Grace Kids Behavior Policy

Purpose

Our Kids Team is committed to providing a safe, loving, and Christ-centered environment where children can learn and develop their faith. We believe in partnering with families in teaching biblical values and in nurturing kids to grow spiritually, emotionally, and socially. This behavior policy is designed to promote respect, responsibility, and positive interactions among children, volunteers, and staff.

Behavior Management Philosophy

At Grace Kids, we understand that children are still learning how to manage their emotions and behavior, and we will work together with parents to address any challenges that arise. All interventions to manage unsafe or undesirable behavior will be handled through a biblical perspective of grace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and compassion.

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1. Expected Behavior

Kids participating in Sunday Service at Grace are expected to:

- **Show Respect** – Treat all leaders and other children with kindness and consideration.
- **Listen and Follow Directions** – Respond appropriately to instructions given by staff and team leaders. Kids are encouraged to listen when others are speaking. Kids should avoid interrupting and excessive disruption to others.
- **Keep Hands and Feet to Themselves** – No hitting, pushing, or inappropriate physical contact. We do not allow any physical contact that could be harmful, inappropriate, or unsafe.
- **Use Kind Words** – No name-calling, teasing, offensive, or inappropriate language. There is zero tolerance for bullying behavior.
- **Take Care of Church Property** – Treat toys, supplies, and church facilities with care and respect. If kids can't do so, the Leader can temporarily take the item and/or remove the item from the space.
- **Stay with the Group** – Kids should remain with their assigned group unless accompanied by a leader.

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2. Response to Misbehavior

Kids Team Leaders will graciously communicate expectations and guidelines to kids consistently and ongoingly while under our care. We desire for all kids to feel a sense of belonging at Grace Kids Ministry. However, if a child's behavior is unsafe or excessively disruptive to others while under our care, we take a proactive, **grace-filled, age-appropriate approach** to correction:

Step 1: Verbal Reminder

- The child is reminded of the expected behavior in a gentle, encouraging manner.

Step 2: Redirect Behavior

- If behavior continues, the child is redirected to a more appropriate activity or encouraged to take a short break.*

Step 3: Quiet Reflection Time *(for ages 3 and up)*

- If necessary, the child may be asked to sit out of an activity for a short period (1 minute per year of age) to calm down before rejoining the group.
- For example, a child may be asked to sit in a chair at a table while the rest of the group finishes the activity or sit quietly by the Leader during the Bible story time.
- Additionally, the Kids Director may choose to take the child out of the classroom for a one-on-one conversation. This helps create a chance to connect with the child personally and address any needs or concerns they may have.

Step 4: Conversation with Staff Lead

- If behavior persists, the Staff Lead will have a one-on-one conversation with the child to address an occurrence and reinforce positive choices.*

Step 5: Parent Notification

- If disruptive behavior continues or escalates, parents will be informed at pick-up in an **understanding and solution-oriented manner** and may be asked to discuss solutions with ministry leaders.

Step 6: Parent Involvement & Follow Up

- In cases of repeated or severe behavior concerns (e.g., aggression, extreme disruption, or refusal to follow safety guidelines), a meeting with parents and staff leaders may be required.
- If absolutely necessary for the ministry's overall safety, Staff may request that a child take a short break from Kids Ministry to ensure a safe and positive environment for all.

*For extremely unsafe or excessively disruptive behavior that persists, the Kids Director can intervene at any point to help determine the next steps, such as excusing the child from the group and contacting their parent/guardian immediately. If it's determined that the kid cannot return to the classroom and the attempt to reach a parent during service is unsuccessful, the kid will remain with the Kids Director until pick-up time. In most cases, the kid will be allowed to return to the classroom in the future.

3. Zero-Tolerance Behaviors

To maintain a safe environment, the following behaviors are **not tolerated** and will result in immediate action (such as removal from the classroom and parent notification by staff):

- **Physical aggression** (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting, throwing toys, or any form of violence)
- **Bullying or harassment** (verbal, emotional, or physical)
- **Destruction of property**
- **Leaving the designated area without permission**
- **Inappropriate language or gestures**
- **Bringing unsafe objects or items into the ministry area**

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4. Volunteer & Staff Responsibilities

- **Model Christ-like behavior** by demonstrating patience, kindness, and respect.
- **Reinforce expectations consistently and positively** in all classrooms.
- **Communicate with parents** when needed lovingly and constructively.
- **Partner with families** to support each child in their spiritual and emotional growth.

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5. Partnering with Parents

We believe that behavior management is a partnership between the church and families. At Grace, parents should feel encouraged to:

- Reinforce positive behavior expectations at home.
- Keep communication open with ministry leaders about concerns.
- Work with church leadership on solutions if behavioral challenges arise.

Acknowledgment

We strive to create a loving, grace-filled atmosphere where every child feels valued and safe. Our goal is to guide children toward Christ-like behavior through encouragement, correction, and discipleship. All volunteers must align with this mission and adhere to child safety policies, including the behavior policy, before serving on the team. Regular reviews and updates to these policies will be communicated during team meetings or through ministry updates. Thank you for partnering with us at Grace Kids Ministry in promoting a fun and safe place where all children can thrive!