

Navarre United Methodist Church
Nursery Staff Handbook
Revised June 2010

Church Mission Statement: To develop each person into a fully devoted disciple of Christ.

Purpose of Navarre United Methodist Church Nursery: The purpose of our nursery is to encourage the active participation of parents in worship, Bible study, and fellowship. We will always provide a safe, loving, Christian environment for all children.

Team Work: The nursery should function as a team. The main focus of the nursery is the well being of the children in its care. A nursery caregiver's main task is to provide a safe, warm, nurturing, fun, Christian environment for each and every child. In order to do this, each caregiver is expected to get along amicably with her/his co-workers.

- Leave personal issues at home and away from the children.
- Arguing, bitterness, and sarcasm do not belong in the nursery.
- Personal conversation/gossip should never be discussed in front of the children or parents.
- At times, for the benefit of the children, one caregiver may need to cover another's responsibilities.
- A Christian, professional attitude is required at all times. Caregivers should treat each other with respect.

Employment Requirements: Per Safe Sanctuary Policies, the following are required as conditions of employment with the NUMC Nursery:

- Employees must submit an application with references that will be checked by the Nursery Coordinator and submit to a background check.
- Must be 18 years of age to be employed by the NUMC Nursery.
- Current First Aid and CPR certifications are required of all NUMC Nursery staff.

Employee Performance: All NUMC employees begin employment with a 180 day probationary period. During this time, the employee performance is evaluated for continued employment.

- Each caregiver's performance will be evaluated after one year of employment and yearly thereafter. These evaluations are used to discover areas of needed improvement, employee strengths, and to consider raises or termination.
- Raises are determined by Staff Parish and the Finance Committee.
- Violation of nursery or church policies may result in a letter of reprimand, which will require the caregiver's signature.
- Three letters of reprimand or three negative evaluations may be cause for termination.
- A serious violation of policies may be cause for immediate termination.
- If a congregation member makes a complaint about a caregiver, the issue will first discussed between the Nursery Coordinator and that caregiver. Comments will be noted in the caregiver's file. If a second valid complaint is filed, the caregiver will be given a written notice. When a third valid complaint is filed, the caregiver will be evaluated for termination.
- If you decide to leave your job, a two week notice is requested.

Interaction with Children: Nursery caregivers are expected to give the children in their care one hundred percent of their attention. Socializing with other adults should be kept to a minimum while on duty. Caregivers should play with the children on the floor or at the tables with an activity. Materials can be found in the copy room and preschool office. Equally important is the attitude the caregivers display while in the children's presence, i.e.:

- Speak in warm, loving tones, avoiding sarcasm. Never yell at a child.
- Use positive messages. Never resort to condescending or shameful language.
- Get down on the child's level and do not speak down to them.
- Recognize that all children are raised differently. Our job is to treat them with the love and respect every person deserves, just as they are.

Interaction with Parents: Nursery workers should stand and greet parents and children whenever possible. Spend time introducing newcomers to our policies including child information sheets, nursery pamphlet, sign-in/out sheets, pagers, and workers names. ***It is the caregiver's job to help the parents feel comfortable leaving their children in our nursery.*** Kind words and a smile go a long way.

- Report to the parents any positive or negative behavior when they pick up their children.
- If any caregiver has a negative experience with a parent, write down the incident and speak to the Nursery Coordinator as soon as possible.

Supervision of Children: There must be two caregivers in each room at all times.

- *Approved volunteers* count as caregivers. Helpers do not count as caregivers or volunteers. (See volunteer section in this handbook.)
- Any child left in the nursery's care will be supervised at all times by a caregiver.
- No helper under the age of 18 will be allowed in the nursery without 2 other caregivers, at least 18 years of age and 4 years older than the helper and the oldest child in the room present, per Safe Sanctuary Policy.
- Caregivers should spend minimal time out of the room. Reasons for leaving the room include bathroom breaks, gathering needed supplies, and emergencies.
- All children should have the caregivers' full attention for safety and quality purposes.
- Caregivers should not use nursery work time to do non-work related activities i.e. homework, lesson plans, checkbooks, fund-raising activities, talking on a cell phone, texting, etc.
- Caregivers should be on the floor with the children or at least sitting close to them in a chair.
- Caregivers should be able to see all children and the door at all times.
- Caregivers' words and actions should always revolve around the children. Anyone can see and hear what is going on in the nursery.
- Count the children several times throughout the time they are in your care.

Behavior Management: When directing a child's behavior, caregivers should strive to praise the children often, creating opportunities to make them feel good about themselves.

- If a child is choosing not to listen, be sure you have given adequate verbal warnings before action is taken.
- It is acceptable to let the uncooperative child sit out, away from the group, with a book or puzzle until he chooses to listen and follow directions.
- If the child is endangering himself or others, or is out of control, time out is permitted. The child should sit one minute for each year of his age.
- Written behavior reports are at the caregiver's discretion, and should always be signed by the caregiver, parent and Nursery Coordinator.
- Anytime a child cries continuously for fifteen minutes, the parent should be notified.

- Physical punishment of any kind is prohibited, and is grounds for immediate dismissal of the caregiver.

Accidents: Any accident should be written up on a NUMC Nursery Accident/Incident form, located in the copy room in a file folder on the counter.

- Head injuries require immediate notification of the parent.
- Completed accident forms are to be placed in the Nursery Coordinator's box to sign and file.
- Notify the Nursery Coordinator immediately in the case of a serious injury.
- The first aid kit is located in the education building kitchenette cabinet.
- Clean the injury with soap and water only, and apply a bandage if necessary.
- Frozen sponges are located in the freezer of each classroom.
- Employee Accidents- If an accident or injury occurs while on the job, employees should document the accident on an Employee Accident form. Notify the Nursery Coordinator immediately, and place the form in the Nursery Coordinator's box.

Snacks: Only healthy snacks shall be distributed to children. Popcorn, any type of candy and red drinks are prohibited even when a parent has brought them solely for their child.

- If a child has brought dinner, try to seat them away from others, or see if everyone has a snack to eat at the same time.
- Hot drinks of any kind are prohibited in all downstairs classrooms.
- Snacks are available for those who have none. The snacks are found in the copy room.
- Staff should not eat in the classroom unless all children are eating.
- Avoid bringing unhealthy foods. Make time to eat at home whenever possible.

Age Appropriate Rooms: All children are to be placed in age appropriate rooms, including caregivers' children unless otherwise specified by the Nursery Coordinator. Upon birthdays, children are moved up to the next room until they are three years of age. After age three, we follow the same procedure as area public schools, with the cut off date being September 1st.

- Children should stay in the room that their parent has signed them into unless the Nursery Coordinator or Children's Minister makes an exception.

- NUMC Nursery will abide by the Department of Children and Families' Adult/Child ratios listed below:

<u>Age of Child</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Under 1 year of age	1 caregiver for 4 infants
1 year of age	1 caregiver for 6 children
2 years of age	1 caregiver for 11 children
3 years of age	1 caregiver for 15 children
4 years of age	1 caregiver for 20 children
5 years of age	1 caregiver for 25 children

It is required per Safe Sanctuary policies to ensure that there are always two caregivers in a room. If you find you have exceeded the above ratios, contact the Nursery Coordinator immediately.

Sign In/Out Sheets: It is the caregiver's responsibility to be sure parents sign their children in before leaving them in the nursery's care. The sign in form should be readily available and visible. The form should be dated, with caregiver's names listed. It is equally important that the parent sign the children out before they are released. If the parent does not sign their child in or out, write in the child's name, the time, and your initials followed by the word "Staff".

- Blank sign in/out sheets are located in the file folder on the counter in the copy room.
- Make copies if the supply is low.
- Completed forms are stored in the plastic holder on the counter in the copy room. They will be filed at a later date by the Nursery Coordinator.

Child Information Sheets: These should be completed for any child who attends the nursery and contains important information about each child. If at all possible, be sure the form is completed before the child is left in the nursery. These forms are kept in the age appropriate blue notebooks located on top of the nursery employee boxes.

Releasing Children: Do not release a child to anyone other than a parent unless the parent has personally left a written statement, with a particular name listed, and giving permission to do so. Or the parent may verbally tell you, face to face, they may go with a particular person.

- Never except permission to release a child over the phone.
- If you do not know the person, always check the person's photo ID before releasing the child.
- Siblings less than eighteen years of age are not permitted to pick up any children signed into the nursery.

Babysitting Children: Nursery workers should not bring babysitting children to work with them. Likewise, congregation members should not leave their babysitting children in our care. Only the Nursery Coordinator or the Children's Minister will make exceptions.

Health Guidelines: Everyone who attends the nursery, i.e. children and caregivers, should be free of contagious illness. Locate the parent immediately if any of the following is discovered after a child is signed into the nursery:

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Fever over 100 degrees
- Conspicuous or unexplained rash
- Trouble breathing
- Head Lice
- Head injury
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe/constant cough
- Sore throat
- Unexplained pain
- Any unusual sign or symptom of illness

Likewise, if any of these are present in a caregiver, the Nursery Coordinator should be called immediately to find a replacement. For sanitary and safety reasons, shoes are to be worn at all times while nursery is open. This pertains to all indoor and outdoor areas.

Abuse/Neglect: If there is information or a situation that leads you to suspect abuse or neglect, you have a legal and moral responsibility to report to the Department of Children and Families. However, anytime you make a report, these steps should be followed:

1. The caregiver notifies the Nursery Coordinator of all information pertaining to the suspected abuse or neglect.
2. The Nursery Coordinator reports the situation to the Children's Minister.
3. The Children's Minister contacts and explains the situation to the pastor.

NUMC will take all allegations seriously.

Leaving the Building with Children: Anytime you leave the building with children who are in nursery care (going for walks, to the playground, or the volleyball court), follow these steps:

1. Bring the sign in sheet with you.
2. On the nursery door, post a note explaining where you will be located.
3. Count the children before leaving the room and frequently while out of the building. Likewise, count them again once you have returned to the room.
4. Stay together at all times.

Playground Rules: Please keep in mind that the playground equipment is designed for children of preschool age. Therefore, it is important that caregivers ensure proper use of equipment to avoid accidents or breakage of equipment. Items stored in the preschool shed are available for nursery use. The key to open the shed is located in the preschool office. All toys must be put away after use and the shed must be locked. Always report damaged items to the Nursery Coordinator.

- Be sure all gates are closed as soon as you get to the playground. The gate nearest the road should always remain locked.
- Springy toys, tricycles, and cars are to be used by children five years of age and younger.
- Swings are to be used in a back and forth motion only. No side to side or twisting motions are allowed. Children should not push other children on swings.
- Children should go down slides only, on their bottoms with their feet first.
- Never allow a child to climb on the outside of the slide structure or the swings.
- Children must use the door to enter the playhouse.
- Children should not use the wooden sandbox walls as a balance beam.
- Children should not play under the bridge on the slide structure.

Hand Washing: All employees should wash their hands upon entering the nursery. Hands should be washed frequently throughout work hours, including before and after diaper changes, before handling food, after cleaning up messes, after wiping noses, etc. Also, employees must wash their hands after they use the restroom.

Cleaning Procedures:

- Rubber gloves must be worn when changing diapers. Take off gloves after changing a diaper, wash hands, and then a new pair of gloves must be put on before changing another child's diaper. Gloves must also be worn any time you come in contact with bodily fluids, i.e. urine, feces, blood, and vomit.
- Clorox and water solution is stored in each room. If you run out, refill the spray bottle with new solution found in the kitchenette sink. Use the Clorox and water solution on changing tables, toys, tables, mats, and toilets. Keep the solution bottle up high out of the children's reach.
- Changing tables should be sprayed with the Clorox and water solution and wiped with paper towels after each diaper change. Allow the mat to dry before changing another child.
- Clean the tables and sweep the floors as needed.
- Place clean linens on the cribs and mats for each child. No child should be placed on a sheet that another child has laid upon. After using any linen, place it in the laundry basket in the copy room.
- Trash should be taken out at the end of each nursery shift.
- Toys should be returned to the appropriate container and shelves.
- Toy's placed in a child's mouth must be place it in a sink or bucket until the end of the shift. When the children are gone, spray the mouthed toys with the Clorox and water solution and leave them on a table to dry. On Sunday morning, all toys in the room should be sprayed with the Clorox and water solution at the end of the shift.
- Refrigerators must be kept clean and anything placed in them must be labeled. Items left in the refrigerators may be discarded by the Preschool staff.
- Leave the room exactly as you found it. At the end of a shift, it is the caregiver's responsibility to sweep the floors, clean tables, and counters, put away toys, put up chairs, etc. Anytime you arrive at work and find the room disorderly or unfit to use, inform the Nursery Coordinator.

Dress Code: Dress comfortably to interact with children but appropriately for church. We want to present a professional appearance at all times.

- On Sunday mornings caregiver's are not allowed to wear shorts, tank tops or spaghetti strap shirts. Try to dress in a conservative manner.
- No clothing in which undergarments are visible will be allowed.
- Shorts and skirts must extend past your fingertips when standing with arms straight down.
- Long hair should be worn tied back when working with infants.

- Pins, long earrings, or necklaces should not be worn while working with infants.
- Perfumes and colognes must be worn in moderation.
- Smocks are in the snack cabinet if needed.

Scheduling: This is done on a monthly basis. Days and hours vary with no amount guaranteed.

- There is a two hour minimum notice required when you can not work due to illness or emergency. Unless the emergency is substantiated, you may be terminated for not following the two hour notice policy.
- If you are unable to work on Sunday morning first call the Nursery Coordinator. If you are unable to reach the Nursery Coordinator, call the Children's Minister.
- You are responsible to find your own sub when you can not work your scheduled time. Call or leave a note for the Nursery Coordinator about the change in the schedule.
- Excessive absences or unavailability to work may cause for termination.
- You must be 18 years of age to be employed by the NUMC Nursery.
- If no children show up for an event in the thirty minutes after the event is scheduled to begin you may leave.

Breaks: These are not regularly scheduled due to the short hours Nursery is normally open. When working long shifts (four hours or more), caregivers are entitled to a fifteen minute break. Be sure to let the other caregiver know where you will be during your break.

- Do not leave church grounds.
- Always keep in mind the adult/child ratios. At times you may need to ask a supervisor or volunteer to help out when breaks are taken.
- Anytime you are feeling particularly stressed, please ask someone to relieve you for a break, rather than reveal your tension to the children in your care.

Time Cards: Nursery caregivers are expected to arrive for work fifteen minutes prior to the beginning of any event unless otherwise specified by the Nursery Coordinator. All employees are expected to be punctual and consistent in attendance.

- The purpose of arriving fifteen minutes early is to have the room prepared before the children arrive. Gather art supplies, books, sign-in sheets, and cleaning supplies at this time.

- Caregivers are required to clock in and out daily. If you forget to clock in or out, you must write in the time and have it signed by the Nursery Coordinator. Caregivers must sign their names to each time card.
- The Nursery Coordinator will total everyone's time, initial and turn in the time cards to the accounting department every Monday morning by 10:00 a.m.
- A time card manipulation to receive credit for hours not worked will be grounds for dismissal on the first offense.

Payroll: Employees are paid every other Friday by electronic transfer from Administrative Concepts. In order to get paid you must fill out all required paperwork and provide a voided check from your financial institution. NUMC can not pay you for any hours worked until this is done.

Volunteers: The minimum age to volunteer in the nursery is 18. Per Safe Sanctuary Policy, volunteers must be a member and/or in regular worship attendance for at least 3 months prior to volunteering, fill out a volunteer application form, consent to criminal background check, sign a Participation Covenant Statement and complete Safe Sanctuary training. The minimum age to *assist* in the nursery is thirteen. Helpers must also be 1 year out of the Children's Ministry and must be at least 4 years older than the oldest child in the room. Helpers must be approved by the Nursery Coordinator or the Children's Minister. Helpers do not count as volunteers or caregivers. (For further clarification on volunteer requirements, please see the Safe Sanctuary Policies.)

- The nursery employee is in charge of the room. The volunteer is there to assist.
- The nursery employee is to perform all diaper changes.
- The nursery employee is responsible for ensuring that all policies and procedures are followed and practiced by volunteers.
- Nursery employees have the authority to ask any individual to leave the Nursery for the betterment and tranquility of the room.
- The Nursery should not be used as a place of socializing.

Nursery Communication: The right end of the counter located in the copy room of the education building serves as a communication area for the nursery. You will find the following necessary items there:

- In the drawers there are various office supplies, coloring sheets, and various CD's to use on Sunday morning.
- Time cards are hanging on the wall next to the window. If you do not have one hanging up with your name on it, get a new one out of the

drawer under the time clock. Make sure you write your name on it and sign it.

- Blank forms are located in the labeled file folders on the right hand side of the counter. If you notice the supplies are low, please make copies to replenish.
- The bulletin board on the wall contains schedule information, staff memos, and a staff roster for your convenience. Remember that staff phone numbers should not be given out without permission. This board should be checked for announcements each time you come to work.
- The Nursery Coordinator's office is located in Administration Trailer.

Complaints: The proper chain of command must be followed when making a complaint about the nursery department.

- First, speak to the person involved. Be sure to do this away from the children in your care. Direct communication may allow you to work out the problem together.
- If the problem is not solved, go to the Nursery Coordinator. She will evaluate the nature and conditions of the complaint, and may call a conference with both parties, separate or together.
- If you are unhappy with the outcome, or wish not to speak with the Nursery Coordinator, go to the Children's Minister.

Opening Up: Once you are hired, you will receive a key and the alarm code for the Education Building. The key belongs to Navarre United Methodist Church and must be returned before disbursement of your final paycheck should your employment end.

- Open the main door and turn off the alarm. Unlock only the interior doors that you will be using.
- If you find the room disorderly, unclean, or an item broken, leave a note in the Nursery Coordinator's box.
- If there are toys lying on the tables, put them in their designed containers and return them to their proper area. The Preschool staff has sanitized these toys and left them to dry.

Locking up: Caregivers have a responsibility to see that the building is closed up properly.

- Make sure all lights are turned off and interior doors are locked.
- Check to see that the back doors are locked.

- Check up stairs to see that everyone has left. If not, leave on the downstairs hallway light. Do not lock the front doors unless asked to by the remaining group.
- If the building is empty, be sure the front doors are locked and set the alarm.
- Always leave in pairs. Check to see that your co-workers car starts and you drive off at the same time.
- For further clarification on closing procedures, please reference the Nursery Closing Checklist. This document is posted in all nursery rooms and may also be obtained from the Nursery Coordinator.