



Volunteer Handbook

Nursery

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Welcome to Kids Ministry!

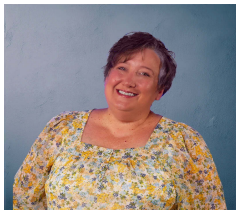
Welcome to Kids Ministry at Okolona Christian Church. We are so excited that you have decided to volunteer your time, energy, and talents to serve God by serving His children. It is our prayer that a passion for this ministry grows within you and that a desire for God's Will in your life becomes your 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.

Nursery Information

There must ALWAYS be two volunteers in the room with the children.

Ratios

For the safety of the children, adult/child ratios have been established.

- 1:3 for the Crib Nursery (maximum of 13 children)
- 1:3 for the Crawler Nursery (maximum of 13 children)
- 1:5 for the Toddler Nursery (maximum of 12 children)
- 1:5 for the Tots Nursery (maximum of 13 children)

The smoothness of check-in is dependent upon the prompt arrival of volunteers. No room can be opened unless there are two volunteers to receive children. Therefore, please arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled service hour. Remember, if we do not have volunteers, we cannot provide care for the children.

If the room does not have enough volunteers, please contact the Ministry Team Leader. A child can be reassigned; a volunteer can be moved, or a floater can fill in.

Foods

Crib and Crawler Rooms

- Parents/guardians must provide prepared bottles and feeding instructions. Bottles can be warmed by running under hot water. Volunteers will not mix bottles.
- Children may be given snacks from home. **BE VERY CAREFUL** so another child does not consume another child's snack.

Toddler and Tots Rooms

- The only food given to the child is what we provide (crackers and water).
- Snacks should not be given from home, as a child with food allergies may accidentally take the snack and consume it.
- Regarding children with special diet restrictions, please see the Ministry Team Leader or Director.

Emergencies – Fire

If a fire alarm goes off, the area must be evacuated. Follow Fire Evacuation stated above.

Crib and Crawler Rooms

- Place babies in the Evacuation Cribs, located in the back hallway outside of the Preschool Resource Room. Use your best judgment to evaluate how many children can safely be placed in one crib.
- Roll the Evacuation Cribs to the exit shown on the evacuation escape plan, located in your room.

Toddler and Tots Rooms

- Locate emergency box.

Diaper Time

Every child should have his/her diaper checked and changed every hour.

Method 1

1. All volunteers must wear gloves while changing diapers.
2. Place a sheet of waxed paper on the changing table before placing the baby on the table.
3. After making the change, do not touch any surface.
4. Place the dirty diaper and wipes in the plastic bags provided for disposal purposes.
5. Carefully remove gloves and place them in the bag.
6. Seal bag and put in trash can.
7. Put hand sanitizer on the baby's hands.
8. Wash your hands.
9. Wipe down the changing table with a Clorox wipe.
10. Let it air dry, if possible. Do not wipe dry.
11. Use hand sanitizer on your hands.

Method 2

1. All volunteers must wear gloves while changing diapers.
2. Place baby on the table.
3. After making the change, do not touch any surface.
4. Place the dirty diaper and wipes in the plastic bags provided for disposal purposes.
5. Carefully remove gloves and place them in the bag.
6. Seal bag and put in trash can.
7. Put hand sanitizer on the baby's hands.
8. Wash your hands.
9. Clean changing table of any kind of soil.
10. Spray with 10% bleach, let air dry for 1 minute before wiping dry with a paper towel.
11. Use hand sanitizer on your hands.

Note: 10% bleach solution should be kept in marked spray bottle and is made by adding 9 oz. of water and 1 oz. of bleach. Extra care must be taken to protect volunteer's clothing.

Bathroom & Clean-up Time

For Toddlers who are being potty trained:

1. Please take children to the bathrooms located in the Preschool Hallway or the Volunteer Room.
2. Exterior doors should always be propped open.
3. Two volunteers must accompany the children to the bathroom. **DO NOT** shut the door. Never should one volunteer be in the bathroom with children alone.
4. If the child needs help, encourage the child to come to the hallway.
5. If a child has an accident, please text the parent/guardian.
6. Male volunteers should never accompany little girls to the bathrooms. They are, however, permitted to change diapers.

Sippy Cup Cleaning Instructions

1. Fill the sink with water. Pour in ½ cup of bleach (use sippy cup to measure).

2. Put in cups and lids. Let set for 10 minutes.
3. Empty water in sink (use a glove when letting water and bleach out of the sink).
4. Fill up the sink with warm water and some dish soap, then wash cups and lids.
5. Set on drain tray to dry.

Toy Use and Cleaning

1. Put only as many toys into circulation as there are children to use them.
2. Watch children as they play. If a toy is put into a little one's mouth, it must be removed from circulation as soon as the child discards it.
3. Spray the toys with disinfectant spray (3-4 second spray, 6-10 inches from the surface of the toy, that covers the entire surface).
4. Place the toy in the basket provided (it will be on your countertop).

Note: Walkers, jumpy seats, etc. must be wiped down with Clorox wipes and allowed to air dry 10 minutes before use by another child.

Helpful Hints for Difficult Times

We strive to make the Nursery a happy place. However, children can sometimes become unhappy when they are separated from their parent/guardian. If this is the case, please remember:

- Try to distract the child and refocus their attention on something or someone else.
- Try a pacifier if one is available.
- Try a walk in the Nursery, but do not leave the Nursery area.
- If the child continues to cry for more than 10 minutes, text their parent/guardian.
- For older children, directions should be firm but brief.
- Shouting or yelling indicates that you have lost control.
- Try flicking on and off a light, then move to an activity which will help to slow them down.
- Always watch your example. Children are great imitators.

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 _____