



# 2023 Family Ministry Policy

Guidelines and Procedures for  
SR Kids & SR Students Ministries

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

South Ridge Community Church Guidelines and Procedures.....3  
General.....3  
SR Kids .....4  
Cdc Safe and Healthy Diaper Changing Steps in Childcare Setttings.....7  
SR Student Ministry.....8  
Special Events.....8  
Health and Safety.....9  
Communication .....11

# South Ridge Community Church Guidelines and Procedures

Our mission is for kids and students to Experience Belonging, Embrace God's Grace, and Extend God's Love. In order to accomplish our mission, we believe that South Ridge and its ministries must be a safe place for all ages. Our Family Ministry Policy provides guidelines and expectations on how we approach and best disciple our kids, students, families, and volunteers. We expect that both staff and on-going volunteers will follow this policy and if at any point that is not the case, we will have a conversation about how to best proceed and next steps.

## *General*

### **Attendance/Volunteering Requirements:**

- All team members must be regular attendees of South Ridge Community Church and regularly participate in services.
- All volunteers and staff must complete the volunteer pathway which includes our Statement of Faith, Code of Conduct, background check, onboarding training, and more. This must be completed prior to serving and upheld throughout your time serving.
- All volunteers and staff will follow this policy and the guidelines stated below as a part of South Ridge's ongoing training.
- We value volunteers being a part of South Ridge for a season prior to serving in a leadership role (SR Kids/SR Students).

### **Being an Example for Kids, Students, and Families:**

- **Dress Code:** We understand fashion is very subjective. Rather than being overly focused on too many rules, our desire is to eliminate distractions that draw attention to ourselves, so that we can maximize the opportunity to lead kids and students. Our greatest goal is for peoples' attention and focus to be drawn toward the Lord. Dress is an area where we want to use our freedom to serve others by directing their focus towards God, rather than being distracted by our clothing.

#### Some Guidelines:

- Please do not wear clothing with images or statements that could be offensive to others.
- Shirts/blouses should not be low-cut and should cover midsection at all times, even when arms are raised.
- If wearing shorts or skirts, please make sure they cover everything and provide a modest length.
- **Language:** All Volunteers and staff will use uplifting and encouraging language that enables kids and students to feel supported. Do not use foul language such as curse words, inappropriate slurs, sexualized innuendos, etc.
- **Social Media:** We ask that volunteers use discernment when it comes to posting, publishing, or commenting on social media platforms. Please remember that kids and students are watching and will imitate how you act and respond. Additionally, you may NOT post pictures of the kids on any social media platform unless you ask permission from the parent. You may post pictures of yourself with other volunteers, but NOT kids unless you have parent permission.

## Displays of Affection

- **Appropriate Touch** – This is an important communication tool and includes holding the child’s hand, putting an arm around a child’s/student’s shoulder, patting a child’s/student’s hand, head, shoulder, or back and holding a preschool child who is crying.
- **Inappropriate Touch** – This includes kissing or coaxing a child/student to kiss you, extended hugging or tickling; touching in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit; carrying an older child or sitting him/her on your lap; full-contact, and other displays of affection.

## Discipline

- In keeping with our desire to provide the safest environment possible for each child/student, guidelines need to be in place for the proper handling of unacceptable behavior.
- General guidelines: Initially, each child/student will be verbally warned, and a gentle reminder will be given. It is a core value that we partner with the parents in the spiritual teaching of each child. Therefore, if there is a consistent problem, the parent(s) would be contacted. If the situation required the immediate involvement of the parent, they would be notified accordingly. If a verbal warning proves ineffective with the child/student, the ministry leader would need to be informed and consecutive steps taken.
- It is our truest desire that each child/student feel valued, cared for and safe while in our ministries.

## *SR Kids*

### Check in, Attendance, and Dismissal

- Visitors have the option of creating an account ahead of time by clicking on “Visitor Form” on the SR Kids and SR Students website. If a family does not create an account before arriving on campus they can do so when they arrive by filling out the “Visitor Form” at the Kiosk, in the Activity Center or at Preschool Check-In.
- Regular attendees will bring children to one of our Check-In locations. Each child (Nursery through 4<sup>th</sup> Grade) will be checked in and receive a name label and security label. The child will wear the name label and the parent, guardian, or older sibling will hold onto the security label. Once the child is checked in, the parent will escort him/her to the classroom, where a ministry volunteer will record the attendance.
- Accurate attendance records are essential. There is an “attendance roster” provided for every room. Please ensure that accurate attendance records are kept. If a child is picked up, please note that on the attendance sheet. These rosters will be used in the case of an emergency or evacuation.
- For dismissal, Nursery through 4<sup>th</sup> grade requires a parent/guardian/older sibling to check them out. This individual will be asked to show the security label to validate proper dismissal of child to that individual. The 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will be dismissed from their ministry areas to find their families or pick up younger siblings. An older sibling must be in at least 5<sup>th</sup> grade in order for our team to dismiss that child into their care.
  - *Please note: Some of the children in our ministry have serious food allergies, special instructions regarding parental requests, custody issues or other restrictions that are essential for us to know. Please pay special attention to any notations on name tags and/or attendance sheets.*

**Restroom Guidelines**

- Parents should take their children to the restroom before the class or service begins. However, if needed, a female team member (high school and up) may take a group of children to the restroom. If only one child needs to go, one female may escort him/her, hold the outside door open and wait outside until the child is finished and escort child back to class. If a child needs assistance in the bathroom, a second female will be called and an adult female will help the child. For SR Kids 1st-4th graders on Sunday morning, the bathrooms are in eye view in the activity center, therefore kids do not need to be escorted. If a 1st-4th grade child needs assistance in the bathroom the parent will be contacted.
- Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised restroom, and do not enter a cubicle with a child and shut the door. If a child needs help with toileting, you must get the assistance of another adult woman on the team.
- If “in bathroom assistance” is needed for an older child, a parent will be called/retrieved first and will be present physically or via phone.
- Male team members are not permitted to help in this area of service.

**Student Grade Requirements for serving in SR Kids**

5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2-year-old's through Kindergarten if accompanied by a parent
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	2-year-old's through 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade and Nursery if accompanied by Parent
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2-year-old's through 4 <sup>th</sup> grade and Nursery if accompanied by Parent
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Nursery through 4 <sup>th</sup> grade
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Nursery through AREA 56
11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	All SR Kids Areas

\*\*Please note there may be some exceptions due to varying factors.

**Classroom Requirements**

- Preferably at least two adults (age 18 or older) should be present with the children. If there is only one adult available, he/she may have a teenage helper. Never, under any circumstance, should a staff member or volunteer be alone with a child while on church property.
- Monitors will periodically walk through the church building and check classrooms.
- This is our preferred minimum volunteer/child ratio:
  - Under 2 years 1:2
  - 2 years– 4 years 1:5
  - Kindergarten- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: 1:10

\*\*In some settings, we may elect to have a breakout for the purpose of activity, discussion or more which can affect the overall ratios. For example: In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we may prefer a 1:4 or 1:6 for breaking up into groups.

### Childcare Staff / Child Ratio (NJ.gov)

Ages	Staff/Child Ratio
Under 18 months	1:4
18 months up to 2 ½ years	1:6
2 ½ years up to 4 years	1:10
4 years	1:12
5 years and older	1:15

### Grouping of Children (NJ.gov)

Ages	Maximum Group Size
0 to 18 months	12
18 months to 4 years	20
5 years and older	30

### Specific to Nursery/Toddler

- Smocks are provided but not required. If you want to wear a smock, they are in the Sterlite storage drawers behind the Nursery door.
- Diaper Changing – Before the parent leaves, they should check his/her child to ensure they have a clean diaper. If during the service a change is needed, a team member should adhere to the following diaper changing procedures. The changing of any diaper is to be the responsibility of an adult female team member only. (Please make sure there are no special instructions regarding diaper changing on the attendance sheet regarding parent notification, etc.). **You must be 18 years old to change a diaper.**

## **CDC SAFE AND HEALTHY DIAPER CHANGING STEPS IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS**

**\*\*\* Always keep a hand on the child for safety! \*\*\***

<b>1. Prepare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cover the diaper changing surface with disposable liner.</li><li>• If you use diaper cream, dispense it onto a tissue now.</li><li>• Bring your supplies (for example, clean diaper, wipes, diaper cream, <b>gloves</b>, plastic or waterproof bag for soiled clothing, extra clothes) to the diapering area.</li></ul>
<b>2. Clean Child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place the child on the diapering surface and unfasten diaper.</li><li>• Clean the child's diaper area with disposable wipes. Always wipe front to back!</li><li>• Keep soiled diaper/clothing away from any surfaces that cannot be easily cleaned. Securely bag soiled clothing.</li></ul>
<b>3. Remove Trash</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place used wipes in the soiled diaper.</li><li>• Discard the soiled diaper and wipes in the trash can.</li><li>• Remove and discard gloves.</li></ul>
<b>4. Replace Diaper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slide a fresh diaper under the child.</li><li>• Apply diaper cream, if needed, with a freshly gloved finger.</li><li>• Fasten the diaper and dress the child.</li></ul>
<b>5. Wash Child's Hands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use soap and water to wash the child's hands thoroughly.</li><li>• Return the child to a supervised area.</li></ul>
<b>6. Clean Up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remove liner from the changing surface and discard in the trash can.</li><li>• Wipe up any visible soil with damp paper towels or a baby wipe.</li><li>• Wet the <b>entire surface</b> with disinfectant; make sure you read and follow the directions on the disinfecting spray, fluid, or wipe. Choose disinfectant appropriate for the surface material.</li></ul>
<b>7. Wash Your Hands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.</li></ul>

**\*\*\*Gloves must be worn and discarded after each use.**

## ***SR Student Ministry***

### **Check-In/Attendance**

- Accurate attendance records are essential. There is an “attendance roster” provided for every class, Life Group, or group. Please ensure that accurate attendance records are kept. These rosters will be used in the case of an emergency or evacuation.
  - Sunday Morning: Students will be dismissed from their ministry areas to find their families or pick up younger siblings (if they have necessary security tags).
  - The Ridge/Retreats/Activities: Students will be dismissed from a centralized location to families and parents. Students are not allowed to leave unless their entrusted guardian/parent/other is there to pick them up or they drove themselves. In case of a parent being late, 2 adult leaders must remain until their entrusted ride has arrived.

### **Discipleship Practices and Conversations**

- A Student Ministry Leader should not be alone with a student in a secluded area. Make sure that when you connect with students you are in public areas.
- Never be alone or transport a student of the opposite gender.
- Do your best to meet students at the destination and avoid being alone in a car with a student of the same gender. If that is not possible, ensure that the parents or ministry leader are aware of the circumstance prior.
- Under no circumstances are leaders allowed to date or court students within the ministry. If you are engaged in an inappropriate relationship, you will be immediately removed from leadership.

## ***Special Events***

### **Special Events/Overnight Policies for events Sponsored by the Church.**

- Church leaders must be verbally notified of off-site activities, and such activities must be supervised by at least two adults. Parents must be notified of the outing in advance.
- Drivers must have a valid license, and current automobile liability insurance for vehicles. The number of people in each vehicle cannot exceed the number of seat belts which must be worn. Any child under 12 is not allowed to sit in a front seat where an air bag is installed.

## ***Health and Safety***

### **Health and Safety Policy**

- Sick Policy: The general overview is as follows: Children with symptoms of illness should not be accepted into the classrooms. Some signs of illness include coughing, excessive sneezing, runny eyes and nose, fever, fatigue, irritability, vomiting and diarrhea. If a child has had a fever within the last 24-hour period of more than 100 degrees or any of the symptoms itemized above, he/she should be asked to stay with their parent(s) for that ministry event.
- Medication will only be administered by a parent. Exception: topical ointment, such as diaper creams/powders, anti-biotic ointment such as Bactine, etc. If a child has an allergy, bee sting, etc. Epi-pens must be left, and instructions given on what to do in the event the child has an allergic reaction. In the case of an emergency, an exception would be made. **ALL ALLERGIES AND ANY SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE CLEARLY DEFINED ON THE SIGN-IN SHEET.**
- Protective gloves are available in each classroom's first-aid kit. Wear them when handling any bodily fluids (urine, feces, vomit, and blood), as protection against blood-borne pathogens, which are micro-organisms that can cause disease.
- If an injury or illness does occur, move other children/students away from the ill/injured child/student and isolate the area where any bodily fluid has dropped. Use protective gloves as needed. Place soiled items (including gloves) in a zip-lock baggie and dispose of them in a plastic-lined trash container. Wash hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap. Lastly, depending on injury or accident, an incident will need to be completed. One copy needs to go to the parents and one copy needs to be put on file in the church.
  - If an incident report needs to be completed, please make sure to contact a South Ridge Staff member.
  - Incident reports can be found in the Activity Center (Gym Office – Wall File Folder), in the Nursery, and in the Preschool Check-In Office (on the desk in the file organizer).

### **Hold Harmless Forms**

The following sections are a part of our Hold Harmless policy (Authorization, Release and Indemnity; Medical & Dental Waiver; Image Release; Transportation Release) which must be completed by an Adult when registering for certain events (i.e., either the PARTICIPATING adult or the parent/guardian of participating minors). This form ensures the safety of our kids and understanding on the part of the participant or guardian. The Hold Harmless Policy will be integrated into registrations as a part of Off Campus Events or Special/Irregular Events on Campus.

### **Emergency Procedures– See following layout (Kids + Students)**

- It is imperative that accurate attendance be kept. In an emergency, we use our attendance to account for all children/students.
- Our Emergency Procedure Overview will be on the wall near or around the door. This document will show you the closest exit and a basic overview of how to handle specific emergencies.
- Where applicable, classrooms should be occupied by the ministry team and children only. If someone other than that wishes to enter the classroom, first determine who they are and why they are there.
- Each classroom is equipped with a two-way radio should help be necessary. The radio should always be kept on channel 3 unless otherwise instructed.
- Please Review our Emergency Procedure document on the following page.

# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## THREAT INSIDE - CAMPUS ON LOCKDOWN

<b>1. RUN</b> IF ESCAPE IS POSSIBLE	<b>2. HIDE</b> IF ESCAPE ISN'T POSSIBLE	<b>3. FIGHT</b> AS A LAST RESORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· If safe, gather others and escape to Walmart entrance</li><li>· Leave belongings behind</li><li>· Warn/prevent others from entering the area where the threat is</li><li>· Once you are safe, call 911</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Lock and block doors, turn off lights, cover windows</li><li>· Hide in an area that is out of view of the threat</li><li>· Silence cell phone including vibrate) and remain quiet</li><li>· Stay in place until all clear signal from police</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Fight as a last resort and only when life is in danger</li><li>· Attempt to disable threat</li><li>· Recruit others to ambush threat with makeshift weapons (fire extinguisher, chairs, scissors, etc.)</li><li>· Act with aggression, yell, throw items at the threat</li></ul>

## THREAT OUTSIDE - GET INSIDE, LOCK DOORS



### Kids/Students

- Return inside
- Business as usual

### Leaders

- Bring everyone indoors
  - Lock perimeter doors
  - Increase situational awareness
  - Business as usual
  - Take attendance
  - Be ready to respond to...
- Are all accounted for?***

## EVACUATE - TO ANNOUNCED LOCATION



### Kids/Students

- Leave belongings behind
- Follow instructions
- Maintain silence

### Leaders

- Turn off lights/Close door
  - Grab radio/attendance sheet
  - Lead evacuation to location
  - Adult at front/end of line
  - Leaders staggered in between
  - Take attendance
  - Be ready to respond to...
- Are all accounted for?***

## SHELTER - HAZARD AND SAFETY STRATEGY



### Kids/Students

- Take shelter inside.
- Follow Instructions

### Leaders

- Lead group to designated area
  - Take attendance
  - Be ready to respond to...
- Are all accounted for?***

## ***Communication***

### **Communication Flags**

- In discipleship conversations, different levels of personal information and challenges can be shared. This can leave a volunteer or staff member trying to determine what to do with the information shared.
- We have developed a system called Red, Yellow, and Green Flags. This system helps us identify the various kinds of conversations and what are some helpful next steps for the discipleship and safety of a student.

### **Red Flags**

A red flag conversation is one that should immediately prompt you to talk with your ministry leader about the situation. This could be for the child's safety or for liability reasons.

- Causing harm to oneself
- Signs of abuse from home (physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse)  
Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse, including sexual abuse, or acts of child abuse shall report. A report is required when a person has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.
- Suicidal thoughts or actions: Common phrases include "I have no hope.," or "No one would miss me if I was gone."

### **Yellow Flags**

A yellow flag conversation is one that should prompt you to talk with your ministry leader but does not require everything to be dropped to have the conversation. These are challenges that are not life threatening but are helpful to be processed through.

- Being bullied
- Personal or family member struggling with serious disease
- Parents going through a divorce
- Questionable home life
- If a student is in leadership, but is not living according to God's word (Ex: student leader who is sleeping with their boyfriend/girlfriend)

### **Green Flags**

A green flag conversation is one that you should feel is important to share with your ministry leader unless you have a question or would like to process something. Most conversations are green flag conversations but please know that I am here as a resource if you have any questions.

- Complaining about parents, teachers, etc...
- Personal challenges with their Faith
- Struggles in school related to grades, motivation, etc...
- Dating relationships

### **Communicating with participants outside of ministry**

- We believe in the value of communication and relationship building outside of regularly scheduled ministry. Technology in today's day and age provides an incredible opportunity to connect with kids and students.
- In an effort to protect leaders and students we have put together guidelines for how to best utilize technology and communicate with students.
  - We strongly encourage you to reach out to students, build relationships, and encourage connection. The Student Ministry Team will send a message to parents telling them that volunteers may contact their child. If a parent is uncomfortable with this, we will inform the leader and process other avenues of communication.
  - When texting, emailing, or using other 2D communication, be mindful of the tone and context.
  - Do not disciple or engage in regular communication with students of the opposite sex. We do not want to have intentions misinterpreted or misunderstood.
  - We strongly discourage the use of platforms that do not keep record of conversations (ex: Snapchat)