



LIBERTY
LIVE.CHURCH

ABUSE PREVENTION

KIDS MINISTRY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Welcome to Liberty's Kids Ministry!

At Liberty, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of Liberty. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

**Liberty
Policies & Procedures for
Kids Ministry**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Overview of Liberty’s Safety System	1
• Kids Ministry Safety Policy	2
• Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse	4
• Liberty’s Abuse Prevention Team.....	6
• Kids and Student Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan	7
• Building Safety	7
• Worker to Child Ratio	8
• Discipline.....	8
• Restroom Supervision and Assistance Guidelines	9
• Intoxicants.....	10
• Medication.....	10
• Nudity	10
• One-to-One Interaction with Children	11
• Transportation	11
• Parental Contact	11
• Parental Involvement.....	11
• Physical Contact	12
• Misconduct.....	13
• Electronic Communication & Social Media	15
• Sexually Oriented Conversations	17
• Sexually Oriented Materials.....	17
• Tobacco Use And Vaping.....	17
• Verbal Interactions.....	17
• Release of Children	18
• Supervision.....	18

Overview of Liberty's Safety System

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, Liberty requires all staff members and volunteers working with children (and other vulnerable populations) to complete FIVE SAFETY STEPS before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children are required to complete Liberty's Screening Process, which includes:

- an Employment Application (employees only);
- a Volunteer Application (volunteers);
- references to be checked (employees and volunteers).

STEP TWO: Criminal Background Check

Liberty requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in Kid/Student's activities undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign electronically indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Personal Screening Interview

Liberty requires that all staff and volunteers to have a Personal Screening Interview. The interviewer will have access to the staff or volunteer's application, references and pertinent background information. A template is provided for the interviewer.

STEP FIVE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Liberty policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor, Ministry Director or Executive Pastor of Ministries. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Liberty staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior such as gift giving to a child, rule breaking with a child, playful yet inappropriate touch, or arranging time alone with a child through gaining the trust of parents and staff. Liberty requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training.

Kids Ministry Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Liberty has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Liberty to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Kids Pastor, the Kids Director, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Generally, child abuse is categorized in four primary forms:

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional abuse
3. Neglect
4. Sexual abuse

1. Physical abuse: Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage
- Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

2. Emotional abuse: Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved, but undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide

- Speech and/or eating disorders
- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
- Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

3. Neglect: Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.

Possible Signs of Neglect

- Failure to thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- Begs or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor hygiene

4. Sexual abuse: Sexual Abuse consist of any tricked, forced, manipulated or coerced sexual activity for the pleasure of the abuser. The abuser may be an adult or more dominant peer. Often, the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for student's age and developmental stage
- Depression – cries often for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue
- Sexually transmitted diseases

In addition to these indicators, students who have been sexually abused at church may exhibit some of the following:

1. Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the classroom.
2. Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously enthusiastically approached.
3. Comments such as "I don't want to be alone with ____" in reference to a volunteer or teacher.
4. Nightmares including a volunteer or teacher as a frightening character.
5. Unexplained hostility toward a volunteer or teacher.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Liberty is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services, or another appropriate agency.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Kids Pastor, Kids Director, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Liberty staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Liberty policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Kid Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Executive Pastor of Ministries and the Executive Team.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Kids Pastor, Kids Director, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries. The Kids Pastor, Kids Director or Next Gen Pastor is then responsible to report the abuse to the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by Liberty to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in the Kids Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective Services.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children at Liberty. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Liberty.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or students at Liberty.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at Liberty are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior to the Kids Pastor, Kids Director, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries. If the Executive Pastor of Ministries was not the person the report was made to, he should be informed as soon as possible.

Under the Commonwealth of Virginia Statute § 63.2-1509, the follow guidelines that can apply to the church are provided.

The following persons who, in their professional or official capacity have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately, within 24 hours, to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resided or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or the Department's toll-free child abuse or neglect hotline:

- 1. Any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children;*
- 2. Any person providing full-time or part time childcare for pay on a regular basis;*
- 3. Any athletic coach, director of other person 18 years of age or older employed by or volunteering with a private sport organization or team.*
- 4. Administrators or employees 18 years of age or older of public or private day camps, youth center or youth recreation programs.*

The person making a report must identify, if known:

- The name and address of the child,
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, and
- Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged abuse or neglect.

In no way is any provision in this policy meant to discourage any staff member or volunteer from *personally* reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies, but it is important that the Kids Pastor, Kids Director, Next Gen Pastor and Executive Pastor of Ministries know in order to ensure a safe environment in the Kids Ministry as well as confirm the appropriate report is made to law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

Staff members and volunteers are to verbally report an incident to the supervisory staff mentioned above as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the Kids Pastor, Kids Director, Next Get Pastor, or Executive Pastor of Ministries will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. If the incident occurred at church or church sponsored activity, the Executive Pastor of Ministries will enlist the help of the Abuse Response Team. The Abuse Response Team will consist of 3-5 members who are trained to respond to reports of abuse.

If appropriate, the Kids Pastor, the Kids Director, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

When a report of abuse or neglect occurs, Liberty Leadership will take necessary and appropriate action to ensure a safe environment for the person(s) at risk.

Liberty's Abuse Prevention Team

ABUSE PREVENTION TEAM

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children and students, Liberty will appoint and maintain an Abuse Prevention Team, which will meet at least twice a year.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Abuse Prevention Team is to enable Liberty Kids and Student Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Abuse Prevention Team will be comprised of the following members:

1. Executive Pastor of Ministries,
2. Next Gen Pastor,
3. Recreation Director, and
4. Other team members as desired.

MEETINGS

The Executive Pastor of Ministries will chair the meeting of the Abuse Prevention Team at least twice a year to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Abuse Prevention Team will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Abuse Prevention Team will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Liberty policies and procedures related to Kid and Student's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Kid and Student Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Executive Team regarding safety issues.

Kids and Student Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with children.

1. Local Ministry Supervisors conduct an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs that occur weekly.
2. Next Gen Pastor will be responsible for their ministry to conduct an annual abuse prevention training set by the Abuse Prevention Team.
3. Local Campus Pastors and/or Central Ministry Supervisors conduct an unscheduled observation of a Kids and Student Ministry program at least once each quarter.
4. The Executive Pastor of Ministries meets with the Abuse Prevention Team at least twice a year to discuss Kids and Student Ministry, including safety training and procedures

Building Safety

The Kids Pastor or Kids Director will be responsible for ensuring that the kids areas are monitored during groups or programming. Kids are not allowed to wander inside or outside the building without appropriate supervision at any time.

No child will ever be left unattended in the kids building or on the kids playground during kids ministry programming or classes. Kids Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Kids Ministry staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the kids playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

Worker to Child Ratios

Liberty is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, we strive to observe the following worker to child minimum ratios:

Program	Workers	Children
Babies & Toddlers	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Kids Director or Kids Pastor who will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with Church policy.

Discipline

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors. The difficult child in your group could be missing a few crucial social skills or be ridden by deep insecurity and fear. No matter what, God has allowed them to be in your path and now you get to choose how you'll respond and care for them.

Address with Love and Compassion

Sometimes our natural response is not love and compassion. Most adults in this child's life probably don't respond that way to them either. This can lead to continual isolation and deeper loneliness. As the church, we must address them with love and compassion because they are loved by and made in the image of God. To grow your love and compassion for this child, remember:

- Almost all difficult children have a troublesome story behind their behavior.
- They are children. They need to be known, loved, and understood. They will push the boundaries to test and see if your love is real.
- Pray for them. Ask God for wisdom. Address their behavior but walk in love and forgiveness. They need to see the love and forgiveness of Jesus modeled before them.

Talk with the staff member giving oversight to the area you serve and set up a plan to talk to the child's parent. Let the parents know that we want to partner with them to love and care for their child. Ask them if they have any tips for you. What do they do at home that you can reinforce in group?

Set Boundaries

You must consider what is best for the individual child, but also the rest of your group. Consider what boundaries you need to set in your group for the benefit of everyone. Do so in the beginning of the year and review them often. If a child is regularly disruptive to the group, we may need to bring in a shadow or find an alternative remedy so that you can continue to lead your group.

Contact a coach/staff member giving oversight to your area of ministry immediately if you have a difficult situation so we can address it with you.

If a child is bitten, notify church staff right away. Remove the biter from the room until his/her parents arrive. If the child remains in the room, the parent must stay with him/her. If biting continues weekly, the parents can either attend with their child or the child will be removed from the group until biting has subsided.

Restroom Supervision and Assistance Guideline

Preschool

Because Preschoolers may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only 18 years old or older female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other preschool workers.
- 3) Changing stations must be positioned to ensure that a child's privacy is protected, with no direct exposure of private areas to the camera.
- 4) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 5) Any special instructions given by parents leaving the children in nursery will be recorded when checking in ("Seth Adams has a diaper rash")
- 6) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 7) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female preschool workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into restrooms, the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in restrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in preschool ministry will be recorded on the group sign in sheet ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.")
- 6) Children should be verbally assisted where possible. If physical assistance is necessary, another staff member or volunteer should be present, when possible.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear or clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

Volunteer Restroom Guidelines

Where available, volunteers should use volunteer restrooms. If a designated volunteer restroom is not available, please do not use a restroom if children are present.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any Liberty program or activity.

Medication

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication, including diaper cream, to any child while serving in Kids Ministry. Exceptions will be made as it relates to an EpiPen since the medication has to be administered in emergency situations. Parents/guardians must provide written instructions to church staff regarding method and timing of the administration of an EpiPen.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers serving in Kid Ministry should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Kids Director/Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

One-to-One Interactions with Children

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Kid Ministry activities or programs. Another trained, screened adult should always be present.

Transportation

Volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. Staff members should not provide transportation to children without permission of supervisor. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. Drivers must always drive responsibly and follow all traffic regulations, including the speed limit.
4. All passengers must always be seated, with a seat belt on while the vehicle is moving
5. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving unless in an emergency.
6. No drivers under age 21 may drive Liberty-owned or rented vehicles. Drivers must have a valid driver's license.

Parental Contact

Parents who leave a child in the care of Liberty staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Kid Ministry programs.

Parental Involvement

Parents have an open invitation to observe, with supervision, all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete Liberty's volunteer application and screening process.

Physical Contact

Liberty is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Liberty has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Kid Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Kids Director, Kids Pastor, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or Kids Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Staff members and volunteers should not allow children older than four years of age to sit in their laps. Encourage kids to sit next to you and pat them reassuringly on the back if needed.
6. Staff members or volunteers should never carry children older than four years of age.
7. No child should ever be lifted above shoulder height. Never toss a child into the air or carry them on your shoulders or back.
8. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Kids Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
9. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
10. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
11. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Kids Director, Kids Pastor, Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

Misconduct

BULLYING

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at any Liberty activity and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. Liberty is committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any child who is aware of bullying behavior is expected to tell the Kids Director, Kids Pastor, or Campus Pastor.

Objectives of Liberty's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To clearly communicate that Liberty will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give staff members and volunteers a suitable understanding of those behaviors that constitute 'bullying'.
3. To make it known to staff members and volunteers that a policy and protocol exist should bullying issues arise.
4. To clearly communicate how to report bullying behavior.
5. To communicate to staff members and volunteers that Liberty takes bullying seriously and will immediately investigate and address all reports of bullying.

Bullying is defined by Stopbullying.gov as unwanted, aggressive behavior among children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance by seeking to harm, intimidate or coerce another individual. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying.

1. **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Examples may include teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting and/or threatening to cause harm.
2. **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Examples may include leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, embarrassing someone in public.

3. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Examples may include hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking, or breaking someone's things, making mean or rude hand gestures.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that

1. Are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance;
2. Offend or degrade;
3. Create a hostile environment;
4. Reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual child/student or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or mental or physical disability; or
5. Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Examples of harassment prohibited in Liberty activities include, without limitation:

Physical offenses. Behaviors that include

1. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping a child;
2. Throwing at or hitting a child with objects;

Non-physical offenses. Behaviors that include

1. Making negative or disparaging comments about a child's/student's disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits;
2. displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols.

HAZING

Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for

1. A child joining a group;
2. a child being socially accepted by a group's members; or
3. any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

Examples of hazing prohibited in Liberty activities include, without limitation:

1. Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring a child to consume alcohol or illegal drugs;
2. Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining a child;
3. Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature;
4. Sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food;
5. Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule;

6. Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of a child's willingness to cooperate or participate.

PRANKING

Pranking or playing a practical joke on another person can lead to injury, inappropriate behavior, or acts of retaliation that can be detrimental to minors.

Activities that fit the definition of pranking are not allowed, regardless of a child's willingness to cooperate or participate.

WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT

It is a violation of this Code of Conduct if a staff member or volunteer knows of misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the child. All forms of misconduct should be reported to the Kids Director, Kids Pastor or Campus Pastor.

PEER-TO-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE

Approximately 1/3 of all reported sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children or minors. Staff members and volunteers have an obligation to report peer-to-peer sexual abuse in accord with state mandatory reporting requirements. Whether sexual interaction between children constitutes 'sexual abuse' depends on the existence of an aggressor and whether there is an imbalance of power between the parties (e.g., an age difference between the children, disparity in size or the existence of a physical or intellectual disability). **If you have concern that an interaction between a child may constitute sexual abuse, report the interaction immediately to the Kids Director, Kids Pastor or Campus Pastor.**

Peer-to-Peer sexual abuse risk is highest:

1. Any location that is less easily seen; or
2. Any time children are unclothed or changing clothes, for any reason.

Due to this risk, staff members and volunteers will be aware of locations and facilities that are less easily seen or supervised. These locations and facilities vary per ministry and activity, and can include restrooms and changing areas. These areas will be supervised regularly by staff members and volunteers, where possible and appropriate.

Electronic Communications & Social Media

All electronic communications between a staff member or volunteer and a child must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities.

As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the child's family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the child's parents or guardians.

FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES

Staff members or volunteers can communicate with children through sites like Facebook, but all communication needs to be in group form and public (no private communication). If a Facebook page is used, all staff members and parents must be included. All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind shared among children or between staff members/volunteers and child must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about ministry activities or for ministry-oriented motivational purposes.

TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA

All communication is to be public in nature. Staff members/Volunteers and children may “follow” each other. Staff members/Volunteers cannot “re-tweet” a child’s inappropriate message posts. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to “direct message” children through Twitter (or similar media). Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to post inappropriate off-color content or comment on inappropriate off-color posts. If there is doubt, treat the content as inappropriate.

EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff members may use email to communicate with the child but a parent or another staff member should be copied on all email communication with minors. All email content between staff members/volunteers and a child/student must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities. Where possible, the child’s parent should be copied on e-mail communications. Email communication between staff members/volunteers and a child is allowed during the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Texting is allowed between staff member/volunteer and a child if the child is at least 14 years of age. Texts between a staff member/volunteer and a child must be a group text – the text should include another child, volunteer, a parent, or another staff member. All texts between a staff member/volunteer and a child must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about ministry activities. No texting is allowed between a staff member/volunteer and a child before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m., unless there is a specific ministry activity that requires a text communication.

The use of Snapchat, Instagram (and similar apps) with a minor child is not permitted.

ELECTRONIC IMAGERY

From time to time, digital photos, videos, and other publicly obtainable images of the minor child – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be used for Liberty videos and/or websites. The use of photos/videos is permissible as long as the child is in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the child and the ministry. Photo or video imagery must not be contrary to any rules or guidance outlined in this Code of Conduct.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE

The parent or guardian of a child/student may request in writing that their child/student not be contacted by staff members/volunteers through any electronic communication; that request must be honored. Additionally, a parent or guardian of a child/student may request in writing that

photographs or videography of their child/student not be posted on programs and/or websites, understanding that group photography or videography may render this impracticable; to the extent this request is practicable, it should be honored.

MISCONDUCT

Social media and electronic communication can be used inappropriately. (e.g., emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communication by staff members/volunteers will not be tolerated.

Electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

1. Drugs or alcohol use;
2. Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language or sexual activity;
3. An adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
4. Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.

Any communication concerning a minor's personal life, social activities, relationships, family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible, and professional.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Sexually Oriented Materials

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care. Staff members and volunteers should check with parents and use good judgement regarding movies and video games.

Tobacco Use And Vaping

Liberty requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco and vaping products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Liberty activities or programs. Liberty is a tobacco and vape free facility.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging,

constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Release of Children

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Kids Ministry staff members or volunteers, Liberty incurs responsibility for the safety and welfare of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Kids Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Kids Director/Pastor before releasing the child.

The Kids Check-In Procedures with security stickers should be followed at all times.

Supervision

Staff members and volunteers in Kids Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working in church programs.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Liberty's Kid Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Liberty.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Liberty.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor/director.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Liberty and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

By digitally signing, I hereby acknowledge receipt of Liberty's policies and procedures manual.