

Hinsdale Evangelical Covenant Church
Children's Ministry Safe Child Policy
Revised & Approved by Council, August 2026

1. Adult Volunteer Requirements

- Six-Month Rule: New attendees must actively participate in the church for at least six consecutive months before volunteering with children, have a pastoral recommendation, and participate in volunteer training (see Appendix A).
- Backgrounds Checks: All staff and volunteers working with minors must pass a national criminal background check and sex offender registry search before serving. This background check will be updated every 4 years.
- Mandatory Reporter Training: All staff and volunteers must complete the [online DCFS/State of Illinois training](#) to learn about the state laws surrounding the reporting of abuse and neglect.
- Training & Spiritual Formation: Adult volunteers are required to actively participate in the life of the church including: Sunday worship, small groups, and fellowship, as provided by the church.

2. Student Helper Requirements

- Requirements: Minors (12-17) assisting in Children's Ministry must have a pastoral recommendation, and participate in yearly training (see Appendix A).
- Age & Responsibilities: High school students are permitted to serve as the 2nd helper in a classroom; jr. high/middle school students will serve as the 3rd helper, as needed.
- Training & Spiritual Formation: Student helpers are required to actively participate in the life of the church including: Sunday worship, youth group, and fellowship, as provided by the church.

3. Supervision Requirements

- Two People: At least one adult (18+) and one other individual (adult or high school minor) will be present in each classroom. Two related adults will not be scheduled to help in the same room.
- Host: One adult or older teen (16+) will be in the hallway of the children's ministry area to help as needed.
- No Isolation: An adult or teen helper will never be completely alone with an individual child out of sight of other leadership.
- Diaper & Bathroom Opt-In: Parents may opt-in to have their child's diaper changed by an adult volunteer or receive help in the bathroom (see Appendix B).
- Bathroom Protocol: Children help themselves in the bathroom; adults remain at the outer doorway, and never enter the bathroom alone with a child. If a child needs help washing his/her hands, the door must be left open while the volunteer provides assistance, including hand-over-hand assistance to zip or pull up pants.
- Windows: Internal windows are to be kept uncovered.

4. Check-In & Check-Out System

- Registration: Parents may register their children each year online or in-person for the Children's Ministry.
- Nursery & Little Lambs Check-In: Parents of children aged birth-preK will register their children in the Lower Level before the 10:30 service begins.
- Elementary Check-In: Pre-registered children in grades K-5 will be checked in by the Host after dismissal from the sanctuary. By allowing their child to go to the Lower Level with a volunteer, parents are allowing their child to be checked in.
- Upper Elementary Dismissal: Parents may give their permission for their 4th or 5th grader to be dismissed at 11:35 (see Appendix C).
- Birth-Grade 3 Dismissal: One parent or guardian will pick up their child.
- Parents must pick up their children by 11:40, or five minutes after the church service is over. Children not picked up will be taken upstairs by ministry staff or volunteers.

5. Incident Reporting & Response

- Reporting: Report any incident (including injury, bullying, or suspected abuse) to a full-time staff member or pastor. You may be asked to write up an incident report.
- Immediate Separation: If any form of abuse or misconduct is suspected or observed (via adult/minor or minor/minor), immediately separate the individual from all minors and report the behavior to a staff member.
- Mandatory Reporting: Pastors will report any credible allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or neglect directly to state child protective services and local law enforcement within 24 hours. Utilize the Reporter Decision Tree (Appendix D) to help assess the situation.
- Incident Logs: Document all injuries, behavioral issues, or policy deviations on an official Incident Report Form on the day of occurrence (Appendix E).

6. Emergency Response

- Each classroom has an emergency exit protocol listed beside the exit door.
- The Nursery has a 4-pocket baby carrier apron for evacuation; the Little Lambs room has a walking rope.
- Important Phone Numbers
 - Hinsdale Police: (630) 789-7070
 - Poison Control: (800) 222-1222
 - Emergency: 9-1-1

Volunteer Agreement

I have read, understood, and agree to strictly abide by these Safe Church Guidelines.

Volunteer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____