

- Children's Ministry -

POLICY MANUAL



Updated on 08-29-18

- **Emmanuel Bible Church** -
8512 Sunnyview Road NE
Salem Oregon 97305

Dear EBC Volunteers,

What a privilege to serve alongside incredible volunteers like you! I really believe that we are serving in one of the most important ministries in the church! When we are successful, the difference isn't measured in only individual lives, but quite possibly in generations. I believe that together, we can make an impact that will change our community and beyond ...one precious life at a time!

What you do in Children's Ministry is more than babysitting or childcare. It is the church hard at work, developing the church *today*, where children are being equipped to make a difference for Jesus Christ right now! Our mission statement states that we are committed to...

*“Partner with parents to help each child develop their God-given potential to **SEEK** Him diligently, **SERVE** Him faithfully and **SHARE** Him boldly.*

This statement affects every ministry we undertake. Whether it is Sunday School, Children's Church, Awana, Camp, the Nursery or the After School Program, we want to be intentional about the kids in our care! But, we realize we are bit players compared to the influence parents have in the spiritual formation of kids. Two statements that have really helped me understand this partnership are as follows:

- ❖ “The Church's potential to influence a child dramatically increases when it partners with parent's.”
- ❖ “The parent's potential to influence a child dramatically increases when that parent partners with the Church.”

Our goal is to come alongside parents in their effort to grow their children spiritually. Realizing that as a church we basically have about forty hours a year with kids, we have emphasized the value that... ***What happens at home is a lot more important than what happens at church.*** At the same time, we realize that parents' influences are also limited and that other adult voices are needed in the lives of kids. Therefore, we seek to combine the efforts of home and church for the sake of impacting the next generation...and that's where **YOU** come in!
As a Children's Ministry Volunteer, you are the voice, the hands, the feet and the mouth, reinforcing God's truth in the lives of kids at EBC.

Thank you for your willingness to be used by God to do His work. I pray that as you serve, not only will you bless the kids and their families, but that you will also experience community and spiritual growth as you work with other like minded servants in carrying out our mission for the kids at EBC. My prayer is that while serving, you will experience powerful and lasting life-change as you make a difference in the lives of kids!

Ready to plunge in? Let's go!

Mindy Myers
Director of Children's Ministry
Emmanuel Bible Church

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PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY TO CHILDREN

Our EBC philosophy of ministry to children defines the compelling values and motives we hold and the effect those have on how we minister to children. As a church, our values and motives are to be informed, indeed they are to be determined, by God's revelation, the Scriptures. Cultural considerations hold only secondary status as they inform our values and motives; they are not determinate. At Emmanuel, we hold Scripture to be supra-cultural.

Three areas of Biblical inquiry drive EBC's Philosophy of Ministry to Children:

AUTHORITY

Because we serve under the authority of the Great Shepherd, we acknowledge that parents, not the church, comprise the primary God ordained authority structure over their own children (Exodus 20:12; Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20; Prov. 6:20; 23:22). Though all God's commands to submit to authority apply equally to children and adults, note that the commands specific to children for obedience are always linked to their parents, not to others in authority. Therefore we believe that all children's ministry should be vitally supportive and complementary to parental influence and that children's ministry is incomplete apart from the church equipping the parents for godly parenting. Children's ministry as a stand alone ministry is not only incomplete but is antithetic to the Scriptural model. Therefore EBC parents, along with the church's spiritual leadership, will have controlling input into EBC's ministries for children. God's intention is that EBC ministry to children would be shaped by His heart's desire that the hearts of fathers would be turned to their children and that the hearts of the children would be turned to their fathers (Mal 4:6).

TEACHING AND APPLICATION

All teaching at EBC must be Christocentric. All God's revelation, even Old Testament stories, point to Christ. Effective teaching will always show relationship to Christ as applicable in the child's life. A child is not capable of understanding complex theological constructs but is eminently qualified and is capable of plumbing the depths of simple faith in Christ. Age appropriate teaching does not have to be shallow and teaching must proceed from Bible stories to age appropriate application. Since children are susceptible to false teaching just as are adults, care needs to be given to teach doctrine as revealed without inadvertently adulterating it to promote a change in behavior.

WALKING IN FELLOWSHIP IN THE LIGHT

Godliness is not specific to age. All God's commands, His standard, and His provision equally apply to children and adults. The children's ministry leader's expectations should match God's reality. Apart from actively engaging their role in the Body of Christ, even children will be stunted in their growth. Children need to appropriate Christ's view of His Body, the Church, and how they fit in to the body. They need opportunity to encounter Christ in other members and to delight in Christ's life in themselves. Children need nurturing as they grow in the body, and as they earn trust, they should be given increased opportunity and responsibility. They need to understand the function of spiritual leadership in the church and how they personally relate to church leadership.

Adopted by Elder Board 10/10 /07

AREAS of MINISTRY

- **Nursery** - The Nursery is for babies up to 2 years of age. Nursery is available during both worship services and the education hour. We have rotating greeters, who check babies in, give parents a pager, and have oversight of the volunteer staff for that hour. See Nursery handbook for policy details.
- **2T Class** - When a child turns 2, he/she graduates to the 2Transition class. Here they are introduced to the first steps of listening, cooperating and playing with other toddlers. Children stay in the transition class from their 2nd birthday until the September promotion date, or a date agreed upon by parent and teacher. As we begin to look at our 2 and 3 year old children as individuals, we can transition them into new learning environments when they are ready, not necessarily bound by the calendar. (Education hour 9:30-10:30)
- **The Gospel Project (Preschool-5th grade)** - Late 2's through 5th grade study the Bible from Genesis to Revelation following the whole sequence of Bible history to understand its importance in God's grand plan of redemption. The gospel story is unpacked and kids see how every story points to Jesus. Kids begin class in small groups, move to a large group story time/worship and then return to small group time with teachers. (Education hour 9:30-10:30)
- **Children's Church** - Knowing that many small children struggle to remain still and quiet during the entire worship service, EBC provides Children's Church for ages 2 through Kindergarten. Our program is designed to accommodate children's activity, while also reinforcing the themes and stories of our Sunday school program. This is done through stories, songs, memory verses, games and crafts. (Kids are dismissed during both services after the worship time) See Children's Church handbook for details.
- **Awana** - AWANA stands for Approved Workman Are Not Ashamed (based on 2 Tim. 2:15). This is a Bible based club where children learn God's Word and have lots of fun! Kids of all ages are encouraged to attend. Cubbies (Pre-school), Sparks (Kdg-3rd), and TNT (4th-6th). (Wednesdays 6:30-8:15 Oct.-April)
- **After School Program** - A local outreach to our nearby public school in Pratum. We meet every Monday from 2:00-4:00. We emphasize character virtues, group activities, small group time, games and crafts. Our goal is to express the love of Jesus to the kids and parents in our community. We seek to be a bridge between the public school and EBC.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

The following information is important for you to know, regardless of what area you serve in. Please familiarize yourself with this essential information.

REQUIREMENTS

Background Check and the Absolutes of the Scripture document

All volunteers (including minors) that have access to children must complete a criminal background check. In addition, all those in leadership/teaching positions must agree and sign the Absolutes of Scripture document that lays out the essential truths of scripture that we hold absolute.

Age Requirements

- **Junior Volunteer:**
Children (1st through 5th grade) can serve two-year olds through Kindergarten only if accompanied by a parent.
- **Youth Volunteer:**
Middle school students (6th through 8th grade) can serve in the nursery, with a parent, and as a volunteer, without a parent, in Children's church.
- **Student Volunteer:**
High School students (9th through 12th grade) can serve in all areas of Children's Ministry after being interviewed by the team leader of that ministry or Director of Ministry to children.
- **Adult Volunteer:**
Adults (18 years or older) can serve in any area of Children's Ministry after completing a background check, signing an Absolutes of Scripture and meeting with team leader of that ministry or Director of ministry to children.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Understand the Mission

The children's ministry of Emmanuel Bible Church exists to glorify God by:

- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching Biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4).

- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17).
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10).
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

Arrive on time

All Children’s Ministry volunteers should arrive **at least 10 minutes** before their volunteer service time. This time will allow for preparation and connection with those you are serving with and communicate with parents and children that you are ready to receive them.

Be prepared

Please come fully prepared and ready to go. That means lessons, skits, lyrics or whatever else will be used to present, play or teach.

Use of Media in the Classroom

When using any media in the classroom such as YouTube, DVD’s, or Netflix, it is the teacher’s responsibility to review all such material to make sure it is appropriate and that there are no surprises before showing it to children. If in doubt, contact the Director of Ministries to Children for review.

Communicate

If you are going to be absent, please switch with someone in your area of ministry. If you are unable to come up with a substitute, contact the team leader of that ministry and if they are unavailable, contact the Director of Ministries to Children.

Your feed back is also important to us. Please communicate any needs or concerns you have regarding what you are doing.

Hygiene

Please help us prevent the spread of illnesses by washing or sanitizing your hands:

- When you first arrive in a room
- After a diaper change
- After accompanying a child to the restroom
- After contact with body fluid (wiping a child’s nose, etc.)
- Before handling food
- Whenever else is needed

Please instruct children to wash their hands:

- After using the restroom
- Wiping their nose
- Before eating

Diaper wipes or hand sanitizer is also available for washing kid's hands before snack time.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is our hope that Children's Ministry is a warm, welcoming and friendly place. We greatly value the safety of our kids. We also seek to provide an environment that protects you as a volunteer from misunderstanding. Therefore, the following policies are meant to protect children and misunderstandings that can arise for the volunteers caring for the kids in their charge. It is imperative that all Children's Ministry leaders and volunteers carry out the policies below. Failure to comply with these guidelines are grounds for immediate evaluation and/or dismissal.

BASIC SAFETY GUIDLINES

Two Person Rule

- Never plan be alone with a child. Each leader should have an assistant or helper.
- Classroom doors should be left ajar if there is only one adult in the room.

Sunday School Drop Off / Pick Up

- Teachers should be in the classroom ready to receive students at least 15 min. before class is to begin.
- Teachers need to check students in using the check in sheet as parents drop them off.
- Room Leaders should note any allergies the student might have and post it in the room so it is passed on to other classroom volunteers.
- Never let unauthorized adults in the room.
- When receiving new students, please have parents fill out a registration form and put form in attendance sleeve.
- Add new children to attendance sheet. Please write first and last name.
- Children are not permitted to leave until parent or designated person has checked them out with the teacher.
- When the service is over, parents are permitted to enter the room and pick up their child from his or her classroom.
- If anyone ever pushes their way in at any time, or takes a child without permission, call for help immediately.
- Parents have the option on registration sheet for 3-4th grade to do self-check in and out.

See specific handbooks for Nursery and Children's Church Drop Off / Pick Up policies.

Discipline

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should

be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include:

- Correcting the child verbally.
- Withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).
- Sever disruptions might mean the removal of the child from the classroom.
- Parents should be contacted about reoccurring issues by the teacher.

Children's ministry volunteers and staff members should never yell, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, ask an assistant volunteer to call the parents.

For further information regarding discipline please speak with the Director of Children's Ministry.

Well Child Policy

In order to promote health and wellness in all children, we ask that sick children not attend church events where they will be exposed to other children.

Please advise parents if you see the following symptoms:

- Any degree of fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained or contagious skin rash
- Bleeding/wet diaper rash
- Chronic cough
- Runny nose (yellow/green discharge)
- Eye/ Ear infections
- Pink Eye
- Parasites (nits, lice, mites, ring worm, etc.)

See Nursery Handbook for specifics regarding children in the nursery.

Bathroom Policy

- If at all possible, the same gender adult should walk child to the bathroom.
- Only allow one child in a bathroom stall at a time

- If no one else is in the bathroom, keep main bathroom door open and stay outside bathroom or in bathroom entry as much as possible.
- If a child can go on their own, let them
- If a child needs help or has hasn't finished up after some time, talk through the door or slightly crack the door so you can talk without looking.

STANDARDS FOR APPROPRIATE TOUCH

Emmanuel Bible Church recognizes that touch can be an important way to communicate Christ's love, care, and compassion in children's lives. We are committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing and safe environment for our children's ministry that protects our children from abuse and our adult leaders from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for children, it is important to establish what types of touch/affection are appropriate and inappropriate, creating a well understood standard for each individual to reference. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows adult leaders to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, as well as to identify and educate individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children. The following standards are to be carefully followed by all leaders working around or with children.

Proper touch/affection includes:

- Brief hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Verbal praise
- Handshakes/High fives
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands during prayer

Inappropriate Touch/Affection includes:

- No extended hugging, piggy back rides, tickling or prolonged physical contact of any kind.
- Lap sitting is only appropriate for children in the nursery and the 2/3's class. If a child is insistent in sitting in your lap, move them to sit next to you or sit on your knees as they are not able to sit in your lap. Other than the nursery, men must not have any child on their laps.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Giving gifts, money or personal information (telephone numbers) to individual children without parental permission and awareness.
- Never touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when changing a diaper or properly assisting a child in the restroom).
- Never allow a child to touch you in a way that is inappropriate.

CHILD ABUSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Definitions

“The National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse” designed the definitions below.

- **Physical Abuse** - Physical abuse can be defined as a 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.
- **Physical/Emotional Neglect** - Physical/Emotional neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Sexual abuse is constituted through the sexual exploitation of a child by an older person as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism or pornography.
- **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. It can also be defined as providing no love, support, or guidance for the child.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

- Familiarize yourself with the definitions and descriptions of child abuse listed above.
- If you suspect that a child involved in any of the programs of Emmanuel Bible Church has been abused, the following steps are to be followed:
 - Report the suspected abuse to the Director of Children’s Ministry.
- Do not interview the child regarding the suspected abuse. This could be considered leading the child.
- Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other volunteers, parents, etc. All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with Director of Children’s Ministry and the proper authorities.
- You may be asked to complete a Suspected Child Abuse Report. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible. This form will be returned to Director of Children’s Ministry.

VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION AND VISITING ADULTS

We make every effort to keep Children's Ministry secure and safe. Below are our policies concerning adults in Children's Ministry.

Volunteer Identification

- All volunteers are required to wear a nametag while in a classroom.
- Adult volunteers can get their nametags from the drawers in their classrooms.
 - Student and youth volunteers can get their nametags from the teacher of that classroom.

Parents

- Parents or adult family members are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Emmanuel Bible Church. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing, contact with their children's programs at EBC will be required to complete the EBC volunteer application and screening process and consult with the Director of Children's Ministry.
 - A parent should be called from the sanctuary or classroom, by a staff member, in the event that the child is completely inconsolable (after at least ten minutes of care), is ill, injured, has a severe disciplinary problem, or is a danger to himself/herself or other children.
- Parents are encouraged to leave their child after getting them settled in the classroom. If a parent insists on staying in the classroom, it is advised he/she consult with the teacher of that classroom.
- Once the service is over, do not release students until the parent or approved sibling picks up the child.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Classroom Evacuation

In the event of a fire or some other emergency situations where it is necessary to exit the building, please do the following:

- Get children out of the area that needs to be evacuated to the designated safety zone. Once there, keep children together and separate from other groups so that children can be more easily accounted for.
- Evacuate children from the children's wing out the South door and into the open parking lot. One leader should be in front, with the assistant being the last out of the classroom.
- Once evacuated, please wait for further instructions from an usher.
- Please stay with your group at all times. Do not leave to get your own children, to obtain first aid or for any other reason. First Aid will be brought to the evacuation zone.
- Release children only to their parents and only after you have been given the okay to dismiss them by an usher.

- Do not dismiss any children, including elementary age, to go on their own. Do not allow parents to take their child from your care during the process of your evacuation. Remind the parents they can walk with you but you cannot release a child until you have arrived to the evacuation zone and have been authorized to release children.

Classroom Lockdown

The following lockdown procedures should be followed if a ministry leader, usher, or other authorized personnel announces the need, if shots are heard, etc...

- Barricade door(s) with emergency stops.
- Close windows and window blinds.
- Keep everyone quiet.
- Be attentive and prepare for necessary action.
- Wait for all clear code from authorized personnel.

Location of all First Aid Kits

First aid kits can be found at the following locations:

- The Kitchen
- The copy room (in the cabinet labeled first aid)
- The 2T room (resource cabinet)

Location of all Defibrillators

Defibrillators can be found at the following locations:

- Foyer
- South Building main entrance

Each defibrillator is equipped with child pads.

Emergencies

We are not authorized to administer any over the counter or prescription medications. In the event a child needs more attention than we can provide, the parent will be notified.

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

- Remain calm and keep the children and the injured person as calm as possible. Speak calmly to the child.
- Do not move or leave the injured child alone.
- Send a fellow volunteer to the nursery where a beeper will be activated, alerting an usher to locate the parents.

- The usher will call 911 if necessary.
- The usher will contact the parents.

Other Incidents

In the case of any non-accident or injury incident that is a cause for concern, please inform the coordinator for that department or a Children’s Ministry staff member right away. This may include behavior that indicates possible abuse, inappropriate talk or touch from one child to another or any other incident that a parent or Children’s ministry staff needs to know.

PROMOTION

Children are promoted to the next class level once each year at the beginning of the school year. Children remain in their class level until the next promotion date except for the 2T Transition Class where it is determined by the teacher and parent as to when the child is mature enough to be in the older 2’s/ 3’s class.

The first Sunday after Labor Day is “Promotion Sunday”. After introducing teachers to parents in the large group setting, teachers go to their classrooms to meet and greet parents and new students. Teachers are to give parents a registration form to be filled out that day and returned to them.

POLICY EXCEPTIONS

It is understood that circumstances may arise that necessitate the need for deviating from this policy. For such infrequent and unusual situations that are not easily classified elsewhere in this policy, the standards and spirit of this policy shall be recognized as being in force. Exceptions should be cleared with the Director of Children’s Ministry in advance if possible. As soon as an unavoidable or uncorrectable deviation is observed, please notify the Director of Children’s Ministry as soon as possible for your own protection and the protection of others.

