastic bags will be available in the kitchen for use as an ice-pack. **Fill out a Kidcreek Boo Boo Report and have parents initial then give to Kidcreek Director. For head injuries, contact Kidcreek Support Team to get parents.**

B. Serious Injury

Emergency medical personnel can be reached by dialing 911.

In case of serious injury, the responsible adult will contact the Kidcreek Support Team or Kidcreek Director and have them call 911. The Kidcreek Support person will page parents from service. AED and official First Aid Kit are located outside the main entrance of Kidcreek.

C. Illness and Medication

A child or student who is not feeling well should not be received in the classroom, exposing other children, students and staff personnel to the illness. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, green runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. Ill or infectious children or students will be asked not to attend until they are well. However, children and students with non-infectious disease, allergies or certain health impairments will be allowed to participate within reason.

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Medication may NOT be accepted or dispensed by any Children's or Student Ministry Personnel. The exception to this would be if the child or student attends an off-site, church-sponsored event. Parental permission must accompany the medication, and the medication must be in the original container with dosages and times of administration clearly labeled.

Children and students with head lice will NOT be accepted into the classroom. If a child or student has already been accepted into the classroom or small group and head lice are observed at that time, the child or student will be removed from the classroom or small group. The adult in charge should contact the Children's Director or Pastor of Students. They will then contact the child's or student's parents. The child or student will NOT be accepted back into the classroom until the second treatment has been administered (seven days from the first treatment.) The following websites will provide helpful information:

www.drkoop.com, www.clearcare.com, www.healthcentral.com
www.headlice.org, www.healthanswers.com

D. Fire

1. In the event of a fire, all children and youth will be evacuated along assigned routes **to the south west corner of the parking lot.** Children and students will be kept calm and quiet and moved quickly without running. **Please take your roster with you and check roll once you are at a safe place. DO NOT RELEASE CHILDREN TO PARENTS UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE ALL CLEAR.**
2. All exits are clearly marked and emergency exit routes are shown on wall maps in **red** in each room. These will be reviewed regularly. Periodic drills will be performed.
3. **Cuddlers and Wigglers have cribs on wheels. Put up to five (5) children in the crib. You may have to carry some children. Carefully take children to the south west corner of the parking lot, take roll and wait to be given the all clear before you release any children.**

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E. Weather Evacuation

1. All exits are clearly marked and emergency exit routes are shown on wall maps in **blue** in each room. These will be reviewed regularly. Periodic drills will be performed.
2. ALL Early Childhood and Pre-school classes will move to the ladies restroom in the atrium. Cuddlers and Wigglers may use their cribs on wheels to help transport.
3. Kindergarten go to church office #316, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grade go to church office workroom #302, 4th grade girls go to church office #305. 4th grade boys go to church office on the wall out side offices #303 and #304. 5th grade will go to church office #306.
4. Check roll.
5. Try to keep the children as calm as possible. Have the children sit with their knees up to their chest and tuck their head in with their arms over their heads. Do your best with the little ones.
6. **DO NOT RELEASE CHILDREN TO PARENTS UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE ALL CLEAR.**

V. Special Events Policies

- A. Appropriate adult to children/student ratios will be ensured by the staff personnel in charge.
- B. Off-site activities must be pre-approved by the directing staff personnel. Parents will be notified at least one week prior to the outing.

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- C. Proper written consent (permission slip) forms are required for each child or student participating in off-site activities and trips.
- D. When transporting children and students involved in an activity or trip, all drivers must have a valid, appropriate type driver's license and current motor vehicle insurance on file in the administrative office. The number of persons per vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts.

VI. Playground Safety Procedures

- A. Once on the playground, the gate will be kept closed at all times.
- B. Children must be accompanied by an adult to and from the playground.
- C. If a child needs to be taken to the restroom, one approved adult will take the child to the nearest, accessible location, being careful to follow the previously stated restroom procedures.
- E. A two way radio is on the playground gate if you need assistance or have an emergency. Kidcreek Support Team and Kidcreek Director have a two way radio to take any calls.

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Requirements for all Children's and Student Ministry Personnel

Anyone desiring to work with the children and youth at Woodcreek Church will be asked to complete the following:

1. Child Safety Evaluation
2. Background Verification Release Form through VERIFYI, Volunteer Center of North Texas
3. Woodcreek Membership Covenant Card
4. Parent Permission (if under 18 years of age) – Obtained on the Verify! Background Check form

These forms must be completed and be on file for any staff personnel involved in the supervision of, or participation in, any program involving children and youth at Woodcreek Church.

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What is the Volunteer Center of Dallas?

The Volunteer Center of Dallas is a United Way affiliate whose primary mission is the promotion of volunteerism and the referral of volunteers to non-profit agencies. In addition, the Center provides education and training concerning the use and management of volunteers. The Volunteer Center is also able to assist member agencies by providing access to criminal background history on prospective volunteers and staff personnel. Any agency receiving any of these services must be a member agency, either registered as a *clearinghouse agency* (for volunteer referral) or as a *consulting member*.

The *consulting membership* of the Volunteer Center of Dallas County is designed for non-profit agencies desiring participation in the information, training and education programs of the Volunteer Center as well as access to the criminal background check system.

What Does the Criminal Background Check Involve?

The Volunteer Center of North Texas will initiate criminal background verification through VERIFYI only on Agency (Woodcreek Church) applications who have signed the authorization/waiver/indemnity for this process. Woodcreek Church will access the VERIFYI through Volunteer Center of North Texas, thereby initiating the criminal background check through the Texas Department of Public Safety. Woodcreek Church shall maintain custody of the consent from and shall retain the applicant consent form for three years following the date of requesting the criminal background check from the Volunteer Center of North Texas.

Woodcreek Church will treat all criminal history information as confidential, and shall limit the number of people who have access to applicant criminal history information to only those individuals who have attended the Volunteer Center training. Documentation of criminal histories requested by Woodcreek Church shall be received from the Volunteer Center by authorized and trained personnel from Woodcreek Church and cannot be received by any other person.

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Woodcreek Church agrees to immediately destroy all records pertaining to said criminal background checks once a final decision has been made regarding an applicant.

Woodcreek Church must destroy the criminal history inquiry response within five days of making a decision of each applicant's suitability for placement as a volunteer, but in no case later than 30 days after having agreed to keep the criminal records in a secure, locked storage drawer until such time as the records are destroyed.

Woodcreek Church agrees that *under no circumstances* shall the applicant be allowed to keep or photocopy of his or her criminal history record transcript, *under no circumstances* will Woodcreek Church record in any way the information contained in the criminal history record transcript.