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KIDS

HANDBOOK



## **Welcome to our SomaKids Ministry Team!**

Thank you for serving in our children's ministry. You are now part of a ministry that has the privilege to bless, encourage and teach a precious group of children.

In Matthew 19:13–15, the story is told of how Jesus took the children into His arms and blessed them. Here at Soma, we want to be the extended arms of Jesus. When we hug a child, it is our prayer that the child feels like they are in the arms of Jesus. When we teach a child, it is our prayer that Heaven opens up over that child. When we pray for a child, it is our prayer that Jesus is standing in their midst. When children leave the SomaKids ministry and move on to the next ministry, we want them to already know and love the Lord.

This manual is provided for you in order to communicate the vision, policies and procedures of SomaKids for all service volunteers and childcare workers – collectively called 'SomaKids Ministry Workers.' In addition, it contains the guidelines necessary to allow an orderly and organized ministry.

Please read the entire manual and keep it handy as a reference guide. This is a working document which will change over time. We will hand out additions as policies are added or changed. A copy of this handbook will be placed in each classroom's binder.

Thank you for dedicating your time to this ministry. It is exciting to see the children learn and grow in our classes. We thank the Lord for the awesome opportunity to bless these children, and we thank you for allowing Him to work through you. We pray the time, love and blessings you give these children will be multiplied beyond your expectations. You are a blessing.

## Finding a Replacement

An email or text message reminder will be sent mid-month to remind volunteers to add blackout dates for the following month. If you need to cancel any previously scheduled service, we ask volunteers first to work with their volunteer team to find a replacement for that weekend service. If no replacement can be found, please reach out to your scheduler for help finding a replacement. Please review and accept the monthly schedule as soon as you receive it and let your scheduler know if you swap with another volunteer.

## Pre-service Meeting:

Please promptly meet at the early scheduled meeting time (below) for prayer and to receive any last minute details about the service.

- Saturday 5P Service: 4:30 PM
- Sunday 9A Service: 8:30 AM
- Sunday 11A Service – Because of the service turnover, it's difficult to meet consistently at this time.
  - LittleSoma → NO meeting will be held before service. Instead, you need to BE IN your assigned rooms at 10:35 to help manage the room during the service transition period.
  - BigSoma → Arrive at 10:30 and connect with Director/coordinators before the start of 11A service.

## Male Workers

We are blessed to have men serving within the SomaKids Ministry. A male worker has all the responsibilities of a female worker with the **exception of changing diapers and assisting children inside of the bathroom.**

LittleSoma: Men can remain in classrooms while ladies accompany children to and inside of the restroom.

## Open Door Policy

Classroom doors *without windows* must be open at all times.

The only people allowed in the classrooms are:

- Volunteers
- Age-appropriate children
- Soma Staff members

## Check-in Procedure

All children must be provided a name tag before entering a classroom. All children will check in at the SomaKids sign-in tables. When checking in, a name tag and security tag will be printed. The name tag is to be placed on the child, with the parent/guardian keeping the security tag portion of the printout. The security tag contains an alphanumeric code which corresponds to the child's name tag.

If the check-in table is unavailable, a manual name tag can be used to check in the child. Manual name tags can be issued at the child's classroom.

The child's tag will contain the parent's phone number, any allergies or vital information.

## Check out Procedure

Each teacher will be given an iPad or tablet to use the Check-Ins App to check out all kids.

If a security tag has been lost or misplaced the **parent must show a driver's license and their name needs to be on the child's list of approved people who can check them out.**

If the 'list of approved people' is set up properly and you do not know the parents – Contact the SomaKids Director or Coordinator ASAP to help troubleshoot or resolve any issues.

*\*There is frequent communication/posted information related to how to access tablets and how to use for best worker success.*

## Parent Serving with Kids Policy

We ask that all parents that serve with us please check their children into their respective classrooms or have appropriate care coordinated. In order for a child to serve in SomaKids or LittleSoma, they must be 10 years of age and fully trained. Thank you all for your understanding.

This helps protect the safety and integrity of each class environment.

*Example: We ask that you don't keep your Pre-k or BigSoma aged kid in the room with you if you're serving in LittleSoma. It is okay to serve in the same room/class as your kids, but other aged siblings should not be present. If you are serving in LittleSoma and you have a BigSoma age kid, you need to make appropriate accommodations for your kids to be in service until they are dismissed for class.*

## Children in the Hall

1. Children in the following classrooms are not allowed in the hallways unattended at any time: Babies, Toddlers, Pre-school. In the event that you encounter an unattended child (from Babies-Preschool) in the hall, direct them back to their parent or guardian or to their appropriate classroom.
2. Children who attend the BigSoma (Kinder-4th grade) are permitted to go to the restroom and get water unattended.

\*\*If you encounter a child in the hallway and are unsure of what class they attend, check their tag.

## Security During Service

All LittleSoma classrooms are equipped with a door lock. After worship, please set the lock to the horizontal position. The door key for the room is in your prep box. Please wear the key around your neck at ALL times. Don't LEAVE WITHOUT returning the key for the NEXT volunteer.

The doors are to remain **closed** and **locked** during services.

## Abuse Awareness Policy

If you suspect physical or sexual abuse or neglect, immediately report it to church authorities and the proper legal authorities.

## Technology in the Classroom

Technology in the classroom is limited to RightNow media and approved YouTube content.

## General Clean-up Duties

- Put all the toys away, spray them down with disinfectant and let them dry
- Spray all sitting areas, door handles, and tables with disinfectant
- Wipe tables, check for crumbs on the floor-vacuum or sweep if needed
- Change all trash liners

## BigSoma (K-4): ADDITIONAL-Cleanup Duties

With recent health concerns – we have added a few extra areas that need to be thoroughly sprayed with disinfectant. Before leaving, please spray/wipe down the following areas with the given disinfectant spray or wipes:

- Bathrooms- bathroom door handles, faucet, soap dispenser, toilet handle and seat, light switch
- Hallway door handles
- Front and back door handles

## WELLENES PROCEDURES - ALL

Soma follows the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation that a child or childcare worker should not attend church when the following symptoms exist:

- A fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea or Vomiting, currently or within the last 24 hours—no matter what the cause is (medication, teething, etc.)
- Any symptom of childhood diseases such as Scarlet Fever, German Measles, Mumps, Chicken Pox or Whooping Cough
- Common cold
- Sore throat, constant cough or croup
- Colored mucus (runny nose that is not clear)
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection: boils, ringworm, impetigo or any open sores that leak fluid/blood even if the condition is caused by eczema or other benign skin conditions
- Pinkeye or other eye infections/mucus or redness of the eye
- Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits
- Any communicable disease

These rules apply to all children and all Ministry Workers. If you have any of these symptoms or your children have any of these symptoms, do not come to work. If you suspect a child is sick during class, contact your Coordinator. The Coordinator will text or call the parent if needed. All children and Ministry Workers must have been free of symptoms without medication for 24 hours.

**See our supplemental Health Policy at the end of this manual for a summary.**

### **No Medication Policy**

No medication may be administered by SomaKids Ministry Workers with the exception of an EpiPen® in the case of life-threatening reactions. **We must have a Medical Release Form in our possession to administer the EpiPen®.** All other medication, both oral and topical, such as teething gel, teething drops, eye drops, etc., must be given by the parent.

**In the event of an emergency allergic reaction, liquid or tablet allergy medicine**

**may be administered by a SomaKids Ministry Worker or safety team member.**

SomaKids Ministry Workers are prohibited from opening or taking medication while in the classroom. In the event that the Ministry Worker is in need of medication, they must leave the classroom to administer it to themselves.

## **Hand Washing**

When to Wash Your Hands:

- Before handling food or bottles
- After using the restroom
- After changing each child's diaper
- After assisting a child in the restroom
- After wiping a child's nose

## **Restroom Policy**

- The door should be propped open if/when a child requires assistance
- Let the child do as much as they can by themselves
- No worker or adult is allowed in the restroom with children while the door is closed for any reason
- If a child needs assistance, an adult female may assist a child if necessary.
- No adult is allowed in the restroom stall with children while the door is closed for any reason.
- Junior volunteers ARE NOT TO take children into the restroom.
- LittleSoma - Be sure to label your class door with the BATHROOM sign.

## **Walkie – Talkies**

Make sure your classroom walkie talkie is turned on and set to channel 5 while serving for SAFETY. This is how our safety team can communicate with you at all times.

## **Playground**

Using the walkie - talkie, **inform security that you plan to take your class to the playground.** Please give them prior notice in case they are busy with another duty. **Security will walk with the class to the playground.**

- Take the walkie - talkie outside with you.
- LittleSoma – Be sure to label your class door with the PLAYGROUND sign.

### Diaper Changing Policy

When changing a child's diaper, remember these points:

- Only females may change diapers
- Have all diaper changing items ready before bringing a child to the table
- Never, ever, ever leave a child on the table unattended for even a second
- Wash hands with soap and water after each diaper change or wear gloves when changing the diaper
- Put on a new pair for each diaper change
- Place all soiled clothing in a scented bag before placing it into the child's diaper bag
- Between changing each child, clean the changing table with Clorox wipes (Do not use Clorox wipes on a child!)
- Wash your hands

*\*Cloth diapers: If a parent brings a child in a cloth diaper please inform them that the volunteer will call them if their child needs a diaper change. If the parent wants the volunteer to change their child's diaper, they will need to put a disposable diaper on the child before sending the child to class. We can supply them with a disposable diaper if they need it.*

### Potty Training Policy

A potty training policy has been implemented for sanitary reasons.

#### Potty Trained vs. Potty Training

We describe a child as potty-trained if the parent can drop off the child with no special instructions about taking the child to the bathroom. The potty-trained child will tell a worker if they need to go.

If a child needs to be asked whether they need to go to the restroom or if the parent tells you to take the child at certain times or time intervals, the child is potty-training. A parent who is potty-training a child must send their child in a pull-up until they can independently tell a Volunteer that they need to go to the restroom.

If a parent is not aware of the policy and sends the child in underwear, explain the policy, and offer to supply a pull-up for that day. Explain that the next time the child arrives, they should be in a pull-up until the parent is sure that the child will let the Volunteers know that they need to go potty.



### **Crying Threshold Policy**

When a child is dropped off to class and is clearly having a hard time, the worker is required to ask the parent/guardian what their crying threshold is. This means how long they are ok with them being upset till they want to be notified.

Once a child has hit that point and their parent wants to be notified, then the worker needs to text the Coordinator of your class and they will talk with the parents.

Our heart is that every child is able to stay in class to hear the gospel in a way they understand. Also, we want the parents to be blessed by the sermon.

**See our Supplemental DISCIPLINE POLICY for further guidelines.**

### **Junior Volunteer Participation policy**

We are so blessed that you have committed to serving in the SomaKids Ministry. As you are serving, please keep the following in mind:

- It is important to remember that you are serving and not a part of the class. Please be sure you are assisting the teacher.
  - For example: passing out papers, helping children to stay in a straight line, passing out snacks, etc.)
  
- You are a role model.
  - You are a role model to the children you serve! Please be sure to abide by the same rules we ask of our children- Respect each other, Respect the teacher and Respect God. It is important for them to see you participate in obedience!
  
- Have fun! :)

## **SomaKids Handbook Acknowledgment**

I have read and agree to comply with the SomaKids handbook.

I completely understand all aspects of the handbook and will do my best to serve the SomaKids team well.

Print Name

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Sign Name

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Discipline Policy (Babies - PreK)**

It is the heart of SomaKids to make every effort possible to ensure the safety and well-being of anyone who enters our doors. There may be occasions when some children have a difficult time adjusting to a classroom environment. Children's Volunteers are asked to be proactive in reporting any instances in which our standards are being compromised by a child.

### **Discipline Steps**

If a child is **NOT** Respecting God, Respecting themselves or others, or Respecting property, the following disciplinary actions will be taken:

**1. Verbal Warning:** Reminding the child of the behavior expected in class. A Volunteer should go to the child and communicate with them personally. We want to use as much positive verbal correction as possible, along with praising the child for good behavior. The SomaKids Directors will be the only one to discuss behavior with the parents.

*\*We correct in private and praise in public.*

**2. 1st Group Separation:** If a child is consistently disregarding correction from a Children's Volunteer, the Volunteer may choose to remove the child and sit them separate from the rest of the class and the behavior pattern.  
(2 minutes).

**3. 2nd Group Separation:** If consistent disregard for correction, as described in #2 above *continues*, the child will be separated again from the rest of the class and the behavior pattern. (2 minutes)

**4. Paging a Parent (Possible Removal):**

If unacceptable behaviors resulting in #1-#3 above occurs, paging of the child's parent will be required. The SomaKids Director will be notified, and

parents will be paged so they can discuss the behavior. If the behavior did not involve physically or verbally hurting anyone, the parents will have the *opportunity* to take their child from the classroom and discuss the behavior with them and then return them to class to “try again.” It is our heart to correct the behaviors as they are exhibited and give every opportunity for grace and forgiveness. If the behavior did involve physically or verbally hurting anyone, the child will be asked to leave the class for the remainder of the day.

When a student returns to class after being removed for the day, each further incident (after 2 verbal warnings) will result in the removal of the student from class with the possible loss of rights to attend SomaKids. ***In these instances, attendance in SomaKids may be suspended for a minimum of 2 weeks.***

**Example:** Joey refuses to listen to his teacher. He is getting up and disrupting the class during teaching. The teacher asks him to please be respectful and return to the group (verbal warning). After another instance of disobedience and disruptive behavior, Joey receives a 2nd verbal warning. Still not working. He is then separated from the class (by behavior monitor or Class Coordinator) for 2-minutes. He returns, and yet again displays disobedience. His parents are paged immediately and he is removed from class (utilize Class Coordinator and SK Host to facilitate). Upon returning to class the following week - Joey's parents are aware that Joey is on a zero tolerance behavior plan. He is allowed the 2 verbal warnings before being removed again for the remainder of class. If behavior persists and he is removed from a total of 3 classes for a pattern of repeated disruptive behavior and disobedience, he will be asked to sit out from SomaKids classes for a minimum of 2 weeks.

*In certain circumstances, including students with special needs, parents may be asked to sit in on a class to ensure their child understands and complies with the expectations.*

## **Incident Report**

**A Notification of Incident Report** form needs to be filled out in great detail when a child *is disruptive, not responding to correction or involved in an incident (physical/verbal)*. Documentation of these incidents is necessary in the event of future occurrences that warrant paging parents or removal of the child from the classroom following repeated unacceptable behaviors.

While Children's Volunteers may be involved in documenting behaviors for a **Notification of Incident Report**, it is not the expectation for volunteers to discuss any negative behaviors with parents. The SomaKids Coordinators or Soma Pastors will confirm the completion of the form and subsequently discuss the issue with the parent when necessary.

Examples of behaviors **that bypass the discipline steps** outlined above and result in immediate **Paging a Parent, Removal from Class** & completion of a

**Notification of Incident Report:**

- Biting, Hitting, Spitting, or Kicking
- Fighting
- Hair-Pulling
- Verbal Abuse

Examples of behaviors **that should follow the discipline steps** outlined above and will result in **Paging a Parent, Removal from Class** & completion of a **Notification of Incident Report:**

- Repeated disobedience that does not improve with verbal correction, including non-compliance to classroom expectations?
- Tantrums (uncontrolled crying or screaming and flailing of the arms and/or legs).

**Working and Praying Through the Behavior**

It is never our heart to turn away a child, however sometimes for the safety and wellbeing of the other children, having parents pick them up for the day is the best option. When children who have had previous issues return to class, a Children's Volunteer will watch carefully over that child to encourage them in appropriate behavior.

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## **Discipline Policy (K-4)**

It is the heart of SomaKids to make every effort possible to ensure the safety and well-being of anyone who enters our doors. There may be occasions when some children have a difficult time adjusting to a classroom environment. Children's Volunteers are asked to be proactive in reporting any instances in which our standards are being compromised by a child.

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**2. Group Separation:** If a child is consistently disregarding correction from a Children's Volunteer, the Volunteer may choose to remove the child and sit them separate from the rest of the class and the behavior pattern. (5 minutes).

**3. Paging a Parent (Removal):**

If unacceptable behaviors resulting in #1-#2 above occurs, paging of the child's parent will be required. The SomaKids Director will be notified, and parents will be paged so they can discuss the behavior. If the behavior did not involve physically or verbally hurting anyone, the parents will have the *opportunity* to take their child from the classroom and discuss the behavior with them and then return them to class to "try again." It is our heart to correct the behaviors as they are exhibited and give every opportunity for grace and forgiveness. If the behavior did involve

physically or verbally hurting anyone, the child will be asked to leave the class for the remainder of the day.

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**Example:** Joey refuses to listen to his teacher. He is getting up and disrupting the class during teaching. The teacher asks him to please be respectful and return to the group (verbal warning). After another instance of disobedience and disruptive behavior, Joey is separated from the class (by behavior monitor or Class Coordinator) for 5-minutes. He returns, and yet again displays disobedience. His parents are paged immediately and he is removed from class (utilize Class Coordinator and SK Host to facilitate). Upon returning to class the following week - Joey's parents are aware that Joey is on a zero tolerance behavior plan. He is allowed one verbal warning before being removed again for the remainder of class. If behavior persists and he is removed from a total of 3 classes for a pattern of repeated disruptive behavior and disobedience, he will be asked to sit out from SomaKids classes for a minimum of 2 weeks.

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Examples of behaviors that should follow the discipline steps outlined above and will result in **Paging a Parent, Removal from Class** & completion of a **Notification**

**of Incident Report:**

- Repeated disobedience that does not improve with verbal correction, including non-compliance to classroom expectations?
- Tantrums (uncontrolled crying or screaming and flailing of the arms and/or legs)

### **Working and Praying Through the Behavior**

It is never our heart to turn away a child, however sometimes for the safety and wellbeing of the other children, having parents pick them up for the day is the best option. When children who have had previous issues return to class, a Children's Volunteer will watch carefully over that child to encourage them in appropriate behavior.



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## HEALTH POLICY

### SICK CHILD

If your child is feeling unwell, or experiencing any of the symptoms listed below, we ask that you keep them from LittleSoma and BigSoma Kids classes until they are 24 hours fever and symptom free (without fever-reducing or symptom masking medications):

- Fever, Cough, Runny Nose, Diarrhea, Rash, Vomiting.

**We ask that you exercise caution and care when choosing to attend services and place your children in SomaKids if you have knowingly been around someone that is sick, or you (or your kids) are sick.**