



# Safety & Accountability Policy

We live in a world that is consumed with worry. Jesus told us,

***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*** *Philippians 4:6-7*

Children’s safety is a top priority, and there is no greater safety than in the loving arms of the Savior Jesus Christ. As Jesus is the Great Shepherd and Protector of His children, leaders are charged to keep their “sheep” safe. Leaders also have the responsibility to teach the Word of God (i.e., the curriculum), to be God’s ambassador in the classroom, and prayerfully lead those hearts ready into a relationship with the Savior.

Our policy is to have at a minimum one teacher and one assistant in every classroom for accountability and to assist with classroom activities. Assistants must be 16 years old or older.

## **Classroom Size**

Calvary Chapel Sarasota will not turn any children away who desire to attend the children’s program. The Lord always provides. However, as the number of kids increases in each class, the number of leaders must increase as well to ensure that two basic goals are met. First, kids must have an environment conducive to hearing God’s Word, and second, we want to insure the physical safety of every child in our care.

When these ratios are exceeded, a call for help needs to be made through one of two avenues. First, ask a parent to stay and help you. They might enjoy the opportunity to be in their child’s class to see what happens and also have an opportunity to get to know you – their child’s teacher.

Second, call one of the ministry leaders (e.g., send a text) to come to you and ask them to either stay and help or to seek help elsewhere if they are unavailable. The emergency help paging number for the nursery is “99” (*the super saint number!*). If anyone approved to work in Children’s Ministry sees the number “99” displayed in the Sanctuary it is a call for help.

## **Sign-in & Pick-up**

All children must sign-in. The reason for all kids signing in is three-fold: (1) for teachers to know the names of the kids; (2) a means to address discipline issues that necessitate parent involvement (*i.e., parents can be texted from the check-in stations*); and (3) to alert teachers to any medical condition or allergies.

The children's sign-in system is automated and provides for quicker family check-in through a self check-in process. There is a registration assistant at each of the services 15 minutes prior to the beginning of each service and at least 15 minutes after the start of each service. The registration assistant will be able to facilitate any technical issues and add or edit families as needed.

In a perfect world, the parents or guardians sign in their children and the children wear their stickers the entire time they are in class. The stickers sometimes become items to play with however. Show grace, but encourage the kids to leave them on their shirt or dress as this is ultimately for the child's safety.

## **Paging System**

The paging system is to be used for emergencies, discipline action, or situations that are beyond the control of the volunteer (e.g., having an infant in the nursery that is uncontrollably crying beyond a reasonable time limit or when there is insufficient nursery volunteer support).

The paging system can be accessed from either an app on specific leader phones or on the check-in systems. The check-in systems also provide a means of texting parents/guardians. For example, volunteers might send a text to worried parents in service with a comforting message to enjoy the service as everything is okay or texting them to request their presence for a needed discipline or medical issue involving their child.

The sign-in systems are located in: The **Nursery** and outside of **Room A2**

## **Classroom Safety**

Teachers and assistants are not to be left alone with children in the classrooms. There must be two volunteers present at all times. Additionally, children must never be left alone in the classroom.

Parents expect to drop off their children with reasonable lead time before the adult service begins. This is a friendly and courteous gesture towards families with children to grant them time to build adult friendships within the church. It also facilitates other volunteers being able to focus on their service roles elsewhere in the church knowing their kids are safe in a room with the eligible volunteers.

Therefore, **be in your classroom 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.** This affords you the opportunity to talk with the children in advance of the lesson, and grants you time to connect with the parent(s). Take advantage of this "extra" time to help children and families feel welcome in your class. Your efforts in welcoming children can help calm new family worries (*which are sometimes legitimate concerns*).

Parents are permitted to observe their child in class. At no time, however, are parents allowed to be alone with any child except their own. Encourage parents to “work their way out” into the adult service, but if not, then put them to use within the classroom as you are able.

The nursery must have a minimum of two (2) people at all times during each service. At least one (1) person to minister to the infants and one (1) person to minister to the toddlers will be scheduled. And for each service, at least one of the volunteers scheduled must be an adult. The volunteers may combine efforts and all work together (i.e., share the responsibilities with both the infants and toddlers), but please do not leave a single leader alone in the nursery. This is to ensure we maintain two-person accountability.