



Overview, Policies, and Procedures
for Grace Kids at Grace Hewitt

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in serving in the children's ministry at Grace Hewitt - Grace Kids!

Your involvement in Grace Kids matters because your service impacts the lives of children and makes the name of Jesus known to the next generation. All who are called by God to follow Him are also called into His very mission - to make disciples (Matt 28:16-20). Making disciples who make disciples is the ultimate aim of Grace Kids.

Whether you serve in setting up, as a helper, a teacher, or an extra set of hands, Grace Hewitt needs volunteers who are intent on leading the next generation to follow Jesus, teaching them to obey all that he commanded and leading them to trust in His glorious grace.

In this packet you will find an overview of Grace Kids, what to expect on a Sunday morning, helpful instructions for your time in the classroom, and the policies and procedures expected for all staff and volunteers working with minors at Grace Church.

Please read through this carefully as you prayerfully discern God's calling for you to serve at Grace Hewitt.

Overview of Grace Kids

1. We believe children are a gift from God and a blessing to their parents and the church.

Genesis 1:28 – And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

Psalms 127:3-5 – Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb *a reward*. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Mark 9:37 – Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.

2. We believe parents are called to make disciples of their children.

Proverbs 22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 1:8-9 – Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

Deuteronomy 6:7 – You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Ephesians 6:1-4 – Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

3. We believe the church must also make disciples of children. We work toward this in three ways: (1) Making disciples of parents, (2) Teaching children God’s Word through age appropriate, gospel-centered classes and instruction, and (3) inclusion of children in gathered worship with the church as well as in Community Groups throughout the week.

These three components work together within the local gathering of believers to make disciples of the next generation. As parents are discipled, they are better equipped and supported to train their own children. Classes and instruction on Sunday mornings ensure that children are discipled appropriately for their age. Bringing children alongside their parents and others in the church is of immeasurable value. This final element allows children to observe their parents sing, pray, read Scripture, and submit to the authority of God and His church. It also allows for children to learn from and be discipled by the rest of the church body, exposing them to the breadth of giftings, knowledge, experience, and wisdom God has bestowed upon Grace Hewitt.

We do not believe the Bible prescribes a specific age for children to enter into or remain in the worship service, so we leave that to the discernment of each family. However, Grace Kids is committed to teaching children from birth through 12th grade.

We believe that age-appropriate teaching can benefit the children in early years and help them grow in their understanding of God’s Word, thereby preparing them for the sermons they will hear for the rest of their lives.

We also offer various resources for family worship, Bible study, and catechism. We believe the church has a missional purpose in the community and

therefore exists to provide teaching and instruction to the children of unbelieving parents who visit Grace and to the children of new Christian parents who are still learning God's Word themselves.

At Grace Hewitt we love children and will be patient as parents strive to raise kids who honor them, respect others, and love Jesus. Our hope is that your kids grow up with a deep love for Jesus and His Word and will learn to live their life on mission at a young age.

Classes, Curriculum, and Sunday Schedule

NURSERY (0 – 4 Years)

The nursery (ages 0-4) is a safe and engaging environment for children where they will learn short and simple facts about God, His Word, and creation, taken from The Gospel Story Bible or The Jesus Storybook Bible. While the classes may be broken up into crawlers & walkers, we offer Nursery during both the Equipping Hour and the Worship Service.

9:30 AM Equipping Hour: Nursery

- 9:15 Arrive at church, prepare your classroom, greet children/parents as they arrive (some may be attending adult Equipping Hour)
- 9:20-9:35 Free play, games, color, etc. Feel free to chat about the previous week or visit with parents dropping their children off
- 9:35-9:45 Read a Bible Story from Gospel Story Bible or Jesus Storybook Bible (there will be a coloring sheet with the story in the room)
- 9:45-9:55 Snack, color, and discuss the story
- 9:55-10:05 Sing songs, play a game
- 10:05-10:20 Clean up room, parents pick up, and transition teacher

10:30 AM Worship Service: Nursery

- 10:15 Arrive at church, prepare your classroom, greet children/parents as they arrive
- 10:20-10:50 Free play, games, color, etc. Feel free to chat about the previous week or visit with parents dropping their children off.
Wait on any children that may be in the service until dismissal.
- 10:50-11:10 Read a Bible Story from Gospel Story Bible or Jesus Storybook Bible (there will be a coloring sheet with the story in the room)
- 11:10-11:25 Sing songs, play a game
- 11:25-11:40 Snack and discuss story
- 11:40-11:55 Coloring page, read another story, or play calm game
- 11:55-12:10 Clean up room and parents pick up

KIDS (Kindergarten – 2nd Grade)

Our classes for Kindergarten through 2nd grade will learn the same Bible story at an age-appropriate level using the The Gospel Story Bible. As our children grow, they are familiarized with God's big plan of salvation and progress to a more detailed look at the connection of each Bible story to the gospel and God's larger plan of redemption through the finished work of Christ. They will learn to see that all Scripture, all that God has done, and all He is doing directly points to Jesus. Children will also learn one Bible Memory passage per month.

9:30 AM Equipping Hour: Kindergarten - 2nd grade

- 9:15 Arrive at church, prepare your classroom, greet children/parents as they arrive (some may be attending adult Equipping Hour)
- 9:20-9:35 Free play, games, color, etc. Feel free to chat about the previous week or visit with parents dropping their children off.
- 9:35-9:05 Using The Gospel Story Bible & Curriculum, read the Bible story, teach and discuss the story, color the lesson's picture, and use object lessons (you may also offer snacks at this time)
- 9:10-9:20 Clean up room and parents pick up

PRETEENS (3rd Grade – 5th Grade)

Our classes for 3rd through 5th grades will be based upon the New City Catechism. Children will learn a different catechism each week and examine the scriptural basis of each catechism. Children will be encouraged to look to the Bible in order to answer their big questions.

9:30 AM Equipping Hour: 3rd grade – 5th Grade

- 9:15 Arrive at church, prepare your classroom, greet children/parents as they arrive (some may be attending adult Equipping Hour)
- 9:20-9:35 Free play, games, color, etc. Feel free to chat about the previous week or visit with parents dropping their children off.
- 9:35-9:05 Using the New City Catechism, teach, discuss, and memorize the question and answer for this week
- 9:10-9:20 Clean up room and parents pick up

YOUTH (6th – 12th Grade)

Our youth classes will be based upon the Rooted Reservoir curriculum. These classes will range from biblical overview classes to classes on worldview and gospel foundations. Our prayer is to equip each student with the tools necessary for standing firm in the faith as they transition into adulthood.

9:30 AM Equipping Hour: 6th grade – 12th Grade

- 9:15 Arrive at church, prepare your classroom, greet children/parents as they arrive (some may be attending adult Equipping Hour)
- 9:20-9:35 Free play, games, catch up, etc. Feel free to chat about the previous week or visit with parents dropping their children off.
- 9:35-9:05 Teach and discuss this week's lesson, following the Rooted Reservoir curriculum
- 9:10-9:20 Clean up room and parents pick up

Onboarding Process

Application: Applicant fills out the online Grace Kids volunteer application. The Grace Kids Director or Coordinator will review the application and give approval for moving forward.

Background Check: Each applicant will receive a form via email for permission to run a background check. Once an applicant has given approval, the Grace Kids Director or Coordinator will run and review the background check.

Policy Training: The applicant will receive a copy of the Grace Kids Manual including Overview, Policies, and Procedures. The volunteer must read through the manual.

Classroom Training: Before becoming a lead teacher or assistant teacher (serve during the 9:30 am equipping hour), all applicants must attend an on-site teaching training, which will be conducted biannually or upon special request.

Approved Volunteer: Once each of the above steps have been completed, confirmed by the Grace Kids Director, the applicant becomes an approved Grace Kids volunteer and can be placed on the schedule to start serving within the Grace Kids ministry.

Volunteer Age and Membership Requirements

All volunteers must be members in good standing at Grace Hewitt. In general, all volunteers must be at least 18-years-old. Exceptions may be made for minors volunteering with a parent who is an approved Grace Kids volunteer. In that case, a minor volunteer must be supervised by his/her parent, must never be alone with a child, and may neither take children to the bathroom nor change diapers.

Grace Kids Positions

Grace Kids Director: Serve as a staff member to organize and manage the operation of Grace Kids, working with staff and gifted volunteers to disciple children and their families, in the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

Responsibilities:

On Sundays:

- Identify, greet, and direct new families entering the building
- Greet and interact with regularly attending children and families
- Direct volunteers
- Visit classes for the purpose of teacher support and/or to address any issues or emergencies that arise
- Teaches classes as needed

Otherwise:

- Recruit, train and coordinate workers for classes and events, worship services and programs
- Uses appropriate child development knowledge to best meet the needs of children in curriculum selection, child discipleship, classroom grouping, etc.
- Communicates the needs of the children's program to other staff and church leaders as appropriate
- Organizes, sets-up and stocks classrooms with necessary supplies
- Coordinates childcare for special services and events

*If there is no Grace Kids Director, the Grace Kids Coordinator and Elders will share in these responsibilities.

Grace Kids Coordinator: Oversee nursery and classroom preparation, volunteer rotation, parent / child check-in and pick-up.

Responsibilities:

On Sundays:

- Ensure classroom is ready for the arrival of children
- Direct Volunteers
- Greet Parents and inquire about any special instructions for their

children (i.e. food allergies, feeding, changing, napping)

- Direct teachers in best practices and ensure all policies and procedures for Grace Hewitt are carried out

Otherwise:

- Keep track of supplies and report to Grace Kids Director any necessary purchases
- Coordinate laundering of linens
- Communicate necessary set-up changes to Grace Kids Director or Deacon of Facilities

*If there is no Grace Kids Director, the Grace Kids Coordinator will report to the elders of Grace Hewitt.

Nursery Teacher: Leader in the Nursery for a given classroom (during one of the worship services).

Responsibilities:

- Take lead on greeting parents
- Ensure each child's needs are attended to as best as possible (i.e. feeding, sleeping, or other special instructions)
- Oversee the receipt of appropriately checked-in children and ensure proper check-out procedures are followed
- Keep track of child's diaper bag and personal belongings
- Lead other volunteers in proper child engagement: reading, talking to, rocking, and teaching weekly lesson

Classroom Teacher: Lead teachers for classrooms aging from 3 years to 6th grade for a given rotation.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure proper check-in and check-out procedures are followed
- Prepare the lesson during the week prior to a Sunday morning
- Be familiar with the lesson for that classroom and be prepared to lead the teaching time and any activities
- Oversee all aspects of the class during their assigned rotation.
- Lead other volunteers in proper child engagement.

Assistant or Volunteer Teachers

Rotating and regular volunteers to help manage any age classroom in Grace Kids. Assistant Teachers may be non-members of Grace Hewitt, although membership is encouraged.

Responsibilities:

- Respond to all needs made known by the Classroom Teacher
- For the nursery, Volunteer Teachers should be fully engaged with the children by reading to them, talking with them, rocking them, or playing on the floor.
- For older classrooms, Volunteer Teachers should engage with the children in age-appropriate ways, doing whatever is necessary to ensure that every child is engaged in the lesson, safe, and cared for during the class.
- This might mean handling snacks, playing with a child, or helping redirect children to the lesson. Follow the lead of the primary teaching the room and be active in child engagement.

Overview of Practices and Procedures

As Grace Hewitt staff and volunteers (leaders), we must ALWAYS be above reproach when interacting with our students. Our actions and intentions should always be pure and honoring to Christ. We will treat others with respect in all verbal and physical interaction. The subject of conduct with students and children is fragile and should be taken with the utmost concern and seriousness by every Grace Hewitt leader.

Our greatest desire for children of all ages is to make Jesus known to them so that they would learn to love, trust, and follow Him. That aim must be at the heart of every gathering of Grace Kids, motivating leaders to be actively engaged with every child. Grace Kids is not meant to be a time of “babysitting,” but a time of teaching about and stirring the affections for Jesus with every child entrusted to our care.

In light of the increasing number of tragedies that have shocked the Christian community, it is our desire to set in place policies to keep students, families, and leaders safe. Our safety guidelines, set below, can be summarized in two words: overly cautious. We know that “our adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter: 5:8). Our desire, then,

is to build into our lives and our ministry safeguards of accountability that would help keep us from situations that could damage the integrity of our ministry. We want to be sure our policies and procedures not only set up a framework where inappropriate behavior is difficult to have happen, but also where any appearance of impropriety is avoided. It's important that we be above reproach in every way we can.

Outlined below is the code of conduct adopted by Grace Hewitt to help staff, leaders, and volunteers create safe environments for students in Grace Kids and for those who minister to them. Certain best practices for teaching and redirection within the classroom are also outlined below to help Grace Kids aim toward making Jesus known to all children at Grace Hewitt.

All personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement outlined below and within this manual before agreeing to adhere to the "Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement."

Best Practices

1. Teaching / Engaging with Children

Be Engaged

Be focused on the children during Grace Kids.

Talk to the kids - at any age

In the nursery, read to, sing with, maintain eye-contact with kids as much as possible.

In older classes, ask lots of questions and seek to involve all children in the discussion.

Grace Kids is about the kids, so please keep your phone away and direct conversation to the children rather than the other adult volunteers

Be prepared for the lesson.

All ages will have some form of material to teach the children, please be sure to read through the material in preparation for the class.

Know how the story or material points to Christ. The focus of Grace Kids curriculum is not to teach children how to recite the order of creation or the tribes of Israel, though those things may be important. The aim is to lead them to see Jesus in all of Scripture.

Example: How does this story anticipate Jesus? How does Jesus perform this sort of task in a greater, fuller, more meaningful, or more honorable way?

How does the grace of God shape how we read this story?

Be Flexible

No lesson will go precisely as planned.

Children are highly relational and it is more valuable to build that growing relationship and ensure them a safe and welcoming environment than to achieve your entire well laid plans.

Concern yourself first with the kids as individuals and secondly as a conveyor of information.

2. Redirection

Use Positive Language

Offer positive statements in place of “No” or “Don’t” statements, where possible.

Instead of “Don’t say that to him.” Try, ‘Please use kind words.’

Instead of “Don’t hit the table with your shoe.” Try, “Why don't you try putting that on your foot?”

Reframe your negative commands with positive requests.

Give Choices

Adults frequently back themselves into battles of will and authority by unnecessarily limiting a child’s autonomy.

Instead of controlling all variables, control the end result and open other variables for children to control on their own.

Ex: You want a child to sit and listen to the lesson, but he/she is busy with another object. Try, “Do you want to put the object away and then sit and listen, or do you want to sit and listen with the object sitting next to you at the table?”

Ex: You want a child to start helping to clean up. Try, “Do you want to hand me that toy and then help clean up, or do you want to put that toy away yourself before you clean up?”

Control the end result while offering choices that are true options for the child to choose.

Use Enforceable Statements

Again, teaching children can easily become a battle of wills. The teacher should maintain control and aim to limit a “battle of wills.”

Enforceable Statements tell children what WE will do rather than telling them what THEY will do.

Ex: You want a child to sit before snack while they refuse. Say: “I’m sorry, but I can’t give you a snack until you are seated.”

Ex: A child whining for something or yelling for something. Say: "I will listen when your voice is calm like mine."

This eliminates "Timmy, sit down" from being said over and over to no avail. These statements allow children to share some control over their situation and their behavior, validating them as people, while continuing to place control in the hands of adults.

Shepherd the Child's Heart

In all interactions with children, our aim is not ultimately to direct specific actions. Instead, our aim is to address the heart issues (e.g. idols, lack of belief in the Gospel) behind the behavior.

Redirection is necessary to control the teaching environment, but all confrontation and redirection with children should aim to point them to Jesus and to help them see their actions in light of sin and disbelief.

We aim for heart change, not behavior modification.

Policies and Guidelines

Volunteer Arrival and Departure

Please arrive for your scheduled service 10-15 minutes before the service time so that you can prepare your room and be ready to receive children and greet their families.

Please do not leave your classroom until your replacement for the next service arrives, or if the last service, until the last child is picked up.

Appropriate Dress

Please dress modestly. Remember that you are working with children and will be bending over and sitting on the floor. Dress comfortably and casually in clothing that is not revealing.

Security

Each child will wear a nametag to class. Teachers should not receive a child without a name tag. Do not release a child to anyone who does not have the tag with the matching number. Please do not release children to a sibling or another child.

Drop off and Pick up

When parents drop off their children, the teacher should always meet them at the door. The additional volunteers in the class should be engaging the

children as they enter and directing them to an activity.

When parents pick up their child, meet them at the door. Use this time to complement the child to the parent. Teachers should direct any child behavioral concerns to the Grace Kids Director, not the parent, unless the behavior immediately endangers the safety of the child or others.

Allergy Alert

If you want to provide a snack other than what the church provides, as with an object lesson, please place a sign on the door indicating what you will be serving so the parents will know. Please check the children's name tags for allergies.

Cell Phones

Cell Phones are prohibited except in the need to contact a child's parent or to contact the Grace Kids Director or a Grace Hewitt staff member for assistance.

Final Clean Up Before You Leave

Teachers are responsible for putting resources away and cleaning up the room when you leave. Please throw away any unused coloring sheets or coloring sheets that children have left for more than one week.

Clean spills or excessive debris/food from the floor. Wipe down the table with Clorox wipes. Place chairs on the table so it will be easier for the cleaning staff to vacuum.

Trash with dirty diapers needs to be removed and thrown away in an outside trash can.

Staff to Student Ratio

Groups of students will always have at least one staff member or volunteer supervising them. The ratio of students to caregivers or supervisors is graded by age as follows:

For children 24 months and below, a minimum student to teacher ratio of 4:1 shall be observed.

For children 24 months to 5 years, a minimum student to teacher ratio of 8:1 shall be observed.

For children 5 years and older, a minimum student to teacher ratio of 10:1 shall be observed.

One-to-one Interactions

Leaders must never be alone with a student. The Rule of Three must be followed. There should always be at least 3 people (2 students & 1 Leader = Good; 2 Leaders & 1 student = Best) in any given area. If a child wishes to talk privately with a staff member or volunteer, these conversations must happen in a public area far enough away from others that no one else can hear, but where all actions can be observed. Ideally, the “public area” will be in a place where the Rule of Three can still be followed. If a volunteer plans to have a one-on-one meeting with a child in a public venue that is not in the context of a ministry event, prior permission must be given by the parent. At no time are one-on-one meetings with the opposite gender allowed.

Scheduling and Finding a Substitute

Volunteers are scheduled for the following month during the last week of the current month and an email will be sent out regarding your serving times. For example, the August schedule is created and sent out the last week of July. It is very important that you sign into Planning Center and block out days that you know you are unable to serve. If something unexpected happens, please send a message in GroupMe and ask someone to switch places with you. If you have accepted the request to serve on Planning Center and can no longer serve, it is your responsibility to find a substitute. The Grace Kids team will do our best to help you find a replacement.

Discipline

It is the policy of Grace Hewitt that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavioral management of children or students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction. If a student is unruly and will not respond to verbal instructions or warnings, then that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered in doing so) or the student’s parents will be contacted to pick the child up.

Parental Contact

Parents who leave a child in the care of Grace Kids during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in the Grace Kids ministry programs.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and activities in which their child is involved at Grace Hewitt. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs or activities in which their child is involved. However, any parent who wishes to maintain consistent contact with Grace Kids programs will be required to complete the Grace Kids volunteer application and screening process.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers should be positive and uplifting and should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children. Language should never be such as to be construed as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of students.

Physical Contact

Grace Hewitt is committed to protecting children and students in its care. To this end, Grace Hewitt has implemented a physical contact policy which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Grace Kids programs. The following guidelines should be carefully observed:

Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff and volunteers and students are important for student's development and are generally suitable for the church setting. **Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching, or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Grace Kids director, Grace Kids coordinator, or a Pastor.** Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student and never based on the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. Physical contact and affection should be given **only in observable places** or when the presence of other students or staff or volunteers. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers in Grace Kids must foster trust at all times. Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant child. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected. **Staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting students** under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by

others. **Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately** to an immediate supervisor, Grace Kids Director, or Pastor.

Car Seat Policy

Children should not remain in car seats while in the care of Grace Kids staff members and volunteers, unless the parent of the child is one of the staff members or volunteers caring for the child.

Regarding Diapers and Bathrooms

Men are prohibited from changing diapers or taking children unrelated to them into the restroom. Women must inform other teachers or volunteers that they are taking a child to use the restroom.

Medical Issues

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

When confronted with a medical emergency please do the following:

- If the child's condition appears serious or life threatening, call 911 immediately. Tell them what happened and where they can find you (Grace Church Hewitt, 10020 Panther Way, Waco, TX 76712).
- Send another volunteer to get the parents.
- Make sure someone from the Grace Kids team remains with the child having the medical problem until the parents arrive.

MINOR INJURIES

First Aid Kits are located in each classroom. An injury report should be filled out each time a child sustains an injury, even if it is minor. The teacher that witnessed the injury should objectively and factually recount what happened (e.g. —Johnny fell off the slide on the playground and scraped his knee.) List any first aid or other attention given (e.g. —lots of hugs, Band-Aid, ice pack) in the appropriate space. The name and contact information (phone number or e-mail) of the volunteer that observed the injury should be listed on the injury report. Please also fill out a short description of the incident on the injury report document in your Classroom Binder.

At check-out, the parent should be given a copy of the injury report and be told about the incident by the Teacher. The Teacher should determine whether a follow-up call is appropriate based upon the seriousness of the injury.

INFECTION CONTROL

A child should not be accepted into the classroom if he or she is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- A fever within the previous 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or other eye infection.

If a volunteer has a question about accepting a child into the classroom, the volunteer should send another volunteer to locate a Grace Kids Coordinator or Pastor to determine how to handle the situation.

ILLNESS

If a child becomes ill while under the supervision of Grace Kids, a volunteer should be sent to notify the parent(s) in worship. A volunteer should keep the child isolated from the other children until the parents arrive.

MEDICATIONS

Medications may only be given to children by their parent or guardian. No exceptions.

Fire Emergency

FIRE EXIT PROCEDURE

Please remain calm. Follow the procedures for getting everyone out of the building quickly. There are multiple exits at Grace Hewitt, so be aware of the nearest exit to your particular classroom. A flow chart with detailed instructions is located on the inside door of the cabinet of each Grace Kids classroom. Familiarize yourself with the flow chart before children arrive in your classroom.

NURSERY ROOMS

Promptly ask other adult volunteers to help carry babies. If enough adult volunteers aren't available, babies may be transported by placing them in a crib and rolling the crib safely out of the building. If so, the volunteer must ensure the safety of the babies in the crib (e.g. not overcrowding). Only allow a baby to be checked out when you collect the parent's label for that child.

ALL OTHER ROOMS

Walk out with toddlers in a group. One adult should be in the front. The teacher should be the last one out to make sure no one was left behind. All other classes should walk in a single file line with the assistant teacher in front of the line and the lead teacher in the back of the line. Only allow a child to be checked out when you collect the parent's label for that child.

9-1-1

If a staff member or volunteer encounters an emergency that is not addressed in these safety standards, or if the staff member or volunteer is not sure how to proceed, he or she should call 9-1-1, tell them the situation, and give their address and exact location.

Written Communication

Any written communication through mail, postcards, email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok or any other social media site must be done with prior child *and* parent approval. If the volunteer or staff member does not know if the parent approves of communicating with his/her child in this way, the communication should not happen.

Gift Giving

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from giving special gifts to any individual child. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition.

Intoxicants & Tobacco Products

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with children at Grace Hewitt. Additionally, staff and volunteers are asked to abstain from the possession or use of tobacco products while interacting with children at Grace Hewitt.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children. If a Grace Kids lesson or church-wide sermon addresses human sexuality issues related to purity, dating, and/or sex, the lessons will convey Grace Hewitt's views on this topic. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented visual materials, including magazines, cards, videos, pictures, and electronic content on a phone or computer in the presence of children at Grace Hewitt.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Grace Hewitt has zero tolerance for abuse of any kind. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer in our children's ministry to act in the

best interest of all children under our care.

How to Handle Cases of Abuse

Follow the guidelines below if a child indicates that he or she may have been the victim of abuse or exploitation:

Listen: The student may tell you that someone has molested/hurt them. This may have occurred at home or elsewhere. If this happens, we want you to be prepared to help the child.

Never communicate to a child that you will keep something a secret.

Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the child.

Remember the child is looking for stability; if you appear unable to handle the news, this can reinforce their negative self-view or dissuade them from confiding.

Don't ever criticize the child or claim that the child misunderstood what happened.

Don't ask the child leading questions - just let them know you care and will listen and that nothing they say will change that.

Respect the child's privacy. Take the child to a place where the other students cannot overhear, but still in a public place. Another adult witness would be preferred.

It is important that you discuss the child's situation *only* with the Grace Kids Director/Coordinator or a Pastor - reporting up the chain of supervision (rather than horizontally or downward).

Document any conversation that you have had with a student that told you of any potential abuse, being sure to include the time, date, and location of the conversation along with your signature.

Report Suspected Abuse

In Texas, anyone with knowledge of suspected abuse is required by law to report the case to the authorities. Failure to report carries criminal penalties. It is wise to alert your Grace Kids Director about your report as well.

If you gain knowledge of or have suspicions about abuse that happened or is happening to the student outside of church property, let your Grace Kids Director know and you two can co-report this abuse to the **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1.800.252.5400)**. You may visit www.dfps.state.tx.us for more information.

As a transparent ministry, we reserve the right to notify parents, other students, or other groups of people if an accusation has been made against one of our leaders.

If no abuse is suspected, but volunteers observe other inappropriate behavior (e.g. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role modeling, etc.), the volunteer must report it to the Grace Kids Director immediately. The Grace Kids Director will report to pastors and elders as appropriate.

Adult-to-Adult Disclosures

In addition, a staff member or volunteer must make a report if he or she has cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child, and the staff member or volunteer determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child.

Reporting Other Issues

If at any time you become aware of a child that is experiencing or contributing to destructive or otherwise concerning behavior or health issues (self-harm, threats of hurting others, anxiety, depression, bullying, eating disorders, etc.), please let the parent and Grace Kids Director know as soon as you are reasonably able.

Enforcement of Policies

Staff members and volunteers in supervisory positions must diligently enforce all policies. A violation of these policies is grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of Grace Hewitt pastors.

Consequences of Violation

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

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or minors. If the person is an employee, such conduct may result in termination of employment.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from

participation in any future activities involving children at Grace Hewitt.