

Tapestry Kids Child Protection Policy

Tapestry Church

January 2015

Our Mission

Tapestry Kids Ministry exists to glorify God by:

- Maintaining a safe and secure environment for our children.
- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Encouraging children to learn to serve and to not just be served (Mark 10:43-45).
- Maintaining the highest ethical standards such that volunteers and teachers always live and serve above reproach, protecting the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Preparing children to one day walk with God as adults, which means getting them ready to be a part of the public services and Lord willing, one day, a fully participating adult member.

Our Vision

Generations of Godliness

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, ESV)

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14-15, ESV)

Personnel Summary

Adults are individuals eighteen years or older.

Child or Children are individuals under eighteen years of age.

Staff are the paid employees of the church.

Volunteers are adults who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. Volunteers include childcare workers, hall monitors, teachers, leaders, coordinators, and anyone else who serves the children. The term ‘volunteer’ will be used throughout this policy manual as an all-encompassing term for anyone who serves the children and is not church staff.

Leadership and Volunteer Expectations

All Tapestry Kids leadership and volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Ministering to the children
- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children

Further explanation on volunteer roles/expectations:

- Tapestry Kids Teachers - Serve every week to every other week (depending on rotation) for one year. Please be available 15 minutes prior to the start of service time. Build relationships, plan/teach curriculum, walk kids through activities, pray with/for children.
- Tapestry Kids childcare workers- Serve on assigned week inside a nursery class or in a classroom to assist teachers. Please be available 15 minutes prior to start of service time. In the nursery you will be expected to change diapers, feed bottles/food, rock or calm sleepy or fussy babies, play with babies, sing, pray with/for the babies. In the older classrooms you will be expected to assist teachers with activities, build relationships with children, keep children on task when necessary, take children to the bathroom, play with the children, sing, pray with/for children.
- Hall Monitors - Serve on assigned week at the check-in desk and hallways. Welcome, sign-in, assign labels, and lead new families to appropriate rooms (with the help of the children’s ministry team). During the service, act as security,

bathroom assistance for teachers/volunteers, and be in constant communication between all classrooms.

- **T-Shirts**

ALL Tapestry Kids volunteers are required to wear a Tapestry Kids ministry t-shirt every week they are serving with the children. They are only allowed to wear these t-shirts when they are serving. This helps everyone to identify who is responsible for the care of our children each week. No adult volunteer should be in a room with children unless they are wearing this t-shirt. The Hall monitor will also be required to wear this shirt on the weeks they are serving.

Child Protection

Our first concern is the safety of each child while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all Tapestry Kids volunteers
- Perform background checks on all Tapestry Kids volunteers and on all full-time church staff, regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.
- Require training for all volunteers
- Use parent authentication identification system
- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Employ hall monitors to promote and maintain safety in the building.
- Equip each room with a first aid kit
- Educate our staff and volunteers on our suspected child abuse reporting procedures and follow any applicable reporting laws.
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to children's ministry
- Adhere to a two-volunteer per room policy.
- Equip our volunteers to know how to evacuate children safely in case of an emergency

Parameters for the Child Protection Policy

This child protection policy applies to children (from birth to 5th grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents/guardians under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship gatherings or specific Tapestry Kids-related church-sponsored activities.

Protecting the Children Before They Arrive

Every applicant who wishes to serve in Tapestry Kids Ministry is required to go through a screening process (detailed below) and attend childcare training.

Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, Tapestry Church has established a screening procedure to approve all volunteers to work with our children:

- All volunteers must be members of Tapestry Church and in good standing for three months
- All volunteers must be eighteen years of age or older.
- Children or youth who are at least two grades older than the children they are assisting are welcome to help (subject to the approval and direction of the Tapestry Kids leadership), but they are always in addition to the adult volunteers.
- All volunteers must have completed Tapestry Church's childcare training.
- All volunteers must have completed the volunteer application and be approved by Tapestry Kids leadership and/or pastoral staff.
- Criminal records checks and other appropriate screening checks will be completed.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.
- Tapestry Church reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; failing to comply with volunteer expectations; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer's ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children.

*Any volunteer, leader, or staff member who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to Tapestry Kids leadership and/or the pastor. He or she will also be personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose such information to the authorities.

Training

All Tapestry Church staff and Tapestry Kids volunteers must attend Tapestry Church's childcare training before they are allowed to work with the children. Full-time staff who do not have direct contact with children will receive training on child protection policies. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

Protecting Children As They Arrive and Depart

Arrival and Departure Times

Volunteers should be READY to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of any session, so that parents have enough time to transition their children before the session begins.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the session. In the event that a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session, volunteers will ask the Hall Monitor to locate the parents.

Signing a Child in to Tapestry Kids Ministry

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a Tapestry Kids gathering/event will sign the child in to the appropriate classroom, nursery, or activity when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that Tapestry Kids event. The parent should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have. For more details on our procedures for caring for children with allergies, please see the “Snacks and Food” section below.

Check-in and check-out procedures apply to all children birth through 5th grade.

Volunteers, leadership, and staff members have the right to refuse any child at check-in when deemed necessary. Some reasons might include potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the room being closed because the adult child ratio, or anything else that might impair our ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

For all children age 3 and under, a parent or designated guardian must be in the church building at all times while their children are checked-in. A parent of a child over 3 who chooses to leave the church building while their child is still checked in is required to inform the volunteer of their absence and leave a phone number where they can be reached.

Parental Authentication Identification System

In order to protect the children in our care, each child must be signed into his/her class by a parent or guardian.

Parent/guardian will report to the Tapestry Kids check-in desk in the nursery area.

The labels provided will be filled out by the parent/guardian for each child and placed on the child's back. Parents will tear off and keep the ticket number from the top of the

label. The child's label and parent's ticket have the same number on them and will be used to match parent with child at check-out.

Volunteers for each room will have a class roster, and will document the label/ticket number for each child for the purpose of a double safety check during check-out procedures.

At the end of the gathering when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

- The Tapestry Kids volunteer will bring the child to the door, match the parent ticket number with the child's label AND match the parent ticket number with the class roster. The volunteer will then REMOVE the child's label BEFORE releasing the child to the parent.
- Volunteers will REMOVE & DESTROY child labels as children leave their room. This will prevent strangers from referring to the child by name and potentially luring them away from their parents.
- Volunteers will document check-out time for each child on the class roster.
- Only the parent/guardian who signed the child into class AND has the ticket in hand, is authorized to pick up the child. **The only exceptions to this are:**
 - In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of the gathering, the child will be released to the care of Tapestry Kids leadership or a staff member of Tapestry Church.
 - A member can send their spouse to pick up their children. They must have the TICKET IN HAND in order to check-out a child.
 - A member parent may make prior arrangements with Tapestry Kids leadership to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of the gathering. In this case, the person responsible for picking up the child MUST show the volunteer a valid driver's license. This person's name must also be noted on the child's label at check-in.

Divorce, Separation or Custody Visitation

In a situation where the parents are divorced or separated, volunteers should only release the child to the parent who brought the child to check-in. If the other parent or anyone else attempts to check out the child, the volunteer should immediately contact Tapestry Kids leadership or a staff member. If a parent presents a court order for a child, the police must also be present and we are to release the child to police custody. In any of these circumstances, the volunteer should immediately inform Tapestry Kids leadership and a staff member.

Protecting Children While They Are In Our Care

Two Volunteer Rule

For all children's classes and nurseries, at least two approved, unrelated adult volunteers must be present in each classroom at all times.

Staff, teachers, and volunteers must never leave a child alone in a classroom.

Two male volunteers may not serve together in the same room without a female volunteer also being present. The only exception to this rule is when a male Hall Monitor temporarily substitutes for a female volunteer who is taking children to the rest room.

Staff, leadership personnel, or volunteers may take children out of the nursery or classroom only for a compelling reason, such as to use the bathroom or in cases of illness, emergency, or evacuation.

****A crying or disgruntled child is NOT an acceptable reason to remove the child from the nursery. If a child is unable to calm down and/or is disrupting the class/nursery, volunteers will ask the hall monitor to notify the parent/guardian.**

Visibility

The interior doors and windows of all classrooms/nurseries should allow for unobstructed views of everyone inside the room. Classroom and nursery doors should remain open at all times unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it.

Hall Monitors

The Hall Monitor is an approved male or female volunteer whose duties are not limited to any one classroom. Hall Monitors generally move about the hallways and buildings during weekly gatherings and scheduled events to observe any unusual activity and be of service to volunteers (e.g. locating parents or substituting temporarily for another volunteer.) The Hall Monitor and each classroom are equipped with a walkie-talkie to facilitate communication. A Hall Monitor is on duty for all Tapestry Church gatherings and events that require childcare.

Child-to-Volunteer Ratios

In addition to always having at least two volunteers present, the following ratios are maintained during Tapestry Church weekly services and any Tapestry Church event that requires childcare:

- Children 0-11 months: One adult for every three children
- Children 12 – 35 months: One adult for every four children

- Children ages 3-5: One adult for every eight children
- Children ages 6-12: One adult for every twelve children

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom/nursery until additional volunteers are added. If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, Tapestry Kids leadership and/or the Hall Monitor should be notified and asked for more volunteers in order to maintain these ratios.

Diaper Changing and Rest Room Procedure

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children *prior to* signing them into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once and as needed during service. Both men and women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their potty-trained children visit the bathroom prior to signing them into the classroom.

Children four years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, a volunteer should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking one child to the bathroom alone. The volunteer will prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists each child (as needed).

For children ages 5 and older, a volunteer should escort a group of children to the bathroom, remain outside the bathroom door, and then escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, volunteers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Appropriate Discipline

All Tapestry Kids volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and 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.

During correction, a child should never be removed from the classroom. Correction should be discrete; in the classroom (not in the hallway); and never outside of the sight of others.

Steps of correction might include (depending on the age of the child): (1) removing the child from the situation or problem; (2) pointing out the problematic behavior; talking to the child about his/her sin and need for Christ; (3) praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity; (4) helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate. Volunteers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce children to the gospel.

Tapestry Kids volunteers and staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, volunteer or staff should ask the Hall Monitor to call the parents. If the child assaults, harasses or bullies other children, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, the parents should be immediately called so the child can be removed. Volunteers, Ministry leaders, or staff members are allowed to physically restrain a child ONLY if he/she is physically endangering other children. Please report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to a Tapestry Kids leader. Once a child is removed from Tapestry Kids ministry, reinstatement is possible at the determination of the pastor and/or leader who oversees Tapestry Kids ministry. A child may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced.

Physical Touch Policy

Two types of relationships are important to consider: volunteer-to-child and child/teen-to-child.

Volunteer-to-Child

While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or showing Godly love and care, it can also be misinterpreted. Particularly in our interaction with children, we want to be blameless and above reproach. The following will help workers to avoid any compromise or concerns in this area.

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security and maturity in their interactions with adults. Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of children and not the adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.

- Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to, coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploits the child's lack of knowledge, satisfies adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violates laws against sexual or physical contact between adult and child, and any attempt to modify child behavior with physical force.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 to 5.
- In general, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- Volunteers should refrain from rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.

Child/Teen-to-Child

- No male or female under the age of 18 should ever be alone together while in Tapestry Kids ministry.
- No inappropriate touching (as defined above) of any kind will be accepted.
- Fighting will not be tolerated and any child participating in violent action will be dismissed from the class and placed into his or her parent's care.

Parents in the Classroom

If a child would feel more at ease with a parent in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are going through separation anxiety. If this goes beyond a few minutes, the parent should be kindly but firmly dismissed. If the child cannot remain without the parents, or if the parent is causing difficulty or presenting concerns for the welfare of the class, the parent will remove the child and leave the classroom.

Food and Drink Policy

The primary mission of Tapestry Kids Ministry is to provide a safe and loving environment for the children entrusted to our care, so that their parents may be fed spiritually without undue concern.

One of the ways we protect children is to limit the food and drink allowed in classrooms.

Why do we do this? The nature of childcare is very hectic and dynamic so we cannot guarantee that:

- a child's bag will be properly marked at all times
- the childcare volunteer will reach into the correct bag
- another child won't grab food/drink and eat it
- a child won't share his food/drink with other children

Also, some children will struggle with allergies or react adversely even to mere exposure to certain foods (like peanuts). So we need to limit the types of foods and drinks used on the Tapestry Kids ministry floors.

Why don't we allow children to bring their own food with them and feed themselves? For the same reasons: we can't guarantee that volunteers will find/give the right food to the right child or that a child won't grab and eat another child's food or that a child won't share his food with other children.

So what do we do? If a parent wants to feed their child, they may check out their child, feed him outside the room, and then return him to the childcare room. This is the policy throughout the building.

The only exception to these rules is our infant nursery policy (See below).

Administering Food and Water

For ages 12 months through 5 years:

- Volunteers may offer properly labeled sippy cups containing only water, as provided by the parents upon signing the child in. Water may be provided, with assistance and supervision of volunteers, from the water fountain, to those children who do not have/use sippy cups.

Ages 5 through 5th grade may have water from the water fountain upon discretion of the teacher/volunteer. Teacher/volunteer must always accompany a group of children to the water fountain.

Administering Food/Bottles in Infant Nursery

For infants 0-11 months:

- Volunteers may administer baby food and/or formula or breast milk bottles per the request and instruction of the parent. ALL baby food and bottles MUST be properly labeled with infant's name.
- If instructions are not clear, no food/bottle should be given to the infant without clarification from the parent/guardian. The volunteer may send the Hall Monitor to clarify with the child's parent or guardian.

Ongoing Care for Children with Allergies:

Parents of children with allergies should talk with Tapestry Kids leadership about how to handle any allergic reactions. Upon parental request, allergy information about children of members may be posted in the child's classroom.

Volunteer Food/Beverage Policy

Volunteers may not bring food with them when they serve. Volunteers may choose to bring a beverage when they serve. All volunteer beverages must be in a bottle/container with a lid in place, and kept out of reach of children AT ALL TIMES.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of Tapestry Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by the parent at home. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with Tapestry Kids Leadership to develop a plan of action.

Healthy Child Policy

Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, several guidelines are in place concerning disease.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
2. Volunteers will use disposable non-latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills or any bodily fluid.
3. Hand washing or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and Volunteers (See Universal Precautions below).
4. Toys and equipment should be washed and disinfected regularly (See Universal Precautions below).

5. Tapestry Church is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. Leaders have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the *Healthy Child Policy* guidelines.

A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea. *Note: Children should be free of a fever (without the use of medication), vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick (green, yellow) constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the nursery sign-in desk with a volunteer while the Hall Monitor locates the parents.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers from illness. These methods are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in any setting and should always be used.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear non-latex disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- At the end of a session, disinfect the room and toys with the disinfectant spray provided by spraying toys and hard surfaces and allowing to air dry. Please spray and wipe down with paper towel any toy that a child has mouthed.

Security and Emergency Response

Emergency Situations

In emergency situations, if appropriate, 911 will be called to secure help and/or the walkie-talkies will be used to summon staff and volunteers to the Tapestry Kids ministry floors to assist with the emergency.

Accidents, First Aid and Medical Emergencies

All classrooms are equipped with basic first aid kits. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called and parents should be located and informed immediately. Volunteers should complete an Accidental Injury Report Form for all injuries, whether major or minor, prior to leaving the premises on the day of the injury.

In the case of a medical emergency, a volunteer or the Hall Monitor will use the walkie-talkie to summon medical volunteers to the Tapestry Kids ministry floors. Depending the severity of the situation, someone may also call 911.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire or emergency situation requiring evacuation, a ministry leader, staff member, or volunteer should call 911 and also assist all children in immediately evacuating the building. Staff and leaders will help keep parents away from the children's floors. Parents should not report to the children's floors because they risk creating chaos and blocking the exit stairwells for children. Instead, parents will meet their children in the designated areas outside of the building. Evacuation information is located on all of the floors. Volunteers and parents should familiarize themselves with this information.

Leaders and staff members will practice evacuation procedures yearly.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action), which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.

- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Tapestry Kids volunteers or teachers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to Tapestry Kids leadership for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Tapestry Church during our weekly gatherings or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
4. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children or youth.
7. The Pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.