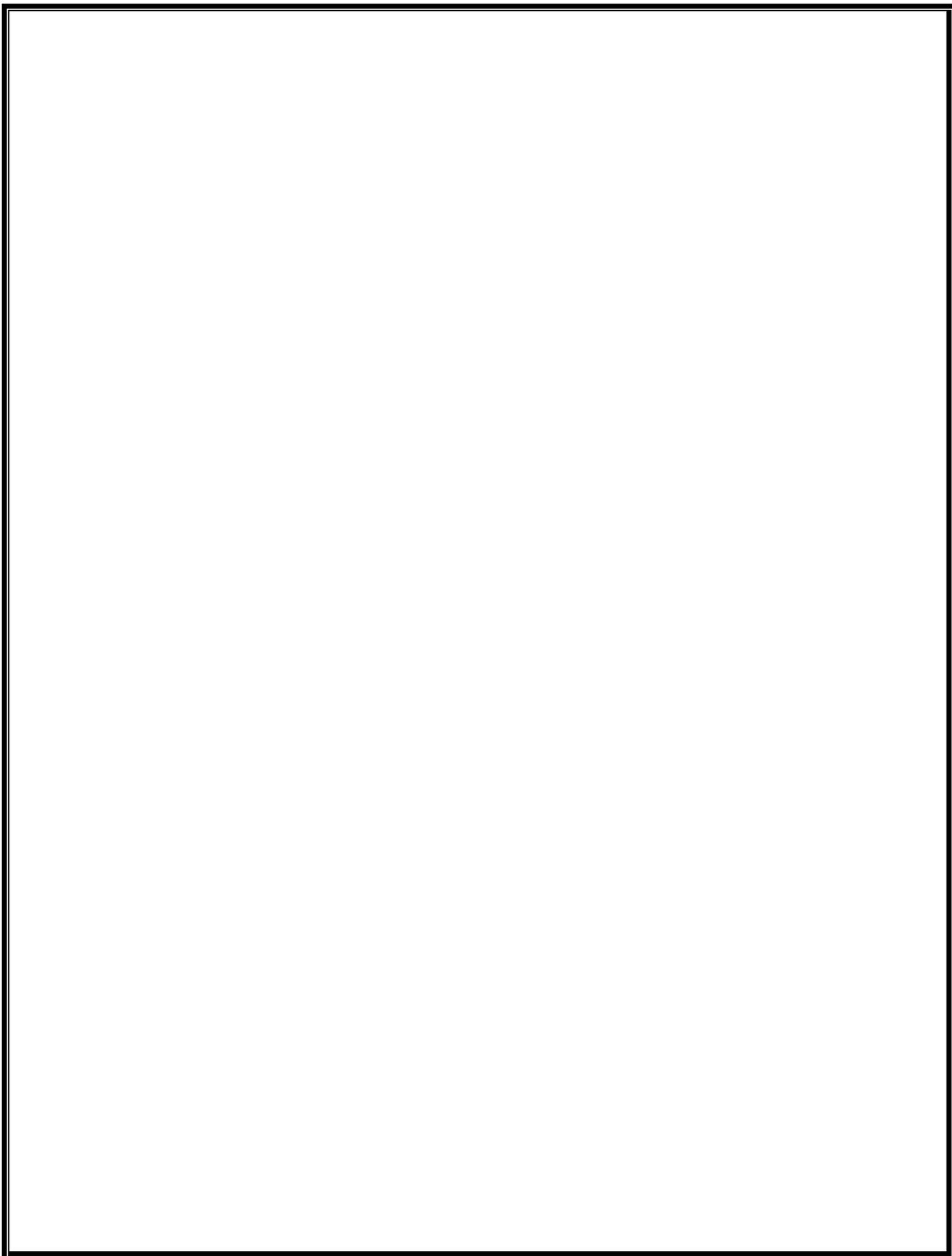




Keeping Our Children Safe!

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16



Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

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

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Children's Director or a member of the Elder Board.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

RCC volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all RCC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal or reassignment from Children's Ministry's positions for volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

SUPERVISION

When a child has been entrusted to RCC volunteers, RCC incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Volunteers in Children's Ministries are expected to provide adequate supervision and safety for children in their care while working in church programs.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in RCC Children's Ministry programs. Another adult who has completed the RCC application and screening process should always be present.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of RCC volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children's Ministries volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. In the event that volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate the Children's Director before releasing the child.

SUBSTITUTES

When a volunteer is in need of a substitute, he/she should contact an alternate in that area of ministry and swap with them when possible. If the alternate is unable to fill the role, the volunteer in need will contact the Children's Ministry Director for assistance.

Only those who are Ministry Safe certified should substitute in the Children's Ministry in any capacity.

It is preferable to have two women or a married couple in each classroom. However in the event a wife cannot attend class with her husband, he needs to follow guidelines appropriate to the age group he teaches:

- **Ages 2-Kindergarten:** one female teacher must be present in classroom with a male teacher
- **First Grade to Youth:** two male teachers may teach in a classroom

BUILDING SAFETY

The Children's Director or a designated representative will be responsible for ensuring that the RCC Children's Classrooms are monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

- No child will ever be left unattended in the church building or on the children's playground during children's ministry programming or classes.
- Children's Ministries volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that volunteer will take the child to a room or location occupied by others, or easily observed by others.
- At least two volunteers should remain in a visible location until all children are picked up by parents.

After every programming event, Children's Ministries volunteers or a designated deacon must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

- On the children's playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas which are 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.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

RCC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
• Nursery I - Infant	1	1
• Nursery II – Crawlers/Toddlers	1	2
• Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
• Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
• Elementary	2	20
• VBS/KidsRock	2	20

If teacher/volunteer is 'out of ratio,' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Children's Director. Children's Director will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

DISCIPLINE

It is RCC's policy that volunteers are prohibited from using 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. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

*Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Children's Director.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

Nursery children

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent/legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight, on a changing table in the presence of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on sign-in sheet.
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent/legal guardian will accompany children of either sex to the bathroom.
- 3) Young children (under age 6) should never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 4) Parents should consult with workers regarding toilet training progress; special instructions will be written on sign-in sheet.
- 5) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing, diapers, and pull-ups are available from RCC in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change
- 6) Adult intervention will also be provided for young children between the ages of two and five, who are generally potty trained, but may still need more restroom assistance than school age children six and above.
 - when a child needs to go to the bathroom, the teacher helper will alert a neighboring teacher helper that they are leaving momentarily to take a child to the bathroom
 - the neighboring teacher helper will stand in the doorway of their classroom in order to monitor the next door class as well as their own (or walk between the classrooms if they are not adjacent classrooms)

Children 1st Grade and older

- 1) If a volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance.
- 2) If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.
- 3) Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another volunteer.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

RCC is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, RCC has 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:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Children's Director or a member of the Elder Board.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a volunteer must be reported immediately to the Children's Director or a member of the Elder Board.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

- **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

Volunteers in Children's Ministries at RCC are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

- **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. RCC volunteers 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, volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

- **INTOXICANTS**

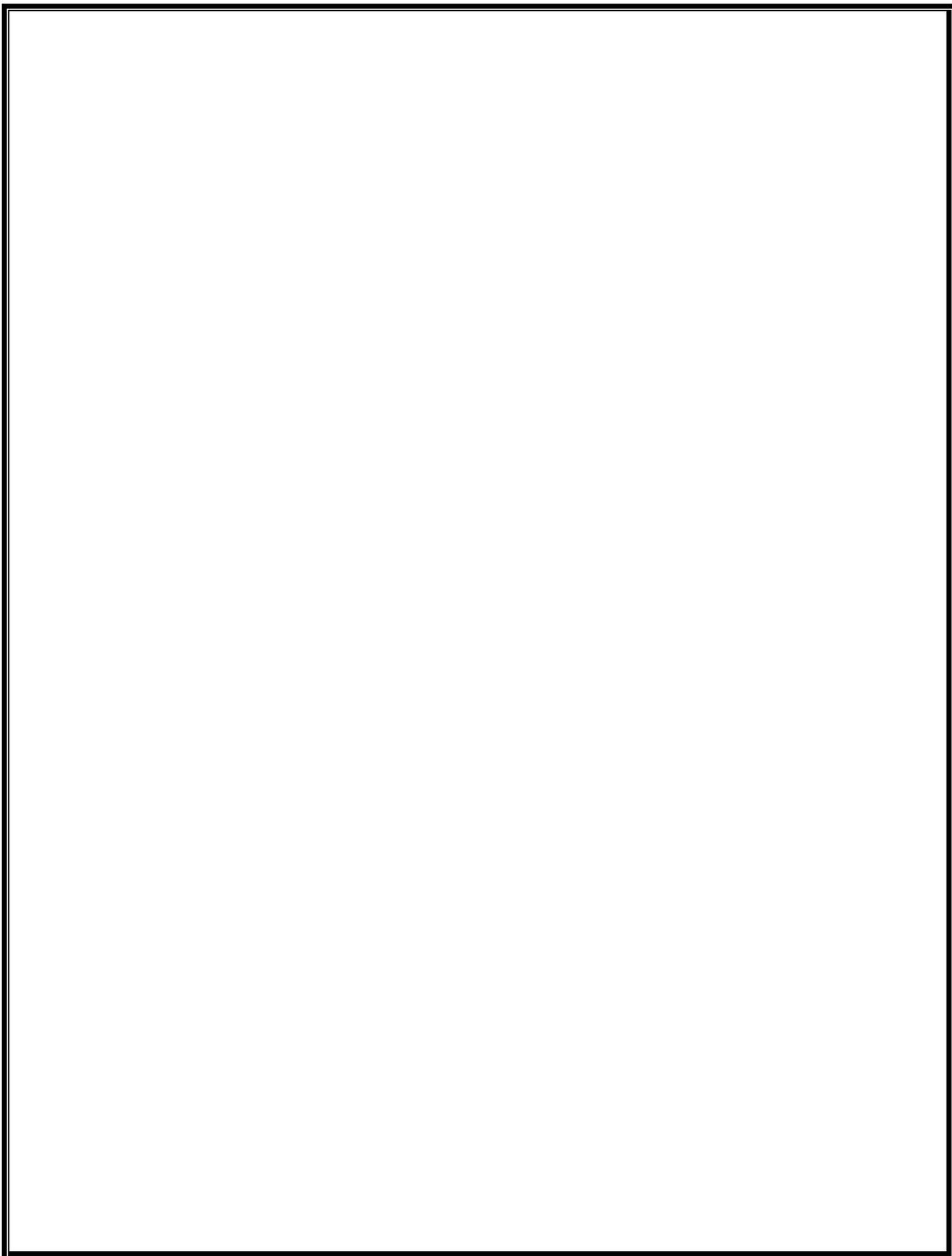
Volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any RCC facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

- **NUDITY**

Volunteers in RCC's Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

- **TOBACCO USE**

RCC requires volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during RCC activities or programs. RCC is a tobacco-free facility.



Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Rockdale Community Church's (RCC) Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving at RCC.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by RCC.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my voluntary service at RCC at any time

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual relationship between me and RCC. Applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of RCC policies and procedures manual.

(Spouses may sign the same acknowledgement and agreement page.)

Volunteer's name (please print)

2nd Volunteer's name (please print)

Volunteer's signature

2nd Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

Date: _____

