



GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

No Perfect People Allowed



Grace Kids

**“Dear Children, let us not love with words or speech
but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:18**

Children’s Ministry Service Opportunities Handbook

Church Office 623-393-8386

Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

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Mission Statement

The Mission of Grace Fellowship Church’s Children’s Ministry is to work with parents to carry out the mandate of scripture to “train up a child” Proverbs 22:6.

Our Vision

We at Grace Fellowship Church desire to see our children experience a loving relationship with the one true God. We desire to help them grow in His grace through His Word and His Spirit, and to see them experience the joy of glorifying God through worship, obedience, and love.

Your child is of the utmost importance to us. We believe children are a gift from God and they are greatly loved and valued by each member of the children's ministry team. We take all necessary means to ensure that children feel welcome in class; that we provide them with a safe and secure environment where they may play and learn; that teaching is biblically sound; and that volunteers are properly checked and monitored.

Statement of Faith

1. The Bible is inspired by God and is the only infallible, authoritative Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Peter 1:23-25, Hebrews 4:12, John 20:31)
2. There is One God eternally existent in Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19, Luke 1:35, 1 John 5:7, 2 Corinthians 13:14)
3. Jesus Christ is God (John 1:1-2, 14); came in the flesh through the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23); lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15); performed miracles (John 2:11, Luke 1:1-4); died for the sins of the world (Romans 3:23-26, 1 Corinthians 15:3, Colossians 1:14, 1 John 1:7, Hebrews 10:19); bodily rose from the dead (Matthew 28:6, Romans 1:4; 8:1, 1 Corinthians 15); ascended to Heaven and intercedes for us with the Father (Luke 24:50-51, 1 John 2:1-2, Hebrews 7:25); will return in power and glory to judge all creation and to establish an eternal kingdom (Acts 1:11, Titus 2:1-13, Revelation 1:7; 11:15, Philippians 2:9-11).
4. Man and woman were created in the image of God, were tempted by Satan, rebelled and sinned and experienced spiritual and physical death. As a result, all people are born with a sinful nature and apart from Jesus Christ are eternally lost (Genesis 2:17, Romans 4:12-19, Ephesians 2:10; 4:18-19; 6:10-19, Mark 7:20-23, Revelation 12:9, 1 Peter 5:8).
5. A person becomes a Christian by personally receiving Jesus Christ as an act of faith (born again), a willful commitment to trust and follow Him. All who believe are assured that Christ comes into their life (Revelation 3:20); their sins are forgiven (Colossians 1:14; 2:13-15); they become children of God (John 1:12); they begin new life with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, John 10:10); and they are assured eternity in Heaven (John 11:25-26; 17:3, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Salvation is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-10).
6. The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian and is actively ministering in the world today enabling and empowering the living of a life pleasing to God; He gives gifts to every believer for the building up of the Body of Christ [the Church] (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:1-14; Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5:18, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Peter 4:1-10).
7. All people will be resurrected, the believers to everlasting life in Heaven and eternal rewards; the unbelievers to everlasting death in Hell and eternal punishment (John 5:24-29, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, Revelation 20:11-15).
8. There is spiritual unity of believers in Jesus Christ; many churches but one Lord (Matthew 16:16-18; 28:19-20, Acts 1:8; 2:42-47, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Revelation 1:4-8).

Program Administration

The Children's Ministry Board was created by Grace Fellowship Church's Board of Elders in the Spring of 2012. The Children's Ministry Board reports to the Elder Board. The purpose of the Children's Ministry Board is to support the Children's Minister at GFC.

Child Protection Policy and Information

Note: While Grace Fellowship Church has and will work diligently to apply this policy, due to the nature of ministry it makes no written or implied guarantee that every aspect of the policy will be followed in every situation. Any concerns about the implementation of the policy should be directed to the senior pastor or the chairperson of the child protection committee.

I. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Grace Fellowship Church is committed to the nurture and protection of all human beings, particularly those who are physically or emotionally vulnerable such as children. Thus, GFC will not tolerate the physical or sexual abuse of minors in our church. GFC will act decisively and assertively to protect children and youth. The church will also help victims as well as perpetrators find personal and spiritual healing.

II. DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

GFC defines child or youth abuse as acts of mistreatment or neglect against minors (those under age 18). The child/youth abuse covered in this policy falls into three major areas, which GFC defines as follows.

- A. Physical Abuse:
Physical abuse is any non-accidental injury to a minor by an adult or older care giver (ARS 13-3623). This could include blows, shakings, or assaults which cause injury to the child.

Disciplinary spankings by a parent which do not cause physical injury to the child are not considered physical abuse.

- B. Neglect:
Neglect is the chronic failure of a parent or guardian to provide a minor with adequate food, clothing, medical care, protection, and supervision.
- C. Sexual Abuse:
Sexual abuse is the exploitation of a minor for the sexual gratification of another person. Sexual abuse includes intercourse, sodomy, oral sexual contact (ARS 13-1405-6), fondling (ARS 13-1410), prostitution (ARS 13-3212), the production of pornography (ARS 13-3552), exhibitionism, and the deliberate exposure of a minor to pornography or sexual activity (ARS 13-3553, 3556).

III. PROCEDURAL RESPONSES TO ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

For legal and moral reasons it is imperative the following reporting procedures are carefully followed. These procedures apply to all paid or volunteer workers ("GFC workers") who minister to minors at GFC (nursery workers, AWANA workers, Sunday School teachers, Sunday School helpers, youth sponsors, etc.).

- Step 1. The sole function of the Mandatory Reporter is to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe a minor has been abused. If and when they determine there are reasonable grounds to believe a minor has been abused, they are immediately to notify the proper authorities. They are not to conduct a forensic (formal investigative) type of interview with the alleged victim, as this might well impede a subsequent investigation by law enforcement officials. All they are to ask of the alleged victim are four questions: (1) What happened to you? (2) Where did it happen? (3) When did it happen? (4) Who did it? A written summary will be

made of the conversation and will be treated as strictly confidential and preserved in a secured file.

- Step 2. As soon as the Mandatory Reporter determines there are reasonable grounds to believe a minor has been abused and they have contacted CPS and the Buckeye Police Department, the pastor of the church will be immediately contacted, who will then inform members of the elder board of the abuse allegation. The parents of the suspected victim are not to be contacted by the church leaders and told of the abuse allegation until law enforcement officials are able to do their investigation and give the church clearance to contact the parents.
- Step 3. If the inquiry team or pastoral staff determines there are reasonable grounds to believe a minor has been abused, and the alleged perpetrator is a member of the church staff or is a volunteer youth or children's worker at GFC, the accused will be immediately removed from his or her ministry to children or youth. The elder board will determine if and when the accused can resume ministry to children or youth at GFC. It must be remembered, however, that an accusation is just that until adjudicated or admitted in a court of law. We must be mindful of the rights of the accused, and the potential damage a false accusation may bring.
- Step 4. If the alleged abuse perpetrator is a volunteer church worker or a church staff member who allegedly abused a child or youth under his or her care while in ministry at or on behalf of GFC, the church will offer *counseling* to the alleged victim and to the alleged perpetrator, and may also offer legal counsel. The type and duration of counseling offered will be at the discretion of the church leadership.

Step 5. The church elders and legal or psychological counsel will determine additional steps which GFC will take to minister to the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.

IV. SELECTION OF WORKERS

- A. All children's and youth workers will receive the GFC child protection policy summary, and will attest in writing that they have read the policy, have never *sexually* abused a minor, and will abide by the policy guidelines.

All staff (i.e., paid workers) and volunteers who work with minors at GFC will also fill out a written application. All *janitors*, adults who work with adolescents, all children's ministry teachers and leaders, and all adults who take minors on overnight outings will also have a current Background Check on file and will participate in an oral interview. This will serve to evaluate as is reasonably possible the suitability of the individual for ministry to children or youth.

- B. All individuals listed in A above will provide references as requested in the written application. The child protection committee and their designees will check references as they deem appropriate.
- C. Occasional children's workers may be asked to submit to the full screening outlined above as the pastoral staff deem appropriate.
- D. All children's and youth workers' applications, notes from the oral interviews, reference interviews, and background check data shall be kept in the secured child protection safe.
- E. Child protection committee members, in general consultation with the pastoral staff, will evaluate the potential workers' applications, oral interviews, references, and background checks to determine suitability of the applicants for work with minors at GFC. If for some reason it is determined an

individual is unsuitable for ministry to children or youth (for example, they *have ever committed child sexual abuse, have ever committed sex crimes*, or have a recent history of drug abuse), every effort will be made to find another area of ministry they could engage in at GFC. Every effort will be made to do this in a spirit of grace, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

V. EDUCATION AND MONITORING OF WORKERS REGARDING ABUSE

- A. In consultation with the pastoral staff, the child protection committee will seek to develop an abuse education plan for the whole church family, including parents, children, and adolescents, as well as those who work with minors.
- B. One of the most important steps we must take to implement a church child protection policy is to train all leaders thoroughly, so they can successfully educate and supervise the workers under them. Thus, GFC will conduct or recommend child protection training and policy clarification meetings on a regular basis. It is expected that all workers and staff will attend these training sessions.
- C. Children's and youth leaders will regularly monitor their workers through scheduled and unscheduled observations of their classrooms and ministries. This will be done expressly to help teachers and workers improve their skills and become their best for Christ, and to identify potential problems.

VI. WORKERS' PROCEDURES TO REDUCE ABUSE AND FALSE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

In order to protect children and youth at GFC and to reduce the likelihood of false abuse allegations, workers should do the following.

- A. All teachers and assistants should strive to work as a team. Seek to avoid situations in which the worker and child or youth are alone without another worker present, particularly in the rest room, disciplinary situations, and when counseling.
- B. In the event that a worker is left alone with children, be sure the door is ajar and windows are not obstructed. Always strive to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.
- C. When workers assist in the restroom, they should alert other workers that they are taking 2 children to the restroom. Secure restroom by checking each stall. Then the worker would step out of the restroom. When assisting with a child's clothing, the child should come to the door of the restroom for assistance.
- D. Children at play should be carefully supervised so that no sexual misconduct occurs between them while they are playing. The same principle applies to adolescents.
- E. Junior and senior high workers should be particularly careful about spending time alone with youth of the opposite sex. When this is unavoidable the worker should notify the youth's parents and another youth worker prior to the event.
- F. Always report any abuse concerns, suspicions, or nagging questions immediately to the pastoral staff member who oversees your ministry (refer to §III).

Nursery Policies and Procedures

Teacher Responsibilities:

- *Arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the beginning of service (for *BOTH* services).
- *Put all curriculum supplies and/or toys away in the appropriate cabinet/tubs before leaving.
- *After second service, stack chairs against the wall and run the vacuum if the floor has food crumbs on it.
- *Any toys that have been 'mouthed' need to be immediately put in the mesh bag hanging on the wall.
- *Any large toys need to be wiped down with a disinfecting wipe, especially in the infant/walker rooms after second service.
- *Wipe down tables with disinfecting spray before and after snack time.

Infant and Crawlers Room:

- *After a baby has gotten up from a crib, sheets need to be removed to the laundry bag immediately and replaced.
- *Swing covers need to be removed immediately if a baby spits up. Otherwise, they should be washed monthly.
- *Sink area, rockers, swings and large toys need to be wiped down with a disinfecting wipe after second service.

Please note that parents will be receiving a Parent Handbook that outlines the following information.

Curriculum and Room Assignments:

Infants and Crawlers/Mother's Room (Rm. C3)

- *Age appropriate play time and parent provided snack if desired.

Walkers through two years (Rm. C1)

- *Age appropriate play time and church provided snack.

Two Year Olds (Three years before Kindergarten) (Rm. C2)

- *Age appropriate play time and church provided snack along with story and song time.

Three Year Olds (Two years before Kindergarten) (Rm. C4)

- *Age appropriate play time and church provided snack along with story and song time.

Pre-K class (One year before Kindergarten) (Rm. C5)

- *Board approved curriculum will be provided for the Pre-K class along with a snack.

Drop Off and Pick Up Information:

- *Parents will stop at the check-in desk to label all belongings they wish for their child to have access to during the service (bottles, cups, snacks, bag, etc.).
- *Returning families will find their nametags on the wall along with parent pick-up cards. The child's nametag is to be placed on their back. The parents keep one pick-up card and the greeter keeps the other.
- *New parents will complete a temporary nametag and orange allergy sticker (if needed). Please be sure to alert classroom volunteers to any allergy/special needs alerts. New parents receive a pager when dropping children off and must return it at pick-up.

Determination for Paging Parents:

- *If a child cries/is inconsolable.
- *If a child has demonstrated an unsafe behavior, such as biting, they need to be removed from the nursery.
- *If a child is having a discipline issue that is taking away from the learning of other children.

Discipline Measures for Disruptive Behaviors:

- *For children in the Two Year Old through Pre-K rooms:
 - *First disruption: Give the child a loving, yet firm verbal correction.
 - *Second disruption: Remove the child from the group. (The child may sit in a chair in the hall with the Greeter. The time away from the group should be the child's age plus one in minutes.)
 - *Third disruption: Page the child's parent(s) to come pick him or her up. Give a full explanation to the parent of the offenses and the consequences you followed according to the Children's Ministry Policy.

The following health guidelines should be considered when making the decision as to whether your child should come to nursery:

Fever—Your child should remain at home with a fever greater than 100 degrees. If your child has been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication), they are welcome in nursery.

Diarrhea/Vomiting—A child with diarrhea or vomiting should stay home unless he or she has been symptom free for 24 hours.

Conjunctivitis (eye infection)—Following a diagnosis of conjunctivitis, your child should not be in the nursery until after he or she has had the prescribed medicine for 24 hours.

Rashes—Common infectious diseases with rashes may be infectious in the early stages. If your child has a suspicious rash, please keep them home until after a health care provider has made a diagnosis and authorized the child to be with other children.

Colds—Please consider keeping your child at home if he or she is experiencing discomfort due to cold symptoms, such as nasal congestion and cough.

*****Green discharge from the nose may be a sign of infection. The nursery is not able to accept a child with green discharge into the nursery for care.*****

Communicable Diseases—The State Health Department requires written permission from a private physician or the Health Department to return to school after having a communicable disease, including, but not limited to, measles, chicken pox, mumps, scarlet fever and impetigo.

*****Although GFC Nursery is not a school or licensed care center, we ask that you follow these guidelines regarding communicable diseases when bringing your child to the nursery.*****

Please know that you have the responsibility to yourself and the other children to let parents know if you believe that a child falls under one of these health guidelines. You must refer them back to the parent handbook and ask them to keep their child with them until the child is well.

Kindergarten through Sixth Grade Policies and Procedures

Teacher Responsibilities:

- *Arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the 9:00 service.
- *Offer a 'filler' activity for the first few minutes while you begin taking attendance and children arrive.
- *All classroom supplies need to be returned to the appropriate cabinet after class each Sunday. Please remember to put away the white board marker/eraser as well.
- *Teacher or Helper needs to wipe the tables with disinfecting spray each week before leaving.
- *All chairs need to be stacked against one wall and all scraps of paper need to be picked up off the floor after class each Sunday.
- *If you serve a snack and there are crumbs on the floor, please run the vacuum to help prevent 'critters' joining our ranks. (The vacuum is stored in the Resource Room behind the office.)
- *If you have time at the end of class, have students put all markers/pencils/scissors/glue in the appropriate containers for you. They should also stack the chairs safely and pick up any scraps if there is time. If you do not have time for students to help with clean up, then you are responsible for these things.

Classroom Management Ideas

- *Count down from five to zero—explain that when the Teacher/Helper voice gets to zero, the children should all have 'zero voices'.
- *Give a set number of counts to complete a specific task. (Ex. 'When my voice gets to five, your papers will be in a nice stack in the middle of the table. One...two...three...four...five.)
- *Most importantly, be consistent with every child, every time.

Please note that parents will be receiving a Parent Handbook that outlines the following information.

Curriculum and Room Assignments:

- *Kindergarten (Rm. C6)
 - *First and Second Grade (Rm. C7)
 - *Third and Fourth Grade (Rm. C10)
 - *Fifth and Sixth Grade (Building B & Rm. A7)
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- *All classes will be using Board approved curriculum as the basis of their teaching each Sunday.
 - *Teachers may alter a craft idea or object lesson as long as the integrity of the lesson is not lost and the children's time is well used.

Discipline:

*First disruption: Give the child a loving, yet firm verbal correction.

*Second disruption: Remove the child from the group. (He or she may sit in a chair in the hall with the drop off/pick up person for the day.)

*Third disruption: Leave your class in the care of your helper and take the child to his or her parent. Give a full explanation to the parent of the offenses and the consequences you followed according to the Children's Ministry Policy.

The following guidelines should be considered when making the decision as to whether your child should come to Sunday School:

Fever—The child should remain at home with a fever greater than 100 degrees. If your child has been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication), they are welcome in Sunday School.

Diarrhea/Vomiting—A child with diarrhea should stay home unless he or she has been symptom free for 24 hours.

Conjunctivitis (eye infection)—Following a diagnosis of conjunctivitis, the child should not be in Sunday School until after he or she has had the prescribed medicine for 24 hours.

Rashes—Common infectious diseases with rashes may be infectious in the early stages. If your child has a suspicious rash, please keep them home until after a health care provider has made a diagnosis and authorized the child to be with other children.

Colds—Please consider keeping your child at home if he or she is experiencing discomfort due to cold symptoms, such as nasal congestion and cough.

*****Green discharge from the nose may be a sign of infection. Our Sunday School is not able to accept a child with green discharge into class.*****

Communicable Diseases—The State Health Department requires written permission from a private physician or the Health Department to return to school after having a communicable disease, including, but not limited to, measles, chicken pox, mumps, scarlet fever and impetigo.

*****Although GFCs Sunday School is not a school or licensed care center, we ask that you follow these guidelines regarding communicable diseases regarding bringing your child to Sunday School.*****

Please know that you have the responsibility to yourself and the other children to let parents know if you believe that a child falls under one of these health guidelines. You must refer them back to the parent handbook and ask them to keep their child with them until the child is well.

Other Children's Ministries at Grace

Children's Church

*Children's Church is offered during the 10:35 a.m. service for children in grades K-3. Children will begin in worship with their parents and be dismissed to Room C9 with the Children's Church teacher.

Vacation Bible School

*Our Vacation Bible School is coordinated by a volunteer director in conjunction with the Children's Minister.

Awana

*Awana currently services children from age 3 (with a parent) through sixth grade.

*To volunteer with Awana, contact our Awana Ministry Leader at awana@graceinbuckeye.com.

Worship Disciples

*Children's Choir led by a volunteer staff member. Please contact the Children's Minister for more information.

Worship Dance

*Worship Dance Ministry of Grace Fellowship Church is open to girls in 4th – 12th grades and run by a volunteer dance instructor and coordinator. Please contact the Children's Minister for more information.

Other Nursery and Sunday School Service Opportunities

Nursery Toy Patrol

*Be willing to spend time at the beginning of each quarter going through the toys in the nursery rooms. Remove any broken toys, used up play dough, torn books etc. If toys can be repaired, they can be kept; otherwise they need to be disposed of safely. Wash all the small toys that may be 'mouthed'.

Holiday Helper

*Provide special treats on Holidays.

*Help with the special snack on Gingerbread House Sunday.

*Provide additional assistance to Teachers for special holiday crafts if needed.

Pray For Kids

*Would you be willing to take a short list of names to pray diligently for the children at GFC? What a precious gift to give to a child, to be taken before the King for love and protection.

****If you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact the Children's Minister or any Board member.****