

SEVEN MILE
KIDS
HANDBOOK

UPDATED AUGUST 2021



**LOVING OUR
SONS AND DAUGHTERS
BY LEADING THEM TO
THE GOSPEL**

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WELCOME

Welcome and thank you!

What a grace it is to join with you and to lead our children in worship of the living God each week! We care deeply about the sons and daughters that our Father has blessed us with and are working hard to lead them toward a grace-centered, Biblically-grounded love of Jesus and His gospel. Our prayer is that they will grow up holy, healthy, and happy to call Seven Mile Road home. We are so excited and so thankful that you are aligning with the church's heart to serve and lead our children to this end. At Seven Mile Kids, our desire for every child is the following:

- Grow in the language of the Gospel
- Enjoy coming to Lord's Day worship
- Come to saving faith

The Seven Mile Kids Handbook is your guide to the policies and procedures at Seven Mile Kids. All of the policies and procedures that we have are in place to keep both kids and leaders safe. Please take time to read through this handbook carefully and apply these things during your time with the children.

Grace and Peace,

Seven Mile Road Staff



NOTE TO PARENTS

It is our joy to serve you and your children by aiding in their love for Jesus in the life of Seven Mile Road. In doing so, here are a few guidelines we ask parents to follow.

- Volunteer and serve in Seven Mile Kids.
- Provide your child with a snack if there are particular specifications or health issues your child has.
- Be sure that your child's check in/out is handled by the same parent/guardian.
- Label your child's belongings (water bottles, pacifiers, etc) that they bring to class.

For everyone's safety in Seven Mile Kids, we ask that if your child has any symptoms listed in the "Illness and Injury" section listed on Page 8, that you do not bring your child downstairs for Seven Mile Kids. We ask that you bring your child to Seven Mile Kids only if he/she has been symptom free for 24 hours prior to Sunday.

Additionally, we ask that each parent/guardian read this handbook thoroughly so you are aware of the processes involved as we care for and instruct your children. If there are any specific needs or preferences you have for your children, you can make mention of them in the registration form and we will be sure to adhere to those specific needs when applicable.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation with Seven Mile Kids.

Grace and Peace,

Seven Mile Kids Staff



CHILDREN IN OUR GATHERINGS

In our fallen world, we often live with unresolvable tension when trying to fully embrace everything we value simultaneously. In the case of gathered worship, we value BOTH creating space for people to connect individually and corporately with God and the gospel *with as little distraction as possible* AND integrating our children in the worshiping life of the community *as fully as possible*.

There is a continuum along which every church lands in navigating this tension:

- On one end are “family-integrated” churches that provide no childcare at all: all children of all ages are included in all elements of every worship gathering.
- On the opposite end are “separate program” churches who remove all children from the entirety of the worship gathering by providing an entirely separate program from beginning to end.

We’ve always gravitated toward “as much inclusion as we can.” We want our children growing up to love gathered worship, the preaching of the Word, gospel-centered liturgy, and corporate singing.

To that end, our youngest children (12 months - 3rd grade) will be cared for downstairs during gathered worship. See “Schedule” section on page 11 for more information.

That said, parents are always welcome to keep their children of any age with for the duration of the Sunday Gathering. We love kids and they are welcome here.



SAFETY

It is our responsibility, both to God and parents to provide a nurturing and safe environment for our children. To that end, we have developed particular safety policies and procedures. All Seven Mile Kids staff and volunteers must abide by the following:

- Before serving, every volunteer will complete MinistrySafe training and required reference checks.
- No child will ever be left unsupervised.
- Each classroom will be staffed with 2-3 volunteers each Sunday. No classroom should ever be left unattended.
- Two volunteer rule for all classrooms. There should always be 2 volunteers present with children. If there is a situation in which there is only one adult, the door to the room shall remain open.
- Staff/Leader is not to abuse children in any way, including:
 - Physical abuse - strike, spank, shake, or slap
 - Verbal abuse - humiliate, degrade, threaten, compare, or criticize
 - Sexual abuse - inappropriate touch or verbal exchange
 - Mental abuse - shaming, withholding love, or cruelty
 - Neglect - withholding food, water, or basic needs, etc.

**Any type of abuse or corporal punishment will not be tolerated.

**If there are any questions or discretionary issues, please speak to the church pastoral staff immediately.

**Our hope is that we never have to encounter these kinds of situations. The detailed nature of this language is for all volunteers' and children's protection.

Under no circumstances should any volunteers release a child to anyone other than the person who placed them in Seven Mile Kids unless they have the corresponding Pick Up Label or the parent has notified you of the change.



REPORTING GUIDELINES

As a volunteer in Seven Mile Kids, you are a Mandatory Reporter as defined by Massachusetts State Law. According to Massachusetts State Ann. Laws Ch. 119, § 51A:

If you have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse or neglect, you are required by law to report it. Abuse and neglect is defined as follows:

- Abuse inflicted upon him or her that causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse
- Neglect, including malnutrition
- Being a sexually exploited child
- Being a human trafficking victim

This is to protect, serve, and minister to those abused or neglected and also to protect, serve, and minister to the reporter and anyone affected.

The reporting process is as follows:

1. Mandatory reporter submits an oral report IMMEDIATELY to someone on the Pastoral Team.
2. The pastor files an immediate ORAL report with the Department of Children and Families
3. The pastor files a WRITTEN report with the Department of Children and Families within 48 hours of the initial report.
4. Pastor will notify parents of report
5. Reporter may be asked for follow up questions.

The church will take immediate measures to protect, counsel, minister, and serve anyone who has been affected by abuse or neglect. The first step is to take the proper legal action. For more information, you can visit www.mass.gov/dcf. -



ILLNESS & INJURY

Children with any illness will not be received into a classroom. This includes and is not limited to:

- High fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Frequent coughing
- Rashes
- Any other infectious/contagious illnesses

Children will only be received if they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours.

Parents/guardians will attest an absence of symptoms prior to placing their child(ren) in Seven Mile Road children's ministry. See Health Attestation Form on page 21.

*Minor cuts and scrapes will be attended to by teachers and helpers. Parents will be notified of this attention.

**All medication must be administered by the child's parent(s).

***Any emergency situation should be given immediate medical attention. Parents will be notified immediately. If necessary, medical personnel will be called.

****Any emergency situation will require an injury report (see page 19) to be filled out by the involved parties.



COVID GUIDELINES

Classroom expectations:

- Do not volunteer if you are experiencing any symptoms of Covid 19 (see page 22), or if you have a confirmed or potential exposure to Covid-19.
- As of this update (August 2021) masks are to be worn covering the mouth and nose at the discretion of the individual. If at any time there is a city, state, or church wide mask mandate put in place, volunteers and parents will be notified.
- If a child displays symptoms (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, difficulty breathing, gastrointestinal distress) while in care, the child will be moved to an area separate from others (while remaining in full adult supervision), and the parents will be notified via text message immediately. The child will not return to close proximity of others and will be removed by the parent.
- Hand sanitizer will be made available in each classroom to be utilized by both staff and children. Hands will be cleaned with soap and water, or with sanitizer wipes/gel as needed including upon arrival, at dismissal, and before snack. Hand sanitizer will be stored out of reach of children when not in use. Volunteers will ensure sanitizer is fully rubbed in/dry to make sure children do not get sanitizer in their hands/mouth.

Classroom safety and cleaning:

- Classrooms will be clean upon arrival on Sundays (weekly cleaning will be done prior to Sunday).
- Shared materials will be used with discretion and minimized as practicable through the use of child specific materials (art supplies, etc)
- Books and paper based materials are not considered high risk and may be utilized within the classrooms.
- Minimally 2 windows will remain open in the classroom area when weather appropriate to promote air flow.
- Any toys mouthed (or otherwise made dirty) will be placed in the specified bin for thorough cleaning and removed from general play.

DISCIPLINE

If a child is having difficulty following instructions or is being repeatedly disruptive in class, a teacher will walk the child to a less active area in the classroom and remind them that for everyone in class to be able to learn, people need to listen and follow instructions. The teacher will welcome them to join in with the rest of the class as soon as the child is ready. If the behavior persists, the point person will speak with the parent.

- Classroom volunteers will address the behavior with the child once (or twice depending on severity of disruption and ability for redirection) without shame or embarrassment.
- If the issue persists the volunteer will text the point person (PP). The PP will then come downstairs so an additional adult is present and the PP will assist with child(ren) while teacher(s) are able to continue with the lesson.
- If the issue still persists, the PP will get a parent, either via text or retrieve a parent from the sanctuary.

*When speaking with the parent, please provide a detailed, factual, and objective account of the incident while refraining from exaggeration

RESTROOM POLICY

It is standard procedure that children will be helped to the restroom by a volunteer with general supervision. The child will receive further assistance only if he/she requests it.

Any special instructions or specific preferences from parents should be recorded in check-in and will be recorded on the child's label. Be sure to check the name tag of the child using the restroom before he/she enters the restroom. If you have any questions regarding further details, please speak with the Seven Mile Kids Coordinator, or Point Team.

Seven Mile Kids adopts a "No Diaper Change Policy." Diaper changes will be handled only by the parent/guardian. Teachers and helpers will not be required to change any diapers. If a diaper change is needed during class, a teacher will text a parent at the phone number provided on the name tag.



SCHEDULE

Worship: All of our children join the larger congregation for the beginning elements of our service.

Kid Sermon: At this point in our liturgy, children will be asked to come to the front for the KidsSermon. The pastor leads our kids in teaching and prayer before dismissing them downstairs.

Transition: During the time of greeting and offering, children ages 1 through 9 (12 months – 3rd grade) proceed downstairs for their time in Seven Mile Kids. Children will need to be escorted to their classroom by a parent.

Dismissal: The oldest classroom (K - 3rd) will be escorted back upstairs after communion to join the congregation for worship. The teacher and point person will dismiss the child to their parent/guardian.

The younger classrooms (Crawlers and Climbers) will remain downstairs for the duration of the service to be picked up by parents/guardians when the service is over.



CHECK IN/OUT GUIDELINES

CHECK-IN: Please check your child(ren) in before the service begins. Check in stations are available in the lobby. If assistance is needed please check with Seven Mile Kids Coordinator or a member of the Seven Mile Road staff.

The parent/guardian will enter their child(ren)'s information using Planning Center. Any information regarding special needs for a child (bathroom, allergies, etc.) should be entered upon check-in and will be recorded on the Child's label. If the child has an allergy, please place a brightly colored sticker on the name tag as well. Stickers can be found at the check-in station.

Acquire a name tag with unique code for your child(ren). Affix name tag to child's back and retain code for pick up. Upon pickup the code on the name tag will be verified to match code on pick up tag.

CHECK-OUT: The older children who have joined the rest of the family for the ending elements of worship will be manually checked out by the teachers. Children in the younger classrooms (crawlers and climbers) will check out with parents upon pick up. Parents will give Check-Out Label (with barcode) to the Volunteer to verify Parents/Guardians with the Child's Name Tag. Volunteer checks out the child on Check-out station.

GOSPEL STORY CURRICULUM

Because children need help understanding that the Bible is one story with Jesus as the hero, the *Gospel Story Curriculum* focuses on Christ as it teaches preschool through 3rd-grade children key stories from Genesis to Revelation that highlight God's plan of redemption.

This unique 1.5 year curriculum grows with children by exploring the same Bible stories at different learning levels, presenting the material in a fresh way each time to help children grow in their understanding of the Bible.



CLASSROOM GROUPINGS

Seven Mile Kids Classrooms:

BABIES IN ARMS ROOM *located upstairs

- *What happens in this room?* Mothers and babies (under 12 months) are given space to stay together during the service while having access to live broadcast of the teaching. Room is stocked with toys, supplies, and comfortable seating.

CRAWLERS (1-2 years)

- *What happens in this room?* Once a child turns 1 year of age, the parents can start introducing the child to our Crawlers classroom. This classroom does not follow a curriculum as the children are encouraged to explore and play with age appropriate toys. A snack is provided by volunteers.
- *Who is this classroom designed for?* Children who are at least 12 months old and have not yet turned 3 before the September cut off date. (2nd Sunday of September) i.e. 1 and 2 year olds
- *What should I do when my child turns 3?* All of our children graduate to the next classroom at a fixed point, once per year. Your child will remain in the Crawlers classroom with which they started in September until the following September. Promotion Sunday happens the second Sunday in September.
* Please reach out to the Lead Volunteer team with any questions.
- *How will I know if my child is upset and needs me?* We follow a 10-minute rule. If your child is upset, the volunteer team will make every effort to help comfort your child, after 10-minutes if your child is still upset we will text you. Parents are always invited to stay with their child during the service; however, parents who haven't been properly trained or referenced are not to assist other children other than their own.

* Note: We adopt a "No diaper changing policy". Diaper changes will be handled only by the parent/guardian. Teachers and helpers will not be required to change any diapers. If a child needs to be changed or has an accident, a parent will be contacted via text to come care for their child. All children should have a cell phone number on their name tag for Volunteers to reach during the Sunday Gathering



CLIMBERS (3-4 years)

- *What happens in this room?* This classroom introduces our young children to organized group activities. Seven Mile Kids utilizes “The Gospel Storybook Bible” curriculum where they are introduced to brief stories from the Bible, provided with a coloring sheet corresponding to each story, and given a snack. Our toddlers are given free time to enjoy developmentally appropriate toys with their peers.
- *Who is this classroom designed for?* Children who have turned 3 before the fixed date in September and who have yet to turn 5. This classroom is designed for preschool and pre-K aged children who are developmentally ready to begin participating in curricular activities. (ie, 3 and 4 year olds)
- *What happens if my child needs assistance using the restroom? (*See restroom policy).* Please note on the child’s check-in label if he/she needs bathroom assistance and inform the teachers at arrival. Teachers will follow up with the parent at check-out if he/she assisted the child.

BUILDERS (K-1st grade)

- *What happens in this room?* Seven Mile Kids uses “The Gospel Story” curriculum. In the preschool curriculum, children are introduced to God's big plan of salvation in Jesus Christ as they learn key Bible stories. Each lesson equips teachers to bring Christ to early elementary schoolers with the help of a lesson snapshot, simple object lessons, coloring sheets, and easy-to-follow instructions.
- *Who is this classroom designed for?* Children who are in Kindergarten and grade 1. Those who have started kindergarten or are at least 5 years of age but have yet to turn 7 at the fixed point in September (2nd Sunday) on Promotion Sunday. (ie, Kindergarteners and 1st graders)



EXPLORERS (2nd-3rd grade)

- *What happens in this room?* Seven Mile Kids utilize “The Gospel Story” Designed for second and third-grade children, the lower elementary curriculum takes a more detailed look at how each of these Bible stories connects to the gospel. Through age-appropriate object lessons, activities, and coloring sheets, teachers can help young elementary school children see Christ in the Old and New Testament.
- *Who is this classroom designed for?* Children who are in grades 2 and 3, or are at least 7 years old by the fixed date in September (2nd Sunday). The lower elementary curriculum takes a more detailed look at how each of these Bible stories connects to the gospel. Through age-appropriate object lessons, activities, and coloring sheets, teachers can help young elementary school children see Christ in the Old and New Testament.

Seven Mile Kids graduate children at a fixed point in the year (Second Sunday of September) to enable and ensure:

1. Proper ratio of teachers to children for the safety of our children
2. Conducive discipleship environment for instruction
3. Adequate amount of curriculum and supplies for each classroom
4. Healthy rotation where teachers serve once every six weeks
5. Room in each classroom for visitors

NOTE: Whatever classroom your child is in as of September for any given year, that is the classroom they will stay in until the following September. The only exception to this is children who turn one can start in the crawlers room. If you have any questions, please contact the Ministry Coordinator at Seven Mile Road Melrose.



CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

The schedule during this time is as follows:

1. Rules Overview:
 - Be respectful
To God, others, self, authority, and property
Respect church property and other's personal property
 - Be obedient
To God and authority
Listen to the teacher and follow directions the first time
 - Be responsible
To God, others, self, authority, and property
Keep your hands, feet, and bodies to yourself
 - Be positive
In attitude, action, and effort
Be kind to others with your words and actions
2. Welcome/Play
3. Bible Story
4. Object Lesson
5. Snack (prepackaged/single serve food, and water)
6. Review and Free Play



VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

QUALIFICATIONS

- Be a covenanted and functioning member of Seven Mile Road or moving towards membership with approval by a Pastor.
- Complete a CORI check, checkr background check, and Ministry Safe training.
- Lead Volunteers must be 18+ years old.
- Classroom Volunteer Helpers must be 14+ years old.
- Unquestionable integrity and trustworthiness with confidential and sensitive information.
- Dependable, flexible, and humble.
- Agree to follow all ministry policies laid out in the handbook.
- Anticipate and thrive in rapidly changing environment requiring frequent adjustment of job roles and duties.
- Read and understand this Seven Mile Kids handbook
- Attend annual teacher training in August

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide a safe, clean, and loving environment for Seven Mile Road parents and visitors to drop off their children.
- Provide a safe and sanitary environment for children to prevent sickness or injury including observing every Name Tag for safety notes (allergies, bathroom help, etc.)
- Prepare to lead lesson (if applicable), activities, and games as indicated in the curriculum which is sent out quarterly as the schedule is made and weekly in the reminder email.
- In an emergency situation, sub in for any immediate volunteer needs.
- Immediately report any physical, emotional, verbal, mental, and/or sexual abuse to pastor and parent.
- Learn and use Planning Center Online for scheduling
- Be responsive to scheduling and email communication with Ministry Coordinator.

*In the event you are unable to serve on a scheduled Sunday, please use SLACK to coordinate a swap in dates with other teachers. If you are unable to secure a substitute, please then reach out to the Point Person scheduled for that week.



POLICY REVIEW

Every year, the Executive Leadership of Seven Mile Road will conduct a review of the policies and procedures for Seven Mile Kids. If necessary, the policies and procedures will be modified in accordance with the guidelines of the organization and its leaders. When changes are made, ministry leaders will communicate them to all employees and volunteers affected by the policy changes.

This Handbook will also be sent to the entire congregation each year in September for parents and volunteers to review.

ANNUAL RE-ENROLLMENT

Each year, all Seven Mile Kids employees and volunteers will take part in the following:

- Seven Mile Kids Ministry Training
- CORI Application



STAFF CONTACTS

Justin Gottlieb - Acting Lead Pastor

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SEVEN MILE KIDS POINT PERSON TEAM

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SEVEN MILE ROAD EMERGENCY INJURY REPORT

Name: _____ Address: _____
Date of Injury: _____ Time: _____ AM PM
Where did the injury occur?
Person Injured Name: _____ Age: _____
Address: _____ Telephone: _____
Name of parents/guardians (if a minor): _____
Injuries sustained: _____

Where was injured taken? (hospital/doctor): _____

Relationship to Seven Mile Road: Member Visitor Volunteer Employee
 Student/Camper Tenant/Resident Other

If injury occurred on insured's premises, for what purpose was the injured on the premises?

Who was responsible for supervision at the time of injury?

If injury occurred elsewhere, what connection did it have with the insured's operations or activities?

Does the injured party have personal medical insurance that could apply?

Yes No

Name of medical insurance company: _____

Full Description of Incident: _____



Witness #1

Name

Telephone

Address:

Witness #2

Name

Telephone

Address:

Signature: _____ Date of Report: _____



HEALTH ATTESTATION FORM

- My child has had no known contact/exposure to a positive or suspected covid-19 case.

My child is absent of the following symptoms:

- Fever (100.0° and higher)
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Gastrointestinal distress (Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea)
- New loss of taste or smell
- New muscle aches (not due to other known causes, such as participation in sports)
- Runny nose or congestion (not due to other known causes, such as allergies)

