

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**  
**Children's Ministry Policy**  
**Updated January 2018**

**PURPOSE & MISSION**

***Our Purpose***

Believing that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, Westminster's purpose is to be a community which is created and sustained by God's Word, renewed through worship, nurtured through fellowship, and extended through cultural engagement. The purpose of the Children's Ministry is, by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit, to produce disciples who love Jesus, love His Church, love His Word, serve His people, and need His people.

***Our Mission***

Our mission is to teach children who they are and whose they are; to recognize and support our covenantal understanding that God is at work in families; to provide worship training with the goal of full participation in the church body; to teach children the real, whole truth; and to share in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that engenders joy in knowing Him, participating in His body, and a hope and certainty of heaven.

At Westminster, we seek to provide our children with opportunities to worship, to form life-giving relationships of mutual joy, and to give themselves away in service to others in childlike ways – the ways of Jesus' kingdom.

Therefore, this Policy is intended to protect the children of these ministries and assist the staff and volunteers who have the privilege of working with children. Changes may be made from time to time in the policy contained in this handbook without prior notice.

## **VOLUNTEER SCREENING**

All Westminster PCA volunteers and paid workers 16 and over will undergo background checks every two years. Also, workers will read and sign Westminster's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND PREVENTION**

### ***Mandatory Reporting of Abuse***

Westminster will not tolerate the abuse, either physical or verbal, of children in our care. State law requires volunteers or paid workers to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as Westminster PCA, to the appropriate individual in charge. Any WPC staff member may be contacted. The individual reporting the alleged abuse is required to maintain strict confidentiality of all information about the alleged abuse, and shall not disclose any information to any person other than the persons named above and governmental authorities as required by law.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

The Westminster Children's Ministry is comprised of children from birth through 6th grade.

*Nursery (0-3 year olds)*

*Worship Kids (4-7 year olds)*

*Sunday School Classes (2 years through 6<sup>th</sup> grade)*

### ***VISIBILITY***

It is important that all interactions between children and workers happen in a location where others can observe what is going on for safety and accountability purposes.

### ***TWO ADULT RULE***

Ideally, two adults (volunteer/staff/paid caregiver) will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during WPC programs and activities. If, due to circumstances beyond our control (sudden illness, volunteer taking a child to the restroom... etc), only one worker is left with children, the door should be left open until the second worker returns.

### ***RESTROOMS***

Restrooms are located in the nurseries, the education wing as well as outside the sanctuary. Female adults (volunteer/staff/paid caregiver) should provide physical assistance to a child using the restroom if the child is three years or younger or has needs requiring extra assistance. Male adults (volunteer/staff/paid caregiver) may provide physical assistance for male children only if the child is three years or younger or has needs requiring extra assistance while in the restroom.

### ***PHYSICAL CONTACT***

Westminster Presbyterian Church will insure in every way that children have a safe and

protected environment when on church premises. Physical contact in any form from workers should be above reproach. For each age level of children, Procedures will outline the kinds of physical contact that would be considered normal. The personal behavior of staff members, volunteers, and paid caregivers must foster trust at all times. Never force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

### ***DISCIPLINE POLICY***

WPC believes discipline of children to be scriptural and primarily the function of parents. We're given a description of God's discipline in Hebrews 12:7-11. It is not punishment, but guidance, training, and molding of character. WPC workers do not seek to merely control behavior, but to partner with parents to help shape a child's character to be more and more like that of Christ. We also strive to keep a safe environment for all children under our care. Therefore, if a child becomes unruly or disruptive, and does not respond to verbal requests, a parent may be summoned to take proper care of the situation in the way is appropriate for their family. Physical punishment will never be given by WPC workers.

### ***ALLERGIES***

Westminster will endeavor to have a clean and food allergy free environment for children. Each area of ministry will have procedures in place to prevent, as much as possible, sharing of food or the eating of allergy causing substances. WPC staff will have procedures in place to help workers to be aware of a child with allergies.

### ***CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT*** (nursery)

In order to maintain a safe environment for children, only the nursery coordinator and approved volunteers will be permitted past the nursery counter. Children will be released to a parent or other authorized adult over the age of 16.

### ***SICK POLICIES***

Parents should be encouraged to not bring children to activities who exhibit the following symptoms within 24 hours of dropping off their child. Furthermore, if these symptoms are observed by adults (volunteer/staff/paid caregiver), the child's parent may be called to remove the child from the classroom. If a caregiver experiences these symptoms, alert the nursery coordinator so a replacement can be secured.

- Yellow or greenish discharge from the eyes or nose during a cold
- Heavy coughing or excessive sneezing
- A temperature of or greater than 100.4
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Questionable rashes

### ***MEDICATION POLICY***

Westminster is not responsible to store or administer any medication for any child. This is solely the parent's responsibility.