



# NURSERY POLICIES

*Hope Presbyterian Church*

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# General Policies

## 1. Nurseries at Hope Presbyterian Church

Hope offers three nurseries: Infants, Ones, and Twos. Generally, the Infants room will offer care for children up to 12 months, the Ones room up to 24 months, and the Twos room up to 36 months. Hope Church moves a child to the next nursery room as explained in the Parent Policy (page 5). Hope also offers a room for Nursing Mothers.

## 2. Adult-to-Child Ratios

Hope Church nurseries prefer to exceed the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Social Services by providing additional caregivers, but uses the state's requirements as a reference point. The North Carolina Department of Social Services defines safe childcare ratios as follows:

- Birth to 12 months: 1 caregiver to 5 children
- 12 months to 24 months: 1 caregiver to 6 children
- 24 to 36 months: 1 caregiver to 10 children

For church events and gatherings, it is Hope's goal and practice to have at least two adults present at all times. However, due to the size of the program and the demands on adult leaders, this is not always feasible. Therefore, when two adult workers are not present, the adult-to-child ratios (listed above) must be complied with, and the classroom door must be left open if the door doesn't have a window that provides an unobstructed view of the classroom and the participants. Children will never be left alone.

## 3. Registration and Check-In/Out Procedures

In order to provide the best care possible for children and to help in the event of an emergency, all children must be checked in at the computer system and have a name tag with a corresponding security tag number before entering the classroom. First-time guests will register their child into the computer system located at the check-in station. All the child's belongings should be labeled with their name. Children are not be released to anyone without the correct security tag number. If an adult picking up a child has misplaced their security identification number, please direct them to the check-in station to obtain another tag before picking up their child.

## 4. Security & Safety Procedures

Hope Church values providing a safe and secure environment for children and families. In an effort to accomplish this goal, we have security measures in place to protect the children, their parents, volunteers and Hope. All volunteers are required to have a completed background check before participating in any children's activities. All volunteers are asked to check in upon arriving and wear a name badge to identify themselves as a volunteer. Staff, volunteers with the appropriate name badge, and children should be the only people in the children's classrooms during programming. Outside building doors will be locked once the service has begun to help ensure a safe environment.

## **5. Diaper-Changing/Bathroom Policy/Toileting Accidents**

- Any caregiver may change a child's diaper, but nursery staff and trained members should assist first if available. The door to the bathroom must be left propped open while changing the child's diaper.
- Use Non-Latex disposable gloves when changing diapers or dealing with any other fluid. Discard in trash after use.
- Use only diaper-changing pad to change diapers. Do not change diapers on the floor.
- Once the caregiver has finished changing the child's diaper, he/she should continue to stand beside the child, watching the child as he/she removes gloves and places them on top of the diaper. Then the caregiver should lift the child off the changing table before disposing of the diaper and gloves as a unit. If a disposable pad was used, please discard it after changing the diaper.
- A child must never be left unattended on a changing table.
- The caregiver must wash his/her hands after changing the child's diaper and disposing of both gloves and soiled diaper.
- Volunteers and paid workers must make sure that all diapers are checked at least once during the nursery period. A child's diaper should be changed as soon as it becomes soiled or wet.
- Children four years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. The door to the bathroom will be left propped open while child uses the bathroom.
- If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.
- A child of any age shall never be punished for a toileting accident. If a toilet-trained child has an accident, change the child into clean clothes. Place the wet clothes into a grocery bag. If there is no change of clothes for the child, page the parent out of the service and discuss options for their child. (Put a diaper on the child for the remainder of the time or allow the parent to take the child.)

## **6. Crying**

- If a child is crying longer than 10 minutes, the parent will be paged to come try to comfort the child.
- During the 10 minutes that the child is crying, nursery workers and volunteers will try to comfort and console the child by rocking or holding him/her. They will also try to engage the child in an activity.

## **7. Discipline**

- It is the policy of Hope Presbyterian Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There shall be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

- Any acts of aggression or violence from one child to another, such as hitting, biting, or fighting, will result in the separation of the children involved. If necessary, the parents of both children will be paged, and an Injury Report Form will be completed and signed by parents of both children.
- Workers should consult with the Nursery Coordinator if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## **8. Child Abuse Procedures**

If you suspect that a child involved in any program has been abused, the following steps should be followed:

- Report your suspicions of child abuse/neglect to a staff member. Do not talk to the child about it. A trained professional will do so.
- A staff member will report the suspected abuse to a reporting agent following the Child Protection Policy Guidelines.

## **9. Biting**

We want to promote a safe, secure, and friendly environment in our nurseries. Therefore, if a child bites another child, we ask the following:

- The first incident will serve as a warning.
- If there is a second incident, we will ask that one of the parents remain with the child in the nursery for two weeks in order to supervise him/her. This way the parent can help the child interact with others in a gentle, loving way.
- Should there be a third incident, the parents and Nursery Coordinator will meet to discuss a plan moving forward to help assist the child with stopping the behavior. The Nursery Coordinator will work with the child's family to tailor a plan best suited for the child, providing an appropriate balance of discipline and education appropriate to the child's age/stage.

If there is a biting incident in one of Hope's nurseries, the following actions will be taken:

- The caregivers will separate the children involved.
- The caregivers will attend to the child bitten first, comforting him/her and checking for broken skin, swelling, etc.
- If cold compress is required to reduce swelling, wet a paper towel with cold water and apply to child's arm or send a volunteer to the kitchen for a ziploc bag of ice, wrapped in a towel.
- If the skin has been broken, the caregivers will page the parent of the hurt child, and standard first aid procedures will be followed.

## **10. Snack**

- Before serving snack, one volunteer should be in charge of checking special instructions/allergies on each child's name tag.
- Children's hands should be cleaned either by washing at the bathroom sink or by using hand sanitizer.
- Serve snacks at the table only, making sure that all children are seated.

- Serve crackers and water to children unless there are special instructions to do otherwise.

## **11. Medication Administration**

It is the policy of Hope Presbyterian Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care.

- Medications should be administered by a parent at home.
- If a child must take a medication during his/her stay in the nursery, the parent will need to come to the nursery and administer the medication.
- If a child is injured and first aid is required, the parent will be paged so that he/she can choose to administer first aid ointments if necessary.
- If the parent does not respond within seven minutes, the Nursery Staff Person or Nursery Coordinator will administer standard first aid procedures (e.g., washing site, applying bandage, etc.) and send an available volunteer to find the parent.
- In the event of a medical emergency, as determined by nursery personnel, 911 will be called, the parents and Nursery Coordinator will be paged, and standard first aid procedures will be administered immediately by the Nursery Coordinator or Nursery Staff Person.

## **12. Fire Evacuation Procedures**

- Fire evacuation procedures are posted by the doors of each nursery room.
- In case of an evacuation of the building, parents are asked to exit the nearest door and go to the grassy hill behind the education building. Nursery workers will take the children to this area to be reunited with parents.
- Nursery workers will take the attendance rosters with them in order to have a list of the children present, and will check the children off the roster when parents pick up their children using their security identification number.
- Children in the Infant room will be placed in the cribs which will be rolled out of the building towards the parking lot. Volunteers will take attendance rosters with them to have a list of children present and to check off children when picked up by parents.

## **13. Cleanliness Policy**

In an effort to provide a clean and safe environment for the children, all toys will be wiped down at the end of the service. All tables and chairs will be wiped down, as well. The rooms will be cleaned during the week by a cleaning company.

# Parent Policies

## 1. Nurseries

Except in specific situations where approval from Nursery Coordinator has been given, parents are expected to remain on Hope's premises while they have a child in the nursery.

Hope's nursery ministry moves children up based on birthdays or development level.

- When your child has a birthday, they can move up to the next classroom (or when you feel they are ready). Our hope is that this will create more age-appropriate environments for our littlest ones, while also creating safer environments. When your child turns 3, they will join our 3's Sunday School and Worship Class and receive a fun book in celebration of this milestone!
- We know some children may not be ready to move up right after their birthday. *If you feel your child is not ready, please reach out to the Nursery Coordinator, who will work with your family until your child is ready.*

## 2. Wellness Policy

Please be considerate of other children, nursery staff, and volunteers. If your child is not feeling well, please do not bring him or her to the nursery.

Specifically, do not bring a child to the nursery if he/she has had:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Severe cough
- Questionable rash
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Any other contagious illness

If a child exhibits any of these symptoms during his or her stay in the nursery, the parents will be contacted to pick up their child for the day.

## 3. Check-In Policy and Procedure

- Upon arrival, the parent should check the child in at the designated check-in station and make sure to note any allergies or medical concerns.
- If a child has an allergy or medical concern, please make sure it is listed on your child's name tag and speak to the volunteer assigned to your child's room to notify them of your child's needs.
- The child's name tag should be placed on their back before entering their classroom. Parents should keep the security identification portion of the name tag to use at your child's pick up. The number on your child's name tag will be matched to the number on the parent's portion of the identification tag in order to pick up your child after the service.

- All items (bags, bottles, cups, clothing, diapers, etc.) should be labeled before being brought to Hope's nursery.
- Upon drop-off, parents should remain outside the nursery room to avoid confusion and emotional distress.
- Nursing mothers are invited to use the Nursing Mothers' Room for nursing.
- Parents of potty-trainers should take their child to the bathroom before coming to the Nursery.

#### **4. Contacting Parents**

- Please keep your security identification number close during the time you are away from your child. If a nursery worker has trouble settling your child or has an immediate need, you will be paged on the screen in the service using your security identification number to come back to the room to assist your child.
- Nursery staff and volunteers aim to make the nursery a pleasant and fun experience for your child but occasionally may need additional assistance if your child is having trouble settling. It is Hope's policy to help a child settle into the nursery for at least 10 minutes through repeated attempts of comfort and distraction before you are paged.

# Paid Worker Policies

## 1. Personnel Guidelines

- It is recommended that paid workers at Hope Church be at least 18 years of age. (Special permission for a worker under 18 may be obtained from the Nursery Coordinator and/or the Associate Pastor overseeing the Nursery ministry.)
- All paid workers must complete a background check and provide three references.
- Dependability is essential. You are representing Hope Church and the Nursery Ministry Staff, and tardiness and excessive unscheduled absences are not acceptable.
- Please dress in an appropriate manner that also allows freedom to interact with children. We ask you to wear your Hope Church t-shirt.
- All paid workers must wear closed-toe shoes in the building, on the playground, or any other place on Hope Presbyterian Church property.
- Do not bring your own children into the room with you during the nursery period unless specific permission has been given by the Nursery Coordinator. In some circumstances, permission will be granted to workers who have children the same age as the ones in the nursery being overseen.
- Immediate termination will occur in cases of intentional verbal, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect of any child, parent, or church member. Nursery workers will be terminated if they fail to follow nursery policies or in situations of absence or habitual lateness.
- Please refrain from using your phone to make personal calls, check messages, or use the internet during your time of employment in Hope's Nursery.

## 2. Nursery Procedures

Before the children arrive:

- Turn lights and music on.
- Wash hands.
- Wear name tag on to allow parents to identify you and to help visiting families know who will be caring for their child.
- Check for safety:
  - Close nursery doors.
  - Ensure that small objects and personal belongings (purses, etc.) are off the floor and put out of reach of children (place in an upper cabinet).
  - Please do not bring in hot beverages or outside snacks unless approved by Nursery Coordinator.
- Ensure that crackers, cups, and napkins are available.
- Take chairs off tables.

When the children arrive:

- Stand at the doorway to greet children and help guide parents with sign-in. Make sure that each child has a name tag, each parent keeps his/her portion, you are aware of each child's allergy information, and each child's belongings are labeled.
- Greet every child and parent warmly. Pay special attention to visitors. Our nursery is often the "first touch" a family may have with our church, so we have the privilege of serving each family with kindness, gentleness, and love.
- Be positive and assuring to parents about leaving their children. Let them know they will be paged if there is a need.

During the nursery period:

- Interact with the children, remembering that you are here for them: play, sing, read, hold, comfort, and pray with them and for them.
- Check all diapers each hour and change when wet or soiled. Leave the bathroom door open when changing a child's diaper.
- Children four years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. The door to the bathroom will be left propped open while a child uses the bathroom.
- If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.
- Inform the Nursery Coordinator if problems arise during the nursery period.
- Snacks are served at tables only at a specific time for the whole group.
- Before snack, every child's hands should be washed with soap and water or cleaned with hand sanitizer.
- Children should be seated at the table while eating snack.

When parents arrive to pick up their children:

- Greet each parent warmly. If you have any concerns to discuss with the parent, please do so gently and discreetly to protect the child's privacy.
- Ask parents for their child's number or back portion of name tag to confirm check-out with the correct adult. Children should not be released to anyone without the correct security tag number.

After the children are gone:

- At the end of each nursery period, volunteers and staff help to clean the nursery room according to "Room Cleaning Procedures" listed on page 10 and posted in each room.

### **3. Hand-Washing**

- Caregivers should wash hands with soap and warm water in the following circumstances:
  - upon entering the nursery.
  - after changing a child's diaper.

- after taking a child to the bathroom.
- Hand sanitizer should be used in the following circumstances:
  - after wiping a child's nose.
  - before and after serving snack to the children

#### **4. Room Cleaning Procedures**

After Sunday school:

- Remove any toys that were mouthed by children and place them in the sink in the room to be washed at the end of the day.
- Tidy the room by picking up toys and straightening room so that it is ready to welcome the children arriving for worship.

After the worship service:

- Wipe all cribs, tables, chairs, swings, changing tables, and large play items (such as kitchens, slides, etc.) with disinfectant wipes found in the cabinet.
- Pick up room, wiping down used toys and placing them in their labeled location.
- Remove any toys that were mouthed by children and place them in the sink to be washed.
- Remove any used crib sheets or soiled changing table pads and place them on the counter in that room.
- Wash all mouthed toys in warm water and dishwashing liquid. Set out to dry on counter. If there are toys especially soiled, please leave them on the counter to be taken home by the Nursery Coordinator for disinfecting.
- Empty trash cans and diaper pails and place bags in hallway for deacon on duty.
- Turn off lights before exiting the room.
- If there are supplies that are low, please notify the Nursery Coordinator in person or leave a note.

# Volunteer Policies

## 1. Volunteer Caregiver Responsibilities

- Our nursery runs on faithful volunteers—thank you for serving Hope Church’s children and families! Please familiarize yourself with Nursery Procedures on pages 8-9.
- All volunteer nursery caregivers must be at least 12 years of age. Special permission for a volunteer under 12 may be obtained from the Nursery Coordinator.
- Volunteers are expected to:
  - Greet children and parents as they arrive. Aid parents in the check-in process.
  - Play with the children and interact with them by singing, playing games, or reading books. We want to let these little ones know that they are special and loved by Jesus. Talk to them, pray for them, and help them play with other children.
- Please follow the policies listed in this document regarding discipline, snack, injury, handwashing, and clean-up.
- After children are picked up, please follow the guidelines listed in this document and posted in the rooms for clean-up.
- Volunteers will often work alongside a Nursery Staff Worker.
- Personal cell phones or other electronic devices should not be used to take or post photos of children in the nursery.
- Please wear your Hope Church t-shirt when you are serving, along with your check-in name tag. For your safety and the safety of our children, we recommend wearing closed-toe shoes.

## 2. Volunteer Scheduling

- We are thrilled that Hope Church is home to many young families! With that excitement comes the great responsibility to care for so many little ones. One of the ways we encourage our members to uphold the baptismal vow to nurture our children is by asking them to serve in the nursery. Therefore, we request that all members serve in the nursery on a quarterly basis, and we welcome help from regular attenders who have been attending at least three months. Those who currently serve in ministries that take them away from attending the worship service are asked to help in the nursery as much as their time allows. We also recognize that some members may not be able to serve in the nursery for a variety of reasons, including age, life circumstances, and physical or emotional difficulties. Please contact the pastors to discuss any circumstances that prevent you from honoring this request to serve.
- Schedules will be posted quarterly on the church website with updates weekly in the bulletin. Please check these sites for your scheduled dates. If you become unable to serve on your assigned date, please coordinate a swap with another volunteer. The schedule is posted on the church website so that you can figure out a date that works for you. Please contact at least three people before asking for help from the Nursery Coordinator. After you have worked out a swap, please notify the Nursery Coordinator of who your replacement will be.

*\* This document was adapted with permission from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, VA.*