



Child Protection Policy

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Any questions relating to the content of this document can be relayed to the above compiler and/or kids@victorychurch.org.za

INTRODUCTION

This document has been formulated to protect both the children in our programs and the people who work with them. This document has taken into account similar documents and practices from other churches in South Africa and abroad. It is furthermore compliant with The Children's Act and seeks what is in the child's best interest.

We aim to create a safe environment in every way for our children by combining good leadership with a safe place and safe practices. We believe in the need to equip our leaders and volunteers to ensure a ministry that is safe for all children. Our greatest priority in this regard is to protect the rights of the child.

Our Constitution defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. Therefore, in this policy, the description 'child/ren' will refer to all minors under the age of 18.

CONTEXT

We ask that every person wishing to join the Kids Ministry Team at Victory Church reads through and agrees to, this policy. This policy, therefore, applies to anyone with access to children and includes, but is not limited to:

- All staff
- Victory Kids leaders
- Volunteers (during the 2-week probation)

The requirements within this policy apply to all Victory initiatives and events including but not limited to our weekly ministries, special events and holiday programs. It applies also at sites where these Victory Kids initiatives are held and are not limited to Victory sites and venues only.

The Victory Kids Child Protection Policy serves as the framework through which every volunteer and staff member should serve in this ministry. This policy must be updated and re-signed on an annual basis.

VICTORY KIDS REQUIREMENTS (REFER TO VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK)

Victory requires that anyone wishing to work with children must:

- Connect with the ministry Pastor and go through this policy, and also the Volunteer Handbook.
- Agree to, sign and adhere to this Child Protection Policy and the requirements expressed in this document.
- Fill in the online application form and provide documents required as per the specific application.
- Provide a certified copy of their ID, which will then be used to obtain a clearance certificate against Part B of the National Child Protection Register on their behalf. Failing this, they must have an official criminal record check. Any applicant under the age of 18 must have a form signed by their parents/guardians declaring they have never been involved in any activity that was harmful or potentially harmful to children.

No one who has been convicted of a crime involving abuse or neglect of children will be allowed to work with children at Victory Church. Any other criminal record will be considered on a case to case basis in discussion with the Victory Eldership and the Pastoral Staff.

CONTACT DETAILS

Victory Church ensures the rights and safety of our children on our premises and will always promote a Culture of Safety. We are very aware of child abuse and are committed to preventing incidents of any form of abuse at Victory Kids. In the unlikely event that an incident takes place at Victory, we will respond promptly and appropriately, and cooperate with all parties involved including the parents, the child, the police, the Department of Social Development and Social Welfare.

We want to create a place where the child will be protected from abuse. We also hope that, if there is any abuse in the child's life, that he/she will feel safe enough to share this with us.

- *The person that will be the Safety Coordinator for all Victory Kids is:*
Kids Ministry Leader

- *The designated management, who oversees the Safety Coordinator, is:*
Alistair Roper
083 601 2001

- *Childline South Africa*
08 000 55 555

- *Lifeline Counselling Centre*
041 373 8882

DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse may take the form of the following conduct concerning a child:

- Allowing children to be sexually abused
- Sexual abuse
- Exposing a child to any pornographic material
- Emotional abuse / Bullying (causing harm by name-calling, threats, intimidation, ridicule, etc. This can also happen on social media)
- Harassment (unwelcome conduct and contact through physical contact, following or stalking, unwelcome comments)
- Neglect (being deprived of essentials – food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, education, supervision, medical care, etc.)
- Exploiting a child for labour
- Exposing or subjecting a child to psychological abuse
- Physical abuse (intentional or reckless act causing physical harm to a child)
- Self-harm (deliberate injuring oneself)
- Mental Health Concerns

Leaders and volunteers have authority over children because of their position, age, maturity, physical size, strength and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power, and any form of child abuse is always wrong.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Any physical contact with a child should be:

- in public;
- appropriate to the age of the individual and related to their need;
- Generally initiated by the child.

5.1 There must be more than one leader with a child in a room. If a leader finds him/herself alone with a child, another leader should be asked to accompany them immediately. Please note, only where and if it is possible. This will vary from service to service.

5.2 In the case of sensitive conversations (conversations regarding any abuse, neglect or inappropriate behaviour), leaders must find a quiet spot that respects the nature of the conversation, but is easily accessible. It must never happen behind closed doors. These conversations will be recorded and the Safety Coordinator will immediately be informed.

5.3 All leaders need to be vigilant in ensuring that the activities the children partake in, and the space in which we host the children, are safe.

5.4 Victory Kids leaders and volunteers should not engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, especially with children of the opposite sex. In the same way, they should not allow children to engage in games which could be misconstrued by other children.

5.5 Victory Kids Leaders and Volunteers must not allow bullying to happen in any group. Bullying in any form is to be dealt with strictly and speedily. Victory Kids Leaders should speak to all parties involved, explain why it is wrong and what the correct Kingdom way of handling such an incident is. The goal for all parties is to apologize, ask for forgiveness and to forgive each other.

5.6 Victory Kids leaders, volunteers and parents must report any suspicion of abuse taking place at Victory immediately to the Safety Coordinator (Jandre van der Walt).

5.7 Victory Kids leaders must be accountable to other leaders within the team and must inform their ministry Pastor, Jandre van der Walt, of any incident which could be held against them, could lead to them being falsely accused, or if they feel uncomfortable with any situation.

5.8 Parents/guardians will sign a release form before we post their child's picture on Facebook. This would only be applicable if there are up to 3 children in the photo, and their faces are visible.

APPROPRIATE TOUCH

We are working to make Victory Kids as warm, welcoming and friendly place as possible. We greatly value the safety of our kids and failure to comply with these guidelines are grounds for immediate dismissal.

- Hugging can only be done if the child initiates the contact. Never allow full contact (body to body) hugs. Rather distance your body from the hug or give the child a side-to-side hug. Sometimes it is best to initiate a fist-pump, high-five etc.
- Tickling or prolonged physical contact of any kind is not appropriate.
- A light touch to a hand, shoulder or back when encouraging is appropriate
- Lap sitting is only appropriate for children under five years old (Little Dynamites). If a child is sitting in your lap, move them to sit next to you or sit on your knees so they are not able to sit in your lap.

- Many children who are sad or upset can be comforted best by being held. Holding children is only appropriate in Little Dynamites, and Grade R-1.
- Never touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- Never kiss a child or entice a child to kiss you
- Never allow a child to touch you inappropriately.

Our Appropriate Touch Policies are for the protection of our children and volunteers. When serving you must observe these policies even with your own children who may be in your class.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS AND CONCERNS

If a parent/guardian has a concern around the possible abuse/neglect of a child/ren or a concern around inappropriate conduct of a volunteer or staff member, they must immediately contact the Safety Coordinator by making an appointment and explaining any concern in person. Victory is committed to responding promptly to all incidents or concerns of abuse which are brought to our attention.

PROCEDURE FOR SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CHILD ABUSE

Where the evidence is clear:

- The Victory Kids leader or staff member first needs to report any suspicion to the Safety Coordinator immediately and then write a dated record of the details of the concern and discuss it with the Safety Coordinator. The records and details of the discussion are stored in a personal file according to each child.
- Victory will refer the matter to the South African Police, Department of Social Development and/or Department of Health and Social Welfare.
- Care is taken not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to the child or by asking questions of the child.
- If the parent/guardian are suspected, care must be taken not to alert them (in case they start hiding the abuse), before referring the matter to the Departments as listed in this policy.

Where the evidence is unclear:

- The Victory Kids leader or staff member first needs to report any suspicion to the Safety Coordinator immediately and then write a dated record of the details of the concern and discuss it with the Safety Coordinator. The records and details of the discussion are stored in a personal file.
- The matter will be discussed at Victory Church between the Victory Kids leader or staff member, the Safety Coordinator (which is the Children's Pastor) and Senior Management.
- If the above group of people cannot reach consensus, they will decide to engage with the parents and/or Social Welfare and/or Social Development.

RECORDING AND HANDLING OF DISCLOSURES:

When a child makes comments to a Victory Kids staff member or leader, that gives cause or concern (disclosure), or the Victory Kids staff member or leader notices another Victory Kids staff member or leader being abusive to a child [such as significant changes in behavior, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect] that Victory Kids staff member or leader will be required to follow the steps below:

- make the child feel comfortable.
- reassure the child that it is not his/her fault.
- not react in shock, anger or disgust.
- not force the child to talk.
- not force the child to show injuries.
- not 'interview' the child.
- only ask open-ended questions, such as "can you tell more about what happened?"
- be honest with the child.

The staff member, volunteer or leader will then write a report that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure. The report must include:

- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
- The exact words spoken by the child as much as possible.
- The name of the person of whom the concern was reported, with the date and time.
- The names of any other person(s) present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in a personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.

7. INFORMING PARENTS

Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with the parents to gain their view of events unless we feel that the parent is the perpetrator of the abuse and that informing them may put the child in greater danger.

- We make a note of any discussion we have with the parents regarding a concern and the notes are stored in a secure file kept with Pastor Jandre.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to the SAPD (South African Police Department), DSD (Department of Social Development) or Welfare, parents are informed that the abuse has been reported.
- If the parent is the possible abuser, management takes advice from Welfare or Victory's attorney regarding when to inform the parents.

8. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST VICTORY STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

Victory will respond firmly and decisively to any inappropriate behaviour defined as child abuse (Under the heading, "Defining Child Abuse") of this policy, by a Victory staff member or volunteer.

When a complaint of any abuse is received against a Victory Kids staff member/leader, a written report needs to be compiled and given to the Safety Coordinator. We will then respond by re-cording the details of the alleged incident.

Should the parents wish to take the matter further, Senior Management and the Safety Coordinator will hold a meeting with the Victory Kids staff member/leader and his/her version is recorded and filed. If necessary, we will refer the complaint to the relevant local authorities.

Management may suspend the Victory Kids staff member/leader until the investigation is complete. This is not an admission of guilt or that the alleged incident did take place, but it is to protect the staff/leader as well as the children and families throughout the investigation.

After the investigation, if the Victory staff member/volunteer is found to be guilty:

- Victory Church will see to it that the member or staff/leader is charged by the police per South African law.
- An emergency Disciplinary Hearing will take place and the member or staff/leader will be dismissed with immediate effect.
- The same process will be followed should the volunteer be under the age of 18. The process will be followed alongside the parents/guardians of the youth volunteer.

9. SUSPECTED ABUSE OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH CONTEXT

We are required by law, to report any child/ren we suspect are suffering abuse in any way. In the case of any leaders or volunteers becoming concerned about the potential abuse of a child happening outside of the church/ministry environment, the following process must be followed:

- If a child shares information with you about a potentially abusive situation, don't react with obvious shock. Reassure the child that they have the right to be safe and that they have done the right thing by speaking to you. If you feel it necessary, ask open-ended questions, such as "can you tell me more about what happened?" Don't promise them that you can keep things a secret but promise them that you want them to be safe.
- Do not speak to the parents about your concern.
- Write down exactly what the child said or what you have observed and what you are concerned may be happening. Date and Sign the page and take it to the Safety Coordinator to sign and keep.

The Safety Coordinator will then determine the next step, which may include:

- Trying to gather more information from the child
- Involving a trained counsellor to formulate a plan of action.
- If the Safety Coordinator still feels there is a legitimate cause for concern, they must document their concerns (and possibly fill in form 22) and immediately contact and report it to a designated child-protection organization.

10. PROTOCOLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

In the case of an emergency please follow the relevant protocols immediately as outlined below.

10.1 Fire:

In the event of a fire, raise the alarm as quickly as possible. Do this by calmly getting everyone's attention and moving the children out of the building to the nearest exit and gather in the designated safe area. Victory Kids staff members are responsible for checking that everyone is in the safe area (See safety map at the back of the document).

For any other emergencies (crime, wild animals, natural disasters, etc.) please apply a similar protocol to the above.

10.2 Medical:

Victory will ensure there is at least one person present trained in First Aid in the Victory Kids venues. Victory Kids leaders and volunteers need to make sure that they know where the First Aid Kit are in their venue, and if necessary use it within their ability. No medication can be dispensed without parental permission. If a serious injury or accident occurs, a medical doctor, as well as the parents/guardians, needs to be contacted immediately. Please be aware of any allergies children may have (see child/ren's name sticker). Any serious injury that requires the attention of a medical professional must be reported to Pastor Jandre, who will keep a 'Record of Injury', wherein the name of the child together with the date, the nature, the treatment and the outcome of the injury must be recorded.

- All persons attending to blood spills, open wounds, sores, breaks in the skin, grazes, open skin lesions, body fluids and excretions should wear protective latex gloves to minimize the risk of HIV transmission.
- If there is a biting or scratching incident where the skin is broken, the wound should be washed thoroughly with running water and disinfectant. Cleansing and washing of wounds should always be done with running water.
- If blood has contaminated a surface, that surface should be cleaned with fresh, clean bleach solution.
- Blood-contaminated materials should be sealed in a plastic bag and disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Children should be instructed never to touch the blood, open wounds, sores, and breaks in the skin grazes and open skin lesions of others, not to handle emergencies such as nosebleeds, cuts and scrapes of friends on their own. They should be taught to call for the assistance of an adult.

11. APPEARANCE

All Victory Kids volunteers are encouraged to wear their issued shirt/lanyard. Slacks, jeans, shorts of appropriate length are highly encouraged. Ladies should refrain from wearing skirts, as it makes working with children (floor time) difficult. Please make sure your clothes are neat in appearance.

12. HYGIENE

Please help us prevent the spread of illnesses by washing or sanitizing your hands:

- Upon the first arrival in a room
- After accompanying a child to the restroom
- After contact with body fluid (wiping a child's nose, etc)
- before handling food and snacks
- Whenever else is needed

Please instruct children to wash their hands:

- After using the restroom
- Wiping their nose
- Before eating

13. ACCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES

Please review our policies and procedures regarding accidents, incidents and allergies, especially how we document both for occurrences and prevention.

INJURIES

In the case of an accident, regardless of a child or adult, inform the Safety Coordinator or staff member right away. Classrooms for children over two years old are equipped with a small First Aid Kit. Along with care, an Incident Form will need to be filled out and signed by the leader that witnesses the event. The Incident Report also requires a parent and staff signature.

If there is a spill of body fluid (*due to cuts, nosebleeds, vomit, etc*), latex gloves must be worn (*available in the First Aid Kit*).

EMERGENCIES

We are not authorized to administer any over the counter or prescription medications. In the event a child needs more attention than we can provide, the parent will be notified. Injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, loss of consciousness or other serious bodily injuries should be treated as follows:

- Remain calm and keep the children and the injured child as calm as possible. Speak calmly to the injured child.
- Do not move or leave the injured child alone
- Send a fellow leader to find the Safety Coordinator (Children's Pastor) / staff member for assistance.
- The leader must then contact the parent.

To promote health and wellness in all children, Victory Kids is for healthy children only. Therefore, if a child has any of the following symptoms, please do not admit him to the classroom and kindly ask parents to please take care of their child:

- Any degree of fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Unexplained or contagious skin rash
- Bleeding / wet diaper rash
- Chronic cough
- Runny nose (yellow/green discharge)
- Eye / Ear infections
- Pink Eye
- Parasites (nits, lice, mites, ringworm, etc)

If a child enters any Victory Kids facility and one of the above symptoms are found, inform the parent immediately.

14. BATHROOM POLICIES

- Only one child in the bathroom at a time
- If a child can go on their own, let them (just stand by the door ready to help if needed)
- If a child needs help or hasn't finished up after some time, talk through the door or ask if you can slightly open the door to talk to them.
- If your assistance is required, ask another volunteer to stand at the door and watch as you assist the child. Volunteers/Staff are never to be alone with a child in the bathroom.

VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION & VISITING ADULTS

We make every effort to keep Victory Kids secure and safe. Below are our policies concerning adults in Victory Kids:

Visiting Adults / Parents / Friends

- If an adult/parent/friend is interested in observing a classroom at Victory Kids to potentially become part of the team, they must first be approved by Ps. Jandre and then register as a Volunteer upon Check-in. The sticker needs to be visible at all times and they must refrain from interacting with the kids as much as possible unless given permission.

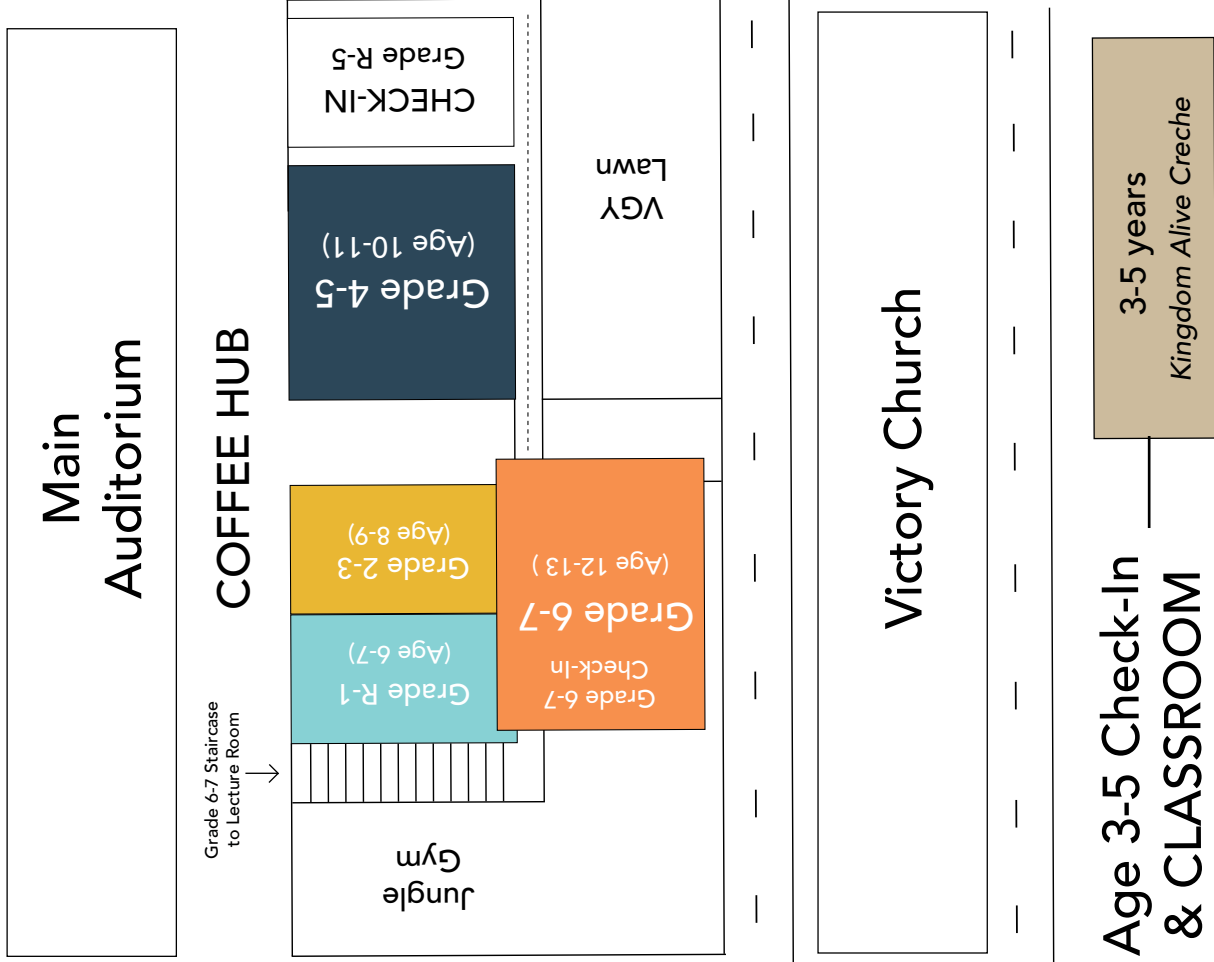
CHECK-IN

- Children need to be taken to their specific classroom
- The scheduled Leader needs to be at the check-in table starting at 8:25 am. Check-in starts promptly 8:30, no-one is allowed in the classroom earlier.
- Never let unauthorized adults in the room (refer to the previous page....)
- Only allow children into the room if their grade on the nametag matches the room you are in. Otherwise, direct the family to the correct location for correct check-in.
- Check-in Leader should be friendly and welcoming to parents and children at all times.

CHECK-OUTS

- Parents must present their check-out token to receive their child
- No Parent are allowed inside the classroom without permission. One of the leaders will fetch their child/ren. If child/ren doesn't want to come, then only can the parents come in and fetch their child.
- Classroom leaders must check the parent's security tag and match it to the child's tag number. Once this match has been made, they may go with their parent. Take off the child's check-out token so that you can also keep track of who has gone etc.

VICTORY KIDS FACILITIES



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

