



Discovery provides a safe and secure environment for every child/teen. These policies were developed to protect our children, the volunteers, workers and classroom environment.

The following policies are in effect during church services and church-sponsored activities.

This child protection policy has been reviewed and approved for implementation by Pastoral Staff and Board of Elders.

### **Volunteer Requirements**

These requirements must be met to volunteer in ministry areas with children and young adults under the age of 18. (Currently known as Family Ministries)

- All workers must be pre-qualified:
  - Shall complete an application, background check, and an interview with the Ministry Director before volunteering in specific ministry
  - Adhere to the statement of beliefs listed at the end of this document
  - Shall complete "Protect My Ministry" online training
  - Shall receive, read and sign a copy of this child security and protection policy
- Only after the initial interview, background check and online abuse awareness training has been completed will a volunteer be eligible to "test drive" or serve in desired ministry.
- "Three-month Rule" – For those working with children and students in any teaching role or small group capacity, volunteers are encouraged to be active attendees of Discovery Church for a time period of three months before participating. The only exception is when suitable non-member workers are hired by the pastoral staff for special events or services; and when guest missionaries, evangelists, or teachers are ministering to our children.
- Adult workers are 18 years of age or older. Students 18 years of age or younger must work with **their parent or approved adult at coordinators discretion**.
- No person with known prior incidents of sexual misconduct or abuse occurrences will be permitted to serve in any capacity with children 18 years or younger.

### **Check-in/Check-out**

- Children/Teens may be dropped off 10-15 minutes before an event, program or worship service – providing the classrooms are adequately staffed (see Classroom/General)
- Only a parent or guardian with a check out tag (Provided by Planning Center) may pick up Early Childhood children (Birth – pre K). Parents or older sibling (16 and up) may pick-up elementary children (K – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade).
  - 4<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades are released when their programming ends. Please communicate with your child/teen about where they are to meet you.
- Children/Teens need to be picked up within 15 minutes of the event completion.

## **Discipline Policy**

Our intent is to encourage positive behavior through positive means and involvement in interesting activities. When a child is not able to respond to positive means after they are given opportunity, then parents will be contacted and asked to come and get their child. Our desire is that the parent will deal with the behavior immediately so that the child can return to class. Otherwise, the child may remain with their parent in the service. In no way EVER will a staff member or volunteer correct a child/teen in a physical way.

## **Classroom & General**

- Only paid staff and pre-qualified volunteers are permitted in childrens/teens learning environments.
- The value of each child will be respected and honored. All Children will be treated fairly and equally, with no special regard to race, creed, color or social status.
- "Two-adult Rule": Two non-married adults must be on duty in each room when it is open and kids are present.
- Adult to child ratios minimums are observed in class rooms.
  - Nursery 1:4
  - Early Childhood 1:7
  - K – 6<sup>th</sup> 1:10
- Volunteers shall abide by the following in regards to counseling sessions.
  - No worker should be alone with one minor in an isolated situation. This includes vehicles used for transportation, activities, and/or retreats, and meetings of any kind.
  - Always meet in the open.
  - Workers should avoid physical contact with children that could in any way be misconstrued as inappropriate. (See attached pages on 'Child Abuse')
  - All children's areas should have a see-through window or doors left propped open.
  - There must always be a pre-qualified adult present during any children's service or activity, including 'playtimes'. (Youth 12 years and older who have been properly screened and trained by the ministry lead may be used for support help)

## **Health Policy**

In order to ensure a healthy and safe environment for all children in Discovery, we follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Children will not be admitted to Discovery Kids with the following symptoms.

- Fever – greater than 99 degrees within the last 24 hours. (w/o medication)
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting in the last 24 hours. (w/o medication)
- Pink eye or other eye infections (red, crusty, or watery discharge)
- Sore throat
- Sneezing or cough, if persistent and/or productive
- Color nasal discharge: white - viral infection; yellow or green - bacterial infection
- Jaundice (yellowing of the eyes or skin)

- Any skin infections; sores and/or crusts on the scalp, face or body - particularly if red, swollen, draining, or spreading
- Skin eruptions or rash (other than diaper rash)
- Lice
- Swelling and tenderness of glands, particularly around face or neck
- Any communicable diseases

**NOTE:** Neither leaders nor the staff of Discovery are allowed to give any medicine to any child in Discovery Kids. In the case that your child shows symptoms while in our care – the parent will be contacted and the child must be picked up.

### **Water & Restroom Breaks**

- When a restroom break is required in the Early Childhood ministry, as needed, a leader will direct the child to the bathroom. Unless a child is in obvious need, no teacher should go inside the bathroom with any child. If the child needs help, a female will help while another teacher watches or stands by – and the bathroom door must remain open.
- Elementary age children: A teacher may allow 1 child at a time to go to the bathroom. If the child does not return in three minutes, the teacher should go to get the child. If it is a group restroom break - two adult monitors need to be present
  - During restroom breaks, workers should monitor the children from outside the door if at all possible.
  - No adult(s) can occupy the bathroom, while a child is going to the restroom.
- **A volunteer should never be alone with a child in the bathroom.**

### **Diaper Changing Policy**

- Unless otherwise directed by the parents, the children in the infant nursery will be changed by female adult, screened worker(s) as needed.
- Diaper Changing Procedures are posted next to changing table – and are to be followed for the protection of each infant.

**Emergencies:** (All plans are located on classroom walls in kids ministry areas)

#### **Fire:**

All Children will be gathered quickly and calmly by their classroom teacher(s). A count will be taken to make sure everyone is accounted for and will then be taken directly outside following the exit route shown on the building map posted beside each classroom door.

#### **Storms:**

The children will be gathered quickly and calmly by their classroom teacher(s). A count will be taken to make sure everyone is accounted for and will then follow the exit route for tornadoes shown on the building map posted beside each classroom door.

- In both above cases, parents are not allowed to receive children until child's class arrives at their destination, are recounted by their classroom teacher(s) and have been accounted for using their classroom role sheet.
- If parents are arriving during a fire or storm they may join their child's class and help the children follow the designated emergency route.

### **Personal**

- In case of injury – an accident report will be made out and copy will be sent home and a duplicate will be kept on file at the church.
- In case of injury – parent will be notified immediately. If the injury is deemed serious, 911 may be notified as
- A first aid kit is required to be stocked and available in each ministry area.

### **Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect**

Child abuse falls into five primary categories:

**Physical abuse** exists when a child has a non-accidental injury.

**Emotional abuse** is injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child.

**Sexual abuse** exists when an adult uses a child as a part of any type of sexual act.

**Emotional neglect** is when the child suffers from an adult failing to give chances for feeling loved, wanted, secure, and worthy.

**Physical neglect** is when an adult does not provide basic needs or supervision.

[[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/identifying](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/identifying)]

### **Discovery Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse**

- Be familiar the principles of identification listed above.
- Respond to the child's pain. Avoid overt reactions of disgust, shock, or anger.
- Write down basic information (name, address, phone, parent or guardian name) and any written observations you may have from your interaction. Written observations and data are very helpful in substantiating an objective case of abuse.
- Immediately contact your direct report with the information. Volunteers are to contact the ministry lead.
- Upon receiving the information, the direct report will make the decision to call the **Oklahoma Child Abuse Hotline 1.800.522.3511**. Operate under the general rule “**When in doubt, REPORT**”. The Direct Report will then inform the Senior Pastor who will inform the elders.
  - Best case scenario is for the initial contact (the one who wrote down the information) to make the phone call after conferring with the direct report.
  - Reports may be made anonymously. A person who reports suspected abuse in “good faith” is immune from criminal and civil liability.
- DO NOT leave a child/teen if in immediate danger.
- Keep information on a “need to know only” basis. The law of immunity may not protect those who disclose the report or its contents to anyone other than the children's services or municipal or county peace officer in the county in which the child resides or county in which the abuse or neglect occurred.

- DO NOT do any investigative reporting. Your job is to protect the child by bringing awareness to the right people.

### **Who is required by Law to Report Abuse or Neglect?**

Any person, having reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is a victim of abuse or neglect, shall report the matter promptly to the Department of Human Services. No privilege or contract shall relieve any person from the requirement of reporting child abuse or neglect.

### **Child Protective Services Program Information**

Child Protective Services (CPS) are provided through OKDHS to identify, treat and prevent child abuse and neglect. The two purposes of CPS intervention are to protect the safety of children and to provide services to help families with any difficulties that cause the safety of their children to be at risk. Services are provided either through community resources or through OKDHS. While every attempt is made to preserve the family, if a child's safety cannot be controlled, then court intervention, including removal of the child, may be necessary.

If you believe a child is being abused or neglected, you have a legal responsibility to report it to the appropriate OKDHS county office during business hours. Reports can also be made at any time to the 24-hour **Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-522-3511.**

### **Role of Physical Contact**

Touch is a powerful and important tool in working with children. It has the power to communicate warmth, concern, and care to a child. When used with common sense and concern for the child's benefit, it enhances trust and safety in a relationship while affirming and reciprocating the child's worth as a person. Healthy touch needs to be a conscious choice.

### **Appropriate touch is**

- non-demanding, gentle, aware
- shoulders, hands, arms, head, back
- sitting a young child on a leg in a lighted room with one or more adults present.

### **Inappropriate touch includes**

- kissing a child
- demanding or initiating hugs
- touching chest, genital region, upper legs, buttocks
- sitting child in center of your lap, in a darkened room or when no other workers are present
- "piggyback" rides.

### **To avoid physical injuries,**

- never grab a child by any joint
- never spin a child by their limbs
- never toss a child.

### **Failure to Comply with Policies**

Failure to comply with the above guidelines will result in disciplinary action, which could include the dismissal from the Discovery Family Ministry team and prohibition from volunteer roles in other Discovery ministries.

Any concerns about the inappropriateness of the behavior of any volunteer should be directed to the Ministry Lead who will talk with the Director and the Area Pastor.

## Confession of Faith

### Trinity:

**Truth:** I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Key Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 13:14 *“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*

#### Assessment Statements:

1. I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God.
2. I believe the God of the Bible is one in essence but distinct in person—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. I believe Jesus is God in the flesh—who died and rose bodily from the dead.
4. I believe the Holy Spirit is God and dwells in Christians to empower them to live the Christian life.

### Salvation by Grace:

**Truth:** I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Key Scripture:** Ephesians 2:8-9 *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

#### Assessment statements:

1. I believe I will inherit eternal life because of what Jesus has done for me.
2. I believe nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation.
3. I believe salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.
4. I believe people are saved because of what Jesus Christ did, not because of what they do.

### Authority of the Bible:

**Truth:** I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Key Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

#### Assessment statements:

1. I believe the Bible is absolutely true in matters of faith and morals.
2. I believe the words of the Bible are words from God.
3. I believe the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do.
4. I believe the Bible is relevant to address the need of contemporary culture.

### Personal God:

**Truth:** I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life. Psalm 121 *“I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”*

#### Assessment Statements:

1. I believe God has a purpose for my life.
2. I believe pain and suffering can often bring me closer to God.
3. I believe God is actively involved in my life.
4. I believe God enables me to do things I could not or would not otherwise do.

## Identity of Christ:

**Truth:** I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Key Scripture:** John 1:12-13 *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

### Assessment Statements:

1. I believe God loves me and therefore my life has value.
2. I exist to know, love and serve God.
3. I believe God loves me, even when I do not obey him.
4. I believe I am forgiven and accepted by God.

## Church:

**Truth:** I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish his purposes on earth today.

**Key Scripture:** Ephesians 4:15-16 *"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

### Assessment Statements:

1. I believe God gives spiritual gifts to every Christian for service to the church and the community.
2. I believe I cannot grow as a Christian unless I am an active member of a local church.
3. I believe the community of true believers is Christ's body on earth.
4. I believe the purpose of the church is to share the gospel and nurture Christians to maturity in Christ.

## Humanity:

**Truth:** I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Key Scripture:** John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

### Assessment Statements:

1. I believe each person possesses a sinful nature and is in need of God's forgiveness.
2. I believe we are created in the image of God and therefore have equal value, regardless of race, religion, or gender.
3. I believe all people are loved by God; therefore, I too should love them.
4. I believe God desires all people to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

## Compassion:

**Truth:** I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

**Key Scripture:** Psalm 82:3-4 *"Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."*

### Assessment Statements:

1. God calls me to be involved in the lives of the poor and suffering.
2. I believe I am responsible before God to show compassion to the sick and imprisoned.
3. I believe I should stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.
4. I believe Christians should not purchase everything they can afford, so that their discretionary money can be available to help those in need.



**Eternity:**

**Truth:** I believe there is a heaven and a hell, and I believe Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and establish his eternal kingdom.

**Key Scripture:** John 14:1-4 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”*

**Assessment Statements:**

1. I believe it is important to share the gospel with my neighbor because Christ has commanded me to do so.
2. I believe people who deliberately reject Jesus Christ as Savior will not inherit eternal life.
3. I believe every person is subject to the judgment of God.
4. I believe all people who place their trust in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in heaven.

**Stewardship:**

**Truth:** I believe everything I am or own belongs to God.

**Key Scripture:** 1 Timothy 6:17-19 *“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”*

**Assessment Statements:**

1. I believe everything I am or own comes from God and belongs to God.
2. I believe a Christian should live a sacrificial life that is not driven by pursuit of material things.
3. I believe Christians should give at least 10 percent of their income to God’s work.
4. I believe God will bless Christians now and in the life to come for their good works.

## Child Security and Safety / Confession of Faith Adherence

\*\*\*By signing below I am acknowledging that I have received, read and will adhere to the child security and safety policies of Discovery Church AND I have read and agree with Discovery's confession of faith\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (printed) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_