

Children & Student Ministry Volunteer Guide

(Volunteer Roles, Safety Practices & Daily Operations)

Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church

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Introduction

Welcome to the Team!

Thank you for saying “yes” to serving the children, students, and families of Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church. Your willingness to invest your time, attention, and heart into this ministry is deeply appreciated. Whether you are teaching, assisting, leading, or supporting behind the scenes, your role is essential in helping young people experience the love of Christ, grow in faith, and engage in the life of the church.

This handbook is designed to equip you with the clarity and confidence needed to serve well. It includes our **core expectations**, **safety procedures**, and **ministry guidelines**, all of which reflect our commitment to providing a physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment for every child and student entrusted to our care.

This resource also functions as a practical, day-to-day companion to our governing **Child Abuse Prevention Manual (CAP Manual)**. While the CAP Manual addresses mandated reporting procedures, this handbook offers clear, actionable practices for maintaining safety, encouraging spiritual growth, and serving with excellence.

Please keep this handbook accessible for reference and review. It is reviewed quarterly and any changes will be communicated through staff meetings, volunteer trainings, and seasonal ministry events such as VBS.

Who We Are: Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

At Cedar Crest, we exist to glorify the Triune God by exalting Him, edifying and equipping His Church, and evangelizing the world with His Gospel.

Children's and Student Ministries fulfill this mission by coming alongside families to help children and students learn and live the Gospel. We aim to create safe, loving, and Christ-centered environments where young people are equipped to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ. Through gospel-centered teaching, meaningful relationships, and age-appropriate ministry experiences, we desire to see each child and student grow in their understanding of God's Word, experience the love of Christ, and participate in the life of the Church.

Our Ministry Core Values

- **Christ-Centered Teaching**
We are committed to teaching the Bible in a way that is faithful, engaging, and rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Safe and Secure Environment**
We strive to create physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe spaces where children and students can grow and thrive.
- **Loving Relationships and Encouragement**
We model God's love by forming supportive relationships that reflect grace, compassion, and care.
- **Faithful Stewardship of Time and Resources**
We use the time, gifts, and materials entrusted to us in ways that honor God and benefit the children and families we serve.
- **Partnership with Families**
We work alongside parents and caregivers to reinforce biblical truths, support discipleship at home, and strengthen the whole family's spiritual growth.

Commitment to Child Safety and Ministry Excellence

At Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church, we believe every child and student should be surrounded by the safest possible environment in which to learn, grow, and thrive. This commitment is foundational to our ministry and reflected in every policy and practice.

We are committed to:

- **Providing safe, attentive supervision and care** for every child entrusted to our ministry.
- **Equipping volunteers and staff** with clear procedures that reduce risk and promote consistency.
- **Ensuring all ministry participants** understand and uphold behavioral expectations and reporting responsibilities.

This shared commitment protects children, supports families, and strengthens our testimony as a church community.

Volunteer Roles & Expectations

Each volunteer plays a vital part in the mission and safety of our Children's and Student Ministries. Whether you are in the classroom, at check-in, or supporting a special event, your service helps children encounter the love of Christ in a meaningful and safe way.

Volunteer Roles May Include:

- **Lead Teacher/Leader**
- **Assistant Teacher / Classroom Leader**
- **Check-In Volunteer**
- **Floater / Substitute**
- **Nursery worker**
- **Event Volunteer** (e.g., Vacation Bible School, seasonal programs)

Your specific role will be clearly communicated during onboarding and updated as needed.

Volunteers are entrusted with a sacred responsibility—to reflect Christ's love while providing a safe, welcoming environment for children and students. As such, the following expectations must be upheld at all times.

You Are Expected To:

- **Maintain a personal relationship with Jesus Christ** and reflect His love in word and action.
- **Follow the policies and procedures** outlined in this handbook and the CAP Manual.
- **Complete all required clearances, background checks, and annual safety training.**
- **Arrive on time** (15-30 min. before start of the program) **and remain until all children are dismissed and/or picked up.**
- **Dress appropriately** for serving with children (modest and movement-friendly attire).
- **Minimize distractions** for yourself and the children by proactively engaging with them during the entire time of your assigned role.
- **Use calm, redirection-based correction techniques**—never yelling, shaming, or using physical force.
- **Communicate with parents** in a respectful, encouraging way, recognizing that you are partnering with them to invest in their children's spiritual growth.
- **Partner with the ministry director** if unsure about any situation or procedure, while promptly reporting any concerns, disclosures, or scheduling issues.

Communication and Boundaries

Effective ministry requires healthy communication and clearly defined boundaries. Volunteers are entrusted with representing the love of Christ through both words and actions.

A. Digital and Verbal Communication

- Speak kindly and respectfully to children, parents, and fellow volunteers.
- Communication with parents of children in specific classes will be the responsibility of the lead teacher in that class. Ministry wide communication will be handled by the ministry director.
- Avoid inappropriate jokes, nicknames, or language.
- Avoid private or one-on-one digital contact (e.g., texting, direct messaging, or social media) with children or youth without parental consent.

- Do not initiate outside contact (digital or in-person) without prior approval from ministry leadership and parental consent.
- Report any inappropriate behavior or concerning communication to the ministry director immediately.

B. Appropriate Touch Guidelines

- **Physical affection** should be child-initiated, brief, and age-appropriate (e.g., side hugs, high-fives, handshakes).
- Avoid **frontal hugs, lap-sitting, or prolonged physical contact.**
- **Nursery workers** are permitted to hold and carry Nursery age children, while still maintaining appropriate physical boundaries.

C. Social Media & Photography Guidelines

- Volunteers should **not post images** of children or students from church events on personal social media accounts.
- Capturing images or videos during ministry events must be **pre-approved** by the Children's Ministry Director.
- If approved, volunteers must clarify:
 - Which devices will be used
 - How the images will be stored and shared
 - Who is responsible for safeguarding the content
- Always honor the **privacy and photo permissions** of families.

At CCBFC, parents should expect photos/videos to be taken of children for promotional and advertising purposes from time to time. However, if a parent would not like their child to be photographed or filmed, they can notify us.

D. Phone Use & Student Access

- Be sure to **safely store your phone** while serving and do not leave it where a child could gain access – even if the screen is locked.
- Please **refrain from scrolling** on your phone while serving. Our goal is to stay focused on the children in class and engaging with them for the duration of the class period.

- For Nursery – 5th Grade: Volunteers should **not show personal content** (photos, videos, memes, etc.) to children without parental consent, regardless of perceived appropriateness.
- Volunteers should **never hand over their phone or device** to a child or student to use unsupervised without explicit parental or ministry leadership permission.
- When in doubt, **err on the side of caution** and consult the Children’s Ministry Director or Student Ministry.

Supervision Guidelines

At Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church, supervision is a primary way we protect children and build trust with families. All volunteers must adhere to the following supervision guidelines to create a safe, transparent, and Christ-centered environment.

A. Avoiding Isolation: The Two-Worker Rule

- Volunteers must **never be alone** with a child or student in a private, enclosed space unless with written parental consent.
- A minimum of **two approved workers** (at least 1 adult and 1 teen volunteer of the same gender, or 2 adults) must be present at all times in any room, vehicle, or designated space where children or students are present. If possible, these two workers should be unrelated.
- An **“approved worker”** is one who has completed all required clearances, background checks, and ministry training.
- If a second approved worker must briefly step away (e.g., bathroom break), the door should remain open, or a **floating volunteer** should be assigned to provide visibility.
- Necessary one-on-one conversations (e.g., a moment of correction or prayer) should:
 - Occur in an open or highly visible space
 - Be **brief, respectful, and purposeful**
 - Be conducted **within view or earshot** of another adult
 - Be reported to the **ministry director** and parent/guardian if sensitive in nature

B. Transitions & Special Settings

- **Transitions** (e.g., moving from sanctuary to classroom or during check-out) must be actively supervised. Children should not be left unattended at any time.
- When ministry is held **off-site or outdoors**, the Two-Worker Rule and visibility standards still apply.
- **Hallway monitors**, floaters, or check-in desk volunteers may support supervision but are not substitutes for in-room adult presence.

Correction Philosophy and Behavioral Expectations

Definition of Correction & Discipline:

At Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church, correction and discipline are understood as *discipleship*—guidance that nurtures spiritual growth, Christ-like character, and respect for others. Our aim is to build children up through instruction, correction, and encouragement, not to punish them. This applies to all ministry settings—classrooms, events, outings, and activities.

Prohibited Practices:

Volunteers must never use physical discipline or shaming tactics. The following actions are strictly prohibited:

- Spanking, hitting, grabbing, shaking, or any physical force
- Yelling, verbal abuse, or demeaning speech
- Threats, ridicule, or humiliation
- Forcing a child to sit in isolation without support or supervision

Universal Behavioral Guidelines:

Volunteers are expected to:

- Promote respect, patience, and encouragement
- Use age-appropriate redirection and problem-solving strategies
- Provide clear and calm instructions
- Model consistent expectations with grace and truth
- Seek support when behaviors escalate
- Communicate with the ministry director and parents when concerns arise

Expectations for children & students attending programs (ages 4+):

- Listen attentively during Bible lessons and group activities.
- Share with one another, take turns, and treat others with kindness and respect.
- Follow instructions and respond to their leaders with obedience and respect.

In-Classroom Behavior Management Policy

(For children's classroom environments: ages 4 – Grade 5)

Volunteers may use the following techniques to manage behavior during ministry sessions:

Acceptable Classroom Management Tools:

- Calm, verbal redirection with gentle, specific language
- Offering alternate choices or activities
- Providing a brief “cool-down” or supervised reflection time (a common guide is one minute per year of age)
- Withholding a classroom privilege for a short time

Reflection Point & Parent Involvement Protocol:

When behavior is persistent or escalates:

1. The child may be given a **Reflection Point** by the Lead Teacher or Children's Ministry Director. Record the Reflection Point on the sheet provided inside each classroom clipboard.
2. At pick-up, the incident is respectfully discussed with the parent, outlining the steps that were used to redirect.
3. If a child receives **three Reflection Points in six weeks**, the parent must either:
 - Attend class with the child for at least two consecutive weeks, or
 - Keep the child out of class for two weeks to reflect and reset
4. These options will be discussed with the parent by the Children's Ministry Director, and they will provide families with a guide to walk through how to best utilize this time.

Immediate Removal from Class:

A child must be removed from the classroom if they:

- Cause physical harm to themselves, another child, or an adult
- Are completely unresponsive to direction and disruptive to the group
- Experience sudden illness or injury

In these cases:

- A volunteer should immediately contact the ministry Point Person and/or Security Team if needed.
- The Point Person will contact the child's parent/guardian for immediate pickup
- While waiting for parental assistance, if the child continues to harm themselves or classroom property, have the assistant leaders quietly lead the rest of the class into the hall to remove them from the situation while the Lead teacher and security team stays with the child who is struggling. DO NOT try to physically force the child that is struggling from the room.
- If the child is harming another child, you may step between them to break up the altercation. Remove the rest of the class as stated above until parental assistance arrives.
- After the situation has deescalated, an Incident Report must be completed and reviewed with the parent
- This results in the same consequence as a third Reflection Point: a two week break from class or parental supervision in class for at least 2 weeks.

We recognize that every child and situation is different. These guidelines are intended to be implemented with discernment by the Lead teacher. Please contact the ministry director at any time if you need advice or input when dealing with a challenging student.

Optional Training Resource:

Volunteers are encouraged to review the brief instructional video for handling classroom behavior biblically and effectively:

[How to Handle Difficult Behavior in Ministry \(YouTube\)](#)

Bathroom and Diapering Procedures

- Follow the Bathroom and Diapering procedures outlined in the CAP Manual.
- Always ensure proper handwashing for both workers and children after toileting or diaper changes.
- The bathrooms in the Children's Ministry hallway (near the elevator) are reserved for **children only!** Please refrain from using that for yourself during scheduled programs. If you notice another adult using that bathroom, kindly direct them to the ones by the Activity Center.

- Preschool age children may be escorted to the bathroom by a volunteer.
- Elementary age children may go independently to the bathroom or be escorted.
- Students may go independently to the bathroom.

Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

- All children must be checked in using the Children's Check-In Kiosk system.
- Each child will receive a name tag, and the adult picking them up must present the matching pick-up tag or a valid photo id. Any exceptions will need to be approved by the Children's Ministry Director or Point Person.
- A photo of the matching tag is acceptable for pick-up.
- If a child is dropped off in your classroom without a nametag, please contact the Point Person to remedy the situation.
- For Preschool – 5th Grade, please take attendance at the beginning of each class period using the proper mode of attendance tracking you have been supplied with.
- We will notify teachers if any individual is on a "no pick-up" list for a child on their roster. If such a person attempts to pick up the child, remain polite and calmly inform them that they are not listed as an approved pick-up person for this child. Contact the ministry director and/or the security team if the individual persists.
- Two approved workers must remain in the classroom until all children are picked up.
- Students (6-12th grade) must check in via the Check-In Kiosk system. At the close of the program, there is no check-out system. Students may leave the classroom when they are dismissed.

Fire and Emergency Safety Procedures

- If you encounter an emergency situation in your classroom (medical or otherwise), **immediately radio** for assistance by using the security radio we provide. The security team and on-call medical professional will report to you ASAP. If you do not have a security radio, send one volunteer to locate security personnel. Parents should be contacted as soon as possible by lead teacher or Ministry director.
- In the event of a **serious or life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately**. After contacting emergency services, notify the security team via your classroom security radio as well as the ministry director who will contact parents.
- A Silent **Fire Drill** will be conducted in the building on a specified Sunday each year, and each class will be required to participate.

- Familiarize yourself with the **evacuation plan** posted by the door in each classroom or ministry space. For K-5th grade classrooms, instructions are also included in the Children's Ministry clipboard you are provided with.
- In an **emergency evacuation**, lead children calmly and promptly outside to the designated meeting area through the designated exit door.
- **Conduct headcounts** before exiting the building and again once you've arrived at the meeting area.
- **In the Nurseries**, please make use of the cribs on wheels to transport infants and toddlers.
- **Children may only be released to a parent or guardian** after official clearance is given by safety personnel or ministry leadership.

The following procedures apply to situations involving an event disruption, suspicious or potentially dangerous person, violent act, or other emergency that may require Safety Team response, emergency services, or building lockdown procedures. Children's Ministry volunteers should remain calm, keep children together, follow Safety Team and ministry leadership instructions, and use the classroom radio and attendance materials as directed.

EVENT DISRUPTION OR VIOLENCE

1. The Church has a Safety Team that is on duty for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services. If an event disruption or violent act should occur, the Safety Team shall be notified. Depending on the severity of the disruption or violence, event leadership should also contact emergency services via the 911 call center.
2. If the Safety Team is not available for an event, event leadership should immediately contact emergency services via the 911 call center.
3. Depending on the severity of the incident, Lock Down Procedures may need to be followed.

LOCK DOWN PROCEDURES

1. In the event of an emergency, a building lockdown may be done.
2. The Safety Team may use house phones within the building to make a broadcast announcement which will be heard over a portion of other house phones. There is also an LCA emergency announcement system that exists throughout the building. An announcement must be made from base stations located in the LCA office or Room 9.

3. For Children's Ministry programs, Teachers and Safety Team will use the radios we provide to communicate information during a Lock-down situation. **Please keep your radio on at all times.**
4. In the event of an actual emergency involving a suspicious or potentially dangerous person, the following message will be used:
"ACTIVE SHOOTER NEAR ROOM XXXX"
5. If an actual emergency announcement is made, the following procedures should take place:

AVOID – Leave the building if possible.

1. For the Worship Center and Activity Center, remember that the door you entered may not be the closest exit door.
2. When in a classroom, make use of the fire evacuation documentation you have been provided with to familiarize yourself with the closest exit.
3. Once outside, move away from the building. Use your attendance sheet to verify that everyone is accounted for. Do NOT re-enter the building until you have been cleared to do so by emergency personnel.

DENY - If leaving the building is not a safe option:

- Lock doors and barricade if possible
- Turn out lights.
- Proceed to position in room that is not visible from door.
- Pull down shade on classroom doors.
- Turn cell phones to vibrate and remain silent.
- Turn your radio volume down as low as possible.

DEFEND – Do whatever needs to be done to protect yourself using bee spray, fire extinguishers, heavy objects and/or projectiles.

After any emergency disruption, evacuation, or lockdown, children may only be released to a parent or guardian after official clearance is given by safety personnel or ministry leadership.

Children's Ministry Volunteer Reminders During an Event Disruption or Lockdown

- Keep children with their assigned class or group whenever possible.
- Use the attendance sheet to account for children before moving, after moving, and before release.
- Follow Safety Team, emergency personnel, and ministry leadership instructions.
- Do not allow parents, guardians, or other adults to remove children until official clearance is given.

- If evacuation is required, move away from the building and remain with the children until directed otherwise.
- After the incident, report concerns, injuries, missing information, or unusual observations to ministry leadership as soon as it is safe to do so.

Medication and Injury Response

- Volunteers **may not** administer any medication without prior written parental consent. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, such as a severe allergic reaction, volunteers may administer emergency medications like an EpiPen.
- First aid kits are available in designated ministry areas for minor scrapes and bumps.
- Any injury that requires basic first aid should be referred to the on-call medical personnel via your classroom security radio, or by sending a volunteer to locate security. An Incident Report may be filled out by either the volunteer and/or medical personnel depending on the situation.

Incident Reporting

Non-Abuse Related Incidents

All incidents involving injuries, behavioral concerns, medical issues, or property damage must be documented using the [Incident Report Form](#).

- **Forms are available** in the Children's Ministry Resource Room, from the ministry director, or the Student Pastor.
- Reports should be completed **as soon as possible** – ideally on the same day the incident occurs.
- Completed forms should be submitted directly to the **Children's Ministry Director or Student Pastor**.

Prompt reporting ensures that concerns are properly addressed, patterns can be identified, and the ministry can continue improving its safety and care practices.

Mandated Reporting & Abuse-Related Concerns

Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church is committed to protecting children and youth from abuse and neglect. All ministry staff and volunteers are **mandated reporters under Pennsylvania law**.

You are legally and morally obligated to report if you:

- **Witness** abuse or neglect
- **Suspect** abuse or neglect
- **Receive a disclosure** from anyone

Do not investigate or attempt to verify. **Report what you know.**

Immediate Steps if a Child Discloses or You Suspect Abuse:

1. Remain calm. Do not express shock or disbelief.
2. Do not promise confidentiality. Assure the child they did the right thing by speaking up.
3. **Report the alleged abuse to Child Line** as outlined in the **Child Abuse Prevention Manual**. Call the hotline (1-800-932-0313). **Notify the Children's Ministry Director or a Pastoral Staff Member immediately.**

Reference for Detailed Abuse Reporting Procedures

For complete instructions, forms, and definitions related to mandated reporting, refer to: [Child Abuse Prevention Manual](#).

Updates, Communication, and Continuous Improvement

This guide is reviewed regularly and updated as needed to reflect best practices, policy changes, and ministry growth.

Any updates will be communicated through:

- Ministry leadership
- Volunteer training sessions
- Seasonal ministry events (e.g., VBS)

Training and Acknowledgement of Volumes

All volunteers are expected to participate in any initial onboarding training necessary, as well as review of both the **Child Abuse Prevention Manual** and this **Ministry Volunteer Guide** before serving in Children or Student Ministry. This applies to our teen volunteers as well.

In subsequent years, volunteers will be expected to participate in an annual review of both volumes as well as any refresher training offered – typically in the fall before the programs begin.

Acknowledgment of both volumes is completed through the **CAP signature form**, which confirms your commitment to follow the expectations, reporting responsibilities, and safety procedures outlined in both guides.

Volunteers are encouraged to share feedback with ministry leadership on areas where further clarification or support would be helpful. Ongoing learning ensures we remain aligned in our commitment to safety, consistency, and excellence.

For questions or clarification, please contact the Children's Ministry Director or Student Pastor.

Scenarios and FAQs

Pick-Up & Drop-Off

A child refuses to go with the adult who has the pick-up tag

Stay calm and keep the child with you. Let them know they are safe and that you are getting help. Notify the ministry director or Point Person immediately so they can intervene, verify identification, and support the family through the situation. Do not release the child to leave with the adult until the situation is clarified and resolved.

A parent doesn't have the pick-up tag

Kindly let the adult know that, for the safety of all children, you cannot release a child without the assigned pick-up tag. Politely ask the adult to present a valid photo ID. Verify that the name matches the name listed on the child's approved pick-up list. If there is any uncertainty or the individual is not listed, do not release the child. Contact the ministry director or Point Person immediately for further verification. Ministry staff will make the final determination.

The adult with the tag appears impaired or otherwise unfit to receive the child

Do not release the child. Discreetly contact the ministry director or Point Person and keep the child with you in a calm, safe environment. The Director will follow established safety procedures, which may include involving pastoral staff or calling law enforcement if the child's safety is at risk.

Illness, Injury, or Emergencies**A child becomes ill or injured**

Act quickly but gently. Provide basic first aid if you are trained to do so or contact the on-call medical professional via your security radio. Notify the ministry director and complete an Incident Report as soon as possible. Be honest and factual in your documentation. The parent should be notified promptly and compassionately, either at check-out or earlier, depending on the severity.

A child is in danger or out of control

Prioritize safety. If a child is at risk of harming themselves, others, or church property, call for help via a ministry radio. Do not attempt to physically intervene unless trained and necessary for safety. The Point Person or Director will make the decision to remove the child from the space and contact the parent or guardian. All such events require documentation with an Incident Report which will be reviewed with the parent.

Behavior & Discipline**A child refuses to follow directions**

Use calm, consistent redirection and gentle correction. If the behavior escalates or disrupts the group, contact the Point Person or ministry director. Avoid threats or raised voices. Always use grace and aim to protect the child's dignity while maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

A child receives multiple Reflection Points

Reflection Points are part of our structured discipleship-based discipline process. Follow the protocol:

- Inform the child that they have received a Reflection Point and explain why in a calm and respectful manner.
- Notify the ministry director and complete the Reflection Point form.

- The ministry director will communicate with the parent and determine next steps. Multiple Reflection Points may lead to a break from participation, a parent meeting, or further support for the student.

Volunteer Conduct or Concerns

You observe concerning behavior by another volunteer

Do not ignore it. Whether it's a policy violation, boundary concern, or something that just doesn't sit right, bring it immediately to the Ministry Director or Student Pastor.

Documentation and investigation will follow. You are never responsible for handling it alone, but you are responsible for reporting.

You will be late or absent for your scheduled time

Let your ministry coordinator know as soon as possible. Early notice allows the team to find coverage and avoid understaffing. If it's last minute (emergency or illness), send a text or call directly. We appreciate your commitment and communication.

You want to show a student at Youth Group something on your phone

Avoid using your personal phone for entertainment during ministry time unless pre-approved by Student Pastor. Use of devices for teaching or group activities is permitted when done with another adult present. Even well-meaning content may unintentionally violate family preferences or church guidelines.

You want to take pictures at a ministry event

You may take photos at events for your personal use, but if they contain images of children outside of your family, please refrain from posting them online without the parental consent of those individuals. All photos used for promotion of church activities must be uploaded to the shared drive or designated folder and authorized church staff will follow our digital media policies to post them.

You need to communicate with a teen digitally

If communication is needed (e.g., for youth discipleship or ministry scheduling), follow these guidelines:

- Include a parent or guardian in the message or request prior parental approval.
- Use group texts or email threads whenever possible.
- Never delete messages and keep content ministry-appropriate.
- Reach out to the ministry director with questions or for clarification.

A teen private messages you via social media or text

Respond kindly and briefly. Avoid lengthy private chats on social media. If further discussion is needed, arrange with the parents for a date and time when more in-depth discipleship can take place in a less secluded setting. Notify the parent and the ministry director if the private message is sensitive or out of bounds. Protect the teen's dignity while keeping integrity and accountability at the center.