

*PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
BAPTIST CHURCH*

*PRESCHOOL MINISTRY
HANDBOOK*

Dear Preschool Worker,

Thank you so much for your commitment and your faithfulness to the Preschool Ministry of Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church (PABC)!

Please read the enclosed information carefully. Although this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that could possibly arise, it is intended to give general guidance, answer frequently asked questions, and to provide information you will need as a worker in the Preschool Ministry. Should you have any questions or suggestions, please call or otherwise contact a member of the Preschool Committee. Since the committee members may change from time to time, you may not always know the current committee members. In that case, please call the church office at 217-367-5924. The office staff will then be able to put you in contact with the committee chairperson or another committee member.

In Mark 9:37 (NIV), Jesus says: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me....” Could there be anything more fulfilling, more important, or more rewarding than welcoming a child to church in the name of Jesus? You have accepted a huge responsibility as a worker to join parents in loving and nurturing the children in God’s family. You will also reap a huge reward when you see the children “...grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.” --Luke 2:52 NIV.

YOU are vitally important to God, to this church, and to the children entrusted to your teaching. Whether you are just beginning to serve or whether you have served for many years, we greatly appreciate your willingness to nurture the children at PABC.

May God bless your efforts as you serve Him.

The Preschool Committee

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OUR VISION; OUR MISSION; OUR VALUES

OUR VISION: To see children "...grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God...."

OUR MISSION: To nurture and disciple children, in partnership with families, so that they might grow into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

OUR VALUES:

- ★ Each child is an individual created by God and entrusted to our care.
- ★ Our church and our ministry are Christ-centered.
- ★ Learning and teaching are conducted in a safe and healthy environment.
- ★ Bible teaching is conducted creatively.
- ★ Learning about God is fun, exciting, and purposeful.

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CURRICULUM:

As we join parents in laying the foundation for a life lived in a relationship with Jesus, it is our

philosophy that preschool-age children need to know that God made them, that God loves them, and that Jesus wants to be their friend forever. Therefore, the curriculum provided for each class is meant to facilitate the teaching of these truths while introducing basic Bible stories and verses.

CLASSROOM APPEARANCE:

Although the classrooms are kept clean by the janitorial staff of PABC, neatness is the responsibility of the teachers. After completion of the various church services during which the preschool classrooms are used, all toys, supplies and other teaching aids should be put back in their proper storage places.

The janitorial staff will clean and mop the floors, but cleaning the tables, play equipment, and toys are the responsibility of the teachers. These items and equipment should be disinfected before the next service begins. A monthly “clean-up” is highly recommended, including removing items from cabinets and shelves in order to clean those shelves and storage compartments. Any extra supplies should be returned to the common storage area.

If assistance is needed in clean-up, please contact the Preschool Committee.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE:

It is our philosophy that encouragement and praise strengthen good behavior. Close attention to children, smiles, pats on the back, and approving words are all important ways to help children behave in a manner conducive to learning.

When a child is upset or inconsolable, the teacher should attempt to comfort and assist the child for about ten minutes. If the child is still inconsolable after that length of time, the Registration Coordinator or security personnel can assist in contacting the child’s parents or guardian (see the section on classroom security).

When a child misbehaves in the classroom, three methods of discipline may be used:

1. Redirect the child’s attention to something else.
2. “Actively ignore” the child. This is most effective with temper tantrums and whining in that it removes all attention from the misbehaving child. The teacher should keep an eye on the child, but should not make direct eye contact or respond to the bad behavior. When the misbehaving stops, the child should be shown much attention. Of course, this “ignoring” should not allow the misbehaving child or any other child to be put in any danger.
3. Put the child in “time out.” This method should be used if the previous two methods are ineffective and if the child is two years of age or older. The length of time should approximate one minute for each year of age. Place the child in a chair away from the activity of the classroom. The teacher should explain to the child the reason he/she is being placed in “time out.” After the “time out” is over, the child should be

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returned to the group. Again, the teacher should keep an eye on the child to be sure neither that child nor any other child is put in danger. Direct eye contact should be avoided.

Never use any other method of discipline, including physical or verbal.

The above three methods of discipline should be effective for most preschoolers. If a child's repeated misbehavior becomes disruptive or dangerous, the parents or guardian should be made aware of the problem immediately. Explain to the parents or guardian, in love and concern, the offense and the disciplinary steps taken.

CLASSROOM INJURIES:

Minor Injuries:

If a child sustains a minor injury (such as a small scratch or bump), console the child if possible and take any first aid measures necessary (such as band-aids, ice, or other similar measures). If the child wants his parents or guardian, then contact that parent or guardian through the communication channel provided for that purpose.

FIRST AID KITS ARE LOCATED IN THE CABINET IN THE PRESCHOOL HALL.

An accident report should be completed by the teacher and approved by the Registration Coordinator. One copy of the report is to be given to the parent or guardian and a duplicate copy kept on file in the church office. If the child is hurt by another child, it is our policy to not release the name of the child who caused the hurt. If this does not satisfy the parent or guardian, get their name, address, and phone number so that someone can talk to them later.

Medical Emergencies:

If a child (or a worker) has a medical emergency that could be life threatening, take any life saving measures that are appropriate and for which you have been trained. Then,

- have security personnel or someone call 9-1-1 immediately.
- notify the parent, guardian, or spouse through the security personnel.
- notify a medical resource person through the security personnel.
- if possible and proper, move the person from the classroom to a more private location. If such a move is not advisable, then have the other children move to another classroom in order to not upset them any more than necessary.

CLASSROOM SECURITY:

General Policy:

In order to ensure the safety and security of all children in our care, to protect our staff and workers from false accusations of mistreatment of children, and to protect our church from possible liability issues resulting from improper screening of children's workers, PABC has instituted the following policy and procedures:

Restroom Security:

Children should be accompanied to the restroom by at least two adults. This is not only for the protection of our children, but also for the protection of our teachers and all workers from false accusations. For those reasons as well as classroom efficiency, some teachers may find it

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advisable to take all the children to the restroom at one time rather than on an "as needed" basis. Of course, "as needed" situations may still occur; if so, please respond to the need.

Should you find yourself alone in the restroom with a child, please use the doorstop to ensure that the door remains open.

Security Before and After Services:

Teachers who serve during any service should be ready to receive children 15 minutes prior to the start of that service. The teacher should make every effort to get to their assigned place on time.

Teachers should remain in the classroom with the children until their replacement teacher arrives. If the service is the last one in a series, then the teacher should remain with the children until all of the children have been properly released to their parents or guardian.

At no time should children be left in the classroom without a teacher or worker being present.

Training:

All persons working in the Preschool Ministry shall have an annual opportunity for CPR and First Aid training.

Facilities/Equipment:

Every classroom will be evaluated at least quarterly to ensure that equipment and supplies are safe, clean, and adequate for a secure and healthy environment.

Registration/Sign In/Tagging/Release of Children:

Registration cards will be kept on file for all children enrolled in the Preschool Ministry. These cards will contain relevant medical and allergy information, information and instructions on whom to release the child, and the location of the parent or guardian during services.

The Registration Coordinator will tag children, upon their arrival in the Preschool area, with one half of an adhesive security label. The parent or guardian (who must be at least 18 years of age) will retain the other half of the label, which must be presented to the Registration Coordinator at the end of the service in order to pick up the child. Children will be released only to the person presenting the label matching the corresponding label on the child.

Emergency Communications:

Two security people (either deacons or church members) with walkie talkies will be in the hallways during church services to provide security and assist with communications. If an emergency or a need arises, you may contact either of these security people or the Registration Coordinator, who will in turn find the parents or guardian in the church service. The security people will accompany the parents or guardian back to the preschool classroom.

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CLASSROOM WELLNESS:

To minimize the exposure of the children in our care to contagious diseases, we request that parents keep their children at home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Temperature should be normal for a minimum of 24 hours before attending church.
- Upper Respiratory Infection (including colds, bronchitis, throat infections, etc.).
- Nasal Drainage (particularly thick, cloudy, and/or colored drainage).
- Cough (including frequent, loose, productive, “barkey,” and/or deep sounding).
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing.
- Eye Infection (including redness of the eyes, white or yellow drainage, excessive tearing, and/or dried drainage on the eyelashes after sleeping).
- Vomiting and/or Diarrhea. Symptoms should be absent for at least 24 hours before attending church.
- Rashes (but does not include heat, diaper, or allergic rashes).
- Irritability and/or Listlessness (not related to fatigue or teething).
- Head Lice.

If the child is on antibiotic treatment, he/she is considered contagious for the first 24 hours. Also, recent exposure to a contagious disease could cause the child to be a potential carrier and a source of exposure for others. In both instances, the child should be kept at home.

If a child has been left who exhibits any of these symptoms or situations, please request that the parent or guardian pick up their child immediately. Or if the child should become ill during class, please request that the parent or guardian pick up their child immediately.

DISASTER RESPONSE:

Fire:

In case of fire, teachers should take their class in a quick and orderly fashion out of the building through the nearest exit. The fire alarm should be pulled as you exit the building if it has not already been activated. Once outside, go to the edge of the parking lot furthest away from the fire. Teachers should stay with their class at all times.

Tornado:

If notification of a tornado is received, or if the local disaster siren sounds, all building occupants should go to the main hallway in the education wing in a quick and orderly fashion. Once in the hallway, kneel along either wall and stay there until notified that it is safe to return to other areas of the building.

PRESCHOOL MINISTRY STAFFING:

It is our intention that every child placed in our care is safe and secure. Parents should feel comfortable leaving their children in a clean, safe, and secure environment with workers who have been interviewed by staff, cleared after background and reference evaluations, and equipped and trained with the skills necessary to provide quality instruction, worship, playtime, and childcare.

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The Preschool Committee is the governing body for the preschool ministry. The committee members are approved by the Church.

The Registration Coordinator is appointed by the Preschool Committee to ensure that every child who attends our program feels welcome and secure. The Registration Coordinator makes sure that each child is registered and has a security tag. Since the Registration Coordinator is the first contact with visitors, he/she is to be friendly and reassuring to all who leave their children, especially to first-time visitors. This person is also to be available to assist classroom staff if needed, to assist with taking children to the restroom, and to assist when a parent or medical personnel is needed in the preschool area. This person will also assist with completion of accident and injury reports.

Classroom Teachers:

- Every classroom should be staffed by at least two adult workers, one of whom is the classroom teacher and the other(s) are classroom assistants. Students in Grades nine through twelve may serve in the preschool ministry as assistants, but must always be accompanied by at least two adults.
- At least two adult workers must be present for any activity involving children away from the church building.
- Before being considered to work in the preschool ministry, a teacher must be a member at PABC. Assistants may be either members at PABC, parents, or regular attendees.
- Every teacher or adult worker must have a background check that will be evaluated by the Pastor and a deacon, after which it will be securely filed and unavailable for review by any other person. Following the evaluation, potential workers will be referred to the Preschool Committee for placement in the Preschool Ministry.

General:

All persons working in the Preschool Ministry will be issued a copy of these policies and procedures, which will be reviewed with all workers at least once a year. Following the review, all workers will sign an agreement that they understand and will follow the policy as outlined in this handbook.