



Nazarene Safe

8th Street Church of the Nazarene CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

POLICIES and PROCEDURES MANUAL





8th Street Church

Policies & Procedures for Children’s Ministries

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Overview of the 8th Street Church Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, 8th Street Church requires all staff members and Level 1* volunteers working with children or youth (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

8th Street policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a Ministry Director or Pastor. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in ‘grooming’ a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or ‘gatekeeper’), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip 8th Street Church staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, 8th Street Church requires all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children’s activities or programming to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training must be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers who work with minors are required to complete the 8th Street Church Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an application (employees and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

*Candidates with a Nazarene District License or Ministerial License will be screened through the denominational data base.

**It is the general policy of 8th Street Church that a volunteer attend 8th Street Church for a period of at least six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, youth, or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check



8th Street Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or youth activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

8th Street Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at 8th Street Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to one of the pastors.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

8th Street Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Police Department, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a Pastor. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a Pastor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

8th Street Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all 8th Street Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from an employment or volunteer position. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Pastor(s) and Church Board.

GENERAL BOARD

In absence of a specific more restrictive policy or procedure, 8th Street Church, adopts the policy and procedures of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene relating to the prevention of sexual abuse.



Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, 8th Street Church staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Pastor(s).

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Children or Youth Ministries activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, youth or vulnerable populations at 8th Street Church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from 8th Street Church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations at 8th Street Church and will be required to take part in a re-training process before volunteering again.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at 8th Street Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Pastor(s).

Oklahoma law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to the Ministry Director or Pastor and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to the Ministry Director or Pastor as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Children, the Pastor(s) will speak with the reporting person or volunteer in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Pastor(s) will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.



Investigation

1. The Pastor(s) will be responsible for interviewing all potential witnesses and gathering all available relevant information necessary to complete a thorough investigation of the incident. The investigation shall be documented.
2. The Pastor(s) shall notify the parent(s) or guardian of any child who may have been a victim of the abuse.
3. The alleged abuser shall be temporarily removed from working with children or youth immediately.
4. The Pastor(s) and Safety Committee will review the relevant information pertaining to the incident(s) and should the investigation reveal that the incident of abuse occurred, the abuser shall be immediately and permanently removed from working with children and youth. This will be decided by a vote of the Safety Committee.
5. The Pastor(s) will provide a written report of the incident to the Church Board, District Superintendent, General Board, and the Board of Superintendents.

If appropriate, the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services will be informed. The statewide child abuse hotline is 1-800-522-3511. The Oklahoma County child abuse hotline is 713-6800.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The 8th Street Church Board will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.



8th Street Church Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, the Pastor(s) of 8th Street Church of the Nazarene will appoint the Leadership Team to act as a Safety Committee.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable 8th Street Church's Children's Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

MEETINGS

During the monthly meeting, the members will discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing 8th Street policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the 8th Street Church Board regarding safety issues.

Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide directors the opportunity to observe staff members and volunteer interactions with children.

1. **Each Pastor(s)** conduct ongoing and unscheduled observations for programs that occur weekly.

BUILDING SAFETY



The Pastor(s) will be responsible for ensuring that the 8th Street Church's Children's area is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the building or outside during children's or youth programming or classes. Children's and Youth Ministries staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children's and Youth Ministries staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) space.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

8th Street Church of the Nazarene is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery: 0-2	2	8
Early Childhood: 3-5	2	8
Elementary	2	8

8th Street Church will always maintain a minimum of a 2-adult ratio.

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Pastor(s) and Volunteer Coordinator. They will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with 8th Street policy.



DISCIPLINE

It is 8th Street Church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children and youth. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children and youth are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child or youth before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child or youth away from the group within the same room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child or youth).
- 3) For younger children, provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, since being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) For younger children, provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes), with a maximum of 5 minutes.
- 6) Stay aware of the child through the entire time-out.
- 7) Praise children once they have completed the time-out and tell them that they are welcome to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the parent/guardian.



Restroom Supervision and Assistance Guideline

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their restroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded. ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children must be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When adults accompany children into the restroom in the early childhood room, the door will be left unlocked.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in restrooms.
- 5) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 6) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

Early childhood

- 1) No adult will ever be in the restroom with the child with the door locked.
- 2) Adults may assist early childhood children in the restroom with the door unlocked when another adult is present and aware.

Elementary

Children in the elementary room will use the family restroom one at a time. The teacher will ensure that the bathroom is empty before sending any child in the restroom. The adult must remain outside of the



restroom in the community room. If a child needs help, the adult must inform another adult volunteer and keep the door unlocked. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance based on their individual capabilities and needs. At no time may one adult be alone with any number of children in the restroom.

Adults must not use the restrooms when children are present.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Adult leaders who have completed abuse awareness training in the last two years are the only ones authorized to change diapers or assist with accidents for special needs children.

If a child or youth with special needs assistance with going to the bathroom then two adults or one adult leader and the child's buddy go to the restroom together. The adult leader assists as needed to undo clothing and help the child to be seated in the stall. The staff person holds the stall door shut for privacy. Once the child is done, the adult leader makes sure the child is clean and then helps with clothing. The leader and child wash hands and leave the restroom with the child's buddy.

If a child or youth is able to go to the bathroom independently, he/she enters the restroom and the buddy stands outside in the hallway until the child is done. Bathroom doors are to always be propped open to provide assistance if necessary.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any 8th Street Church facility, while traveling with children and youth, or while working with or supervising children and youth.

MEDICATION

8th Street Church staff and volunteers are not responsible for dispensing medication to any child. The only exceptions to this policy are:

- 1) Diaper rash ointment, Mylicon, Orajel, EpiPens, and inhalers.
- 2) With children who have special needs, medication must be in original container. Instructions are given and signed by parent or guardian each time child is left.

NUDITY



Staff members and volunteers at 8th Street Church should never be nude in the presence of children and youth in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, camp, etc.), specific measures should be taken to adhere to policy.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in 8th Street Church programs or activities. Another adult who has completed the 8th Street application and screening process or parent/legal guardian should always be present.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving vehicles, unless during an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive 8th Street Church owned or rented vehicles.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of 8th Street Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs. Parents are required to provide up to date contact information prior to dropping off their children.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT



Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at 8th Street Church. Elementary age parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at 8th Street Church will be required to complete the 8th Street Church volunteer application and screening process. Parents are welcome to observe Nursery and Early-childhood children from the hallway only.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

8th Street Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, 8th Street Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's and Youth Ministries while protecting children and youth. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's and Youth Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to a Ministry Director or Pastor. Examples include:
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in 8th Street Church must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.



8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Ministry Director or Pastor. Reporting should be done in person or through a phone call. There will be a written record of each report.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Purity programs may be available with approved curriculum and parental consent.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers at 8th Street Church are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (including magazines, cards, images, videos, films, phones, electronics, etc.) on church property, during church sponsored functions, or in the presence of children.

The media used in Children's Ministries at 8th Street Church must be approved by the Pastor(s).

TOBACCO AND MARIJUANA USE

8th Street Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco, marijuana, and vape products in church facilities, while in the presence of children, youth, or their parents, or during 8th Street Church activities or programs. 8th Street Church is a tobacco, marijuana and vape-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. 8th Street Church staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or



humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to 8th Street Church staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. They must show the ticket with the number assigned to the child. Staff or volunteers may ask for a valid state-issued identification card or refer to the Pastor(s).

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or youth has authority to pick up the child.

If a parent or legal guardian who has custody of a child has a court order for the non-custodial parent or anyone else to not have access to the child, a copy of the court order is requested. A court order gives the staff and volunteers at 8th Street Church the power to protect the child.

If the person picking up a child, whether it is parent, grandparents, friend, or legal guardian appears to be impaired either mentally and/or physically, the child will not be released. This will be a decision between the Pastor(s) and/or Volunteer Coordinator. Every effort will be made to contact the child's other parent, grandparent, or friend. If the child appears to be in danger and no contact can be made, the Department of Human Services will be called for assistance in the situation.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate Pastor(s) before releasing the child.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs. Staff members and volunteers are expected to avoid unnecessary phone use or other distracting activities while supervising children.



Peer to Peer Policy

Children and youth are prohibited from harassing, sexually harassing, sexually assaulting, hazing, threatening, intimidating, bullying, or verbally abusing another person, including gestures, written or verbal expressions, or physical acts that a reasonable person should know will harm another person, damage another's property, or insult or demean another. This includes, but is not limited to, threatening behavior, harassment, intimidation, and bullying by children and youth at church or church activities.

If any person is aware of, observes, or is a victim of harassing, assaulting, hazing, threatening, intimidating, bullying, or verbally abusing behavior or communications from a child or youth, such person must report the behavior or communication to the Pastor(s).

Once a report has been received information will be gathered by the Pastor(s) to determine the severity of the incident. All information should be kept in complete confidence. In making this determination, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred shall be reviewed. The following steps may be taken:

- The parent/guardian of all parties will be notified of the incident.
- The Pastor(s) will ask each person involved to write out what happened.
- Possible consequences *may* be:
 - ✓ Expulsion from an immediate event
 - ✓ Restriction from future ministry activities
 - ✓ Writing a letter of apology or verbal apology
 - ✓ Completion of some act of service
 - ✓ Banning the perpetrator from volunteering with children
 - ✓ Requiring parental supervision in order to be active in the program
 - ✓ In severe cases (such as rape or assault causing serious injury) reporting to law enforcement
 - ✓ Recommend mental health care for victim and/or perpetrator
- The Pastor(s) will complete a report to give to the Safety Committee.
- The Pastor(s) may also require that the minor and/or the minor's parent or guardian meet with them or other appropriate personnel before being allowed to return to church or church activities.

Reporting Incidents to Parent/Guardian

When a parent/guardian needs to be informed of a situation regarding his/her child or youth at church or during a church activity the policy at 8th Street Church is that the Ministry Director or Pastor will inform one parent. When it is known that parents are together, the



church assumes that by informing one parent, the other parent will be told. In the case where it is known that parents are divorced or separated; the church will make efforts to inform both parents.



Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of 8th Street Church’s Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at 8th Street Church.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by 8th Street Church.

I also acknowledge that I have agreed to fulfill the duties asked of me in my ministry position. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at 8th Street Church at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks’ notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and 8th Street Church. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of 8th Street Church’s policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer’s name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer’s signature

Date: _____

[This page is to be signed and remain attached to the 8th Street Church’s Policies and Procedures.]