

NEW CREATION CHURCH

CHRIST MAKES ALL THINGS NEW
BIBLICAL ROOTS, HISTORICAL WORSHIP, MISSIONAL FOCUS

Children's Ministry Policy*

**Portions adapted from MinistrySafe's Children's Ministry policy.*

OVERVIEW OF OUR SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we love children and desire to protect them, New Creation requires all volunteers/staff working with children or students to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Screening Process*

Volunteers/staff are required to complete the Screening Process, which requires a volunteer to:

- complete the application forms
- provide references to be checked
- complete a face-to-face interview

*a volunteer must attend New Creation for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children or students.

STEP TWO: Criminal Background Check

New Creation requires that all volunteers/staff working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

STEP THREE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

New Creation Church policies and procedures require that volunteers/staff avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers/staff are required to report any policy violations to the Pastor (or another officer of the church). Volunteers/staff should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip New Creation volunteers/staff with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, New Creation Church requires volunteers/staff to complete MinistrySafe sexual abuse awareness training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP FOUR: Policies & Procedures

Volunteers/staff are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

Volunteers/staff must also read the diocesan Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.

BUILDING SAFETY

No child will ever be left unattended in the worship space or nursery during children's ministry programming or classes. Children's Ministries volunteers/staff are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. The door to the nursery will be left open.

After every programming event, Children's Ministries volunteers/staff must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

CHECK-IN POLICY

Younger children visiting New Creation Church for the first time will be checked into the nursery when they arrive. Volunteers/staff will walk the parent(s) through the form, asking for special needs dietary and otherwise. Parents will be made aware of New Creation's policy with bathroom/changing assistance and supervision (see below).

ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS

Our adult/child ratios follow the guidelines stated in the DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children. For our purposes, this means maintaining a ratio of 2 adults for up to 8 children. 1 additional adult will be required for every additional 1 to 4 children.

BATHROOM/CHANGING SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

All bathroom supervision and assistance will be handled by the parents of the child. Children are to be supervised by parents while they use the bathroom **at all times**. Volunteers/staff will not take children to the bathrooms or change diapers. Parents will be notified of the need for bathroom/changing assistance.

DISCIPLINE

It is New Creation Church's policy that staff members and volunteers/staff are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers/staff should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Pastor.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

New Creation Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, New Creation has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

1. Side-hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers/staff and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection (such as those described on pg 13 of the DOMA Child Protection policy) are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor or the Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers/staff. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers/staff in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's staff members and volunteers/staff are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Pastor.

HOME GROUPS

The Diocese and its churches do not have, and therefore do not exercise, control over home groups. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child. Our Diocese provides some resources that may help empower and equip parents/guardians and the home groups of its churches as they exercise their care and responsibility. In home groups where children are present, even on an occasional basis, leaders are encouraged to follow as closely as possible the provisions outlined in this Children's Ministry Policy, including the supervision plan, which should consider the following:

- Supervision by two screened and trained individuals. Supervision by a single individual is never a good idea.
- Physical environment should be inspected and prepared for child safety for the developmental age of those being served, (keeping in mind outlet coverings, sharp corners, sharp objects, unsecured furniture, access to outdoors, toxic materials, etc.).
- Restroom procedure. For any child who requires assistance, parents should be responsible for diapering and meeting other restroom needs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I have received and read a copy of New Creation Church's Children's Ministry Policy for Onsite Supervision and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving at New Creation Church.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by New Creation.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

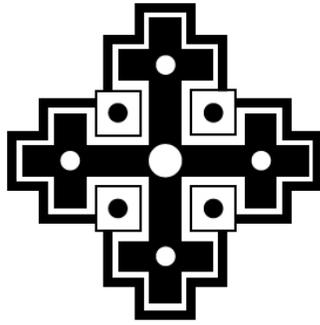
I have also received and read a copy of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic's Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.

Lastly, I certify that I and other members of the household have not been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism.

Volunteer/attendant/staff name (please print)

Volunteer/attendant/staff signature

Date: _____



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SUPERVISORY PLAN

(TO BE POSTED IN THE NURSERY)

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