

# VBS Safety and Security

## TIP SHEET



### Good Questions Parents are Asking

- ◆ Who's caring for my child?
- ◆ Who are the volunteers and how are they trained?
- ◆ What are transition protocols?
- ◆ What's the bathroom policy?
- ◆ What's the check-in and check-out procedure?
- ◆ How do you handle kids with allergies?
- ◆ What's the emergency plan?
- ◆ How is discipline handled?
- ◆ How are medical emergencies handled?

### Tips (shared by VBS leaders across the United States)

- ☑ **Enlist a minimum of two teachers over 18 years old for each room.** Preferably two unrelated adults; age reflects liability issues (under 18 can increase liability if something occurs); if teenagers are present, enlist two adults with teens.
- ☑ **Use a security system to insure children are released to authorized adults.** Systems can be simple or complex—permanent cards; temporary cards/tags; computerized systems; paper systems. Churches of all sizes/kinds should use some type of security system.
- ☑ **Complete a background check on all leaders that work with children.** Screening forms; application; make it mandatory for everyone; staff and other leaders should be example.
- ☑ **Train all teachers on your policies and procedures.** Policies and procedures give back-up to the leader or teacher; enforcement is key (for everybody); only thing worse than no policies are unfollowed policies.
- ☑ **Maintain child-teacher ratios,** the recommended number of children per teacher. Recommended are 1:3 younger preschoolers; 1:4 older preschoolers and pre-K; 1:5 Kindergarten; 1:6 grades 1-6. Even if classrooms have lots of kids, work to maintain ratios.
- ☑ **Post allergy signs to inform parents when you offer tasting, touching, or smelling activities.** Create a system for knowing kids' allergies and what to do if allergic reaction occurs.
- ☑ **Gather all pertinent information and keep good records.** Including child info sheets (with allergy info), permission slips and medical releases, and any custodial issues.
- ☑ **Keep classroom doors closed.** Closed door keeps kids from leaving or others from entering, or at least slows down that process and lets the teacher know something is happening; minimizes distractions for both kids and teachers.
- ☑ **Doors should have window in or beside them to allow visibility in the room.** Window should be smaller but allow clear and easy visibility into the room. Protection for kids, leaders, and the church.
- ☑ **The best way to maintain a clean environment is hand washing.** Regular hand washing prevents spread of illness and keeps everything as clean as possible.
- ☑ **All materials and activities should be age appropriate, suitable to the age and developmental level of children in the room.** Many issues related to safety can be avoided if we make sure that what we are using/doing with kids is right for their age/development.
- ☑ **Keep a fully stocked first aid kit that is easily assessable for teachers.** Leaders know locations of these kits. Keep them maintained on a regular schedule.
- ☑ **Post a list of leaders who are certified in first aid and CPR.** Determine a system to locate these teachers/leaders; also a system to notify medical personnel of emergencies.
- ☑ **Post a map marked with the emergency exit route in each room of your children's ministry.** Map of exit routes for fire and route/location for other emergencies; make sure teachers are familiar with primary and secondary exit points and safe places within the building for other emergencies.
- ☑ **Make sure teachers know what the fire alarm sounds like and what to do if it sounds.** Sound the alarm for leaders and children; practice fire drills. Make sure leaders know where to take children when evacuating the building. Parents should know where to meet kids. Develop a simple system to reconnect parents and children away from the classroom.

# Safety and Security Checklist for My Church

- |     | <i>Yes</i>               | <i>No</i>                | <i>???</i>               |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Printed copies of church-approved policies are available and consistently followed by teachers and parents.  |
| 2.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Classrooms have easy access to running water for teachers to use in washing hands.   |
| 3.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Toys and equipment in rooms for babies through twos are washed in soapy water, rinsed, and disinfected with a diluted solution of household bleach.  |
| 4.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The bleach dilution for disinfecting toys and other surfaces is 1 (one) tablespoon of bleach per 1 (one) quart of water mixed fresh daily.   |
| 5.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers use latex disposable gloves when changing diapers.  |
| 6.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The church follows a policy regarding how to respond when sick children are present at church.   |
| 7.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers have access to information sheets parents complete on their children (providing family and health information).   |
| 8.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers inspect toys, teaching materials, furnishings, and the playground and remove broken, inappropriate, or unsafe items.  |
| 9.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Signs are posted outside classrooms informing parents of food activities and requesting allergy alerts.  |
| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Only safe pets and plants are used in classrooms.  |
| 11. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers have access to a well-stocked first aid kit.  |
| 12. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Individuals with first aid training are always available when children are present at church.  |
| 13. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers fill out an Incident Report when any accident or injury takes place, including biting.  |
| 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers have easy access to a telephone and numbers for emergency assistance, including the Poison Control Center.  |
| 15. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The church has a disaster preparedness plan, and teachers are trained to respond. Teachers know (1) the escape procedure and route to exit the building and (2) the safe locations within the building.            |
| 16. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers follow the church policy regarding safety of children on the playground and on field trips.   |
| 17. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers follow church-approved security procedures for the arrival and departure times of children from their rooms.  |
| 18. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Safeguards against child abuse include screening and supervising teachers, providing windows in classroom doors, placing a minimum of two unrelated adults in rooms, and enlisting teachers 18 years old or older. |