



## **Children's Ministry Handbook and Policy and Procedures Manual**

We are in the business of changed lives. We live to turn the uncommitted and opposed into unashamedly committed, fully devoted followers of Christ. Everything we do is measured by its usefulness, effectiveness, and contribution toward this purpose.

WATERMARK COMMUNITY CHURCH  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HANDBOOK AND POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL  
VERSION 6.0 (January 2015)

Dear Watermark Children's Leader,

Thank you so much for your interest in the Watermark Children's Ministry. We highly value you as our leaders, and the ministry you provide to our children. We also value our children and want to provide for them an environment that is safe and nurturing so that they can actively learn about the God who loves them.

We have established this handbook, including our policies and procedures, to protect not only our children but also our leaders, and Watermark's mission. These rules will be strictly enforced. It is therefore imperative that you know and observe the rules listed in this handbook.

Please carefully read this manual, including the parts that are specific to the ministry you are interested in serving. There are four places you are required to initial in the midst of the document. At the end you can add your electronic signature and submit the document back to us. You will receive a copy of the signed document in an email for your future reference as well.

We are thankful for your commitment to partner with us in ministry!

Sincerely,

Wes Butler  
*Family & Children's Ministry Director*

# Watermark Community Church Children's Ministry Handbook

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# **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide policies and procedures for the Children's Ministry of Watermark and the employees and leaders who work in that ministry. Changes may be made from time to time to the policies and procedures contained in this handbook without prior written or oral notice. These visions and values are consistent with our doctrinal statements as found on our website at <http://www.watermark.org/about-us/what-we-believe/>.

## **VISION AND VALUES**

### **Mission**

Partnering with families to train up the next generation of fully-devoted followers of Christ.

### **Vision**

Inviting all kids to know Christ in a way that transforms their eternity, their daily lives and the lives of those around them.

### **Values**

#### **TRUTH-BASED**

We believe that God's word is foundational truth, and it is our heart to train every kid to use it as his or her guide, authority, and conscience in everything.

#### **RELATIONAL**

We believe that life-change happens best in the context of relationships. Gifted, godly, and passionate adults who exhibit Christ to children, their families, and each other will show kids how to do the same. This modeling will impact God's Kingdom for generations to come.

#### **ADVENTUROUS**

We believe that church is FUN and that "it is a sin to bore a kid with the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Therefore, it is our commitment to challenge kids beyond the rules of church toward a vibrant growing relationship with Christ.

#### **INNOVATIVE**

We believe in inspiring kids to greatness by pursuing excellence in our programs, risking in our attempts to be innovative, and ruthlessly examining everything we do in order to remain biblical, relevant, and effective.

## **NURTURING**

We believe that spiritual growth happens best in an atmosphere of emotional safety, physical security, and sanitary conditions. We are committed to exceptional standards in these areas.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

Watermark employs various full-time personnel called to minister to its children. In addition to full-time staff, Watermark may employ additional Children's Ministry personnel for various part-time assignments. The Watermark office will provide you with the current list of Children's Ministry employees and their basic areas of responsibility upon request.

## **LEADER APPLICATION PROCESS**

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Watermark requires all leaders working with children to complete the following leader application steps.

### **1. Application**

All children's ministry leaders must complete the Leader Application, including providing references and signing the Consent to Background Checks and the Doctrinal Statement.

### **2. Reference Check**

All references will be contacted and asked to assess the applicant's suitability/capability for working with children. A minimum of two references must be received prior to a leader beginning to serve in a classroom.

### **3. Policies & Procedures**

Leaders are required to review the policies contained in this manual and initial and sign in the appropriate locations indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

### **4. Criminal History Check**

Watermark utilizes the services of a reputable public data screening firm in order to check the background of all volunteers and employees for possible criminal history and/or registered sex offender information.

Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on deferred adjudication or regular probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes, either misdemeanor or felony, cannot serve in any area of children's ministry. Watermark utilizes a comprehensive background check and relies upon the truthful answers of applicants and their references for this information.

Watermark Staff members are also required to have updated background checks, even if they are not serving with kids on a regular basis.

## 5. Interview

All Children's Ministry leaders must be willing to submit to an interview by either a Director or Coordinator.

Watermark reserves the right to revoke any leader's ability to serve in the Children's Ministry with or without notice at any time for any reason or for no reason at all.

## **SECTION 2: CHILD ABUSE AND PROTECTION**

### **POLICY AGAINST CHILD ABUSE**

Watermark supports and maintains a **zero tolerance** policy against child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct) for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of the actor or for producing any visual depiction of such conduct.

It is against the law and against Watermark's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

Watermark reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss, or to exclude from affiliation with Watermark any volunteer or employee who is or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect of any child.

Watermark will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically or sexually abusive behavior towards a child.
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to church activities.
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Watermark staff members have been trained to recognize behaviors intended to "groom" children for sexual abuse. These behaviors will be immediately investigated and reported to the appropriate authorities.

### **Duties of Serving as a Leader**

Child abuse is a serious crime, and Watermark will initiate and cooperate where appropriate in the investigation, reporting and prosecution of child abuse in any form as required by law and which is consistent with our mission to protect children. You are under the following obligations as a leader:

All leaders and employees are under the obligation to immediately report to Children's Ministry staff and document any incident of abuse or violation of the two-adult policy (see Section 2 page 7) of which they have knowledge or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

## INVESTIGATION

### 1. Incident of abuse defined

An “incident of abuse” means any occurrence in which any person:

- Has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, youth worker, or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- With respect to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.

### 2. Imminent threat

In all cases where an imminent threat of continued or actual abuse exists, any witness shall immediately contact a Watermark staff member to request that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing or with knowledge of the incident of abuse shall complete a written report of the incident of abuse and submit the report to the Children’s Director (or in his/her absence other appropriate staff or member of the Board of Elders) and Watermark legal counsel. A written report can include any form of available communication including any hard copy or electronic form that provides the required information including an email report to the Children’s Director.

### 3. Watermark Staff Internal Reporting Procedure

The staff member receiving a report of an incident of abuse shall contact the Children’s Director (or in his/her absence, other appropriate staff or any member of the Board of Elders). The reporter shall provide information regarding all relevant facts with respect to the incident of abuse. Upon receiving a report of an incident of abuse, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall prepare a written report of the incident and submit a copy of the report to Watermark’s legal counsel. The written report can take the form of email communication provided it contains the information necessary to understand the incident and take action on it. However, in all cases where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom a report should be made, he or she shall be considered absent for the purposes of this reporting procedure and the report should be submitted to another appropriate Watermark representative and to Watermark legal counsel.



#### 4. Responding to the report

When someone receives a report of an incident of abuse, he or she shall immediately take steps to ensure the continuing safety of the alleged victim (for example, if the accused perpetrator has continuing access to the alleged victim (e.g., teacher-student), immediate action shall be taken). After the continuing safety of the alleged victim has been secured, and after the report has been appropriately documented, the person receiving the report shall:

- Immediately contact the Children's Ministry Director or any member of the Board of Elders who will then contact the parents or guardian of the alleged victim to inform them of the incident.
- Immediately the Children's Ministry Director will contact any member of the Board of Elders who will contact the Watermark Community Church legal counsel. The legal counsel shall retain outside counsel to conduct an investigation, which shall be completed within 72 hours of the report of abuse, for the purpose of determining if there is reasonable cause to believe an abuse incident occurred.
- Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending investigation.
- Take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults pending the investigation.

Leaders and staff members are obligated to participate with the investigation described above to the extent required by their knowledge of the facts and circumstances and if necessary cooperate with law enforcement investigators.

## **REPORTING**

### **Conclusion of abuse**

If Watermark's legal counsel concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse may have occurred, Watermark's legal counsel shall:

- Report the incident of abuse to any other appropriate authorities.
- Conduct all further investigations as directed by the Board of Elders.
- Advise the Board of Elders to report the conclusion to Law Enforcement.

### **Obligation to report to Law Enforcement**

In all cases of actual or imminent threat of continuing abuse, the Children's Director, Director of Operations, or a member of the Board of Elders shall dial 911 for immediate assistance. Further, nothing about the procedures required by this manual shall suggest that any person who has a suspicion of actual or imminent threat of continuing abuse is restrained from contacting authorities. An individual's decision to contact authorities is

theirs alone to make. The intent of this manual is to set forth appropriate procedures that balance the need for immediate notification of actual or imminent threats of continuing abuse against the need to properly investigate allegations of possible abuse.

In all cases where the investigation has determined reasonable cause exists to believe that a child or youth has been or may be abused or neglected by either known or unknown persons inside or outside of Watermark, the Watermark legal counsel or staff member shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency's child abuse investigators within 24 hours of the determination that such reasonable cause exists.

If in doubt regarding whether a report should be made, Watermark shall err on the side of making the call and shall telephone the agency and discuss the situation with an investigator to determine whether the report should be made. The Watermark legal counsel or staff member shall make a written record of the name and the title of the investigator with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation made by the investigator, then submit a copy of the written record to the Children's Director.

Additionally, Watermark's legal counsel shall provide a written account to the Board of Elders.

### **Conclusion of no abuse**

If after the completion of the above investigation, Watermark's legal counsel concludes that there is not reasonable cause to believe the abuse may have occurred, Watermark's legal counsel shall provide a written report to the Board of Elders documenting the conclusions reached and the basis for those conclusions. The contents of the report presented by legal counsel where no abuse was found shall be confidential unless requested by law enforcement officials.

The written report shall:

- Identify the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and all witnesses identified and contacted.
- Set forth the allegations and the steps taken to investigate the allegations.
- Set forth the facts revealed by each significant witness.
- Set forth the temporary actions to be taken by the Board of Elders as well as a recommendation of additional actions to be taken by the Board of Elders.

## **LEADER/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Watermark intends to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of leaders and children. As a precaution and to ensure strict accountability from one adult to another, leaders must follow these rules:

### **1. Two Leader Policy**

Watermark Children's Ministry requires that a minimum of two leaders will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a church activity

regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. At least one of these must be an adult. Some school age classes may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances doors to the classrooms will remain open. At **no time** should an adult ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with any child. If a leader needs to leave a group of children, a hostess or staff member must be notified so that the two leader policy can be upheld. This is for the protection of the child(ren) as well as the teacher/staff. **In short, never be alone with a child.**

## 2. Visibility & Security

It is important that all interaction between children and leaders happens in a location where others can observe what is going on for safety and accountability purposes. At no time should a child and leader disappear behind a closed door with no visibility to outsiders.

Most, if not all, areas where children and leaders are present on the Watermark campus are equipped with video surveillance equipment. As a leader you acknowledge that you are being recorded for safety and security purposes. This is done for the protection of both children and leaders. Therefore, lights are to remain on at all times during ministry events (even when watching movies.)

## 3. Restroom Policy

Leaders should provide assistance to a child using the restroom only if the child is three years or younger or has special needs requiring extra assistance. Only female leaders should provide this assistance.

Restrooms located between classrooms: One leader may provide assistance for a child three years or younger in one of these restrooms, as long as the top half of the split door to the restroom remains open and one or more leaders are present in the room adjoining the restroom.

Multi-stall restrooms: Two leaders are required to take children to these restrooms. One leader should check the restroom before the child enters and then hold the door of the restroom open while the child(ren) goes(go) into a stall. The leader remains in the restroom to provide assistance as needed.

Single-stall restrooms: Two leaders are required to take children to these restrooms. Only a child four years old or older may use these restrooms. One leader should check the restroom before the child enters. Both leaders should remain outside the restroom to wait for the child. The door to the single-stall restroom must remain slightly open.

## 4. Physical contact

Watermark is committed to protecting children in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy children's ministry. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by Watermark leaders.

Using good judgment, the following are appropriate ways to touch kids:

- an arm around the shoulder
- walking hand in hand
- short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- a brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- handshakes, high-fives, and knuckles

The following are actions a leader should NEVER take:

- never touch a child in anger or disgust
- never touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- never touch a child between the navel and the knee
- never touch a child's private parts (with the exception of diaper or bathroom procedures)

Lap Sitting:

- No lap sitting at all in elementary (Kindergarten and up)
- No males may have a child in their laps age 2 years and older

Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of staff members and leaders must foster trust at all times.

Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected, except in cases where the child's safety or the safety of others is in question.

## 5. Taboo topics

Certain topics of discussion are best left for parents and their children. If you have a question about the propriety of discussing one of these topics, speak with the teacher or leader in charge of the area in which you serve:

- The rapture
- The tribulation
- Satan - if the purpose is to incite undue fear or confusion
- Hell - if the purpose is to incite undue fear or confusion
- Denominations
- Speaking in tongues
- Human sexuality or reproduction
- Female menstrual cycle
- Personal testimonies related to drugs, alcohol, or other questionable behavior

## 6. Verbal interactions

Verbal interactions between leaders and children should be positive and uplifting. Watermark leaders should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and

mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, leaders should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, leaders are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

## **SECTION 3: SAFETY & SECURITY**

### **SECURITY**

Please follow these rules to make sure our children are safe:

#### 1. Stranger in the hall

Only parents, Children's Ministry leaders, church staff, and children are allowed in the Children's Ministry area. All other adults (including any other church members) should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the Children's Building. If there are any questions or concerns associated with a stranger in the area, a staff member or security team member should be notified immediately to question the stranger.

#### 2. Check-in policy

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into a classroom. Leaders must also write down contact information for a parent for all classrooms kindergarten and younger. Contact information can be either a cell phone number that can receive a text message or a pager number. Remind the parent to keep their cell phone/pager on their person and that their security tag is necessary for pick-up.

#### 3. Check out policy

A child may not be released unless a parent has the security tag which corresponds to the name tag on that child. If an adult attempts to pick up a child without the corresponding security tag, the leader on duty must ask to see the adult's driver's license. If the adult's relationship to the child can be validated, then the leader may release the child. In the case that the adult's relationship to the child cannot be verified, then a hostess or staff member must be notified to make the decision to release a child.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

*Be able to account for every child in your classroom, by name, at all times.*

In case of an emergency, do the following:

#### 1. Hazardous weather

In the event of dangerous weather leaders should follow the guidelines below. Further instructions will be given by a staff member or over the PA system.

- Stay calm.

- Move your classroom in a quiet and orderly manner to the designated interior area according to the map in your classroom.
- If applicable, take your clipboard, paper roster, and walkie-talkie.
- Put on a movie or read a book to keep children calm.
- Await further instructions.

## 2. Fire

- Stay calm! We will periodically run a fire drill. However, if you hear the fire alarm, assume it is real and begin evacuating the children.
- Familiarize yourself with all the fire exits. Evacuation plans are posted in each room.
- Evacuate the children in the infants, crawlers, and walkers rooms by using the cribs. Put babies in each crib, no more than 4 babies recommended per crib. Have one adult stay with each crib.
- Check the room for stragglers. Close the door.
- If applicable, take your handwritten list of the children in your room with you and check off each child after you have evacuated the building.

## 3. Lock Down Procedures

- Stay calm.
- Close classroom doors and lock doors.
- Turn off lights and keep as quiet as possible.
- Move children to the area of your classroom least visible from the hallways.
- Do not open the door for anyone. Once the situation is resolved security personnel will unlock the door with a key after stating the password.
- Keep children quiet and calm. Sing, pray, play quiet games, read a story. Assure them that our God is great and loves us very much.

***Parental Release: Parents may stay with you and assist, but they MAY NOT take their child and leave during an emergency situation! Parents may not claim their children until after an all-clear signal has been given and when a supervisor releases the child to a parent. The parent must have the matching security tag or show photo ID before checking out the child.***

## 4. Missing child

Time is critical if a child is reported missing. Leaders should contact a staff member as soon as possible with the following information:

- Name/age/sex
- Color of hair, shirt, and skin
- Ministry where child was checked-in (stroller or walking?)

The person reporting the lost child should remain with the staff member until further direction is given by a member of Watermark's security team.

## 5. Media Response

In the event of a severe accident or death, it is likely that the media will be on site to cover the incident. It is important that all leaders say nothing that could be mistaken or misquoted by the interviewer. A Watermark Elder or their designee shall be the only people to make any statement. If asked by a media member for a statement, please graciously decline and direct them to the Watermark Communications Director, a Watermark senior staff member, or any member of the Board of Elders.



## **SECTION 4: HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDELINES**

### **MEDICAL CONCERNS**

Immediately report any medical needs or concerns to a hostess, coordinator, or director. The notified person will contact the Medical Ministry Team (MMT), or the Security desk, or the Safety director via walkie-talkie to decide if 911 should be called. The leader should remain calm and divert the attention of the other children. The victim should be kept quiet and still. Do not attempt to move a severely injured person unless he or she is in imminent danger.

All minor injuries should be reported on an incident report signed by the ministry director and the parent prior to the child leaving the classroom.

#### **Medical conditions**

It is Watermark's desire to partner with parents in addressing medical conditions that pertain to their child's care while at church.

#### **Allergies**

Parents with children that have a severe allergy requiring an Epi-Pen are asked to register with Watermark Kids by completing a *Child Allergy Form*. The *Child Allergy Form* MUST accompany the Epi-Pen whenever the child is dropped off. Extra forms will be available for completion at the Guest Welcome area and Starting Blocks/Training Ground front desk.

Parents are responsible for informing leaders of allergies pertaining to their child at each drop-off. Make sure to place an allergy alert sticker on any child with an allergy each time he/she is in a Watermark classroom. Leaders are asked to be constantly aware of kids with allergies in their classroom. Watermark Kids is a nut-free facility - peanut butter and nut products should never be allowed in the classroom.

#### **Medication**

Watermark Kids leaders are not allowed to administer any type of medication to any child at any time.

### **SICK CHILDREN**

At drop-off, leaders should evaluate each child for signs of illness. If there is concern, kindly ask the parent if the child has been symptom-free for 24 hours. Do not admit a child who currently or within the last 24 hours has had one or more of the following symptoms:

- fever
- colored mucous from the nose
- productive cough
- skin infection
- unexplained rash

- unexplained diarrhea
- pink eye
- nausea or vomiting

While in class, should a child begin to exhibit any of the above-mentioned symptoms or shows other signs of illness, contact a ministry leader to evaluate the child. Symptoms due to allergies will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

If a parent tells you that his or her child has exposed the class to a contagious disease (e.g. measles, chicken pox, etc.) please contact a ministry leader to handle the situation. Do not alarm other parents or children. The circumstances will be fully investigated and ministry leadership will be responsible for notifying other parents.

### Area and Toy Cleaning

All classrooms will be regularly cleaned and vacuumed. In the event of an illness outbreak, classrooms and toys will receive an additional cleaning.

*Infant Area only* - Equipment should be sprayed with the provided non-toxic sanitizing spray. Toys that are visibly mouthed by children should be washed under running water and sprayed with non-toxic sanitizing spray. Leaders are required to wear shoe booties upon entry to the room.

## **SECTION 5: LEADER GUIDELINES**

### **LEADER ATTENDANCE**

Watermark takes seriously the obligations to its children and asks leaders to abide by the following guidelines.

#### **1. Arrival**

Leaders must arrive 30 minutes prior to the event at which they are serving unless otherwise instructed by leadership.

#### **2. Departure**

Leaders must remain at the Children's Ministry event until the last child has been picked up by a parent or until relieved by another leader. The two-leader policy will remain in effect until the last child is picked up.

#### **3. Absences**

Leaders are responsible for their assigned shifts. Should the need arise for a leader to be absent, it is the leader's responsibility to secure a substitute. The leader must (1) seek out an approved substitute (from a list provided by their ministry leader), (2) contact their ministry leader to inform them of their upcoming absence, replacement status, and the name of their replacement. \*Paid leaders can see the appendix for absence procedures.

In the event of a last-minute illness or emergency, leaders should contact their ministry leader.

### **LEADER EXPECTATIONS**

Staff members and leaders are prohibited from the use, possession of, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal drugs while working with or supervising children at Watermark.

Leaders must stay alert and attentive to the children at all times. Leaders may not eat meals, read personal materials, talk or text on their phones, write letters or perform any other task that takes your attention away from caring for the children in your room.

As social media becomes more prevalent, we ask that leaders refrain from posting pictures of children from their classroom or small group without the consent of parents and their ministry director.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Watermark. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at Watermark will be required to complete the Watermark leader application and screening process.

A parent will be contacted by a hostess or staff member in the event that the child is inconsolable, is ill or injured, has a severe disciplinary problem, or is a danger to himself/herself or other children.

### **Leader and Parent Communication**

Watermark encourages an open culture of communication. If any parent or leader has any concern about a leader or policy, they should immediately contact a Children's Ministry staff member. That staff member will report the concern to their campus Children's Director.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted only as necessary and may, in some instances, be necessary. Affirmation and encouragement is always preferred.

Follow these rules for discipline:

1. Consistency  
Discipline must be consistent to be effective. Correct a behavior the first time and every time.
2. Response  
Make a prompt and individualized response to inappropriate behavior. Do not threaten a consequence without the intention to follow through.
3. Resolution  
Seek to both resolve the conflict and reconcile relationships.
4. Reward  
Acknowledge and reward positive behavior. Encourage children who are behaving well and following the rules.
5. Preparation  
Read the lesson before you arrive at your classroom on Sunday. Often the best deterrent to discipline problems is a confident, prepared teacher. Be prepared to change activities to keep children engaged and positively interacting.

## 6. Prayer

Pray for your kids and your patience consistently. Ask the Lord to guide you throughout the class. A ministry leader is always available to pray with you for your class.

## 7. Discipline Steps

Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, leaders should observe the following guidelines:

- a) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- b) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child to an area of the room away from the group. (Avoid being alone with the child).
- c) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with a clear explanation of your expectations. (“Jamie, you didn’t stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.”) In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- d) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child’s life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- e) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. If you can, use this time as an opportunity for discipleship.
- f) Once the child has completed the time-out, allow them to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Assure the child they are loved, you are glad they are there, and you are excited for them to return.

If the behavior continues, leaders should contact a hostess or ministry leader for assistance. The hostess or staff member will determine what further action should be taken (contacting the parent, discussion with parent, etc.)

## **LEADER TRAINING**

Ongoing training is an important, effective, and required step in fulfilling your responsibility as a leader.

### 1. New Leader Training

Each new leader shall attend one informational meeting regarding his/her area of ministry.

### 2. Ongoing Training

Leaders are required to attend any ongoing training sessions as designated by the Coordinator or Director of his/her area of ministry.

### 3. Periodic Training

From time to time, Watermark will provide training sessions to address specific needs and/or topics of interest for leaders.

### 4. MinistrySafe Training

Watermark Kids partners with MinistrySafe to provide Sexual Abuse Awareness Training online for all of our leaders. We ask that all leaders serving with us take advantage of this training at least once every three years.

## **ADDENDUM: STARTING BLOCKS POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Starting Blocks includes all Sunday children's classes for children from infants through Pre-K. Classes are designated as follows:

- Red (infants)
- Orange (1 year olds)
- Yellow (2 year olds)
- Green (3 year olds)
- Blue (4 year olds and 5 year olds not yet attending Kindergarten)

Class ages are based on a child's age at the date of promotion.

### 1. Age requirements (Red + Other Classes)

Unless specific permission is granted by the Children's Ministry Director, leaders in our nursery must be at least 15 years of age to volunteer in the Red classes. Those leaders between the ages of 15 and 17 years of age will be evaluated and placed in Red to serve on a case-by-case basis. Leaders must be at least 12 years of age to volunteer in our Orange, Yellow, Green and Blue classes without a parent present.

### 2. Child to leader ratio & room capacity limits

Watermark will adhere to its established limits for child-to-leader ratios and room capacities in order to protect the safety of the children and ensure the best experience for both children and volunteers. Classrooms will be closed and additional families directed elsewhere when these limits are reached. Once all classrooms in a child's age group are closed, parents will need to keep their child with them as they attend the service.

In our classrooms, our child-to-volunteer ratio is as follows:

<b><u>Classroom</u></b>	<b><u>Ratio (Child-to-Leader)</u></b>
Red (children under 12 months old)	2 to 1
Red (children over 12 months old)	3 to 1
Orange	4 to 1
Yellow	5 to 1
Green	5 to 1
Blue	7 to 1

Room capacities are clearly posted outside of each classroom. Exceptions to these limits can be made on behalf of first-time guests, as Watermark's heart is to never turn away a first-time guest from a classroom.

### 3. Diaper procedures (Red, Orange + Yellow Classes)

All children should have their diaper changed during their time in the Red classes. Children still in diapers in the Orange and Yellow classes should have their diapers changed on an

as-needed basis. Adult leaders must adhere to the following procedure when changing diapers:

- Never move away from or turn your back on the changing table while changing a diaper.
- Wear disposable gloves while changing diapers and use new gloves with each change.
- Place a clean disposable changing pad under each child before changing a diaper.
- Dispose of diaper, gloves, and changing pad in provided trash can.
- Disinfect your hands after changing diapers.
- Disinfect diaper changing area at the end of each service.

Only female leaders are to change diapers. Male leaders should care for other children in the room while a female leader changes diapers.

#### 4. Stroller policy for Red and Orange Classrooms

Leaders may stroll children in provided strollers, but remain within the approved area of campus (in Dallas: within locked doors of kids building). Strolling should not begin until at least 15 minutes after the beginning of the service when the entrance doors are closed and locked. All babies should be returned to their rooms by the time the service is scheduled to be completed.

#### 5. Diaper Bags & Backpacks

All diaper bags and backpacks accompanying a child must be **clearly labeled** with the child's name either prior to or upon arrival. Bag tags and masking tape are available. All bottles, cups, pacifiers, diapers should also be labeled when removed from the bag. We cannot risk giving a bottle, cup or pacifier to the wrong child.

Please advise parents that toys of any kind may not be brought into the classroom. Such items are to remain in the child's backpack for the duration of class. The only exceptions are if the child has a security blanket or bear, etc.

#### 6. Preschool Restroom & Potty Training Procedures

Be aware of those children who are potty training with instructions from parents on how the child can best be assisted. All potty-training children should be in pull-ups. Children can be asked if they need to take a bathroom break, but they should not be forced. When assisting a child in the restroom, leaders **MUST** leave the top half of the door open, or leave stall door partially open. Leaders should **put on gloves** and assist the child as needed, and then help them thoroughly wash their hands. Make sure the restroom area is left clean.

If a child has an accident and has wet or soiled clothing, do not show anger or frustration. Do not scold or discipline the child. Put on gloves and help the child change into dry clothes. If dry clothes are not provided in the child's bag, ask the Hostess or ministry leader to assist you in getting appropriate clothes (girl clothes for girls and boy clothes for boys in



the right sizes) from our provision of extra clothing. Put the soiled clothing in a plastic bag and seal. Inform the parents upon pick up.

## 7. Biting and Injuries (Incident Reports)

Biting incidents must be reported to parents of both children, both the biter and the bitten. An Incident Report must be completed. If the skin has been broken, recommend that the child see a doctor. Immediately notify a Team Leader so that the necessary follow-up actions be taken.

If any child exhibits persistent biting behavior, the Coordinator or Director will notify the parents for further discussion. If this biting has occurred on more than 3 occasions, the parent may be asked to remove the child from the class for a period of time or until the behavior ceases.

All minor injuries should be reported on an incident report signed by the Team Leader and the parent at the end of the day.

## 8. Bottles & Snacks

**Bottles:** Document all parent-provided feeding instructions (times, quantities, etc). on the white board. All infant bottles must be plastic with pre-measured, ready to be mixed formula. (We do not measure out formula. This is a parent's responsibility.) Water can be added to the pre-measured formula in the bottle provided.

**Water:** Infants should not be offered any water unless specifically requested by the parent to do so. Children in all other color areas may be offered water to drink.

**Snacks:** Snacks are provided as follows (unless instructed by parents otherwise due to allergies, etc):

- 10 months and up can be offered Cheerios.
- Children in Orange can be offered a choice of graham cracker or Cheerios.
- Children in Yellow, Green and Blue are provided with a cup of Goldfish.
- No solid foods provided by the parents will be given to children unless otherwise instructed.

Please wear gloves when preparing and distributing snacks. Remember to offer a prayer of thanksgiving before the children eat their snacks. Older children can be asked if anyone wants to pray or the leader can lead all the children in a simple prayer. One extra small serving of snacks can be provided upon request.

Do not withhold snack as a punishment or force a snack if the child doesn't want to eat or drink.

## **ADDENDUM: TRAINING GROUND POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Training Ground Ministry Role:**

Training Ground exists to provide effective discipleship ministry to the children of parents who are attending midweek events at Watermark. Not all midweek events at Watermark are partnered with Training Ground but only those that are scheduled and designated will provide coinciding children's ministry.

As a leader in Training Ground, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children in your class and to provide a ministry environment that is committed to the discipleship of children. Our mission in Training Ground is to partner with families to train up the next generation of fully-devoted followers of Christ. Our staff has a vital role in accomplishing this mission by providing discipleship ministry to their children. Through the curriculum and staff relationships, our vision is to invite all kids to know Christ in a way that transforms their eternity, their daily lives, and the lives of those around them.

### **Training Ground Ministry Procedures:**

#### **Greeting Parents and Signing Children In**

Parents will either check-in children via the kiosk computer system, by manual nametag and security card, or the classroom teacher will provide a token.

Be ready to greet children and parents with a smile at least 15 minutes prior to the event. Please make sure you are wearing a Watermark Training Ground nametag and your Training Ground t-shirt so parents can easily identify you.

The classroom leader will sign-in ALL children on the classroom sign-in roster (this includes preschool and elementary kids). Please write the parent's name, cell phone number and ministry event they are attending. If the event they are attending is not on your list of approved events, please direct the parents to the Team Leader desk for approval.

Check each child for any signs or symptoms of illness. Any questions or concerns regarding a child's health should be directed to the Greeter or Team Leader. (See section 4, "Health & Wellness Guidelines")

Follow all other sign in procedures as described in the Policy.

Greet each child with a smile and a welcoming attitude. Do not rush the sign in process. It's expected that parents will wait in line. It is more important that this procedure is done properly than quickly. Stay calm, cheerful and be thorough with the complete sign in and admission of each child so we can easily locate a parent if needed.

Children are not automatically moved to the next level based on age or ability. Moves are based only on availability. It is important to maintain appropriate child/teacher ratios. If

parents have a concern regarding their child's room assignment, kindly send them to see a Team Leader.

## **Leading the Classroom**

Classroom Leaders are provided with curriculum for each ministry event. Please familiarize yourself with the activities and schedule you will be sharing with the kids that day. Remember the focus during our time is discipleship, helping children grow closer in their walk with God while they are at church.

## **Classroom Culture**

Please be intentional about working with your co-leader to set a cheerful and positive tone for your classroom in every possible way. The focus is on the children and the Lord. Gossip and/or judgmental comments between teachers will not be tolerated. This behavior is disruptive and does not set a positive example for the children. A Team Leader is available to help resolve any misunderstandings, miscommunications, etc.

Please do not discuss your personal, financial, marital, or other problems with your partner teachers/volunteers while children are under your care. If you have a problem and need help or wise counsel, Watermark is a great place to deal with those issues. Please talk to your Team Leader or the Coordinator and they can refer you to someone in ministry at Watermark who can better help you.

## **Moving Children through the Halls**

Always use the bright colored jump-rope or walking rope as a "lifeline" when you take your class out of the classroom and into the hall. Encourage the children to be quiet and orderly in the halls. They should all hold onto the rope as they walk through the hallways. Count heads as you line up and count again when you arrive at the playground or other destination. Take your roster with you in order to take an accurate role when out of the classroom. Take special care when by the elevators not to let kids enter an open elevator door.

## **Biting and Injuries (Incident Reports)**

Biting incidents must be reported to parents of both children, both the biter and the bitten. An Incident Report must be completed. If the skin has been broken, recommend that the child see a doctor. Immediately notify a Team Leader so that the necessary follow-up actions be taken.

If any child exhibits persistent biting behavior, the Coordinator or Director will notify the parents for further discussion. If this biting has occurred on more than 3 occasions, the parent may be asked to remove the child from the class for a period of time or until the behavior ceases.

All minor injuries should be reported on an incident report signed by the Team Leader and the parent at the end of the day.

## **End of day**

Make sure all children are cheerfully returned to their parents with all their proper belongings. When the class is down to one child remaining, please notify the Greeter and the Team Leader who may elect to consolidate the smaller classes.

Leave the room cleaner and tidier than you found it. Organize and display the toys on the shelves. Clean off all surface areas. Respect the fact that several classes use the room each week. Please disinfect all toys, changing tables, diaper pails, cribs, and swings.

Clean any spills, spit up, or other “accidents” on the floor with disinfectant and a wet towel. Larger messes should be reported to your Team Leader so that maintenance can be contacted to clean it up

## **TRAINING GROUND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

These policies apply to our Training Ground leaders who are paid employees of Watermark Church for their consistent role as leaders.

### **Reporting to Work**

Please arrive on time for your ministry event. Clock in and clock out using the kiosk located in the hallway using your provided Fidelity login. Use the pulldown menu to select the Day and AM/PM. If you do not clock out, you will automatically be clocked out for 3 hours. Leaders should report to the Volunteer Waiting Room located behind the Welcome Desk. We meet for devotional and announcements and pray as a team at this time. Then you will be dismissed to be in your classroom ready to greet children 20 minutes before event begins.

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

A 24-hour notice is required if you will not be able to serve at a ministry event you are signed up for, unless you have an extreme emergency (illness, car accident, etc). Please call or text your Team Leader and the Coordinator as soon as you know that you will be absent or late for work.

### **Breaks**

There are no scheduled or unscheduled breaks during your hours of employment. Make sure that you have used the restroom before your scheduled start time. We understand that it may be necessary to use the restroom again. If so, let a Greeter or Team Leader know so they may take your spot while you are absent and get back to your room as quickly as possible. Do not leave the classroom for any reason unrelated to your duties in caring for the children.

## **Weather Conditions**

The Dallas campus will often follow the ruling by the Richardson Independent School District (RISD). The Fort Worth campus will follow Fort Worth ISD, and the Plano campus will follow Plano ISD. If they are closed, it may be likely that we will not work. However, it is best to contact your Team Leader for confirmation of a potential closing. We do have some ministries that meet in the evening if the weather has improved throughout the day, but if you do not feel safe driving and you cannot get to work, make sure you call 214-393-3077 and leave a message. If unsure, call the Watermark Church Offices at 214-361-2275 and listen for a special greeting.

## **Personal Appearance**

Your appearance reflects not only you as an individual, but on Watermark, as well. We expect you to take pride in your appearance. A Training Ground Ministry t-shirt has been provided for you to wear at every event you work. Clothing should be casual and comfortable, but also look professional. Pants, nice jeans (no holes or tears), skirts, skorts, **long** walking shorts (below your fingertips when arms are at your side – no short shorts) and dresses are all acceptable.

## **Staffing (Volunteer Pro, room assignments and reductions in workforce)**

The Coordinator will provide each leader with a unique access login to our online Volunteer Pro ministry scheduler. Each leader may indicate their availability to serve on the indicated ministry events. Leaders will receive an email confirmation of the events where they have been scheduled to serve. Leaders are encouraged to sign up for the same events for the consistency offered to the children in the classroom and the opportunity to build team and family relationships.

The Training Ground Coordinator and Team Leaders strive to take each teacher's preferences of age level into consideration when making classroom assignments. However, our primary objective is to provide the best possible overall ministry to the children. This means that we may need to temporarily or permanently reassign leaders throughout an event. Leader flexibility is highly valued. If you have any concerns about your room assignment, please talk to your Team Leader or the midweek ministry coordinator immediately. We value our two-way communications.

There are times when we will not need every available leader. If you have been scheduled and have reported on time to work, you may be asked to assist with other associated TG tasks (curriculum preparation, toy care, laundry, etc.) The Team Leader on duty for that event will decide these tasks. If all tasks are completed and you are still not needed, you will be sent home and paid for your minimum 3 hours. Do not ask to be sent home. The Team Leader on duty will make these decisions.

If you have been notified more than 24 hours prior to your scheduled hours that you are not needed to work, you will not be compensated. We consider this a reduction in scheduled hours due to changing ministry conditions. If a ministry event is cancelled, you will be notified either by email or phone. If, however, it is more than 2 weeks prior to the

cancelled event, you will not receive a call, just an email. Please check the Volunteer Pro calendar of events frequently and your email regularly to take note of cancellations, time-changes and added opportunities to serve.

At times (e.g. when a class is understaffed due to a last minute teacher absence), an approved volunteer may be asked to step in a room to maintain an acceptable teacher/child ratio. Please welcome these volunteer “room-moms and room-dads” and treat them with great kindness. They will be looking to you for your guidance and expertise.

## **Teacher Evaluation and Training**

The Kids Midweek Ministry Director and Coordinator will work together with the Team Leaders to evaluate each employee twice a year, in June and December. The evaluation will consist of observation of work by the Ministry Coordinator and Team Leaders, and it may include classroom observations, reporting to work on-time, and adherence to all Midweek Ministry policies addressed in this manual. We will support you in your role as a leader. We pray for your spiritual growth and we want you to develop new skills that are useful to the Lord. We hope to provide you with beneficial references on your future career endeavors.

There will be 2 mandatory meetings held throughout the year. These mandatory training meetings are paid time. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you will need to set up a time to meet with the Midweek Ministry Coordinator to address the information you missed. There will also be optional trainings available throughout the year. These optional trainings are elective for your professional ministry development and not considered paid time.

## **Employment at Will**

Employment is with the mutual consent of you and the church. Consequently, both you and the church have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice.

## **Termination of Employment**

**Voluntary** - If you are no longer available to work for the church, please let us know your reason for leaving, your last day available for work, and an address where we can send your final pay check. If you do not call in or report to work for two consecutively scheduled workdays, you may be considered to have voluntarily quit.

**Involuntary** – Watermark may terminate your employment for any reason. If your termination is due to changing business conditions or business necessity it is called a layoff.

## **Payroll**

Watermark pays semimonthly. Payroll is paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month. Checks are mailed to the address on file or direct deposited into the account you

designated upon employment. Please notify us of any address changes immediately. A direct deposit form can be obtained from the Midweek Coordinator or Director.

All shifts are guaranteed 3 hours minimum. After 3 hours it is actual time worked.

Any questions regarding your paycheck (e.g. missing checks, wrong number of hours, etc.) should be directed to the Midweek Kids Ministry Coordinator.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The church is committed to equal employment opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, or age, to the extent required by law. This applies to all employment practices including hiring, promotions, training, disciplinary action, termination and benefits.

We expect all employees to show respect and sensitivity toward all other employees and to demonstrate a commitment to the church's equal opportunity objectives. If you observe a violation of this policy, you should report it immediately to your supervisor or the Ministry Coordinator. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Personnel Records**

It is important that the church always have current information about you. Please let us know immediately if you change your name, address, phone number, or marital status, etc. You may also update your information through Volunteer Pro.

### **Employment Performance Standards**

Leaders are expected to demonstrate the highest regard for their duties as a Training Ground Leader. (Colossians 3:23-24)

*Poor job performance will be discussed with the Director in terms of gaining immediate improvement. Some examples of poor job performance include but are not limited to:*

- Below average work quality or quantity (example, not equally sharing duties with co-workers or not fully engaging kids)
- Poor attitude, including rudeness or lack of cooperation
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- Gossiping, discussing personal problems, etc. in the classroom
- Failure to follow instructions, failure to follow church policies and procedures

*Misconduct demonstrated by an employee will result in immediate discussions with the Director that may lead up to and possibly include termination. Some examples of misconduct are as follows:*

- Insubordination
- Suspected abuse of any child or person

- Abuse, misuse, theft, or unauthorized possession of church property or the personal property of others
- Falsifying records and documents including time cards
- Disorderly conduct on church property including fighting and the use of profane, abusive, or threatening language
- Possession of a weapon on church property
- Signing in or out for another employee without authorization
- Knowingly letting an unauthorized person sign in and/or out for you



**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT**

I have received and read a copy of Watermark Community Church's Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving at Watermark.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Watermark.

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and Watermark. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the Watermark policies and procedures manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Children's Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date