



## **Christian Education Policies and Procedures**

At Capital Life Church, we teach biblical principles to enrich the lives of every child that visits or goes through our program. We strive to model Christ and God's love for each child. Our goal is to provide safe, stimulating, God-centered care for CLC children from birth through junior high.

### **Children's Classes:**

- Nursery: Birth to 24 months
- Toddlers: 2-4 years
- Preschool: 4-6 years
- Primary: Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Junior High: 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade

The Christian Education Directors must approve admittance of a child into a class if not in the age/grade range listed above for each class.

### **Classroom Policies for the Nursery, Toddler, and Preschool Classes:**

- The Nursery class must ALWAYS have a minimum of 2 volunteers if more than one baby is present.
- Volunteers and parents are the only people allowed in the classroom with the children. Parents should not remain in the classrooms after dropping their children off, as this is disruptive to the rest of the class. Our teachers are well-qualified to handle children who have a hard time separating from their parents. 😊
- Parents may drop their children off no earlier than 15 minutes before service begins and no later than 15 minutes after service ends.
- Parents who are volunteering or helping in a class may bring their child into the class with them *only if* approved by the Christian Education Directors.

- All parents/guardians must complete a registration form for their child in order to join the class for the first time.
- Parents must take a number when signing in their child and return the number when signing out child.
- Only a parent/guardian may pick up a child from the classroom (no older siblings).

### **Classroom Policies for the Primary Classes:**

- Class begins promptly when church begins, as children in the Pre-K class as well as Kids Church for K-5, have their own worship.
- Parents may drop their children off no earlier than 15 minutes before service begins and no later than 15 minutes after service ends.
- The Primary class teacher is responsible for checking children into the classroom.
- Once they have joined the class, children are not allowed to leave the class area for any reason unless accompanied by a teacher.
- All parents/guardians must complete a registration form for their child in order to join the class for the first time.
- Children MUST be signed out of class by a parent/guardian (no older siblings).

If a volunteer at ANY time feels additional help is needed, he or she should immediately notify one of the Ushers through the walkie-talkie that is left in every classroom. The Ushers will either call the Christian Education Directors to help or notify the child's parent during service to go to their classroom.

### **Child-to-Adult Ratios:**

The standard child-to-adult ratios are followed and shown below. We will stop admitting children to the classroom once those ratios have been met, and ask parents to stay with their child and help in nursery/classroom until additional help can be found. We will advertise the need to the church body during service. If we still do not have enough volunteers, parents will be asked to stay and help or bring their children into service with them.

Nursery: 1:3 (volunteer/children)  
 Toddlers: 1:6 (volunteer/children)  
 Preschool: 1:7 (volunteer/children)

Primary Classes: 1:12 (volunteer/children)  
Junior High: 1:15 (volunteer/children)

**Child Sickness Policy:**

*Children with any signs of contagious illness or symptoms listed below will NOT be admitted into the classroom:*

- Fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe sore throat (unless strep throat is ruled out by a doctor)
- Any substantial unexplained rash (excluding diaper rash)
- Croup, severe cough, or shortness of breath
- Childhood illness or virus such as chicken pox, fifth disease, measles, mumps, flu, etc.
- Lice or scabies
- Pink eye or other eye infection (All eye infections are contagious. The child must be on medication at least 24 hours and exhibit no symptoms before entering the classroom.)

Children recovering from viral illnesses must be fever-free for 24 hours prior to Sunday service in order to enter the classroom.

**Hand Washing Policy:**

One of the best ways to prevent the passage of germs is by correctly washing hands. It's important to teach our children and model for them frequent hand washing. Hands should be washed with soap and water or sanitizing gel:

- Before handling food or snack (for teacher)
- Before and after changing diapers (if a child has a poopy diaper, hands should be washed with soap and water only)
- After helping a child in the bathroom
- After wiping and blowing noses

### **Diaper Changing:**

Please make sure to check diapers throughout service and 30 minutes prior to end of service. Our goal is that every child go home with a clean and dry diaper.

- There is one designated area for changing diapers. All children should have their diapers changed in the same area, in order to maintain child safety.
- Wash or sanitize hands before and after changing diapers.
- Be sure to wipe down diaper area with disinfection wipes after changing diaper.

### **Restroom Policy:**

For the protection of our children and our volunteers, it is required that we follow these procedures when taking a child, preschool or below, to the restroom.

- A volunteer is never allowed in a bathroom alone with a child.
- Teachers will assist children with their clothing in the open doorway before they go into the bathroom, if necessary.
- Children will be encouraged to do as much of this for themselves as possible.
- If needed, teachers should stand with their foot in the door to monitor the needs of the child.
- If there is an emergency situation where a child is sick or needs assistance, the bathroom door will be propped open and a teacher will come into the bathroom and assist the child. Parents will be contacted if there is a problem or if the child is indeed sick.

For Primary age, the rule is to use the buddy system. At least one other child of the same sex must accompany them to the restroom and they must return together.

Junior high students are allowed to go to the bathroom on their own.

### **Emergency Plans:**

**For all emergency plans, the children will never be released to anyone other than the parent or guardian. The Christian Education Directors**

**must complete a final head count first, and then the parent/guardian MUST sign the child out before releasing them.**

Fire evacuation procedures:

If the fire alarm goes off in the building, please follow these instructions:

1. Our first concern in the event of an emergency is to evacuate the children safely. Teachers should not leave the children to announce the emergency to other classes and parents should not check on your own children. All teachers and staff will evacuate the children safely.
2. Stay calm.
  - Use a calm voice and line children up to evacuate the building.
  - Infants and babies will be held or placed in the crib and rolled out of the building until the parents come.
  - Toddlers and preschoolers will hold hands and proceed out following the teacher.
  - Older children will line up and walk to the courtyard outside of the building.
3. Teachers should conduct a head count as you leave the room and again once outside.
4. One adult should be at the front of the line and, if possible, another at the back while exiting. The last adult should visually check the room for vacancy.
5. The classes will be led directly outside the back doors, and head into the elementary school's parking lot.
6. At this time, the Christian Education Directors will check the roll for the sign-in sheet for the final head count.

**Severe Storms or Power Outage:**

If another type of weather emergency happens (tornado, severe storm, loss of power), follow the instructions below:

1. Stay calm.
2. Bring the children together to sit still in a group in the middle of the room.
3. There should be a flashlight in each classroom bin.
4. Tell the children a story or sing songs to keep them calm until the lights come back on or you are given further instructions.

### **Lock-down or bomb threats:**

If a stranger with a weapon is seen in the church, or some other type of similar emergency, we will be in communication with outside sources and will make teachers aware when the building is safe.

In case of this kind of emergency teachers should:

1. Stay in the classrooms.
2. An usher via the walkie-talkie or other CLC staff will notify you when it is okay to leave the classroom and will give you updates as we know.
3. If you are asked to evacuate the building, follow the fire emergency procedures. The only difference should be that all children should be escorted through the back doors and taken behind the elementary school (rather than just in their parking lot). Please do not let parents take their children at this time, as we want everyone to be accounted for.

### **Reporting Abuse or Suspected Abuse**

Child abuse is taken very seriously by the Commonwealth of Virginia and by Capital Life Church. If you ever see or suspect that a child is being physically or sexually abused, you should IMMEDIATELY report this to the Christian Education Directors and/or a Pastor.

Under Virginia law, *“Persons age 18 or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children”* are mandatory reporters of child abuse.

Mandatory reporters that fail to notify authorities as soon as possible are liable to civil and criminal penalties. In Virginia, for example, a mandatory reporter can be fined up to \$500 for a first time offense of failure to report, and at least \$1,000 for any subsequent failure. If the abuse involves certain forms of sexual abuse, failure to report can be punished as a Class 1 misdemeanor, which can carry large fines and jail time.

In addition to civil fines and criminal liability, failure to report may also give rise to civil liability should a civil suit be brought against the church or organization. The safety and well-being of the children in our care are more important than any person’s reputation.