

MBC KIDS MINISTRY – BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

At MBC Kids, our mission is to provide a safe, welcoming, and Christ-centered environment where children can grow in their relationship with God, build friendships, and experience joy in learning His Word. In order to accomplish this, we strive to encourage positive behavior and provide consistent guidelines for handling challenges. Manassas Baptist Church Kids has developed a detailed set of policies regarding children's behavior management and action steps. Every leader/volunteer is required to follow each policy when handling behavior issues.

Our guiding principles are simple but essential. All correction should reflect Christ's love, grace, and patience. Every child is to be respected, valued, and kept safe. We believe in positive reinforcement, focusing on encouraging good choices rather than punishing mistakes, and we work to make sure children thrive by setting clear and consistent expectations.

In General, Manassas Baptist Church operates under the following policies:

- Psychological abuse, coercion, and physical abuse, or injurious treatment of children is not permissible under any circumstances
- No corporal punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, squeezing, jerking, biting, kicking, will ever be used.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment or verbal abuse, including those that are shaming, frightening, or humiliating.
- No child shall be denied food, toileting, or rest privileges as punishments.
- No harsh or profane language or implied threats promising physical punishment shall be used.
- No child shall be punished for soiling or wetting him/herself or not using the toilet.
- No coercion when disciplining a child, such as rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping of any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

Positive behavior is encouraged through praise and recognition. Leaders are encouraged to acknowledge good choices by offering words of affirmation such as, "Great job listening!" We also use reward systems, like smiley tickets or participation points, and provide opportunities for children to serve in leadership roles such as line leader, prayer helper, or supply assistant.

When misbehavior occurs, leaders are expected to remain calm, firm, and loving. Steps include giving a gentle reminder and clearly restating the expectation, redirecting the child to another activity or seat, and, if needed, offering a short break to pause and reflect. Leaders (minimum of two) may then talk privately with the child about better choices. Here are a few examples of ways to handle different scenarios

1. When a Child is Misbehaving

- Stay calm, speak gently, and address the behavior (not the child).
- Redirect to a positive activity (helping, answering a question, sitting near leader).
- Use positive reinforcement (“Thank you for listening,” “I love how you’re sitting quietly”).
- If behavior continues:
 - Give a clear reminder of expectations.
 - If needed, move child closer to teacher or separate from distraction.
 - If serious or ongoing, notify Children’s Director.

2. When a Child is Upset or Crying

- Get down at their level and speak softly.
- Ask simple questions: “Are you hurt?” “Do you miss mom/dad?”
- Offer comfort (toy, coloring page, sit next to helper).
- If inconsolable after 10 minutes → notify parents.

3. When a Child Refuses to Participate

- Give them space, don’t force.
- Offer two gentle choices: “Would you like to join the game or help me hand out crayons?”
- Encourage but allow them to rejoin when ready.

If all possible interventions have been attempted, please report the situation to the Children’s Director/Minister and parents for further steps. For the safety of all, there are zero-tolerance behaviors, such as physical aggression, bullying, and intentional destruction of property. These require immediate intervention and parent notification. We also view discipleship as a partnership with parents. Parents will be informed of both positive and concerning behaviors. They will be encouraged to reinforce expectations at home and invited to work with leaders when ongoing issues arise. Together, we aim to provide consistency, love, and support for each child’s growth in faith and character.

Background Checks & Ongoing Screening

For the safety and well-being of all children, every person serving in Kids Ministry must undergo a thorough **background check** before beginning their volunteer role. In Virginia, state law requires that volunteers who will be alone with or supervise children must complete a background check prior to service and then **repeat the check every five years**. [Virginia Law+1](#) This ensures we maintain high standards of trustworthiness and accountability in our ministry.

Nursery Diapering/Restroom Procedures

In our Nursery area, extra care and precision are needed as infants and toddlers are more vulnerable and require constant supervision. Here are key guidelines:

- Only volunteers who have completed background checks and received training may serve in the nursery.

- Two adults should always be present (two-adult rule).
- Diapering must be done in designated changing areas with gloves, sanitized surfaces, and proper hygiene (handwashing before and after).
- Soothers, bottles, blankets, and personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name.
- Infants should always be visible and within reach; never leave a baby unattended or with another child.
- Feeding should be done following parents' instructions; check for allergies or special dietary needs.
- For safety, no volunteer should be alone with a child in a nursery rest area, even during naps; always maintain sight and sound supervision.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, leaders should remain calm and alert the nearest leader for support. One leader should stay with the child while another immediately contacts the Children's Director. If the situation is severe—such as unconsciousness, a seizure, or severe bleeding—911 should be called right away and the parent contacted immediately. After the situation is under control, an incident report must be completed and submitted.

Fire Alarms and Evacuations

If a fire alarm sounds or an evacuation is required, leaders should calmly stop the activity, line the children up, and take attendance. It is important to count the children and bring the attendance sheet along as the group is led outside to the designated safe zone. Leaders must keep the group together at all times until the official "all clear" is given.

Strangers or Unsafe Situations

For the safety of every child, leaders should never release a child to anyone who does not have the proper check-in tag. If someone unfamiliar enters the classroom, leaders must immediately alert security or the Children's Director. In the event of a lockdown, doors should be locked, and all safety instructions must be followed without delay.

General Classroom Guidelines

To ensure safety and accountability, two leaders must always be present in every classroom. No leader should ever be alone with a child. Cell phones should be kept silent but accessible in case of emergencies. Each class should conclude with both cleanup and prayer, setting a positive tone as children leave.

Emergency Protocol Summary

In all emergencies, leaders are expected to notify the Children's Director and parents immediately. Whether responding to illness, injury, fire, or unsafe circumstances, leaders should remain with children at all times, follow established safety procedures, and complete an incident report when necessary.

Finally, our leaders/volunteers serve as role models and are expected to demonstrate Christ's love in words and actions. They must remain consistent, fair, and gentle, avoiding raising voices, shaming, or any form of physical remediation. Instead, they are encouraged to pray with and for children, modeling forgiveness and grace. By serving in MBC Kids, leaders commit to following this policy with love, consistency, and prayer. Our goal is to nurture children in their walk with Christ while creating a safe, joyful environment where they can thrive.