



Redeemer Kids Policy Handbook

Version 2.0 / August 2016

Dear Parents and Volunteers,

Thank you for trusting us with your children.

Here at Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta, we don't want to simply baby-sit children on Sunday mornings. We're here to provide a safe and fun environment that will lead each child to follow Jesus. It's our honor to partner with you in this task. We operate with five core values:

Safety

We will provide a safe environment for children to enjoy. We want children to be safe and feel safe, and parents to rest assured that their child is well cared-for while they are in the service. For this reason, we obtain applications and background checks on every volunteer. Adults are never alone with children, and there are always at least two adults with children at all times.

Tell the Story Every Week

Our goal is to tell the stories of Scripture so that children understand God's rescue of people through Jesus. We want children to learn about Jesus and his amazing grace, and we want them to grow in their knowledge and love of the Lord. Lessons about Christ and the Bible will be age appropriate and will help them understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Have Fun

We want children to have fun! Our desire is to see each child have such a good time they will be begging to come back next week. When we say fun, however, we're not saying that it's our goal to entertain children. Our goal is not a "Nickelodeon" style children's ministry. Rather, it's our desire to engage each child with God's story in an age appropriate fashion, as well as engage each child in relationships with his/her peers and with caring adults. We believe creating this kind of fun environment for kids will help children learn more about Jesus. We use games, crafts, props and creative stories, and most important, relationships, to communicate the gospel message. And ... we think it's okay to have a good time at church!

Family

Regarding a child's spiritual development, we believe that what happens at home is just as important, if not more important than what happens at church on Sunday mornings. Redeemer Kids partners with parents by providing resources, support, and encouragement as they lead their families into greater knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and his gospel.

Trust the Holy Spirit

Ultimately, we believe that it's the Holy Spirit who moves and works in our children's hearts to draw them to Himself and to form them into the people he wants them to be. This is a life-long process that begins with our children now. This leads us to our knees to pray for our children continually, and it leads us to cling to the promises that "He who began a good work (in us and in our kids) will be faithful to complete it" and "God's Word will not return void."

Sincerely,

The Redeemer Kids Team

Mission

To teach the Scriptures so that children understand God's rescue of people through Jesus.

Weekly Objectives

1. Tell the story of Jesus as our rescuer
2. Have fun
3. Trust the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of each child's heart

Kid's Environments

Redeemer Kids has eight age groups for children available on Sunday mornings. Students older than 6th grade will participate in middle or high school ministry.

- Babies (Infants through Scooters)
- Crawlers & Early Walkers
- Toddlers (18 months and older)
- Two Year Olds
- Three Year Olds
- Pre-K (Fours and Fives)
- Lower Elementary (Kindergarten - 2nd Grade)
- Upper Elementary (3rd - 5th Grade)

Family Fellowship and Family Worship

We believe that corporate worship is a family affair. Redeemer Kids provides a unique service for families with children to worship together. During the Redeemer Kids Worship on Sunday morning, parents and children will be able to worship together through music and scripture in a way that engages children so they can understand God's rescue of people through Jesus.

The intent of the Redeemer Kids Worship is to provide a setting for multi-generational worship. Children can worship alongside adults in a fun environment that allows younger and older generations to get to know each other, be taught Scriptural truths together, and better understand God's rescue of people through Jesus.

We will have a time of fellowship in the lobby with doughnuts and coffee from 9:30 - 9:45 am. Children of all ages are welcome to attend Family Worship (worship in the sanctuary and a five-minute bible story lesson preview in Hallway Huddles) but childcare will be available for Babies & Crawlers and Toddlers & Twos starting at 9:45 am.

Kids at the Corporate Worship Service

We also encourage families to worship God together during the corporate Sunday morning service as soon as they feel their children are ready. Therefore, we welcome children of all ages into our worship services.

We also know that children develop at vastly different rates and styles. Sometimes a first grader is ready to participate in a whole corporate worship service, while another child is not ready until 4th or 5th grade. That's why we leave it up to parents to decide whether to include their children in our worship services or to allow them to participate in our Sunday morning children's program, Redeemer Kids Connection.

We realize that there may be some whining or restlessness, and we're perfectly OK with that! There will be some "rough spots" as you train your child to worship God with the church family. If your child is being an excessive distraction, however (ex: loud, sustained crying or screaming), please remove him or her from the service. You also have the option to allow your kids to participate in our Sunday morning children's programs. These programs are designed to tell your kids the story of Jesus Christ in a relational environment geared specifically for them.

Redeemer Kids Connection

All age groups are classes are available for you about 15 minutes prior to the start of the corporate Sunday morning service until the service ends. You can bring your infant to the nursery before the service begins, or have your baby with you in the service and bring him/her to the nursery if he/she gets "fussy."

Preschool and elementary aged children will be with their families at the Redeemer Kids Worship service. They will get the opportunity to sing to the Lord with their families and hear the Bible lessons read. After this service, parents can then take their children to Redeemer Kids Connection or keep them for the corporate Sunday service.

Safe Check-In

1. Parents proceed to their child's classroom to get a 2-part security tag for their child from the sign-in table outside of their child's classroom. One half of the tag goes on the child's back and the other half will go with the parent. Parents will also need to initial next to their child's name under today's date on the attendance sheet.
2. First time visitors will need to fill out some information about their child (phone number to contact if there is an emergency during church, if your child has any food allergies) on the visitor's sheet.
3. Parents give their child to the classroom adults but do not enter the classroom.
4. Please label all items (bottles, pacifiers, diapers and/or cups) that are left with the child using either a adhesive label or permanent marker.
5. Please do not send your child with toys, handheld games, etc. Our volunteers have worked hard to prepare for your children, and there are plenty of things to do in each class. You may send "comfort or security" toys to help children feel safe and secure (blankets, teddy bears, etc.)

During the Service

In the event of an emergency, or should any of the Redeemer Kids Team need to contact you during the service, we will first try texting you using the number listed on the attendance sheet. If we do not get a response within a few minutes, a volunteer will come and get you in the service.

Safe Pick-up

1. Parents proceed to their child's classroom to retrieve their child.
2. Parent gives matching security tag to the adult in the doorway. Only adults are allowed to pick up children and they must have the matching security tag to pick up.
3. Parents are requested to be considerate of the Redeemer Kids Team of volunteers by picking up their children no later than 5 minutes after the end of the corporate service.

Security

In order to keep Redeemer Kids a safe and secure environment for parents and children, the

following security measures are constantly in effect:

1. Only volunteers with the appropriate identification, parents with the appropriate documentation, or staff are allowed in the classrooms.
2. No adult is allowed to work in an environment without completing annual volunteer training.
3. Every adult working in classrooms must and complete an annual background check.
4. Every classroom or environment will have two adults present at all times. No adult is to ever be alone with a child.

Volunteer and Staff Requirements

All volunteers and staff are required to fill out an application and background check authorization form. We run an annual background check on every volunteer who works with minors. Students must be in 6th grade or above to volunteer, and they are always under the supervision of an adult. Our volunteers and staff must also complete annual safety and church policy training.

General Wellness Guidelines

To ensure the health of children and volunteers, we ask that sick children/volunteers do not attend Redeemer Kids' programs. The Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child should not leave home when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever (over 100 degrees) within the last 24 hours
2. Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
3. Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough
4. Common cold, including colored runny nose
5. Sore throat
6. Croup
7. Any unexplained rash
8. Any skin infection – boils, ringworm or impetigo
9. Untreated pink eye or other eye infection
10. Any communicable disease
11. Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits

These are the guidelines that we follow and we expect that a child or volunteer be free of fever for 24 hours before coming back to church. In the event of a contagious disease (lice, chicken pox, etc.) parents will be notified.

Medication

Christ the Redeemer staff and volunteers WILL NOT administer any medication except in life threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent to come to the room and give it.

In a situation where a child has a potentially life-threatening condition and medication may need to be given, a Medication Authorization form should be completed and signed by the parent.

EACH time a parent drops off a child and his/her medication, clear directions must be written out BY THE PARENT, outlining the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed. The form is to be given directly to the Lead Teacher by the parent so the Lead Teacher can read the directions and ask for clarification if necessary.

Accidents/Health Conditions

If a teacher encounters a life-threatening situation (loss of consciousness, significant blood loss, difficulty breathing), they will immediately call 911 from a cell phone or the phone in the office. Minor accidents (bumps, bites, bruises, scrapes, etc.) will be handled in the room.

Special Needs Children

Special needs children are to be a part of the whole, not separated from the group. The child will be included in all activities offered. We will provide personal attention and one-on-one care as needed.

Disciplining Children

Redeemer's paid workers and volunteers are always prepared and will be sensitive to children's needs. Adults will never use harsh words, sarcasm or corporal punishment. In the event that a child becomes disruptive, we have a 1-2-3 System:

1. The first time there is an issue, the child will remain side-by-side with an adult in the classroom for the duration of the hour.
2. If the behavior continues or worsens, the child will sit with the front desk volunteers in the lobby to calm down for a few minutes (for example a three year will sit in the lobby for three minutes). An adult will address the issue and outline expectations with the child before he/she returns to the classroom.
3. If there is a third incident, the child will be removed from the classroom and a staff member or church elder will be notified. The staff member or church elder will decide if a parent needs to be contacted. If a parent does not need to be contacted, the child will remain in the lobby with the volunteers for the remainder of the hour and parents will be notified at pick-up time.

However, if a child is becoming a physical threat and/or intentionally harms another child or adult, we will immediately remove the child from the classroom and contact the parent. The child will not be allowed to return to his/her classroom that day and can try again next week.

Crying Children

Crying children obviously need care and compassion. We will reassure the child that their parent will come back for them if necessary. We will contact you if **your child has been crying consistently for 20 minutes**.

If we contact a parent to come check on their child, parents may stay in a common area with their child (hallway, lobby,) for the duration of the service but they cannot come into in a classroom.

Diapering Policies

The person changing diapers will be a female. Diapers will be checked each service. Parents should send appropriate sized diapers and pull-ups, and possibly a change of clothes. A child is never punished for toileting accidents. Until a child is fully potty trained, parents should send them in a pull-up.

Feeding

Please write down specific instructions regarding bottles or feeding for your caregivers. Make sure all bottles, diaper bags and containers are labeled. Only adults are permitted to feed children.

Bathroom Policies

We observe the following procedures when taking children to the bathroom.

1. Once the bathroom is clear, the adult volunteer will wait outside the bathroom door in the hallway with the door slightly open. If the child needs assistance, we will follow the “two adult rule.”
2. We will help the child wash their hands and return to the class.

Mandatory Reporting Law Changes

General Information

Georgia Governor Nathan Deal signed into law HB 1176, the Criminal Justice Reform bill in May 2012. Among other things, it expands the pool of mandated reporters already in Georgia law to include volunteers whose duties include attending to children; and it includes clergy with an amended "confessional" protection. This law becomes effective July 1, 2012 under Code Section 19-7-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to reporting of child abuse. Subsections of the Code where changes were made are indicated below (**b**, **c**, **e**, and **g**), in *italics* and underlined.

(b)

Georgia law defines "child abuse" as:

- physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker by other than accidental means
- neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker*;
- sexual abuse of a child (*does NOT include consensual sex acts between minors or between a minor and an adult not more than 5 years older than the minor*)
- *sexual exploitation of a child (conduct by any person who allows, permits, encourages, or requires that child to engage in prostitution or sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct.)*
- However, no child who in good faith is being treated solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly accredited practitioner thereof shall, for that reason alone, be considered to be an 'abused' child.

* 'Caretaker' - If a person is a 'caretaker', it is best to call the Department of Family and Childrens' Services (DFCS). If the person is not a caretaker the police are usually better able to respond. However, this is not an exact science. You may report to either and they will sort it out.

Who MUST Report?

(c)

1) Georgia law generally requires those who work with families or who come in contact with children to report suspected child abuse.

Designated professionals include:

- Physicians, interns or residents;
- Hospital or medical personnel;
- Dentists;
- Licensed psychologists and interns;
- Podiatrists;
- RPNs and LPNs; nurse's aides
- Professional counselors, social workers, or marriage and family therapists;
- School teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, (all levels of educational system)
- Child welfare agency personnel;

- Child-counseling personnel;
- Child service organization personnel: means persons employed by or volunteering at a business or an organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children.
- Law enforcement personnel;
- Reproductive health care facility or pregnancy resource center personnel and volunteers
- Clergy: ministers, priests, rabbis, imams, or similar functionaries, by whatever name called, of a bona fide religious organization*

* See section (g)

(2) If a person is required to report child abuse pursuant to this subsection because that person attends to a child pursuant to such person's duties as an employee of or volunteer at a hospital, school, social agency, or similar facility, that person shall notify the person in charge of the facility, or the designated delegate thereof, and the person so notified shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with this Code section. An employee or volunteer who makes a report to the person designated pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have fully complied with this subsection.

Under no circumstances shall any person in charge of such hospital, school, agency, or facility, or the designated delegate thereof, to whom such notification has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification, or make other change to the information provided by the reporter, although each of the aforementioned persons may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant, and necessary information when making the report."

To Whom Do You Report?

(e)

An oral report shall be made immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused, by telephone or otherwise and followed by a report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Services, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

If a report of child abuse is made to the child welfare agency or independently discovered by the agency, and the agency has reasonable cause to believe such report is true or the report contains any allegation or evidence of child abuse, then the agency shall immediately notify the appropriate police authority or district attorney. Such reports shall contain the names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or caretakers, if known, the child's age, the nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries, and any other information that the reporting person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator. Photographs of the child's injuries to be used as documentation in support of allegations by hospital employees or volunteers, physicians, law enforcement personnel, school officials, or employees or volunteers of legally mandated public or private child protective agencies may be taken without the permission of the child's parent or guardian. Such photograph photographs shall be made

available as soon as possible to the chief welfare agency providing protective services and to the appropriate police authority."

(g)

Suspected child abuse which is required to be reported by any person pursuant to this Code section shall be reported notwithstanding that the reasonable cause to believe such abuse has occurred or is occurring is based in whole or in part upon any communication to that person which is otherwise made privileged or confidential by law; provided, however, that a member of the clergy shall not be required to report child abuse reported solely within the context of confession or other similar communication required to be kept confidential under church doctrine or practice. When a clergy member receives information about child abuse from any other source, the clergy member shall comply with the reporting requirements of this Code section, even though the clergy member may have also received a report of child abuse from the confession of the perpetrator."

Cobb County DFCS:

404-651-9361 (phone)

404-657-4483 (fax)

General information: 404-657-3400

After hours centralized intake:

1-855-GA CHILD (422-4453), 5pm-8am weekdays/24 hours on weekends/holidays/furlough days.

This number is currently not available for Fulton or DeKalb counties. You must call Fulton or DeKalb DFCS directly.

If unable to reach DFCS or if the child is in immediate danger, report to local law enforcement (911) or district attorney in the county where the child lives.

Rights of Mandated Reporters

- Anonymity or confidentiality (when at all possible)
- Knowledge of the outcome ONLY of a report
- Immunity for "good faith" report
- **Penalty for NOT reporting:** Any person or official required by Georgia law to report suspected cases of child maltreatment and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor