

Grandview Nazarene Church

Procedures and Best Practices for Ministry to Children and Youth

Below are procedures that will serve as a guide for those who volunteer in ministry to children and youth. It is our hope that these procedures will also offer encouragement to parents who choose to leave children and youth in our care.

Screening, Interview, and Training

All volunteers covered by the GNC policy are required to complete and submit a ministry application and screening form. These can be obtained through the church office. Applicants may be required to meet with the appropriate ministry leader for a personal interview. Once a ministry placement is made, the volunteer co-minister will be encouraged to attend training sessions relevant to his/her ministry, as trainings are made available.

- 1. Ministry Application** A hardcopy application will be completed and returned to the appropriate ministry leader. These applications will be held in confidence and securely locked for storage in the church office.
- 2. Screening Interview** After the application is submitted, the applicant may be required to meet with the ministry leader to discuss the application and answer any questions either party may have about the process or the ministry. At this time, the applicant may be asked to complete some form of strength and/or gifts assessment. If this is necessary, the ministry leader and the applicant will review the results of this assessment to see what ministry placement would be best for their gifting.
- 3. Background Checks** The final step for an applicant is the review of a criminal background check.

The screening interview and background checks will reoccur every third year of a volunteer's ministry as a form of accountability.

Secondary Screening Procedures

Secondary screening procedures will only apply to volunteers who work with children occasionally (defined as "on special occasion," or "not regularly scheduled,"). These volunteers are to be regular attendees (exceptions to this may include college or seminary students requesting a practicum, internship, or other form of ministry partnership with pastoral leadership. Recommendations and references will be required and considered on a case-by-case basis).

Secondary volunteers will only be allowed to work with minors if they are working with 1 employee or 1 adult volunteer who has gone through screening, interview, approval and training. Secondary volunteers are not to be alone with a child or student under any circumstances.

Guiding Behavior

Discipline is not equal to nor is it meant to be punishment. Instead it is a time of teaching. The “teaching of discipline” is two-fold.

First, immediately stop inappropriate or unsafe behavior.

Second, help child find a more appropriate and safe way to behave. Here are some procedures for correcting behavior:

1. Work first to prevent problems before they occur. This can often happen as a result of being prepared for every moment you are with your children.
2. Set clear guidelines/limits/boundaries. Be sure these are clear. Redirect energy by giving children better options.
3. Give young children choices. Example: I am sorry, but Bobby has the blue car right now. You may play with the red car or the green car. Or you may wait until Bobby has finished.
4. Talk through the problem with the child. (resist the temptation to lecture—talking through should be appropriated by the child’s age) Allow them to the opportunity to become problem solvers.
5. If you do not meet success after redirection, i.e., talking through an issue, giving other options, etc. Call for assistance from the ministry leader.
6. It is the ministry leader’s role to discuss the situation with parents.

Remember to . . .

- ❖ acknowledge a student’s good behavior.
- ❖ focus on the action rather than tie it to the student’s personality flaws.
- ❖ remember that more than 80% of communication is non-verbal.
- ❖ when addressing a child’s behavior, lower your voice.
- ❖ realize a child’s behavior may be a cry for your attention or help.
- ❖ avoid hurrying a student.
- ❖ always, always, always...pray for and with your children!

Room Ratios

All Children’s ministry activities will be staffed with adequate numbers of adults (and approved Jr. Staff). The ratio of adults to participants will depend upon room, event size and the nature of the activity. However, we make every effort for a minimum of 2 adults (or 1 adult and 1 approved teen volunteer) to serve as supervisors and leaders. If it is not possible to have 2 staff/volunteers classroom doors will be left open to promote greater accountability.

Room Safety

All classroom doors should remain locked anytime classroom is not in use. Therefore, doors should be locked prior to a class gathering and immediately after children and leaders vacate a room. Following this procedure will help to create greater accountability for where groups and/or individuals gather. It also limits space for a predator’s playground.

In Case of an Accident or Incident (i.e., fighting, one student hurting another, an accident resulting in a cut or bump, etc.) Reports are located at two locations, upstairs next the NMI bulletin board and downstairs next to the Kid Splash room. When forms are complete, give one copy to the parent/caregiver and one copy to the senior pastor. These forms will be filed in the church office.

Administering First Aid

There are two first aid kits for minor injuries. One is located in the basket under the greeting table in the foyer and the other is in the kitchen of the fellowship hall.

1. Determine if injury is life-threatening or includes significant blood loss. If yes to either of these, call 911 immediately.
2. If non-life threatening injury determine best treatment.
 - a. Is there a need to send a volunteer to get a parent? (Never leave a child unattended.)
 - b. If incident is not urgent, take the child to first aid site and use appropriate care. (*i.e. ice on bump or bruise, band-aid on minor cuts, etc.*) Do not administer medication to child.
3. Deal with the child and his/her injury lovingly.
4. When parents/caregivers come to pick-up a minor child, be sure to tell them what happened and give them a copy of the Incident/Accident Report.
5. Give a copy of the Incident/Accident Report to the supervising pastor to be filed in the office.

Suspicious of Abuse

If you suspect that a child is the victim of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), this should be reported to a pastor. Any paid pastoral staff employee or volunteer must report suspicions of abuse immediately to a supervisor (paid staff member), both verbally and in writing on the Form for Reporting Abuse.

Investigating Allegations of Abuse

The supervisor/paid staff member will see that an immediate investigation is conducted in conjunction with the church's legal advisor and the lead (elected) pastor. If it is determined that actual or suspected child abuse has occurred, the lead pastor will determine what to do with the potential allegations.

Allegations against a Volunteer or Staff Member

Allegations against a minister are not equal to an actual occurrence. In the event an allegation is made the minister will be asked to step down temporarily from their duties. If allegations are made against a paid staff member, that staff member will automatically be relieved from any further activity or function and will be put on paid leave, until the allegation has been resolved. This means that the accused is not allowed to work in his/her previous role, but will continue to receive usual pay.

The volunteer or paid staff person is not permitted to serve in a ministry capacity until the allegations are resolved. The church will take steps necessary to protect the integrity of the minister involved while taking steps necessary to protect all children and students.

Rights of the Accused

If a staff member or volunteer is being investigated by a governmental agency because of a report of child abuse, that person has certain rights. These include:

- a. The right to be informed of the nature of the report (not including information about the person(s) who reported the alleged abuse or neglect).
- b. The right to provide full information regarding his knowledge of the alleged report and to identify witnesses who can support his explanation.
- c. The right to deny the social worker entrance to his home or to discuss the allegations. (If he chooses not to cooperate with the social worker conducting the investigation, the assistance of law enforcement may be obtained.)
- d. The right to be informed of the agency's findings and the basis for those findings.
- e. The right to be represented by a lawyer

Worker's Rights if a Report of Child Abuse is Confirmed

Should a report of abuse be confirmed following an investigation by the governmental agency, the worker will have certain rights. These include:

- a. The right to request and receive information about the finding (not including information about the person(s) who reported the alleged abuse or neglect).
- b. The right to disagree with the finding and to request a formal hearing by a State Department hearing office.
- c. The right to be represented by a lawyer.

NOTE: Adults who work with children and youth should understand that sexual relationships, physical abuse, and emotional abuse with minors can lead to a felony conviction and imprisonment. Workers should also understand that Grandview Nazarene Church insurance policy may-not provide them with a legal defense of a sexual, physical, or emotional misconduct charge, or pay any portion of a jury verdict assessed against them because of such conduct.

Records Maintained by the State

If the agency finds that there is sufficient evidence of child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse to confirm the allegation, a report will be submitted to the appropriate law enforcement officials; that record will be kept by the state agency, and information concerning the victim and the alleged perpetrator may be entered into the child abuse/neglect central Registry.

A person who is placed in the registry as an abuser or neglecter is barred from employment, residence or volunteering in child-care facilities, and the information may be given to other governmental agencies that have a need to know.

If the report is unfounded, the record will be kept for two years and then destroyed. No information will then be entered into the Central Registry or be shared with other governmental agencies.

Response Procedures

Under no circumstances is anyone affiliated with Grandview Nazarene Church other than the Lead Pastor (or otherwise designated Pastor) or appointed Grandview Nazarene Church representative, permitted to make a public statement.

The basic content of the public statement will be as follows: “An allegation was received by the Social Services Department. They (Social Services) are investigating the allegations, and we are cooperating. There is no additional information I can share until the Social Services Department completes its investigation.”

Emergency Plan

It is essential that in the event of an emergency, the age level ministries work together with the ushers to communicate with the parents in other parts of the church. The church usher will be the one to ensure that the parents exit the building in an orderly fashion, directing them to meet at a pre-determined area adjacent to the children’s meeting area.

The parents will further be instructed by the church ushers, that the children’s areas are inaccessible. The ushers will always reassure the parents that the Children’s and Youth Ministries are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures. The age-level ministry volunteers and leaders will direct the children and students to their predetermined areas.

- All volunteer ministers are expected to be familiar with the Emergency Response Plan
 - a. FIRE
 - b. TORNADO
- Emergency Plans will be posted in each classroom
- For Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures see GNC Children and Youth Protection Policy document.

During Services and Activities

For the safety of all children and volunteers, minors should not be permitted to roam the building during services or other activities. If you see a child away from his or her designated area, it is appropriate to ask where they are headed and escort them to that destination. If a student is planning to use the restroom, wait outside the door, then escort the child back to the service/class in process.

Building Procedures

Room Stewardship

- Always attempt to leave a room better than you found it.
- If you get it out, put it back.
- Do not leave outdated materials laying around in your classroom or space.
- Leave your room tidy each time you leave.
- Our volunteer custodial staff will empty trash and sweep floors. The rest is up to you and your team!

Transportation and Room Reservations

- Contact the church office at 816-763-6891. The appointed staff will contact you to lead you through the proper procedure.
- Event drivers should be 25 years or older. If documents are required by Grandview Nazarene Church’s current insurance provider, these should be on file in the church office. i.e., driver license, proof of insurance, driving record, etc.