

January 2024

Children's Ministry Volunteer Handbook

Bethany Christian Church

BCC kids

HERE WE GO!

Welcome to the exciting world of Children's Ministry at Bethany Christian Church. We are so glad that you have joined the BCC Kids' Ministry team! It's a great opportunity to point kids to God and make a difference in their lives.

We get to show kids how amazing God is in all kinds of ways. We get to show God's love for them and reflect God's love to them, pray for and with them, and speak His truths to them. Kids need people in their lives who will show up to hang out with them, love them (and like them too), and show them what it looks like to follow Jesus.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. Thank you for caring about kids and families. And thank you for letting God use you.

I am honored to partner with you in ministry to impact the lives of kids and parents here at BCC.

Rachel Ohmes, BCC Children's Pastor
765.643.5713 (office)
www.bccanderson.org

RESOURCES

BCC Kids' Webpage



<https://bccanderson.org/get-connected/kids>

Bethany Kids FB Group



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/226304977895438>

5th & 6th Grade FB Group



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/181016785303993>

Volunteer Resources



<https://bccanderson.org/cmvolunteers>

Sign up for BCC Kids' Text Alerts



Text @bethcckids to 81010

OR <https://bccanderson.org/kids-text-newsletter-signup>

BCC KIDS CLASSES

Age Range: 18 months
(depending on development) to 4
years (promotions in June & Dec)

Times: Classes at both 9am &
10:30am



**TODDLER/
PRESCHOOL**

Age Range: Birth-18
months (promotion
varies, depending on
the development of
each individual child)
Times: Childcare at
both 9am & 10:30am

NURSERY

PRE-K/K

Age Range: 4 years
to completion of
Kindergarten
(promotion in June)
Times: Classes at
both 9am & 10:30am

ELEMENTARY

Age Range: 1st grade through 6th grade
Times: Discovery Zone Kids' Worship at 9am;
Grade-specific Sunday School classes at 10:30am

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a ministry team, there are a few things we'd like everyone to abide by.

Work Hard - you are so important to our ministry! We need you! So please, show up on time, give it your all, and be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to you.

Be Kind - ministry is all about people. To be effective in ministry, you need to reflect God's heart for people, with kids, parents and guardians, and other volunteers. Ask God to have His Spirit help you treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and love.

Be Like Jesus - God is entrusting you to be an influence in the lives of kids. While no one is perfect in loving others, we do expect every volunteer to seek the Lord on how to



make wise decisions and to continue to allow the Holy Spirit to transform you into the likeness of Jesus every day - especially in key areas like treatment of others on our team, social media presence, drug or alcohol use, and sexual behavior.

ATTIRE

Please be aware of your appearance so that you present a **positive** and **welcoming** impression.

Keep in mind that you will be interacting with children, and that could involve quite a bit of up-and-down movement and floor time.

Should you decide to wear shorts or a dress/skirt, please make sure the length is appropriate for working with children in a church.

Please do not wear low-cut or strapless shirts or halter tops.

The Children's Pastor reserves the right to ask any Children's Ministry volunteer who is wearing inappropriate clothing to step out for the morning. This will be uncomfortable and embarrassing for all involved. So, please...

Use discretion— if you think your clothing is questionable or could be a distraction, please do not wear it.



CONCEALED WEAPONS POLICY

As a Children's Ministry volunteer at Bethany Christian Church, I recognize the great responsibility of caring for the students and their safety.

I also realize that while working with minors my right to carry a weapon is surrendered.



This means that I cannot have a weapon on my person at any time while participating in any BCC Children's Ministry activities on or off the church property.

Our policy at BCCAnderson is that leaders with concealed weapon permits may keep their weapons locked in their personal vehicles during family and children's activities.

At no point should the weapon be removed from the vehicle or put on display for anyone to see.

If at any point I disregard this policy, I am aware that I may be asked to step down from my volunteer position as a Children's Ministry volunteer.

CELL PHONE & PHOTO POLICY

- Out of respect and protection for our children and families, it is important to **put away anything that may cause a distraction** while in the classroom. This includes cell phones, iPods, cameras, and any other similar devices.
- We do have some families who prefer that pictures of their children NOT be available to the public. If you take pictures of the children in your class, **no pictures should be stored on devices or posted to any website or social media outlet.** Please forward pictures or videos to the Children's Pastor (765-610-2527, rachel.ohmes@bccanderson.org), who will then decide if appropriate pictures should be posted to the church website or social media. This is to protect our children and our families.
- At no time should pictures or videos be taken while in bathrooms, while children or adults are in any state of undress, or when those being photographed show any discomfort about their picture being taken (whether verbally or non-verbally).



WELLNESS POLICY

To ensure the health of the children and volunteers, we ask that sick children and sick volunteers not attend any Children's Ministry event. Please stay home when any of the following symptoms are present:

- A fever of 99 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea or vomiting— no matter what the cause (i.e. medication, teething, etc.)
- Common cold, flu, and COVID symptoms (from onset through day 5)
- Any symptom of childhood diseases such as Scarlet Fever, German Measles, Mumps, Chicken Pox, or Whooping Cough
- Sore throat, recently-onset cough, or croup
- Colored mucus (runny nose that is not clear; in the eyes)
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection: boils, ringworm, impetigo, or any open sores that leak fluid/blood
- Pinkeye, redness of the eyes, or any other eye infection
- Any communicable disease
- Lice— including the presence of eggs or nits

Again, this applies to all children and volunteers. If you have any of these symptoms, please stay home from your scheduled time to serve.

If you suspect a child is sick during class, please contact the Children's Pastor and they will contact the family if needed.



FINDING A SUB



If for any reason you are unable to be in the classroom on your scheduled day, **please try to find a substitute before calling/texting the Children's Pastor.** Don't worry though—it's easier than you think!

1 YOUR TEAM

Call other leaders in the grade/age level where you serve and attempt to coordinate a switch.

2 SUBSTITUTE POOL

Check the volunteer schedule to see if there are any potential subs listed at the bottom of the schedule. See if one of them would be willing and available to take your Sunday.

3 CHILDREN'S PASTOR

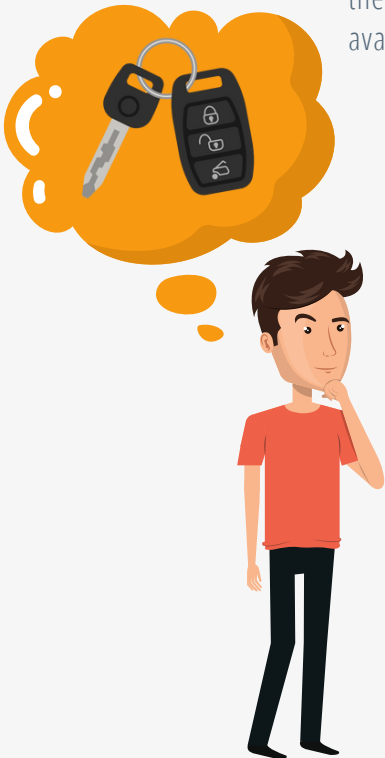
If steps 1 and 2 didn't produce the desired results, please call or text Rachel Ohmes at 765-610-2527 as soon as possible.



In the event of sickness or an emergency late Saturday night or early Sunday, please contact Rachel Ohmes. And don't worry...we'll get it covered!

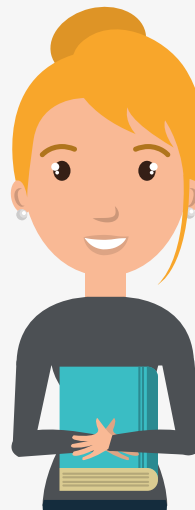
DID YOU KNOW?

Eight out of 10 times, finding a sub (someone to volunteer in your place) is easier than finding a missing receipt or your car keys.



THE RULE OF TWO

Ideally, there should be two adults/teens (ideally non-related) present when supervising one or more children.



SAFETY GUIDELINES

As a member of our ministry team, it is essential that you practice healthy boundaries with kids at all times, for their safety and yours. These guidelines exist to protect kids from harm and to protect you from false allegations.

Never Be Alone with a Child - no volunteer should ever be alone with a child at any time. Ideally, there should be a minimum of two volunteers in a room. If you find yourself alone with a child, please walk with the child to the Check-In Area and contact the Children's Pastor. Alternative arrangements will be made.

You may not enter a bathroom alone with a child or allow more than one child to enter a bathroom without volunteer supervision. If a child needs assistance in the bathroom, the door must be left open and other volunteers must be present.

Document All Incidents - if a child in your care is injured or falls ill, or an incident occurs, an incident report must be filled out and turned in to the Children's Pastor.

Follow Diaper Procedures - only trained volunteers over the age of 18 may change diapers, and other adults must be present while the diaper change occurs.

ONE ADULT SHOULD

NEVER

BE ALONE WITH A CHILD

OTHER THAN THEIR OWN

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- Susan is teaching 2nd grade class together with Jeff. She just received a text message telling her that she's needed in the Nursery where her 2-year-old son wouldn't stop crying.
- Jeff is in the classroom getting ready for the morning. Parents are starting to drop off their children, but Susan (the other adult volunteer) is not there yet.
- Jeff and Susan allowed little Jimmy to go to the bathroom. It was 7 minutes ago. They're beginning to get worried. Jeff steps out to make sure Jimmy is okay.

NOTE for Nursery, Toddler, & Pre-K Classes: If unforeseen circumstances (unplanned situations) make it difficult or impossible to abide by the two-adult rule, **immediately inform the Children's Pastor, a Check-In Area worker, or a member of the Safety Team.**

GOOD TOUCH VS BAD TOUCH

Then people brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. — Matthew 19.13



APPROPRIATE

- BRIEF HUGS OR SIDE HUGS
- PATS ON THE SHOULDER OR BACK
- HANDSHAKES
- HIGH-FIVES, HAND SLAPPING, AND FIST BUMPS
- VERBAL PRAISE
- TOUCHING HANDS, FACES, SHOULDERS, AND ARMS OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH
- ARM AROUND SHOULDERS
- HOLDING HANDS WHILE WALKING WITH SMALL CHILDREN
- SITTING BESIDE SMALL CHILDREN
- KNEELING OR BENDING DOWN FOR HUGS WITH SMALL CHILDREN
- HOLDING HANDS DURING GROUP PRAYER

Age-appropriate, positive physical contact nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security in their interactions with adults. It is applied to meet the needs of the children and not the adults.

INAPPROPRIATE ✘

- LENGTHY EMBRACES
- KISSES
- HOLDING CHILDREN OVER FIVE YEARS OLD ON THE LAP
- TOUCHING BOTTOMS, CHESTS, OR GENITAL AREAS OTHER THAN FOR APPROPRIATE DIAPERING OR TOILETING OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS
- SHOWING AFFECTION IN ISOLATED AREAS
- OCCUPYING A BED WITH A CHILD
- TOUCHING KNEES OR LEGS
- WRESTLING
- TICKLING CHILDREN
- PIGGYBACK RIDES
- ANY TYPE OF MASSAGE GIVEN BY A CHILD TO AN ADULT OR BY AN ADULT TO A CHILD
- ANY FORM OF UNWANTED AFFECTION
- COMMENTS OR COMPLIMENTS (SPOKEN, WRITTEN, OR ELECTRONIC) THAT RELATE TO PHYSIQUE OR BODY DEVELOPMENT
- GIVING GIFTS OR MONEY TO INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

TRANSITION TIME

The period of time between the First and Second service (approximately 10:15 to 10:30) when children are dropped off and picked up.



The first service team cannot leave the classroom until the arrival of at least two second service adults.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP POLICIES

Kids are under the care and supervision of their parents until they are checked in to the BCC Children's Ministry. We require all kids 6th grade and under to be checked in by a parent or guardian, and that the following steps are taken . . .

Check-in - kids must be checked in for gatherings by parents/guardians using our check-in system. The adults will get a barcoded family-specific security sticker that matches their child(ren)'s unique code. Parents/guardians should keep that barcode tag for checkout at the end of the morning.

If a child has a special need, medical issue, or allergy, parents & guardians should alert the check-in team and/or the child's teacher.

Check-out - a child must remain in their classroom (Nursery & Toddlers/Preschool) or lined up in the hallway with their class and teachers (Pre-K through 6th grade) until their name is called by the Check-in Area volunteer.

All parents/guardians must have their barcode tag and must give this tag to the Check-In Area volunteer to pick up their child.

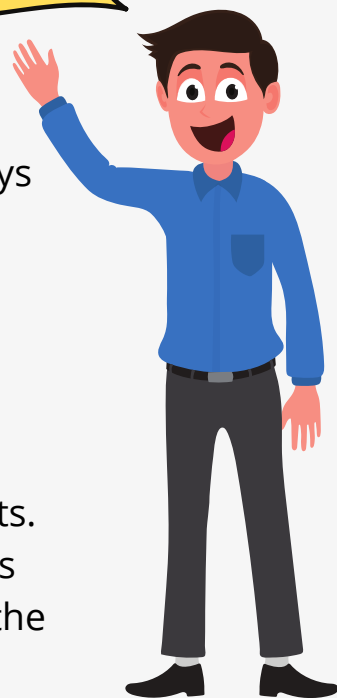
Do not release a child to a parent or guardian unless they have a matching sticker, even if it's someone you know. This will communicate to everyone that we take safety seriously.

If a parent/guardian loses their barcode tag, they will meet with a member of the Check-In Area team or the Children's Pastor to look them up in the computer system to make sure the adult is authorized to pick up the child. The parent/guardian will need to complete a Check-Out Child Release Card before their child will be turned over to them.

BYE! HAVE A GREAT WEEK!

Teachers, please...

- make sure at least one teen/adult leader stays with your class until all of the children have been picked up.
- do not send children out to look for their parents.
- do not take children out to meet their parents. The Check-In Area volunteer or the Children's Pastor will call the cell number provided on the tag to locate guardians who are late.



HANDLING EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency, DO NOT release children to their parents or leave your class to find your own children.

WEATHER - you will be instructed to take your class to the nearest secure room (interior room of Toddler class, Pre-K/K snack/craft room, bathrooms across from the Fellowship Hall).

FIRE - you will quickly and calmly walk your class to the closest exterior door and group them on a nearby grassy area. Have the children sit in a tight group. Volunteers should watch the children the entire time.

ACTIVE THREAT - quickly and quietly close the door and turn off the lights. Lock the door (if possible) or use a table to barricade the door. Have kids and volunteers huddle together out of sight of the windows and door.

If an emergency occurs, kids will not be released to parents/guardians until the area is cleared, until the Children's Pastor is given the all-clear signal by the Safety Team and/or local law enforcement, and until the guardians have the security sticker or have been cleared for pickup. DO NOT release children on your own.

DEFINING ABUSE

Our church policy is to report any signs or suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Sexual abuse is any occurrence in which an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor. It could be contact behavior (touching) or non-contact behavior (pictures, spying, exposure, or conversation).

Physical abuse is any contact intended to cause physical pain or injury to a child. The law does permit parents to use corporal punishment, but the discipline has to be reasonable.

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or supervision. Neglect can also include exposure to harmful substances or situations.

Contact the Children's Pastor immediately if you see signs of abuse, such as depression, sudden changes in behavior, paranoia, fear of their caregivers or others, aggressive behavior, anxiety, bed-wetting or accidents in their underwear, imitating or talking about sexual behaviors, wounds or pain, unexplained bruises, or untreated illnesses.

If you would like to receive professional training on spotting child abuse, contact the Children's Pastor.

MANDATED REPORTING

According to Indiana state law, all volunteers that work directly with children are considered **mandated reporters**.

Should you suspect abuse or neglect with a child in your care, the first step is to talk to the Children's Pastor (or another BCC Pastor) directly, as soon as possible, but not in the presence of other children (including your own). Do not attempt to gather information from the child or speak with the parents about your concerns. Do not talk with other team members about your concerns.

You will be asked for information such as:

- who was involved
- what are your suspicions
- statements the child involved may have made to you

Together, and with other BCC Pastoral Staff, we will decide who should make the report of your suspicions of abuse and/or neglect. You may be contacted by the Indiana Department of Child Services for further answers to questions and important details.

If you would like training on the detection and prevention of child abuse, contact the BCC Children's Pastor or contact the Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral at **800-299-1627**.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. — Ephesians 4.29

Keep your communication positive and uplifting. ALWAYS look for ways to express praise, encouragement, kindness, and respect.

NEVER speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation. DO NOT talk in a way that is (or could be construed as) intimidating, shaming, derogatory, or demeaning.

Think about the tone of voice you use, and pay close attention to how you can soften it when you speak to your students, even if you're correcting a behavior problem.

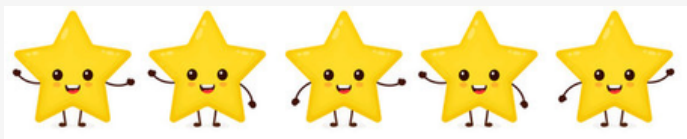
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

It is the heart of the BCCAnderson Children's Ministry to make **every effort possible** to ensure the safety and well-being of every child and volunteer that is in our area.

There can be occasions where some children have a difficult time adjusting to a classroom environment. **We ask that you be proactive in letting the Children's Pastor or other BCC staff members know of any cases in which our standards are being compromised by a child.**

To limit the amount of discipline needed, here are some tips:


- **Prepare Ahead of Time** - become familiar with the curriculum and gather supplies before kids enter the room (by 8:45 & 10:15 AM). When they arrive, be prepared to greet and engage them.
- **Establish Rules and Expectations Early** - communicate the rules and expectations consistently at the beginning of every gathering. Remind the kids of our guiding principles:
Is it safe? Is it respectful? Is everyone participating?



- **Be Proactive** - make sure there are enough adults and youth helpers to maintain order in the room. Look for kids who may talk too much around each other and split them up. Encourage kids who have trouble listening to leaders and look for ways for them to serve and be a leader to other students.
- **Talk to Parents** - if you feel like you should talk to the parents/guardians, always do so in an encouraging, gentle, and positive way. Ask them how you can help their child.

When discipline for a child is needed, please avoid using words or tones of voice that may frighten a child or may make them feel shameful.

While in our care, we will never physically discipline a child — spanking or hand popping, etc.

The Children's Pastor should be contacted immediately when a child exhibits the following behaviors: 

- Temper tantrums or loud outbursts of crying
- Utter defiance and repeated refusal to cooperate
- Use of foul language
- Hitting, biting, kicking, or other violent behavior

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The discipline policy of the BCC Children's Ministry is:

- **1st time: Remind/Redirect** - get on the child's level and look them in the eye. Give a verbal warning, reminding them of the expected behaviors in class. Redirect their attention if needed.
- **2nd time: Remove** - if the child does not return to acceptable behavior when you give them a redirection, it may be necessary to remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to rejoin the group. Place them in an area away from the other kids for no more than one minute per year of age.
- **3rd time: Refer** - contact the Children's Pastor via text or small (non-emergency) walkie-talkie to have the parents/guardians remove the child from the classroom. The parents/guardians may also stay in the classroom until the behavior is under control.

Never attempt to physically discipline a child, belittle a child, or administer corporal punishment.



Any instances of "foul language" or physical altercations with other children or leaders will result in immediately contacting parents/guardians to pick up the child.

If the inappropriate behavior choices require the Children's Pastor to intervene on **two consecutive Sundays**, the following Sunday a parent will need to stay with the child for the duration of the class in order to provide direction and assistance to the volunteer and demonstrate appropriate behavior to the child.



KNOW WHEN TO CONTACT PARENTS

If you need to get ahold of parents/guardians at any point during the service, let a member of the Check-In Team know via the small (non-emergency) walkie-talkie in each classroom, and they will contact the child's guardian.

Parents and guardians can be contacted if a child exhibits symptoms of illness, is crying inconsolably for more than 10 minutes, has hurt themselves, or behaves in a violent manner.

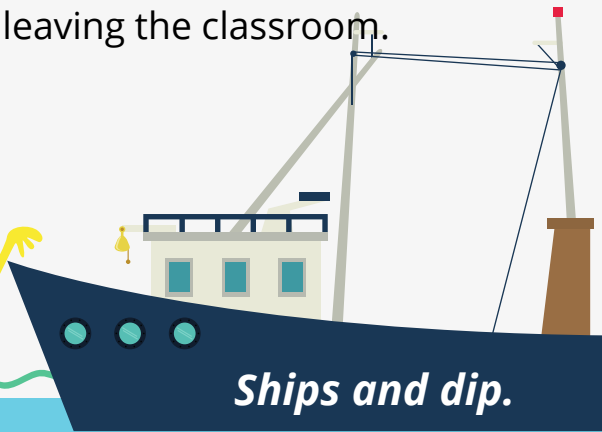
To help console unhappy babies and toddlers, there is an umbrella stroller in the Nursery Area, as well as a full-size double stroller. Feel free to use these to try to calm a child before calling the parents. If possible, please keep the child in the secure Children's Ministry Area while walking around in an effort to calm them.

NEVER administer a hold or physically restrain a child. If there is a concern of a child hurting someone else, remove others from the area until the parent/guardian arrives.

SNACKS

- Snacks are available in each classroom. If a supply is low, please list it on the whiteboard on the wall of your classroom.
- Alternative snacks are available to children with known medical allergies. If you do not have a suitable snack, please text the Children's Pastor or use the small (non-emergency) walkie-talkie to let them know. They will bring an allergen-friendly snack to your room.
- Guardians are welcome to supply a safe snack for their child. This snack must not be served to other children without the permission of the guardian who supplied the snack.
- Please wash hands and/or wear gloves when serving snacks to the kids.
- Hand sanitizer or hand washing is recommended for kids both BEFORE and AFTER they eat their snacks.
- Clean up all snack mess before leaving the classroom.

What is a sea monster's favorite snack?



Ships and dip.

ALLERGIES

- Be aware of your students' allergies. Allergies will be listed on a child's tag and will also be on a posted list in each classroom.
- If you plan to use a potential allergen during your class, please let the Children's Pastor know.
- Consider alternatives to the most common severe allergies in children: peanuts, tree nuts, egg, and dairy.

WHAT TO DO IF A REACTION OCCURS?

- Allergic reactions can range from hives, to lightheadedness, to life-threatening swelling.
- If mild symptoms occur (rash or the start of hives), use the small (non-emergency) walkie-talkie to let the Check-In Area worker and/or Children's Pastor know. They will then call the parent/guardian and allow them to determine the next step.
- If a severe reaction occurs (difficulty breathing, unusual swelling), use the large (emergency & safety) radio to immediately contact the Safety Team.

SICK OR INJURED CHILDREN

You should make every effort to provide a welcoming, fun, and safe environment for children. In the event that a child is injured, please follow these procedures.

For small injuries (only a band-aid needed, small bumps):

- Apply aid to the injured child. Minor medical supplies are located in First Aid kits on the walls near the Toddler classroom, next to the Early Elementary Area Supply room, next to the 5th & 6th Grade supply closet, and next to the BCC Office area. Zipper bags and ice are available in the Fellowship Hall kitchen.
- Complete an Injury Report Form (available in all classrooms and at the Check-In Area desk). Give the injury report to the Children's Pastor BEFORE allowing the child to be dismissed to their guardian.

For large injuries (major bumps, bodily fluids):

- Use the large (emergency & safety) radio to immediately contact the Safety Team.
- Trauma bags are located in the BCC Office kitchen, in the Gym kitchen, and under the Nursery counter.
- One adult should remove the other children to a safe location away from the accident.

- Keep pressure on any bleeding wounds until Safety Team members arrive.

In the event of an accident involving injury in the classroom, all witnesses to the accident must give their account on an Injury Report Form.

VOMITING

- In the event of vomiting, notify the Children's Pastor via text or the small walkie-talkie in your classroom. The Children's Pastor will then contact the child's parents/guardians and also decide if they need to contact the Safety Team.
- Clean up as much of the mess as possible. The Children's Pastor will contact the custodial staff to let them know about the area that will need attention.

LICE

- If you discover lice on a child, don't freak out and don't make a big scene. Quietly isolate the child without embarrassing them and scaring or confusing the rest of the class.
- Be careful not to act repulsed by the child or angry toward them.
- Contact the Children's Pastor via text or the small (non-emergency) walkie-talkie in your classroom. They will contact the child's guardians and the church custodial staff.
- Stay with the child until his or her parents/guardians come.

HYGIENE

Please help us prevent the spread of illnesses by washing or sanitizing your hands:

- When you first arrive in a room
- After a diaper change
- After accompanying a child to the restroom
- After contact with body fluid (wiping a child's nose, etc.)
- Before handling food
- Whenever it's needed

Please instruct children to wash their hands:

- After using the restroom
- After wiping their nose
- Before eating



HAPPINESS IS

...accidentally making a soap bubble
while washing your hands.

CLEANING

While we do have fabulous custodians, it is not their responsibility to clean up after your class.

Please honor them and be considerate by putting all of your supplies away in the appropriate places.

Wipe any obvious spills or messes off tables and sweep up any crumbs or trash on the floor.



**THIS IS A SELF-CLEANING
CLASSROOM.**

**AFTER ALL THE
SUNDAY FUN, TAKE
TIME TO PICK UP.**



CLASSROOM SPACE & CABINETS

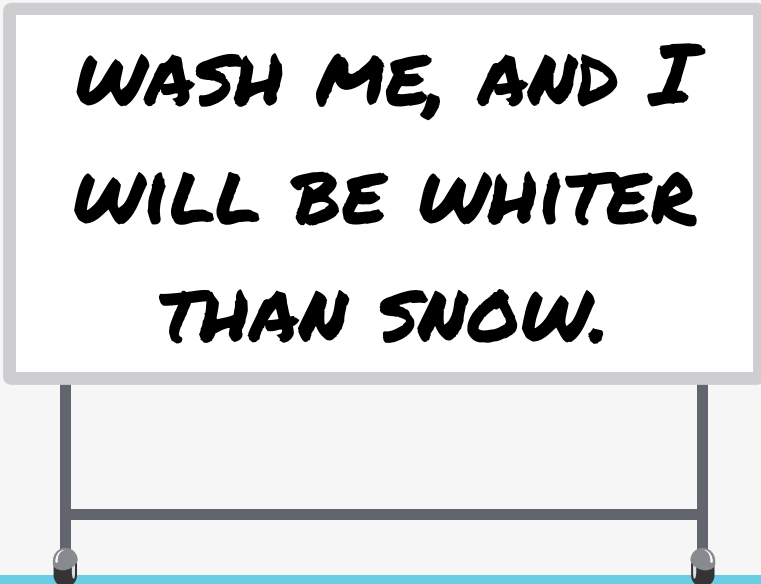
- Do your best to keep the classrooms looking clean and organized.
- Use the whiteboard on the wall to communicate any items that need to be refilled or replaced.
- Contact the Children's Pastor for any special crafts or supplies you would like.
- Check the Early Elementary Supply room (inside the Pre-K through 2nd-grade classroom space) or the Discovery Zone supply closet (outside the Old Chapel) for any special supplies or creative project items.
- Games, toys, and balls are located in the closet next to the lower-level steps.
- Take advantage of brooms and dustpans, vacuums, disinfecting spray, and paper towels that are available near (or in) each classroom.

*A place for everything,
everything in its place.*



WALLS & FLOORS

- It is a challenge to get anything to stick on the concrete block walls.
- If you would like to hang something (and you plan for it to stay up for a while), let the Children's Pastor know, and they can use a hot glue gun during the week to hang it.
- Blue painter's tape is available to hang items temporarily.
- Masking tape works well for marking the floors. Just ask, and it will be available in your classroom. Be sure to remove it when you are finished with your activity.
- Clean the whiteboards after each Sunday using the eraser and/or whiteboard cleaner.



**WASH ME, AND I
WILL BE WHITER
THAN SNOW.**



Together

may we give our children
the roots to grow
and the wings to fly.

BCC kids