



Volunteer Handbook

Preschool

Revised 4/30/2026

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Welcome to Kids Ministry!

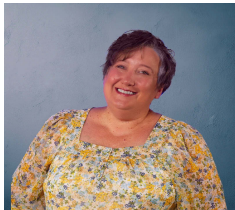
Welcome to Kids Ministry at Okolona Christian Church. We are so excited that you have decided to volunteer your time, energy, and talents to serve God by serving His children. It is our prayer that a passion for this ministry grows within you and that a desire for God's Will in your life becomes your greatest need. We want you to know that your Ministry Team Leaders will keep you in their prayers as you continue in your ministry here.

There is nothing more special than touching the life of a child. There is nothing more rewarding than guiding a child to Jesus Christ. Working in Kids Ministry is one of the most important things that you can do.

“So will My word be which goes out of My mouth; it will not return to Me void (useless, without result), without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

This handbook was designed with you in mind. You will find the latest policies and procedures, as well as some helpful information inside. Please read and save this handbook, as it will be a valuable tool in the future. If you have any further questions, please contact us. We are always ready to help.

In Him,



Susan Ehret, Director of Early Childhood Ministries



Jennifer Gnau, Administrative Assistant

Volunteers Are Our Lifeline!

Our Mission

The mission of Okolona Christian Church, as based in Scripture, is to “Help Everyone Find and Follow Jesus.”

Children’s Ministry Values

We are called to “Help Every Kid Find and Follow Jesus” through teaching, loving, and caring for the children in the ministry.

Our desire is to partner with parents/guardians in:

1. The Biblical instruction of their children so that all might come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
2. To encourage kids in the living of changed lives as fully devoted followers of Christ.

General Expectations

Children, parents/guardians, Ministry Team Leaders, and Okolona Christian Church Staff depend on your commitment to serve. Please be faithful to the commitment that you have made and be mindful to:

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV
- Love children and share the love of Jesus with them.
- Be actively involved in the care of all the children in your area. Please pray, read, sing, and talk with the children. The more involved you are, the greater your impact will be.
- **Arrive 30 minutes prior to your commitment.** Please make every effort to be on time; we cannot accept children until we have enough volunteers. Huddle Time is 30 minutes prior to service. Drop off your child 25 minutes prior to service. Be in place to receive kids 20 minutes prior to service.
- Find replacements when you are unable to fulfill your commitment. To find a replacement, check the list of volunteers for your area in the appropriate Planning Center group (Volunteers – Nursery, Volunteers – Preschool, Volunteers –Elementary). If an emergency arises, please contact the Director of Early Childhood Ministries, Director of Elementary Ministries, or your Ministry Team Leader.
- Invite accountability to your commitments as other volunteers, children, members, and staff depend on everyone fulfilling their commitments.
- Keep a positive, godly example among the kids and volunteers showing poise and respect for everyone.
- Preserve dignity, respect, and truth on SOCIAL MEDIA platforms.
- Support decisions of OCC Kids Ministry Staff and OCC Staff overall. If you struggle with this, ask questions in a respectful manner to understand.
- Attend volunteer trainings and meetings.
- Have fun and be the best example of a Christian adult that you can be!

Safety and Security Guidelines

It is important that we demonstrate friendliness when working with parents/guardians. We are the first impression they have of Okolona Christian Church.

Guest Registration – Children

Direct guests to the Check-In Desk to the left of Door 3. Kids Ministry Volunteers will assist guests with check-in. Once an account has been created, a volunteer should accompany the family to the Nursery, Preschool or to the Elementary area.

Pick-Up Procedures

Ask the parent/guardian to show the security tag and state the child's name. **DO NOT TAKE THE TAG.**

1. Announce the child's name in the room and bring the child to the door with all their belongings.
2. Remove the tag from the child.
3. Match parent/guardian tag number to child's tag number again before releasing the child.
4. Fold tags in half (sticky sides together).
5. Put in the Tag Disposal Bag provided.

No Tag, No Child, No Exceptions

If a parent/guardian arrives, but has lost the tag, ask them to go to the Check-In Desk and explain that they have misplaced their tag. Parents should have a text with the information needed to pick up their child.

- No one is allowed to take a child without security ID received at check-in. Elementary can look up the tag info on the iPad, if needed.
- Child recognition does not count.
- Always refer the parent/guardian to the Check-in Desk, to see the Director or your Ministry Team Leader and they will check the driver's license before releasing the child.

This may inconvenience the parent/guardian and take additional time, but **the safety and security of the children is our primary concern.**

Volunteer Check-in

All volunteers must check in before entering the Children's Area.

- Sign-in as a "9:30 am Misc. Volunteer" or "11:00 am Misc. Volunteer" — for the respective areas of Nursery, Preschool or Elementary. A volunteer tag will be printed upon sign-in.
- Pick up and wear your printed volunteer tag.
- Stay in your area until the next group of volunteers is settled into the transition period.

Restroom Safeguards

- Clear restroom before admitting a child.
- Children should not use the restrooms while other adults are in them.
- Two volunteers must monitor restrooms while children are using them.
- Restroom doors should always be propped open.
- Volunteers remain in the hallway, outside the restroom, while the restrooms are in use.
- If a child needs help, two volunteers should step just inside the restrooms and encourage the child to come out to them.
- If child needs help inside of a stall, never close the stall door behind you.
- In an emergency, if adults are using the restroom, two adults should accompany the children into the restroom.
- If a child has an accident, text the child's parent/guardian.

Clean-Up Procedures

Whenever you use a room, please return it to its original condition. There are many different programs that use the space that we occupy, and we need to be sensitive to their needs. Vacuum (if necessary), wipe down tables, and put away literature or toys that were used during your stay.

Snack Policy

Only snacks that are provided by Kids Ministry may be served. Many children in our program have allergies, some have diabetes, and we cannot risk their safety over snack food. This decision was made to help protect our children.

Visitors (i.e., Parents/Guardians or Volunteer Shadows)

Visitors are welcome to observe their child's classroom or worship service during regularly scheduled programming time.

They must do the following:

- Visitors must sign in at the Check-in Desk. Their name should be placed at the bottom of the classroom attendance sheet in the room they are visiting.
- Visitors are to be given a Visitor Name Tag. Please write their name on the tag. Visitors must wear the tag the entire time they are in Kids Ministry.
- Visitors should not be allowed to freely mix with all the children, as they have not met the criteria set forth in Okolona Christian Church Security Policy. At no time should a visitor fulfill any of the roles that are tasked to volunteers. They **must not** be the second person in the room, help with restroom breaks, etc. They are just there to observe the class with their child.
- Visitors should remove their name tag when leaving the area.
- In the instance a potential volunteer wants to *shadow* another volunteer, again, safety of the child(ren) is the main focus.
- Visitors who are shadowing shall remain **HANDS-OFF** and should only be observing the tasks their assigned volunteer is doing.

Additional Guidelines

- Volunteers are **NOT** allowed to take photos of **ANY** child(ren).
- Requirement: All volunteers working with or around children must have an approved Security Application and a completed Certificate of Training on file with Okolona Christian Church.

- Substitute volunteers must be approved by the Director of Early Childhood Ministries or the Director of Elementary Ministries prior to entering classrooms or large group areas.
- Children of volunteers not participating in programming are not allowed in classrooms or large group rooms unless they are approved workers and are listed on the attendance rosters for that program.

We do want you to express love, concern, and care for all our children.

The following are examples of how these can be expressed in appropriate ways:

- Always bend down and speak to a child at their eye level. Speak kindly and listen carefully.
- Take a child's hand and lead them to the area you need them to be in.
- Put your arm around a child who needs comfort or quieting.
- Take both hands of a child in your hands when you are expressing joy in seeing them or complementing them on their good behavior.
- Give a child a loving pat on the head, shoulders, or back to affirm.
- Hold a child by the shoulders or hands while giving instructions to redirect behavior.
- Side-hugging is acceptable but avoid lingering or overly affectionate contact.

Avoid the following when showing affection:

- Kissing children or encouraging them to kiss you.
- Touching a child in an area that would be covered by a bathing suit (Except where assistance is needed in the bathroom, but always in the presence of another adult volunteer).
- Frequently carrying older children or having them sit on your lap.

Sickness/Illness and Medications

Children with the following should not be admitted into a room or remain in programming:

- Fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting.
- Obvious rash or open uncovered sores.
- Symptoms of contagious diseases such as chicken pox, rubella, etc.
- Pinkeye

Children who develop symptoms after entering programming should be removed or separated from other children. Children must remain in the company of at least two volunteers. The child's parent/guardian should be contacted immediately.

Medication is **NOT** to be administered by volunteers. This includes prescriptions that a parent/guardian requests to have administered on their behalf, medicated ointments of any type for cuts and scrapes, cough or allergy medication, or Tylenol or other analgesic. **Medication is to be administered by parents/guardians only.** Medications should not remain in the classroom or in the possession of a child. The only exceptions to children retaining medications in the classroom are asthmatics with inhalers, children with an Epi-pen, or those situations arranged for by the parents/guardians with the Director or Ministry Team Leader.

Dress Code

Keep in mind that when working with children and parents/guardians, volunteers are the first impression they will have of OCC. This impression initially comes through your appearance. Keep appearance kid-friendly and welcoming.

- Clothing should provide proper coverage and remain family friendly.
 - Avoid low cut tops, short or tight-fitting clothing, crop tops, and similar attire.

- Pants, skirts, and shorts should allow for bending, sitting on the floor, and active movement.
- Clothing should not display alcohol, drugs, or political messaging, violent or frightening imagery, or offensive or suggestive content.
- A volunteer badge must be worn at all times.
- Clothing should be clean and neat. Avoid strong fragrances that may overwhelm children or trigger allergies.
- Tattoos are generally acceptable if not offensive. Limit distracting accessories as needed.
- No hats inside classrooms unless part of an approved theme or event.
- Long hair should be secured when serving infants or toddlers.

Lice/Fleas

If a child is found to have lice/fleas present on their person or belongings, they will be removed from Kids Ministry programming immediately. Parents/Guardians will be asked to pick up all children in the household and exit the building. Spaces that have been exposed will be closed and will be treated with lice/flea spray as soon as possible. Also alert a member of the Security Team who will escort them off the premises.

Exposure to others: Any exposed classmates or teachers will be notified at pick up or via text message/email as soon as possible.

Returning to Kid's Programming: OCC requires a 2-week treatment window to ensure that the child is free from lice/fleas upon their return. A discreet visual inspection by a member of our Medical Response Team will be required to enter programming.

Antibiotics

If a child is being treated with antibiotics, they should be on the medicine for at least 24 hours before coming to the Nursery, Preschool or Elementary. Please do not recommend that sick children be taken to the cry room by the main auditorium.

Acute Illness or Injury

If a child has a seizure, has difficulty breathing, a severe laceration and/or bleeding, broken bones, dizziness/passing out, or an accidental injury occurs that you feel warrants medical attention, you or someone assisting you must contact the Okolona Christian Church Safety Office via radio (using channel 1), by church phone ext. 6518 or your cell phone 502-962-6518. Ask for Medical Response Team to come to your location immediately. After emergency help has been called, call/text and locate parents/guardians. Remember, **do not move an injured child. Do not leave an injured or sick child alone.**

Accidents, Serious Injury, or Illness

Please have the Medical Response Team paged (by dialing 6518 on any church phone) in any situation where a volunteer thinks it necessary. Notify the Ministry Team Leader and Director as soon as possible. In the event of a serious emergency (stop breathing, seizure, etc.), please call 911. The Medical Response Team should be notified, as well as the Director.

Life Threatening Injury/Illness

In the event of a serious emergency (ex. stops breathing):

1. Call 911

2. Call Medical Response Team
3. Call the Director
4. Call/text the child's parent/guardian.

Fire Evacuation and Fire Drills

In the event of a fire or fire drill, an alarm will sound. Please always refer to the evacuation policy in your classroom. Each child needs to be accounted for before we begin releasing children to parents/guardians. Be sure to take the Emergency Box and use the flags and cards once in the safe location.

- Gather up your children.
- Take your attendance roster with you.
- Do not linger to collect personal belongings.
- Children should exit the building, oldest children first, as they move more quickly causing less clogging of staircases and/or hallways and out of the building.
- Using the map located at the door of your classroom, locate, and use the exit route and staircase indicated.
- Once outside, proceed to a grassy area, away from the building and any glass windows. Meet at the southwest corner for instructions. Display flags and appropriate card.
- Do not cross paved areas or roadways if possible.
- Keep all your children with you. Once you have reached safety, take attendance.
- Wait for further instructions from the Director or your Ministry Team Leader.
- The Director, Ministry Team Leader or Security Team will provide you with all needed instructions once outside the building.
- If a parent/guardian wants to take their child during the process, note it on your roster and collect their guardian tag.

Severe Weather Procedures

We are linked by radio to the Safety Team. All warnings to evacuate or move to cover will come directly from them to us. They will also tell us when the situation is resolved. In the event of a tornado or other such severe weather conditions, proceed as follows:

- If you are in an exterior room, gather your group together and calmly organize for departure from your room to the nearest interior room.
- Proceed to that room as soon as you are able. Take the classroom attendance sheet with you.
- Keep your children with you. Take attendance once you have reached the interior room.
- Calmly wait for additional information from the Director or your Ministry Team Leader. Children should remain with you until you are given information that the storm has passed.
- Children should not return to their classrooms until the "all clear" is given.

Responses to Situations Involving Possible Child Endangerment

Person in an Inappropriate Area

If an unknown person is observed in an inappropriate area, you, the observing person, should do the following in this specific order:

1. Tell either the Director, Ministry Team Leader, or a Safety Officer to make them aware. Inform the Safety Office that the person should be observed.
2. Provide the Safety Office with the person's current location and a description, including clothing, sex, size, hair color, approximate age etc.

Observation of Non-Violent Crime in Progress (i.e., theft)

If a person is observed committing a non-violent crime such as theft, the observing person shall, in this specific order:

1. Tell either the Director, Ministry Team Leader, or Safety Officer to make them aware.
2. Inform the Safety Office of the crime.
3. Provide the Safety Office with the person's current location and a description, including a clothing description.

Observation of Potentially Disruptive Person

If a person displaying behavior of concern is observed, you, the observing person shall, in this specific order:

1. Contact the Safety Office via radio (using channel 1), church phone ext. 6518 or cell phone 502-962-6518.

Inform the Safety Team of what you have observed by saying 1) "There is a person displaying concerning behavior", and 2) give a description of the person (clothing, sex, size, hair color, approximate age).

Child Care Volunteers' Response When a Violent Situation Requiring Lockdown Occurs:

The safety and security of the children is paramount. Safety officer will be sent immediately to the wing to secure the doors.

In the meantime, volunteers should do the following:

1. Close all classroom doors and lock or otherwise secure them. Take tables, flatten them, and put at least two up against the door where the glass is. If the room has a third table, put it in front of the door. For extra weight, stack chairs in front, up against the tables. Close the drop curtains.
2. Move children to the side of the room, farthest away from the glass.
3. **DO NOT reopen** the door for any reason from the inside.
4. Children shall not be allowed to leave until the card is slid under the door noting that violence has ceased.
5. Stay in place until notified by the Safety Team.

Remember

- A violent situation could be a ruse intended to distract childcare workers.
- The intent of the person is to distract you from keeping track of the children in your care so that a child may be taken by an unauthorized person.
- It is imperative that all safety procedures related to child "pick-up" be explicitly followed.

Preschool Information

Programming Options

Large Group 9:30 am and 11:00 am

Preschool children arrive at the “Preschool Large Group Room” for a morning of fun. They start off with a welcome activity then move on to worship time. The children are presented Bible stories and high energy worship by our kid-friendly Large Group Team. The children are taught in a fun, multi-sensory method. Use of visuals, sound effects, exciting characters, and colorful staging keep the children engaged throughout this experience. After Large Group, the children go to their classrooms for crafts, snacks, guided activities and play time with friends.

Small Group – 11:00 am

Preschool children remain in their classrooms for a fun, multi-sensory faith experience. Our nurturing volunteers present the Bible stories with use of colorful visuals, fun sound effects, and music. The children finish their time off with crafts, snacks and play time with friends.

Classroom and Large Group

Participation includes:

- Eyes on speaker
- Ears listening
- Lips are closed.
- Hands and feet are quiet.
- Backs up straight.

Behavior/Discipline Guidelines

1. Start with a Gentle Reminder.

Oftentimes a gentle reminder is all that a child requires to change their behavior. A look, a gentle touch on the shoulder or a verbal warning in a soft loving voice are ways to remind the child of what appropriate behavior is. In younger preschoolers, redirecting their focus is sometimes all that is needed.

2. Warning

A warning is a sterner approach. Make sure that the child has eye contact with you, and that they understand what you are saying. Always state the offense and the consequences of repeating the offense.

3. Move

A child who is continually disrupting their neighbors should be moved. In some cases, children only need to be moved away from each other. In others, children may need to spend time in “time out.” In the large group setting, time out is when a child is moved to “Harry the Hot Spot.” In a small group setting, time out could be established as a chair against the wall away from other children.

4. Remove

After the above methods have been attempted and failed, the child needs to be removed from the classroom. The child should be placed with the Ministry Team Leader. They will provide care for the child until the child realizes what was unacceptable about their behavior. The child needs to apologize to their teacher before returning to class. If a child needs to be removed from class a second time, the parent/guardian will need to be contacted to pick up the child.

5. Communication

A conversation needs to occur between the volunteer and the parents/guardians. Teachers can oversee telling the parents/guardians of any progress that the child has made, or any observations that the teacher may have. If a disciplinary problem needs to be addressed, the Ministry Team Leader will discuss that with the parents/guardians.

Thank you for your time, love, and devotion to Kids Ministry at Okolona Christian Church. You make the difference! Your help is invaluable and without you, we could not do this! The children may or may not remember, but God knows your servant heart. We appreciate you!

Sign Off Sheet

Please sign and return this page to Okolona Christian Church Director of Early Childhood Ministries or Director of Elementary Ministries when you have completed reading this booklet.

I have received the OCC Kids Ministry Volunteer Handbook and have completed reading the entire handbook. If I have questions, I will discuss them with the Director of Early Childhood Ministries or Director of Elementary Ministries.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____