



**CHRIST THE
REDEEMER
ANGLICAN CHURCH**

Children's Ministry Policy Manual

Updated November 2022

Dear Children's Lay Minister,

Welcome to Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church's (CTRAC) Children's Ministry!

We take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for CTRAC clergy, lay ministers, and staff members.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page to one of the lead teachers or the children's ministry coordinator.

Sincerely,

CTRAC Staff and Clergy

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Overview of the CTRAC Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, we require all staff, clergy, and lay ministers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work begins.

Step One: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

CTRAC policies and procedures require that staff members, clergy, and lay ministers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. All those serving are required to report any policy violations to the children's ministry coordinator or the rector. Every minister should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip all serving in CTRAC children's ministries with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, our leadership and the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains (DRM) require all adult clergy, staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every two years. Parents of youth who are serving in this ministry may discuss with the children's coordinator or the rector whether the training is appropriate for their child.

Step Two: Interview

Every person serving our children is required to complete an informal interview with the children's ministry coordinator and lead teacher.

Step Three: Policies & Procedures

Each new lay minister is required to review the policies contained in this manual and the *DRM Policy Manual for Safe Children* and sign the pages indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

Step Four: Criminal Background Check

In accordance with Diocese policies, we require that all adults serving in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels of background check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children

or minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving minors.

Child Safety Policy

Abuse Tolerance

CTRAC has **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every member at CTRAC to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that you observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is your responsibility to immediately report your observations to the children's ministry coordinator or the rector.

Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

We are committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the CTRAC children's ministry coordinator, the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains, the Rector, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a lead teacher or a member of the CTRAC clergy or staff. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible that you may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. We ask you to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the children's ministry coordinator or a member of the CTRAC clergy.

Enforcement of Policies

All those who supervise other staff members or lay ministers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all CTRAC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children's Ministries – for clergy, laity, and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the rector and children's ministry coordinator.

Children's Ministry Monitoring Plan

Building Safety

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programs that serve children. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes or activities.

Supervision

Only parents (dropping off children), screened lay ministers, clergy, church staff members, and children are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a ministry supervisor should be notified immediately.

Two trained ministry team members should supervise children at all times. If possible, avoid being alone with an individual child in any room or during any ministry program.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where others are present.)

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Playgrounds

On the playground, remember to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

Child Safety Measures

Worker to Child Ratios

CTRAC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all children's ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Ratio	Minimum # of Workers
Nursery	4 kids to 1 worker	2
4-6	8 kids to 1 worker	2
7-11	8 kids to 1 worker	2
Youth	8 kids to 1 worker	2
VBS	8 kids to 1 worker	2

A minimum of two workers will be required in each class at all times. One worker must be an adult aged 21 or older. The other worker may be an adult, youth, or teen volunteer. If ratios are exceeded due to the number of children present, a worker should alert the children's ministry coordinator and an additional worker will be identified.

Minimum age requirements for youth volunteers by program.

Program	Minimum Age
Nursery	9
4-6	11
7-11	15
Youth	18

Check-In

Children will be checked in by a teacher as they enter the classroom. A roll sheet will be in an informational binder placed in each classroom before church on Sunday. Parents of new children should check in their child with the teacher. The parent should be given a child information sheet (found in the information binder) and asked to return it upon their second visit.

Release of Children

Nursery and 4-6 teachers should check out each child to their parents, or, during Sunday service, return children directly to their parents. 7-11 teachers should escort their class to the service to ensure they are safely released to their parents.

Those serving in the children’s ministry are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians (the adult who dropped off the child) at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that a lay minister is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact the children’s ministry coordinator before releasing the child.

Disciplinary Policies

Discipline

It is CTRAC’s policy that our ministry uses no physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. *When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.
2. If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others, and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.
 - a. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. (“Terry, you didn’t stop hitting Kelly when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.”)
3. After a 3rd time, refer to the children’ ministry coordinator or lead teacher. The leader may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior. If a behavioral problem occurs during Sunday service, a child may be escorted to their parent(s) or guardian by a worker.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the children's ministry coordinator, who will follow up with the parent or guardian.

NEVER...

- yell at a child.
- grab a child.
- threaten a child. Always follow through with your words.
- hit a child.
- confront a parent
- openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

Bullying

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in CTRAC ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform the lead teacher or the children's ministry coordinator. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense:* Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense:* Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with the children's ministry coordinator and the child's parent(s) or guardian. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.
 - a. Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. **Do not single a child out in front of the group.** Be discreet.
3. *Third Offense:* Notify the children's ministry coordinator who will discuss the matter with the child's parent(s) or guardian.

Restroom Policies

Nursery Children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all nursery workers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

Workers are not responsible for diapering. Please alert the parent by text message if diapering is necessary.

Toilet training

Unless a bathroom is available in the ministry space, the nursery worker should notify parents by text message if bathroom assistance is needed. If a parent is unavailable, a female worker may take a child to the bathroom. However, the door should be left partially open during the process.

- Youth helpers should not assist with bathroom use.
- “Accidents” should be handled by reassuring the child and alerting his or her parents.

Grades K-6

If a teacher must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, the teacher should seek out another worker. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.

If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, 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 person.

If restroom use is required:

- Only *adult* female workers will assist children in the restroom, unless a parent is assisting their own child.
- When a worker is assisting a child, the door must not be locked, and must remain ajar. In general, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- A lone teacher should never take a lone child to the restroom.

Verbal Interactions with Children

Verbal interactions between teachers and children should be positive and uplifting. All CTRAC lay ministers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, all who serve in the children ministry should not talk to children or their parents in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, all church members are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

One-to-One Interactions with Children

No one serving in the Children's Ministry should ever conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in the CTRAC Children's Ministry.

It is inappropriate for children's ministry workers or church staff to seek out or contact children outside of church without their parent's knowledge or consent.

Physical Contact

CTRAC is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, we have implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

- Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between adults and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to a lead teacher, the children's ministry coordinator, or the rector.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a person serving in the ministry.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's ministry workers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- All Children's Ministry workers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a ministry worker must be reported immediately to the children's ministry coordinator or the rector.

Intoxicants

All members of the community are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any CTRAC facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

Tobacco Use

All members of the community are to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during CTRAC activities or programs.

Sexually-Oriented Conversations

All members of the church community are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the church.

Sexually-Oriented Material

All members of the church community are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Parental Involvement

Parental Contact

Parents who leave a child in the care of CTRAC children's ministry during church services or activities will be contacted by phone or in-person immediately if their child becomes ill or injured while participating in children's ministry.

It is not the duty of CTRAC children's ministry workers to address regular behavioral issues with a child's parent. Instead, they should follow the disciplinary policy stated above before addressing matters directly. If a child's behavior is consistently problematic, please alert the children's ministry coordinator. If behavior is raised during organic conversation (ex. a parent asks a teacher how their child did in class) the teacher should not offer behavioral advice. Instead, factually summarize how the child managed. If consistent problems arise that impact

the entire class or the teacher's ability to conduct class, the lead teacher or children's ministry coordinator will discuss the matter with a parent or guardian.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved. Parents have an open invitation to observe all activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their Children's Ministry will be required to complete the screening process.