

Safe Keeping Policy

To prevent allegations of child abuse or to prevent the actual occurrences of child abuse, all workers are to follow the guidelines listed below. Anyone who works with children at Belmont Church is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the Children's Ministries Staff. Belmont Church reserves the right to dismiss workers who fail to follow the Children's Ministries policies and guidelines.

1. Team Member Approval and Identification:

- All team members (both adults and teens) must be approved by the Children's Ministries Office and must wear photo identification name tags including first and last names.
- Classroom guests or unapproved/cleared assistants (including parents or teens) must wear a guest badge and must never be left unsupervised with children.
- A parent/guardian may be allowed to enter the classroom to give his/her child any necessary assistance. However, the parent/guardian may not take responsibility for any other children.

2. Worker/Child Procedures:

- No worker may be alone with a child at any time.
- Every group of children must have at least two cleared adults or one adult and one cleared teen worker present at all times.
- If due to absence, illness, etc... the two cleared adults are not present at the beginning of the class, back-up measures must be implemented. An available director, staff member, or coordinator may be called in case of emergency. In some instances, two groups may be combined to make the minimum of two cleared adults available. As a last resort, parents may be called on to assist with a class or small group.
- In the Elementary grades, the smaller classes may have one teacher, if there are at least three children in the classroom and the class meets in an area which may be observed by others from the hall or adjacent classes.
- Physical contact with the children should be minimal, age appropriate, and done in the presence of other adults in an open area.
- Window blinds must be kept open and the window in each of the classroom doors must remain uncovered where children's activities are occurring.

3. Child Check-in, Identification, and Dismissal:

Check-in:

- All nursery through 4th grade children must be accompanied to class by their parent/guardian.
- 5th & 6th grade children may go to their class areas unattended; of course, the parent makes the decision as to whether their child is ready for the responsibility.

Identification/Security:

- Each child is issued a unique Quiet-Call Number (QCN) at the time of registration. This number enables the Children's Ministries team match a parent to a child or to contact the parent in case of illness, accidents, or the inability to console the child.
- Name tags printed with the child's QCN (for two-year-old through 6th grade) are provided for regular attendees. Guest parents will receive a temporary quiet call card for their child. Write-in names tags with a temporary QCN are given to visiting children.
- Special identification procedures are used by the nursery for infants up to twenty-four months. Kiddie-Keepers, a creative security system, is implemented. One part of the kiddie-keeper is clipped to the child's clothing and the matching piece goes to the parent/guardian. When the parent/guardian returns, they must show this matched clip in order to obtain their child. (Please refer to the Early Childhood Caregiver Packet if you are volunteering specifically for responsibilities related to infants through two-year-olds.)

Dismissal:

- All nursery through 4th grader children must be picked up by parents in their respective classrooms. 5th through 6th grade children may (by written permission) be released from their weekend classes to meet their parents. During evening events, all children must be picked up by their parents.
- Children's Ministries reserves the right to require parent/guardian, or those authorized by the parent/guardian, to show child's Quiet Call card upon request at time of pick-up.

4. **Potty Breaks:**

- With younger children, always watch for signs of a child having to go to the bathroom. Don't **ask** them if they have to go. Let them know it is their turn to go. **Never** force a child to go to the bathroom.
- **Never** scold a child that has wet his pants. Minister to them as you change them into dry clothes. Explain to them that we all make mistakes and encourage them to tell you next time when they have to go.
- All children from early childhood to 2nd grade must be accompanied to the bathroom by an adult worker. For the safety of the child as well as your own, always take at least two children with you to the bathroom.
- When taking a child to the bathroom:
 - Let the child wash his hands
 - Wash your hands with **soap** and water.
- Workers should only enter a restroom stall when absolutely necessary to assist a child.
- 3rd - 6th grade children may be sent in pairs without an adult. For all evening activities, however, all children must be accompanied by an adult worker.
- Men may not take girls to the restroom.

5. **Discipline:**

- Any major discipline problem should be discussed with your area director. He or She has age specific guidelines based on years of experience that can help you.
- Most needs for discipline can be avoided with proper instruction before a problem occurs.
- Always supervise children when encouraging them to share or play with a toy together.
- Be firm and positive when giving corrective instruction. (“You **can** color on the paper, not the wall.”)
- Always give the child a choice before carrying out corrective action. (“If you . . . , I will”). Then be sure to carry out your action if the child disobeys you.
- **NEVER** spank, slap, pinch, or scream at a child.

- If a toy has been taken from another child, allow the child the opportunity to return the toy. If he refuses, “help” him return the toy to the child that originally had it. Begin to play a “giving game” by picking up toys and giving them to the children. Express a happy heart as you become the “giver.” Try to encourage the children to give toys to you also.
- Many times just removing one child from a situation will correct a discipline problem. Be secure, calm, and never panic. Instruct the child by showing or doing the proper action.
- If your child is in the class and in need of discipline, please leave the room to do so. This eliminates any fear that could be developed by a watching child.
- Assist the teacher during lesson time by helping the children; if there is a problem, please speak to the child in a way that will not disturb the entire class or take away from the lesson.

6. **Infection Control:**

- **Our policy is, “No Sick Children”**
- A sick child is not to be admitted to classes when he or she could cause infection of others.
- Some signs of illness that should be reported to the lead teacher are:
 - Unusual fatigue or irritability
 - Consistent coughing and sneezing
 - Runny nose or eyes
 - Suspected fever
 - Vomiting or diarrhea (procedures for sanitary clean-up in Emergency & Safety)
- The Director will make any final decisions as to whether the parents should be called if a child becomes ill during class time.

Emergency and Safety Procedures

Since emergencies come in many forms and seldom when we expected, Belmont uses the following procedures in dealing with them:

Every area of the Children's Ministries is equipped with a First Aid Kit. A First Aid kit is available in the following locations:

- 3rd floor bathroom cabinet.
- Nursery Cabinet
- Fellowship Hall Kitchen

1. Handling Accidents:

- **Your director or supervisor is your first resource. If you don't know what to do, contact him/her.**
- Keep in mind that we are not authorized to dispense any over-the-counter or prescription medications.
- In the event a child needs more attention than we can easily provide, the parent should be called using the child's Quiet Call number.

Serious Injuries

Serious Injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness, or other serious bodily injury should be treated as follows:

1. Keep calm and keep children and the injured person as calm as possible. Speak calmly to assure the child.
2. Do not move the injured child and do not leave them.
3. Send a fellow teacher to contact the coordinator or director. You may contact the director via the walkie-talkie or use QCN 500 to contact the Children's Director or point CM Staff member.
4. If needed, the coordinator or staff member will contact 911 and any medical personnel available on campus.
5. The coordinator or staff member will contact the parents and advise them of the child's situation and the procedure being followed.
6. The staff member will refer to the parents for details on doctor or hospital preferences.
7. Should a child be taken to the ER, a representative of Children's Ministries or Belmont Church accompanies the family.
8. An accident report is filed and updated for future reference.

If the parent's cannot be located and the injury is serious, the director Children's Director, or a Belmont Staff Pastor will advise the treatment of the child. Each parent or guardian signs a medical release when registering their children in Belmont's Children's Ministries. (Signed medical releases are also required on a per event basis.)

Severe Injuries

Should a child get a severe bump that causes swelling, the parent is called to the area (via Quiet Call system) to assist in a decision for further medical treatment.

Minor Injuries

- A minor scrape during class can be treated with a little loving attention, a cool cloth, a little first-aid cream, and a band aid.
- Please treat the child
- Complete an “Accident Report” and have your director sign it (See forms for a copy)
- Make a copy for the parents and give the original to your director. This form will be filed for future reference.
- Please talk with the parents on their arrival letting them know what happened and how the “ouch” was treated.

2. Sanitary Clean-up

If a child develops an upset stomach resulting in vomiting while in our care, a SAFETEC kit (clean-up, sanitizer-deodorizer provided by the facility manager) is used. It is a product/method for the cleanup of potentially infectious and harmful blood/body fluid spills. For more information, call or write: SAFETEC, 1055 East Delavan Avenue, Buffalo New York, 14215, (716) 895-1822, 1-800-456-7077.

- A custodian is called to the area for assistance.
- The child’s parent is immediately called to the area.
- The child is not allowed back into the classroom.

3. Lost Child

Even when every precaution for the supervision and safety of children is practiced, a child might get lost from a parent or classroom. A plan of action must be in place that can be immediately activated. At Belmont we:

1. Immediately check all hallways and nearby classrooms, including bathrooms
2. Communicate to security via walkie-talkie the description of the child, age, and what the child is wearing
3. Expand search to the next floors, stairwells, elevators, exits, parking lots, adjacent buildings and streets
4. Call 911 and file report

4. **Emergency Evacuation**

(This is an overview. Detailed department-specific procedures follow.)

- If a fire alarm sounds, the children are automatically evacuated. If it turns out to be a false alarm, the children are taken back to class for the remainder of the session.
- **All children's classrooms are equipped with an emergency bag containing:**
 - Knotted Rope (Toddlers – Pre-first)--Children hold to a knot in the rope as they exit the building and they are encircled with the rope until their parents arrive at the predetermined location. (The Nursery Division has a special evacuation bed.)
 - Flashlight and extra batteries—To light the way toward the stairwells should there be a power failure
 - Baggie—Contains bandages, wound wipes, gauze pads and rubber gloves
 - Clip Board—Contains directions for Evacuation Procedure, floor plan of the area, class roll, pen, and paper for parents to sign when the child is released to them
- **Count the children in your class at the beginning of each session.**
- **Know the location and use of the emergency bag. All new teacher/helpers must undergo emergency evacuation training.**
- **In an emergency evacuation:**
 1. Remove rope from emergency bag.
 2. Each child grabs a knot on the rope.
 3. One worker leads the line and one follows at the end of the line.
 4. Lead children to designated exit stairs and then to the designated area of safety.
 5. Encircle the children upon arrival at the designated area.
 6. Count the children upon arrival at the designated area.
 7. Parents should sign for the child to be released from safety area.
Children will not be released to older siblings during emergencies.
- **Every Area Director has a similar bag.** It is their responsibility to check the area for complete evacuation before closing evacuation doors and joining the evacuees in the designated areas.

Procedure for Reporting (Handling) Suspected Child* Abuse/Neglect

Because we value the children of Belmont Church, a procedure has been established for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect. The leadership of Belmont Church will make every reasonable effort to report child abuse/neglect by responding promptly where there is reasonable belief that abuse/neglect has occurred. Any Belmont Church leader (staff member, community group leader, caregiver, teacher, ministry team leader, etc...) who suspects child abuse/neglect shall follow this procedure:

- 1) Call your *Supervisor* (Coordinator, Director, Department Head, District Pastor, or Executive Pastor) to witness any marks of suspected child abuse/neglect on child's body or a verbal report from the child.
- 2) Talk to NO ONE other than your *Supervisor* about what you have seen or heard. Do not mail or fax this information, do not approach parents/guardians, and do not discuss with co-workers.
- 3) Fill out the disclosure form to report any suspected case of child abuse/neglect and immediately give it to your *Supervisor*. This form should be signed by all parties and dated. Copies of the form will be given to each party and the Executive Pastor shall keep the original form.
- 4) Be prepared to meet with Belmont Church leaders/elders if requested to do so.

If necessary, it will be the responsibility of the Executive Pastor or his designee to call the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) concerning a suspected case of child abuse/neglect.

*Child: a person less than 18 years of age

Definitions of Child Abuse

As defined by "The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse."

Physical Abuse – Non-Accidental injury, which may include beatings, violent shaking, human bites, strangulation, suffocation, poisoning, or burns. The results may be bruises and welts, broken bones, scars, permanent disfigurement, long lasting psychological damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage or death.

Neglect – The failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.

Sexual Abuse – The sexual exploitation of a child by an older person as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism or pornography. It may be done for the sexual gratification of another person(s) out of a need for power or for economic reasons.

Emotional Maltreatment – A pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and a sense of self-worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, manipulation; also, providing no love, support or guidance.