



the Heights
kids

PARENT HANDBOOK
AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to The Heights Kids, the children's ministry at The Heights Church.

It is our goal to create a safe and loving environment in which the children entrusted to our care are able to learn about the character of God, discover Biblical truth, and learn what it means to know and follow Jesus.

This handbook is designed to familiarize parents/guardians and volunteers with our childcare procedures and our child protection policy at The Heights Kids. Currently, "The Heights Kids" refers to classes and programs for children birth–grade 3.

If you have any questions or comments as you read this handbook, please contact the The Heights Kids Director at *kids@theheightsdenver.com*.

CORE VALUES

1. SAFE

We commit to being a safe place for children. We understand that safety and security are two of a child's highest needs. As children arrive at The Heights Kids, we want them to feel a genuine warmth and immediate comfort level with the adults who are responsible for them. We will assure parents and children that we have their best interest as our top priority at all times.

We see three aspects of safety that are crucial to The Heights Kids:

1. **Spiritual safety** occurs in an environment where adults understand that children are each in different places spiritually. Children are not coerced into making decisions they are not ready to make and are allowed to move in their own spiritual journeys one step at a time. All children need to have a spiritually safe place where they know it is OK to ask hard questions about faith.
2. **Emotional safety** occurs as leaders are positive, welcoming, and sincere around children. Children are accepted and affirmed for who they are. They are nurtured through kind words and actions by all volunteers.
3. **Physical safety** occurs in room environments with age-appropriate equipment, screened and trained adult volunteers, name tags on all children, a computerized registration process, and the enforcement of check-in and check-out procedures.

CORE VALUES (CONT.)

2. KID-FOCUSED

We commit to teach the Bible to our children in an age-appropriate and relevant way so that our children can apply God's Word in their lives, at home, at school, and in church.

3. RELATIONAL

We commit to lavish children with grace so that they will experience unconditional love. We provide a place for children to know and be known, love and be loved, and serve and be served. We accomplish this through providing a community in which our children can build relationships with their peers and leaders.

4. FUN

We commit to being creative, fun and imaginative in all we do and teach so that we are relevant and inspiring to our kids, motivating them to learn.

MISSION

The Heights Kids exists to partner with families to help children know and follow Jesus.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

All Heights Kids volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

1. Ensuring the children's safety while they are in our care.
2. Loving the children as Christ loves them.
3. Demonstrating a commitment to following and serving Jesus through their teaching and lifestyle.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTRY

We understand that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege. This privilege includes responsibility before God for ministering to and caring for the children.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN BEFORE THEY ARRIVE

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday morning. Every applicant who wishes to serve at The Heights Kids is required to undergo a criminal background check and is encouraged to attend a training.

In addition to a background check, to ensure safety and quality care, The Heights Church has also established several other criteria that all volunteers must meet in order to work with our children:

1. All volunteers must be members and in good standing with The Heights Church.
2. All volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. Youth who are at least 11 years of age are welcome to assist (subject to the approval and direction of The Heights Kids Director), but they will always serve *in addition to* the adult volunteers.
3. Volunteers are to be approved by the The Heights Kids Director in consultation with one of The Heights Church pastors.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN AS THEY ARRIVE AND DEPART

Arrival Time

The Heights Kids volunteers will be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of service so that parents/guardians have enough time to transition their child before service begins.

Checking a Child In and Out

In order to protect the children in our care, each child must be checked into their class by a parent/guardian using the electronic check-in system. Upon checking the child in, the parent/guardian and the child will each receive a label with a family-specific ID code (this code changes each week to assure the correct parent/guardian is picking up the child). This number is used to match parent to child.

At the end of service when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

- The parent/guardian will display the ID code to The Heights Kids volunteer in order to verify a match.
- The Height Kids volunteer will bring the child to the door and remove the child's ID label, verifying that the number on the parent's ID label and child's ID label match.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than the person who placed them in The Heights Kids, unless they have the parent's ID label or the parent has notified The Heights Kids of the change.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN WHILE THEY ARE IN OUR CARE

Only The Heights Kids Volunteers are Allowed in Classrooms

All certified volunteers will be wearing The Heights Kids t-shirts and name tags. This allows parents/guardians and leaders to easily identify those adults who are allowed in The Heights Kids area.

Healthy Child Policy

In order to prevent sickness among the other children, we ask that you not bring your child to Heights Kids area until they have been free from the following symptoms for 24 hours:

- Rashes
- Elevated temperature (anything over 99.6°)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Persistent cough
- Discolored nasal discharge
- Lice

Kids ministry volunteers and church staff are not allowed to give any kind of medication to any child.

Toys and equipment are disinfected weekly to prevent the spread of sickness among the children.

Snacks

Parents/guardians should notify The Heights Kids volunteers at check-in of any allergy or food limitations. The following snacks will be the only snacks served to children while they are signed in under our care (Parents/guardians will be notified if we hold special events and plan to serve snacks that are not listed below):

- Birth–Age 4: *Goldfish* crackers and water
- Kindergarten–Grade 3: *Goldfish* crackers, all-natural fruit snacks, and water

Restroom/Diaper Changing Procedures

RESTROOM:

Two adult volunteers will always be present when accompanying children to the restroom. The volunteers will stand outside of the restroom and wait for the child. If a child needs help, the stall door will be kept open and both volunteers will step into the restroom to help.

DIAPER CHANGING:

Special care is taken with diaper changing and disposal. The following steps are taken in the event a diaper needs to be changed:

1. Have two adults present in the room.
2. Put on gloves and remove soiled diaper. Wipe child's bottom front to back with diaper wipes until clean.
3. Place soiled diapers in a plastic bag along with your gloves. Close and knot the bag and throw it in the trash.

4. Put a clean diaper on the child and remove child from the changing area.
6. Disinfect the changing area and wash your hands.

Appropriate Discipline

All volunteers at The Heights Kids are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include:

- Correcting the child verbally
- Withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time
- Separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if their behavior is endangering or upsetting other children)

Volunteers at The Heights Kids should never yell, spank or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the correction measures above, parents will be notified to return to The Heights Kids area to check on their child.

Communication with Parent/Guardian

Keep your cell phone accessible, checking it periodically during service in case we need to notify you concerning your child.

WE LOVE KIDS!

Your children are important to our community here at The Heights Church. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of spending time with your children at The Heights Kids. We are excited to help your children learn about the joy of knowing and following Jesus!



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