

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY SUMMARY FOR COVENANT LIFE CHURCH MINISTRIES INVOLVING CHILD OVERSIGHT



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*Protection of children attending functions at Covenant Life Church is a responsibility we take very seriously. The following is a summary of the church's overall Child Protection Policy and other procedures that are in place wherever child oversight exists.*

## SECURITY PERSONNEL

Sunday morning Discovery Land security is comprised of several layers of security that function together. Certain other CLC non-Sunday functions also utilize these formalized security teams. Security personnel are briefed on individuals of concern, sex offenders, and other known/potential risks. These layers include:

- Police security team — Sworn law enforcement officers on duty in various areas of the church building, including Discovery Land spaces.
- Discovery Land safety/security team — Volunteers, wearing red uniform shirts, stationed at doors and hallways when Discovery Land is in session.
- Church staff — Serving in numerous areas in the building.
- Discovery Land leaders — Volunteers serving in various Discovery Land areas.
- All of the above are available via walkie-talkie, or have easy access to one, and are wearing nametags indicating they are approved to be in Discovery Land serving.

## CLASSROOM SAFETY PROCEDURES

### CONTROLLED ACCESS

- All exterior doors to the building, except the main lobby, are locked before service starts in order to limit access points to Discovery Land.
- All interior access points to Discovery Land are guarded by safety/security volunteers.
- Safety/security volunteers stop unauthorized individuals from entering Discovery Land spaces.

### TWO-ADULT RULE

- We maintain a minimum of two approved Discovery Land adults, in every classroom or any other context on the church premises where children are located in a child oversight capacity.
- There is no exception to this rule.

## CLASSROOM DOCUMENTS

We maintain emergency information in wall-mounted folders or three-ring binders in each classroom:

- Volunteer handbook
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Lockdown procedures
- Tornado procedures
- Earthquake procedures
- Missing child procedures
- Child Protective Service Hotline information

## IDENTIFICATION

- All Discovery Land volunteers must wear a Discovery Land nametag properly identifying them while serving.
- All staff wear nametags on a Sunday morning.
- Only authorized personnel, and properly identified parents visiting classrooms, are permitted to stay in a Discovery Land classroom.

## CHILD PICKUP

Only a parent or another authorized individual with a pickup slip that corresponds to the child's nametag may pick up a child from class. Pickup slips are printed by parents through our automated child check-in system, using a personal barcoded key tag. Our security system uses a security code, unique to each family each week, in addition to the family paging number. Both the security code and paging number must match.

## RATIOS

The following child-to-adult ratios serve as working guidelines to help inform decisions on how to promote child safety, assess volunteer staffing needs and determine if/when to close classrooms in Discovery Land. These are adjustable by Discovery Land staff, or volunteer leaders if necessary:

- Nursery (ages 6 mo. – 11 mo.) — 3-to-1
- Toddler (ages 12 mo. – 23 mo.) — 4-to-1
- Discover (ages 2-3) — 5-to-1
- Explore (age 4) — 8-to-1
- Adventure (K- 5<sup>th</sup> grade) — 15-to-1

## PARENTS STAYING IN CHILD'S CLASSROOM

Parents are invited to stay in a child's room. If the parent is not an approved Discovery Land volunteer, they must obtain a visitor nametag from a DL staff member or a volunteer coordinator. They may not serve as a volunteer; they may only act as a caretaker/observer of their own child. This rule applies to the following situations:

- A parent wants to help their child acclimate to class.

- A parent wants to observe their child's class.
- A parent wants to stay with their child in the classroom because the classroom's child-to-adult ratio limit has been reached.

## DIAPER POLICY & BATHROOM BREAKS

Here are a few key points from Discovery Land's diaper policy:

- Only adult female volunteers change diapers in Discovery Land.
- In the 2 & 3-year-old Discover classes, parents should be notified through family paging to change their child's diaper or pull-up, if necessary.

Here are a few key points from Discovery Land's bathroom break procedures:

- The two-adult rule must be in effect at all times during bathroom breaks. The two volunteers must be adults.
- Female adult volunteers may supervise bathroom breaks for boys up through 5 years old, and girls of any age.
- Male adult volunteers may only supervise K-5<sup>th</sup> grade boy's bathroom breaks.
- Unless a child is in obvious need, volunteers should not go inside a bathroom stall with any child. If a child needs help, a volunteer should help while another volunteer stands in view.
- Volunteers and staff do not help a child with wiping.

## FAMILY PAGING

The Discovery Land family paging office is where parents can pick up children who need parental assistance for inconsolability, injury, sickness, continued misbehavior, etc. All parents receive a family paging number when they initially register their child in Discovery Land. Parents are alerted to come to the family paging office by a display of their number on screens in the main auditorium, the video room or the infant care room. If a parent cannot be reached this way, Discovery Land staff or Family Paging volunteers will text the parent. This is why we collect the parent's cell phone number.

## HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Discovery Land employs the following for the physical health of each child:

- A volunteer medical team that responds to injuries, sicknesses and medical emergencies when paged.
- Child choking and child CPR instructional signs in each classroom.
- A food policy that governs classroom snacks.
- A policy of not admitting sick children into class, even those with just a runny nose.
- Other health-related policies and procedures.

## VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

## VIDEO & PHOTOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN

- Discovery Land will only use identifiable images of children if granted written permission by parents.
- Photographer assigned by Discovery Land staff to take photos or video (for informational or promotional purposes such as the church website or a brochure) attempt to avoid photos or video where children are identifiable.
- Discovery Land volunteers may never videotape or photograph children while children are in Discovery Land care.
- Classrooms are “no phone zones” for volunteers and children.

#### CELL PHONE USE

- Volunteers should not use cell phones in contexts involving children while in Discovery Land.
- Classrooms are “no phone zones” for volunteers and children. Children should never be given or shown a volunteer’s cell phone. This protects children and allows volunteers to stay focused on care and effective interaction with children.

#### CHILD DISCIPLINE ISSUES

- When working with a child who is struggling to obey, volunteers will address the child verbally, graciously, and in a manner that reflects biblical values.
- Volunteers may never use any form of physical or emotional means of adjusting a child’s behavior, including physically removing an unwilling child, spanking or withholding snacks.
- Any behavior not easily addressed by a gracious and verbal appeal, must always involve a coordinator.
- If the child continues to be disobedient, parents are paged.
- Volunteers still maintain the two-adult rule during escorting a child to Family Paging, and should directly communicate to parents any issues regarding a child’s obedience.

#### VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCEDURES

Annually, all staff and volunteers, regardless of ministry position or tenure complete a Discovery Land application, submit to background checks, and undergo training before being approved to serve. More details are below:

#### VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

- Every adult (18 and over) completes the volunteer application, and submits to a background check.
- Youth complete the volunteer application. Parents and youth sign the application. Youths turning 18 in the serving year submit to a background check.
- This form asks pertinent questions about an individual’s history that help the Discovery Land staff deem whether it is appropriate to have the person serve, and if so, where he/she might best be suited.
- Flagged applications - A volunteer’s application must go through a pastoral review/elder approval process if the background check is flagged, or the applicant does not check NO

regarding any of the application questions. The church elders review and make the final decision for approval/disapproval.

## BACKGROUND/SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY CHECKS

- Discovery Land uses the online service, Intellicorp, for all background checks.
- We consult the National Sex Offender Public Website and other public information.
- Applicants may be interviewed as part of the process.

## TRAINING & MENTORING

- As part of the approval process, every adult volunteer receives training in child abuse awareness and reporting, and training in his or her ministry area of service.
- Youth receive training from other adult volunteers on the days in which they serve.
- Leaders are identified through a mentoring process.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any individual who has a history of legally defined sexual abuse toward a minor will not be allowed to serve in any capacity in Discovery Land.
- This disapproval will not be reconsidered in the future.

## RESTRICTED LIST

The Student Life Ministry maintains a list of individuals who may be restricted from either serving in Discovery Land or entering Discovery Land space at all, due to an elders' decision based on disclosed or revealed information that involves past and/or present sin struggles, concerning behavior, or legal judgments. Here are a few other key points on this topic:

- The list is broken down into several major categories, depending on the situation and severity of each individual's history. Restrictions range from not being allowed to enter Discovery Land, to not being allowed to serve with children or youth.
- Those aware of the individuals on this restricted list are as follows:
  - All pastors
  - CLC police security team leader
  - Discovery Land director
  - Discovery Land administrative assistant
  - Discovery Land safety/security volunteers
  - Student Life ministry staff
  - Any other key church staff members deemed necessary

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

CLC follows a policy of reporting any suspected child abuse and/or neglect. See the Reporting Potential Child Abuse and/or Neglect document for the most up to date information.