

**VALLEY KIDS
TEAM HANDBOOK
2026-2027**

Let your light shine...
Matthew 5:16



Welcome to the Valley Kids Team!

We are so grateful for your faithfulness and your willingness to serve on the Valley Kids Team! We could not do Kids Ministry without the amazing volunteers who faithfully give their time, energy, and hearts to serve our children each week.

This year, our Kids Ministry theme is **"Be the Light."** We want every child and family to know that you are never too young to start shining your light for Jesus. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:16, *"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* Our hope is that kids will discover that they can shine the light of Jesus through the way they love, serve, and care for others. We want to see kids and their families growing in their faith and serving the Lord together through **full Valley engagement.**

That kind of engagement doesn't happen without dedicated volunteers who faithfully show up, invest in kids, and model what it looks like to follow Jesus. We sincerely thank you for the important part you play in making this possible!

We seek to help kids and families grow through the four areas of Valley engagement:

- **Worship** God regularly, both individually and corporately.
- **Connect** with believers, centered around God's Word
- **Serve** others with your gifts to build the Body of Christ
- **Share** Jesus - the Good News of God's love



As you serve this year, we pray that you will experience meaningful opportunities for discipleship—not only for the children you serve, but also in your own walk with Christ. Your willingness to be authentic about how God is working in your life can have a lasting impact on the children in your care.

Our prayer is that, together, we will help kids discover that they are never too young to Be the Light and that their lives can make a difference for Jesus right now.

We are so thankful to serve alongside you and look forward to all that God will do through Valley Kids this year!

With gratitude,

Valley Kids Team

Carmie Maxfield

Taylor Abrahamsen

Eve Burtness

Michele Fitzsimons

Valley Kids Discipline Guidelines

Creating a Positive Environment for Every Child

Our goal is to help every child in Valley Kids programs get the maximum benefit from the time we have together. We want our classrooms to be places where kids feel safe, welcomed, loved, and able to learn, have fun, and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Appropriate classroom conduct and consistent procedures are essential to creating the best possible environment for all children. Our approach to discipline is not about punishment—it is about guiding children toward appropriate behavior, helping them refocus, and creating an environment where everyone can participate and thrive.

Proactive Classroom Expectations

Kids do their best when expectations are simple, clear, and easy to remember. Rather than giving children a long list of rules, we want to consistently reinforce three simple expectations:

Be Kind

Use kind words and actions toward others.

Be Respectful

Respect God, others, and His church by listening, following directions, and taking care of our space.

Be Responsible

Take care of yourself, your belongings, and the things around you.

Be Kind. Be Respectful. Be Responsible.

These three expectations provide a simple framework for guiding behavior in the classroom. We encourage you to consistently model and reinforce these expectations, helping children understand that their words, actions, and choices should reflect kindness, respect, and responsibility.

Our goal is to create a classroom where kids feel safe, loved, and ready to learn about Jesus.

When a Child Needs Additional Redirection

If a child is struggling to follow classroom expectations, our first response should always be calm, positive, and relational. We want to give kids opportunities to make good choices before moving to additional disciplinary steps.

1. Redirect and Refocus

Begin with a simple verbal reminder of the classroom's expectation. Get down on the child's level when appropriate, make eye contact, and clearly explain what you would like them to do.

Examples:

- "Remember, we are being respectful by listening."
- "Let's make a kind choice."
- "I need you to be responsible and take care of that."

Whenever possible, focus on what the child should do rather than simply telling them what not to do.

2. Additional Support

If the behavior continues, ask another Valley Kids volunteer to step in and help. This may involve additional redirection, providing extra support, or simply having another volunteer present with the child.

The goal is to help the child successfully re-engage with the group without unnecessarily removing them from the classroom.

3. Parent Assistance

If the behavior continues or becomes disruptive or unsafe, we will contact the child's parent or caregiver and ask them to come and assist.

This step is not intended to be punitive or embarrassing for the child. Rather, we recognize that parents know their children best and can often provide insight or support that will help the child successfully participate.

Our Goal

This process is intended to be simple, consistent, and easy to understand so that we can manage expectations across all age groups and Valley Kids programs.

Above all, we want to respond to children with patience, grace, and love while maintaining an environment where every child has the opportunity to learn, participate, and have fun.

Our volunteers are not expected to manage challenging behavior alone. We are a team, and we will support one another in creating a safe, welcoming, and Christ-centered environment for every child.



Injury Response Guide

for Children and Students

We understand that volunteers are not necessarily trained medical personnel, but we do want you to know some basic steps to take in case of emergencies. Adults should always err on the side of caution and not guess when responding to an injury.

Be Prepared:

- Familiarize yourself with location of:
 - First-aid kits (main church offices, classroom closets, preschool classroom bathrooms)
 - Emergency evacuation route (on wall inside classroom door)
 - Parents' cell phone list (on attendance sheet on clipboard)
 - Classroom EpiPen baskets (usually heart-shaped red plastic baskets on shelf)
 - Incident Report Forms (in plastic wall hangers outside elevator, resource room)
- Familiarize yourself with the allergies or health concerns of each child, and what to look for in case of a health problem. Speak with parent if you need clarification.
- Practice safety in everything you do. Don't try to be a "cool" leader by taking risks with kids!
- Carry your cell phone and don't be a "lone ranger" with injury response.
- Always take your clipboard and cell phone if you are taking kids to another area. This will allow you to check in late kids, have access to the parents' phone list, and be ready to take attendance in case of emergency evacuation.

First-Aid Kit Guidelines:

- Wash hands before and after first-aid procedures.
- Blood/bodily fluids: wear gloves and dispose of towels in a separate plastic bag.
- Over-the-counter medications should not be dispensed to children Gr. 4 and under.

Level 3: Serious Injuries or Medical Conditions Needing Emergency Professional Care (Brain, Spine & Throat Injuries, Trouble Breathing, Fainting, Severe Bleeding, etc.)

- Call 911 and ask for "paramedic." (Administer EpiPen first, if required.)
- Administer first aid (see First-Aid Chart on inside of closet door).
- Do not move child if vital organ damage or spine injury is suspected.
- Contact parent/guardian.
- Communicate with a ministry leader as soon as possible.
- Complete an *Incident Report Form* and give to ministry leader.

Level 2: Moderate Injuries Not Affecting Vital Organs

(Rolled Ankle, Bruising/Swelling due to physical contact, etc.)

- Administer first aid (see First-Aid Chart on inside of closet door).
- Contact parent/guardian.
- Communicate with a ministry leader as soon as possible.
- Complete an *Incident Report Form* and give to ministry leader.

Level 1: Minor Injuries

(Scrapes, Contusions, Minor Cuts, Nosebleeds, Sprains, etc.)

- Administer first aid (see First-Aid Chart on inside of closet door).
- Communicate injury to parent/guardian during or after event as necessary.
- Communicate with a ministry leader as soon as possible.
- Complete an *Incident Report Form* if the injury is such that it will not resolve shortly.

Evacuation Response Guide

Emergency exit routes are posted in the classrooms. A fire drill will occur each fall, where handbells will be used instead of the actual alarm. Follow these guidelines during an evacuation.

- Calmly gather all children:
 - For nursery, use evacuation cribs; hold remaining children in your arms.
 - For preschool classes, use the ropes to help the children stay together.
 - For elementary-aged children, have them line up.
- Take clipboard (with attendance sheet and classroom sign) and make sure all kids are accounted for as you leave the room.
- Shut light and door, and quietly proceed to posted exit. Find alternate route if necessary.
- Take attendance again at outdoor designated area, holding up class sign when ready.
- Return to classroom at the "all clear" signal, so parents can pick up their children.

Note: In case of a violent intruder, lock doors and gather children in the least visible corner of the room (bathrooms between rooms for preschoolers). Text staff member and wait for "all clear."

Incident Report Form

Name of Injured Party: _____ Phone: _____

Home Address: _____

Gender: ____M ____F Age: _____ Grade: _____

Time accident occurred: Hour _____ a.m. ____p.m. Date: _____

Place of accident (be specific): _____

Injured during a program activity? ____Yes ____No

Ministry Representative: _____ Program: _____

WITNESS TO ACCIDENT, IF ANY:

Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____

Cause of Accident:

Nature of Injury (what part(s) of body affected):

Action Taken:

Was a parent/legal guardian or other individual on site? ____Yes ____No

Was a parent/legal guardian or other individual notified? ____Yes ____No When: _____

Name of individual notified: _____ How: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Position: _____

(Person Completing Form)

VCBC Follow-Up:

COPY - Business Office

COPY - Program or Ministry Leader

Complete form and place in Executive Pastor's box

Health Information Policies and Procedures

Valley's Kids Ministry is dedicated to bringing church and family together for a child's spiritual growth. When parents inform us of their children's medical problems, we are better able to provide a safe environment during our programming. We strongly suggest that families attend the same service each week so staff and volunteers become familiar with a child's specific needs. What follows is a list of policies and forms that come under the topic of health concerns.

Snack Policies:

Our Kids ministry strives to be a "tree nut-free and peanut-free zone." The staff will screen snacks we provide against a list of tree nut and peanut allergens and will ask parents and teachers who may bring in snacks to do the same. We also try to provide a gluten free option. If a child has an allergy to a certain food, we will work with the family to make sure the child is not exposed to it. Parents are welcome to bring nut-free snacks for their own child if he or she cannot have any of the items below.

The following food are served at our Weekend Communities:

- Infants & Walkers - Cheerios (If you prefer to opt out, please notify your child's teacher.)
- 2's - Cheerios, Animal Crackers
- Preschool through Grade 4 (only for those attending two services) - Goldfish, Veggie Straws

Health/Allergy Forms:

Allergy policies and forms can be obtained from the Valley Kids Check-in Desk. For questions or concerns, please contact Taylor Abrahamsen at TAbrahamsen@ValleyCommunity.cc

1. For non-EpiPen related health issues, fill out the *Detailed Health Form (Part 1- Health and Allergy Concerns)*.
2. For EpiPen users, please also fill out the following:
 - a. *Detailed Health Form (Part 2- EpiPen Administration Permission)*.
 - b. *EpiPen Administration Permission Form*: A half-page form that accompanies the child's EpiPen(s) (preferably two) in a Ziploc bag to be kept in the classroom while child is attending. This bag should be taken home with the child each week. If there is a change in the child's allergies and/or dosage or conditions under which EpiPen is to be given, please submit a new form.
 - c. EpiPens must be properly and clearly labeled with:
 - i. The child's first and last name
 - ii. The dosage of epinephrine
 - iii. The expiration date (We will not accept expired EpiPens.)

EpiPen Administration Procedure:

Valley Kids staff and volunteers are not professional medical personnel. However, basic EpiPen administration training is offered for staff and volunteer leaders. While we attempt to have trained individuals present at all times, we cannot guarantee that such an individual will always be immediately available in the event of an emergency. An EpiPen is the only medication we will administer in an emergency. We do not provide EpiPens. They must be brought and returned home for each event the child attends.

1. The Ziploc bag is to be hand-delivered to the teacher or adult in charge of the classroom or event unless the child is approved to carry his or her own EpiPen.
2. Classroom staff or volunteers will put the EpiPens into the Emergency Containers located inside all classroom doors and large group areas where they can be picked up by the parent at the end of the service/program. A classroom teacher can show you the location of the container for your child's specific classroom and/or age group.
3. Should a child stay in the classroom for two services, a Valley Kids staff member or volunteer will be responsible for moving a child's EpiPen to his or her new location.
4. If your child has an anaphylactic reaction and has an EpiPen, the following will occur:
 - a. The EpiPens in their Ziploc bag will be retrieved from the Emergency Container, and the permission form will be quickly reviewed and matched to child.
 - b. An EpiPen will be administered by a Valley Kids staff member or volunteer. The EpiPen will not be administered until a trained individual is present.
 - c. 911 will be called.
 - d. The parents or legal guardian will be contacted.
5. Take your child's EpiPens with you at the end of the class or event. The Valley Kids staff is not responsible for any medication left at Valley and will not store EpiPens. If you accidentally leave EpiPens, you will be called to come pick them up from a locked cabinet located in the Valley Kids Office.

VALLEY COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
DETAILED HEALTH FORM (Part 1 - Health and Allergy Concerns)

Child's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____ Age: _____
Father or Legal Guardian's Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Mother or Legal Guardian's Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Doctor's Name: _____ Office Phone: _____

Please circle: My child has diabetes / My child has asthma / My child has: _____.

My child is allergic to

Food (peanuts, etc.): _____
Type of reaction: _____

Animals, or Insect Stings or Bites (dogs, bees, etc.): _____
Type of reaction: _____

Drug or Medication (Penicillin, etc.): _____
Type of reaction: _____

Environmental Agents (dust, pollen, etc.): _____
Type of reaction: _____

Latex
Type of reaction: _____

Other (such as seizures, asthma, diabetes, hemophilia)

Please specify: _____
Type of reaction: _____

If you have checked off any of the above boxes, please explain the severity and list the reactions:

My child no longer has allergic reaction symptoms to: _____

If your child has a severe allergy that requires the administration of an EpiPen, please complete *Part 2 - EpiPen Administration Permission Form* (the next page of this document).

I have read and understand that Valley Community Baptist Church Valley Kids staff will not administer any medication except for an EpiPen by a trained staff member or key volunteer in the event of an emergency.

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed Name

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date

DETAILED HEALTH FORM AND RELEASE (Part 2 - EpiPen Administration Permission)

To be completed by parent or legal guardian and kept on record by Valley's Kids Staff:

Child's Name as it appears on the EpiPen: _____

I hereby authorize the Valley Community Baptist Church Valley Kids staff and volunteers to administer an EpiPen to my child if he or she has known exposure and /or a severe allergic reaction to a specified allergen. I agree to release, indemnify, defend and hold harmless Valley Community Baptist Church and any of its staff, volunteers, or agents from any and all injuries, lawsuits, judgments, settlements, claims, liabilities, expenses (including reasonable legal expenses), demands, or actions against them arising out of their conduct, whether negligent or not, in administering or failing to administer the EpiPen prescribed specifically for my child. I am aware that the injection will likely be administered by a trained staff member or volunteer who is not a healthcare professional, and that if no trained individual is present the EpiPen will not be administered until one is present.

I have read the *Health Information Administration Policies and Procedures* and agree to provide two EpiPens as required.

I understand that 911 will always be called when an EpiPen is administered to my child.

The following EpiPen has been prescribed. Check as appropriate:

- **EpiPen** (the premeasured dose is 0.3mg. of Epinephrine)
Give the initial dose. Repeat the dose in 15 minutes if a professional emergency team has not arrived.
- **EpiPen Jr.** (the premeasured dose is 0.15mg. of Epinephrine)
Give the initial dose. Repeat the dose in 15 minutes if a professional emergency team has not arrived.
- My child has received adequate training on how and when to use an EpiPen and can use it properly in case of an emergency. He or she will carry EpiPens **at all times.**

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed Name

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date

To be completed by a Valley Kids staff member: The above has been reviewed with the parent or legal guardian. Additional remarks:

VCBC Valley Kids Staff Printed Name

VCBC Valley Kids Staff Signature

Date

EPIPEN ADMINISTRATION PERMISSION FORM AND RELEASE

To be completed by parent or legal guardian and placed in Ziploc bag with EpiPens:

Child's Name as it appears on the EpiPen: _____ Age/Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Emergency Cell/Phone: _____

My child is Allergic to: _____

I hereby authorize the Valley Community Baptist Church Valley Kids staff and volunteers to administer an EpiPen to my child if he or she has known exposure and/or severe allergic reaction to a specified allergen. I agree to release, indemnify, defend and hold harmless Valley Community Baptist Church and any of its staff, volunteers, or agents from any and all injuries, lawsuits, judgments, settlements, claims, liabilities, expenses (including reasonable legal expenses), demands, or actions against them arising out of their conduct, whether negligent or not, in administering or failing to administer the EpiPen prescribed specifically for my child. I am aware that the injection will likely be administered by a trained staff member or volunteer who is not a healthcare professional, and that if no trained individual is present the EpiPen will not be administered until one is present.

The following EpiPen has been prescribed. Check as appropriate:

- ☐ **EpiPen** (the premeasured dose is 0.3mg. of Epinephrine)
- ☐ **EpiPen Jr.** (the premeasured dose is 0.15mg. of Epinephrine)
- ☐ My child has received adequate training on how and when to use an EpiPen and can use it properly in case of an emergency. He or she will carry EpiPens **at all times.**

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed Name

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date

ABUSE PREVENTION HANDBOOK

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member:

Valley Community Baptist Church (Valley) is very serious about our responsibility to care for children. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

This handbook provides a general overview of our guidelines for Valley volunteers and staff members. Our guidelines are intended to create a safe environment for children by protecting children, volunteers, staff, and the mission of Valley. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

Sincerely,

Valley Community Baptist Church

OVERVIEW OF THE VALLEY SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we care for children and desire to protect them, Valley requires all volunteers and staff members to complete our **SAFETY STEPS** before employment or volunteer work begins. We developed the “KidSafe” process to screen everyone who serves within Valley Kids and Valley Students. This document outlines the process, the reasoning of each step, and additional helpful information. All of this is managed with our online database system, Church Community Builder (CCB).

STEP 1 - KidSafe Screening Process

STEP 1A - Application

The first step in the process is to apply. The application includes current contact information, three unrelated character references, the length of time that the applicant attended Valley, areas of interest, the applicant’s faith beliefs, agreement to Valley’s Statement of Faith, disclosure of criminal history and drug use, and consent for a background check. Applicants must have attended Valley for at least six months, express faith in Jesus, and agree to Valley’s Statement of Faith. Any exceptions must be approved by the Executive Pastor.

STEP 1B - Background Check

The background check is a helpful resource in vetting candidates. This allows us to verify any criminal history of the applicant.

STEP 1C - Interview

Once references are completed and checked, it is time for the interview by a staff member. When the interview is completed, the staff member will make any necessary notes in the applicant’s CCB profile.

STEP 2 - Staff Vetting

This gives our staff an opportunity to give feedback on people applying to work with kids and teenagers.

STEP 3 - Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training

Children and teenagers are valued in our church. All who serve with kids and teens are required to complete an online Sexual Abuse Awareness training module before final approval.

STEP 4 - Final Approval

The ministry leader will record the final approval in CCB, and the applicant will be added to the appropriate Ministry Volunteer Group.

STEP 5 - REVIEW MANUAL

Upon final approval, volunteers are required to review the Abuse Prevention handbook (which you are reading now) and agree to the manual by signing that they understand and will comply with the requirements.

Ministry Staff Members

All Ministry Staff Members go through the same vetting and training procedures, along with more detailed interviews to ensure that each staff member is properly trained and qualified.

CHILD SAFETY

Abuse Tolerance

Valley has a zero-tolerance policy regarding abuse in our programs and activities. Every volunteer and staff member at Valley is responsible to act in the best interest of each child.

If volunteers or staff members observe inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspect abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to an immediate supervisor or any Valley Kids staff member.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

Reporting Violation of Policy

To maintain a safe environment for our children, Valley staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse of a child should be directed to an immediate supervisor, or the Valley Ministry Leader.

Consequences of Prohibited or Harmful Acts

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act will be prohibited from future participation in all activities and programming that involve children or vulnerable populations at Valley. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Valley.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children or vulnerable populations at Valley.

Reporting Suspicions of Abuse

STEP 1 - Report to Supervisor

Staff and volunteers at Valley are required to report suspicion of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to their immediate ministry supervisor or appropriate Valley staff member. This reporting must be done as soon as possible after the incident (preferably on the same day).

STEP 2 - Speak with Appropriate People

After hearing from a staff member or volunteer about suspected abuse, Valley staff will speak with the person who reported the suspected abuse, to get detailed information about the entire conversation.

STEP 3 - Report to the State

The state of Connecticut requires that any person (staff or volunteer) having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, must make a report to the Department of Children and Families within 12 hours of becoming aware of the problem. This should be completed by the person who identifies issue.

STEP 4 - Valley Response

Valley will take appropriate action when a report of abuse occurs. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported in accordance with this policy.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities, Valley will provide the child or the child's parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow the child (or parent, on the child's behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as counseling options. If a parent(s) is under suspicion, Valley will seek counsel before proceeding with any discussion with the parent.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

Nursery-age children

Because very young children may require hands-on assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies.

Diaper Changing Policy

There should at least be two people in the room when changing occurs.

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children must be changed only on changing stations.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms, the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery or classrooms will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded - ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing

School-age children

School-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, they should be accompanied by another worker. If another worker is not available, they should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Special Needs Children/Individuals

Parents need to offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of people with Special Needs.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Meeting program objectives may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to interact with children individually. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting one-on-one with children:

Individual Meetings

One-on-one interactions between an adult and a child or youth must be conducted in an environment that provides notice to parents and visibility to other adults. Leaders are expected to adhere to the following rules:

- Notify parents and obtain approval from one parent or guardian unless the one-on-one interaction is spontaneous, brief, and in the context of a larger activity
- No one-on-one interactions behind closed doors. If a room at the church is used, an open door or window must provide visibility. The adult should face the door and should be easily visible through the window.
- No late-night meetings.
- These interactions include virtual communication (Zoom/FaceTime)
- Follow all expectations given by the parent(s).

Transportation

Adults may need to provide transportation for students in Grades 5-12 for church activities. Adults should avoid being alone in the car with one student. In rare circumstances, an adult may have no other option but to transport one student. In this case, the adult should be known by the family and should contact the parent to obtain permission before departure. The student should be driven directly to his/her drop-off location.

The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- Children should never be transported without parental permission.
- Children should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- Cell phones may only be used "hands free" or used with a headset by the driver. Text messages should never be composed or read while the vehicle is in motion.

Driver Requirements:

- Drivers must be at least 25 years of age to transport students.
- A driver background check must be completed for all trips.
- Drivers driving personal vehicles must carry a minimum of \$100,000/\$300,000 liability coverage.

Driving Standards:

- Every passenger must sit in a seat and have their seatbelt on when traveling.
- Vehicles must not be overloaded with luggage and must not exceed the legal speed limit.
- Students may not be transported on the outside of the vehicle. (No roofs, hoods, or back of trucks)
- No students may leave the vehicle while on the roadway, stopped in traffic, or at a traffic signal.
- Those driving must confirm all students are present and accounted for before departure.

Public Transportation:

- At times, particularly during trips, public transportation will be utilized. When on public transportation, the leader must ensure he or she is the last one from the group out of the transportation.

PARENTS**Parental Contact**

Parents who leave their children in the care of Valley staff members and volunteers for services and activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Valley activities.

Parental Involvement

Parents/Guardians are the primary disciplers of their kids. Valley Kids and Valley Students partner with parents to help kids and teenagers honor God and grow in Christ.

Dropping kids off may create anxiety for both kids and parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are welcome to remain with their child, but we ask that this only occurs two times. If a parent/guardian feels the need to continue to accompany their child, they will be asked to complete the "KidSafe" process. This ensures that those who remain in the classroom are properly vetted. A parent who is visiting or observing must not be disruptive, distracting, or combative. If this does occur, the parent may be instructed to leave.

When parents drive their kids or teens to ministry events, it does not always make sense to return home. Therefore, parents may remain in a common area in the foyer or reception area while the event takes place. If a parent wants to serve, they must complete the “Kidsafe” process.

Parents are always encouraged to be part of Valley services and programs in which their children are involved.

Release of Children

At the end of the program or activity, children will be released to their parents or legal guardians. Adults picking up children in Grades 4 and under must show the class leader a sticker with a code that matches the child’s and initial the computerized check-out sheet. Children in Grades 5 and up may be released without any direct adult pickup. If a staff member or volunteer is uncertain whether to release a child, they should immediately locate or contact the responsible Ministry Staff person or their designee before releasing the child.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Valley restricts touching and affection to those activities commonly deemed as appropriate.

Examples of Appropriate Physical Interactions between Adults and Youth:

- Side hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- Pats on the shoulder, arm around shoulder
- Handshakes, “High-fives,” fist “bumps”
- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms

Examples of Inappropriate Physical Interactions between Adults and Youth:

- Full frontal hugs
- Kissing of any kind (no cheek-to-cheek greetings)
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas
- Showing affection while in isolated areas of a building
- Sleeping in a bed with a student
- Touching/rubbing knees or legs
- Male-to-female wrestling
- Male-to-female piggyback rides or shoulder rides
- Tickling
- Massages given in private locations or with the opposite gender

Staff or Volunteer Leader/Student Romantic Relationships

No leader may have a romantic relationship with a student. If a leader and a student engage in a romantic relationship, the leader will be removed from their position immediately.

Valley is committed to protecting the children in our care. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of Valley staff and volunteers must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Valley programs:

1. Pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff or volunteers and children (as described above) are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in the Valley setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden as previously noted. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to a Valley Ministry Leader.
3. Appropriate physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other Valley staff and volunteers.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

MISCELLANEOUS GUIDELINES

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, email, instant messaging, online chat rooms, and other social media.

Possession of Sexually Oriented Materials

Valley staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on Valley property or in the presence of children.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers at Valley should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

Medication

At times, particularly during trips, students may need to take prescribed medications. Medications prescribed may be dispensed by volunteers or staff. All students on trips will be required to complete a medical form. The use of over-the-counter medications must have written or verbal permission from the parent or guardian.

Intoxicants

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with children at Valley. Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to children.

Tobacco

Valley is a tobacco-free facility. Valley requires staff and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products on the property, and while in the presence of children or their parents. Valley staff and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to children.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Valley staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to provide nurturing care to children. Staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Internet / Electronic Media

No computer at or related to Valley is to be used by staff members, volunteers, children, or volunteers to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy will lead to discipline from the Valley Ministry Leader. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the Valley Ministry Leader.

If you have any questions or concerns about the materials in this handbook, please contact your ministry leader

Valley Kids Team Handbook Agreement

I have received and reviewed a copy of the Valley Kids Team Handbook. I understand the guidelines set forth within the handbook and agree to adhere to them during my service at Valley.

Volunteer's name (please print)

Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

