

Crossway Church

Children and Youth Protection Policy

***Policies and Procedures for Children's and
Youth Ministry***

(DRAFT)

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Prepared for review and adoption by Crossway Church

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Purpose

Welcome to the children and youth ministries of Crossway Church. Our purpose as a church is to glorify God, “for from him and through him and to him are all things” (Romans 11:36; see also Ephesians 1:13–14). We seek to glorify God in our ministry to children and youth by doing the following:

- Creating a safe, loving, and orderly environment in which children entrusted to our care may learn from Scripture and from the example of faithful believers about the character of God. We desire to come alongside parents and guardians in preparing children to know, love, and follow the Lord as they grow toward adulthood.
- Praying for the children and relying upon the Holy Spirit to give new life through the faithful teaching of God’s Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4–10).
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling how Christians are called to respond to God, love one another, and interact with those who do not yet believe in Christ (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1).
- Encouraging children to learn the joy of serving others rather than merely being served (Mark 10:43–45).
- Maintaining standards of conduct, transparency, and accountability that reflect the character of Christ, protect children, and preserve the reputation of the gospel (Philippians 2:15; Titus 2:1–14).
- Assisting parents and guardians in nurturing Christ-centered homes (Ephesians 6:4).

Because children are a gift from the Lord and because they are vulnerable to harm, Crossway desires to exercise careful,

prayerful, and accountable oversight in all ministries involving children and youth.

Throughout this Protection Policy, the terms “parent” and “parents” include guardians unless otherwise stated.

We are grateful for the privilege of ministering to the children and youth of Crossway Church. We also appreciate the kindness, respect, and cooperation of parents, guardians, volunteers, and church members as we seek to provide faithful care and instruction. To help us serve children with excellence and safety, we ask that all parents, guardians, and ministry volunteers read this policy carefully and follow its guidelines.

We also invite members of Crossway Church to prayerfully consider serving in children or youth ministry. If you have questions after reading this policy, we would be glad to speak with you. A list of elders and children’s ministry leaders is included at the end of this policy for your convenience.

Scope

This Children and Youth Protection Policy applies to Crossway-approved children’s and youth ministry activities held at 28 Arch Street, as well as Crossway-approved off-site children’s or youth ministry events.

These include:

- Sunday School and Nursery during the Equipping Class hour;
- Nursery during the worship service;
- Trailblazers children’s ministry during the sermon;
- Wayfinders during the Equipping Class hour;
- Vacation Bible School;
- Youth group meetings and Crossway-scheduled youth ministry events;
- Crossway-scheduled children’s ministry activities;
- adult church events for which Crossway has formally approved and provided care for children or youth.

Throughout this policy, “28 Arch Street” may also be referred to as “Crossway,” “Crossway Church,” “the church building,” or “the church.”

This policy does not formally govern private family settings or gatherings that are not Crossway-approved children’s or youth ministry activities. Examples include:

- private homes or family gatherings;
- schools or school-related activities not sponsored by Crossway;
- Home Fellowships, Men’s Fellowship, small groups, home-based Bible studies, and similar gatherings when no formal childcare has been planned, approved, and staffed;
- church picnics or fellowship gatherings where children remain under the supervision of their parents or guardians;
- adult-focused activities or meetings at the church building that are not directly related to children’s ministry, such as women’s Bible studies, prayer meetings, or planning meetings, unless Crossway has formally approved and provided care for children or youth.

However, Crossway expects all members, attenders, volunteers, and leaders to act with wisdom, integrity, and appropriate care toward children at every church-related gathering. If childcare is formally offered during an adult-focused event or similar gathering, the childcare must be approved by the appropriate children’s ministry leader and staffed by qualified workers according to this policy.

Children and Youth Ministry Worker Definitions

Crossway Staff

Crossway Staff are paid employees of Crossway Church. All Crossway Staff are required to complete a background check regardless of whether they have direct contact with children.

Elders/Pastors

Elders, also called pastors at Crossway, are the lead officers of the church who serve the congregation through teaching, shepherding, oversight, and leadership. All elders are required to complete the Children's Ministry Application, background check, and Children's Ministry Training regardless of whether they have direct contact with children.

Director of Children's Ministry

The Director of Children's Ministry is a Children's Ministry Leader appointed by the elders to oversee Crossway's children's ministry programs, including Sunday School, nursery, Children's Church, curriculum, ministry leaders, and volunteers.

The Director of Children's Ministry must be a member of Crossway Church and must complete the Children's Ministry Application, background check, and Children's Ministry Training before serving.

Children's Ministry Leaders

Children's Ministry Leaders are members of Crossway Church appointed by the elders to oversee specific areas of children's ministry. They are not paid employees of the church unless otherwise stated.

Children's Ministry Leaders must complete the Children's Ministry Application, background check, and Children's Ministry Training before serving.

Children's Ministry Workers

Children's Ministry Workers, referenced as CMWs for the duration of this policy, are approved adult members of Crossway Church who serve directly with children during Crossway-approved children's ministry activities.

All CMWs must complete the Children's Ministry Application, background check, and Children's Ministry Training before serving.

Children's Ministry Assistants

Children's Ministry Assistants, referenced as CMAs for the duration of this policy, are approved individuals who serve alongside one or more Children's Ministry Workers. CMAs may be adults or minors. CMAs may or may not be members of Crossway Church, but they must have regularly attended Crossway for at least six months unless an exception is approved by the elders.

Minor CMAs must be at least 13 years old. Minor CMAs may assist with children's ministry but may not be placed in a position of independent authority, supervision, or care over children.

Adult CMAs must complete the Children's Ministry Application, background check, and Children's Ministry Training before serving.

Minor CMAs do not complete the regular Children's Ministry Application used for adult workers. Instead, a parent or guardian must complete Crossway's Minor CMA Consent Form on the minor's behalf, and the minor must complete Children's Ministry Training before serving.

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers are approved adult ministry workers who are present and available during children's ministry activities to assist with safety, accountability, communication, and practical support as needs arise.

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers may assist with classroom support, parent communication, restroom procedures, late pickup coordination, classroom ratio concerns, emergency response needs, and communication between classroom workers and ministry leaders. When assisting children or youth outside the classroom, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers should maintain observable and interruptible interactions whenever reasonably possible and should avoid isolated one-on-one situations except in emergencies or unavoidable ministry circumstances.

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers serve under the oversight of the Director of Children's Ministry or another designated ministry leader approved by the elders. They should be present and available during the ministry session unless otherwise directed by ministry leadership. Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers must complete all required screening, background checks, training, policy agreement, and renewal requirements applicable to adult children's ministry workers.

Youth Ministry Leader

The Youth Ministry Leader is an approved member of Crossway Church appointed by the elders to oversee Crossway's youth ministry for students in grades 7–12, including regular meetings, discipleship, events, communication with parents, and coordination of approved Youth Ministry Workers and Youth Ministry Chaperones.

The Youth Ministry Leader must complete the required ministry application, background check, child and youth protection training, and, if approved to transport youth, a DMV/motor vehicle record check before serving.

Youth Ministry Workers

Youth Ministry Workers are approved adult members of Crossway Church who serve directly with students in grades 7–12 during Crossway-approved youth ministry activities, meetings, discipleship settings, and events.

Youth Ministry Workers must complete the required ministry application, background check, and child and youth protection training before serving. Youth Ministry Workers who are approved to transport youth must also complete a DMV/motor vehicle record check before transporting youth.

Youth Ministry Chaperones

Chaperones serving during youth ministry activities, transportation, retreats, conferences, overnight events, or other supervised ministry activities involving minors are considered

adult ministry workers when functioning in a supervisory role with minors. Chaperones are therefore subject to applicable screening, background check, training, policy agreement, and conduct requirements described in this policy.

Youth ministry leaders may recruit potential Chaperones, but final approval and compliance verification must occur through the established children's or youth ministry oversight process designated by the elders.

Because Chaperones may not serve as part of a regularly scheduled or formally organized ministry team and may instead be requested for specific youth ministry events as needs arise, youth ministry leaders and event planners should plan sufficiently in advance to allow adequate time for screening, background checks, training, approval, and compliance verification before the event.

Last-minute volunteer requests should be avoided whenever reasonably possible if they would prevent proper compliance with this policy.

Global Screening and Compliance Clarification

Unless otherwise specified, all adult children's and youth ministry workers — including Children's Ministry Workers, Adult Children's Ministry Assistants, Youth Ministry Workers, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers, Drivers, and Chaperones — must complete required screening, background checks, training, policy agreement, and compliance requirements before serving.

If any required renewal, background check, training, policy agreement, or other compliance requirement lapses, the worker will not be permitted to serve in any children's or youth ministry role until the renewal or requirement has been completed and verified through the ministry oversight process designated by the elders.

Minor Children's Ministry Assistants are exempt from background check requirements unless otherwise required by law or elder discretion, but they must complete any training and supervision requirements assigned to their role.

Oversight and Scheduling

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers should be scheduled each week along with the other children's ministry workers needed for Sunday ministry. They serve as part of the ordinary Sunday children's ministry coverage and help support safety, communication, restroom procedures, late pickup concerns, classroom ratio issues, emergency response, and parent communication.

Chaperones are coordinated as needed for specific youth ministry activities, transportation, retreats, conferences, overnight events, or other supervised ministry activities involving minors. Chaperones must be approved and verified through the established children's or youth ministry oversight process before serving.

The Director of Children's Ministry and/or Youth Ministry leadership is responsible for ensuring that all individuals serving in these roles remain current on required screening, training, policy agreement, and policy compliance requirements.

Operational Communication Procedures

Operational procedures should ensure that classroom workers have a clear and practical method of contacting a Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker or ministry leader when assistance is needed, including restroom situations, late pickup concerns, classroom ratio issues, emergencies, or parent communication needs.

Summary Clarification

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers and Chaperones are classified as adult ministry workers for purposes of screening, training, supervision, conduct expectations, and policy compliance unless otherwise specified.

Crossway reserves the right, at the discretion of the elders or their appointed ministry leaders, to decline an application or remove a person from service when deemed necessary or wise for the

safety of children, the integrity of the ministry, or the good of the church.

Screening, Approval, and Removal from Service

Submitted forms, background checks, DMV/motor vehicle record checks, training records, consent forms, and related screening or compliance data will be stored electronically and securely in a cloud-based file share or records system. Access will be limited to the Director of Children's Ministry, the elders, and any other individuals specifically approved by the elders for legitimate ministry, administrative, legal, or safety reasons.

Disqualifying Offenses and Concerning Information

Crossway will not allow any person to be entrusted with the care, supervision, control, or direct oversight of minors if that person has been convicted of, received a probated sentence for, received deferred adjudication for, or has pending criminal charges related to offenses that raise concern about the person's suitability to serve with children or youth.

Such offenses include, but are not limited to, misdemeanor or felony offenses involving sexual misconduct, violence, abuse, neglect, endangerment, exploitation, crimes against children, drug-related offenses, or family violence.

Examples include:

- Sexual assault or indecency involving a minor or adult
- Assault of a minor or adult
- Injury to a minor or adult
- Abandoning or endangering a minor
- Sexual performance with a minor
- Possession, production, or promotion of child sexual abuse material
- Enticing, grooming, or exploiting a minor
- Incest
- Drug-related offenses
- Family violence

- Any other offense or credible information that, in the judgment of the elders or their appointed ministry leaders, raises concern about a person's character, judgment, self-control, honesty, or suitability to serve with children or youth

Pending criminal charges will be considered unresolved until a determination of guilt, innocence, dismissal, or other final disposition has been made.

Training, Annual Review, and Parent/Volunteer Equipping

Crossway's Children and Youth Protection Policy should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains accurate, lawful, clear, and faithful to Crossway's ministry practice.

The elders, Director of Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry Leader, and appropriate ministry leaders should review this policy and its implementation at least annually, or sooner when needed because of legal changes, insurance guidance, ministry changes, facility changes, incidents, reported concerns, or significant operational issues.

The annual review should consider:

- whether the policy accurately reflects Crossway's current ministry structure;
- whether worker definitions and role responsibilities remain accurate;
- whether training requirements are being completed and tracked;
- whether background checks, DMV checks, consent forms, and applications are current;
- whether check-in/check-out procedures are functioning effectively;
- whether emergency procedures and evacuation plans are current;
- whether incident, ouch, abuse-reporting, and medical forms are accessible and properly stored;
- whether parent communication materials need updating;

- whether any recurring concerns or patterns have emerged;
- whether changes are needed to improve protection, clarity, or implementation.

Approved workers should receive training before serving and should participate in refresher training according to the schedule established by the elders and ministry leaders. Training should include both policy review and practical instruction for real ministry situations.

Training may include, as appropriate:

- child protection principles;
- grooming and boundary concerns;
- mandatory reporting;
- receiving disclosures;
- digital communication boundaries;
- check-in/check-out procedures;
- restroom and diapering expectations;
- classroom correction and redirection;
- emergency response;
- first aid and incident reporting;
- allergy and emergency medication procedures;
- transportation and youth ministry expectations;
- special-needs accommodations;
- parent communication;
- training and compliance readiness, including live training, recorded training, companion quizzes, completion forms, renewal expectations, and MinistrySafe abuse awareness training requirements.

Training and Compliance Readiness

Crossway will provide Children's Ministry policy and procedure training biannually. Approved volunteers are required to complete this training at least once every three years, though annual participation is encouraged.

Training sessions may be recorded so that new volunteers who apply after a live training session has already been held do not need to wait until the next scheduled live session before

completing required training. Volunteers who complete the training by video must also complete any required companion quiz and submit a signed form confirming completion to the Director of Children's Ministry or another designated ministry leader.

Children's Ministry policy and procedure training will ordinarily be the same for all Children's Ministry volunteers, including adult workers and minor assistants, with appropriate application to each role.

Minor Children's Ministry Assistants are not required by this policy to complete abuse awareness training through MinistrySafe. Participation in MinistrySafe abuse awareness training by minors may be left to parental discretion unless otherwise required by law, insurance guidance, or elder determination.

Crossway may also provide supplemental materials to help workers and parents understand and apply the policy. These materials may include:

- volunteer quick-reference guides;
- classroom procedure sheets;
- emergency response sheets;
- universal precautions reminders;
- parent guides;
- visitor/welcome desk summaries;
- check-in/check-out instructions;
- allergy and medication guidance;
- reporting procedure summaries.

Such supplemental materials are intended to support, not replace, the full policy. Approved workers are still responsible to read, understand, and follow the complete Children and Youth Protection Policy.

Parents and guardians should be given clear communication about the portions of the policy that most directly affect them, including check-in/check-out expectations, illness policies, restroom expectations, allergy and medication procedures, parent responsibility outside formal ministry care,

emergency/reunification expectations, and how to report concerns.

The goal of ongoing review and training is not merely policy compliance, but faithful care for children and youth, protection for volunteers, clarity for parents, and integrity in the ministry of Crossway Church.

Crossway's Children's Ministry Classes

The following descriptions reflect Crossway's standard Sunday schedule. The Director of Children's Ministry, in consultation with appointed Children's Ministry Leaders as needed, may adjust class groupings, schedules, or locations in special circumstances such as inclement weather, holiday preparations, staffing needs, facility limitations, or other ministry needs.

Equipping Class Hour

During the adults' Equipping Class hour prior to the worship service, Crossway offers the following children's classes:

- Nursery: ages 0–3
- Preschool/Kindergarten: beginning at age 3 for children who are potty trained and ready for a classroom setting, through kindergarten
- Grades 1–3
- Grades 4–6
- Wayfinders: Grades 7–8

The nursery functions as one shared nursery space and is not divided into separate age-based rooms. Nursery workers should provide age-appropriate care within the shared nursery environment, taking into account the needs, mobility, and developmental stage of each child.

Worship Service

During the worship service, Crossway offers the following:

- Nursery: ages 0–3, available for the full duration of the service

- Trailblazers: beginning at age 3 for children who are potty trained and ready for a classroom setting, through age 6, meeting from the start of the sermon until the conclusion of the service

Children participating in Trailblazers are dismissed from the worship service just before the sermon begins. Parents are responsible to pick up their children immediately following the service.

Youth Ministry

Youth meetings and events serve students in grades 7–12. Regular meeting times are published through Crossway’s normal communication channels. Special event times are determined and communicated by the youth ministry leaders.

Promotion

Children in Sunday School are promoted to the next class level on the first Sunday in September.

Promotion from Nursery to a Sunday School classroom, Preschool/Kindergarten, or Trailblazers occurs after a child’s third birthday, provided the child is potty trained and ready for the classroom setting.

Crossway recognizes that children may differ in development, maturity, special needs, medical needs, toileting independence, communication ability, and readiness for a classroom setting. Exceptions, accommodations, or adjustments to ordinary promotion timing may be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the parents or guardians and the Director of Children’s Ministry or another designated Children’s Ministry Leader.

When a child may need additional support, parent-provided aids, or a modified transition plan, the parent or guardian should communicate with the Director of Children’s Ministry or appropriate Children’s Ministry Leader before the child is placed in or promoted to a new classroom.

Protecting Children as They Arrive and Depart

Crossway will maintain approved check-in and check-out procedures for Sunday School, nursery, Trailblazers, and other children's ministry settings. These procedures are intended to ensure that children are received, supervised, accounted for, and released in a safe, orderly, and accountable manner.

Parents, guardians, approved pickup persons, Children's Ministry Workers, Children's Ministry Assistants, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers, and Children's Ministry Leaders should follow the current procedures approved by ministry leadership. The ordinary procedures for Sunday morning children's ministry check-in and check-out are provided in Appendix 10 – Subsplash Check-In and Check-Out Procedures.

Ministry leaders may adjust the practical flow of check-in and check-out when necessary because of facility needs, staffing limitations, visitor needs, safety concerns, emergency circumstances, or other ministry considerations, provided that the same basic commitments to accountability, authorized pickup, visibility, attendance records, and child safety are preserved.

Check-In Procedures

Children are considered under Crossway's supervision once they have been checked into a Crossway-approved class or ministry activity through Crossway's approved check-in process and released to approved workers. Classroom expectations and policies apply to all children once they have been checked in.

Parents and guardians should complete the approved check-in process before the child enters children's ministry care. Children should not be admitted into children's ministry programming until check-in has been completed and required child information has been verified.

For Sunday School, nursery, Trailblazers, and other children's ministry settings, ministry workers should follow the detailed

procedures in Appendix 10 unless ministry leadership has approved a temporary adjustment.

Check-Out Procedures

Crossway's supervision of a child ends when the child has been checked out and released to a parent, guardian, or approved pickup person according to Crossway's approved check-out process.

Children may be released only through the approved check-out process. Children should not be released solely on the basis of familiarity or personal recognition. If there is any uncertainty about whether a person is authorized to pick up a child, the child must not be released until a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder has reviewed the situation and approved the release.

Parents in the Classroom

If a child is reluctant to enter class, Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants may attempt to comfort and help the child transition for a brief period of time. If the child has not calmed down after approximately ten minutes, a parent or guardian will be contacted.

For first- or second-time visitors, if a child would feel more at ease with a parent or guardian briefly present in the nursery or classroom, this may be allowed for up to approximately ten minutes. If the child becomes comfortable, the parent or guardian will be asked to leave the nursery or classroom. If the child cannot remain in the nursery or classroom without the parent or guardian, the parent or guardian should remove the child from the nursery or classroom.

If a parent or guardian is needed during the service, a Children's Ministry Worker or Assistant will contact the parent or guardian by text or through another approved communication method. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker will help locate the parent or guardian.

Workers and ministry leaders should explain this expectation with kindness and clarity, especially to visitors, so that families understand the goal is not to be unwelcoming but to maintain a safe, orderly, and accountable classroom environment for all children.

Communication with Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers or Ministry Leaders

Each children's ministry area should have a clear and practical method for contacting a Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker, Children's Ministry Leader, or the Director of Children's Ministry when assistance is needed.

This may include an approved text message process, classroom communication device, hallway notification procedure, runner, or another method approved by ministry leadership. Workers should know how to request help for restroom needs, late pickup, classroom ratio concerns, parent communication, visitor questions, behavior concerns, illness, injury, or emergencies.

Authorized Pickup Persons

Parents and guardians are responsible to ensure that Crossway has accurate and current information regarding who is authorized to pick up their children.

A child may be released only to:

- a parent or legal guardian listed in Crossway's check-in/check-out system;
- an adult specifically authorized by the parent or legal guardian through Crossway's approved check-in/check-out process;
- another person approved by a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder in an exceptional circumstance.

For purposes of check-in and check-out, an "authorized pickup person" may include a grandparent, relative, family friend, or other responsible adult designated by the parent or guardian. An

authorized pickup person is not the same as a legal guardian unless that person has legal guardianship authority.

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should not release a child to a sibling, relative, friend, or other adult unless that person has been authorized according to this policy.

Temporary Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

If Crossway's digital check-in or check-out system is unavailable, a Children's Ministry Leader may authorize a temporary paper-based check-in and check-out process.

Temporary check-in and check-out procedures must still record the information necessary to identify the child, contact the parent or guardian, note allergy or medical concerns, confirm authorized pickup information, and maintain an accurate record of when the child entered and left Crossway's care.

When Crossway uses a temporary paper process, workers should use the Backup Check-In Form provided in Appendix 12 – Backup Check-In Form, or a substantially similar form approved by ministry leadership.

Temporary check-in/check-out forms should be kept in a designated location known to Children's Ministry Leaders and scheduled workers.

Custody Documentation and Access

Parents and guardians are responsible to provide Crossway with accurate and current information regarding custody limitations, approved pickup persons, and any court orders that restrict who may pick up a child.

Any custody-related documentation should be provided to the Director of Children's Ministry or an elder before the child is checked into a class or ministry activity whenever possible.

Custody-related documents should be stored securely in Crossway's approved electronic records system or cloud-based file share. Access should be limited to the Director of Children's Ministry, the elders, and any other individuals specifically

approved by the elders for legitimate ministry, administrative, legal, or safety reasons.

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants are not responsible to interpret custody agreements, mediate family disputes, or determine parental rights during a ministry activity. If a custody order or legal document is presented during check-out that has not already been reviewed by Crossway leadership, workers should not attempt to interpret or apply the document. They should immediately contact a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder.

If there is any uncertainty, conflict, custody concern, or safety concern, the child must not be released until a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder has reviewed the situation and approved the release.

Parent Responsibility Outside Formal Ministry Care

Crossway's children's and youth ministries formally assume care for children and youth only during approved ministry times and in approved ministry settings when children or youth have been properly checked in, released to approved workers, and are participating under the supervision of Crossway's approved ministry workers.

Parents and guardians remain responsible for the care, supervision, and safety of their children before check-in, after check-out, between ministry sessions, and whenever children are outside a formally approved and staffed children's or youth ministry setting.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- time before Equipping Classes begin;
- time between Equipping Classes and the worship service;
- time after worship or after a ministry event ends;
- time when children are in hallways, stairways, bathrooms, the fellowship hall, classrooms not currently staffed for ministry,

the parking lot, outdoor areas, playground areas, or other parts of the church property outside formal ministry care;

- church gatherings where no formal children's ministry or approved childcare is being provided;
- informal childcare arrangements made privately between parents or families.

Children should not be left unattended in classrooms, nurseries, hallways, stairways, bathrooms, parking areas, playground areas, or other areas of the church property. Classrooms and ministry rooms should not be used by children unless appropriately staffed, supervised, or under direct parent or guardian supervision.

Parents or guardians must remain on church property while their children are checked into children's ministry or otherwise under the formal care of Crossway Church. A parent or guardian may not leave the property while a child is in Crossway's care unless the parent or guardian has first notified the appropriate Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or another designated ministry leader and has clearly identified another responsible adult who is present, authorized, and available to care for the child if needed.

Home Fellowships, Home-Based Bible Studies, and Similar Gatherings

Home Fellowships, Men's Fellowship, small groups, home-based Bible studies, and similar church-sponsored gatherings do not ordinarily provide formal childcare unless specifically planned, approved, and staffed. When no formal childcare is provided, parents and guardians remain responsible for the supervision and care of their own children throughout the gathering.

Children should not be sent to unsupervised areas of the home or property, and adults should avoid being alone with a child who is not their own. Hosts and group leaders should communicate expectations clearly to parents and should take reasonable steps to maintain visibility, accountability, and safe use of the home.

If childcare is arranged, advertised, assigned, or functionally provided by the church or group, then the church's Child Protection Policy applies, including applicable screening, training, supervision, restroom, and two-adult/visibility requirements.

Nothing in this section is intended to lessen Crossway's commitment to care well for children and families. Rather, it clarifies when Crossway has formally assumed ministry supervision and when parents or guardians remain directly responsible for their children.

Protecting Children While They Are in Our Care

Class Times

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should be ready to receive children fifteen minutes before the start of a scheduled class, service, or ministry activity unless otherwise directed by a Children's Ministry Leader.

Parents and guardians are expected to pick up their children promptly at the conclusion of the class, service, or ministry activity. If a child has not been picked up within fifteen minutes after the conclusion of the class, service, or ministry activity, a Children's Ministry Worker or Assistant should notify the Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker or a Children's Ministry Leader, who will help locate the parent or guardian.

At least two approved workers must remain with the child until the child has been checked out and released to a parent, guardian, or approved adult according to this policy.

Refusing or Delaying a Child's Entry into Class

A Children's Ministry Worker, Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder may refuse or delay a child's entry into a classroom or ministry activity when doing so is judged necessary for the safety, health, or orderly care of the child, other children, or ministry workers.

Possible reasons for refusing or delaying entry include, but are not limited to:

- Symptoms of contagious illness
- Repeated or unresolved behavioral concerns
- An unsafe or unsatisfactory worker-to-child ratio
- A classroom or ministry space that has reached capacity
- A safety, security, or emergency concern
- Any other circumstance that may impair Crossway's ability to provide safe and orderly care

When possible, the concern should be explained to the parent or guardian with kindness and clarity. If a worker is uncertain whether a child should be received into class, the worker should contact a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder.

Required Staffing and Supervision

For all children's classes and ministry programs, at least two approved, unrelated workers must be present whenever children are in Crossway's care. At least one of those workers must be an adult Children's Ministry Worker.

Children's Ministry Assistants may serve alongside Children's Ministry Workers, but they may not be placed in a position of independent authority, supervision, or care over children.

Children must never be left unattended in a classroom, nursery, restroom, hallway, vehicle, playground, or other ministry area.

If two approved workers are not present, children may not be received into the classroom or ministry activity unless a parent or guardian remains with the child until the required staffing is in place.

If a class has only two approved workers and one worker must leave the room temporarily, the classroom door must remain fully open, and the remaining worker must maintain line of sight to another approved worker, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker, or approved ministry area whenever possible. If appropriate supervision cannot be maintained, the class should

pause or combine with another approved classroom until proper staffing is restored.

Classroom doors may remain closed during class only when the required staffing standard is met. Rooms should remain observable by ministry leaders or Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers whenever possible.

Movement Outside the Classroom

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants may not take children out of the nursery, classroom, or designated ministry area except for a ministry-related or necessary reason, such as:

- Bathroom breaks
- Illness
- Injury
- Emergency
- Evacuation
- Approved outdoor play or ministry activity
- Parent pickup or communication

When children must leave the classroom or designated ministry area, workers should maintain appropriate supervision, visibility, and accountability.

One-on-One Contact and Discipleship

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should avoid private one-on-one situations with children or youth. Ministry conversations should occur in observable and interruptible settings.

For children below sixth grade, private one-on-one meetings are not permitted.

For students in sixth grade and older, discipleship or pastoral conversations should take place in an observable setting. When ongoing discipleship is the goal, it should ordinarily occur between individuals of the same sex, with parental knowledge and approval. It is wise to document parental permission for ongoing discipleship or mentoring.

Nursing Mothers

Nursing mothers are welcome to use a Crossway-designated area for nursing. When possible, nursing areas should be located in a place that allows privacy for the mother while preserving appropriate safety and accountability within children's ministry spaces.

Child-to-Worker Ratios

In addition to the required staffing standard of at least two approved, unrelated workers present whenever children are in Crossway's care, Crossway maintains the following minimum child-to-worker ratios during regularly scheduled children's ministry programs.

At least one adult Children's Ministry Worker must be present in each classroom or ministry area. Approved Children's Ministry Assistants may help satisfy the required ratio only when serving alongside an adult Children's Ministry Worker. In this section, references to an "approved worker/assistant" may include an approved Children's Ministry Worker or approved Children's Ministry Assistant, provided all role, age, supervision, and policy requirements are satisfied.

Class / Ministry Group	Minimum Ratio
Nursery, ages 0–3	One adult CMW and one additional approved worker/assistant for every 8 children
Preschool/Kindergarten, beginning at age 3 for children who are potty trained and ready for a classroom setting, through kindergarten	One adult CMW and one additional approved worker/assistant for every 8 children
Grades 1–3	One adult CMW and one additional approved worker/assistant for every 16 children
Grades 4–6	One adult CMW and one additional approved worker/assistant for every 16 children
Wayfinders, Grades 7–8	One adult CMW and one additional approved worker/assistant for every 16 children
Trailblazers, beginning at age 3 for children who are potty trained and ready for a classroom setting, through age 6	One adult CMW and one additional approved worker/assistant for every 8 children

Because some age ranges overlap by design, especially around age 3, the applicable ratio is determined by the child's assigned classroom or ministry group, not by age alone. When age groups are combined, the required ratio is determined by the youngest child present.

Once the maximum number of children for a classroom has been reached, additional children may not be accepted into that classroom unless additional approved workers or assistants are added to satisfy the required ratio.

If a ratio is exceeded or is likely to be exceeded, a Children's Ministry Worker or Assistant should promptly notify the Children's Ministry Leader, Director of Children's Ministry, or Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker. The Children's Ministry Leader or Director of Children's Ministry is responsible to determine whether additional approved workers or assistants can be added, whether the class should be divided or combined with another class, or whether the classroom should be closed to additional children.

Children's Ministry Leaders may require a lower child-to-worker ratio when needed because of room size, child needs, worker experience, classroom dynamics, safety concerns, or other ministry circumstances.

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Coverage

When scheduling resources allow, ministry leaders should designate an approved Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker for children's ministry sessions. This worker can help provide coverage if a scheduled worker is unexpectedly absent, delayed, becomes ill, or is otherwise unable to serve.

Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers must meet the same screening, training, approval, and compliance requirements as other approved ministry workers. The purpose of on-call support coverage is to reduce last-minute staffing difficulties, help maintain required child-to-worker ratios, and support safe, orderly care for children.

Special Needs, Developmental Needs, and Individual Accommodations

Crossway desires to welcome and care well for children with special needs, developmental needs, medical concerns, behavioral challenges, or other individual circumstances that may affect participation in children's ministry.

When a child may need additional support, modified expectations, parent-provided aids, toileting assistance, communication support, sensory accommodations, or other individualized care, Children's Ministry Leaders should confer with the child's parent or guardian and, when needed, the Director of Children's Ministry and/or elders.

Reasonable concessions or accommodations may be made on a case-by-case basis in order to help the child participate as fully and safely as possible. Any accommodation must be consistent with the safety of the child, the safety of other children, the protection of volunteers, and the practical limits of the ministry setting.

If Crossway is unable to provide a requested accommodation safely or responsibly, Children's Ministry Leaders should communicate clearly and kindly with the parent or guardian and work together to determine what level of participation or support is possible.

Grooming, Boundary Testing, Digital Communication, and Media Sharing

Grooming and Boundary Testing

Crossway recognizes that abuse is often preceded by grooming behavior, boundary testing, secrecy, isolation, manipulation, or the gradual development of inappropriate access to a child, youth, family, or ministry environment. Grooming may involve not only the child or youth, but also parents, ministry workers, church leaders, and the broader church community.

Children's Ministry Workers, Children's Ministry Assistants, Youth Ministry Workers, Youth Ministry Chaperones, ministry leaders, and elders should be alert to patterns of behavior that may indicate inappropriate boundary crossing, including but not limited to:

- seeking unusual or repeated private access to a child or youth;
- showing favoritism or excessive attention toward a particular child or youth;
- giving gifts, privileges, rides, money, food, or special attention without parent and ministry-leader awareness;
- encouraging secrecy or private communication;
- isolating a child or youth from peers, parents, or other approved workers;
- repeatedly testing physical, emotional, relational, or digital boundaries;
- dismissing, minimizing, or resisting accountability structures;
- attempting to build unusual trust with parents or leaders in order to gain greater access to children or youth;
- creating dependence, emotional closeness, or private special relationships with a child or youth.

Not every concerning behavior proves abuse or misconduct. However, patterns of boundary concerns should be taken seriously, documented appropriately, and brought to the attention of a ministry leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, a Youth Ministry Leader, or an elder.

Crossway's goal is not suspicion toward faithful workers, but wise vigilance, loving accountability, and the protection of children, youth, families, and ministry workers.

Digital Communication with Children and Youth

Digital communication with children and youth should be limited, transparent, ministry-appropriate, and accountable. Adult ministry workers should avoid private, secretive, or unnecessarily personal electronic communication with minors.

Except when necessary for ordinary ministry logistics, adult workers should not communicate one-on-one with children or youth through text messaging, email, social media direct messages, gaming platforms, private messaging apps, or similar digital channels without parent or guardian awareness and appropriate ministry-leader accountability.

When electronic communication with youth is necessary, workers should ordinarily use one or more of the following safeguards:

- include a parent or guardian in the communication;
- include another approved adult ministry worker or ministry leader;
- use approved ministry communication channels;
- keep communication brief, factual, and ministry-related;
- avoid secrecy, emotional dependency, flirtation, joking of a sexual nature, or highly personal counsel by private message;
- preserve communication when a concern may need review.
- Adult workers should not initiate or maintain private social-media relationships, gaming relationships, or messaging relationships with children or youth in a way that bypasses parental awareness or ministry accountability.

If a child or youth initiates communication that involves a personal struggle, safety concern, abuse concern, inappropriate content, sexual matter, self-harm concern, or other significant pastoral issue, the adult worker should respond with care but should promptly involve an appropriate ministry leader, elder, and/or parent or guardian as appropriate to the situation. Workers should not attempt to provide extended private counsel to a minor through electronic communication.

Photos, Videos, and Media Sharing

Photos or videos of children or youth taken during Crossway ministry activities should be handled with care, modesty, and parental sensitivity.

Photos or videos of children or youth may be taken, used, posted, published, or shared only when Crossway has documented permission from the child's parent or legal guardian. Parent or

guardian permission should be obtained and recorded through Crossway's approved registration, check-in, consent, or communication process.

Photos or videos of children or youth should not be posted publicly, used in church communication, shared on social media, displayed online, or distributed outside ordinary ministry use unless consistent with documented parent or guardian permission.

Workers should not send photos or videos directly to children or youth through private communication channels.

Photos and videos should never be embarrassing, immodest, suggestive, disciplinary, or likely to shame or expose a child or youth.

Any concern about inappropriate photo or video use, digital communication, media sharing, social media interaction, or electronic boundary crossing should be reported to a ministry leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, a Youth Ministry Leader, or an elder.

Restroom Policy

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take their children to the restroom before checking them into a class or ministry activity.

For the safety and protection of children and workers, parents and guardians should ordinarily assist their own children with restroom needs. Children who are old enough to attend a classroom outside the nursery should ordinarily be able to use the restroom independently, or a parent or guardian should assist them.

If a child needs to use the restroom while in Crossway's care, a Children's Ministry Worker, Assistant, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker, or ministry leader should contact the child's parent or guardian whenever practical so the parent or guardian can escort the child to the restroom.

If a parent or guardian cannot be reached in a timely manner, or if the ministry setting makes parent assistance impractical, a Children's Ministry Worker or Assistant may escort the child to the restroom area with appropriate visibility and accountability. Whenever reasonably possible, two approved workers should be involved, or a Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker or ministry leader should be notified and remain aware of the restroom assistance.

Workers should remain outside the restroom door and should not enter a restroom stall with a child except in an emergency or when immediate safety requires it. Workers should not lock themselves in a restroom with a child or place themselves in an isolated, unobservable situation.

If a child needs help with clothing, wiping, or other personal care, the parent or guardian should be contacted whenever possible. If immediate assistance is necessary for the child's safety or wellbeing, an approved adult female worker should provide the assistance whenever possible, with another approved worker, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker, or ministry leader nearby and with visibility and accountability maintained as much as modesty allows.

When assisting a child with restroom needs, workers must preserve modesty, avoid unnecessary physical contact, and maintain visibility and accountability. A worker should never be alone with a child in a restroom, restroom stall, or other private area except in an emergency or unavoidable immediate-safety situation.

Children who require ongoing restroom assistance should have a plan discussed in advance between the parent or guardian and the Director of Children's Ministry or Children's Ministry Leader. Parents and guardians should remain responsible for any ongoing restroom assistance that requires personal care unless a specific written plan has been approved by the Director of Children's Ministry or elders.

No child may leave the classroom or ministry area for the restroom unattended. Children must be escorted according to

this policy and returned promptly to the classroom or ministry area.

Restroom-related expectations, modesty, visibility, emergency access, and documentation should be addressed in Children's Ministry training.

Diaper Changing Policy

Parents and guardians are encouraged to change soiled diapers before checking their children into the nursery.

Diaper changes should be performed only by approved adult female ministry workers or by the child's parent/legal guardian. Diapering should take place only at the designated changing station and, whenever possible, in view of another approved ministry worker. Children must never be left unattended on a changing surface and should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately after the change is complete. Teenage helpers may not change diapers. If a child requires unusual or extensive assistance, a parent/guardian should be contacted.

The Children's Ministry Leader responsible for nursery oversight should ensure that disposable gloves, wipes, disinfectant wipes or cleaning products, diaper disposal supplies, and other ordinary diapering supplies are stocked and available in the nursery.

Food Policy and Administering Medicine

Peanut and Tree Nut-Free Classroom Snack Policy

Snacks provided to children during children's ministry classes or activities should be peanut-free and tree nut-free.

Parents and guardians should not send snacks or food containing peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, nut butters, or other peanut/tree nut ingredients into children's ministry classrooms. Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should not serve classroom snacks unless they are consistent with this policy and any known allergy or medical information for the children present.

This policy applies to snacks provided to children during children's ministry classes and activities. It does not apply to churchwide meals, fellowship meals, or other food served outside children's ministry classroom care unless otherwise announced for a specific event.

Parents and guardians remain responsible to notify Crossway of any allergy, food sensitivity, dietary restriction, or feeding instruction for their child. If food instructions are unclear, workers should not give food to the child until clarification is received from the child's parent or guardian.

Appropriate Classroom Correction and Redirection

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants are responsible to help provide a loving, respectful, safe, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, worship, and interact with others.

This atmosphere should be maintained through prayerful preparation, clear expectations, proactive supervision, positive encouragement, and age-appropriate correction or redirection when needed.

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should seek to correct children with patience, gentleness, firmness, and respect. Correction should be discreet, should take place within the classroom or approved ministry area, and should remain observable by other approved workers. A child should not be removed from the classroom for correction unless the child is being released to a parent or guardian, taken to another approved ministry area with proper supervision, or removed because of a safety concern.

Acceptable means of correction and redirection include:

- Clearly reminding the child of classroom expectations
- Redirecting the child toward an appropriate activity
- Encouraging and praising appropriate behavior
- Withholding a privilege or activity for a brief time

- Having the child sit apart from the group for a brief, age-appropriate reset while remaining within sight and supervision of approved workers
- Contacting the child's parent or guardian when needed
- Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants must not use corporal punishment or physical discipline of any kind, including spanking, slapping, kicking, grabbing in anger, hitting, or using physical force as punishment.
- Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants must not use harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threats, intimidation, shaming, ridicule, or any form of verbal humiliation.

Physical intervention should not be used to correct behavior except when necessary to prevent immediate harm to the child, another child, a worker, or another person. Any physical intervention used for immediate safety must be limited to what is necessary, must stop as soon as the danger has passed, and must be reported to the parent or guardian and the Children's Ministry Leader or Director of Children's Ministry.

Correction Process

When a child is having difficulty following classroom expectations, Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should ordinarily use the following process:

- **Reminder and Redirection**
The worker should calmly remind the child of the expectation, explain what needs to change, and redirect the child toward appropriate behavior or activity.
- **Warning and Consequence**
If the child continues the same behavior, the worker should clearly explain the concern and identify an appropriate consequence, such as losing a privilege or taking a brief reset from the activity.
- **Brief Reset**
If the behavior continues, the child may be asked to sit apart from the group for a brief, age-appropriate period while remaining in the classroom or approved ministry area and

within sight of approved workers. A general guideline is no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

- **Restoration and Reconciliation**
After correction, the worker should help the child understand what happened, encourage the child toward repentance, reconciliation, and obedience to Christ in an age-appropriate way, and help the child rejoin the group when appropriate. Prayer may be offered in a gentle and appropriate way.
- **Parent Notification or Removal from Class**
If the behavior continues after these steps, or if the child refuses to participate safely, the parent or guardian should be contacted. The child may be released to the parent or guardian for the remainder of the class, service, or ministry activity. The Children's Ministry Leader or Director of Children's Ministry should be notified when a child is removed from class.

Behavior That May Result in Immediate Removal from Class

A child may be removed from class immediately if the child's behavior creates a safety concern or significantly disrupts the care of other children.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Hitting, biting, kicking, or striking another child or worker
- Aggressive or threatening behavior
- Repeated refusal to follow safety instructions
- Attempting to leave the classroom or ministry area without permission
- Throwing objects or damaging property
- Behavior that endangers the child, other children, workers, or others present

If immediate removal is needed, the parent or guardian should be contacted, and the Children's Ministry Leader or Director of Children's Ministry should be notified.

After a child has been removed from class for significant behavior concerns, the Director of Children's Ministry, Children's Ministry

Leader, or an elder may require a parent or guardian to remain with the child during future classes or ministry activities until a plan is developed and the risk of repeated disruption or harm has been adequately reduced.

For further information or help with classroom correction and redirection, parents or workers should speak with a Children's Ministry Leader or the Director of Children's Ministry.

Physical Touch Policy

Appropriate physical touch can be a good and necessary part of caring for children. Young children may need to be held, comforted, helped, redirected, or protected from harm. At the same time, physical touch can be misunderstood, misused, or become unsafe. Therefore, all physical contact in children's and youth ministry must be appropriate, limited, observable, and for the good of the child.

Physical touch must never be used to satisfy the desires, preferences, or emotional needs of an adult or worker. It must never be coercive, secretive, sexual, punitive, harsh, or intended to intimidate, shame, or control a child.

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants must follow these guidelines:

- Remain in open sight of other approved workers whenever physically interacting with children.
- Keep physical contact brief, appropriate, and related to the child's age, need, and situation.
- Use extra caution as children grow older. Forms of touch that may be appropriate for nursery children, such as holding, rocking, or sitting on a lap, are generally not appropriate for older children.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for young children, ordinarily ages 0–5, and should remain observable by other approved workers.
- Touch children only in generally safe areas, such as hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or the top of the head.

Examples may include holding a young child who needs comfort, briefly placing a reassuring hand on a shoulder, giving a high-five, or gently redirecting a child away from danger.

- Never touch a child in or near private areas except as necessary while following the diaper changing, restroom, medical, or emergency procedures in this policy.
- Do not pick up a child who is old enough to attend Children's Church or older as a means of correcting or redirecting behavior, unless the child is in immediate danger or is placing another person in immediate danger. Use verbal instruction, redirection, appropriate consequences, and help from a Children's Ministry Leader as needed.
- Do not roughhouse, wrestle, give shoulder rides or piggyback rides, massage children, rub a child's body, tickle children, or engage in physical play that could make a child uncomfortable or appear inappropriate.
- Never touch a child out of anger, frustration, impatience, or as a form of punishment.
- Never use physical discipline or corporal punishment with any child.
- Respect a child's discomfort with physical contact. If a child pulls away, says no, appears uncomfortable, or does not want physical affection, the worker must stop unless immediate safety requires intervention.
- Report any concerning physical contact, boundary concern, or suspected inappropriate touch to a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder.

Prohibited Physical Contact

The following forms of physical contact are prohibited:

- Any sexual, sensual, or private touch
- Any touch intended to shame, punish, intimidate, threaten, or control
- Any touch done secretly or away from the sight of others
- Any coercive touch or forced affection
- Any corporal punishment, including spanking, slapping, hitting, kicking, grabbing in anger, or shaking

- Any physical contact that violates this policy, violates the law, or raises concern about a child's safety or wellbeing

Child-to-Child Physical Contact

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants are responsible to help children interact with one another in ways that are safe, respectful, and appropriate.

Appropriate child-to-child physical contact may include ordinary play, helping, or friendly gestures that are welcomed, age-appropriate, nonsexual, nonviolent, and not coercive.

Inappropriate child-to-child physical contact includes, but is not limited to:

- Hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, fighting, or violent behavior
- Touching another child in or near private areas
- Attempting to see or expose private areas
- Coercive, secretive, sexualized, threatening, or intimidating behavior
- Roughhousing or physical play that becomes unsafe or unwanted
- Any attempt by one child to control, punish, shame, or intimidate another child through physical force

No child or youth should be alone with another child or youth in a private or unobservable location during children's or youth ministry activities.

If inappropriate child-to-child physical contact occurs or is suspected, Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants should intervene promptly, ensure the safety of the children involved, notify a Children's Ministry Leader or the Director of Children's Ministry, and inform the appropriate parents or guardians.

Further guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate touch may be included in Appendix 1.

Youth Ministry Activities

Parents and guardians of youth participating in Crossway-approved youth ministry programs will be given advance notice of significant variations in schedules, activities, meeting locations, transportation plans, or other event details.

For planned off-site activities, parents or guardians of all participants under the age of 18 must complete any required permission, medical release, transportation, and event-specific forms or acknowledgments before the youth may participate when required by the Youth Ministry Leader, Director of Children's Ministry, or elders. These forms should include emergency contact information, relevant medical information, allergy information, transportation permission, event-specific permissions when needed, and permission to seek emergency medical assistance if a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

For regular youth ministry participation and ordinary recurring transportation permissions, parents or guardians may complete Crossway's annual Youth Ministry Permission and Transportation Form. See Appendix 11.

Chaperones for youth ministry events must be approved by Crossway and must complete all required screening, background check, training, policy agreement, and event-specific forms before serving. Youth ministry leaders are responsible to confirm that chaperones have completed all required items before the event.

Youth ministry leaders or designated chaperones must bring or have access to a first aid kit, emergency contact information, medical information, permission forms, and incident report forms during off-site youth ministry activities.

Overnight Event Procedures

Crossway-approved overnight youth events require careful planning, appropriate supervision, and advance approval by the Youth Ministry Leader, Director of Children's Ministry, or elders.

Co-ed overnight events must have both male and female approved adult chaperones. Male and female participants must have separate sleeping areas, and male and female chaperones must not sleep in the same sleeping area.

Approved youth ministry leaders or approved adult chaperones should provide appropriate supervision of the general sleeping areas during overnight events while preserving appropriate separation, modesty, and accountability. Adults should not share private sleeping accommodations with minors. If approved adults must sleep in the same general area as minors, at least two approved adults of the same sex as the minors must be present.

Chaperones should not be alone with a minor in a private or unobservable location. All counseling, discipleship, correction, or personal conversations during overnight events should take place in observable and interruptible settings.

If an overnight event takes place at the Crossway Church building, sleeping arrangements must ensure that males and females are housed in separate and secure areas. If the building cannot provide sufficient separation and supervision, either the male or female participants must be housed off-site.

Transportation Guidelines

Crossway recognizes that children and youth may arrive at and leave church gatherings, ministry events, and informal activities in a variety of ways. These guidelines are intended to provide reasonable safeguards without placing unnecessary burdens on families, volunteers, or ministry leaders.

Transportation Categories

For purposes of this policy, transportation is divided into three general categories: church-arranged transportation, parent-arranged transportation, and informal social transportation.

Church-arranged transportation means transportation that Crossway assigns, coordinates, directs, or presents as part of a Crossway-approved children's or youth ministry activity or off-site event. When Crossway arranges transportation, the driver,

vehicle, permission, supervision, and safety requirements in this policy apply.

Parent-arranged transportation means transportation arranged independently by a parent or guardian, including rides with another parent, family member, sibling, family friend, or private carpool. Parents and guardians remain responsible for transportation arrangements they make privately. Crossway is not responsible for screening or approving private transportation arrangements unless Crossway is assigning, coordinating, or directing the transportation.

Informal social transportation refers to transportation connected to informal activities that arise naturally outside the formal structure of a Crossway-approved event, such as families or students deciding after church to go to lunch, hike, or gather socially. When Crossway is not arranging or assigning transportation, parents and guardians remain responsible for transportation decisions.

Approved Drivers

When Crossway arranges transportation for children or youth, drivers must be approved by the church. Approved drivers must have a valid driver's license, current vehicle registration, appropriate automobile insurance, and must complete Crossway's required screening process, including a background check and DMV/motor vehicle record check.

Approved drivers will ordinarily be Crossway members or regular attenders known to the church, unless an exception is approved by the elders, Youth Ministry Leader, Director of Children's Ministry, or another ministry leader designated by the elders.

Parent Permission

Parents or guardians must give permission for their child to participate in church-arranged transportation. For regular youth ministry participation and ordinary recurring youth ministry activities, this permission may be included in Crossway's annual Youth Ministry Permission and Transportation Form. See Appendix 11.

Separate event-specific permission may be required for retreats, overnight events, long-distance travel, out-of-state travel, elevated-risk activities, events involving special circumstances, or other events as determined by the Youth Ministry Leader, Director of Children's Ministry, or elders. Crossway may use a separate event-specific permission and medical release form when needed.

Supervision in Vehicles

Church-arranged transportation should avoid any situation in which one adult is alone in a vehicle with one unrelated child or youth. Whenever reasonably possible, either two approved adults should be present in a vehicle, or one approved adult should transport at least two children or youth.

Exceptions may be made for parent/child transportation, siblings, family-arranged transportation, emergencies, or situations specifically approved by a parent or guardian and a ministry leader. When a temporary exception is necessary, the driver should use good judgment, avoid unnecessary isolation, and ensure that a parent, guardian, ministry leader, or elder is aware of the arrangement.

Safety Requirements

Drivers are expected to obey all traffic laws and operate vehicles safely. All passengers must wear seat belts at all times, and the number of passengers may not exceed the number of available seat belts. Drivers may not text, use handheld devices, drive impaired, drive aggressively, or allow unsafe conduct in the vehicle.

Drivers should travel directly to the destination unless a reasonable public stop is needed for fuel, food, restrooms, safety, or an approved ministry purpose.

Planned Off-Site Events

For planned off-site events where Crossway arranges transportation, the ministry leader should maintain a basic transportation plan, including the event destination, approved drivers, participating students, emergency contact information,

and expected departure and return details. For larger events, overnight trips, or long-distance travel, student vehicle assignments should be documented when practical.

Informal or Spontaneous Activities

At times, youth, families, or leaders may participate in informal activities that arise naturally outside the formal structure of a Crossway-approved event. When Crossway is not arranging or assigning transportation, parents and guardians are responsible for transportation decisions.

If a ministry leader is involved in an informal activity with youth, the leader should still act with wisdom, avoid one-on-one isolation with an unrelated minor, communicate clearly with parents when appropriate, and follow the general safety principles of this policy.

Student Drivers

Youth who drive themselves must comply with all applicable laws, license restrictions, and parental instructions. Youth drivers may drive themselves to or from youth activities with parent or guardian permission. Youth drivers may not transport other unrelated youth as part of Crossway-arranged transportation unless approved by the parents or guardians of all involved, permitted by law, and known to the ministry leader.

Crossway reserves the right to restrict or remove any person from transporting children or youth for ministry activities based on safety concerns, driving history, insurance concerns, failure to follow this policy, or any other concern affecting the safety of children or youth.

Healthy Child Classroom Policy

Crossway desires to maintain a healthy classroom environment and to reduce the spread of communicable illness among children, families, and ministry workers.

Parents and guardians should not check a child into a class or ministry activity when the child is ill, appears to be contagious, or

is unable to participate safely and comfortably. Children's Ministry Workers, Children's Ministry Leaders, the Director of Children's Ministry, or elders may refuse or delay a child's entry into class when illness symptoms raise concern for the health or safety of others.

A child may return to class when symptoms have improved, the child has been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours, vomiting or diarrhea has been absent for at least 24 hours, and the child is no longer considered contagious according to generally recognized medical guidance.

If a child becomes ill while in Crossway's care, Children's Ministry Workers or Assistants should contact the parent or guardian promptly. The child may be separated from the group in an observable and supervised area until the parent or guardian arrives.

When Crossway becomes aware that children in a classroom or ministry activity may have been exposed to a contagious illness or other health concern, parents and guardians of children who were present should be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

Notification should be handled with appropriate discretion and should not unnecessarily identify the child, family, or individual who was ill.

Parents and guardians should notify a Children's Ministry Leader or the Director of Children's Ministry if their child appears to have contracted a communicable illness after attending a Crossway event, so that other parents may be notified if necessary.

A one-page summary of Crossway's illness standards should be printed and posted in each children's ministry classroom. See Appendix 8.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are practices used to protect children, families, and ministry workers from the spread of illness or infection. These practices treat all blood, bodily fluids, and soiled

items as potentially infectious. This does not imply that any child, family member, or worker is known to have an infectious disease.

Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants must use universal precautions whenever working with children, cleaning bodily fluids, changing diapers, treating injuries, or handling soiled items.

Universal precautions include the following:

- Wear disposable gloves whenever dealing with blood, vomit, urine, stool, saliva, or other bodily fluids.
- Dispose of gloves after each use and wash or sanitize hands immediately after removing gloves.
- Wash or sanitize hands before and after diaper changes, cleaning bodily fluids, treating injuries, assisting with restroom needs, serving food, or helping children eat.
- Treat soiled clothing, linens, toys, stuffed animals, and other items as potentially infectious until they have been properly cleaned or returned to the parent or guardian.
- Place soiled personal items in a sealed bag or container and return them to the child's parent or guardian.
- Clean and disinfect toys, equipment, changing surfaces, and other contacted surfaces according to Crossway's cleaning procedures.
- Use designated cleaning supplies and follow product instructions for safe and effective disinfection.
- Notify a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder if there is a significant blood or bodily fluid incident, possible exposure concern, injury, or illness requiring parent notification or documentation.

Any incident involving blood, significant bodily fluids, injury, or possible exposure should be documented according to Crossway's incident reporting procedures.

A Universal Precautions Quick Reference should be printed and posted in each children's ministry classroom. See Appendix 9.

Outside Policy, Building Safety, and Emergency Readiness

Crossway recognizes that child protection involves not only written policies, but also the physical spaces, traffic patterns, visibility, access points, and supervision practices used during ministry.

The elders, Director of Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry Leader, and appropriate ministry leaders should periodically review the building and ministry spaces to identify and address safety concerns.

This review should include, as applicable:

- check-in and check-out locations;
- hallway and stairway traffic flow;
- classroom access and visibility;
- door windows, sight lines, and observable spaces;
- restroom access and emergency access concerns;
- nursery layout, nursing privacy, and accountability;
- playground and outdoor boundaries;
- emergency exits and evacuation routes;
- posted evacuation maps and gathering areas;
- parent reunification procedures;
- first-aid kits, incident forms, abuse-reporting forms, and emergency supplies;
- hall monitor locations and communication methods;
- locations where children might be isolated or unsupervised.

Classrooms and ministry areas should be arranged, whenever reasonably possible, to preserve visibility, accountability, and appropriate supervision. Spaces should not be intentionally arranged in a way that creates hidden or isolated access to children or youth.

Check-in and check-out procedures should be reviewed not only for security, but also for practical traffic flow, visitor clarity, emergency use, and volunteer sustainability. If an electronic

system is used, backup procedures should be available in printable form and workers should be trained in their use.

Outside Policy

Children will not ordinarily be taken outside during regularly scheduled Sunday class times. Outdoor activity during children's ministry should be rare and should occur only when approved by a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or a designated event leader.

If a class plans to go outside, parents and guardians should be notified at check-in. Workers should clearly communicate that the class plans to be outside and identify the specific location where the children will be.

When children are taken outside, they must remain in a secured, fenced-in area. At Crossway, the playground is the only ordinary outdoor area suitable for children's ministry use. Children should not be taken to unsecured outdoor areas, parking areas, sidewalks, or other portions of the property that do not provide appropriate boundaries for safe supervision.

Before taking children outside, Children's Ministry Workers should consider whether outdoor activity is appropriate based on weather, temperature, wind, precipitation, available supervision, the condition of the outdoor area, and any other safety concerns.

When children are outside, all applicable classroom policies remain in effect. Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants must remain with the children, maintain the required child-to-worker ratios, and keep the group within approved boundaries or designated play areas.

- Children's Ministry Workers should take attendance or conduct a headcount before leaving the classroom, while outside as needed, and before returning inside. Children may not re-enter the building unattended.

At the conclusion of outdoor activity, the class must return together to the classroom or designated ministry area so that normal check-out procedures may be followed.

Parents and guardians should notify a Children's Ministry Worker, Children's Ministry Leader, or the Director of Children's Ministry if they have concerns about their child participating in outdoor activity.

Fire Evacuation, Emergency Accountability, and Parent Reunification

Crossway's children's ministry classrooms currently have posted evacuation maps and a fire evacuation procedure. Approved workers should be familiar with the evacuation route posted in the classroom or ministry area where they are serving.

In the event of a fire alarm, fire, smoke, suspected fire, or other situation requiring evacuation, workers should calmly lead children out of the classroom or ministry area according to the posted evacuation route, unless that route is unsafe or blocked. If the posted route is unsafe, workers should use the safest available alternate route.

Evacuation Procedure

1. Approved workers and children should line up quietly by the designated exit door.
2. One approved worker should bring the first aid kit and the available attendance/check-in record, whether paper or electronic.
3. Workers should lead children safely outside to the designated meeting area on the back lawn.
4. Children should remain together in line or in another orderly arrangement while workers take attendance and account for every child.
5. Before children are dismissed from the designated meeting area, workers must receive approval from a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder.
6. Children should be released through the ordinary check-out process when available, or through the safest available emergency release process when ordinary check-out is not

possible. A child may not leave unless released to a parent, guardian, or authorized pickup person.

Classroom Check Before Exit

When it can be done safely, an approved worker should check the classroom or ministry area to make sure no child has been left behind. Classroom doors and windows should be closed but not locked.

Workers should not delay evacuation or place themselves or children in danger in order to complete a room check.

A Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, an elder, or another available responsible adult should be notified as soon as reasonably possible. Emergency services should be contacted immediately when there is fire, smoke, suspected fire, injury, imminent danger, or another emergency requiring 911 response.

Parent Reunification

In an evacuation or emergency, parents and guardians should not rush to classrooms, hallways, stairways, nurseries, or ministry areas to retrieve children. Doing so may interfere with evacuation, create congestion, delay workers, block emergency responders, or make it harder to account for all children.

Parents and guardians should exit the building safely and proceed to the designated meeting area on the back lawn, unless directed elsewhere by Crossway leaders, ministry leaders, security personnel, or emergency responders.

Children will remain under the care of approved workers until attendance has been taken, all children have been accounted for, and release has been approved by a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder.

Children should be released only to a parent, guardian, or authorized pickup person through the ordinary check-out process or the safest available emergency release process.

Re-Entry and All-Clear

Children and workers should not re-enter the building after an evacuation until an all-clear has been given by emergency responders, an elder, a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or another clearly authorized person.

If there is uncertainty about whether it is safe to re-enter, workers should remain outside at the designated meeting area or follow the direction of emergency responders or Crossway leaders.

Future Emergency Planning and Training

Crossway intends to continue developing broader church-wide emergency response procedures, including training, role assignments, emergency drills, parent reunification planning, and coordination among elders, deacons, ministry leaders, security personnel, and approved workers.

Until such procedures are further developed, approved workers should follow this policy, the posted evacuation maps, the classroom fire evacuation procedure, ministry-leader direction, and emergency-responder instructions.

Reporting Building and Space Concerns

Building and space-related concerns should be reported to the Director of Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry Leader, deacons, security team, or elders as appropriate.

The goal is to maintain ministry spaces that are welcoming, visible, safe, and accountable.

Reporting and Response Plan for Child Neglect and Abuse

Prevention of Child Neglect and Abuse in Crossway Children and Youth Ministry

Crossway takes the protection of children and youth seriously. We desire to provide ministry environments that are safe,

accountable, and above reproach. In an effort to prevent child neglect and abuse, Crossway seeks to:

- Educate and equip staff, elders, ministry leaders, Children's Ministry Workers, and Children's Ministry Assistants to recognize and respond appropriately to suspected neglect, abuse, boundary violations, and unsafe behavior.
- Follow the procedures and guidelines set forth in this Protection Policy, including required screening, training, staffing, supervision, check-in/check-out, bathroom, diapering, transportation, and emergency response procedures.
- Screen and train Children's Ministry Workers and Assistants before they serve in children's or youth ministry. Screening may include an application, reference checks, background checks for adult applicants, review by ministry leaders, and approval according to this policy.
- Require all full-time Crossway staff, elders, Children's Ministry Leaders, adult Children's Ministry Workers, adult Children's Ministry Assistants, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Workers, and youth ministry chaperones to complete required screening and background checks.
- Repeat required screening procedures and background checks for adult staff and adult children's or youth ministry workers at least every three years.
- Remove from service any person whose conduct, background, references, criminal history, or other available information raises concern about that person's suitability to serve with children or youth.

Reporting Suspected Child Neglect or Abuse

Any person who suspects, witnesses, receives a disclosure, or has reason to believe that a child has been abused, neglected, harmed, exploited, or threatened with abuse in any form must take the concern seriously and respond promptly.

Under New Hampshire law, any person who has reason to suspect that a child under the age of 18 has been abused or neglected must report that suspicion to the New Hampshire

Division for Children, Youth and Families. Reports may be made to DCYF Central Intake at 603-271-6562 or 1-800-894-5533. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911 first.

Reporting to Crossway leaders does not replace a person's responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect as required by law. A person who has reason to suspect abuse or neglect should make the report to DCYF or law enforcement and should also promptly notify a Crossway elder, the Director of Children's Ministry, or another appropriate ministry leader so that Crossway can take immediate steps to protect children and cooperate with civil authorities.

No person should attempt to investigate, prove, disprove, or resolve an allegation before making a required report. A report should be made when there is reason to suspect abuse or neglect. Proof is not required.

Crossway will not retaliate against anyone who makes a good-faith report of suspected abuse, neglect, misconduct, or unsafe behavior.

Who to Contact Within Crossway

After contacting DCYF or law enforcement as required, the person reporting should promptly notify one of the following Crossway leaders:

- An elder
- The Director of Children's Ministry
- A Children's Ministry Leader
- A Youth Ministry Leader, when the concern involves youth ministry

If the concern involves one of these leaders, the report should be made to another elder or appropriate leader who is not involved in the concern.

When a child may be in immediate danger, the first priority is to protect the child and call 911. Internal Crossway notification should occur as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

Expectations for Minor Children's Ministry Assistants

Minor Children's Ministry Assistants are not expected to investigate, confront an adult alone, determine whether abuse occurred, or handle a disclosure on their own. If a Minor Children's Ministry Assistant observes a Children's Ministry Worker, adult Children's Ministry Assistant, youth worker, chaperone, staff member, parent, or other adult violating this policy, behaving unsafely, or acting in a way that makes the minor assistant or a child uncomfortable, the Minor Children's Ministry Assistant must promptly tell an approved adult leader.

When possible, the Minor Children's Ministry Assistant should report the concern to the Children's Ministry Worker in the classroom, the Director of Children's Ministry, the Youth Ministry Leader when the concern involves youth ministry, or an elder. If the concern involves the adult who would normally receive the report, the Minor Children's Ministry Assistant should report to another approved adult leader.

If a child or youth discloses possible abuse, neglect, inappropriate touch, unsafe behavior, or a policy violation to a Minor Children's Ministry Assistant, or if a Minor Children's Ministry Assistant has reason to suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring, the Minor Children's Ministry Assistant should listen calmly, avoid promising secrecy, avoid asking detailed or leading questions, and immediately report the concern to an approved adult leader.

The approved adult leader who receives the report is responsible to ensure the matter is reported according to this policy and applicable law. Parents of Minor Children's Ministry Assistants should discuss these expectations with their child before service begins, and Minor Children's Ministry Assistants should be reminded during training that reporting concerns promptly is an act of care for the children and youth entrusted to Crossway.

Initial Care for the Child

When a child discloses possible abuse or neglect, the adult receiving the disclosure should remain calm, listen carefully, and reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by speaking.

The adult should not promise secrecy. Instead, the adult may say something like, “I am glad you told me. I need to share this with people who can help keep you safe.”

The adult should avoid pressing for details, asking leading questions, or repeatedly interviewing the child. The goal is not to investigate, but to receive enough information to understand the concern and make an appropriate report.

Appropriate responses include:

- Listening calmly and respectfully
- Asking only simple, open-ended questions when needed, such as “Can you tell me what happened?”
- Allowing the child to use his or her own words
- Avoiding suggested answers or emotionally intense reactions
- Not asking the child to undress or reveal injuries that are not readily visible
- Writing down the child’s words as accurately as possible
- Reporting promptly according to this policy and applicable law

Documentation

A Child Abuse Reporting Form should be completed as soon as reasonably possible after suspected abuse, neglect, disclosure, boundary violation, or other serious concern.

Documentation should include:

- The child’s name and age
- The date, time, and location of the concern or disclosure
- The names of those present
- The child’s words as accurately as possible
- Observable signs, symptoms, injuries, emotions, or behaviors
- Actions taken to protect the child

- The date and time DCYF, law enforcement, parents or guardians, and Crossway leaders were contacted, as applicable

Documentation should be factual and should avoid speculation, conclusions, or unnecessary detail. Completed forms should be stored electronically and securely, with access limited to the Director of Children's Ministry and the elders.

Abuse Response Workflow After a Report, Disclosure, or Concern

Any person who suspects, witnesses, receives a disclosure of, or has reason to believe that child abuse or neglect may have occurred must respond promptly and in accordance with New Hampshire law and this policy. A summary of New Hampshire child abuse and neglect reporting requirements is included in Appendix 7. Reporting a concern to Crossway leaders does not replace any legal obligation to report to DCYF or law enforcement.

Crossway workers and leaders must not investigate, attempt to prove or disprove, confront the alleged offender, interview multiple witnesses, or resolve an allegation before making a required report. The role of the worker or leader is to protect, report, document, and cooperate with the proper authorities.

When a concern, disclosure, or suspected abuse or neglect arises, the following response process should ordinarily be followed as appropriate to the circumstances:

1. Ensure immediate safety.

If a child is in immediate danger, urgent medical danger, or another emergency situation, call 911 first. Take reasonable steps to keep the child safe without conducting an investigation.

2. Receive the disclosure calmly.

If a child discloses abuse or unsafe behavior, listen calmly. Do not express shock, blame, disbelief, or anger. Do not promise

secrecy. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling.

Ask only simple, open-ended questions if needed, such as, “Can you tell me what happened?” Do not ask leading or suggestive questions.

3. Report immediately as required by law.

A report must be made promptly to DCYF and/or law enforcement as required by New Hampshire law. If there is uncertainty about whether a report is required, the concern should be treated seriously and reported rather than delayed for internal investigation.

4. Notify Crossway leadership.

As soon as reasonably possible, the worker should notify an elder, the Director of Children’s Ministry, the appropriate Children’s Ministry Leader, or the Youth Ministry Leader when youth ministry is involved.

Internal notification is for protection, pastoral care, documentation, and coordination. It does not replace required reporting to civil authorities.

5. Document the concern.

The worker or leader receiving the concern should complete the appropriate reporting form as soon as possible. Documentation should be factual, specific, and limited to what was observed, heard, said, or done.

When recording a child’s words, use the child’s own words as much as possible. Avoid speculation, conclusions, or unnecessary interpretation.

6. Confirm reporting and next steps.

The elder, Director of Children’s Ministry, Youth Ministry Leader, or designated ministry leader involved should confirm that any required report has been made and should document the date,

time, agency contacted, and any instructions received, to the extent appropriate and lawful.

7. Coordinate parent or guardian notification.

Parents or guardians should ordinarily be notified promptly when a concern involves their child. In abuse-related situations, however, notification should be coordinated with appropriate Crossway leadership and, when applicable, DCYF or law enforcement.

This is especially important when immediate notification could increase risk to the child, interfere with a required report, compromise an investigation, or involve a parent or guardian in the concern.

8. Take protective ministry action.

Crossway leaders may take immediate protective steps, including removing a worker from service, limiting access to children or youth, adjusting ministry procedures, preserving records, notifying appropriate leaders, or taking other steps judged necessary for safety and care.

Such steps are not a determination of guilt, but a protective response while concerns are addressed.

9. Secure records.

Completed reports and related documentation should be stored securely and electronically, with access limited to elders, the Director of Children's Ministry, and others specifically authorized by the elders for legitimate ministry, legal, or safety reasons.

10. Provide pastoral care and oversee communication.

Elders will oversee pastoral care for those affected. Public or congregational communication, if needed, should be handled by the elders or their designees.

No worker should speak publicly, post online, or communicate broadly about an abuse concern unless authorized by the elders and consistent with legal and pastoral wisdom.

The purpose of this process is to protect children, obey the law, care for families, avoid internal investigation, preserve accurate information, and respond with integrity before God and the church.

Defining Terms Related to Child Neglect and Abuse

The following definitions are provided to help Crossway staff, elders, ministry leaders, Children's Ministry Workers, Children's Ministry Assistants, parents, and members understand the kinds of concerns that must be taken seriously and reported according to this policy and applicable law. These definitions are not intended to replace or limit the definitions provided under New Hampshire law.

Child Neglect

Child neglect generally refers to the failure of a parent, guardian, caretaker, or other person responsible for a child's care to provide for the child's basic needs or to protect the child from harm.

This may include failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical or dental care, supervision, education, safety, or protection from known danger.

Child Abuse

Child abuse generally refers to any act, failure to act, or pattern of conduct that results in harm, threatened harm, serious risk of harm, exploitation, sexual harm, serious physical harm, serious emotional harm, or death of a child.

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, or related to neglect or exploitation.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes non-accidental physical injury or harm to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, burning, biting, kicking, choking, throwing, or any other physical act that harms or places a child at risk of harm.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse includes patterns of behavior that seriously harm or threaten a child's emotional wellbeing. This may include severe belittling, intimidation, threats, isolation, humiliation, rejection, or other conduct that causes serious emotional harm.

Sexual Abuse by an Adult

Sexual abuse by an adult includes any sexual contact, sexual activity, sexualized behavior, exploitation, or attempted sexual contact involving an adult and a minor. A child cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult.

Sexual abuse may include both touching and non-touching offenses.

Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct Involving Children

Sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving children includes sexual contact, sexualized behavior, coercion, exploitation, exposure, or activity between minors that is inappropriate, coercive, forced, secretive, threatening, or involves a significant difference in age, size, development, power, authority, or understanding.

Any suspected sexual abuse, exploitation, coercion, or inappropriate sexualized behavior involving children must be reported to the appropriate Crossway leaders and, when required, to civil authorities.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation includes involving a child in sexual activity, sexual images, pornography, prostitution, trafficking, recording,

photographing, livestreaming, or any other sexualized use of a child for the gratification, benefit, manipulation, or control of another person.

Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse includes any sexual contact with a minor, attempted sexual contact, sexual exploitation, exposure to sexual material or sexual behavior, grooming, sexual communication, or other sexualized conduct involving a child.

Child sexual abuse may involve physical contact or may occur without physical contact.

Touching Offenses

Touching offenses include sexual or inappropriate physical contact with a child, including contact with private areas, contact intended to arouse or gratify sexual desire, or any other physical contact that is sexual, coercive, exploitative, or inappropriate.

Non-Touching Offenses

Non-touching offenses include sexual or inappropriate conduct that does not involve physical contact. This may include exposing a child to pornography, sexual images, sexual acts, sexual language, sexual messages, grooming behavior, indecent exposure, voyeurism, or sexual communication through written, verbal, digital, or electronic means.

Responding to Suspected Child Neglect or Abuse

Receiving a Disclosure from a Child

If a child shares information that may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, inappropriate touch, or unsafe behavior, the adult receiving the disclosure should respond calmly, gently, and seriously.

The adult should:

- Listen carefully and respectfully.
- Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling.
- Avoid expressing shock, anger, disbelief, or blame.
- Avoid promising secrecy.
- Ask only simple, open-ended questions when needed, such as, “Can you tell me what happened?”
- Allow the child to speak in his or her own words.
- Avoid suggesting answers or asking leading questions.
- Avoid repeatedly questioning or interviewing the child.
- Avoid asking the child to undress or show injuries that are not readily visible.
- Write down the child’s words as accurately as possible.

The purpose of this conversation is not to investigate or determine whether abuse occurred. The purpose is to care for the child, understand the concern sufficiently to make an appropriate report, and take steps to protect the child.

Observing Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Unsafe Behavior

If a Children’s Ministry Worker, Assistant, staff member, elder, parent, member, or attender observes behavior that may be abusive, neglectful, exploitative, unsafe, or in violation of this policy, he or she should act promptly to protect the child.

When immediate safety is at risk, the adult should intervene appropriately to stop the behavior, remove the child from danger if safe to do so, and contact 911 when needed.

The concern should then be reported promptly according to this policy and applicable law. A Child Abuse Reporting Form or Incident Report should be completed as soon as reasonably possible.

What Should Be Documented

When reporting or documenting a concern, include factual information such as:

- What was seen or heard
- The child's exact words, as much as possible
- Who was involved
- Who was present
- Where the concern occurred
- When it occurred or when it was disclosed
- Any visible signs, symptoms, injuries, emotions, or behaviors
- Any immediate actions taken to protect the child
- The date and time DCYF, law enforcement, parents or guardians, and Crossway leaders were contacted, as applicable

Documentation should be factual and concise. Do not speculate, assign motives, diagnose, or attempt to determine guilt or innocence.

Crossway's Posture Toward Allegations

Crossway will take every allegation, disclosure, suspicion, or report of child neglect, abuse, exploitation, inappropriate touch, or unsafe behavior seriously.

Crossway desires to respond with truthfulness, compassion, courage, and care for all involved, while giving first priority to the safety and protection of children. Crossway will seek to comply with applicable reporting laws, cooperate with civil authorities, and avoid interfering with investigations by DCYF or law enforcement.

Victims, alleged victims, and their families will be treated with care, dignity, and appropriate pastoral support. Crossway will also seek to act justly and carefully toward all parties, while taking necessary steps to protect children and the church.

Response to Allegations, Admissions, Convictions, or Investigations

Any allegation, disclosure, admission, criminal charge, criminal conviction, or civil investigation involving child abuse, neglect, exploitation, inappropriate sexual conduct, or conduct that raises

concern about a person's suitability to serve with children must be reported promptly to the elders.

If the allegation or concern involves a staff member, elder, Children's Ministry Leader, Children's Ministry Worker, Assistant, church member, attender, or volunteer, Crossway will take immediate steps to protect children while the matter is reviewed and, when applicable, investigated by civil authorities.

Such steps may include:

- Removing the accused person from all children's and youth ministry activities pending further review
- Preventing contact between the accused person and the child or alleged victim when appropriate
- Notifying DCYF or law enforcement as required by law
- Cooperating with DCYF, law enforcement, legal counsel, and insurers as appropriate
- Appointing an elder or designated leader to serve as the primary liaison with civil authorities
- Preserving relevant documents, reports, communications, and records
- Providing appropriate pastoral care for the child, family, and others affected

No person who is the subject of an unresolved allegation, investigation, charge, or conviction involving child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or similar misconduct may serve in children's or youth ministry unless and until the elders determine that reinstatement is appropriate. If a person's name is cleared or an allegation is not substantiated, the person must still receive elder approval before returning to children's or youth ministry.

Cooperation with Civil Authorities

If Crossway learns that DCYF, law enforcement, or another civil authority is investigating an allegation of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or related misconduct, Crossway will seek to cooperate appropriately and will not interfere with the investigation.

Crossway leaders, staff, ministry workers, and volunteers should not attempt to conduct a parallel investigation, pressure witnesses, question children repeatedly, or take any action that could compromise a civil investigation.

Adult Reports of Past Abuse

If an adult reports that he or she was abused, neglected, exploited, or harmed as a child in connection with a Crossway program, ministry, leader, worker, member, or attender, Crossway will take the report seriously and respond with care and diligence.

The elders will consider appropriate steps, which may include:

- Providing pastoral care and support to the person reporting
- Consulting legal counsel
- Reporting to law enforcement, DCYF, or other authorities when required or appropriate
- Determining whether the accused person currently has access to children or vulnerable persons
- Notifying any current church, ministry, employer, or organization where the accused person may have access to children, when appropriate and legally permissible
- Preserving relevant records and documentation
- Taking any necessary steps to protect children and the church
- Even if civil authorities are unable or unwilling to investigate because of the passage of time or other legal limitations, Crossway will seek to respond with appropriate care, seriousness, and wisdom.

Confidentiality

Reports, allegations, suspicions, and documentation related to child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or unsafe behavior should be handled with care and appropriate confidentiality.

Confidentiality must never be used to prevent reporting to DCYF, law enforcement, elders, legal counsel, insurers, or others who

need to know in order to protect children, comply with the law, care for victims, or respond appropriately.

Those who become aware of a concern should share information only with the appropriate authorities, Crossway leaders, and others who have a legitimate need to know. Gossip, speculation, retaliation, and unnecessary disclosure are not permitted.

Crossway will not retaliate against anyone who makes a good-faith report of suspected abuse, neglect, misconduct, or unsafe behavior.

Crossway Leadership Contact Information

For current contact information for elders, the Director of Children's Ministry, Children's Ministry Leaders, and Youth Ministry Leaders, please refer to Crossway's current directory, official ministry communications, or the regular contact information provided by the church office.

If a concern involves a leader, the concern should be reported to another elder or an appropriate leader who is not involved in the concern.

Appendix 1 – Inappropriate and Appropriate Touch

This appendix provides practical examples of physical contact that is inappropriate or appropriate in children's and youth ministry. These examples are not exhaustive. All physical contact must be consistent with Crossway's Physical Touch Policy.

Inappropriate Touch

Inappropriate touch includes, but is not limited to:

- Shoving, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, spanking, or using any form of corporal punishment.
- Pulling hair, squeezing a child's arm, neck, face, or other part of the body, or grabbing a child in anger or frustration.
- Tickling, wrestling, roughhousing, shoulder rides, piggyback rides, or other physical play that may blur boundaries, become unsafe, or make a child uncomfortable.
- Holding, restraining, or forcing a child to sit on an adult's lap, except when temporary physical restraint is necessary to prevent immediate harm to the child or others.
- Allowing children age six or older to sit on an adult's lap.
- Touching a child in or near private areas, except as necessary and consistent with Crossway's diaper changing, restroom, medical, or emergency procedures.
- Kissing a child or allowing a child to kiss a Children's Ministry Worker or Assistant. If a child attempts to kiss a worker, the worker should gently redirect the child to an appropriate gesture, such as a high-five, fist bump, or side hug when appropriate.
- Slapping or patting a child on the behind, even in play.
- Any contact that is sexual, sensual, secretive, coercive, punitive, intimidating, or intended to satisfy the desires or emotional needs of the adult.
- Carrying a child on the back unless the child is unable to walk or immediate safety requires it.

Appropriate Touch

Appropriate touch may include:

- A brief comforting pat on the shoulder or upper back.
- A young child leaning his or her head on a worker's shoulder when tired, distressed, or needing comfort, provided the contact remains observable and appropriate.
- Holding or rocking an infant or toddler when needed for comfort, care, or safety.
- A brief gentle pat on the back to comfort an infant or toddler.
- High-fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or similar appropriate greetings.
- Holding hands with children age five and under when initiated by the child or when needed to help the child walk, climb stairs, cross a walkway, or remain safe.
- Briefly holding or guiding a child's hand, arm, shoulder, or upper back to redirect the child away from danger.
- Using the minimum physical contact necessary to prevent a child from immediate injury, from injuring another child or worker, or from creating an immediate safety concern.

Any physical contact that causes concern, discomfort, confusion, or a complaint should be reported promptly to a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, or an elder.

Appendix 2 – Child Abuse Reporting Form

Instructions: This form should be completed when a person suspects, witnesses, receives a disclosure, or has reason to believe that a child may have been abused, neglected, exploited, harmed, threatened, or subjected to inappropriate conduct.

This form is for documentation and internal response. It does not replace any legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families, law enforcement, or other appropriate civil authorities.

The person completing this form should record factual information only. Do not investigate, speculate, assign motives, determine guilt or innocence, or repeatedly question the child. Record the child's words as accurately as possible.

Basic Information

Today's Date: _____

Date and Time of Concern or Disclosure:

Location of Concern or Disclosure:

Name of Child: _____

Child's Age: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Person Completing This Form: _____

Role of Person Completing This Form:

- ☐ Elder
- ☐ Crossway Staff
- ☐ Children's Ministry Leader
- ☐ Children's Ministry Worker
- ☐ Children's Ministry Assistant
- ☐ Parent/Guardian

☐ Member/Attender

☐ Other: _____

Nature of Concern

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Suspected physical abuse
- ☐ Suspected sexual abuse
- ☐ Suspected emotional abuse
- ☐ Suspected neglect
- ☐ Suspected exploitation
- ☐ Inappropriate touch or boundary concern
- ☐ Child-to-child incident
- ☐ Unsafe behavior by adult
- ☐ Unsafe behavior by child/youth
- ☐ Disclosure from child
- ☐ Observable injury or concerning symptom
- ☐ Other: _____

What Was Seen, Heard, or Reported

Describe what was seen, heard, reported, or disclosed. Include dates, times, locations, names of those involved, and names of anyone present.

Child's Exact Words

Record the child's exact words as much as possible. Avoid paraphrasing where exact words are remembered.

Questions Asked

List any questions asked of the child and the child's response. Include only what was actually asked and answered.

Visible Signs, Symptoms, Injuries, or Behaviors

Describe any visible signs, symptoms, injuries, emotions, or behaviors observed. Do not ask the child to undress or reveal injuries that are not readily visible.

Immediate Safety Steps Taken

Describe any immediate steps taken to protect the child or others.

Notifications and Reports

Was 911 called?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, date/time called: _____

Person who called: _____

Was DCYF contacted?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, date/time contacted: _____

Person who contacted DCYF: _____

Name of DCYF representative, if known:

Reference/case number, if provided:

Were law enforcement officials contacted?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, date/time contacted: _____

Person who contacted law enforcement:

Agency/officer name, if known: _____

Reference/case number, if provided: _____

Were parents or guardians contacted?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not at this time due to safety, legal, or investigative concerns

If yes, date/time contacted: _____

Person who contacted parent/guardian: _____

Were Crossway leaders notified?

☐ Elder notified

☐ Director of Children's Ministry notified

☐ Children's Ministry Leader notified

☐ Youth Ministry Leader notified

☐ Other: _____

Date/time notified: _____

Person notified: _____

Additional Relevant Information

Signature

Signature of Person Completing Form:

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Leader Review

Reviewed by: _____

Role: _____

Date reviewed: _____

Follow-up actions needed:

- This form should be stored electronically and securely, with access limited to the Director of Children's Ministry and the elders.

Appendix 3 – Children’s Ministry Application Form

This application is required for all adult applicants seeking to serve in Crossway Church’s Children’s Ministry. Its purpose is to help church leadership responsibly assess each applicant’s qualifications, experience, spiritual readiness, and suitability for service with minors. All information will be handled with appropriate care, confidentiality, and in accordance with Crossway Church’s Children and Youth Protection Policy.

1. Personal Information

Full Name (First and Last)

Email Address

Phone Number

Phone Type (Mobile, Home, etc.)

Gender

Membership Status at Crossway Church (Member / Non-Member)

2. Ministry Background and Experience

Have you participated in other ministries at Crossway Church? If yes, briefly describe.

Have you previously served with children? If yes, briefly describe.

Relevant experience or skills (check all that apply): Teaching, Childcare, Music, Counseling/Mentorship, Other.

If ‘Other,’ briefly describe relevant experience or skills.

3. Preferred Areas of Service

Nursery (0–3 years)

Trailblazers (4–6 years)

Children’s Sunday School

Wayfinders (Middle School)

Youth Group (Junior High to High School)

Open to serving where needed

4. Personal Ministry Commitments

By serving in Crossway Church's Children's Ministry, I commit (by God's grace) to:

- Serve faithfully and reliably
- Grow in my ability to care for and teach children
- Pray regularly for the children entrusted to me
- Follow Crossway Church's Children and Youth Protection Policy and ministry guidelines

5. Personal References

Provide two personal references (non-family preferred when possible).

Each reference must include: Name, Relationship, Email Address, and Phone Number.

Applicants waive the right to view reference statements.

6. Confidential Screening Questions

These questions are intended to help maintain a safe and supportive environment for children. Responses will be reviewed confidentially by authorized church leadership.

Is there anything that might affect your ability to work with children in a safe and supportive way? (Yes / No / I would like to discuss this)

Have you ever been accused of, charged with, or convicted of abuse, neglect, or a crime involving a minor? (Yes / No / I would like to discuss this)

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime (other than minor traffic violations)? (Yes / No / I would like to discuss this)

Are you currently struggling with any ongoing patterns of sin (such as sexual sin, including pornography use) that you have not yet

brought under meaningful accountability and repentance? (Yes / No / I would like to discuss this)

Have you ever engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior involving a minor? (Yes / No / I would like to discuss this)

Are you comfortable following all ministry safety policies and boundaries at all times? (Yes / No / I would like to discuss this)

7. Verification and Authorization

I confirm that the information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I authorize Crossway Church to contact references as needed and understand that my application will be reviewed in accordance with church policies and child safety procedures.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4 – Minor Children’s Ministry Assistant Parent Consent Form

This application is required for all minors (ages 13–17) serving in approved assistant roles within Crossway Church’s Children’s Ministry. This form is to be completed by the parent or legal guardian of the minor applicant. Its purpose is to secure parental consent, confirm understanding of ministry expectations, and ensure that both parent and minor understand and agree to abide by Crossway Church’s Children and Youth Protection Policy and ministry guidelines.

1. Minor Applicant Information

Minor’s Full Name (First and Last) _____

Minor’s Date of Birth / Age ____/____/20____ ____ yrs

Parent or Legal Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Email Address _____

Parent or Legal Guardian Phone Number _____

2. Desired Areas of Service

- ☐ Nursery Assistant
- ☐ Trailblazers Assistant
- ☐ Children’s Sunday School Assistant
- ☐ Other approved children’s ministry support roles as designated by leadership

3. Parent / Guardian Commitments and Acknowledgements

By submitting this application, I confirm the following:

- I give permission for my child to serve in approved minor assistant roles within Crossway Church’s Children’s Ministry.
- I have personally discussed this ministry opportunity and its responsibilities with my child.

- My child understands the importance of following all safety procedures, behavioral expectations, and ministry leadership instructions.
- My child agrees to abide by Crossway Church's Children and Youth Protection Policy and all ministry guidelines.
- I understand that minor assistants will always serve under adult supervision and will not be placed in positions of primary responsibility.
- I understand that Crossway Church reserves the right to limit, modify, or discontinue my child's ministry involvement if necessary for safety, policy compliance, or ministry effectiveness.

I have discussed with my child what to do if he or she observes an adult or worker violating this policy, suspects abuse or unsafe behavior, or receives a disclosure from a child or youth. My child understands that he or she must promptly tell an approved adult leader and should not investigate or handle the matter alone.

4. Relevant Information

Are there any medical, behavioral, emotional, or other concerns ministry leadership should be aware of to help support your child appropriately? (Yes / No / Please discuss)

Is there anything that may affect your child's ability to serve safely and appropriately in children's ministry? (Yes / No / Please discuss)

5. Verification and Consent

I confirm that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I affirm that I am the parent or legal guardian of the minor listed above. I consent to my child's participation as a Minor Children's Ministry Assistant under the supervision and policies of Crossway Church.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Crossway Church leadership may contact parents or guardians if clarification or additional discussion is needed.

Appendix 5 – Ouch Report

CROSSWAY KIDS – OUCH REPORT

This is simply a note to let you know about a minor incident that occurred today during nursery/Sunday School.

Child's Name:	
Date / Time:	

Classroom / Location:

What happened?

What part of the body was hurt?

Care provided:

☐ **Parent informed at pickup**

Care provided by:

Additional adult present:

Crossway Church – Crossway Children's Ministry

For minor incidents only. Serious incidents require an Incident Report.

Appendix 6 – Accident/Incident Report

CROSSWAY CHURCH

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT

Child/Participant Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Ministry/Classroom/Event: _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Incident Type (check all that apply):

☐ Injury/Accident ☐ Illness ☐ Behavior/Aggression

☐ Safety/Security Concern ☐ Property/Facility Issue

☐ Other: _____

Describe what happened (facts only):

Describe nature of injury or concern:

Witnesses:

What action was taken?

Medical treatment / first aid provided:

Area of Injury/Concern (check all that apply):

- ☐ Head/Face ☐ Arm/Hand ☐ Leg/Foot ☐ Torso/Back
☐ Bruise/Bump ☐ Cut/Bleeding ☐ Bite/Scratch
☐ Other: _____

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parent/Guardian notified: ☐ Yes ☐ No

When notified: _____

How notified: ☐ In person at pickup ☐ Phone call ☐ Text

☐ Other _____

Copy of report provided to parent/guardian: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Leadership Notification

Check at least one church official notified of incident:

☐ Director of Children's Ministry

Date/Time notified: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

☐ Pastor/Elder

Date/Time notified: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

☐ Facilities/Property Lead (if facility-related)

Date/Time notified: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

☐ Other: _____

Date/Time notified: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

Immediate escalation required for:

- Head injury, loss of consciousness, blood, suspected concussion, allergic reaction, breathing concerns, injury involving another child, repeated injury, restraint, parent-sensitive situations, or anything requiring medical care beyond basic first aid.

Follow-Up

- Does this require follow-up? ☐ No ☐ Yes
- Assigned follow-up person:

Follow-up notes:

Signatures

Reporter Signature: _____

Date/Time: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date/Time: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

Person in Charge Signature: _____

Date/Time: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

Church Official Signature: _____

Date/Time: ____/____/____ ____:____ AM/PM

Appendix 7 – Summary of New Hampshire Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law

Purpose

This appendix summarizes New Hampshire reporting requirements related to suspected child abuse and neglect for Crossway workers and leaders. It is intended to support policy understanding and ministry practice. It does not replace the full text of New Hampshire law, legal counsel, or instructions from DCYF or law enforcement.

Emergency and Reporting Contacts

If a child is in immediate danger or there is an emergency, call 911 first.

DCYF Central Intake: 1-800-894-5533 in New Hampshire or 603-271-6562 outside New Hampshire.

1. Duty to Report

Under New Hampshire law, any person who has reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected must make a report immediately.

A person does not need to be certain that abuse or neglect occurred before making a report. The responsibility of the reporter is to report a reasonable concern. The responsibility of DCYF and/or law enforcement is to assess, investigate, and determine what action should be taken.

Reporting a concern is not the same thing as proving that abuse or neglect occurred. Workers should not investigate, attempt to verify, confront an alleged offender, or delay reporting in order to gather more information.

2. Where to Report

Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect should be made to New Hampshire DCYF Central Intake.

DCYF Central Intake: 1-800-894-5533 in New Hampshire or 603-271-6562 outside New Hampshire.

If a child is in immediate danger or there is an emergency, call 911 first.

3. Timing of the Report

Reports must be made immediately. A worker should not delay reporting because a ministry leader, elder, parent, or other person is unavailable.

When a concern arises in a Crossway ministry context, the worker should also notify an appropriate Crossway leader as soon as reasonably possible. Internal notification helps Crossway provide care, preserve documentation, coordinate next steps, and take appropriate protective action.

However, internal notification does not replace the legal duty to report to DCYF or law enforcement when required.

4. Content of the Report

When making a report, provide the information known at the time. This may include:

- the name, age, and location of the child;
- the name and contact information of the parent or guardian, if known;
- the nature of the suspected abuse or neglect;
- what was observed, heard, disclosed, or reported;
- the child's own words, when applicable;
- the name or description of the alleged offender, if known;
- any immediate safety concerns;
- any actions already taken to protect the child;
- the reporter's name and contact information.
- A reporter should be factual and clear. Do not speculate beyond what is known. Do not attempt to diagnose, investigate, or prove the concern before reporting.

5. Confidential or Anonymous Reports

When a report is made because of a concern that arose in Crossway ministry, the report should ordinarily be made in a way that identifies the reporter and the church ministry context rather than as a confidential or anonymous report.

Providing identifying information helps demonstrate that the concern was actually reported, allows DCYF or law enforcement to follow up for clarification, and supports institutional accountability.

A worker who is uncertain about how to proceed should promptly involve an elder, the Director of Children's Ministry, the Youth Ministry Leader, or another appropriate ministry leader, but should not delay a required report.

6. Good-Faith Reporting

New Hampshire law provides protection from liability for persons who report suspected abuse or neglect in good faith.

A report does not need to be proven true in order to be made in good faith. DCYF understands that not every report will be substantiated. Even an unsubstantiated report may provide important information that helps clarify a previous or future concern.

Workers should report reasonable concerns honestly, promptly, and without malice.

7. Failure to Report

Knowingly failing to report suspected child abuse or neglect may result in legal consequences under New Hampshire law.

For this reason, Crossway workers must take suspected abuse and neglect seriously. When in doubt, workers should err on the side of protecting the child and making a report rather than delaying, minimizing, or attempting to handle the matter internally.

8. Crossway Internal Notification

When a report is made to DCYF or law enforcement concerning a child connected to Crossway ministry, the reporter should notify an appropriate Crossway leader as soon as reasonably possible, unless doing so would create an immediate safety concern or contradict instructions from DCYF or law enforcement.

Appropriate Crossway contacts may include:

- an elder;
- the Director of Children's Ministry;
- the appropriate Children's Ministry Leader;
- the Youth Ministry Leader, when youth ministry is involved.

Crossway leaders should help ensure that appropriate documentation is completed, required reports are confirmed, protective steps are taken, and pastoral care is provided.

9. Parent or Guardian Notification

Parents or guardians should ordinarily be notified promptly when a concern involves their child.

In abuse-related situations, however, notification should be coordinated with appropriate Crossway leadership and, when applicable, DCYF or law enforcement, especially when immediate notification could increase risk to the child, interfere with a required report, compromise an investigation, or involve a parent or guardian in the concern.

10. Documentation

After a report is made, the worker or leader involved should complete Crossway's appropriate reporting form as soon as possible. Documentation should be factual, clear, and limited to what was observed, heard, disclosed, reported, or done.

Documentation should include, when known:

- the date and time of the concern;
- the date and time of the report;
- the agency contacted;

- the name of the person spoken to, if provided;
- any instructions received;
- the Crossway leader notified;
- any immediate protective steps taken.
- Completed documentation should be stored securely according to Crossway's recordkeeping procedures.

11. Relevant New Hampshire Statutes

The following New Hampshire statutes are especially relevant to child abuse and neglect reporting:

- RSA 169-C:29 — Persons required to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- RSA 169-C:30 — Nature and content of the report.
- RSA 169-C:31 — Immunity from liability for good-faith reporting.
- RSA 169-C:39 — Penalties related to failure to report.

Crossway should periodically review this appendix to ensure that it remains consistent with current New Hampshire law, DCYF procedures, and any legal or insurance guidance received by the church.

Appendix 8 – Classroom Health Guidelines

Crossway desires to maintain a healthy classroom environment and reduce the spread of illness among children, families, and ministry workers.

Parents and guardians should not check a child into a class or ministry activity when the child is ill, appears to be contagious, or is unable to participate safely and comfortably.

Please Keep Children Home If They Have:

- Fever, or fever-reducing medication used because of fever, within the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- Symptoms of a contagious childhood illness, such as chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, or another communicable disease
- Open skin lesions, boils, ringworm, impetigo, unexplained rash, or another skin condition that may be contagious
- Thick green or yellow nasal discharge, especially with other symptoms of illness
- Persistent coughing, croup-like symptoms, or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat accompanied by fever, rash, swollen glands, or other symptoms of illness
- Pink eye or another suspected contagious eye infection
- Lice or nits

Any illness or symptom that prevents the child from participating safely or comfortably in class

A Child May Return When:

- Symptoms have improved;
- The child has been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours;
- Vomiting or diarrhea has been absent for at least 24 hours; and

The child is no longer considered contagious according to generally recognized medical guidance.

If a Child Becomes Ill During Class:

- Children's Ministry Workers or Assistants should contact the parent or guardian promptly. The child may be separated from the group in an observable and supervised area until the parent or guardian arrives.

Known Exposure Notification:

When Crossway becomes aware that children in a classroom or ministry activity may have been exposed to a contagious illness or other health concern, parents and guardians of children who were present should be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

Notification should be handled with appropriate discretion and should not unnecessarily identify the child, family, or individual who was ill.

Appendix 9 – Universal Precautions Quick Reference

Universal precautions help protect children, families, and ministry workers from the spread of illness or infection. Treat all blood, bodily fluids, and soiled items as potentially infectious.

Use Gloves When Handling:

- Blood
- Vomit
- Urine
- Stool
- Saliva
- Soiled clothing or linens
- Diaper changes
- First aid involving bodily fluids
- Cleaning any bodily fluid

After Using Gloves:

- Remove gloves carefully.
- Throw gloves away immediately after use.
- Wash or sanitize hands after removing gloves.
- Use a new pair of gloves for each child and each separate task.

Wash or Sanitize Hands:

- Before and after diaper changes
- After restroom assistance
- After wiping noses or helping with bodily fluids
- Before serving or helping children eat food
- After first aid
- After cleaning toys, surfaces, or soiled items

Cleaning and Soiled Items:

- Clean and disinfect changing surfaces after each diaper change.
- Clean and disinfect toys, equipment, and surfaces according to Crossway's cleaning procedures.

- Place soiled clothing or personal items in a sealed bag or container.
- Return soiled personal items to the child's parent or guardian.
- Use designated cleaning supplies and follow product instructions.

Notify a Ministry Leader If There Is:

- Significant blood or bodily fluid exposure
- A child injury requiring documentation
- Possible exposure to contagious illness
- Soiled items that cannot be safely cleaned
- Any concern requiring parent notification
- Any situation that feels unusual, unsafe, or beyond ordinary classroom care

Remember:

- Never leave a child unattended while cleaning or providing care.
- Maintain visibility and accountability whenever assisting a child.
- Complete an Ouch Report or Incident Report when required.

When unsure, contact a Children's Ministry Leader, the Director of Children's Ministry, Children's Ministry On-Call Support Worker, or elder.

Appendix 10 – Subsplash Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

Subsplash Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

Purpose

These procedures establish the standards for volunteer attendance, child check-in, child release, and attendance accountability within Crossway Church Children's Ministry. The purpose of these procedures is to promote child safety, maintain accurate attendance records, support emergency accountability, and ensure that children are released only to authorized parents or guardians.

These procedures apply to all Children's Ministry programs utilizing the Subsplash Check-In system.

Volunteer Check-In Procedures

Volunteer Attendance Requirements

All Children's Ministry volunteers must check themselves into Subsplash before serving in any ministry capacity.

Volunteer check-in supports:

- Accurate attendance records
- Emergency accountability
- Ministry reporting and recordkeeping
- Volunteer supervision and staffing verification

Volunteers should arrive sufficiently early to complete check-in responsibilities and prepare their ministry area before families begin arriving.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Prior to the start of ministry activities, volunteers shall:

- Check in using their assigned volunteer profile in Subsplash.
- Verify that their attendance has been successfully recorded.

- Volunteers shall obtain the required name badge and wear it visibly on the front left chest.
- Report to their assigned ministry area.
- Confirm that all required check-in equipment is functioning properly, including:
 - Check-in stations
 - Label printers
 - Internet connectivity
 - Required supplies
 - The iPad PIN is 004128

No volunteer should begin serving until volunteer check-in has been completed.

Child Check-In Procedures

Parent or Guardian Check-In

Parents or guardians shall check children into Children's Ministry through the approved Subsplash Check-In system in the foyer. Check-in may be completed using the parent's phone number or the QR code provided through the Crossway mobile application.

Children shall not be admitted into Children's Ministry programming until the check-in process has been completed.

Ministry workers may assist families with the check-in process as needed but should verify that the correct family profile and child information have been selected before attendance labels are printed.

Verification of Child Information

Prior to completing check-in, ministry workers should verify:

- The child's name
- The child's assigned classroom or ministry group
- Any allergy information
- Any special instructions or alerts contained within the family profile

Any discrepancies should be addressed before check-in is finalized.

Attendance Labels

Upon successful check-in, Subsplash will generate:

- A child identification label
- A corresponding parent or guardian pickup tag
- The child identification label shall be placed on the child's back in a visible location.

Labels should not be attached to skin, hair, or personal items that may become separated from the child.

Transfer of Custody

Once checked in, the child shall be directed or escorted to the appropriate ministry area.

Ministry workers should ensure that:

- The child arrives at the correct ministry location.
- A ministry worker is stationed at the top of the stairs to direct children to the appropriate classroom.
- Classroom leaders are aware of the child's arrival.
- Younger children receive appropriate assistance or supervision during transition.

The parent or guardian must retain the pickup tag until check-out.

Child Check-Out Procedures

Authorized Release

Children may only be released through the approved check-out process in the foyer.

Parents or guardians shall report to the designated check-out location in the foyer and present their pickup tag.

Before releasing a child, the designated check-out worker shall verify that the pickup tag presented by the parent or guardian matches the information contained on the child's identification label.

Children shall not be released solely on the basis of familiarity or personal recognition.

Child Retrieval

After pickup verification has been completed:

- The classroom leader shall confirm the child's identification label.
- The child shall be brought to the designated check-out location in the foyer.
- The child's identification label shall be removed upon release from Children's Ministry.
- Final verification shall occur before release to the parent or guardian.

Children should not be released directly from classrooms or ministry areas unless specifically authorized by ministry leadership.

Missing Pickup Tag

If a parent or guardian does not possess the assigned pickup tag, the check-in label and pickup tag may be reprinted through Subsplash to verify pickup authorization. If authorization cannot be verified through Subsplash, additional verification measures shall be used before the child is released.

Verification procedures may include:

- Verification of the child's security code through the Crossway mobile application.
- Confirmation of the adult's identity through government-issued photo identification.
- Review of family information within Subsplash.
- Verification that the individual is authorized to pick up the child.
- Approval from the Children's Ministry Leader or designated ministry supervisor.

The child shall be released only after sufficient verification has been completed.

The situation should be documented when appropriate.

Mismatched Pickup Information

If the pickup tag does not match the child's identification label:

- The child shall not be released.
- Ministry workers shall remain calm and professional.
- Ministry leadership shall be notified immediately.
- Family information shall be reviewed and verified before any release occurs.

Release may occur only after authorization from ministry leadership.

Trailblazers Ministry Procedures

Trailblazers follows the standard Children's Ministry check-in, supervision, and check-out procedures except as noted below.

Check-In

At the beginning of the song following Communion:

- Parents shall escort children to the designated gathering location in the foyer at the bottom of the stairs.
- Parents shall remain with their child until Trailblazers teachers have completed check-in and assumed responsibility for supervision.
- Trailblazers teachers shall check children in through Subsplash and escort participating children to the classroom as a group.

Check-Out

At the conclusion of the service:

- Trailblazers teachers shall escort children to the foyer at the bottom of the stairs.
- Children shall be checked out and released to a parent, guardian, or other authorized individual in the foyer.
- Trailblazers teachers shall remain present until all children have been picked up.

Safety Standards

The following safety principles apply to all Children's Ministry programs:

- Children shall be supervised in accordance with the Children and Youth Protection Policy.
- Attendance records shall be maintained through the approved check-in system.
- Children shall only be released to authorized individuals through the approved check-out process.
- Questions regarding child safety, custody, or release authorization shall be referred immediately to ministry leadership.
- All volunteers shall follow established check-in and check-out procedures.

Appendix 11 – Annual Youth Ministry Permission and Transportation Form

Crossway Church of Keene, NH

28 Arch Street, Keene, NH 03431

This form may be completed once each ministry year by a parent or legal guardian for ordinary Crossway youth ministry participation and recurring transportation permissions. This annual form does not replace event-specific permission that may be required for retreats, overnight events, long-distance travel, out-of-state travel, elevated-risk activities, or other special events.

1. Ministry Year

Ministry Year: _____ to _____

2. Student Information

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

Student Cell Phone, if applicable: _____

3. Parent / Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Additional Parent/Guardian Name, if applicable: _____

Additional Parent/Guardian Phone: _____

4. Emergency Contacts

Please list at least one emergency contact in addition to the parent/guardian listed above.

Emergency Contact 1: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency Contact 2: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Phone: _____

5. Medical and Allergy Information

Does the student have any allergies, including food, medication, insect, or environmental allergies?

☐ No ☐ Yes — please explain:

Does the student have any medical conditions, physical limitations, mental health concerns, dietary needs, or other information youth leaders should know?

☐ No ☐ Yes — please explain:

Is the student currently taking any medication that may be needed during a youth ministry activity?

☐ No ☐ Yes — please list:

Does the student have emergency medication, such as an EpiPen, rescue inhaler, or similar medication?

☐ No ☐ Yes — please describe: _____

Instructions for emergency medication, if applicable:

Physician / Medical Provider: _____

Provider Phone: _____

Health Insurance Provider: _____

Policy / Member ID: _____

6. Annual Youth Ministry Participation Permission

I give permission for my child to participate in ordinary Crossway youth ministry activities during the ministry year listed above, including regular youth group gatherings, discipleship activities, service opportunities, local outings, meals, recreation, and other ordinary activities approved by youth ministry leaders.

I understand that special events may require separate event-specific permission.

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____

7. Annual Transportation Permission

I give permission for my child to be transported as part of ordinary Crossway-approved youth ministry activities by approved adult drivers or transportation arranged by Crossway, consistent with Crossway's transportation guidelines.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Contact me before each transportation need

I understand that approved drivers must follow Crossway's transportation guidelines, including applicable screening, DMV/motor vehicle record check, seat belt, supervision, and safety requirements.

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____

8. Parent-Arranged or Alternate Transportation

I understand that transportation arranged independently by parents, guardians, families, or students is the responsibility of those families and is not considered church-arranged transportation unless Crossway assigns, coordinates, or directs the transportation.

☐ My child has permission to ride with a parent-arranged or family-arranged driver designated by me.

☐ My child does not have permission to ride with another family unless I give specific permission for that occasion.

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____

9. Student Driver Permission

Please complete this section only if applicable.

☐ My child has permission to drive himself/herself to and from ordinary Crossway youth ministry activities.

☐ My child does not have permission to drive himself/herself to and from youth ministry activities.

Student drivers must comply with all applicable laws, license restrictions, and parental instructions. Student drivers may not transport other unrelated youth as part of Crossway-arranged transportation unless approved by the parents or guardians of all involved, permitted by law, and known to the ministry leader.

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____

10. Emergency Medical Permission

In the event of illness, injury, medical concern, or emergency, I authorize Crossway youth ministry leaders, chaperones, or designated representatives to seek medical care for my child if I cannot be reached in a timely manner.

I understand that reasonable efforts will be made to contact me as soon as possible. I also understand that I am responsible for any medical costs or expenses incurred on behalf of my child.

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____

11. Photo and Media Permission

Please select one:

☐ I give permission for Crossway to take and use photos or videos of my child from youth ministry activities for church communication, ministry updates, or related church purposes, consistent with Crossway's photo and media guidelines.

☐ I do not give permission for Crossway to take or use photos or videos of my child, except as may be necessary for safety, identification, documentation, or emergency purposes.

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____

12. Parent / Guardian Signature

By signing below, I confirm that I am the parent or legal guardian of the student named above, that the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that I give permission according to the selections and acknowledgments on this form.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Best phone number during youth activities: _____

13. Ministry Use Only

Form received by: _____

Date received: _____

Permission complete? ☐ Yes ☐ No — missing items:

Medical/allergy concern noted? ☐ No ☐ Yes — leader notified:

Emergency medication noted? ☐ No ☐ Yes — plan reviewed:

Transportation permission confirmed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Contact before each
need

Approved by ministry leader: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 12 – Backup Check-In Form

Equipping Class Teachers _____ and _____

Worship Service Teachers _____ and _____

Date _____

Class _____

Child's First Name	Child's Last Name	Allergies	Age	Parent's First Name	Parent's Phone Number	Time In	Time Out	Alternate Pickup