



St. Mark's

**Kidz**

## Nursery & Childcare Guidelines & Procedures Handbook

### **PURPOSE:**

The nursery supports parents by providing for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of young children during worship services and other scheduled events.

### **POLICY:**

St. Mark's United Methodist Church provides these guidelines to give children the best possible care. It is our desire to protect the health and safety of the children, workers, and all who enter our nursery.

Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." - Matthew 19:14

# Welcome

Welcome to the St. Mark's Nursery! We are excited to have the opportunity to share in the care and growth of your child. We realize that our role is an important one in your child's life, and we will strive to fulfill that role to the best of our abilities.

We are called as the church to receive, nurture, and treasure each child as a gift from God and to give high priority to the quality of planning for children and the preparation and support of those who minister to them. We are called to love, shelter, protect, and defend children within our community, and to nurture and support families in caring for children.

We hope this handbook will be both helpful and informative. Please read it thoroughly and keep it handy for future reference. Copies are available in the nursery, as well as online at: [stmarkscarmel.org/kidz](http://stmarkscarmel.org/kidz).

## **Worship Services:**

The nursery is available Sunday Mornings at 9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 a.m. year-round.

### **Sunday Services:**

**9:00 a.m.- Traditional Service**

**10:00 a.m.- Education Hour**

**11:00 a.m.- The Current**

## **Nursery Information:**

We believe as a church family, all of the children who attend St. Mark's are "ours" and treat them as such. The nursery is available to anyone in attendance for Sunday morning services, and other church sponsored events as indicated. It is offered and equipped for children from 6 weeks through Kindergarten age. Parents and guardians may leave a child in the nursery **ONLY** in order to attend a St. Mark's sponsored activity and must remain on-site.

# Parent Responsibilities

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. We count it as great privilege to partner with parents in laying a foundation for faith in their children's lives.

Parents can help us by:

- Becoming familiar with the nursery procedures and policies.
- Remembering that each policy and guideline is based on a desire to provide a safe, secure learning environment for your child. Please ask one of the Children's Ministries Directors to discuss any policy that you do not understand.
- Filling out the *required* **Nursery Family Registration Form**.
- Encouraging your children in their walk with Christ.

## Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures

At the time of drop off, you will be asked to sign your child in at the check-in station. If your child has any allergies or medical concerns, please note when signing in. After sign-in, please hand your child to the nursery worker. **To ensure that all children stay inside the nursery and little fingers do not get pinched, we ask that parents do not enter the nursery. This request is also in place to keep children from becoming upset every time people come and go into their space.**

We want your child to feel comfortable in the room, so if your child is having separation anxiety or difficulty transitioning for more than 10 minutes, be assured that staff will contact you by text or in person. After your child is content, however, they can return to the nursery and you can return to service or the class/event you are attending.

When the service has ended, please arrive promptly to pick up your child. You will need to check your child out by presenting the check-out tag you received at check-in. Once you have checked-out your child, the nursery workers will bring your child to the door with your child's diaper bag. **We will only release children to their parents/guardians or individuals pre-approved by parents on the Family Registration Form. Older siblings may not pick up younger siblings.**

## Snacks

We may provide a light snack. If your child has a food allergy or special need related to food, please provide this information on the registration form and notify the Children's Ministries Directors and Nursery Coordinator. Parents are encouraged not to bring special snacks for their children unless previously approved by the Children's Ministries Director.

# Parent Responsibilities- Cont'd

## Potty-Training/Special Needs

Please describe any special needs and/or provide additional instructions on the Family Registration Form. Also, please inform the nursery staff if your child is in the process of potty-training so that we can better assist your child.

## Children's Supplies

Parents should include the following supplies for their children in a small diaper bag or other bag, labeled with the child's name.

- Bottle or sippy-cup (labeled with your child's name)
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Soother (pacifier, blanket)
- Change of clothes

Please check diaper bags regularly to ensure there are proper supplies. If you forget these supplies for your child, we have items available for use.

We prefer that you **DO NOT** bring the following items:

- Medicine of any kind. (If your child needs medication at all, it **MUST** be administered by the parent/guardian)
- Personal toys
- Sick children! No sick children will be admitted into the nursery for the health of others.

It is often difficult to track down the items that personally belong to your child especially if they are not labeled and resemble the nursery supply. Therefore, **please label all items.**

# Safety and Security Policies

## **Safety and Security**

Parents are to complete a **Nursery Family Registration Form** and leave it with the nursery workers to have on file for each child who will utilize the nursery. This registration form includes contact information, allergies, and special needs. Each guest of our nursery will need to fill out a **Guest Nursery Registration Form**.

So that we can notify parents to come pick up their children during the service if necessary, we ask parents to indicate a preferred cell phone number that we can use to reach them. Only the parent/guardian or an authorized person listed on the registration form will be allowed to pick up the child from the nursery.

## **Incident/Accident Policy**

We strive to keep your child as safe as possible. However, if your child is in some type of incident/accident, we will contact you in a timely manner. An incident report will be completed by the worker(s) who witnessed the event and then given to the Children's Ministries Director. The Director will follow up with the parent/guardian of each child involved.

## **First Aid Kit**

A First Aid Kit is available in the nursery/toddler area. General first aid can be administered by nursery workers as needed, but if your child needs medication it **MUST** be administered by the parent/guardian.

# Health Policies

## Illness

Children are very susceptible to any and every “bug” that comes along. Despite our best efforts, the spread of these germs can run rampant in the nursery. Therefore, to prevent the spread of colds, flu, and ear infections the following policies will be enforced.

You will be notified immediately to come pick up your children should they become ill in the nursery. **Medication will not be administered by any of the nursery staff.** Should your child develop an infectious disease following a session in the nursery, please contact a Children's Ministries Director immediately. Children who show signs of illness should be kept at home. According to the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, **a child be kept at home when any of the following exists, or if the child has had symptoms of the following within the previous 24 hours:**

- Fever greater than 101 degrees
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Any of the symptoms of the usual childhood diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough

Children should also be kept at home who show signs of any other illness, including but not limited to:

- Covid-19
- Strep Throat
- Head Lice
- Pink Eye
- Undiagnosed Rashes or Sores
- On-going Cough
- Runny Nose and Watery Eyes

# Nursery Workers

## **Nursery Workers/Volunteers**

Believing that all the children of our church family are “ours,” the Children's Ministries Directors will provide training opportunities to familiarize the volunteers with the policies and special procedures outlined in this handbook. This training helps all nursery workers and volunteers know the proper way to handle situations that may arise during their time in the nursery and will keep our nursery team unified.

The Children's Ministry Directors are responsible for determining the suitability of nursery workers to care for our children. It is a priority to recruit and maintain nursery workers who will provide loving, responsible, and developmentally appropriate care for all children staying in the nursery. Lead volunteers must be 16 years or older. Junior aides/assistants should be 13-15 years old and safe-sitter certified. Should you, as a parent, have questions or concerns regarding care given, please contact one of the Children's Ministries Directors.

## **How Many Caregivers Do We Need?**

The Safe Church Policy requires two caregivers must be present at all times when caring for children unless they are in clear view of others (doors with windows/windowed wall/half door). St. Mark's Nursery always has a clear view in through its windows and doors, however we still strive to have at least two caregivers present whenever possible for the safety of the children and the staff. If you find the nursery understaffed, please contact a Children's Ministries Director immediately. Substitutes will be located to provide support to the nursery workers.

## **Screening Procedure**

We require all teachers, staff members, and volunteers who work with children and protected persons to go through a screening process that includes an application form and a criminal/child abuse background check from a third-party company (Trusted Employees). Nursery workers are also required to complete Safe Church training and to be familiar with this policy.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

If you are interested in participating in our Nursery Program, please contact a Children's Ministries Director for the application process.

# Nursery Workers- Continued

## Volunteer Scheduling

To ensure the Nursery is adequately staffed at all times, a nursery schedule will be provided to all nursery workers. Please alert a Children's Ministries Director to any scheduling conflicts. If you cannot serve on your scheduled Sunday, please make arrangements to switch shifts with someone on the nursery schedule.

## Duties Prior to Service Time

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to volunteer time to make sure that nursery is open and set appropriately for care.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before entering the nursery.
- Be sure that the “Dirty Toys Bin” is accessible and ready for use.

## Check-In Procedure    \*Note: Parents are to remain outside the nursery\*

- As the parent/guardian comes to the nursery door, be sure they have already checked-in their child at the check-in station or on the sign-in sheet. Be sure all categories on the sheet are completed.
- Once the child is checked-in, have the parent hand his or her child to you.
- Place labeled diaper bag on a shelf in nursery.
- If the child is a first-time visitor to our nursery, have the parent/guardian fill out a **Guest Nursery Registration Form**.
- If the family regularly attends St. Mark's UMC, but the child does not have a pre-printed name tag, that may mean the church has not yet received a completed **Family Registration Form** for that child. Please have the parent(s) fill out this form prior to the child's entry into the nursery.

**Note:** We need to keep children's personal items separated in order to decrease the spread of germs and to ensure the correct items go home with the correct child.

## General Procedures

- Wash your hands after each diaper change and after wiping a runny nose.
- Try to prevent babies from sharing bottles/cups and pacifiers. Be sure to keep these items in the child's bag when not in use.
- If you think a child is sick, inform a Children's Ministries Director and refer to the “Illness” section of this handbook.
- When stock is running low in any area, please mark the item on the Nursery Supply List and let a Children's Ministries Director know as soon as possible.
- Check a child's diaper bag for diapers and wipes before using the nursery-provided items.

# Nursery Workers- Continued

## General Procedures- Cont'd

- See that each baby's diaper is checked at least once during the time you are on duty. If a child is potty-training, ask that child at least once if he or she needs to use the potty. Assist the potty-training child as needed and in clear view of the other childcare provider serving with you.
- If a child becomes frustrated or aggressive, redirect that child's attention to another toy or activity. If that does not solve the problem, contact a Children's Ministries Director and they will contact the parent/guardian to pick the child up if needed.
- Do not permit babies or toddlers to climb on chairs and tables.
- Report any incidents/accidents to a Children's Ministries Director, and fill out an incident/accident form. Notify the parent/guardian when he/she comes to pick up the child, and have him/her sign the form before leaving with the child. If an incident/accident has caused the child to become inconsolable, please text a Children's Ministries Director, who will then contact the parent/guardian. The Children's Ministries Director will follow up with the parents of the child(ren) involved.
- Check for Allergy Alerts (should be printed on the child's name tag) prior to snack time. Place children in snack table seats and wipe their hands with baby wipes. Disperse small amounts of the snack at a time. When the children are finished with their snacks, wipe their hands with baby wipes, and clean the table with a disinfecting wipe.

## Toy Cleaning Policy

All nursery toys will be cleaned weekly to avoid spreading germs. Nursery volunteers will remove "mouthed" or "chewed-on" toys by placing them in the "Dirty Toys Bin." Before these toys are used again, they will be disinfected. Be sure children do not remove/play with toys out of the "Dirty Toys Bin."

## Parent/Guardian Communication

Parents want to hear about their children. They need to know if there was a problem, such as excessive fussiness, a slight accident (a bump or a fall), or if you noticed any signs of illness. They also need to hear about the good things that happened while they were away such as: were the children happy and smiling; did they tell you that they had to go potty; did they drink all their bottles; etc. Telling parents these things helps them feel secure about leaving their children with you and lets them know you care. If you have any kind of negative experience with a child in the nursery, please discuss with a Children's Ministries Director first so we can determine together the best course of action.

# Nursery Workers- Continued

## Check-Out Procedure

- When the parents/guardians arrive at the nursery door, have them check their children out by returning the barcode ticket they received at check-in or initialing the proper space on the sign-in sheet.
- Talk with each parent/guardian. If any accidents or incidents occurred in the nursery, be sure to complete an incident form and have the parents of the children involved sign the form.
- Once a child is checked-out and all necessary paperwork is complete, hand the child with his/her diaper bag to the child's parent/guardian.

## After Service Time

After all the children have been picked up by their parents/guardians:

- Return all toys and books to the shelves.
- Wipe all counters and table surfaces with disinfectant wipes.
- Disinfect any toys in the "Dirty Toys Bin" and leave them out to air-dry.
- Mark any needed supplies on the Nursery Supply List.
- Clean up any snack debris.
- After the room is completely clean, turn off the lights and close the hallway door as you leave.
- Please take smelly diaper trash to the dumpster.

# More Information

## **Childcare Policy for Church Special Events**

- All requests for church event childcare, other than Sunday morning, should be submitted in writing to Children's Ministries at least two weeks in advance by emailing [kidzchurch@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:kidzchurch@stmarkscarmel.org).
- The Children's Ministries Directors must know the number of children anticipated as well as their ages so that an adequate number of workers can be scheduled and a Sign-Up Genius can be created for the event ([stmarkscarmel.org/signups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/signups)).
- If there are any changes to the event, a Children's Ministries Director must be informed as soon as possible.
- Sign-Ups for Childcare will close 48 hours before the event.

## **Childcare for Older Students**

By request, childcare can be considered for children in grades 1-5 for parents attending various events at St. Mark's. Care will take place in another area of the church such as the lower-level, gym, etc. All the special event policies above still apply.

## **Handbook Agreement**

Each time you check-in your child to the nursery, you are agreeing to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. If you have any questions or concerns about anything included in the handbook, please let a Children's Ministries Director know so that your questions may be answered and your views regarding these policies can be reviewed and considered. The handbook will be revised periodically to reflect the childcare needs of our church. New copies of this handbook will be made available after any revision and will be located in the Nursery, the Children's Ministries Office and online. To ensure these policies are implemented, a Children's Ministries Director will provide training opportunities to familiarize the volunteers with these policies and special procedures. The nursery workers are responsible for the day-to-day observance and implementation of these policies.

## **Safe Church**

If you would like more information about our Safe Church Policy for Protected Persons, please visit [stmarkscarmel.org/kidz](http://stmarkscarmel.org/kidz).

## **Thank You**

St. Mark's Nursery volunteers and staff appreciate all the hard work of our church family. By working together, we will make our nursery a fun and safe environment for our children.

Questions? Comments?

Please contact a

St. Mark's UMC

Children's Ministries Director:

[kidzchurch@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:kidzchurch@stmarkscarmel.org)

(317)846-4912

St. Mark's UMC

4780 E. 126th Street

Carmel, IN 46033



St. Mark's

**Kidz**

### Nursery Family Registration Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (1) Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (2) Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Approved Person(s) to Pick-Up Child

Person (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Person (2): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Notes/Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



St. Mark's

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### Guest Nursery Registration Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (1) Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (2) Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Information/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



St. Mark's

**Kidz**

### Nursery Workers Emergency Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Emerg. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Information Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES!** I have read the Nursery & Childcare Guidelines & Procedures Handbook

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_