

# Vineyard KIDS

## Volunteer Manual

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Vineyard Church of Ithaca  
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# Vineyard Kids Volunteer Manual

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# Dear Volunteer,

I want to WELCOME you to a great adventure...working with the children of the Vineyard Church of Ithaca— Vineyard Kids!

When the disciples argued about who was the greatest among them, Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside Him. Then He said to them, “Whoever among you welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest” (Luke 9:47-48). You are working with our children...You are working with the **greatest!!**

I want you to know that this church is committed to you:

- Committed to seek out those individuals who, like you, are committed to serving Christ by ministering to children
- Committed to provide you with adequate training, supervision and assistance
- Committed to provide you with excellent facilities, materials & curriculum
- Committed to support you with prayer

We want to open all doors to enable you to do the ministry God has called you to do—to minister to children.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. May God greatly bless you!

# Vineyard Church of Ithaca's Statements

As a volunteer with Vineyard Kids, you are helping to lay a spiritual foundation in the lives of our children that will be taken with them throughout their lifetime. It is essential that we maintain unity regarding the basics of the Christian faith as expressed here at the Vineyard Church of Ithaca. Therefore all leaders are expected to be familiar with the Mission, Vision, Values, and Statement of Faith of the Ithaca Vineyard and to refrain from teaching anything that would contradict those Statements.

Check out Vineyard Church of Ithaca's Statements at:  
[ithacavineyard.org/what-were-all-about](http://ithacavineyard.org/what-were-all-about)

## Vineyard Kids - Our Purpose

It is our purpose to come alongside parent(s)/guardian(s) to build up children in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. In order to do this we seek out volunteers who have the desire to grow in their relationship with God by practicing discipline in bible reading, prayer, and godly behavior.

We desire to see our children grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men, so that they too can go out and make disciples.

(Ephesians 4:13 & Luke 2:52)

# Vineyard Kids - Role In the Church

The desire of Vineyard Church of Ithaca is to see children come into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to grow in that relationship. The Christian faith is a continuum. We did not learn about Jesus death & resurrection in yesterday's newspaper—it occurred 2000 years ago. We know the good news of Jesus because one generation told the next, who told the next, etc. We too must tell the next generation about who Jesus is and what He has done. Deuteronomy chapter 6 instructs us to *“impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy a long life.”*

The Vineyard Church of Ithaca recognizes children as functioning members of the body.

## **We desire for the Vineyard Kids' Ministry to be:**

- A safe and secure place, where guidelines are clear to the children and respected.
- A place where children learn to trust, respect and honor their peers and those in authority
- A place in which children profoundly encounter Jesus Christ through lessons and worship, and where children can meet the PERSON of Jesus; not just learn about Him.
- A place where children receive teaching that corresponds to their physical and spiritual levels of maturity.
- A place where children pray individually and together.
- A place where children are loved and accepted because of who God has made them and is making them to be.
- A place where a child is trained for ministry and for life (Prov. 22:6).
- A place where children can bring their “un-churched” friends to share the gospel with them.
- A place where children learn to care for, and minister to, people different from themselves — the poor, the needy and the disabled.
- A place where children are mentored by Godly men and women who are positive role models.
- A place where the power of God is invited to heal children and families.
- A place where children are not simply ministered to, but where they are able to minister to one another and to the church at large.
- A place where FAMILY is considered to be the most important in the discipleship of a child.
- A place where families are trained and encouraged
- A place where every endeavor is marked by excellence, integrity, and love, as all things are done as unto the Lord.

# Vineyard Kids - Volunteer Positions

These positions are ideal. However, the reality may be different based upon volunteer base and availability. Talk with the Vineyard Kids Director for current configuration.

## **Nursery Worker**

- Cares for children ages 0 - 1 year for Sunday morning service.
- Arrives 20 minutes before service to greet parents and children.
- Reports to Vineyard Kids Director for any needs or concerns.

## **Nursery Helper**

- Assists Nursery Worker with nursery during the Sunday morning service.

## **Preschool (ages 2-4) Class Teacher**

- Receives lesson plan in advance and prayerfully reviews age-appropriate lessons.
- Arrives 20 minutes early to greet children and set up as necessary
- Teaches the lesson on Sunday morning during the Sunday morning service.
- Helps to clean up classroom with children at the end of class time.
- Reports to Vineyard Kids Director for any needs or concerns.

## **Preschool Class Helper**

- Aids Teacher in activities, snacks, worship, and encouraging child participation.
- Helps to keep the children focused on the present task or teaching.
- Helps to clean up the classroom with children at the end of class time.

## **Elementary (K – 6th) Class Teacher**

- Receives lesson plan in advance and prayerfully reviews age-appropriate lessons.
- Arrives 20 minutes early to greet children and set up as necessary
- Teaches the lesson on Sunday morning during the Sunday morning service.
- Helps to clean up classroom with children at the end of class time.
- Reports to Vineyard Kids Director or any needs or concerns.

## **Elementary Class Helper**

- Aids Teacher in activities, snacks, worship, and encouraging child participation.
- Helps to keep the children focused on the present task or teaching.
- Helps to clean up the classroom with children at the end of class time.

## **Registration/Floater**

- Arrives 20 minutes early to greet children and set up as necessary
- Is friendly and helpful to all who approach.
- Is knowledgeable about information found on Sign-in table.
- Signs in children to appropriate classroom, with name tags, parent information, and allergy information.
- Helps to register new families when they show up.
- After registration duties are fulfilled(10:10), floats between classrooms for additional assistance and ensuring safety
- Reports to Vineyard Kids Director/Pastor for any needs or concerns.

## **Vineyard Kids Director/Pastor**

- Creates policies in conjunction with Senior Pastor and other staff.
- Chooses and implements curriculum.
- Prepares lesson materials for Sunday mornings.
- Recruits, trains, and deploys volunteers.
- Coordinates with parent(s)/guardian(s) to promote healthy families.
- Keeps children's spaces organized and tidy.
- Schedules, plans, and coordinates special events.



# Vineyard Kids - Expectations & Benefits

Vineyard Kids volunteers are entrusted with the care and training of our children and as such are extremely valuable individuals. They should be of exceptional character and devoted to the church. Expectations for these individuals vary with the position; however general expectations are listed below.

## **Expectations:**

- You have a commitment to Jesus Christ that is demonstrated through Christian growth and is a model of spiritual leadership and lifestyle.
- You regularly attend Sunday morning services at the Vineyard Church of Ithaca.
- You are a member of the Vineyard Kids team—you support the programs, ministry and philosophy of Vineyard Kids.
- You have a teachable spirit exemplified by faithful attendance at Vineyard Kids meetings.
- You serve as a contributing member of the team by praying regularly for the other members of your ministry team and the children in your care.
- Your desire to achieve excellence is exemplified by being on time in the classroom.

## **All Elementary, Preschool, and Nursery Volunteers:**

- You have been attending the Vineyard Church of Ithaca for at least **6** months.
- You are involved in a weekly kinship or an equivalent campus fellowship.

## **Vineyard Kids Director:**

- You have been attending the Vineyard Church of Ithaca for at least **8** months.
- You are involved in a weekly kinship.
- You are a tithing member of the Vineyard Church of Ithaca.

## **Benefits:**

- You will grow in spiritual wisdom and strength as you prepare weekly for your ministry.
- You will feel the personal satisfaction of knowing you have done your best to share the love of Christ with another person.
- You will experience the joy of seeing children come to faith in Jesus Christ.
- You will make an eternal investment by helping children to assimilate biblical truth into their lives and to grow in your own relationship with Jesus Christ, your team, and your Vineyard Kids.

# Vineyard Kids Policies

One of the goals of Vineyard Kids is to provide a safe, secure and loving environment in which our children can participate and in which a parent can feel comfortable leaving their child. Our policies are designed to create a suitable environment for children and to intervene in and bring an end to situations when we become aware of them. Prevention begins with the selection and screening of our leaders. As a volunteer, you are required to adhere to the policies detailed below. Bear in mind that, as a volunteer these guidelines will help to protect you if any accusation is made. Failure to follow these guidelines, however, may result in dismissal from the Vineyard Kids, and in the case of actual abuse of a child by a volunteer, in church discipline and legal action.

## Keeping Children Safe and Secure

### Facility Policies

- Only scheduled volunteers and parent(s)/guardian(s) are allowed in the Vineyard Kids hallway during the Sunday Worship Service.
- Children may not be dropped off without volunteers present.
- The top half of the doors of the classrooms must remain open at all times other than in the event of an emergency situation.
- Lights must be turned on in any room in which children are present. Lights may not be turned out for the viewing of movies.

### Staffing and Supervision

- Individuals with a record of child sexual abuse or physical abuse are not eligible to work with children.
- No person volunteering with children and representing Vineyard Kids may be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs.
- To be eligible to volunteer with Vineyard Kids you must:
  - complete a Volunteer Application,
  - pass a background check,
  - sign Vineyard Kids Policy Agreement,
  - be interviewed by the Vineyard Kids Director.
- All Volunteer Applications include personal information, history of past work with children, adult references, and Christian history. Personal information contained with the Volunteer Application is confidential and will be protected under the church confidentiality policy.

- All volunteers go through basic training to familiarize themselves with policies, procedures, and basic child care.
- All volunteers must wear an approved identification while on duty.
- Follow the two-worker rule: when possible at least two unrelated volunteers should be present at all times. As much as possible keep child to volunteer ratios as such: 1 volunteer for every 3-5 children under age 3, 1 volunteer for every 8-10 children over the age of 4
- All teenage volunteers must be supervised by an adult volunteer.
- If children are being taken outside of their regularly assigned space, they must be accompanied by at least 2 volunteers. The assigned classroom volunteers must be notified as to where children are located.
- Any lesson plans that involve transportation of children, or any special activities, outside of the classroom must have prior approval from the Vineyard Kids Director and communication with parent(s)/guardian(s).

## Security Policies

- Report anyone engaging in suspicious activity or loitering to the Vineyard Kids Director/Pastor or a pastor.
- Childcare can only be provided on a Sunday morning when parent(s)/guardian(s) are present on the church campus.
- Depending on volunteers all children will be signed in both at the Check-in desk and their classroom. At minimum children will be signed in at the classroom. Children will receive a sticker name tag with a number on it and any pertinent allergy information. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will receive a tag with the corresponding number of the child on it. This tag is necessary to check-out a child. If a tag is lost, identification will be necessary to check-out a child.
- Sign-in sheets will document: date, first and last names of child(ren), approved parent(s)/guardian(s) first and last name for check-out, allergy information, and any other pertinent information needed.
- Parents of children through fifth grades must pick up their children from the kids program at the back doors of the Sanctuary at 11:00AM. Parents must check their child out at the doors before releasing their child into the Sanctuary.
- Physical contact must be limited to appropriate touch. Appropriate touch is defined as no touching where a bathing suit covers (ie. top of head, shoulders, elbows, hands, sideways hugs).
- Children older than three years old may not sit in volunteers' laps.

## Restroom Policies

- Children must be escorted by a same-sex (when possible) Vineyard Kids volunteer to the designated children's restroom door – located in the Nursery and **NOT** the adult bathrooms.
- Children in the Elementary Room will walk over to the Nursery with the Floaters supervision in the hall if a restroom is needed.
- If a child needs direct assistance, a volunteer will provide assistance in the presence of another volunteer.(leaving the door cracked open)
- Nursery changing tables will be placed at all times so as to be in view of all nursery volunteers. Diaper changing must be performed in the designated area.

## Discipline Policies

- Volunteers will regularly explain and enforce the discipline policy so that the expectations and responsibilities of children are known and understood by a child. Discipline is not about punishments, rules, and negativity. It's about guidance, correction, diligence, and teaching.
- All children will be treated with gentleness, respect and understanding. Remember the role that a child has in the church.
- **Never** use physical means in dealing with a child unless in an attempt to protect yourself or others from harm.
- Use of profanity and/or derogatory gestures will not be tolerated.
- Stealing, fighting, verbal or physical abuse, or inappropriate touching will not be tolerated.
- Rules are posted in each classroom.

### Class Rules:

1. Be Kind
2. Listening Ears On
3. Raise Your Hand
4. Keep Hands & Feet to Yourself
5. Be safe...no climbing...no running...tell someone
6. Have Fun!!!

### Discipline Actions:

1. Get on child's level, look them in the eye. Give a verbal warning, explaining why the behavior is not acceptable. Give a suggestions for the right way to act or behave and help them to do it. Redirect their attention to a more appropriate task.
2. If a child does not follow directions when you give them a redirection, remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to rejoin the class. Place them in an area away from the other kids for no more than one minute per year of age. Create an entry in the behavior log so that other volunteers may know that a child has struggled with this behavioral issue.

3. If a child still does not obey, contact the parent in the service and have the child removed that week. If a pattern of behavior continues with a particular child a meeting of the Vineyard Kids Director and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be scheduled to find a way to integrate the child in Vineyard Kids in a healthy way. A child is never given up on, just new approaches implemented.

## Photo Policy

- Vineyard Kids follows the Vineyard Church of Ithaca's Photo Disclaimer. <https://thechurchco-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/1496/2022/08/2022PhotoDisclaimer.pdf>

## Allegations of Abuse

### Volunteer Response

- Report the suspected abuse to the Vineyard Kids Director and/or Senior Pastor.
- Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other volunteers, parents, etc. All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with the Vineyard Kids Director/Pastor and the proper authorities.

### Church Response

- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
- Situations will be handled immediately, yet with due respect to people's confidentiality and privacy.
- Full cooperation will be given to law enforcement authorities.
- Appropriate care will be given to victims.
- If the accused is a volunteer or employee, the church will relieve him or her of duties until the incident is resolved.

## What is Child Abuse?

The following definitions (as provide by "The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse") are provided to aid in awareness:

### Physical Abuse

Non-accidental injury, which include beatings, violent shakings, human bites, strangulation, suffocation, poisoning or burns. The results may be bruises and welts,

broken bones, scars, permanent disfigurement, long-lasting psychological damage, serious internal injuries, brain damage or death.

### **Neglect**

The failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter and medical care; also abandonment and inadequate supervision.

### **Sexual Abuse**

The sexual exploitation of a child by an older person as in rape, incest, fondling of the genitals, exhibitionism or pornography. It may be done for the sexual gratification of the older person, out of a need for power or for economic reasons.

### **Emotional Maltreatment**

A pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self worth, such as constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, manipulation; also providing no love, support or guidance.

## **General Safety Standards and Emergency Procedures**

### **General Guidelines**

At all times as a volunteer you will:

- Use good and common sense safety practices.
- Refrain from unsafe actions that might endanger yourself or others.
- Follow safety procedures provided for your protection. (For example, follow hand-washing guidelines after changing diapers in the nursery.)
- Report unsafe situations or actions immediately to the Vineyard Kids Director.

### **Emergency Guidelines**

- Familiarize yourself with the location of the Emergency Exits and the Evacuation Maps posted in the classroom in which you serve.
- Familiarize yourself with all written policies and procedures for an emergency.
- In the event of a power failure, emergency lights will activate immediately. If your classroom is in darkness, take children to the nearest lighted area and remain there.

# Volunteer Absence

YOUR PRESENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO THIS MINISTRY. Without you, the children may not hear the gospel and may not grow in their faith. Without you your fellow Vineyard Kids volunteers are placed in a difficult situation. If you can't be here, be sure to make arrangements as follows:

## **Planned Absence**

1. Block out dates in Planning Center as soon as you know you will not be available.
2. If you are already scheduled in Planning Center for a day you will not be available, be sure to decline the request in Planning Center as soon as possible to give the Vineyard Kids Director time to find a different volunteer.

## **Unplanned Absence (sudden illness, emergency)**

1. Call or text the Vineyard Kids Director
2. If you cannot reach them, call another volunteer that is scheduled for that day to let them know you will not be available. Scheduled volunteers can be found in Planning Center.

## **Vineyard Kids Director Contact Info:**

Alyssa Foster  
Cell: 607882-3032  
alyssa.foster@ithacavineyard.org

## Health & Wellness/First Aid

- Children with the following symptoms in the past 24 hours will be asked to not enter Vineyard Kids.
  - fever
  - vomiting
  - diarrhea
  - infectious cough
  - colored discharge from nose
  - discharge from eyes/pink eye
- A child taking antibiotics should have received them for at least 24 hours before coming to Vineyard Kids.
- First-aid kits are located in each classroom. Volunteers should be familiar with these locations.
- In case of accident or injury, you must fill out an Injury/Accident Report Form. These forms can be found in the Check-in desk.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should be notified if their child experienced an injury or accident during the Sunday Worship Service, or any activity. Completed forms must be turned in to the Vineyard Kids Director/Pastor.

## Confidentiality Statement

I understand that I may come into contact with personal information about children and their families that could be sensitive and should be kept confidential. I agree to keep information about children's health, behavior, disabilities, and related matters confidential and only disclosed to Vineyard staff/leaders who need to know. I will uphold this confidentiality statement whether or not I continue to be a member of the Vineyard Kids team.

## Vineyard Kids Policy Agreement

I have read and understood the policies listed in this document. I agree to conscientiously abide by them in the performance of my duties. I understand that not following these guidelines could result in the termination of my services.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Fire Evacuation Plan

All children and volunteers are to be evacuated in a timely and efficient manner.

## **In the event that the building needs to be evacuated:**

- Evacuate all children in your care, following the evacuation map in your room, to Northeast Pizza. Always use the safest, most direct route available.
- Pull the fire alarm on your way out of the building, if it has not already been triggered.
- Accessories such as purses, toys, etc. are to be left behind.
- One volunteer should grab the sign-in sheet for the room and a writing implement on the way out. They will also grab a first aid kit if possible.
- The volunteer with the sign-in sheet will take attendance after evacuation.
- Do not allow parent(s)/guardian(s) to take charge of child(ren) until after they sign them out. Require identification of some kind to sign out a child (parent tag, license, etc.) The volunteer who signs out a child to a parent/guardian must initial each child sign out.
- No one may re-enter the building until it has been declared safe by fire and/or police personnel.
- When returning to the building, take attendance of the children not signed out already. Sign-in any children who are rejoining your class.
- Contact Vineyard Kids Director if there becomes a child who is unable to reconnect with a parent/guardian.

# Active Shooter Plan

## **In the event that the building can be evacuated:**

- Evacuate all children in your care, following the evacuation map in your room, to Northeast Pizza. Always use the safest, most direct route available. *Be aware that the windows in the classrooms can be broken to accomplish this, although you must protect children from the broken glass hazard this creates.*
- Pull the fire alarm on your way out of the building, if it has not already been triggered.
- Accessories such as purses, toys, etc. are to be left behind.
- One volunteer should grab the sign-in sheet for the room and a writing implement on the way out. They will also grab a first aid kit if possible.
- The volunteer with the sign-in sheet will take attendance after evacuation.
- Do not allow parent(s)/guardian(s) to take charge of child(ren) until after they sign them out. Require identification of some kind to sign out a child (parent tag, license, etc.) The volunteer who signs out a child to a parent/guardian must initial each child sign out.
- Contact Vineyard Kids Director if there becomes a child who is unable to reconnect with a parent/guardian.
- Follow all guidance given by emergency personnel upon arrival, maintaining safety of children.
- No one may re-enter the building until it has been declared safe by police personnel.

## **In the event that the building cannot be evacuated:**

- Shelter all children in place.
- Lock the door with the manual slide lock on each door.
- Each classroom has a curtain for the windows on the doors that should be secured for no view of the room interior.
- All window shades should be adjusted for no view of the room interior.
- One volunteer should grab the sign-in sheet. They will also grab a first aid kit if possible.
- All children should be kept low to the ground away from entry points with as many obstacles and barriers surrounding them as possible. *Bullets can travel through walls.*
- Wait for a police presence identifying themselves before allowing anyone into room.
- Follow all sign out procedures with volunteer initialing each parent/guardian that signs out a child.
- Contact Vineyard Kids Director if there becomes a child who is unable to reconnect with a parent/guardian.

It is understood that these situations can be fluid and the approach may need to be reevaluated throughout a crisis. The safety of the children is of highest importance in any situation.