



**Valley Grove Baptist Church  
Children's Ministry Policy and  
Guidelines**

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## Policies and Guidelines

*These policies were developed by the Children's Ministry Team of Valley Grove Baptist Church. It incorporates the best policies developed at VGBC and other churches across the nation. We ask that you abide by these policies for the protection of our leaders and children in our ministry.*

## Our Mission

VGKids is a ministry of Valley Grove Baptist Church that exists to build Christ-centered relationships with kids and parents to help them grow as followers of Jesus who GATHER as God's family, GROW in love for Jesus and GO share the gospel and make disciples of those around them.

## Statement to Parents

We believe your child is a special gift from God—so we want to provide the best love and care possible while they are with us here at Valley Grove. Your becoming acquainted with these procedures and guidelines will help us in fulfilling our goal of helping to give all children the best care possible. What a joy it is to care for God's littlest ones. At Valley Grove, we desire that children come to know our Lord and Savior at an early age through the love, care, and security our leaders provide each child. To that end, these policies were developed to help parents and leaders of VGKids know exactly how we will provide love, care, and security for each child.

## VGKids Leadership Team

*Every role on this leadership team is under the immediate supervision of the Family Pastor with oversight given by the entire pastoral staff.*

### Family Pastor

Josh Ogle / [josh@valleygrove.org](mailto:josh@valleygrove.org) / 865-315-0915

### Elementary Coordinators

Debra Kitts / KidzGrove Coordinator / [kittso1@aol.com](mailto:kittso1@aol.com)

Melanie Clark / Sunday Growth Coordinator / [melanieclark731@gmail.com](mailto:melanieclark731@gmail.com)

Katie Mize / Events Coordinator / [kmize105@gmail.com](mailto:kmize105@gmail.com)

### Preschool Coordinators

Rachel Barrath / [rachelsuddarth23456@gmail.com](mailto:rachelsuddarth23456@gmail.com)

## VGKids Ministry Structure

VGKids, the Children's Ministry of Valley Grove, is set up as one department. We proposed to do this so that we could develop and maintain a consistent flow of ministry with our church from Nursery through 5th grade. Each level builds and prepares young people for the next level.

VGKids is subdivided into two divisions with age appropriate groups in each division. There is a Preschool/Nursery division with four (4) age-assigned classes and an Elementary School division with two (2) age-assigned classes. You can find the division breakdown in the list below.

#### Preschool:

- Beginners (Infant - 18 months)
- Lil Climbers (18 months - 24 months)
- Hikers (24 months - Unpotty trained 3 years)
- Jr. Explorers (Potty Trained 3 years - 4 years)

#### Elementary School:

- Explorers (K-2nd Grade)
- Trailblazers (3rd - 5th Grade)

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Every attempt is made to appropriately age-assign classrooms. However, class size is a factor in placement and promotion may be done at the discretion of the department director based on developmental guidelines. You will be notified when your child is about to be promoted.*

## PARENT EXPECTATIONS

*Children are the responsibility of their parents, even while at church. All children MUST be checked into VGKids and taken to their designated room by a parent/guardian.*

### Parental Responsibility

- Parents/guardians must be reachable during service hours. Therefore, please keep your cell phone on vibrate and check regularly. Make sure a current phone number is on file.
- The adult signing in the child should maintain possession of the claim ticket issued at check-in. This must be presented when picking up a child.
- A parent should pick up a child IMMEDIATELY following the service or function. *(All workers are volunteers. They may also have children to pick up.)*

- Please have only one parent pick up a child. Parents should not enter the room when picking up children. *(The exception for this is when picking up your child's belongings.)*
- Parents should never leave the premises after dropping off a child.

## Parents as Volunteers

- If your child attends regularly, we would love for you to serve in our children's area during a service in a rotation. Contact the department director to arrange your time preference.
- Everyone serving must complete a background check to ensure the safety of the children in our care.
- We need to have a specific ratio of adults to children. Because of this requirement, when you check your child in, you may be asked to stay and work during a service.

## Food/Feeding Guidelines

- Approved snacks and a gluten free option may be given to Nursery/Preschoolers during service times. We request that no outside food is to be brought into the classroom. We strive to be a "nut-free zone". If it is necessary for a parent to feed a child, we can provide a classroom that is not being used at the moment.
- Bottles will be given when necessary. However, no baby will be spoon fed. A parent is welcome to return to the baby room to feed a baby a meal.
- Any special instructions concerning feeding should be written
- on the sign in sheet.
- If a parent would like to have a special snack for a preschool room, please contact the Preschool Ministry Director for prior approval.

## VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

*The following guidelines are required of any person who volunteers in the Children's Ministry.*

### Personal

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Commit to be an active member at Valley Grove, worshipping regularly with your family.
- Agree to a background check.
- Be loyal to and supportive of pastors and leaders of this Church.
- Commit to one year of ministry. This would run August - July.
- Attend all meetings and workshops.

- Commit to be faithful in attendance, arriving at least 15 minutes before the service begins. If absence is necessary, contact a substitute or contact the department director if unable to secure a sub for that day.
- Be neat in your appearance.

## Handwashing

- Before feeding a baby or serving snacks.
- After changing a diaper.
- After assisting a child with going to the toilet.
- After wiping a child's nose or mouth.
- Before and after attending to a cut or other injury.
- After you go to the restroom.

## Cleaning

- Lysol and Clorox wipes are located in each classroom.
- Disinfect after the last child in your class leaves.
- All toys used should be sprayed and wiped thoroughly.
- Crib sheets must be removed.
- Mattresses and changing pads must be sprayed and wiped thoroughly.
- Leave to air dry.

## Diapering

- All children who are in diapers should be changed during the service time and go home with a fresh diaper. Diaper changing is to be done in a designated area and in the presence of other caregivers.
- Clean surface with spray before and after changing.

## Toileting

- If a toddler needs to use the bathroom, the leader should assist the child in view of another adult.
- Older children not requiring assistance should enter the bathroom alone.
- Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised restroom and never go into a restroom stall with a child and shut the door.
- Have the children wash their hands with soap after a restroom break.

## Student Volunteers

*The following guidelines are required of any student between 7th - 12th grade who volunteers in the Children's Ministry.*

### Responsibilities

Assist in Large Group and Small Group activities. Sit on the floor and play with the children before activities start and when they are finished. You are to be interacting with the children the whole time you are in the nursery and preschool room.

Assist the lead adult teachers as requested.

### Guidelines to Follow

- Must be a student currently in 6th – 12th grade.
- Check in with the adult leader 15 minutes prior to the service.
- Be respectful and obedient to adult leaders in the classroom.
- Model good behavior and participate in activities with the kids.
- Interaction with the children is your main priority!
- Stay in the classroom until service is over, children have been picked up, AND you are dismissed by the adult leader.
- Remain actively engaged with kids at all times.
- You must have parental approval to serve.
- You must regularly attend youth group and church service.
- Be aware of words that you use in front of the children. Remember, they ARE still children. Words that might be acceptable for you to use, may not be considered acceptable for them to use!
- You must remain with your class at all times.
- Make sure you are with an adult leader at all times. You should never be alone in a room with any children.
- Strolling the children is only permitted in the children's wing and with permission of the adult leader. Strolling is not allowed during drop off times before Sunday Small Groups or service. Adult leader must put children in and take them out of stroller.

### DO NOT

- Lift or carry the kids. *(The exception to this rule is for those working in the Beginners, Lil' Climbers and Hikers classes.)*
- Bring in food or drink to the rooms.

- Change diapers or assist with children using the restroom.
- Take children from the group or class without an adult leader with you.
- Take children from the children's area.
- Hang out in the Preschool Lobby during Sunday Small Groups or services.

## Discipline Policy

*Leaders will make every attempt to engage and instruct children through clear expectations and positive reinforcement. However, when necessary, disciplinary practices will be directed.*

## Disciplinary Guidelines

- **WE TEACH, NOT PUNISH:** Disciplinary practices will be directed toward teaching children to understand and practice acceptable behavior; help in building the child's self-esteem; be consistent and individualized for each child; be appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and never be humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to the child. Verbal abuse is unacceptable. Physically touching a child being disciplined should be kept at a minimum and only to prevent a child from hurting himself or another person.
- **TIME TO CONSIDER:** When discipline is necessary the only acceptable form will be supervised time-out. During this time the child will be instructed concerning his/her improper behavior and what is acceptable behavior. *One minute of time-out per year of age is recommended. Corporal punishment (e.g. spanking, slapping, pulling hair, arms, legs or clothes) and unsupervised total isolation are not acceptable forms of discipline.*
- **CALL FOR HELP:** If a child does not respond positively to discipline measures, contact the department director. The director will decide whether the child is removed from the classroom or whether parents will be contacted.
- **PARENT CONVERSATION:** Leaders should not discuss any behavior issues with a child's parents. If the behavior issue is severe enough, the department director will be notified and will address the issue with the parent/guardian.
- **WRITE IT DOWN:** Incident reports will be completed any time a mark is left or blood is drawn. Incident reports are available from the department director. If an incident report is completed, the department director will explain to any parents involved the nature of the incident and obtain a signature from the parent or guardian.

## CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

*Children from Nursery through 4th grade are to be checked in every time they are going in to a VGKids area.*

### Check-In Guidelines

- When using the computer check-in, please make sure children are checked into their proper classes as this helps us to keep accurate attendance records.
- Drop off items or allergy items should be updated at the check in computer before printing badge/stickers. Each child should have a badge/sticker to wear and each diaper bag or drop off item should have a badge/sticker on them before drop off.
- Guests will be registered at the main check-in desk and a badge/sticker will be issued that includes allergies and parent/guardian cell phone number.
- Leaders will be prepared to accept children into the classroom 15 minutes prior to service beginning. A leader should greet the parent and child at the door.
- The child's badge number will be entered onto the attendance roster beside their name, if a regular attendee. If a visitor, name and badge number will be added to the roster.
- All belongings should at this time have been properly tagged. Ask the parent/adult guardian to take all the child's personal toys from home with them.

### Check-In Hours

The hours that we are ready to accept and care for children at church are as follows:

**Sunday Small Group & Worship Service:** 9:15 am - Noon (or the end of service)

**Wednesday Worship Service:** 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm

Please be mindful and respectful of the volunteer's time needed for both prepping the lessons before class and cleaning up after class, being prompt in both drop off and pick up times.

## CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

*For the safety and protection of all children in our care, a claim ticket must be presented before taking children from the classroom. This includes active members and visitors.*

### Check-Out Guidelines

- Claim tickets should be presented at the door of the classroom to the leader.



- The leader will check the claim number with your child's badge/sticker number and then give you all of their materials from the day. The child can then be taken from the room.
- In the event a claim ticket is lost or someone else has it at pickup, the leader is required to find the department director to sign off on the pick up of the child, regardless of whether the leader knows them personally.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A CHILD BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WITHOUT A CLAIM TICKET. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

## SAFETY & SECURITY PROCEDURES

*VGBC recognizes the great obligation it has to take care of the children God has given. It is the church's desire not to have any harm befall a child because of a lack of security. To this end, the following security procedures have been adopted.*

### General Safety Guidelines

- ALL children are to be delivered to the appropriate VGKids classrooms/areas and picked up there by their parents/guardians.
- Nursery through 4th grade must be checked in at the computers at the VGKids Check-In area. Two stickers/badges will print for each child. One sticker goes on the back of the child and one sticker remains with the parent or guardian for pick-up of the child. If the sticker is unavailable or lost, the Department Director must be consulted before the child is released.
- To help insure the security of the room by not allowing "escapees," parents should ask for their child from the door and not enter the room.
- No child will be released to a child under seventh grade with or without the security label.
- A child is not to be left in a room without a teacher.
- Parent or guardian is to remain on premises after dropping off a child.

### Weather Related Emergency

- Should a weather alert be issued for the area, the teacher/leader should take a head-count of the assigned group.
- The leader should then move to the assigned weather secure location (noted on the sign by the door) and remain there until the all-clear is given by the pastor/ministry leader/security team.

- Students will not be dismissed/checked out until the all-clear is given.

## Fire Related Emergencies

- If a fire should occur, do not try to put it out. Pull the alarm if possible and get students out of the room or area.
- If the fire is not present in your classroom/area but the fire alarms begins to sound:
  - Calmly instruct students to line up at the door
  - Take a head-count of students
  - Proceed quickly and safely to the assigned exit, using the route noted on a sign beside the door of the classroom/area.
  - Once you have exited the building, make your way to the assigned safe zone (noted on the sign by the door) away from the building.
- One volunteer should be at the beginning of the line and one volunteer should be at the end of the line of the group as you make your way out of the building.
- Stay with your group; do not leave your group to find your own children or for any other reason.
- Students will not be dismissed/checked out until the approval has been given by the pastor/ministry lead/security team.

## ABUSE POLICY

### Abuse Definitions

**Physical Abuse:** Violent non-accidental contact which results in injury. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries include bruises, fractures, cuts, and burns.

**Sexual Abuse:** Any form of sexual activity with a child/youth, whether at the Church, at home, or any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another minor.

**Emotional Abuse:** A pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a child's/youth's spirit attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.

### Sensitive Information

- Never agree to keep something in confidence. Always communicate with students that before they share with you that you may share with a pastor/ministry lead and/or their parents should it be something very serious and as needed.
- Reassure them that you will do so, if needed, in a way that will protect them and help them.

- If you discover or even suspect that a student is being physically or sexually abused, you are required by law to pass that information on to a Child Protective Services. You, even as a volunteer, are a “mandatory reporter”.
- If a student is doing something illegal, is at risk (including suicidal), or other sensitive non-mandatory reporting issues, you **MUST** contact a pastor/ministry leader immediately.
- When dealing with all sensitive issues, they are not to be discussed in open group settings. If possible, move and/or immediately stop the conversation or information that is being shared, encouraging the students to talk privately afterward.
- Information that is shared in group/classroom settings should also not be discussed with others outside of your ministry area unless appropriate or necessary.

### Please contact a Pastor/Ministry Leader when...

- Implication of physical abuse (\*mandatory report)
- Implication of sexual abuse (\*mandatory report)
- Implication of drug or alcohol abuse by a family member
- A report of outbursts of anger
- Implications of self-harm or threats of suicide
- Implications of drug or alcohol use by a minor
- Implication of exposure to pornography or other explicit materials, products, or actions
- Struggles of sexual identity or exploration
- Other life struggles or hurts that would help us to be aware of: death of a family member, parent separations or divorce.

### Mandatory Reporting Guidelines

- Immediately call the Childline (1-800-932-0313) as soon as possible. Give as much information as possible. It is okay if you do not know every detail.
- Contact the pastor/ministry lead and share with them as soon as possible so they can walk you through the process. You may ask the pastor/ministry leader to join you and be present when you call the Childline, if they are available.
- File a paper report with Childline within 24 hours, located on their website.
- The laws are written for over reporting. Best rule is always to stop, pray, and make a report.

## ILLNESS & INJURY

### Before Arrival

For the protection of all preschoolers in the preschool area, parents are requested not to bring a child who appears to be ill. Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should not be taken from home when any of the following exists:

- Fever (currently or within the previous 24 hours)
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Any symptoms of childhood disease such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough.
- Common cold (from onset through one week)
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Any unexplained rash, any skin infection (boils, ringworm, impetigo), pink eye or other eye infection

## While in VGKids

- If a child develops symptoms during a service, the parents *will be called for and expected to come immediately.*
- If a child exhibits symptoms of a fever, VGKids leaders will take their temperatures using a touchless thermometer.
- VGKids leaders are not permitted to administer medication to any child.
- Please notify the Department Director if your child develops symptoms of any highly contagious illness within 48 hours of having been at church.

## Injury Guidelines

In case of injury while your child is in the care of VGKids, we will operate by the following guidelines.

- See to the immediate needs of the child.
- Do not leave the child unattended for any reason.
- A first-aid kit is located in the preschool desk with disinfecting cleanser, antibiotic ointment and bandages for minor injuries.
- Notify the Department Director who will complete an incident report.
- For serious injuries, contact the Department Director immediately.