



The purpose of The Rescue Church Kids Ministry is to glorify God by introducing children to Jesus and equipping them to know Him personally, to walk with Him daily, and to share His love with the world around them.

We will accomplish this by providing age-appropriate Bible lessons and activities and communicating Gospel truths with practical application for each child.

SAFETY STATEMENT:

Every volunteer at TRC Kids is required to complete a background check and a training event to learn the policies and procedures of TRC Kids to protect children physically and emotionally. Additional training will be done throughout the year to ensure our volunteers are up-to-date and fully equipped to minister to the children at The Rescue Church.

KIDS PROGRAMS AT THE RESCUE CHURCH

- Nursery (Ages 0 – 3)
- Sunday School (Ages 4 – 11)
- Kids Worship (Ages 4 – 11)
- Wednesday Kids Club (Ages 4-11)

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAMS

Every Sunday morning includes a transition from Sunday School to Kids Worship. Parents are directed to pick up their children from their Sunday School Class no later than 10:20, allowing Sunday School Teachers to clean up and close their classroom before the 10:30am worship service begins.

Kids Worship is dismissed from the main worship service. Leaders should be prepared and ready at the back of the worship center to lead and direct children to the classroom following the last song of the main music set.

Parents are directed to pick up their children from the classroom following the service. If a student is not picked up, teachers should contact the TRC Kids Coordinator to handle contacting the parents. No child will be released on their own.

Regarding the nursery, the workers for the 10:30am service should be in the nursery no later than 10:20 to allow a transition of teams. More information on this transition is addressed later.

TRC KIDS TEAM MEMBER ROLES

A team member is anyone serving in TRC Kids, whether staff or volunteer. All team members share a responsibility for loving the children as Christ loves them and for setting an example of proper Christian conduct in how they live their lives. However, some team member have specific responsibilities that are outlined below.

- ***TRC Kids Coordinator (Bethany Harris: 757-714-7982)***
The TRC Kids Coordinator is the church-appointed individual responsible for the oversight of all TRC Kids programs. This person is responsible for scheduling, maintaining adequate supplies and curriculum materials, volunteer training, and general oversight of the TRC Kids program.
- ***Nursery Coordinator (Renee Copley: 757-714-4377)***
While the nursery is primarily a self-contained ministry, it does fall under the umbrella of the TRC Kids Ministry. While the TRC Kids Coordinator is ultimately responsible for the Nursery, the Nursery Coordinator will be the hands-on person responsible to handle scheduling, supplies, and training related specifically to the nursery.

- **Team Leader**

The Team Leader is the scheduled leader for a given Sunday. The Team Leader is generally either the TRC Kids Coordinator or the Nursery Coordinator.

The Team Leader should gather all volunteers for prayer a few minutes before the programs begin. The Team Leader should also oversee the adult-to-child ratios are adequately maintained. Team Leaders will be considered “on-call” during the service, and accessible by text to offer support if necessary.

- ***Classroom Leader***

Each week there will be two classroom leaders. One for the nursery, and one for Kids Worship. The classroom leader is responsible for leading the Bible study, preparing any materials for activities, and ensuring compliances with policies and procedures. At times, the classroom leader may double as that week’s Team Leader.

- ***Classroom Helpers***

Classroom Helpers are there to support the Classroom Leader. In Kids Worship specifically, classroom helpers are there to offer support with activities, help children focus during the Bible lesson, and help with set up and clean up as necessary. Classroom helpers are a very important part of the ministry, but ultimately report to the Classroom Leader with any serious issues or questions. Minors may serve as a classroom helper, but not as a classroom leader. Minors do not affect the adult-to-child ratio.

TRAINING AND SCREENING PROCEDURES

To ensure safe and quality care, all Team Members must:

- Be regular participants of The Rescue Church
- Complete a ministry application
- Complete a criminal record check and other appropriate screenings (all completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application)
- Review policies in this manual and sign the last page indicating agreement
- Complete approved training by the TRC Kids Coordinator and/or TRC Nursery Coordinator
- Understand that final approval is subject to the TRC Kids Coordinator, TRC Nursery Coordinator, and the Pastoral Staff.

GENERAL CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

1. ***The Two Adult Rule***

At least two adults must serve together in each Kids Classroom, including the Nursery. One adult may not be in a room alone with a child or children. When two adults serve together, one of them must always be a woman.

2. ***Adult-to-Child Ratio***

In addition to always having two caregivers present, the following ratios are maintained during the regularly scheduled meetings of the church:

Children ages 0-2 – *At least one adult for every four children*

Children ages 3-5 – *At least one adult for every eight children*

Children ages 6-12 – *At least one adult for every twelve children*

The TRC Kids or Nursery Coordinator should be notified if more Team Members are needed to maintain these ratios.

3. ***Visibility***

All efforts will be made to maintain appropriate visibility into children's classrooms.

4. ***Discipline***

All TRC Kids Team Members are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his or her behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).

Team members should never yell, humiliate, pinch, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents may be called.

5. ***Physical Touch***

Accompanied by good judgment, the following are appropriate ways to touch minors:

- a hand on the shoulder
- walking hand-in hand
- carrying a *small child* on your hip
- short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- a brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- handshakes, high-fives, and fist bumps

The following is a non-exhaustive list. Team Members shall NEVER:

- touch a minor in anger or disgust
- touch a minor in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- touch a minor between the navel and knee
- touch a minor's private parts (*except for diaper or bathroom procedures for small children*)

Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of Team Members must always foster trust. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child or student. A child or student's preference not to be touched must be respected.

6. Photography and Media

Photos of children may only be taken with written consent from the child's parents and should only be used in the purpose of sending the parents photos of their child and should never be for personal use or posted online.

FOOD POLICY

One of the ways we protect children is to limit the food and drink allowed in classrooms for all age groups. No snacks will be given out in Sunday School, Kids Worship, or other children's events without prior approval from the TRC Kids Coordinator and the child's parent/guardian. Any snack given must not contain peanuts. Refer to the registration book to check individual allergies for children.

PROACTIVE RULES AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Sickness and Wellness

Any child arriving with any of the following symptoms will be returned immediately for care. If a child should develop any of these symptoms while in the program, a parent will be notified, and a child must be picked up in a timely manner.

- Fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the last 24 hours
- Vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- Persistent coughing associated with respiratory infection including cold, bronchitis, etc.
- Runny nose with colored discharge associated with a cough or fever.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) that may have colored discharge or drainage.
- Parasites, any form of lice, mites, or ringworm.
- Skin rashes or eruptions of unknown origin including but not limited to impetigo, measles, chicken pox, etc. If your child has any of these or another contagious illness, please notify Bethany (757-714-7982 or

bethany@rescuechurch.info) so we can take proper precautions and alert other parents of exposure, if necessary.

The parent or guardian of a child is the only one allowed to administer any form of medication to a child except for diaper rash cream, with parental instruction, or application of medical first aid.

2. *Check-In Process*

Parents will bring children upon arrival to the registration desk where the Team Leader will be stationed. The Team Leader will check in the child using that week's check-in form. If the child is new, the parent/guardian will need to fill out a registration form before the child can be checked in. Once a child is checked in they may go into the classroom. At times, the registration desk may be moved to the main entrance for ease of access.

3. *Check-Out Process*

After service, parents will come to the kids' wing to pick up their children. Only the parent/guardian who checked the child in may check the child out. Children are never dismissed alone.

4. *Nursery-Specific Procedures*

To ensure accurate information is clearly communicated to all Team Members, a dry erase board is located in the nursery with a place for child's name, parent name and phone number, and feeding and diaper information.

Upon check in, Team Members should ask a parent about diaper changes, feedings, and snacks.

If a parent requests that Team Members do not change their child's diaper, write it clearly on the board. If they are comfortable with Team Members changing the child's diaper, the Team Member should write on the board the time the child receives a diaper change so the parents can be informed at pickup.

If a child is to be fed during the nursery, write down the time and details of the feeding on the board. If the child receives a bottle, the parent must prepare the bottle ahead of time.

Parents should also be asked if their child can eat the snack for that day.

Any specific instructions from a parent should be written on the board in the classroom for all to see so that Team Members abide by the parents' wishes.

At check-in, each parent will fill out a three-part sticker. One part goes with the parents, one part goes on the child's back, and one part goes on the child's diaper bag. Upon checkout, the parent will turn in their part to be matched with the child and their bag.

5. Diapering Procedures

Upon check in, parents should be asked if they are comfortable with Team Members changing their child's diaper. If they are not, make a note for the other workers and plan to contact the parent should the child need a diaper during the service.

If the parent is comfortable with Team Members changing their child's diaper, utilize the following procedures:

- Diapers should be checked and changed, if necessary, before the service ends.
- Only women are permitted to change diapers (except for a father with his own child).
- All diapers will be changed in full-view of other classroom leaders and only on designated changing stations.
- Be sure to have all supplies ready and with you before placing child on the changing pad. No child should ever be left unattended on the changing pad.
- Wipe down changing table/pad or change out liner after each diaper change.
- Wash hands with soap after each diaper change.

6. Restroom Procedures

Parents should be encouraged to take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into class.

At check-in and drop-off, parents should let Team Members know if their child is potty training.

Children should only use the restroom in the kids wing.

If a child needs to use the restroom, the classroom helper will direct the child to the kids wing restroom and stand in the classroom door until the child is finished in the restroom.

In the event a child has an accident, determine if there are spare dry clothes that can be used. When possible, we will change the child into dry clothes and bag the soiled clothes for the parents to pick up after service. If no dry clothes are available, or the accident requires parental assistance, please call the parent from the service to assist and comfort their child.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Medical Concerns

Immediately report any medical needs or concerns to the TRC Kids Coordinator. The notified person will decide if 911 should be called. Team Members should remain calm and divert the attention of the other children. The victim should be kept quiet and still. Do not attempt to move a severely injured person unless in imminent danger.

2. **Hazardous Weather**

In the event of dangerous weather, Team Members should remain calm and await further instructions. Further instructions will be given by the TRC Kids Coordinator.

3. **Fire**

The safety of all children and Team Members is the priority in any fire. Any attempt by Team Members to put out a fire is absolutely forbidden unless judgment to do so is unquestionable and presents no possible danger to anyone present.

4. **Lost Child Procedure**

A Team Member should contact the TRC Kids Coordinator and let them know of the missing child. Team Members should not leave other children to search for the child. The TRC Kids Coordinator will gather a team to look for the missing child.

5. **Evacuation**

Evacuation plans are posted in all the classrooms. The children will be led by their Classroom Leader through the nearest exit door. If a door is locked, the Team Members will lead the children through the nearest alternate exit door. Windows may also be used as an escape if necessary. The Team Members and children will congregate in the Church Park/Playground across Colin Drive South.

6. **Injury & First Aid**

Qualified Team Members are permitted to administer Band-Aids, ice packs, and CPR. If there is an injury in the classroom, the Team Members should immediately find their Team Leader. All injuries must be reported because some seemingly trivial injuries can turn out to be serious.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

1. *Understanding Abuse*

Abuse is a horrifying reality in a sin-stained world. Abuse occurs whenever a person in a position of greater influence uses his or her personal capacities to diminish the personal capacities of those under his or her influence in order to control them. Like all sins, abuse can manifest itself in various forms. These forms include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and more.

Abuse is far more serious than the “ordinary” ways people sin against each other through unkindness, harsh words, anger, etc. When I sin against someone in these ways, I am selfishly putting “me before you.” It’s a competitive sin, like two squirrels fighting over the same acorns. But abuse is something more. In abuse, the sin is predatory or parasitical. It goes beyond “me before you” to “me over you.”

2. *Understanding the Abuse of Children*

Although the church should care about and combat against all forms of abuse, this policy is especially concerned with the abuses committed against children. Again, abuse can take various forms, but here we’ll address the three most severe:

- **Physical Abuse** – Generally speaking, physical abuse involves conduct intended to cause physical harm. This would include things like kicking, punching, slapping, choking, throwing objects, or otherwise inflicting pain or fear of immediate injury. This does not include measured, reasonable, controlled corporal punishment, like a spanking.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Any occurrence in which an adult engages a minor in sexual activity of any kind is abusive. Sexual activity between an adult and a child is abusive regardless of who initiates, whether the activity is forced or not, or whether the child understands that the activity is sexual in nature.
- **Neglect** – The continued *failure to provide* a child with food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical care, or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child’s health, safety, and/or development is jeopardized. Neglect can also include a continued *failure to protect* a child from extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations.

3. Signs of Abuse of Children

By understanding some of the behaviors that might indicate a child is being abused, we will be in a better position to intervene to help a vulnerable child. Although this list is not exhaustive, the following are some key indicators of possible abuse.

Physical Abuse

- Frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns, etc.), especially when the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation for the cause of the injury
- Injuries that appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of instruments
- Pay particular attention to injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body.

Sexual Abuse

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
- Discharge from the penis or vagina
- Injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the vaginal, anal area
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases
- Promiscuity and early sexual activity

Neglect

- Obvious malnourishment, listlessness, or fatigue
- Begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger
- Consistently dirty or has a severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Has an untreated illness, injuries, health, unmet need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention

The mere presence of one or more of these indicators does not mean abuse has occurred, since each indicator could have a cause unrelated to abuse. The presence of any of these indicators is a signal to pay attention and ask more questions.

Asking the right questions of the right person requires some level of discernment. For example, if you're concerned that a child is arriving with unexplained bruises, you may choose to begin by asking his or her caregiver. In most cases, a simple question or two will alleviate any concern or suspicion. If you're ever unsure what questions to ask or who to talk to, please talk to the TRC Kids Coordinator for help.

4. **Reporting the Abuse of Children**

What should we do when the recognition of a key indicator of child abuse develops a reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred? How the church responds in such cases is a matter of great legal importance.

The standard for reporting is *reasonable suspicion*, which means you must not wait until you have confirmation of proof of abuse. Your job is *not* to investigate the incident yourself. Reporting child abuse is not making an accusation, nor is it rendering final judgment. Reporting child abuse is asking legal and child advocacy professionals to evaluate relevant information.

Virginia law classifies any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children as a mandatory reporter for any reasonable suspicion of abuse of a minor (Virginia Code Title 63.2-1509, A-11). **This means that every adult volunteer is legally responsible to report any reasonable suspicion of the abuse of a minor to Virginia Child Protective Services.**

Far more important than these legal demands is our responsibility to care for the vulnerable children God has entrusted to our care. Reporting the reasonable suspicion of abuse could save a child's life. Silence about a reasonable suspicion of abuse could bring incredible harm to victims and embolden offenders.

5. **How to Report Abuse**

If you have a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred (either within TRC or in the child's home) you should take the following steps. Please be sure to alert the TRC Kids Coordinator and the Pastor of your concerns and intent, as well.

- ***Unsure if your concerns warrant filing a report?*** Call the ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-4-A-CHILD. They provide confidential guidance to callers who are considering filing a report.
- ***Ready to file a report?*** Call the CPS Hotline at 1-800-552-7096 and report your suspicion of abuse.

6. *Known Offenders*

The Rescue Church desires to extend God's grace to all – including a repentant person who has been convicted of abuse of children (hereafter called KO for “known offender”). To responsibly protect the children in TRC Kids, we will take the following extra precautions associated with KO attendance:

- At no time may a KO have any position of ministry to children or be asked to assist in events attended by children.
- At no time is a KO allowed in the Kids Wing or any other areas on the church or grounds dedicated to children or used primarily by children (e.g., the outdoor playground).
- Kos are required to make themselves known to the Pastor. If a Team Member discovers the presence of a previously unknown KO, they will immediately notify the Pastor.
- A signed agreement will be put in place between the church, the KO, and (if necessary) the KO's parole/probation officer, defining the boundaries and guidelines for attendance.
- The TRC Kids Coordinator and others that need to know about the situation will be notified about the KO's attendance and the guidelines for their attendance.