

## Children Policies Summary for Parents

### Intro:

Dear parent, we have been working very hard at setting new policies in place for our Children's Ministry in order to make your child's experience here at FBCM more safe and secure. These policies include everything from Evacuation procedures, to diapering policies and everything in between. It is our hope that by creating and following these policies our Children's Ministry will be a warm and welcoming place where parents from our community feel safe and even good about bringing their children. The hope and goal is that more and more parents would bring their children to our church to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, thus increasing our impact to children in our neighborhood, as well as their parents. For this reason we feel it necessary to work hard at bringing our children's ministry up to par with the standards and expectations of our culture and community in order to better serve them and reach them for Jesus!

### Most of the Policies Affect the Volunteers:

The Policy Manual was written with the volunteer staff in mind, thus many of the changes and procedures will be things that aren't necessarily seen by parents on first glance. Things like how to handle children who have medications, or what to do when a child won't stop crying, or which form to fill out when you have a disciplinary issue with a child, and whom to give that form to are all examples of policies that you likely won't notice and won't have to deal with because they were written for our volunteers. However, there are some important things that we would like you to know in regards to our volunteers. Those things are:

- 1) All volunteers must pass a background check, be growing Christians, be 18 years of age, be properly trained and must agree to adhere to the policy manual.
- 2) All Volunteers will wear Picture ID Name-Tags so as to be easily identified.
- 3) All Volunteers will never be alone with a child in an area not publically visible.
- 4) All Volunteers will agree to be in their ministry area 10 minutes prior to the start of any service.
- 5) All Volunteers are trained in how to lead an evacuation in case of an emergency.
- 6) Eventually all main Children's Ministry leads will be trained in Child CPR.

### Things that Pertain to Parents:

There are a couple new policies that will affect you as parents. They are listed and explained below:

**1) A Sign-In / Sign-Out Policy:** Starting in January we will be implementing a Sign-In and Sign-Out policy for Sunday School and Nursery Classrooms. In order that our children not roam around unsupervised it will be required that a designated parent figure drop them off and pick them up from their classrooms.

**a) Nursery / 2's and 3's:** For the nursery and 2's and 3's age we are requiring that a parent or legal guardian be the one who drops off and picks up their child. Upon dropping off your child you will be asked to sign them in on the Sign-In Sheet. As an added safety precaution, once signed in, your child will receive a unique ID clip, and you as the parent will receive the other half of this ID clip. In order to pick up your child you must return with the matching ID clip, return it to the nursery / 2's and 3's Attendant and sign your child out using the Sign-In/Out sheet. The reason for this added safety precaution is because of child custody issues. Only the designated parent with the matching ID tag can pick up their child, thus protecting these little ones who can't speak up for themselves. *(Eventually these ID tags will be used in a LED Paging System to notify parents when they are needed in the nursery, but that will not be coming for some time.)*

**b) Primary Age:** The primary age group must be dropped off and picked up by a parent or an older sibling that has been designated by the parent who is 12 years of age or older. In order to designate one of your older children (12 +) to be authorized for Sign-In / Sign-Out procedures you must write their name(s) on your child's Registration Form which you will fill out at the time of your first "Sign-In".

**2) No Guests In Rooms:** We will be getting much stricter about who can be in the classrooms with your

any time. If a parent would like to stay in the classroom, that is ok, but they must wear a “Visitor” name-tag and may not help lead any class activities or interact with any children other than their own because they have not been background checked nor trained. In other words, only official volunteers or parents with “Visitor” name tags may be in a classroom or nursery with children. This means no aunts or uncles, or cousins, or older friends, or someone who “just loves being around the babies”, or anyone else can be in the classroom or nursery. Only official volunteers and parents who are wearing a “Visitor” name tag.

**3) A Children’s Wing:** We will be converting the downstairs area (near Fellowship Hall) into a dedicated Children’s Wing. Starting in late December / Early January all Sunday School classes and Children’s Church programs will be downstairs. This will simplify things for parents and new visitors to know where their children are at all times. There will be a Floor Supervisor roaming the floor at all times making sure the teachers are equipped and helped, that they are following protocol, that there are no strangers wandering around in the Children’s Wing, and acting as an extra body so that the “Two-Adult Rule” is maintained at all times. Eventually the Children’s Wing will be decorated in exciting, creative, fun and engaging ways! (*Nursery and 2’s and 3’s will remain upstairs so that parents can maintain quick and easy access*).

**4) In Case of Evacuation:** If there ever is an emergency evacuation it is important that you understand you may not take your child and leave. There are important procedures in place to make sure that we have gotten all of the children out of the building and that all are accounted for. If you’d like to be with your child and help the Lead Teacher guide the children out, that is fine. Once all the children are safely out of the building, role has been taken, we can start dismissing the children one by one, and crossing their names off the list as their parents take them. We hope to never have an emergency evacuation, but if one does occur we appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

### **Policies, New Curriculum, Then Decorations:**

The policies are only the first step of our Children’s Ministry revamp. There are actually three phases. Phase one is to implement the policies, which will effectively go into place the first two weeks of January. Around that same time the classrooms will be moved downstairs into the new dedicated Children’s Wing. Phase two will begin when we start using new curriculum for our Sunday School classes and Children’s Church. This should take place sometime toward the end of January. Finally, in Phase Three, we will decorate the Children’s Wing to be a fun and engaging environment for our kids to learn. This should take place sometime in late February or March.

### **Consistency and Graciousness:**

As with any program that is undergoing major changes, there are bound to be hic-ups and issues as we work out the kinks. We are going to try to make sure that our Volunteer Staff is as consistent as possible in abiding by the policies. We ask that you parents would be consistent as well. If things are a little rocky at first, just keep doing what we’re asking you to do, and do so with patience and grace as we try to work things out. Remember, we are doing this to better serve and bless you and your children. It’ll take some time, but after a few months it’ll be so natural and engrained in our way of life here that soon we won’t even remember how we did it any other way. Grace, Patience and Consistency is what we’re asking for.

### **Input and Feedback:**

We are open to input and feedback. If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns we’d be happy to hear them. We may not be able to implement every suggestion given, but we’d be happy to hear your thoughts as we move forward in this exciting endeavor!

### **Pray:**

Please pray for us during this time. Pray that God would give us grace to do what needs to be done. Pray that parents and volunteers would be consistent and gracious, pray for more volunteer staff, and pray that kids and