Child Safety Policy

> **Related documents.** This policy is one of Mayflower's four safeguarding documents. It is read together with:

- Volunteer Screening and Application — Service with Minors
- Mandated Reporter Policy
- RSO Attendance and Membership Policy

Approved by Servants Council on July 11, 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

It is the policy of Mayflower Church that our facilities are adequate and appropriate, and our childcare workers trained and equipped, to ensure the safety of children in our care. The purpose of this Child Safety Policy is to define safety standards for childcare during children's ministry activities at Mayflower Church. These are primarily nursery care and Discipletown children's ministry. This policy is not meant to define child safety for teen ministries, although some elements may apply.

2. Definitions

- **Infant —** A "babe in arms." May be able to crawl but cannot walk. (Generally, newborn to 12 months)
- **Toddler —** A child who can walk independently. (Generally, age 1 to 5 years)
- **Children —** A child of any age from infant to age 12 but for this policy age 6 to 12 (Discipletown age)
- **Teenager —** A child age 13 to 19
- **Childcare worker —** A nursery worker, Discipletown teacher, or helper. A teen-ager can be a childcare worker and has the same restrictions as an adult.
- **Child guardian —** The person who brought the child to nursery or Discipletown. This person may be a relative or friend of the child's family. This person is designated when the child is registered for nursery or Discipletown.
- **Contact —** A child guardian will be contacted via their preferred method: cellphone message, text message, or retrieval from an adult activity. Attempts to contact the

designated child guardian will continue every 2 minutes until they arrive at the child's location.
- **First aid training —** Formal training in first aid and CPR.

3. Oversight and Responsibilities

The Deacons have primary responsibility for overseeing the children's nursery and implementing this policy for nursery infant and toddler childcare workers. The Elders have primary responsibility for overseeing the children's ministries (e.g., Discipletown) and implementing this policy. Every childcare worker is responsible for reading, understanding, and implementing this policy.

The chain of oversight is as follows. Childcare workers serve under the Deacons (for the nursery) and the Elders (for Discipletown). Matters of worker placement, reliability, and discipline are handled by the Deacons, who may refer a matter to the Elders. The Trustees and Elders are notified of accidents and legitimate concerns as set out below. The Pastor and Elders are notified immediately of any instance of abuse.

Annual Reviews

This policy should be reviewed annually by the Deacons, Trustees, and Elders and updated as needed to address omissions, insurance concerns, current State laws, and the experience or concerns of those in children's ministry. All children's workers must annually read and sign their commitment to observe the policy.

4. Child Protection Standards

Never Alone / 2-person rule

Children will never be left alone in a room. There will always be 2 "people" in any room with children. This could be:

- 2 women childcare workers
- 1 woman child guardian and 1 woman childcare worker.
- A focused, live-stream camera may substitute for one of the adults.

Only women can be nursery workers. Men and women can teach Discipletown but still only in pairs or with a live-stream camera.

Background Checks and Live Security Cameras

Child protection at Mayflower includes:

- Formal sign-in
- This Child Safety policy
- The 2-adult/never alone policy.
- Annual background check of all childcare workers per church policy/state law
- Live security cameras in hallways and childcare rooms. The live security camera "counts" as a second childcare worker.

Appropriate Touch / Affection

Infants and toddlers can be held or hugged for comfort, always in the presence of another childcare worker. Only side-hugs are allowed and only if the child initiates it. Appropriate affection/touching never includes removal or even partial removal of clothing (e.g., lifting up a shirt). Only infants and toddlers may be held or set on a childcare worker's lap. Children may not sit on a childcare worker's lap.

Prohibited Acts / Behavior

No physical contact with children is allowed except for comfort (see Appropriate Touch / Affection above). No physical punishment or restraint. No single adult with a child ever unless a live-stream camera is operating. No removal of clothing ever. No yelling, hitting, swearing, or belittling a child. No speech or activity that harms the child physically, mentally, or emotionally. "Love is patient and kind."

Presence of a Child Guardian During Worship

It is permissible for a child guardian without a background check to stay in the nursery or Discipletown classroom during the worship service with their own child if the room has a live-stream camera. However, because this person is not designated by Mayflower Church with the proper Child Safety credentials, they may only stay alone with their own child, not with other children.

Abuse Prevention

Abuse prevention is all actions needed to prevent the physical, sexual, or verbal abuse of a child by an adult or another child. This Child Safety Policy is for the purpose of child protection.

5. Worker Responsibilities on a Shift

The core duty of every childcare worker is the safe, loving supervision of the children entrusted to them, in full compliance with this policy. A worker is responsible for receiving each child, keeping each child safe and cared for through the session, and returning each child only to the right hands. The specifics below state what that duty requires on a shift.

The detailed, step-by-step shift checklist (preparation, worship-time care, and clean-up) is carried in the separate Nursery Team Job Description 2026, which is incorporated into this policy by reference. Where this section states a policy responsibility, the Job Description states how to carry it out. The two are to be read together; where they ever appear to conflict, this policy governs.

On Time

Childcare workers must arrive at 9:40 a.m. in the Briggs Building, in keeping with the Nursery Team Job Description.

Sign-in / Registration of children

The responsible child guardian must sign in each child prior to each visit. The information required includes:

- Child guardian name and cell phone.
- Child's name and age, any allergies.
- For each child, log the time the child is signed in and the time the child is signed out.
- Notice that the guardian will be contacted for consolation, diapering, or toileting.

Dismissal

Children will only be dismissed into the direct supervision of the designated child guardian or a relative or friend designated by the child guardian at check-in.

Bathroom policy

- **Diapering —** only child guardians will change diapers. They will be contacted via email/cell phone if a diaper change is needed.
- **Toilet visits —** A childcare worker will accompany children to, but not into, the women's bathroom.

- For toddlers or children who can use the toilet independently, the childcare worker will bring children for a group 'bathroom break' as needed. The childcare worker will stand in the hallway and children will go into the bathroom while others wait in the hall. The bathroom door will be open.
- For toddlers or children not able to go by themselves (needing assistance) the child's guardian will be contacted.

Crying

If children cry during nursery or Discipletown, the child guardian will be notified if the child cannot be comforted by distracted play within 5 minutes.

Food / Refreshments

Children in the nursery will not be fed snacks unless provided by the child guardian. Food may be given during Discipletown if food is part of the lesson (e.g., an object lesson). Childcare workers will determine food allergy restrictions when choosing and serving food in these instances. (Guardians list food allergies when children are checked in; allergies are listed on child name tags). Both the childcare worker and each child must clean hands before and after eating. Any uneaten food must be thrown out.

Approved Activities

Children may participate in safe and reasonable play and learning activities.

Appropriate Activities	Inappropriate Activities
Paperwork and crafts, reading	Climbing
Floor games	Jumping off anything
Age-appropriate scissors, glue, paint	Pointed objects
Rolling ball games	Chemicals
Basket ball	Throwing or kicking ball games
	Laying on the ground, "sleeping"

Cleanliness / Hand Washing

Adults will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after class and before/after distributing food or drinks. Children will be guided to clean hands after using the bathroom and before and after eating. Craft smocks will be used for crafts with glue or paint and will be washed after each use. Glue and paint must be washable.

Cleanliness / Safety of Childcare Areas

The childcare area must be clean and neat. Childcare workers should review the area before and after each nursery session to discard broken furniture and toys. Children should not be allowed to put a toy in their mouth, unless it is their own. However, any nursery toy that a child puts in their mouth must be set aside and disinfected before it is used again. At the end of each session the childcare worker should make sure toys are cleaned (if needed), put away, and that the area is "straightened up."

Child Discipline (time-out)

Child discipline for inappropriate behavior will be limited to "time out" in the classroom. The child guardian will be contacted if a child persists in inappropriate behavior. The child guardian may take the child from the classroom or sit in the classroom while nursery or Discipletown continues. No physical discipline of any form is permitted at any time. A child guardian will always be contacted if a child becomes aggressive against another child.

6. Health and Safety Procedures

Accidents

Every accident, whether or not it results in injury, will be reported to the child guardian immediately, to the Nursery or Discipletown Leader, the Deacons, the board of Trustees, and the Elders using an accident report form.

Permissible Treatments	Impermissible Treatments
Cold water/ice	Medication, ointments
Band aid	Removal of any clothing
Soap and water	Medical procedure (splints, sutures, etc).
Pressure to stop severe bleeding	
Heimlich maneuver	
Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (with mouth guard; only by a worker with current CPR certification)	
CPR (only by a worker with current CPR certification)	

First aid kits are installed on every level of the church and Briggs Memorial Hall. They are inspected and stocked annually or as needed. 911 should be called for any serious injury and the child guardian immediately notified.

Emergency Evacuation

Children will be evacuated in the event of a fire. We will evacuate to Briggs Memorial Hall if the problem is in the church and to the church if the problem is in the Briggs. The door farthest from the fire will be used. If safest, we will stand outside away from the fire with children.

If there is an active shooter, we will act to protect children above ourselves as trained by the Kingston Police Department:

- We will evacuate running away from the site if we can do so safely.
- We will barricade in place if we cannot safely evacuate.

Off-Site Activities

Off-site activities are not permissible for nursery or Discipletown.

Outdoor Activities

Outdoor activities are not permissible for nursery or Discipletown.

7. Worker Accountability

This section governs the accountability of childcare workers. It is kept separate from the child discipline addressed in Section 5 above. Child discipline concerns how a worker responds to a child; worker accountability concerns how the church responds to a worker.

Consequences of violations

Our aim when a childcare worker falls short is to protect children first and to restore the worker wherever restoration is possible. We distinguish two kinds of matters and handle them differently.

Safety failures and abuse are immediate

A childcare worker who commits a genuine safety failure, such as leaving a child unattended, breaking the never-alone rule, or any act that endangers a child, will be removed from childcare service immediately by the deacons. Any instance of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the child guardian, the pastor and elders, and the police immediately, and the worker will be removed from service immediately. These matters are not subject to the graduated steps below. A record of any safety failure or abuse matter will be maintained.

Non-safety reliability matters are handled with a graduated, restorative path. Reliability matters, such as not arriving on time or not showing up when scheduled, are handled by the deacons through the following steps, moving to a later step only if a pattern continues:

1. A private conversation and coaching with the worker.
2. A written reminder, with the worker asked to re-read and sign the policy.
3. A temporary step-back from serving for a season, by agreement with the deacons.
4. Removal from childcare service.

A worker will be given the opportunity to be heard by the deacons before being removed for any non-safety matter. A worker who believes a decision was made in error may ask the deacons to review it; if the matter is not resolved, the worker may ask the elders to review it. Records for non-safety reliability matters are kept lightly and pastorally and are not treated as a formal infraction file.

Placement and Fitness

Whether a particular volunteer is the right fit for nursery or Discipletown service is a matter of placement and care, not discipline. Some service requires a worker to get down on the floor, to lift a child, or to keep pace with active children. If a physical limitation or another matter of suitability makes a particular role a poor fit, the deacons will speak with the volunteer privately and pastorally, and will look for a different way to serve that fits the volunteer's gifts and limits well. This is never treated as a violation, and it generates no infraction record. The deacons make placement decisions for the nursery with the care owed to a fellow member who has offered to serve.

Feedback

A child guardian will be given a chance to provide feedback and express concerns when they retrieve their child. All feedback will be recorded and evaluated at the next Deacons' meeting. As appropriate, the trustees or elders will be notified to ensure any legitimate issues are addressed quickly. The childcare worker will provide feedback to the child guardian about how the child responded to the nursery / Discipletown setting.

8. Covenant

This policy is a covenant between Mayflower church leadership, child guardians, and childcare workers. We covenant to ensure that all our activities with children are in their best and safest interests.

9. Approval and Signatures

Approval

Approval	Date
Elder Chair:	
Deacon Chair:	
Trustee Chair:	
Pastor:	

Childcare Worker Concurrence

I have received, read and understood this Child Safety Policy and commit to implement it fully to ensure the safety of children.

Field	Entry
Child Care Worker (Print name)	
Childcare Worker (Signature)	
Date	

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