



Riverside community church
Columbia, SC



City Kids Volunteer Policies:

Jesus called the children to him and said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*
(Luke 18:16)

Children are a blessing. Our purpose for establishing this children's ministry policy is to demonstrate our total and unwavering commitment to the physical, emotional and spiritual safety of all our children and youth.

Our kids are engaged in learning about God's redemptive plan for humanity through a focused and creative curriculum called The Gospel Project by Lifeway Publications. While most children's Bible stories reveal a moral lesson we strive to teach how God always had a plan to save His people and continues to save through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Having these policies in place helps us to safely and effectively minister to the youngest congregants at Riverside.

Note: These policies apply to Sunday morning gatherings, family meetings, and membership classes only. All smaller, off-site events do not fall under children's ministry liability. The safety of children in smaller, off-site gatherings is ultimately up to parents.

Policies for all City Kids volunteers:

- All volunteers must complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information.
- All volunteers must undergo a criminal background check at no expense. (No one who has been convicted of physical or sexual abuse or neglect will work in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.)
- All volunteers who work with children or youth at Riverside shall be actively involved at Riverside prior to volunteering unless they are paid from outside of the church.
- Two non-related volunteers will be present at all times (mother and daughter, husband and wife pairs are only allowed when other adults are also present).
- Children will be checked in to and out of the activity by their parent or legal guardian or people authorized by parent or legal guardian.
- Volunteers will have access to a phone in case of emergency.
- Parents, guardians, and background-checked church members have the right to visit and observe children's/youth activity, classroom or program at any time, unannounced.
- All classroom and office doors will have a window or be visible from the hallway or remain open while occupied. These windows will remain free from adornment.
- Adults should never be alone with children/youth.
- One-on-one interactions with children/youth will be with an open door and visible to all.
- No adult should ever transport a child by himself/herself.
- Bathroom trips with even one child MUST be with two, non-related adults.
- Any group, agency or organization that uses Riverside's facilities must follow our Children's Ministry Policy.
- All volunteers will be held accountable for the content in this volunteer policy. It is available on the church website and from the children's ministry director.

Specific to Sunday morning gatherings:

- There must be 2 adults present at all times. If only 2 adults are present, they must not be related. A youth volunteer and an adult may not serve alone.
- All above content also applies to Sunday morning gatherings.

Specific to Youth volunteers:

- Youth must be at least 12 years old and approved by the Children's Ministry Leadership Team and volunteer with an adult in the same classroom.
- There must always be two adults (18 years or older) present during the Sunday morning gatherings.
- There can be one youth volunteer and one adult present (non-related) at other official church-wide events such as family meetings and membership classes.
- The youth volunteers may supplement the adult volunteers but two youth volunteers without an adult present is not acceptable.
- The youth volunteers are between the ages of 12-17 years of age and are never responsible for the safety of the children in their care. They must be accompanied by an adult or two adults depending on the setting.

Specific to Church-wide events, other than Sunday mornings (family meetings, membership classes):

- Volunteers and paid sitters will adhere to all above content
- Background checks must be processed, approved, and placed in employee file prior to the event
- These sitters must be approved by administrative staff at Riverside and come from a list of official sitters recognized by the church staff
- A youth volunteer may work with an adult one on one in this setting as long as they are not related
- An adult must be present at all times

All volunteers who work with children of Riverside in a smaller setting (small group, Bible study, group trainings) – any event where the parent or group is paying the sitter out-of-pocket, regardless of whether the church provides re-imbusement:

- The volunteers will be scheduled by the event coordinator, not the children’s ministry
- The ages and backgrounds will need to be approved by the persons in charge of the event(s) – small group leaders, coaches, instructors, etc.
- Ultimately parents will remain responsible for the safety of the children at these smaller events. The children’s ministry rules and policies do not apply to these events.
- The children’s ministry is not liable for the safety of children in these settings and at these events.

If a suspected incident of child abuse or neglect occurs at or is revealed to a staff person (volunteer or paid) at a Riverside sponsored activity, the adult in charge shall:

- Insure the safety of the child or youth.
- Contact the Columbia Police Department.
- Contact the pastor and the children’s ministry director.

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