



Children's Ministry Handbook

&

Policies and Procedures Manual

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Our Mission: We are continually **GOING** to the children of our world, **INVITING** them into welcoming communities, and **PARTNERING** with families to lead them in a **GROWING** relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our Vision: It is our desire to partner with parents in the process of helping their children grow up into spiritually mature young men and women. We want to provide a safe and enjoyable environment specifically designed for children, where they can learn and grow with the guidance and supervision of caring adults.

What to Expect: We have age-appropriate curriculum and classes for infants through 5th grade. Our Bible-based curriculum is taught by trained adults that love God and have a heart for serving and teaching children. We want all children to feel invited, welcomed, and safe! We want to get to know each child and their family so that we are able to meet the unique needs of each one.

Age Groups

Lemon Grove: Birth-18 months

Peach Grove: 18-36 months

Plum Grove: 3 & 4 years

Pear Grove: K & 1st grade

Orange Grove: 2nd & 3rd grade

Apple Grove: 4th & 5th grade

When a child turns 18 months or 36 months, they graduate to the next classroom immediately. The Plum, Pear, Orange, and Apple Grove children graduate the first Sunday of June. If a child turns five shortly after the school year starts but is not enrolled in Kindergarten, they may also graduate to the Pear Grove pending their developmental readiness. The Grove Coordinator and parents will come to an agreement on what is best for the child and the classroom environment.

Classroom Schedules

Lemon Grove

The Lemon Grove has free play, snack, music/worship time, and a short Bible story/activity

Peach and Plum Groves

Welcome

Free Play

Worship and Bible Lesson

Snack, Craft/Activity

Free Play

Dismissal to Parents

Pear, Orange, and Apple Groves

(Pear, Orange, and Apple Groves join the church body for worship and are dismissed to class following worship)

Group Worship, Dismissal to Classrooms

Bible Lesson

Small Group Activity, Craft, or Game

Dismissal to Parents

Volunteer Application Process

Thank you for your interest in serving with The Grove! We believe that ministry to our children is vital to the health of our families and church. At Life Pointe, we are committed to providing our families with a safe and secure ministry environment. This includes volunteers who have been screened and have been cleared to work with children. Because we have this standard, we ask every person who applies to work with our children to go through a comprehensive background check. Every applicant will go through the following steps to ensure that our children are as safe as possible.

1. Application

This form is used to help find the right placement for each volunteer and to gather basic information for future communications. References are a crucial part of the process, and we will not be able to process your application without them.

2. Criminal History Check

We ask all of our volunteers to fill out the sheet that authorizes Life Pointe to run a criminal history check. Once we have obtained the authorization sheet, we will run the criminal history check. If an applicant has a charge against them for the sexual abuse of a minor or any other crime that puts our children at risk, the applicant will not be allowed to serve within The Grove ministry.

3. Reference Checks

All references will be contacted and asked questions pertaining to the volunteer's capability to serve in children's ministry. Each applicant will provide names, addresses, e-mails & phone numbers for three references. These cannot be family members. They must have known the applicant for at least three years, and be able to recommend them for ministry with children. The Grove staff will contact each reference either by phone, in person, or by e-mail.

4. Training for The Grove

Applicants must read and understand the Children's Ministry Handbook and Policies and Procedures. New volunteers will be directed to read through the functions of our ministry, safety and procedures, and what to expect in the classrooms. If the leaders have reservations, then an evaluation will occur and the applicant may be asked to stop volunteering.

If any of these requirements are not met, an applicant will be denied access to working with our children.

Thank you for your heart for this ministry and your willingness to serve!

The Grove Volunteer Requirements

- ✓ Application: All volunteers will be required to fill out an application.
- ✓ Background Check: For the safety of our children, and to protect the integrity of our volunteers, all workers will be required to complete a background check. If needed, we will gladly help you find another area of service.
- ✓ Arrival: All teachers, helpers, and teens must arrive at minimum 30 minutes prior to the start of class, 10:00 am. As soon as the first child arrives, all children's ministry volunteers must be in place and should not leave the children's area until the last child is gone and the room is cleaned up. It is disruptive to families when we are not ready to accept their children and it communicates a lack of concern and care. Teachers/Helpers in the Pear, Orange, and Apple Groves must arrive no later than 10:00 for prayer and to set-up your classroom. You may join the church body for worship, and then lead your children back to their assigned classroom when the children are dismissed following worship.
- ✓ Supervision: Never leave children unsupervised! Do not leave the classroom while children are in your care, unless there is an emergency. Please ask a greeter, registration table attendant, or the children's ministry coordinator to step into your classroom, to retain two-deep (please see page 11), while you are away. Please return to the classroom as soon as possible. If you need to leave Life Pointe Church due to an emergency, the children's ministry coordinator and greeters will help find someone to take your place.
- ✓ Media & phone use: No texting, checking social media, or talking on your phone while you are in the classroom. Please give the children your undivided attention and care. No taking pictures using a camera or other device without prior permission by children's ministry staff.
- ✓ Safety: When you are in the classroom, you are responsible for safety, security, evaluating the environment, and guiding behavior.
- ✓ Attendance: Please realize that children need consistency in schedule as well as caregivers. You are missed when you are not in attendance. As a teacher, you are ministering to the needs of the child and their family. Please make an effort to establish a relationship with the children and their families. Outreach is necessary in making sure all the needs of the family are met and to show Christ's love.
- ✓ Confidentiality: Volunteers will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality, respect, and privacy when it comes to the history, records, and conversations about families in The Grove.
- ✓ No gossip or slander.
- ✓ Attire: Volunteers must dress modestly and respectfully to maintain a professional appearance in and outside of our classrooms. Please no low-cut shirts or explicit/violent graphics on shirts. Shorts and skirts must be at least finger-tip length, and no midsections showing. Dress comfortably enough to move around the classroom with children.

All children's ministry volunteers must agree with and follow The Grove Policies and Procedures. The children's ministry staff reserves the right to make changes to the policies and procedures as needed without prior written or verbal notice.

Ministry Positions

Children's Ministry Coordinator: Must be a committed follower of Christ and be invested in a personal and growing relationship with God. Must also be able to lead both children and children's ministry volunteers in carrying out the mission and vision of The Grove.

Responsibilities:

1. Regularly attend Life Pointe Church, support Life Pointe's leadership, and be committed to the mission and vision of the church.
2. Teacher recruitment and retention
3. Teacher orientation and training
4. Teacher scheduling
5. Classroom design and management
6. Curriculum selection and implementation
7. Attendance record-keeping
8. Guest follow-up
9. Promotion of The Grove
10. Communication with parents and congregation
11. Budget development and management
12. Participation as part of the Life Pointe Church Staff (monthly meetings, retreats, church events, etc.)
13. Pray for the children and ministry as this is the key element of any and all ministry!

Classroom Coordinator: Must be a committed follower of Christ and be invested in a personal and growing relationship with God. Must also be able to invest in the children, families, and fellow teachers/helpers in the classroom.

Responsibilities:

1. Regularly attend Life Pointe Church, support Life Pointe's leadership, and be committed to the mission and vision of the church.
2. Assist with curriculum prep each quarter.
3. Track supplies and needed items in the classroom.
4. Communicate and build a relationship with the children and families of the classroom.
5. Attend all of The Grove trainings and meetings and lead classroom specific break-out discussions.

6. Pray for the children and ministry as this is the key element of any and all ministry!

Lead Teacher: Must be a committed follower of Christ and be invested in a personal and growing relationship with God. Must also be able to teach children with provided material and lead both children and fellow workers.

Responsibilities:

1. Regularly attend Life Pointe Church, support Life Pointe's leadership, and be committed to the mission and vision of the church.
2. Serve twice/month in the same classroom (two "safe adults" per classroom).
3. Plan and prepare the Bible lesson and gather all needed materials (please let the children's ministry staff know if materials are needed for crafts/activities in advance).
4. Sign all children into the classroom, with the help of the classroom helper.
5. Clean-up the classroom after the last child is picked up (all toys/materials back into their assigned tubs, tubs out in the hallway/on the cart, desks returned where they belong).
6. Comply with all policies and procedures in The Grove.
7. Attend all of The Grove trainings and meetings.
8. Arrive no later than 10:00 am on the day of service for prayer and to assist with classroom preparation and orientation of classroom helpers to their role in that day's lesson.
9. Serve with a desire to see the children of Life Pointe grow into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and speak truth.
10. Pray for the children and ministry as this is the key element of any and all ministry!

Teacher Helper/Teen Helper: Must be open to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and actively seeking to live a Christian lifestyle. Must also be willing to help and serve the lead teacher and children at all times.

Responsibilities:

1. Regularly attend Life Pointe Church, support Life Pointe's leadership, and be committed to the mission and vision of the church.
2. Serve at least once/month in the classroom (two "safe adults" per classroom).
3. Assist during the Bible lesson with gathering supplies, helping keep children's attention, and providing support to the lead teacher.
4. Clean-up the classroom after the last child is picked up (all toys/materials back into their assigned tubs, tubs out in the hallway/on the cart, desks returned where they belong).
5. Comply with all policies and procedures in The Grove.
6. Attend all of The Grove trainings and meetings.

7. Arrive no later than 10:00 am on the day of service for prayer, assist with classroom preparation, and receive instruction from the lead teacher on that day's lesson and activities.
8. Serve with a desire to see the children of Life Pointe grow into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and speak truth.
9. Pray for the children and ministry as this is the key element of any and all ministry!

Welcome Table/Greeter: Must be a committed follower of Christ and be invested in a personal relationship with God. Must also love to serve families and help families (especially new ones) feel welcome and at home and provide support to the classrooms during service.

Responsibilities:

1. Regularly attend Life Pointe Church, support Life Pointe's leadership, and be committed to the mission and vision of the church.
2. Serve at least once/month at the registration table or as a greeter.
3. Arrive no later than 10:00 am on the day of service to prepare the registration table area and ready to greet families by 10:15 am.
4. Clean-up the registration area after service.
5. Comply with all policies and procedures in The Grove.
6. Attend all of The Grove trainings and meetings.
7. Serve with a desire to see the children of Life Pointe grow into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and speak truth.
8. Pray for the children and ministry as this is the key element of any and all ministry!

Restroom Attendant: Must be a committed follower of Christ and be invested in a personal relationship with God.

Responsibilities:

1. Regularly attend Life Pointe Church, support Life Pointe's leadership, and be committed to the mission and vision of the church.
2. Serve at least twice/month.
3. Safely and quietly assist children from their classroom to the restroom.
4. Check restrooms to ensure no other adults (from the service) are present while children are in the restroom.
5. Provide assistance to a child using the restroom only if the child is three years old or younger, or if the child has special needs requiring extra assistance.
6. Safely and quietly assist children from the restroom to their assigned classroom once restroom breaks are completed.

Chain of Command & Conflict Resolution

Who to go to if there is a need or problem:

Need classroom supplies, suggestions for activities or how to interact with/guide behavior for a specific child/group of children → Classroom Coordinator

Problem/situation with a child, parent/guardian, or fellow adult or teen volunteer → The Grove Coordinator

Problem/situation with The Grove Coordinator/Staff → Pastor Jim

***Please remember that there is often a difference between personal problems and classrooms problems. For ALL situations, PRAY, and refer to Matthew 18: 15-17 for conflict resolution.**

Sign-In

- ✓ Please mark all children on attendance sheet, so we know who has attended and who is in our care.
- ✓ Please do not allow any children to leave without a parent or guardian. Children may be picked up by an older sibling, as long as the sibling has the child's identification tag (Lemon, Peach, and Plum Groves) AND lead teacher's acknowledgement of parental approval (parent/guardian must communicate this to the lead teacher at drop-off).
- ✓ Lemon, Peach, and Plum Grove parents should pick up their child's name tag in The Grove entryway. One tag is to be pinned on the child, while the parent/guardian keeps the matching tag. Diaper bag tags are to be used to mark child's diaper bag in the Lemon and Peach Groves (Plum Grove if needed).
- ✓ Pear, Orange, and Apple Grove children will receive their nametag upon the arrival to their classroom, following worship.
- ✓ When a child is picked up, please retrieve the tag from the parent and the child, and place them in the assigned tag bucket. All tags for the Lemon, Peach, and Plum Grove classrooms should be placed back on the entryway trees once all of

the children have been picked up in your classroom. The Pear, Orange, and Apple Grove tags will be put away in the classroom tub.

- ✓ If you need a parent, please let one of the Welcome Table Attendants or Greeters know and they will contact the sound booth or find the parent. There is a number on each tag (child's first name and last name initial and DOB), and the sound booth will be displayed on the Power Point for the parent to see, signaling them to return to their child's classroom.

Two-Deep Policy

Two-Deep: There must always be two “safe” (background checked) adults providing direct and indirect supervision over a child from the time the child enters their classroom until they are released to their parents.

- a) Any child going behind closed doors, into restrooms, or away from the mainstream of the group, must be accompanied by two “safe” adults.
- b) Large areas that allow for several children to be gathered together may be supervised by adults from a reasonable distance provided the children are in the **line of sight** and adequate supervision can be provided based on the events occurring and the number of children involved.
- c) When in the restroom there must be **line of sight** of both “safe” adults and little feet in each individual stall. If an adult is assisting a child, the other adult must have line of sight of both adult and child.

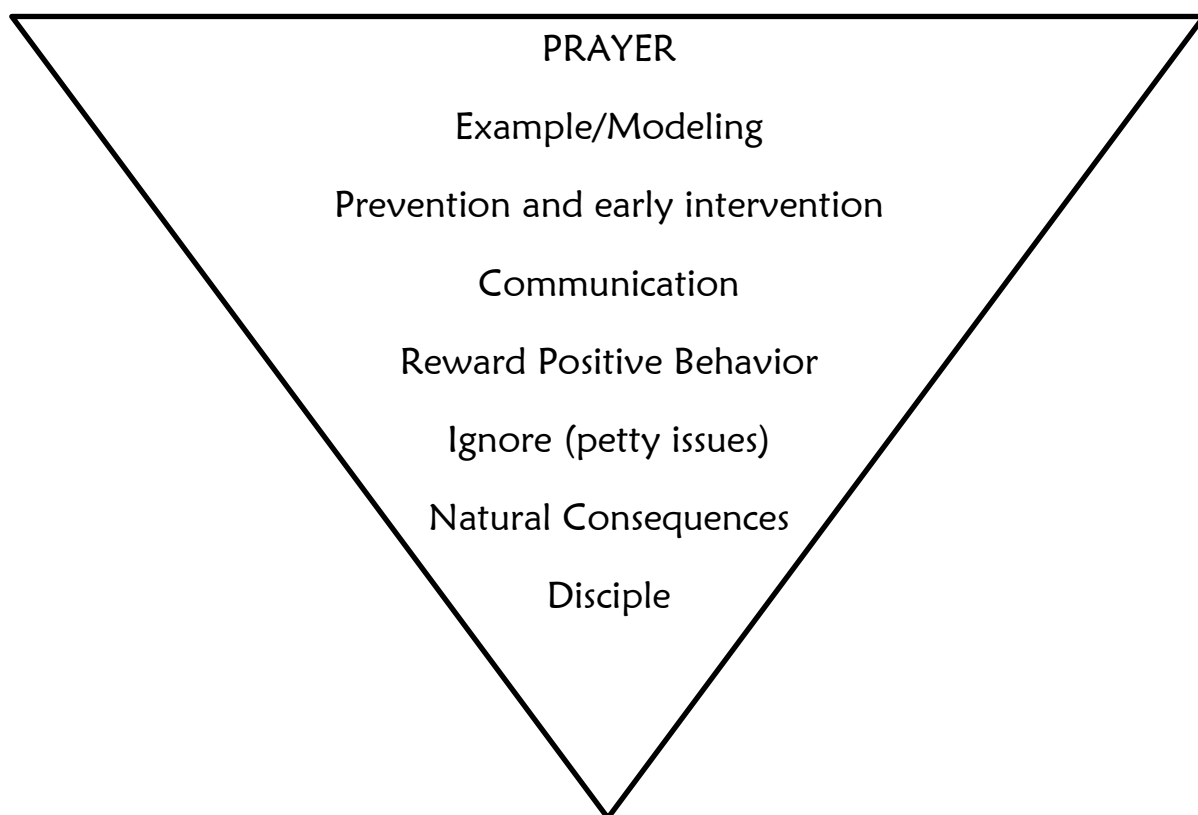
Why? This “Two-Deep” policy is to ensure the safety of the child and the protection of the adult. This provides accountability so that an adult cannot carry on in a particular way with a child, without another adult knowing. It also provides for a second adult to be present to vouch for the behavior of the other adult, should a child falsely accuse an adult of illicit behavior.

Guiding Behavior

- ✓ What is it? Love, trust, care, acceptance, and understanding!
- ✓ Who is responsible? You are! Guiding behavior of the children is your responsibility. You should model the behavior you expect of the children. Our responsibility as children's ministry volunteers is to provide a loving and safe environment where the children feel they belong and are valuable to God and you.
- ✓ How do you do it?
 - Pray!
 - Focus on the positive and notice child's appropriate behavior. Use words of encouragement.
 - Be consistent and over prepare. Children often get disruptive out of boredom, lack of structure, or too much structure. Find a balance for them and you.
 - Redirect! If a child is disruptive, offer alternative activities or provide the child with space to regroup.

Never strike a child or use physical force to secure compliance.

Steps to Discipline:



Use the techniques at the top of the pyramid the most often, resorting to discipline only when absolutely necessary. After you have exhausted all other options and you feel the child is a distraction to the class, remove the child from the classroom, have the children's ministry coordinator or registration table/greeter volunteer find the child's parents, and release the child to their parents. Support and encourage the parents and tell them that you love the child, and hope to see them back next week. Pray for the child to return with an obedient heart towards God. Model the forgiveness and love that God freely gives us through Christ.

Miscellaneous

- ✓ Please no outside food in the classrooms, including food from the hospitality table. Water (with a lid) and coffee/tea that has a lid and is placed away from children is okay to have in the classrooms.
- ✓ If you are scheduled to work in a classroom and are nursing, we ask that you do not nurse in the classroom during service times, unless you are helping as an extra adult in the Lemon Grove. There must be at minimum one adult and one helper available (not including yourself) in the Lemon Grove to assist children in need while you nurse. When you are finished nursing, please return to caring for all infants in the Lemon Grove. All other classrooms require teachers and helpers to assist children at all times, so you will not be scheduled in these classrooms if you are unavailable to stay in the classroom for the entirety of the class. Please use a nursing cover or blanket while you nurse to maintain modesty and discretion.

Diapering/Potty Training/Restrooms

- ✓ Diaper changing, potty training, and restroom breaks must be done by those at least 18 years of age.
- ✓ Two “safe” adults need to be in the classroom when changing a child’s diaper.
- ✓ Two “safe” adults need to accompany children to the restroom.
- ✓ At least two “safe” adults must remain within **line of sight** of each other and the children when ANY children in The Grove are using the restroom.
- ✓ When assisting children in the restroom, please keep the children as quiet as possible. The noise from the restrooms carries down into the service area.
- ✓ Parents are encouraged to take their children to the restroom prior to dropping their children off in their classroom.

Lemon Grove:

- ✓ Diapers need to be checked every 30 minutes and 10 minutes before the end of class.
- ✓ All dirty diapers are to be changed prior to the parent picking up the child.
- ✓ Never leave a child unsupervised on the changing table.
- ✓ If a rash is present, please make sure the parents are aware.
- ✓ If the child does not have a diaper or wipes, please use a diaper and wipes from our supplies.

Peach and Plum Grove:

- ✓ Diapers need to be checked once during class.
- ✓ Restroom attendants (two adults) will take potty training children to the restroom at 11:30.
- ✓ Volunteers should provide assistance to a child using the restroom only if the child is three years old or younger, or if the child has special needs requiring extra assistance. Another “safe” adult must remain within **line of sight** of adult and child during assistance.

Diaper Changing Steps:

- ✓ Use latex gloves.
- ✓ Use the changing table.
- ✓ Put soiled diapers in a plastic bag and then place in the garbage bag.
- ✓ Wipe changing pad with Lysol wipes or spray when finished after each diaper change. Allow the changing pad to air dry for 30 seconds before changing the next child's diaper.
- ✓ Discard gloves and use hand sanitizer after each diaper change.

Pear, Orange, and Apple Groves:

- ✓ Restroom attendants will assist the children to the restroom
- ✓ One volunteer will check the restroom to be sure no other adults from the service are in the restroom. If all volunteers and children are the same sex, both "safe" adults will remain in the restroom while each child is in their own stall. If volunteers and children are different sexes, the child must go alone into the restroom while all other adults and children remain outside in the hall.
- ✓ Once all children have gone to the restroom, and washed their hands, restroom attendants will walk the children back to their assigned classroom.

Sick Child Policy

For the protection of your child and the other children, any child who is ill or appears to be ill cannot be left in The Grove.

A child should not be left under our care or with other children when any of the following exist:

1. Fever
2. Vomiting and/or diarrhea (even associated with teething or antibiotics)
3. Any symptom of the usual childhood diseases: scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, and whooping cough
4. Sore Throat
5. Croup
6. Any unexplained rash
7. Any skin infection: boils, ringworm, impetigo, head lice, etc.
8. Runny noses with yellow or green discharge

Teachers cannot administer medications of any kind. Children must be symptom free 24 hours before arriving in a classroom.

If a child appears to have developed a fever or if any signs of illness occur while in The Grove, the parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the child.

Thank you for your cooperation! It is very important that we keep our children and workers safe. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to ask The Grove coordinator.

Reporting Injuries

What if a child bites or hits another child? Or a child gets hurt?

- ✓ All bites/cuts need to be cleaned with soap and water.
- ✓ The Grove coordinator must be notified.
- ✓ An Ouch Report needs to be filled out and given to the parents as well as one to The Grove coordinator.
- ✓ Notify parents immediately that their child was bitten/hit/fell **IF** skin has been broken and/or the child is inconsolable.
- ✓ Help parents understand that we are sorry this happened but unfortunately it is inevitable with young children sometimes and we will do everything in our efforts to prevent accidents and help children that are frustrated/aggressive. Let the parent know that you are concerned and listen to them.
- ✓ Notify the parents of the child who bit/hit when they pick up their child, and assure them that we love their child and look forward to their return the following week.
- ✓ Do not use names of who bit/hit or who was bitten/hit. Please be as general as possible.
- ✓ PRAY, and ask that God would help us to use circumstances such as these to model grace and forgiveness.



The Ouch Report

Date: _____ Time: _____

Class: _____ Teacher: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian: _____

Your Child cried "OUCH!": Child's Name: _____

This is what happened:	We treated it by:
	We feel your child is O.K. now ()
	Further treatment may be needed ()

Teacher's Signature: _____

Always fill out two copies of the Ouch Report. Give one to the parent of the child that was hurt and give the other to The Grove coordinator for the church's records. The Ouch Report is located in the front pocket of the classroom binder.

Safety Information

First Aid Kit: Located at the sign-in table.

Plastic Gloves: Located in the Lemon, Peach, and Plum Grove classroom tubs.

Emergency Exit: Side entrance to the building, down The Grove hallway, main entrance to the building. See Emergency Evacuation Routes Map and Emergency Preparedness Plan (in classroom binder) and familiarize yourself with your particular classroom instructions.

Take a closer look for safety:

- ✓ Small and dangerous objects removed?
 - For infants, anything small enough to go into their mouths must be removed from their reach and play area!
- ✓ Electrical outlets covered?
- ✓ Windows and screen fastened? Be sure to close windows when you shut down your classroom.
- ✓ Cleaning supplies put away/out of child's reach?
 - Lysol wipes/spray, hand sanitizer, etc.
- ✓ Broken toys removed?
- ✓ Confirm allergies of children in your classroom. In order to preserve a child's privacy, *significant* allergies are indicated on the back of his/her name tag, and an asterisk will appear by his/her name on the attendance sheet.

Thank you for serving the children and families of Life Pointe Church! We are grateful for your heart for this ministry and your willingness to serve. What you do matters! You are sharing with and teaching truth to the children of The Grove, and helping families lay a Biblical foundation onto their child's heart. Thank you for investing in this ministry!

Please do not hesitate to let The Grove Coordinator know if you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the material in this handbook.



Volunteer Agreement

I, _____, have received a copy of Life Pointe

(Print Name)

Church's The Grove Children's Ministry Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual.

I have read it and promise to abide by and comply with all the policies and procedures therein.

I understand the information included in the manual and will be held responsible to the policies and procedures as stated.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Children's Ministry Coordinator: _____