

Splash

Children's Ministry



Policies and Procedures

For Team Members



the waters church

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General Information:

1. Team Member Requirements:

- All team members in classrooms must be at least 13 years old and in 7th grade (at the discretion of Splash Ministry Leadership, responsible 7th graders who are 12 may be considered).
- We aim to have a minimum of five years difference in the team members and the children in the room they serve.
- Everyone in the nursery/toddler area must be at least 18 years of age (at the discretion of Splash Ministry Leadership, responsible 17-year-olds with childcare experience may be considered.)
- All adult team members will be subject to a criminal background check.
- All team members will complete an application to be kept on file.
- In addition to above requirements, Lead Teachers and Substitute Lead Teachers must be at least 18 and will complete a vetting interview.

2. It is important that all scheduled assistants, lead teachers, and coordinators be easily identifiable to parents, children, and other leadership. When you first arrive, stop to check in and pick up a name tag.

3. In our Sunday preschool ministry, we want our kids to learn that **God made them, God loves them, and Jesus wants to be their friend forever**. Our elementary classes build on those themes with deeper connections to God's Word. All lessons and materials are provided and prepared in advance with the materials in the room upon arrival. Teachers will be trained and prepared to lead all lessons with the help of the assistants.

4. Please refrain from using your cell phone while you are serving.

6. Your primary responsibility is to care for children. Sometimes when more than one adult or teen is in a class we have the tendency to visit with each other. Let us not forget that our primary concern is to care for the children - not visit with each other.

7. Teachers and assistants should be cautious about topics discussed with others in front of the children. Remember, children often hear more than we know and absorb much more than we think.

8. In the case of an emergency or for any occasion in which a parent needs to be called out of church service, the lead teacher will assess the situation and ask the Service Coordinator to call or text the parent using their provided contact information.

9. Your presence is crucial to your class functioning. If you cannot come when you are scheduled to serve, please contact the team member ministry director as soon as possible. Lead teachers will have a substitute scheduled. If you are an assistant:

- Look at the schedule and switch with another approved assistant who is scheduled for a different week. After making the switch, contact the ministry director so the change can be noted in the schedule. (Remember that one cannot take the place of two.)
- If you cannot find someone to switch with or if there is an emergency situation and you are unable to attend at the last minute, call or text the ministry director immediately.

Security:

1. Check-In Security Policy

Children must have either a computer-generated or staff handwritten security nametag to be admitted into a classroom. Assistants or lead teachers must write down the child's first and last name and any special instructions on the classroom roster. Remind the parent that their security tag is necessary for pick-up. Diaper bags, car seats and cups need to be labeled with the child's name as well.

If you are bringing your elementary class to the Splash area from the main auditorium, check to make sure that every child has a security tag before you leave the lobby. Anyone who does not have a tag should bring a parent with them and stop at the Splash welcome desk to check in before coming to the classroom with the rest of the children. Encourage all parents to check in before church starts next time so that they do not have to miss any of the adult service.

2. Check-Out Security Policy

- A child may not be released unless a parent/guardian has the security tag which corresponds to the name tag on that child. **You must ask to see the tag.**
- If an adult attempts to pick up a child without the corresponding security tag, please send them to the Splash Welcome Desk. There, the assistant or service coordinator on duty will ask to see the adult's driver's license and match the name to the family file located at the front desk.
 - If the adult's relationship to the child can be validated, then a new security tag will be provided and the teacher may release the child.
 - In the case that the adult's relationship to the child cannot be verified, then a Children's Ministry Director must be notified to make the decision to release a child.
- Adults 18 and over are allowed to pick up children; they are never to be released to another child or teen, including siblings.

3. Entrance Security Policy:

- Do not allow parents to enter the classroom if at all possible, with the exception of first-time guests. This may be difficult for parents at first, but routinely following this procedure will make drop-off easier for both parents and children. This creates a safer and more secure environment for all children.
- In addition, do not allow entrance to any other adult, teen, or child who is not scheduled to serve in the classroom unless Splash leadership gives you special permission (this includes siblings of other children, team members' family/friends, and other team members not currently scheduled to serve in that room).

Classroom Procedures:

1. Accepting Children:

- When accepting children to your classroom, write any special instructions onto the class roster along with the child's full name and tag number. If parents are dropping off, make eye contact with parents and answer any questions they may have.
 - If a child is crying when a parent drops him/her off, be sure to confidently tell the parent that you will take good care of the child, but if for some reason the child continues to cry for more than 15 consecutive minutes, Splash policy states that they will contact the parents.
- Then, immediately make eye contact with the child at their child's eye level and introduce yourself. (If you have met the child before, continue to introduce yourself weekly until you are sure that he/she remembers your name. Remember that the younger children cannot read a name tag and will need to feel comfortable enough with you to ask you for help.)
- Get the child started playing with a toy or another child in the room, or instruct them on how to engage in the first activity. Do NOT let him/her stand alone by the door. All children should feel welcome, safe, and encouraged in their own class.

2. Restroom Policy:

- Parents should encourage their children to go to the restroom prior to class.
- Hallway restrooms are for use by children only. Parents and team members must use the restrooms in the main lobby.
- In the 2-3 year-old class, a note for "diaper" or "potty-trained" will be made on the class roster at drop-off. Diapers can be changed in the nursery on a changing table.
- IN-CLASS RESTROOMS:
 - Children should use the in-class restrooms ONE AT A TIME. Classroom sinks are available for handwashing when the restroom is in high demand.
 - Children may only use the restrooms when there are TWO team members in the classroom.
 - If assistance is needed and a team member must enter the restroom with a child, they should notify their second team member that they are entering the restroom. Doors always remain fully open when any team member and child are inside the restroom together.
 - Nursery & 2-3 Year-Olds: A team member should accompany the child to the door of restroom and assist when needed. The door MUST REMAIN FULLY OPEN.
 - 4-Pk class: The children may enter the restroom on their own and close the other door to the kinder room for privacy. Children in this age group should leave their own classroom door fully open or ajar.
 - Kindergarten: The children may enter the restroom on their own and close both doors for privacy.

- HALLWAY RESTROOMS:
 - Children in first through fifth grade may go to the restroom in the hallway on their own with permission from the teacher, one child at a time.
 - Please do not send a child to the restroom during pick-up time.
 - If desired, a team member may escort a child to the restroom. Team members must stay in the hallway without entering the restroom.
 - If an issue arises and a child needs assistance in the restroom, a second team member must be present. The service coordinator, welcome desk assistant, or another classroom assistant may be called in to be the second person. Remain within eyesight of the second team member while assisting the child. The restroom door should remain open any time team members and children occupy the restroom.
 - If you have sent a child to the hallway restroom and they are taking an excessively long time or you are concerned about their behavior, please contact the service coordinator to check on the child and return the child to the classroom.

3. Child-to-Team Member Ratio:

- We strive to make sure that each child at The Waters is safe and adequately cared for both physically and spiritually. That is why we have set out clear guidelines for our child-to-team member ratios in every classroom, with a minimum of two team members scheduled for each class. If the room you are serving in is ever out of ratio, please contact the service coordinator for us to provide extra team members to your room.
- **We should try to maintain a minimum of two team members with all children, but in cases where a team member is briefly alone with children, there should always be three or more children present. No team member should ever be alone with a single child, of either gender, for any time or any reason.**

Nursery	1 Team Member : 2 Children
2-3 Year Old Room	1 Team Member : 3 Children
4-PK Room	1 Team Member : 5 Children
K-5 th Grades	1 Team Member : 10 Children

4. Media and Phones:

- Age and ministry appropriate DVDs and music are provided when needed. Please ONLY play media that has been approved and labeled for your age group. Do not bring any outside media into the classroom. If something is in your room that should not be there, please give it to the Service Coordinator.
- Our classrooms are “Phone Free Zones.” All parents have different rules for their children, what they can see/do on the internet and on screens in general. For the safety of the children in the room, please do not allow them to use any personal electronic device in the classroom. If you believe an exception should occur, please ask the ministry director for permission first.

5. Personal Items:

- Children should not bring personal toys into the classroom, with the exception of security or teething items for babies and toddlers in the nursery.
- If older children bring personal items into the classroom (coats, water bottles, books, etc.) please have them keep the items out of the way in a cubby.
- If a problem is occurring with a child bringing personal items to class, please talk to the parent and request that it is no longer brought. If the problem persists, let the service coordinator or ministry director know.
- Pick up all personal belongings and return them to the children's bags BEFORE parents begin arriving to retrieve their children.
- **Diaper bags:** All bags, cups, bottles, etc. should have a name label. Tape and a marker are provided in the classroom in case something is missed at the welcome desk. Please label these items. When a child enters the room, put the bag into a cubby with the name label facing out to the room. When you need a cup, bottle, or other item from the bag, return it to the cubby after its use. To keep other children from using it, do not allow it to sit around the room. Make sure all personal items are inside the bag before parents arrive so that you can easily and quickly return to them all their belongings.

Hygiene and Safety:

1. Hand Washing: There is soap at a sink in each classroom. Please wash your hands and have the children wash theirs:

- After wiping a nose
- After cleaning blood, spit-up, or other bodily secretion
- After going outside
- Before having a snack or treat
- After you cough or sneeze into your hand (please try to use a tissue or your elbow/sleeve)

2. Sickness:

If a child has any of the following symptoms at check-in we will ask the parent to keep their child with them. If you notice this during the service times please notify the front desk and we will contact the parent.

- Excessively runny nose
- Persistent cough
- Rash
- Fever, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or shortness of breath in the last 24 hours

3. Safe Actions:

- Please do not swing a child by the arms, or throw the child up in the air to entertain. Please do not sit a child on any ledge or on a table, and we ask that you not pick up a child by pulling on their arms. These activities could seriously injure a child.
- Also, please do not allow children to stand on chairs or to stand or sit on tables.

4. Allergies:

If a parent notifies us of an allergy, we will let the child's teacher know. It is the teacher's responsibility to let the other team members know when applicable.

*Splash is always a PEANUT FREE AREA.

If a teacher is planning to serve a snack or have an activity containing food:

- Nursery through PreK: Please fill out the allergy alert sign and hang it on the door before parents begin dropping off. Goldfish and plain cheerios are expected and do not need a sign.
- K-5th Grades: Please notify the welcome desk. A sign will be placed on the desk stating what foods you will have in the classroom so that parents will be sure to see it and notify us if they have any concerns.

5. Diaper Procedure:

Children in diapers should have their diapers changed on an as-needed basis, with a final change before parents arrive. All children should go home clean and dry. Diapers should be changed on the provided changing table in the nursery. Only adult team members may change diapers, and a second team member must be within sight of the child at all times.

Adhere to the following diaper procedure, which is posted at the changing station:

BEFORE:

- Retrieve all diaper changing supplies (paper, gloves, diaper, wipes, etc.) before placing the child on the changing station. Line the pad with the wax paper.
- Wear disposable gloves while changing diapers, and use new gloves with each change.

DURING:

- A second team member must be within sight of the child being changed at all times. Keep one hand on the child at all times.
- Do not use any powder or ointment during changes unless specifically asked by a parent. Then, use only the items they have provided in the child's bag.
- Only use the child's wipes, diapers, etc. If a child does not have diapering supplies in his/her belongings, please let the parent know and use our extra supplies.

AFTER:

- Dispose of diaper and gloves in provided trash bag turning gloves inside out over the diaper to help reduce odor in the room.
- Wash or sanitize your hands after each diaper change.
- Sanitize the changing pad between each diaper change and at the end of the service.

6. Injury:

For minor injuries, small First Aid kits are available in each room and at the front desk. When a child is treated, please complete an accident report. When the parent arrives, let them know what happened and have them sign the report as well. Turn this report in to the service coordinator. The ministry director will follow up with the parent, if necessary. We are not authorized to dispense any over the counter or prescription medications. In the event a child

needs more attention than we can provide, please notify the service coordinator and the parent will be contacted.

***Serious Injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury should be treated as follows:**

- Do not move the injured child. An adult team member must remain with the child.
- Stay calm and speak reassuringly to the child while another team member cares for the other children in your class. Be sure to keep other children away from the injured child.
- A team member should retrieve the Security & Emergency Response Team member located in the lobby. (Go get them, call them, or use the emergency radio at the welcome desk.)
- Splash Ministry Leaders will call the parent. If necessary, SERT or the parent will call 911.
- A Splash Ministry Leader will help you relocate your classroom, team members, or whatever is necessary once the situation is under the control of SERT. They will also contact you with updates of the child's condition. You may be asked to give information to assist the staff in reporting the incident.

6. Additional Nursery Hygiene and Safety:

- A) Only one child may use the crib/pack-n-play at a time. Do not lay sleeping children on the floor or a changing table to sleep. Use a new sheet for each child who lies in the crib. (Put dirty sheets in the laundry basket in the room.)
- B) Never prop a bottle up to feed a baby. Always hold the baby and the bottle while feeding.
- C) When putting a baby to sleep in the crib, always put the baby on his/her back or side. Do not cover the baby with a loose blanket. There should never be any toys, stuffed animals, or blankets in the crib, especially when there is a child in it.

Food:

1. Use the child's own bottle, cup, or water bottle whenever possible. Use a small disposable cup with a minimal amount of water when no personal cup is provided. Be sure that all cups are labeled.
2. With the exception of the nursery, no outside food is allowed in the classroom unless special circumstances have been approved by a Splash leadership for children with specific allergies or dietary needs. In these cases, the food should be concealed in the child's bag until the entire class has a snack, and this special food should not be shared with any other children. Do not allow children to bring their breakfast, milk, or sodas into the classroom. Ask parents to stay in the hallway or lobby with the child until it is finished (or have the elementary child return the food/drink to their parent in the auditorium.)
3. Splash is always a peanut and peanut butter free area. Please check labels carefully.

4. Nursery Food Procedures: Children in the nursery should be fed according to each parent's instructions and only from the food provided by their own family. Do not share one child's snack with another or provide outside food for the children.

Behavioral Procedures:

1. **Dangerous Behavior:** **If a child misbehaves in a way that compromises the safety of another child, an adult, or him/herself** please contact the ministry director or the service coordinator immediately so the parent can be brought in. Examples include but are not limited to: biting, hitting, kicking, jumping on/off furniture, throwing things, etc. If the parent can help the child calm and the teacher believes he/she is safe to return to class, the child may return. If there is a second instance of dangerous behavior after a parent has been contacted, the parent must oversee the child for the remainder of the service.

2. **For Actions Other than Dangerous Behavior:**

First time: Give a verbal warning to the child. When doing this, get down on the child's level, look into their eyes, and speak to them in a loving and calm manner *without raising your voice*.

Second time: The child may sit out in a short timeout either in the classroom or in the hallway with the service coordinator. The lead teacher will need to make the parent aware of the situation when they arrive to pick up the child.

Third time: Depending on the severity, you may either do a second time out or have the Service Coordinator contact the parents to pick up the child. Make the parent aware of the behavior at pick-up and contact the Children's Ministry Director for advice if you desire.

A child must never be physically touched in any way that is meant to be a disciplinary measure. This includes spanking (even with a parent's permission). Also, please refrain from spanking your own child in the classroom while serving. Our guests, other team members, or other children may not realize you are disciplining your own child. Do not raise your voice unless necessary in order to be heard by him/her.

**If a child has a parent-provided alternative behavioral plan approved by the ministry director, it will take precedence over the above procedures.*

3. **Calming a Fussy Baby or Upset Young Child:**

Even the most well-adjusted child may experience anxiety from time to time, and part of our mission is to do all we can to comfort the child and reassure the parents. Use the following guidelines:

- Divert the child's attention to a toy or book. If you can remember that child or others enjoying a particular toy in the past, use that toy. If two children are arguing over a toy, try to find a similar toy as a substitute for one of the children.
- If the child will allow it, hold them and talk quietly, or sit in a chair and sing. Move to distraction and occupying the child as soon as possible.
- Squat down on their level, point to something outside the window and talk about it (a

bird, a cloud, a truck passing, etc.)

- For infants, check the diaper and change it if necessary. Being rocked in the swing or bounced in a bouncer seat may also calm infants.
- A crying child will usually calm down within a few minutes of a parent leaving, but if crying persists and the parent has not left, politely encourage the parent to leave reminding them that we will text their phone if the child has not calmed soon. If a parent returns to check on a child, the service coordinator will be the one to look into the class for them since the sight of a parent may upset the child again.

4. Crying Limit Policy:

If a child has been crying or screaming for more than fifteen consecutive minutes as you have been attempting to calm and distract the child, please ask the Service Coordinator to contact the parents to come care for the child. If the child calms, they may attempt to leave the child in the class again if they wish.

Outdoor Procedures:

Because we are moving into our new building without a playground, use of outdoor spaces will be evaluated over time. Adjustments and alternative procedures may be added to these.

Currently, only 1st-5th grades may go outdoors.

1. To avoid over-crowding, only go outside when there is space for your class to move about uninterrupted by other classes. Hang the outdoor sign on your classroom door when you leave and remove it when you have returned indoors.
2. Only go outside if you believe your class will listen and follow your directions with first-time obedience. All children should remain close to a Splash team member while outdoors.
3. Always take a SERT radio, SERT team member, or service coordinator with you.
4. Stay away from the street and parking lot.
5. Never leave teens alone with children outdoors, and always keep two team members within sight of the children.
6. Quickly intercede in any situation where a child may hurt themselves or others by their actions.
7. Children must wear shoes at all times when outdoors.
8. Classroom toys should remain in the classroom and not be brought outdoors.

Misconduct:

Please refer to The Waters Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy for a full understanding of this topic. All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence.

Statement of Beliefs: Splash teachers must be aware of our Statement of Beliefs and be willing to counsel within the guidelines presented.

- Additionally, all team members should avoid conversations and behaviors that lead to questions about or discussion of sexual behaviors, identification, or preferences.

Suspected Child Abuse: If any team member has concerns about a child's safety or physical or emotional health, the team member must raise these concerns privately and immediately with the children's ministry executive director, lead pastor, or executive pastor, who will then handle the situation. After reporting the concern, please follow these guidelines:

- Do not discuss your suspicions with anyone else.
- Do not discuss the allegations with the parents. This could have negative impact for the church and for the family if allegations are unfounded. If the parents are abusive, the allegation could also create a harmful situation for the child.
- Do not take photographs of a suspected area of abuse on a child's body.

Confidentiality: Splash team members may not offer confidentiality to children for any reason. If a parent or other leader requests information, team members are required to fully disclose what they have been told by a child. A good line to remember when talking to kids and teens is: "I cannot promise confidentiality, but I will promise discretion."

Communication: Team members will avoid private texting, social media conversations, and emails with children. Whenever possible, parents should be included in all communication. Team members must avoid repetitive social media interactions (such as commenting on posts) with any specific child, especially with the opposite gender.

Clean-Up Procedures:

1. Assistants should remain in the classroom with the teacher until all children have been picked up and the cleaning checklist completed.
2. Return all toys to their correct locations. Please attempt to keep them organized for the next class. (keep puzzle pieces together, toys inside their labeled tubs, etc.)
3. Return all teacher/lesson materials and office supplies to the correct bin, shelf, or drawer.
4. Let the service coordinator know if you are running low on any supplies (tissues, paper, batteries, etc.)
5. Follow the cleaning checklist in each room by checking off each item and initialing its completion before leaving the room. Ask the service coordinator for help if you are unable to complete it on your own.
6. Return your completed roster and all name badges before leaving.

Social Media Agreement:

Splash Children’s Ministry team members agree to not post photos or videos of the children in Splash on any social media, personal or public.

- This includes interactions during Splash classes or otherwise Splash sponsored events such as childcare or Parents’ Night Out, etc.
- It does not include personal interactions outside of Splash.
- The reasons for the agreement include but are not limited to:
 - Legal ramifications of certain children’s photos being made public
 - Parental preferences for their children
 - Protecting children from potential predators online
 - Protecting official advertisement and media portrayal of Splash’s programming

Additional Classroom Assistant Duties:

Your role as a classroom assistant is crucial to the function of Splash Children’s Ministry. It provides safety and gives parents peace of mind. It makes it possible for the lead teachers to focus on teaching and helping kids connect with Jesus. Ask the lead teacher how you can help and offer suggestions of what you’d like to do to help.

Some ways assistants help:

- Set things out and clean up
- Escort elementary kids to the restroom
- Play with children during free-play
- Help kids find scripture in their Bibles
- Sit by wiggly or distracted kids
- Ask children to be quiet or to listen
- Help facilitate games

- In older classes, offer appropriate examples during class discussions
- Soothe an upset child
- Pray for kids
- Get tissues, band-aids, drinks of water, etc.
- Set up music or videos while the teacher speaks to the class
- Handle the roster at the beginning or end of class so that the teacher can communicate with parents
- Clean up at the end of class by following the checklist

What is NOT an assistant's role:

- Discipline (including time-outs, contacting parents, etc.)
- Leading the teaching or choosing whole-class activities
- Distracting kids during teaching
- Carrying on conversations with other assistants or teachers while there are children in the classroom
- Relaying important information to parents

Additional Lead Teacher Duties:

Splash's Vision Statement: Splash Children's Ministry exists to provide a safe, nurturing environment where parents feel confident having their children of all ages learn about the Bible and develop a real, lasting relationship with Jesus all while having fun through age-appropriate activities and peer interactions.

- Refer to Splash Children's Ministry Outline page for information on learning goals and developmental/behavioral goals for each classroom age group.

1. Please keep the ministry director and service coordinator aware of any issues with the curriculum, children, parents, or assistants. Communication is so important for continued growth and improvement from week to week. Also, notify the Service Coordinator of any needed repairs or supplies for your classroom.

2. Watch for any toys or classroom materials that may be broken, torn, or need replacement. Pull unsafe toys from the room and throw them away if you believe they cannot be fixed. Please give detailed information to your Service Coordinator if you believe something can be fixed and leadership will make the final judgment or repairs.

- The children should not bring their personal toys into the classroom (with the exception of security or teething items for children in the nursery.) If any unauthorized toys have been left in the room, please remove the items from the room and ask a Splash Ministry Leader about it.
- Stuffed animals and cloth toys are not allowed in any room because of their propensity to harbor germs.

3. Make sure the class roster/information sheet is filled out correctly throughout your service with the first and last name of every child and the names of the team members in the classroom. Return it to the welcome desk or the service coordinator before leaving.

4. Please make every effort to attend Teacher Huddles and any other training made available. Updates are sent by email every week as well. Attending huddles/trainings and reading provided information is crucial to keeping our team aligned on safety matters, the nuances of behavioral procedures, and spiritual development for both the kids and ourselves.

5. Try your best to follow the lessons and do the activities from the curriculum in whatever order and speed works best for your class. Prepare by reading over the material before arriving to serve and asking the ministry director ahead of time if you need clarification or help with modifications or alterations. Please do not wait until you are in the classroom with children to read the lesson for the first time.