



Valley Community Chapel

"A Christ Centered Community"

**SERVANT
VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK**

Servant Volunteer HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

Section 1—Introduction

Purpose	4
Welcome	4
VCC Mission Statement/Statement of Faith	5
Open Door Policy.....	5
General Volunteer Guidelines	6

Section 2—Orientation

Invitation & Placement	7
Servant Volunteer Position Descriptions	7
Volunteer Files	8
Change of Personal Information	8
Feedback & Review.....	9
Background Checks	9
Equal Employment Opportunity	10
Americans with Disabilities Act.....	10

Section 3—Behavior

Phone Calls	11
Smoking, Drugs & Alcohol	11
Harassment	12
Violent Behavior	13
Confidentiality	13

Section 4—Safety

General Safety Standards & Emergency Procedures.....	14
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Section 5—Children and Youth Policies

Keeping Children Safe & Secure	15
Reporting Complaints, Accidents, or Injuries	16
Discipline.....	16
Illness & Infectious Disease Among Children	17
Allegations of Abuse.....	18

Section 6—Service Environment	
Attendance & Absences	19
Dress Code/Appearance	20
Training and Development	20
Use of Personal Property	20
Personal Use of Church Property	21
Vehicle Use & Driving Records	21
Grievance Procedures	22
Section 7—Ending Your Service	
Resignation	23
Dismissal	23
Exit Interviews	24
Section 8—Forms	
Change of Personal Information	25
Confidentiality Agreement	26
Volunteer’s Handbook Acknowledgment	27

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Section 1: Introduction

PURPOSE

This handbook provides a general overview of procedures and guidelines that Valley Community Chapel has established for its servant volunteers. Please read through it carefully.

The handbook will serve as a guide for you as you begin or continue your service at our church. However, it's obviously not possible to anticipate all situations that could arise in ministry or provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, the church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy or provision, with or without notice, as necessary or appropriate. However, at all times, the church will comply with all applicable laws.

Nothing in this handbook creates a contract of employment. Both traditionally and biblically, churches have long relied on unpaid workers to fulfill their calls to service-not because of reward or remuneration-but out of love and obedience in personal relationship to God. Of course, different ministry roles require different skills and personality types, and neither the church nor the servant can always predict whether things will be a good fit. Our Equipping Ministry is intended to help the people in our congregation identify their God-given spiritual gifts and then help each person find their niche in one of our ministries. And while we hope that your service is both long-term and rewarding, either you or the church can terminate this relationship at any time.

Finally, it's important that you read and understand the contents of this handbook. If you have any questions or need additional information, please talk with your designated ministry supervisor. If your supervisor doesn't know the answers, he or she will find the answers and get back to you in a timely manner.

WELCOME

Welcome to our servant volunteer team at Valley Community Chapel. We are excited about your desire to serve God with your gifts and skills, and we look forward to your service in one of our many ministries.

At VCC, we sincerely believe that God equips all believers to serve in ministry. In 1 Peter 2:9, God calls his followers "a royal priesthood"; 1 Corinthians 12:1 says that "God gives [spiritual gifts] to *each one*, just as he determines." We sometimes use the term "volunteers" as a convenient way of referring to those who serve, but what we're really talking about is people who lovingly respond to Jesus' call to serve in His body - the church. For purposes of this handbook, we interchangeably use the terms "volunteer" and "servant volunteer."

It's important to keep in mind that during your service at Valley Community Chapel, you're representing both our congregation and the Lord as you live out every aspect of your life. As

you minister to others here, as well as in your private life away from church, you should be striving toward living in a way that serves as an example to others of your own deepening relationship with God.

VCC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Valley Community Chapel is to draw people to Jesus Christ, disciple them in God's Word, and deploy them to serve Christ. The result is that our church is Christ-centered, inwardly strong and outwardly focused.

Our Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE

. . . the Bible is God's inspired Word, without error in its original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the believer's final authority for Christian faith and living.

. . . In One God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

. . . Jesus Christ is the Son of God who is co-equal with God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin. He died on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God, and is coming again.

. . . People are made in the image of God and are designed by God to know Him and be like Him. However, each person has marred that image and is lost and separated from God because of Sin

. . . The only way to God is by accepting Jesus as personal Savior.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

As one of our valued servant volunteers, we want to encourage you to provide input and suggestions concerning the ministry area in which you are or will be serving. Your input and suggestions will likely receive the timeliest attention and action if you initially bring your comments to the individual you report to—your ministry supervisor. However, if for some reason that results in inaction or you don't receive an adequate response, you should make an appointment with the Equipping Ministry Director to discuss your concern or suggestion. If you still are unsatisfied, please feel free at this point to approach either a pastoral staff member or an elder to discuss your situation.

This open door policy is important to increasing the quality of our ministries, as well as for correcting problems that may exist in processes or relationships within a ministry. We hope that you will feel a sense of freedom to voice any comments or concerns without fear of retribution or reprisal. We know it can seem difficult to initiate such conversations, but Jesus told us directly (see, for example, Matthew 18:15) that we should take the initiative to resolve such things.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

As a volunteer serving Valley Community Chapel and reaching out to those beyond the church, you agree to be “above reproach” so that the world will see, hear, and respond to the grace of Jesus Christ; and you agree to seek a careful, exemplary Christian lifestyle to encourage other believers and strengthen the church.

You desire and agree that the following statements describe your character as a Christian who desires to serve others:

1. *I have made a commitment to Jesus Christ as my Lord.*
2. *I will serve in harmony with the policies and statement of faith of our church.*
3. *I support the church with my time, money, and loyalty, including participating in the ministries and worship services on a regular basis.*
4. *I am pursuing a dedicated Christian life, according to the standards of God's Word, and I purpose to put any sin out of my life so that my influence to others might be helpful and not a hindrance (Romans 14; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1).*
5. *I am committed to unity, church teamwork, and biblical respect for church leadership (Philippians 2:1-4; Hebrews 13:7, 17).*
6. *I recognize, accept, and hold in highest regard the biblical instruction concerning family and marriage responsibility (Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:18-24; 1 Peter 3:1-7).*
7. *I will not use my volunteer ministry position to further my own interests.*
8. *I will respect the privacy of the people I serve, and hold in confidence information obtained in the course of my service.*
9. *I will also respect the privacy of fellow workers, leaders of various ministries within the church, and the church itself.*
10. *I, upon completion of my service, will continue to respect the privacy of and maintain confidentiality about those I ministered to, fellow workers, and the church.*
11. *I will not exploit the trust of those I serve, my fellow workers, or my supervisors.*
12. *I will not engage in or condone any form of harassment or discrimination.*
13. *I will extend respect, courtesy, and cooperation to my fellow workers, my supervisor, and to the leadership of the church.*
14. *If I know that a fellow worker has violated biblical standards, I will follow the biblical principle of bringing this directly to that person's attention (Matt. 18:15). If this fails to change his or her behavior, I will take the next step and ask one or two others to confront the person with me. If this also fails, I will discretely bring the violation to the attention of a pastoral staff member or an Elder.*
15. *I will accurately represent my training, experience, skills, competencies, and gifts as they relate to filling a ministry position.*
16. *I have total commitment to provide excellent ministry wherever God calls me to serve.*
17. *I will continually assess my own personal strengths, limitations, biases, and effectiveness.*
18. *I will seek assistance for any problem that impairs my ability to serve in this ministry.*

Section 2: ORIENTATION

INVITATION AND PLACEMENT

If you consider Valley Community Chapel your church home, we invite you to participate in some area of volunteer ministry. Our Equipping Ministry is designed to provide the resources you need to uncover and understand your spiritual gifts and to help you find your God-designed niche in the body of Christ.

VCC generally follows these guidelines when it comes to placing volunteers in ministries and programs of the church.

- Potential volunteers will regularly attend VCC services for at least three months before they can serve in a ministry. In some cases, as determined by ministry or program leaders, potential volunteers may serve *with* an already approved volunteer leader.
- All potential volunteers will complete an *Application to Serve in Ministry*. You can obtain one from any ministry leader or the church office.
- Potential volunteers will have an informal interview with an Equipping Ministry leader, who will seek to place that volunteer in a ministry position that matches that person's gifts and talents. Our desire is to place people in ministry positions that they will find meaningful and that will enrich their walk with the Lord.
- Potential volunteers who desire to work with children and youth will be required to undergo a background check. All information related to background checks will be held in strictest confidence.
- Potential volunteers should be willing to attend all training opportunities offered by the church.

SERVANT VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Valley Community Chapel uses position descriptions so that both servant volunteers and the church know what is mutually expected. A position description summarizes your duties and responsibilities and gives you important information about your area of service.

If you are still in the process of discovering your spiritual gifts and identifying in what area of ministry you belong, please be sure to make an appointment with the church office. You will then have an opportunity to look through a catalog of all the servant volunteer positions we currently have identified within our church. You will also be able to ask questions about our various ministries and find a servant volunteer position that is right for you. Once you have identified your area of service, you will receive your ministry position description. Please read and study it carefully and discuss it with your supervisor if you have any questions.

SERVANT VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS CONT.

Please note that the church reserves the right to revise and update your position description from time to time, as it deems necessary and appropriate. Of course, if you're currently in a position, you'll certainly be informed about any changes. In addition, your supervisor may ask you to help evaluate revisions and improvements to your servant volunteer position.

VOLUNTEER FILES

Valley Community Chapel does keep files on servant volunteers. Your file is considered to be confidential information and only your immediate supervisor, the Equipping Ministry leader, and the senior pastor of the church have access to your file.

Even that access is limited—only on a need-to-know basis. Of course, you may request to view your own file at any time.

Volunteer files typically contain the following types of personal information:

- Application to Serve in Ministry.
- Spiritual gifts testing and results.
- Copies of any related training certificates.
- Servant Volunteer Position Description.
- Letters and other records of affirmation/appreciation.
- Documentation required by local, state, federal, and/or private regulatory agencies, including items such as background checks (such as for volunteers who work with children or youth).

CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

It's important that the church has up-to-date, complete, and accurate information on each person who serves in our ministry. Please notify your supervisor and the church office immediately if there is a change involving your name, address, phone number, marital status, etc. See the back of this handbook for a form you can use to submit any changes.

Keeping your personal information updated serves several purposes. In a most practical sense, it allows the church and/or your supervisor to contact you to notify or remind you of meetings and to let you know about changes in schedules. It also allows other workers to contact you if they are ill or injured and need to find a substitute to temporarily fill their ministry position.

FEEDBACK AND REVIEW

We believe that open communication is important. Whether it is encouragement, support, or suggestions for improvement, we want to be sure you know how you're doing. That's why we encourage ongoing discussion between you and your ministry supervisor. (Remember our Open Door policy.)

In addition, your supervisor may schedule a formal review time with you once or twice a year. Unlike a job performance review, a review for a servant volunteer position is intended to provide support for you; to determine if you're serving in the right ministry position; to improve your performance by providing meaningful, constructive feedback; and to assist in your development and fulfillment of personal goals for growth.

This review process will help determine if the servant volunteer position continues to fit into the overall ministry plan of Valley Community Chapel. It also helps the church make important decisions about creating additional volunteer and staff positions and about providing training and development opportunities.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Volunteers at Valley Community Chapel who work with children and youth must submit to a background check. The primary type of background check includes a U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database search and a Social Security number search.

A U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database check searches electronic criminal files and record databases of government agencies, including sexual offenders' registries. Manual records of some records may also be needed in states or counties that don't keep electronic records.

A Social Security number search verifies an individual's name, state, and last three addresses; this prevents people from providing false identification.

Other screening procedures by the church might include a motor vehicle report or a local police record check.

The results of all screening procedures are kept in strictest confidence. Most of these procedures include certain rights for you as a volunteer, such as disclosure of the results.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

VCC is committed to equip volunteers for all levels of ministry according to their skills, abilities, talents, experiences, and spiritual gifts. Our church follows the guidelines established by federal Equal Employment Opportunity laws. We treat all volunteers equally without regard to race, color, gender, national origin, veteran status, or mental or physical disability.

This is important even if you have no concerns about your own opportunities, because as a volunteer you need to remain alert to avoid words or actions that could be seen as racially, sexually, ethnically, or disability based. All workers are entitled to be treated with respect, and the church won't tolerate disrespect for personal dignity.

This policy isn't simply motivated by legal or policy guidelines. The Bible says that every Christian can do ministry in some way! Each person has important work to do in the church, regardless of age, gender, or any other perceived "difference." Consider these verses:

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

"If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." Romans 12:7-8

Process: If at any time you have suggestions, questions, concerns, problems, or complaints about this policy, you're invited to speak to any pastoral staff member or Elder. You may want to submit your query in writing to ensure that you receive an answer and so that concerns and complaints can be investigated thoroughly. Each query will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and in a confidential manner.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Valley Community Chapel encourages and wholeheartedly accepts people with disabilities to serve in volunteer positions. The church works to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) by taking the following actions:

- Considering all individuals with disabilities for ministry service using the same criteria that are used for volunteers without disabilities.
- Considering volunteers with disabilities for supervisory roles using the same criteria that are used for individuals without disabilities.
- Taking steps to make church facilities barrier-free and accessible according to appropriate state and federal statutes.
- Making scheduling and other adjustments to reasonably accommodate volunteers with disabilities.
- Educating other volunteers that individuals with disabilities who serve as volunteers in the church should not be discriminated against.

Section 3: BEHAVIOR

PHONE CALLS

Personal use of the telephone may not be a big issue if your ministry position only requires an hour or two of service at one time. However, if your position calls for longer hours, using the phone might become more of a concern.

Generally, volunteers are discouraged from making personal calls on church telephones, except in the case of emergency.

The same guideline holds for calls on your own cell phone. If possible, look at your volunteer time of ministry as a sacrifice—you're essentially forsaking your own time and immediate concerns to serve others. In many ways this is a stronger commitment of your time than you would give an employer. Make every attempt to give those you're serving your full attention.

Like many items in this handbook, the goal here isn't to establish a lot of rules you have to follow; rather, these guidelines are to remind you of areas where you could be distracted from your primary goal: to minister to others out of love and obedience to God.

SMOKING

For the health of all who attend or visit Valley Community Chapel, the entire facility is considered a smoke-free environment. No smoking is allowed inside the building or anywhere on church property.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

It would seem to be common sense that a church environment is not the place for any kind of consumption of alcohol or controlled substances. So why do we need a policy?

The goal of Valley Community Chapel's guideline regarding drugs and alcohol is to protect and help both the volunteer and the individuals the volunteer serves. Of course, this general guideline can't cover every possible circumstance.

All cases involving alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or related problems will be handled discretely and confidentially.

1. All volunteers are unequivocally prohibited from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using controlled substances. Any volunteer violating this guideline is subject to discipline, including termination.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL CONT.

2. Alcohol abuse is equally serious in nature because of the danger it can pose to both the drinker and to others. Thus, any volunteer who is convicted of driving while intoxicated/driving under the influence (DWI/DUI) or of violating a criminal drug statute must inform the church within five days. The church may take various actions after such a conviction, depending on the nature of the volunteer's ministry, and the individual's desire to battle and overcome the drug or alcohol problem.
3. While moderate consumption of alcohol might not seem to be a problem, it is not allowed on church grounds at any time.

HARASSMENT

Valley Community Chapel is committed to providing an environment free of violence or harassment, including sexual harassment or harassment based on factors such as race, physical or mental disability, age, and gender. We disapprove of any such harassment and will not tolerate it on the part of staff, volunteers, children, or youth in ministry programs.

Definition

Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct that creates an offensive or hostile environment. Such conduct constitutes harassment when:

1. Submission to the conduct is a stated or implied condition for ministry involvement.
2. The harassment interferes with work or volunteer performance or creates an offensive, intimidating work environment.
3. Threatening reprisals result after a negative response to sexual advances.

Prohibited unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal conduct such as derogatory jokes, comments, or slurs.
2. Visual conduct such as derogatory and or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures.
3. Physical conduct such as assault, sexual advances, or unwanted touching.
4. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests.
5. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Process

If at any time you feel harassed at church or at a church-sponsored event, report the incident in writing immediately to a Pastor or an Elder. Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner. You will be informed of the outcome.

Discipline

If the investigation establishes harassment, the violator of this policy will be disciplined. Discipline can range from verbal or written warnings, a meeting with a pastor and a board member, or termination, depending upon the circumstances.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Valley Community Chapel has zero tolerance for violence. This includes even talking or joking about violence. If a volunteer threatens or displays violence, he or she will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including verbal or written warnings, a meeting with a pastor or Elder, or termination, depending upon the circumstances. In addition, the volunteer may be subject to criminal proceedings, as appropriate.

Definition

What is violence? Like many other areas, there's no way to anticipate every possible situation concerning violence. However, it generally includes physically or verbally harming another, including things like pushing, shoving, coercion, or intimidation. The church reserves the right to broaden this definition based on actual incidents or additional information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy when it comes to the history, records, and conversations about the people Valley Community Chapel serves.

The best advice regarding the release of information about the people you serve is *don't!* This is true whether you're simply talking to a friend or family member or to a member of the news media. If anyone requests information from you, your wisest answer is, "*Church policy doesn't allow me to give out that information.*" If someone continues to question you for information, suggest that he or she talk to your supervisor or inquire at the church office.

Volunteers agree not to discuss any individual's circumstances or records with unauthorized individuals, whether you're in the process of serving or not. You may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that you agree to and understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality about the individuals the church serves. This form is found in Section 7 of this handbook.

Section 4: SAFETY

GENERAL SAFETY STANDARDS & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Valley Community Chapel strives to ensure an environment where members and visitors of all ages feel safe and secure. Just as the employees in a place of business are on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of customers, the volunteers of the church serve on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of those to whom we minister.

General Guidelines

In general, as a volunteer, you should strive to:

- Serve using good and common-sense safety practices.
- Refrain from unsafe acts that might endanger yourself, the people you serve, or those who minister with you.
- Use any safety devices provided for your protection; for example, use safety belts in church vehicles or rubber gloves when changing diapers in the nursery.
- Report any unsafe situations or acts immediately to your supervisor.

In addition, please note the safety procedures in the following specific areas.

Fire Prevention

- Turn off electrical equipment when not in use.
- Notify your supervisor of any equipment that has cracked or exposed wiring, is causing a shock or emitting sparks, or appears to be a potential fire hazard.

Fire Emergency

- Familiarize yourself with the locations of fire exits, alarms, and extinguishers in the areas of the church where you regularly serve.
- If you see smoke or fire, pull the fire alarm to alert people in the building. If it's a small fire, use a nearby fire extinguisher.
- If evacuation is called for, use the closest unaffected exit. Guide the group you're working with to walk in single file and to proceed quickly and calmly. Do not run.
- If you and your group encounter smoke, stay low.
- Move as far away from the building as possible for your safety and make room for emergency vehicles.

First Aid

First-aid supplies are located in many areas of the church building. Volunteers should become familiar with these locations.

Section 5:CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICIES

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND SECURE

At Valley Community Chapel, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. Our safety guidelines are intended to provide a secure and nurturing environment where children can come to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. These guidelines are designed to protect each child (and each adult volunteer) involved in children and youth ministries.

Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children must agree to follow these guidelines. They represent minimum requirements. Leaders of individual programs may develop additional guidelines as appropriate to the ministry setting.

Background Checks

All applicants to children's and youth ministry must agree to undergo a background check. The Director of Children's Ministries, after conducting the required checks, will approve all servant volunteers in children and youth ministry. Volunteers will be interviewed and will be provided with the necessary training.

Security Policies

Drop-off—Children should never be dropped off in a classroom without a teacher present. This is the responsibility of parents. However, teachers should be present in the class at least 10 minutes prior to the start of class time.

Registration and Sign-In—All children and youth in our programs should have a completed registration form on file. It is the teacher's responsibility to identify new students and have them or their parents complete this form. Programs for nursery through fourth grade will provide a sign-in sheet. Parents need to sign their children in to class when they drop them off. Teachers should remind parents to do this each week.

Pick-Up—Parents of children in nursery through sixth grade should pick up their children at their classrooms. Teachers should not leave their classroom until all children have been picked up by a parent or approved guardian. Children in seventh grade and above will be released on their own unless parents inform teachers otherwise.

Open Access—Doors and/or window coverings should be open whenever possible to allow for easy viewing of the classroom. Supervisory staff will routinely check on classrooms. Parents are also welcome to check on their children's classes, but should try to do so in a discrete way so the flow of the class isn't disrupted.

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SECURITY POLICIES cont.

Restroom Visits— Encourage parents to take their children to the restroom before class. If necessary, volunteers may take children to the restroom. The preferable method is to take children to the restroom in groups; or have an adult and a junior helper accompany a child to the restroom. (Never leave a class unattended.) Assist children in the restroom only if they ask. If it is necessary for only one adult to escort one child to the restroom, you should stand near the bathroom door with the door ajar (be aware of the child's privacy also).

Please note: Never be alone with a child in the stall of a restroom with the door closed.

REPORTING COMPLAINTS, ACCIDENTS OR INJURY

Complaints

If a student or parent makes a complaint regarding a teacher or a volunteer, the Director of Children's Ministries will review the incident and discuss it with the servant volunteer involved. Parents will be notified of any actions (such as additional training, leave of absence, or termination) that result from the complaint.

If a servant volunteer is concerned about an incident that occurs while they are on duty, they should report it in writing to the Director of Children's Ministries. This will serve as a tool for further discussion/training as well as a record of the occurrence.

Accidents or Injury

If an accident or injury occurs while you are serving as a volunteer, please complete an Accident/Injury Report as soon as possible after the incident. You can obtain this form from your Supervisor or from the church office.

DISCIPLINE

The goal of VCC's children and youth ministries is to foster a sense of both learning and enjoyment. Often, discipline can be handled by redirecting the child or teenager to a more constructive use of time and energy. Being prepared and keeping the learning environment active will usually eliminate the need for a lot of discipline.

However, children and teenagers must also understand that sometimes it is necessary to sit quietly and listen to lessons, instructions for an activity, etc. Part of the learning process is to disciple children in how to behave in a group environment. Remember, the word "discipline" comes from the term "to disciple", which means "to train by instruction or example".

When "discipline" is necessary, all interaction will carefully consider a child or teenager's integrity and vulnerability. All children will be treated with gentleness, respect, and understanding. Physical punishment will never be used. Further training on VCC's specific suggestions for discipline will be provided by your ministry supervisor.

If the classroom teachers and assistants are unable to control a child or teenager after repeated attempts, the child can be taken to talk with the Director of Children's Ministries. The director will discuss the incident with the child. Parents will be brought into the situation if needed.

If a child uses extreme foul language, injures other children, or does anything to affect another child in a negative way, the Children's Ministry Director must be notified in writing. The incident will be discussed with the child and, possibly, the parent. The Director of Children's Ministries will decide if the child will be allowed back into class or if further action should be taken.

ILLNESS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE AMONG CHILDREN

As representatives of Christ, we commit ourselves to obey Jesus' command to love all persons and welcome all persons into the church. However, we also need to take reasonable care not to jeopardize the health of others. In order to try to protect individuals from infectious diseases, Valley Community Chapel follows the following guidelines.

Definition

A communicable disease will be defined as an illness, a departure from health; a particular destructive process in an organism, with a specific cause and characteristic symptoms that may be transmitted to others with the threat of jeopardy to their health. This may range from a common cold to the HIV/AIDS virus.

Policy and Procedure

Parents of all children who attend the services will be asked to keep their children at home if they have any contagious illness. No child will be allowed into the nursery or other children's program when he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Acute cold, Fever, Sneezing, Coughing, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Sore throat, Earache, Runny nose, Red or discharging eyes, Skin rash, Chills

In addition, anyone who has a known communicable disease won't be admitted into activities, programs, or child care where the disease could be communicated to others who aren't infected. If a child is admitted to the nursery or children's programs and is later determined to be ill, the parent will be notified to take the child out of the nursery or children's program until the child is well.

Children who test positive for HIV and who are toilet trained are welcome to attend Sunday school and all church functions, and are encouraged to participate fully. HIV-positive children who lack control over bodily functions, who have open sores or cuts, or who display behavior such as biting, may be screened and temporarily excluded.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

An accusation of child abuse can occur in any church, no matter how many precautions it takes. We must always be prepared to listen to and hear any allegation of abuse.

Like many guidelines listed in the handbook, we can't anticipate every possible situation. Here are some basic guidelines.

Church Response

Generally, the church will be guided by the following when an allegation of abuse occurs:

- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously.
- Situations will be handled immediately, yet with due respect to people's confidentiality and privacy.
- The Director of Children's Ministries will involve a Pastor and at least one member of the church's Board of Directors. Subsequent meetings with the parties involved will determine further action.
- Full cooperation will be given to law enforcement authorities.
- The alleged abuser will not be considered "guilty" or treated as such until an investigation can take place.

Church Procedures

Precautions the church will take include:

- All volunteers working with children will have a background check and a Servant Volunteer Handbook provided to them.
- Completed application forms and records of background checks and screening procedures should be kept for five years after a volunteer completes his time of service.
- If media becomes involved during an investigation of alleged abuse, the church will appoint a spokesperson to respond, and advise all church members to not respond on their own.
- The church will be prepared to show the precautions it takes with every volunteer who ministers in areas where abuse could occur.
- No one should engage in denial, minimization, or blame.
- Church leaders should not accuse the victim or detail the event to those not involved with the incident.
- Those involved in investigating the incident should thoroughly document each step.
- If the accused is a volunteer, the church will relieve him or her of duties until the incident is resolved.

Section 6: SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES

Because you're a volunteer rather than an employee at Valley Community Chapel, attendance may seem like a sticky issue to discuss. If you simply don't show up to fulfill the ministry service you've agreed to, the church can't really "fire" you because you don't work for pay.

However, we need reliable people to fulfill the ministries and programs of the church—the people we serve are depending on us. If you have excessive absences beyond the scope of this guideline, you may be relieved of your volunteer duties. See Section 6 of the handbook for more details about termination and resignation. We expect no less commitment from our unpaid workers than our paid workers.

So attendance—whether it's for training meetings, fellowship times with ministry team members, or during your scheduled time of serving—is a commitment you must make, and then take seriously. Again, the people you serve are depending on you.

If You Can't Make Your Shift

Some absences will likely be necessary. You may get ill, injured, or may be called out of town for business or personal reasons. If you know in advance that you won't be able to serve during a time you're scheduled, or that you can't attend a scheduled meeting, be sure to inform your supervisor. Additionally, ask for a list of other approved volunteers who might be able to substitute for you if you don't already have such a list. Then make an effort to find your own substitute or to "trade" scheduled service times with another volunteer. *Finding a replacement is primarily your responsibility, not your supervisor's.*

If your absence is caused by an emergency, inform your supervisor. You should still make an effort to search for a replacement, but under some circumstances, you may not be able to accomplish this.

Ongoing Absences

If your supervisor notices a pattern of absences, he or she may follow up to see if something besides illness seems to be the real reason you're not able to serve. Don't consider this a confrontation. Your supervisor—and all the leadership of the church—has two concerns. One is for the people who may be left out if you're unable to serve. The other is for you. Perhaps you're not in a place of ministry that "fits" you. If this is the case, your supervisor can work to plug you into a place of serving that better matches your gifts and skills.

In fact, this is an area where you should be proactive. Rather than avoiding a ministry task that you feel uncomfortable performing, go to your supervisor and ask about other needs in the church. There are bound to be plenty of other places to serve, and there's bound to be one that fits you.

DRESS CODE/APPEARANCE

As a representative of the church and God, volunteers should exhibit a neat and well-groomed appearance. Valley Community Chapel strongly encourages you to avoid radical departure from conventional dress or personal grooming. Examples include: immodestly short dresses or skirts, tank tops that reveal undergarments, short shorts, heavy-metal jewelry, exposed tattoos or body piercings, etc.

Of course, guidelines of this type are very subjective. However, the church generally expects you to take pride in your appearance and to strive to project a discreet, modest, and positive image when representing the church and the Lord.

One biblical guideline to follow is 1 Corinthians 10:23-24: *" 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others."*

If your supervisor determines that the average church attendee might find your presentation inappropriate, or feels that your clothing might be a distraction for yourself, co-workers, or those you're serving, you may be asked to wear more appropriate clothing the next time you serve in your ministry position. In some instances, you may be asked to go home to change.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Valley Community Chapel desires that volunteers be equipped to fulfill the duties described in their ministry position descriptions. Each ministry is responsible for providing you with adequate training to perform the servant volunteer position you have chosen. It is your responsibility to attend any team meetings offered by your department, as well as read any materials provided to you. You are also invited to recommend any resources you have discovered for additional training and education.

In addition to in-house training and personal learning, there may be opportunities for further development from outside sources. If you're interested in attending a conference related to your area of ministry, discuss it with your supervisor. Your supervisor (along with guidance from the pastoral staff) will determine the value of the conference and how much of the cost the church can cover. Outside training sponsored by the church will be subject to available funds.

USE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

In church service, it's not uncommon to use personal belongings to supplement the supplies you use to fulfill your ministry. For example, you might bring items to decorate ministry spaces such as classrooms and common areas. Please make sure that all such items are prominently marked to prove your ownership.

While your work as a volunteer may require that you use personal property in your area of ministry, we suggest that you not bring large sums of money, jewelry, or other valuables with you during your times of service. The church cannot be responsible for personal property that is stolen, lost, damaged, or destroyed.

If you find personal belongings that another person has lost on church property, please turn them in to your supervisor or to the church office. Unless an item seems to have great monetary value, all lost items not claimed within approximately 30 days will be disposed. Items of value may be donated to a local charitable organization.

PERSONAL USE OF CHURCH PROPERTY

While it's very likely that you'll be using church property, supplies, materials, etc., during your volunteer ministry, it's wise to take care not to use these items for your personal use. Why? After all, for example, does it really hurt to make a few photocopies? Most of us don't realize that if everyone in the church makes just a few copies each week, the expense for paper, toner, and service calls on the photocopier can easily add up fast.

The same is true of other items around the church. It's easy to think that if you're a faithful financial giver to the ministry of the church it won't hurt to consume these items for personal use. But this practice can lead to poor stewardship both on the part of the volunteer and for the church. Instead, carefully walk that fine line between ministry use and personal use.

VEHICLE USE AND DRIVING RECORDS

This policy affects any individual who may use a personal vehicle while conducting church business or ministry. In general, if you will be driving your car while conducting requested church business, the following information needs to be on file in the church office:

- A copy of your current driver's license number and your current automobile insurance.

If you will be driving other people in your vehicle as part of your ministry service, we will also need the following:

- A record check with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

All information about the driving records of volunteers will be kept confidential. It is your responsibility to keep your information up-to-date, including reporting to your supervisor any moving violations or changes in driving status within five days of the violation or change.

Safe driving practices, speed limits, and other driving laws must be observed at all times. The church isn't responsible for fines incurred by volunteers while driving a church vehicle or a personal vehicle while on church business. Volunteers must report accidents, no matter how minor, to the police before leaving the scene of the accident.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

While we hope that every ministry experience is a positive one, we also recognize that volunteers may become dissatisfied. This can occur because of strained relationships with fellow volunteers, your relationship with your supervisor, disagreement with the church's practices and policies, or other conditions related to your ministry.

The church encourages you to work toward quick resolution of these kinds of situations, which usually don't go away with time. In fact, these kinds of difficulties typically get worse, eventually deteriorating to a degree where you might feel that your only option is to resign.

The following steps are based on Matthew 18:15-16:

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." —Matthew 18:15-16, NIV

Grievance Process

- With an attitude of love and care, speak directly to the person who has offended you. Try to explain the facts as well as your feelings about the situation in a calm manner that is free from accusation or blame. Often, you can diffuse the situation and clear up conflicts during this step because you communicate to the other party that you truly desire to work out the situation.
- However, if the other person doesn't agree regarding the offense, or you can't work out your differences privately, bring the matter to your supervisor's attention. Make sure the supervisor understands that the problem is affecting your service. If you haven't already put the matter in writing, be sure that your supervisor does so. The supervisor should arrange a meeting between you and the other party.
- If you don't feel satisfied with the answers that your supervisor provides (or if you feel uncomfortable discussing the problem with your supervisor, for example, because the problem is *with* your supervisor) you can approach another church leader—perhaps a pastoral staff member or elder—to accompany you to discuss the problem with the other party involved.

Section 7: ENDING YOUR SERVICE

RESIGNATION

Volunteers who desire to leave their ministry positions should attempt to give at least two weeks notice (preferably both verbally and in writing) of their intent to resign. This allows supervisors time to recruit new volunteers to fill vacant positions.

If you are experiencing some dissatisfaction or discontentment in your ministry position that is leading you to resign, be sure to discuss your concerns with your supervisor. Ideally, talk with your supervisor before circumstances reach the point that you feel that resigning is your only option. Your supervisor may be able to change conditions in the ministry or program you're serving in, rearrange ministry teams so you're not forced to serve with a difficult co-worker, or work with you to change your ministry position description to make the duties more enjoyable.

If you're convinced that changes in your current position won't help, perhaps an entirely different position would be better suited to your gifts, abilities, and passions. Before you give up on volunteer ministry, be sure to give it another chance. Finding the right fit in ministry can bring you a great sense of personal satisfaction, and it can be very fulfilling and rewarding to fulfill the purpose for which God created and gifted you.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal from a volunteer ministry position is a rare occurrence. If a supervisor believes a volunteer isn't fulfilling the duties of a position, the first step will always be to discuss the situation with the volunteer. A variety of solutions may be available, including additional training, changing positions within a ministry, or even changing ministries. However, if a volunteer commits a serious offense, dismissal from service - either for a period of time, or permanently, may be the only option.

Out of a spirit of Christ-centered love for all people, including those who volunteer at the church, the church wants to help those who are struggling with problems and who express a sincere desire to change. This may involve taking a break from volunteer duties while receiving pastoral counseling or even seeking outside help. The pastoral and elder staff are willing to work with our servant volunteers to restore each one to a right position with God and with the church.

Some offenses may warrant dismissal from ministry, particularly if the volunteer doesn't express remorse or a willingness to change. These include but are not limited to:

- Theft: Including the removal of church property or the property of another individual from church facilities without prior authorization.

DISMISSAL CONT.

- Drugs/Alcohol: Possession, use, sale, purchase, or distribution on church property of alcohol or any illegal drugs or illegally possessed drugs. Also: reporting to serve in a ministry or program after having ingested alcohol or illegal drugs or illegally possessed drugs, in a condition that adversely affects the volunteer's ability to safely and effectively perform his or her job functions, or which would imperil the safety of others. (See Section 3 for specific guidelines concerning drug and alcohol abuse.)
- Sexual misconduct.
- Falsifying or altering church records.
- Sabotaging or willfully damaging church equipment or the property of others.
- Insubordination involving defaming, assaulting, or threatening to assault a supervisor.
- Fighting or provoking a fight on church premises.
- Carrying concealed weapons on church property.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Valley Community Chapel is committed to helping every Christian find, and be equipped for, the ministry for which God called them. So if you decide to leave an area of ministry, we strongly desire to evaluate the circumstances surrounding why you're ending your term of service, whether the separation is voluntary or involuntary. Exploring your reasons for resigning or the factors resulting in termination enables us to evaluate how that ministry area can be improved to make volunteer service more satisfactory.

Guidelines

Your immediate supervisor will conduct an exit interview in a private area near the end of your term of service. If you prefer, the exit interview can be conducted by another church leader or a member of the pastoral staff.

Information you share will be kept in confidence by the church; nothing will be included in the record that identifies you personally.

In conducting an exit interview, the supervisor of your ministry area will use an exit interview checklist to provide structure for the discussion. Some of the items that may be discussed include:

- The reasons for the separation.
- Updating your contact information.
- Equipment/key return.
- Your interest in serving in another area of ministry.
- Your suggestions and comments to improve the area of ministry you're leaving.

Section 8: FORMS

Any forms mentioned in this handbook can be obtained by contacting either your ministry leader or the church office.

For your convenience, a *Change of Personal Information* slip is included on the bottom of this page. If your information needs to be updated, simply tear out that portion of the page and turn it in to the office.

When you apply to serve in ministry here at VCC, you will be asked to sign a copy of a Confidentiality Agreement and a Handbook Acknowledgement. A copy of these forms is shown on the following two pages for your reference.

Change of Personal Information

Name: _____
(Please use name currently on volunteer records)

Effective date of change(s): _____ Ministry: _____

New name: _____
(Please Print)

New address: _____

New phone number: _____ New email address: _____

Other:

FORMS cont.

Confidentiality Agreement

I agree to respect the privacy of the people Valley Community Chapel serves, and I agree to hold in confidence any information I obtain in the course of service, whether I obtain that information through written records or daily interaction with an individual. I agree not to disclose an individual's confidences to anyone, except in the following circumstances:

- (1) As mandated by law.
- (2) To prevent a clear and immediate danger to individuals.
- (3) Where I am compelled to do so by a court or pursuant to the rules of a court.

I agree to abide by the church's policies to store or dispose of records in ways that maintain confidentiality.

I agree to uphold confidentiality toward the people the church serves, colleagues, applicants, and any sensitive situations arising within the church.

I also agree that when my term of volunteer service ends, to maintain client and co-worker confidentiality, to continue holding in confidence any information about sensitive situations within the church.

Volunteer signature Date

Supervisor signature Date

Volunteer's Handbook Acknowledgment

I have received a copy of Valley Community Chapel's volunteer handbook and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the handbook. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at the church.

Further, I understand that the volunteer handbook may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by the church.

I also acknowledge that during the discussion of handbook guidelines, I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my ministry position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that my service is volunteer and that I can choose to end this relationship at any time (if possible, by providing two weeks' notice to my supervisor),

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply an employment relationship between the church and me.

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

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the volunteer handbook.

Signature _____ Date _____

**Valley Community Chapel
59025 Yucca Trail
Yucca Valley, CA 92284**

(760) 365-6774

www.vcchapel.org

My Ministry: _____

My Ministry Supervisor: _____

Supervisor's Phone # : _____

Supervisor's Email: _____