



W A T E R M A R K

C O M M U N I T Y C H U R C H

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 4.0 (June 2010)

Dear Watermark Children's Volunteer,

Thanks so much for your interest in the Watermark Children's program. We highly value you, our volunteers, and the ministry you provide to our children on Sundays. 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, you, our volunteers, 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.

After carefully reading this manual, including the parts that are specific to the ministry you are interested in serving with, please sign and date the acknowledgement page and email, mail, or fax it back to Watermark, in care of Emily Loerke.

Sincerely,

Mark McLaughlin
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 volunteers who work in that ministry. Changes may be made from time to time in the policies and procedures contained in this handbook without prior written or oral notice.

VISION AND VALUES

Mission

To lead all children to be fully devoted followers of Christ.

Vision

Inviting all kids to know Christ in a way that transforms 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 their 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 intends to employ various full-time personnel called to minister to its children. In addition to this staff, Watermark may employ additional Children's Ministry Personnel for various assignments. The Watermark office will provide you with the current list of Children's Ministry employees and their basic areas of responsibility.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS

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

1. Application

All children's ministry volunteers must complete the Volunteer 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.

3. Policies & Procedures

Volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

4. Criminal History Check

Watermark uses, subscribes, and pays for 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.

5. Interview

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

Watermark reserves the right to revoke any volunteer'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 producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution, or incest with children.

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.

REPORTING & INVESTIGATIONS

Child abuse is a serious crime, and Watermark intends to prosecute child abuse in any form to the fullest extent of the law. You are under these obligations as a volunteer:

1. Reporting requirements

All volunteers and employees shall immediately report and document any incident of abuse or violation of the two-adult policy of which they have knowledge or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. Obligation to report to Law Enforcement

In all cases where any volunteer or staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child or youth, known to the volunteer or staff member in a professional capacity, has been or may be abused or neglected by either known or unknown persons inside or outside of Watermark, the worker shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency’s child abuse investigators within 24 hours of the determination of reasonable cause. If the volunteer or staff member is in doubt regarding whether a report should be made, he or she shall telephone the agency anonymously and discuss the situation with an investigator to determine whether the report should be made. The volunteer 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. This report can be submitted anonymously if so desired.

5. Internal Reporting Procedure

The person reporting 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 complete a written report of the incident and submit a copy of the report to Watermark's legal counsel. 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.

6. Responding to the report

When someone receives a report of an incident of abuse, he or she shall immediately take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the 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 contact the Children's Ministry Director or any member of the Board of Elders who will contact the Watermark Community Church legal counsel. The legal counsel shall -- within 72 hours of the report -- conduct an investigation and determine (along with the Director of Children's Ministry) whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the abuse may have 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.

Conclusion of no abuse

If 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.

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 provide a written account to the Board of Elders.

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.

In addition, 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.

VOLUNTEER/CHILD PROTECTION

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

1. Two Volunteer Policy

Two volunteers should remain together with children at all times. If a volunteer needs to leave a group of children, a hostess or staff member must be notified so that the two volunteer policy can be upheld.

2. Restroom Policy

Volunteers 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 volunteers should provide this assistance.

Restrooms located between classrooms: One volunteer 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 volunteers are present in the room adjoining the restroom.

Multi-stall restrooms: Two volunteers are required to take children to these restrooms. One volunteer 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 other volunteer remains in the restroom to provide assistance as needed.

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

3. 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 volunteers.

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

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

The following are actions a volunteer 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)

Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of staff members and volunteers 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.

4. 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
- Drugs, alcohol, or other questionable behavior before salvation

5. Verbal interactions

Verbal interactions between volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Watermark volunteers 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, volunteers 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, volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

6. Visibility & Security

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

Most, if not all, areas where children and volunteers are present on the Watermark campus are equipped with video surveillance equipment. As a volunteer you acknowledge that you are being recorded for safety and security purposes. This is done for the protection of both children and volunteers.

SECTION 3: VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

VOLUNTEER ATTENDANCE

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

1. Arrival

Volunteers must arrive 30 minutes prior to the event at which they are serving or as otherwise instructed by leadership.

2. Departure

Volunteers must remain at the children's ministry event until the last child has been picked up by a parent or until relieved by another volunteer.

3. Absences

Volunteers are responsible for their assigned shifts. Should the need arise for a volunteer to be absent it is the volunteers' responsibility to secure a substitute. The volunteer must (1) seek out an approved substitute (from a list provided by their team leader), (2) contact their team leader to inform them of their upcoming absence, replacement status, and the name of their replacement.

In the event of a last-minute illness or emergency, volunteers should call 214-361-2275, ext. 8715 and leave a message with their name, time, and location of scheduled service, and reason for absence.

INTOXICANTS

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

COMPUTER CHECK-IN

In order to attend Sunday classes, children (infants through 5th grade) must be checked-in at one of the computer kiosks located throughout the Watermark facility. The Arena check-in system will assign the child to the correct class based on their birth date and print the appropriate security labels. For children from infants through Kindergarten two labels will be printed – one to be affixed to the child and one for the parent to keep for pick-up. For children in 1st through 5th grades only the label for the child will be printed. Parent pick-up tags are not required for children in 1st-5th grades. Children beyond the 5th grade are not required to check-in using the computer system.

Guests to Watermark will be checked-in by volunteers at one of the Children's Welcome Centers. These children and parents will receive handwritten nametags and parent security labels as needed from the Welcome Center volunteers or staff on duty.

PROMOTION

Watermark promotes children to the next class level once each year at the beginning of the school year. Children remain in their class level until the next promotion date unless given specific permission by the Children's 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 volunteer application and screening process.

A parent should be called from the Worship Center by a hostess or staff member in the event that the child is completely inconsolable (after at least ten minutes of care), is ill or injured, has a severe disciplinary problem, or is a danger to himself/herself or other children.

DISCIPLINE

Physical discipline, such as spanking, is never permitted. Using physical restraint to prevent a child from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted 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. Do not threaten a consequence without the intention to follow through.

2. Response

Make a prompt and individualized response to inappropriate behavior. Correct a behavior the first time and every time.

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.

6. Prayer

Pray for your kids and your patience consistently. Ask the Lord to guide you throughout the class.

7. Discipline Steps

Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, volunteers 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 away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (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. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")

- f) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

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

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

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

1. New Volunteer Training

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

2. Ongoing Training

Volunteers 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 volunteers.

SECTION 4: MINISTRY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

STARTING BLOCKS

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

- Infants
- Red (older infants)
- Orange (1 year olds)
- Yellow (2 year olds)
- Green (3 year olds)
- Blue (4 year olds)
- Purple (5 year olds and 6 year olds not yet attending 1st grade)

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

Infant & Red Areas

In the Infant and Red classes, volunteers must follow these guidelines:

1. Check-in policy

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into a classroom. Volunteers must write down the child's name and any special instructions on the classroom roster. Volunteers must also give each family a pager and write down the pager number on the classroom roster. Remind the parent to wear the pager on their person and that their security tag is necessary for pick-up.

2. Age requirement

Unless express permission is granted by the Children's Ministry Director, volunteers must be at least 15 years of age to volunteer in the Infant or Red classes.

3. Diaper procedure

All children must have their diaper changed during their time in the Infant or Red classes. Volunteers 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 volunteers are to change diapers. Male volunteers should care for other children in the room while a female volunteer changes diapers.

4. Stroller policy

Volunteers may stroll children in provided strollers, but must stay within the closed doors of their area.

5. Room clean-up policy

It is the responsibility of the volunteers to disinfect and put away all toys and equipment used in the nursery area after each service.

6. 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 volunteer on duty must ask to see the adult's driver license. If the adult's relationship to the child can be validated, then the volunteer may release the child. In the case that the adult's relationship to the child cannot be verified, then a Hostess, Coordinator, or Director must be notified to make the decision to release a child.

7. Child to volunteer ratio & room capacity limits

Watermark will adhere to its established limits for child-to-volunteer 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 Infants the child-to-volunteer ratio is 2 to 1. In Red the child-to-volunteer ratio is 3 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.

Orange (1 yr olds) and Yellow (2 yr olds) Areas

In the Orange and Yellow areas, volunteers must meet these expectations:

1. Check-in policy

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into a classroom. Volunteers must write down the child's name and any special instructions on the classroom roster. Volunteers must also give each family a pager and write down the pager number on the classroom roster. Remind the parent to wear the pager on their person and that their security tag is necessary for pick-up.

2. Age requirement

Unless express permission is granted by the Children's Ministry Director, volunteers must be at least 12 years of age to volunteer in the Orange or Yellow classes without a parent present.

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 volunteer 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 volunteer 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.

3. Diaper procedure

Children still in diapers in the Orange and Yellow classes should have their diapers changed on an as-needed basis. In the Orange classes diapers can be changed on the provided changing tables. In the Yellow classes diapers can be changed on the changing pad located in the restroom attached to the classroom. The top half of the restroom door should remain open any time a volunteer and child occupy the restroom.

Volunteers 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 volunteers are to change diapers. Male volunteers should care for other children in the room while a female volunteer changes diapers.

3. Bathroom policy

Many children begin potty training during the time they are in the Orange and Yellow classes. Parents should encourage their children to go to the restroom prior to class. If a child needs to go to the restroom during class, a female volunteer may assist the child as needed using the restroom attached to the classroom. The top half of the restroom door should remain open any time a volunteer and child occupy the restroom.

4. Transfer of children

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with one teacher monitoring the front of the line and another monitoring the back of the line.

Children should be counted prior to leaving the classroom as well as upon arrival at the new classroom.

5. Child-to-volunteer ratio & room capacity limits

Watermark will adhere to its established limits for child-to-volunteer 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 Orange classes the child-to-volunteer ratio is 4 to 1. In Yellow the child-to-volunteer ratio is 5 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.

Green (3 yr old) Area

In the Green area, volunteers must follow these guidelines:

1. Check-in policy

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into a classroom. Volunteers must write down the child's name and any special instructions on the classroom roster. Volunteers must record a means of contacting the parent during the service on the classroom roster. This can be a pager number or a cell phone number. In order to leave a cell phone number as a means of contact, the parent must be able to receive a text message. A parent who cannot receive a text message must take a pager. Remind the parent to wear the pager/cell phone on their person and that their security tag is necessary for pick-up.

2. Age requirement

Unless express permission is granted by the Children's Ministry Director, volunteers must be at least 12 years of age to volunteer in the Green classes without a parent present.

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 volunteer 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 volunteer may release the child. In the case that the adult's relationship to the child cannot be verified then a Hostess, Coordinator, or Director must be notified to make the decision to release a child.

3. Bathroom policy

The two volunteer policy must be followed when taking children to the bathroom. At least two volunteers must be with any children going to the bathroom and at least two volunteers must remain with any children in the classroom. Volunteers should use their classroom walkie-talkies to contact staff on duty for extra help for bathroom breaks or take the entire class to the bathroom at the same time.

Children in the Green classrooms should be taken to the multi-stall restrooms. One volunteer 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 other volunteer remains in the restroom to provide assistance as needed.

Children in the Green classes should not use the single-stall bathrooms.

4. Transfer of kids

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with one teacher monitoring the front of the line and another monitoring the back of the line. Volunteers can line up the children using the colored daisy chain provided in each classroom. Children should be counted prior to leaving one area as well as upon arrival at the new area.

Any time the class leaves the classroom the lead teacher should take both their handwritten class roster and the classroom walkie-talkie.

5. Child-to-volunteer ratio & room capacity limits

Watermark will adhere to its established limits for child-to-volunteer 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 Green classes the child-to-volunteer ratio is 5 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.

Blue & Purple (4 & 5 yr old) Areas

In the Blue & Purple areas, volunteers must follow these guidelines:

1. Check-in policy

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into a classroom. Volunteers must write down the child's name and any special instructions on the classroom roster. Volunteers must record a means of contacting the parent during the service on the classroom roster. This can be a pager number or a cell phone number. In order to leave a cell phone number as a means of contact, the parent must be able to receive a text message. A parent who cannot receive a text message must

take a pager. Remind the parent to wear the pager/cell phone on their person and that their security tag is necessary for pick-up.

2. Age requirement

Unless express permission is granted by the Children's Ministry Director, volunteers must be at least 12 years of age to volunteer in the Blue or Purple classes without a parent present.

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 volunteer on duty must ask to see the adult's driver's license. If the adult's identity can be validated, then the volunteer may release the child. In the case that the adult's identity cannot be verified then a Hostess, Coordinator, or Director must be notified to make the decision to release a child.

3. Bathroom policy

The two volunteer policy must be followed when taking children to the bathroom. At least two volunteers must be with any children going to the bathroom and at least two volunteers must remain with any children in the classroom. Volunteers should use their classroom walkie-talkies to contact staff on duty for extra help for bathroom breaks or take the entire class to the bathroom at the same time.

Multi-stall restrooms: Two volunteers are required to take children to these restrooms. One volunteer 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 other volunteer remains in the restroom to provide assistance as needed.

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

4. Transfer of children

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with one teacher monitoring the front of the line and another monitoring the back of the line. Volunteers can line up the children using the colored daisy chain provided in each classroom. Children should be counted prior to leaving one area as well as upon arrival at the new area.

Any time the class leaves the classroom the lead teacher should take both their handwritten class roster and the classroom walkie-talkie.

5. Child to volunteer ratio & room capacity limits

Watermark will adhere to its established limits for child-to-volunteer 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 Blue & Purple classes the child-to-volunteer ratio is 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.

ELEMENTARY AREAS

Elementary classes at Watermark consist of K-1 RACE (Kindergarten – 1st grade), On Your Mark (2nd–3rd grades at the morning services), Crossroad45 (4th-5th grades at the morning services), and 5:30 Rocks (Kindergarten-5th grades at the evening service).

In the Elementary areas, volunteers must follow these guidelines:

1. Check-in policy

K-1 RACE

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into the classroom. Volunteers must write down the child's name and any special instructions on the classroom roster. (Make a note if it is a child's first time visiting with us.) Volunteers must record a means of contacting the parent during the service on the classroom roster. This can be a pager number or a cell phone number (that can receive a text message).

OYM, CR 45, and 5:30 Rocks

Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted into any of the elementary areas. Parent contact information is not required for elementary age kids.

2. Check out policy

K-1 RACE

Parents are asked to check out their children from their class, however, if a parent wants a sibling or family member to check out their child they must leave a note in their child's class authorizing such a pick up as they check in their child. Volunteers will keep these notes on the class clipboard. Any person checking out a child must have the security tag to match the child's nametag. The volunteer should check to see that the number code on the child's nametag and the number code on the security tag match before they release the child from the classroom.

On Your Mark and 5:30 Rocks

Parents must pick up children following an event. A child is NOT allowed to leave alone. A child is NOT allowed to leave with another parent or sibling unless a provision has been made prior to the event. A note written and signed by the parent is sufficient approval to allow a child to leave with someone else besides the parent. These notes are to be kept with the small group leaders' materials.

Crossroad45

Kids in Crossroad45 are allowed to leave the class area at the completion of an event without parental escort.

2. Bathroom policy

K-1 RACE

Ideally, children should go to the restroom on the way to or from the large group time. Check the restroom to make sure it is empty while the child waits outside the restroom. While the child is using the restroom, volunteers must wait outside for the child. Another option is to take your entire group to the restroom at the same time. Again, check the restroom before sending kids inside. Hosts will be posted by the bathrooms during transition times. Try not to allow kids to use the restroom in the middle of a lesson. In case of emergency - if in large group one adult may accompany the child (following the directions above) or if in small group, the child may go to the restroom accompanied by a classroom volunteer or host .

On Your Mark and 5:30 Rocks

An adult must accompany a child to the restroom. The adult must check the restroom prior to the child using the facility. While the child is using the facility, the adult must wait outside for the child. Another option is for an adult to take an entire class to the bathroom at the same time. Again, the teacher must check the restroom prior to children using the facilities.

Crossroad45

Kids in Crossroad45 are allowed to use the restroom without being accompanied by an adult.

3. Transfer of kids

K-1 RACE

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with one teacher monitoring the front of the line and another monitoring the back of the line. Children should be counted before and after each leg of transfer. Volunteers should always carry their clipboard when not in the classroom.

On Your Mark and 5:30 Rocks

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with one teacher monitoring the front of the line and another monitoring the back of the line.

Children should be counted prior to leaving one area as well as upon arrival at the new area.

Crossroad45

Kids in Crossroad45 should be transferred to another program or classroom under the supervision of adult leaders.

SECTION 5: SAFETY & SECURITY

SECURITY

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

1. Stranger in the hall

Only parents, children's ministry volunteers, 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 Area. 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. Child custody issue

Due to the nature of child custody laws, volunteers must act diligently in making sure the correct people are picking up their children. Please be aware that only parents with custody of their child may pick up the child. If there are any questions regarding this procedure, please notify a hostess, coordinator, or director for clarification.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency, do the following:

1. Medical concerns

Immediately report any medical needs or concerns to a hostess, coordinator, or director. The notified person will decide if 911 should be called and use their walkie-talkie to notify the Safety Director. The volunteer 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 in imminent danger.

2. Hazardous weather

In the event of dangerous weather volunteers 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 a bathroom or interior stairwell in the tower or remain in infant area in worship center building.
- Take your clipboard, paper roster, and walkie-talkie.
- Await further instructions.

3. Fire

The first priority in any fire is that all children and volunteers' safety is maintained. Any attempt by volunteers to put out a fire is absolutely forbidden unless judgment to do so is unquestionable and presents no possible danger to anyone present.

Volunteers should follow the directions below in the event of a fire.

1. How will you know of an alarm?
 - a. Audible sound of alarm
 - b. Flashing strobe lights in every room
2. What do you do?
 - a. Stay calm
 - b. Follow Room Ready Procedures (posted in every classroom)
 - c. Get your clipboard, paper roster, and walkie-talkie
 - d. If you are a volunteer who is not assigned to a classroom, report to the nearest classroom to provide assistance or report to a staff person for further instructions
3. When do you go?
 - a. When ordered to evacuate over PA system or by a WM staff member
 - b. Or when you are in immediate danger (see smoke or flames)
4. Where do you go?
 - a. Follow evacuation map on classroom clipboard (Evacuation maps are included at the end of this policy manual.)
 - b. Go to the Blue rally point as indicated on the evacuation map.

Parents may stay with you and assist, but they MAY NOT take their child and leave during an evacuation!

4. Missing child

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

- a. Name/age/sex
- b. Color of hair, shirt, and skin
- c. 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 volunteers not say anything which could be mistaken or misquoted by the interviewer. A Watermark Elder or their designee shall be the only persons to make any statement. If asked by a media member for a statement, please

graciously decline and direct them to a Watermark senior staff member or any member of the Board of Elders.

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 My Church.

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