

FOLLOW ▲ KIDS *safety policy*

updated December 2024



MISSION STATEMENT

Follow Kids exists to join parents and spiritual families in the intentional discipleship of our children, equipping them to discover God personally through His Word and Spirit.

THREE CORE VALUES

- We strive to help our children **trust** in a healthy community and create sincere connections with other believers, recognizing these relationships are the foundation for their spiritual formation and their continued attachment to the church.
- We also provide opportunities for our children to **discover** God through a child-focused time hearing the stories in His Word and experiencing Him through play and creativity.
- We ultimately want our children to **follow** God in Spirit-led obedience outside of our gatherings alongside their trusted adults and families.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY...

- Providing opportunities to create healthy, connected relationships with other believers of all ages
- Purposefully sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Equipping families to disciple and be discipled
- Being safe
- Having fun together

TEAM MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

- Submit to a background check (if over 18)
- Attend an initial training
- Prepare for serving by reading through the lesson and any additional materials beforehand, even if you are not teaching
- Arrive 30 minutes before with the rest of the serving team to pray before the gathering
- Communicate with the volunteer coordinator if you are unable to keep a scheduled commitment
- Participate in training opportunities
- Communicate with wisdom and respect with others on the team
- Interact in a positive way with children, parents, and families
- Pray regularly for the families and children of Follow Church



TEAM MEMBER ROLES

SENDING HUB / FOLLOW TOGETHER

TEACHER

- At least 18 years of age
- Has completed a background check and initial training
- The main leader of the children's Sunday gathering
- Manages rhythms and guides children and helper through the lesson plan
- Prepares and manages children's area and materials
- Helps clean children's area after the gathering

HELPER

- At least 16 years of age
- Has completed a background check (if over 18) and initial training
- The teacher's assistant during the children's Sunday gathering
- Helps foster a safe and engaging environment that supports learning and rhythms
- Helps teacher prepare area and materials as needed
- Helps clean children's area after the gathering

FOLLOW DEEPER

TEAM MEMBER

- At least 16 years of age
- Has completed a background check (if over 18) and initial training
- Will play and watch over children during Wednesday night gatherings (Follow Deeper) along with another team member
- Help foster a safe and positive environment during play
- Help clean and organize children's area after the gathering

SAFETY PROCEDURES



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency procedures (for fires, tornados, lock-downs, etc.) will vary depending on the meeting space. These procedures should be clearly communicated to and reviewed by all team members prior to their first time serving and included in the safety policy binder.



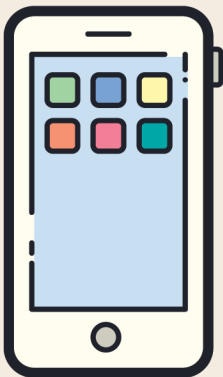
WEAPONS

No firearms, knives, or weapons of any kind are permitted during a Follow Kids gathering.



INCIDENT REPORTS / FIRST AID

All Follow Kids gatherings are equipped with a First Aid Kit. If a child is injured to the point of needing a First Aid Kit, report it to the child's adult immediately and fill out an incident report.



COMMUNICATION

Parents and guardians of each child should be informed immediately if there is a safety concern or urgent need. The method of communication may vary depending on the meeting space, but should be as discreetly as possible.



MANDATORY REPORTING

The state of South Carolina is a "Mandatory Reporting" state. If you have reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, you are obligated to report it. If you believe a report is needed, or you do file one, always notify a staff member. For further information, scan the QR code.

MINISTRY POLICIES

TWO-PERSON POLICY

There should always be at least two team members in every children's gathering space. If one team member needs to step out, the door should remain open.

For no reason should there ever be a one-on-one with a team member and child.

BATHROOM POLICY

Any team member who has completed a background check may accompany a child to the bathroom, but **not into** the bathroom. If there is a situation in which a child needs assistance in the bathroom, the child's adult needs to be retrieved to assist the child.

DIAPER POLICY:

Any team member who has completed a background check may change a child's diaper. However, a second team member must always be present.

TOUCH POLICY

Always follow the bathing suit rule – never touch a child where their bathing suit touches.

Side hugs, high-fives, handshakes, and fist bumps are all forms of appropriate touch with kids.

Lengthy hugs, kisses, tickling, and piggy back rides are not appropriate; and any child over preschool age should not be held or sit on a team member's lap.

MINISTRY POLICIES

WELLNESS POLICY

A child should not join the Follow Kids gathering if any of the following conditions exist:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees F or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or excessive coughing
- Runny noses
- Pink eye or other eye infections

If a child starts to exhibit any of these symptoms after joining the gathering, the child's adult will be contacted to remove the child from the children's gathering.

PHONE POLICY

When you are serving, please put your personal devices away.

If you need to take a personal call or respond to a message, ensure that another adult team member can momentarily watch the children while you step out of the room.

Do not take pictures or videos of the children while serving.

Volunteers are not permitted to be "friends" with or interact with kids on social media, text, or any other private means of communication outside of church.

TRUST—DISCOVER—FOLLOW

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

ABOVE ALL, WE STRIVE TO LIVE OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO US IN SCRIPTURE AS PEOPLE OF GOD:

- We should consider others more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- We should be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient (Colossians 3:12)
- Love should drive everything we do (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
- We should love God in every way and love our little neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31)

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, MODELING, AND BOUNDARIES

- We can highlight the behaviors you want replicated.
 - “Name, thank you so much for sitting calmly in your spot! I really appreciate that!”
- We can model the behavior we want to see from the children.
 - Using a calm and respectful voice when frustrated or using gentleness when handling materials.
- We can make our boundaries clear.
 - “As we walk to our activity table, I need you to use walking feet.”
 - “It is okay to jump and move while we sing, but I cannot let you put your hands on name.”

ATTENTION GRABBERS

- Teacher says “1-2-3, eyes on me!”
 - Kids respond “1-2, eyes on you!”
- Action & response (particularly for children with a lot of energy):
 - Teacher says, “If you can hear me, reach your hands up to the sky! If you can hear me, spin a circle. If you can hear me stomp your feet twice. If you can hear me, sit on your bottom. If you can hear me, show me calm feet and hands. (whisper) If you can hear me, put your finger to your lips.”
- Clap a rhythm and have the kids clap it back to you.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

CLASSROOM DISRUPTORS

- If a child's behavior continues after attempting to redirect them and/or trying to help them calm down, gently guide the child to an area in the room where you can talk (in view of the other volunteer).
 - Get on the child's level and calmly ask, "What's the matter?" or "Is there anything I can do to help you calm down?"
 - Try to have the child tell you why their behavior is out of control in their own words.
- Never "strong-arm" a child or act in anger (i.e. grabbing a child by their arm, neck, shoulder, etc.)
- Never yell at or belittle a child in anger. If you are becoming frustrated to this point, ensure another team member can momentarily watch the children while you step out of the room to calm down.
- The best gift we can give children is our respect and trust. We can be kind, calm, and respectful while at the same time holding firm boundaries and keeping others safe.
- Helpful phrases to use with a dysregulated child include:
 - "I need you to...(keep your hands to yourself/sit on your spot/use a quiet voice)"
 - "I see you are feeling...(excited/energetic/frustrated/sad)... What do you think would help you right now?"
 - "I cannot let you... (hit/yell/hurt)..."
 - "Would you like to obey by yourself or would you like some help?"
 - "Would you like some time to calm your body? I can sit with you if that would help, or I can give you space." (If a child chooses space, let them sit somewhere in your full view.)
 - "If you cannot... (calm your body/choose kindness/keep your hands to yourself)... I will have to walk you back to sit with the adults."

*Jesus said, "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