



RIDGEKIDZ

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

RidgeKidz volunteers are the frontlines of ministry to the kids of our church and community. Through partnership with our staff, we want each volunteer to be empowered and equipped to use the gifts God has given them to serve (Ephesians 4:12). It is our desire for volunteers to connect in relationship with the families, kids and other volunteers of our church. We believe that through the work of the Holy Spirit, volunteers can influence and impact the lives of children to deepen their relationship with God, be inspired to know Jesus and fearlessly change the world.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

RidgeKidz volunteers are:

- Followers of Jesus Christ committed to serving His kingdom in the community.
- Lovers of His people, big and small.
- Show genuine care and concern for each family in our ministry.
- Passionate about the care and safety of all the children entrusted to us.
- Friendly, warm, and welcoming to all families and children.
- Live a lifestyle that is in obedience to the Bible and reflective of the gospel. Remember your lives are a model to the children and families of the Ridge.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

- Arrive 25 minutes before the start of service, stop by the Leader Lounge to get a snack, visit with other volunteers and attend our pre-service huddle.
- Come prepared. Go over your small group content at home and do any prep work before you arrive.
- Attend RidgeKidz Volunteer Leader trainings. These are great times to develop your ministry skills and get to know others serving on the team.
- Clearly communicate your schedule to your coach/staff contact with as much advance notice as possible. We look forward to and rely on your important volunteer role, so please let us know your availability so we can plan accordingly.
- Dress appropriately and modestly when volunteering at RidgeKidz. For example, shirts and tops should cover the waistline when standing, bending, jumping or stretching arms overhead. Provided RidgeKidz shirts are always encouraged.
- When you are serving in the classroom, we want you to be able to focus on serving with no distractions. Therefore, please do not use your cell phone while serving. If you need to text or make a call, please make arrangements so you can step out of the classroom.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Please wear a RidgeKidz T-shirt, your lanyard to ministry activities, check-in tag, and modest pants/shorts/skirt. Please dress in modest, comfortable attire. For example, shirts and tops should cover the waistline when standing, bending, jumping, or stretching arms overhead.

- No short dresses, skirts, or shorts
- No revealing/form-fitting clothes

- No shirts with low necklines or that show midriff

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

TOBACCO USE

Please abstain from using or possessing tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Ridge ministry activities or programs, whether on campus or away. The Ridge Church is a tobacco-free facility.

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, traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any RidgeKidz program or activity.

SEXUALLY-ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Do not engage in any sexually oriented conversations with any child or discuss inappropriate or explicit information about personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program.

SEXUALLY-ORIENTED MATERIALS

Sexually oriented materials (online material, magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) are prohibited on the Ridge property or in the presence of children participating in any ministry program. \

CELL PHONE USE

Children may be lost or hurt without consistent supervision. In order to best care for our kids and to give them the focus and attention they deserve, use of cell phones is not allowed while serving unless in cases of emergency. Cell phones should be silent and out of sight.

SAFETY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

RidgeKidz maintains the highest standards in order to protect both the volunteers and children in our ministry. Anyone who works with children at the Ridge is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the RidgeKidz ministry staff and must follow the RidgeKidz Safety Policies and Guidelines. Any person who may pose a threat to children will be prohibited from working in RidgeKidz. RidgeKidz staff reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who fail to follow the policies and guidelines.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCESS

STEP ONE: SCREENING PROCESS

Volunteers serving with children are required to complete the RidgeKidz Screening Process, which includes:

- Volunteer Application
- Volunteer Interview
- Reference Checks

STEP TWO: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

All adult volunteers working with children must undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children or minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors.

STEP THREE: POLICIES & PROCEDURES + OBSERVATION

Review these policies and sign the Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement, indicating that you have read and understood the material, and agree to comply with our policy requirements. We will also schedule to observe/train in a couple of ministry environments over the course of 2-3 weekends.

STEP FOUR: SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

All adult volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers. To equip you with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behaviors, the Ridge requires all child- serving volunteers to complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training may be completed online and must be renewed every two years.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Reporting Abuse Or Suspicions Of Abuse

The Ridge is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behavior 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 criminal law enforcement.

When in doubt, report.

In general, please inform any staff member IMMEDIATELY if:

- You suspect child abuse of any kind.
- Any situation seems unsafe or needs attention.
- A child is missing, gets hurt, sick or seriously misbehaves.
- You are told of any need or serious prayer requests for families in our ministry.
- Anything out of the ordinary happens while serving.

Please Inform any Coach or Staff IMMEDIATELY if:

- You suspect child abuse of any kind.
- Any situation seems unsafe or needs attention.
- A child is missing, gets hurt, sick or seriously misbehaves.
- You are told of any need or serious prayer requests for families in our ministry.
- Anything out of the ordinary happens while serving.

CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

Upon check-in, every child will receive two nametags, one to go on the child and one to go on the small group roster, and their parents will be given a claim tag. Volunteers must check the parent's claim tag before releasing the child at pick-up.

- If the claim tag is lost, volunteers should send the parent to the Check-In area, where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child can be released. (Have the child stay in the classroom with the volunteer, then the parent can return to pick up the child once they have been cleared).
- In Early Childhood, siblings under 16 aren't allowed to pick up children.
- It is preferable for an adult to perform the check-in and out process; however, the room may assign a responsible student leader lead to oversee this on occasion. Junior leaders (4th/5th grade volunteers) cannot check children in or out.
- All personal belongings (diaper bags, bottles, etc.) need to be labeled with the child's name.
- In order for all children to remain healthy, children who don't meet the Good Health Guidelines will not be admitted into a room.

GOOD HEALTH GUIDELINES

We want to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children and volunteers. In order to do this, we ask that sick children and volunteers stay home until they are well. Children cannot be admitted when any of the following are observed:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Discharge of any kind
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Pink or draining eyes
- Diarrhea
- Excessive coughing
- Questionable rash
- Any communicable disease
- Lice, including eggs or nits

If a child is being treated with an antibiotic, he or she should have received treatment for 24 hours before coming to RidgeKidz.

If a child becomes ill while at church, notify a coach or staff person immediately so that they can notify the parents and help address the situation with any clean-up or by taking the child out of their kids environment.

MEDICATION

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child while serving in ministry programs, including 'over the counter' drugs.

CLASSROOM SAFETY

Only parents or guardians (dropping off children), screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and children are allowed in areas where ministry to children is occurring. All other adults should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a coach, staff member or security team member should be notified immediately.

- No volunteer may be alone with a child at any time. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another volunteer, coach, or staff member must be notified so that the Two Volunteer Rule can be followed.
- There must be at least two unrelated adult volunteers or a combination of three volunteers/staff, one being an adult, in each classroom any time children are present. If the two individuals serving in that room are related to one another, a third unrelated volunteer or staff must be present.
- No piggyback rides or kids sitting on volunteer laps for children three years or older.
- In Early Childhood, staff may open or close rooms when necessary to balance out the ratio of volunteers to children as much as possible.
- If an unusual circumstance occurs and a volunteer finds themselves alone with a single child, take the child to a room occupied by others or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a room to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjacent room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)
- If a volunteer needs to talk with a child alone, have the conversation in the hallway or a highly visible area, and preferably with another leader.
- After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

VOLUNTEER TO CHILD RATIOS

The Ridge is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all ministry programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-child minimum ratios will be observed:

Infants - 2 volunteers per every 4 kids

Walkers - 2 volunteers per every 6 kids

Toddlers/Preschoolers - 2 volunteers per every 10 kids

Elementary - 2 volunteers per every 20 kids

The staff works diligently to keep each room balanced within our workers-to-children ratios. In Preschool, staff members may temporarily open and close rooms when necessary to achieve these optimum ratios.

PLAYGROUND

If applicable, while on the playground, remember to circulate, watch children during play periods, and pay particular attention to 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.

RESTROOM USAGE

- Only adult females may change diapers and must do so on diaper changer stations within plain view of other volunteers.
- Only adult females may take children in Preschool to the restroom unless a parent is taking their own child.
- Some restrooms are KID ONLY restrooms. Adults should only use restrooms specifically available to adults during weekend services or when children are present. DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a bathroom in use by children.

GRADES K-5

If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.

If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

If restroom use is required:

- Only adult female workers will assist children in the restroom unless a parent is assisting their own child.
- When a worker is assisting a child, the door must not be locked and must remain ajar. In general, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based on their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- All students in Kindergarten and 1st grade must be accompanied to the restroom by a female leader. 2nd through 5th grade students may go to KIDS ONLY restrooms alone with permission from their leaders.
- Be aware if a student repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor if it occurs.
- A single staff member or volunteer should never take a lone child to the restroom.

CHILD BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

We want to create a safe and fun-for-everyone church environment. Volunteers play a vital role in helping lead and remind kids of their expectations while attending RidgeKidz.

RIDGEKIDS RULES/EXPECTATIONS

- Respect your leader
- Respect your peers
- Respect the church/facilities

CONSEQUENCES/DISCIPLINE PLAN

- Issue a warning and remind the child of their expectations.
- On the second warning, time-out from activity
- Parent involvement (talk to parent at pick-up; ask coach/staff for help).

DISCIPLINE

Do not use physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children at RidgeKidz. No form of physical discipline is acceptable, including spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior. Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to positive behavior. Do this individually when possible; try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary. For example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.
2. If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others, and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.
 - Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation and a clear explanation of your expectations.
 - “Katie, you didn’t stop hitting Tyler when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.”
3. After a 3rd time, refer to a coach or staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the coach or staff member.

NEVER...

- Never yell at a child.
- Never grab a child.
- Never threaten a child. Always follow through with your word.
- Never hit a child.
- Never confront a parent in front of others.
- Never openly humiliate a child in front of the class.

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in RidgeKidz ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your a coach/staff member. There is no “harmless put-down” where bullying is concerned.

1. First Offense: Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.

2. Second Offense: Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with a staff member and the child's parents. Notify a coach or staff member of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP: be discreet.

3. Third Offense: Send the child to a staff member or pastor or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Parents are invited to observe 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 the RidgeKidz Church volunteer application and screening process.

Parental Contact

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

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Medical Emergencies

In the case of medical emergencies, call 911 immediately. If you are CPR certified and a child is in need of resuscitation, please start CPR. If you do not know CPR and a child stops breathing while in your class, remain calm but yell as loud as you can for someone else to assist.

APPROPRIATE TOUCH

Appropriate physical affection is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy ministry. Physical contact in any form should be above reproach, for the benefit of the child, and never based upon your emotional needs. Our personal behavior must foster trust at all times.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION:

- Meet the child's eye level by bending down or sitting
- Listen to him/her with your eyes as well as your ears
- Pat a child's head, hand, shoulder or back when encouraging him/her
- Side hugs
- Fist bumps

- Handshakes
- High fives
- An arm around the shoulder
- Walking hand in hand with very young children

AVOID THE FOLLOWING INTERACTIONS:

- Never touch a child in anger or disgust.
- Never touch in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Avoid touching a child between the navel and the knees.
- Never touch a child's private parts.
- Never place a child (other than infants/toddlers) in your lap.
- Never carry children piggy-back or on your shoulders.
- Never kiss a child.
- Never place hands beneath a child's clothing to play, rub, or comfort.
- Never tickle, 'roughhouse,' participate in 'horse-play' or wrestle with a child.

Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child, except in cases of necessary restraint for protecting the child, other children or workers.

A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or in the presence of other staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interaction with children should be positive and uplifting. All communication should be encouraging, constructive, and mindful of our mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, do not talk to a child in a way that is or could be construed as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Do not swear in the presence of children. Interaction between children and adults should occur in a location where others can observe what is happening for safety and accountability purposes. At no time should a child and adult (or minor volunteer) disappear behind a closed door or interact in an area that cannot be seen by others.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Only RidgeKidz authorized photographers may take pictures of any child or class (unless it is a parent taking a picture of their own child).