



PMBC
Children's Ministry Policy
2025-26

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PMBC Children's Ministry Policy

The children's ministry program at Port Matilda Baptist Church focuses on teaching children biblical truth, instilling core values, and building strong relationships with families to support the spiritual growth of children. The program is age-specific, providing learning opportunities for children in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Nursery care is available for children from birth to age three.

Administration and Ministry Contact Information

Children's Program Lead: Ashton Shultz

Pastor: Ben Hoover

Nursery Scheduling: Edie Johnson

Pastor: Noah Hoover

Sunday School Scheduling: Olivia Dodson

Jr. Church Program Teachers:

1st Service

Prek - 1st: Nikki Potter

Grades 2-5: Marsha Hoover

2nd Service:

Prek - 1st: Ashley Hoover

Grades 2-5: Donnie & Tricia Green

Sunday School Program Teachers:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| - Nursery: Marsha Hoover | - Grades K-1: Connie Wolfe & Teresa Merryman |
| - Preschool: Libby Reese | - Grades 2-3: Linda Cherry & Jodi Rice |
| - Grades 4-5: Kimmy Kline | |

Allergy Information

PMBC offers a snack to each child attending a children's ministry program. To ensure each child's needs are met, parents are required to list all allergies on the child's emergency form during registration. Updates to the child's medical and allergy needs can be made at any time by submitting an updated emergency form with the ministry program.

Peanut-free: Due to the high frequency of peanut-related allergies, the children's ministry program requests that parents make an effort to refrain from sending snacks that contain peanuts to children receiving care in the nursery.

Attendance Procedures for Students

PMBC is committed to the safety of all children. To maintain an accurate record of children in attendance, all program teachers will maintain attendance sheets for an assigned age group.

Child Illness

A child with significant signs of illness should be kept at home. Examples include:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher; the child must be fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours before participating in the program
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Persistent, uncontrollable cough
- "Flu" symptoms, such as those above, plus extreme fatigue, body aches, headache, runny nose, sore throat
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Red, irritated eyes with pus-like or excessive watery drainage
- Head lice; Strep throat; Scarlet fever; Tonsillitis; Chicken Pox; Impetigo; Ringworm; MRSA skin infection

Curricular Resource

The PMBC children's ministry program utilizes *Answers in Genesis* as its current curricular resource. Students participating in the Junior Church and Sunday School programs will study the bible chronologically through this program.

Custody and Release Contacts

If a separated/divorced parent having custody of a child desires that the child not be released in the care of the other parent, PMBC will comply with the guidance provided on file. All approved release contacts for a child must be noted on the child's emergency contact form. This form can be updated upon request at any time.

Dress Code

PMBC believes in protecting the health, safety, welfare, and morals of all program participants. All participants should attend the program dressed according to these concerns and values.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices, such as cell phones, laser pointers, MP3 Players, iPods, CD players, electronic games, radios, and similar equipment, MAY NOT be used by students during the children's ministry program.

Cell phones may be used only to contact a parent/guardian during or before pick-up. Cell phone use will not be permitted during the program. To maintain and respect the privacy of all participants, student participants are not permitted to use cell phones to take pictures, play games or music, send messages, or record videos during the program. If a cell phone is used inappropriately, it will be kept by a volunteer and returned to the parent/guardian at pick-up.

Parents are encouraged not to send toys, collector items, personal belongings, or other valuables with their child to the program. PMBC will not be held responsible for any of these materials being lost or stolen while attending the program.

Emergency Information

PMBC must be able to reach every child's parent or guardian in the event of a serious illness or injury. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached during program hours, another responsible adult should be designated as an emergency contact. This person must be willing and able to make decisions regarding the child and should be able to provide transportation if necessary. Please provide at least one (1) individual who fits this description.

Please update the emergency card regularly. This may be done by speaking with the program lead or the child's assigned teacher.

Off-Campus Events

Occasionally, PMBC may hold an off-campus event for the children's ministry program. Parental permission is required for children to attend off-campus events.

Parent Contact

PMBC believes that a strong relationship between the parents and the church is imperative to the spiritual growth of the child. Throughout the year, the children's ministry program will send updates to parents via newsletters and the social media page.

If program leaders have a concern regarding a child, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted. This includes concerns related to behavior, health, and spiritual well-being.

Participant Expectations

Port Matilda Baptist Church is committed to establishing a safe and secure environment in which children have the maximum opportunity to learn and grow spiritually. PMBC has established common rules that are followed throughout the building. The rules are posted in the activity areas. We believe our core values will help us work together, preventing discipline problems from arising.

The PMBC team has established core values that will be explicitly taught in all of the program contexts:

**I will be STRONG
I will be RESPECTFUL & OBEDIENT
I will have SELF-CONTROL
I will be HONEST & PURE
I will have FAITH & be FAITHFUL**

I will give THANKS
I will be PRAYERFUL
I will be PATIENT & KIND

For each of these core values, we have defined a set of expectations that we will spend time teaching and reinforcing with children.

Participant Discipline Code

If any child exhibits a behavior or action that defies the core values and expectations of the children's ministry program or places any individual at risk or harm, the following disciplinary procedures will occur:

1st Offense: The child will receive a verbal warning

2nd Offense: The child will receive a verbal warning, and a parent contact will be made

3rd Offense: The child and parent/guardian will have a conference with the ministry leader

NOTE:

- Harassment: Children may not make statements that verbally intimidate, are hurtful, threaten, lead to feelings of discomfort, or are racist or sexist in nature. If one child verbally intimidates or harasses a second, the second child is to tell a volunteer. *Under no conditions is retaliation permitted.* If any child is found guilty of harassment, parent contact is made immediately and may result in partial or permanent removal from the program.

Participants with Exceptionalities

PMBC is committed to the spiritual growth of all participants and their families. Parents/guardians should communicate any individual needs or accommodations to the program lead or the child's teacher.

Program Cancellation

PMBC may cancel a program event or activity for emergency reasons and/or due to inclement weather conditions. This decision is made to protect the health and safety of children and volunteers.

In the event of a cancellation, every effort will be made to notify parents/guardians before the start of the program. This includes an automated Breeze message and announcement on the social media page.

Program Photo Use

While attending a PMBC children's ministry program, participants may not be photographed without a photo release preference on file. Parents and guardians must indicate photo and media

preferences during registration. Sharing of any children's ministry content, such as newsletters, photo use for the church website, or social media, is handled by PMBC.

Program Volunteers

PMBC values individuals who are willing to volunteer their time to serve. We welcome interested adults in the church community who are willing to donate their time and talents to help strengthen our program. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Ashton Shultz or Marsha Stapleton. State law necessitates that anyone working directly with children regularly must submit Act 34 (Criminal) and Act 151 (Child Abuse) clearances. More information can be provided upon request.

Any parent or guardian is permitted to accompany their child during the program; however, without clearance, they will not be permitted to assist in the role of a volunteer. Younger children and siblings under the age of program participation are asked not to accompany the parent or guardian.

Promotion and Age Groupings

The PMBC children's ministry program offers several age groups for participation. In order to meet developmentally appropriate expectations within our curriculum, children are placed in a class according to age and grade level. Except for the nursery and students in grades 6-12, each classroom consists of students in two age groups. All students must meet the minimum age or grade requirement for a class prior to **September 1st** each year in order to be promoted to the next age group. The students must meet this requirement to receive developmentally appropriate instruction. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Nursery Promotion: Age requirement - the nursery is for children ages 0-3. Children who turn three after September 1st are permitted to advance to the preschool classroom from the nursery as long as they are potty-trained.

Jr. Church/Sunday School Class Promotion: Grade requirement - students advancing to the next class must meet the grade requirement for placement by September 1st. This includes all schooling types - public, private, charter, homeschool, hybrids, etc. Regardless of a child's age, their promotional advancement is based on the registered grade level with the school district of residence.

Promotion to a new class occurs on Promotion Sunday. Promotion Sunday is held annually on the Sunday after Labor Day in September. Parents/guardians will be notified when a child is eligible for promotion.

Restroom Use

All restroom breaks are monitored by the group leader. Children in pre-kindergarten through third grade are always escorted to the restroom by a volunteer. Volunteers check the restroom to make sure that it is safe before any child or youth enters. A minimum of two volunteers are present during restroom breaks. If assistance is required, the door is propped open so that the second volunteer can visually monitor the assisting adult.

Potty-training: Volunteers will assist in escorting children to the restroom as directed by parents during potty-training. If a child requires additional or scheduled trips to the restroom due to potty-training, it is the responsibility of the parent to communicate this request.

Safety Plan

The safety of all children is of paramount importance. Port Matilda Baptist Church has taken many steps to ensure this safety while promoting a comfortable atmosphere in which children may learn and grow spiritually. The following details PMBC's safety plan for the children's ministry program.

- First-Aid: At least one volunteer who is CPR certified will be present during the children's ministry program. All volunteers will have access to basic first-aid materials, such as Band-Aids and ice.

The children's ministry program will not provide access to medicinal treatments, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.

- Restraint: PMBC does not require volunteers to maintain training in restraint and thus, will not use it as a form of behavior management.

PA law refines restraint as (i) the application of physical force, with or without the use of any device, for the purpose of restraining the free movement of a student's or eligible young child's body; (ii) The term does not include briefly holding, without force, a student or eligible young child to calm or comfort him, guiding a student or eligible young child to an appropriate activity, or holding a student's or eligible young child's hand to safely escort her from one area to another; (iii) the term does not include hand-over-hand assistance with feeding or task completion and techniques prescribed by a qualified medical professional for reasons of safety or for therapeutic or medical treatment, as agreed to by the student's or eligible young child's parents and specified in the IEP. Devices used for physical or occupational therapy, seatbelts in wheelchairs or on toilets used for balance and safety, safety harnesses in buses, and functional positioning devices are examples of mechanical restraints that are excluded from this definition and governed by subsection.

- Fire-Drills/Evacuation: Evacuation procedures are provided to volunteers to prepare for potential emergencies. All procedures and evacuation locations are posted in classrooms and surrounding areas. Volunteers may make time to talk with the children about the importance of evacuation drill practice and what to expect during the drills. Drills are discussion-based and consist of the following:
 - ➔ Familiarization with the locations of fire exits, alarms, and extinguishers in the areas of the church.
 - ➔ If evacuation is called for, use the closest unaffected exit. Walk in a single file line and proceed quickly and calmly. Do not run.

→ Move as far away from the building as possible for safety and make room for emergency vehicles.

- **Access to Classrooms:** For the safety of all children, children will remain in their assigned classroom area under the supervision of the group teacher, except for restroom breaks. Only one parent per child is permitted to enter the classroom at any time.

Check-in: All nursery program classrooms are equipped with parent/guardian contact information and a locker for each child(ren). Parents must make contact with an assigned nursery worker to confirm their preferred method of contact during supervision (text or pager). All other classrooms, Pre-kindergarten - 5th Grade, have a clipboard with an attendance sheet attached that the teacher completes. As a teacher or caregiver, it is the volunteer's responsibility to take time to greet visiting families, helping them to feel welcome and know what the procedures are for that particular class.

Pick-up: For the safety of all children, parents are requested to pick up their children after classes have ended. Older siblings are not permitted to pick up children. At the conclusion of the worship service, parents pick up children directly from the classroom. At the conclusion of the Sunday School service, children in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade must be picked up in the sanctuary. Nursery children remain in the nursery, and parents must pick up nursery-aged children from the nursery.

Schedule

The children's ministry program will offer age-specific classes every Sunday from 9:00-11:00 AM.

Group	Drop-off	Jr. Church	Sunday School	Pick-up
Nursery (birth - 3 years)	10 minutes prior to start of service	1st service: 9:00 - 10:00 AM 2nd Service: 11:15-12:15 PM	10:15 - 11:00 AM	Occurs at the conclusion of each service:
Preschool	Children are dismissed to Jr. Church during the service (9:20 AM or 11:35 AM). Sunday School drop-off is 10:00 AM.	1st service: 9:15 - 10:00 AM 2nd Service: 11:30-12:15 PM	10:15 - 11:00 AM	1st Service Jr. Church 10:00 AM
Grades K-1				Sunday School 11:00 AM
Grades 2-3				2nd Service Jr. Church 12:15 PM
Grades 4-5				

PMBC Children's Ministry Nursery Policy

Nursery Arrival/Pick-Up Procedures

Arrival: All children attending the nursery program need to be dropped off by a parent or guardian. When dropping off a child in the nursery, enter through the door on the infant side of the room. The room remains closed at all times. Only one parent per child is permitted in the classroom during arrival. All items being checked in with the child should be labeled according to the child's name and placed in their assigned locker. Once a child is checked in with the nursery volunteer staff, the parent will confirm communication preferences for the service (text or pager). Check-in begins 10 minutes before the start of the church service. Children should never be dropped off in a classroom without the teachers present. This is the responsibility of parents.

Pick-up: All children will remain in the nursery until an approved release contact arrives to pick them up. Pick-up occurs in the infant classroom area. Only one parent or guardian is permitted in the classroom during pick-up. Older siblings are not permitted to enter the nursery area. All unfamiliar release contacts need to provide a valid form of ID in order to pick up a child from the program.

***Note:** Parents/guardians must adhere to the scheduled arrival and pick-up times. The nursery program operates with the support of volunteer staff, and the safety of all children is a priority. If a parent/guardian continually fails to arrive during the scheduled time frame for arrival and pick-up, a brief conference will be held with a program leader and a plan of action established (utilizing a different pick-up person, adding a release contact, etc.).

Nursery Arrival Time: 8:45-9 AM (1st Service) (Jr. Church dismissed from service) 10:00 - 10:05 AM (Sunday School) 11:00-11:15 AM (2nd Service)	Pick-up Time: 10:00 - 10:05 AM (1st Service Jr. Church) (all classes) 11:00 - 11:05 AM (Sunday School) 12:15-12:20 PM (2nd Service Jr. Church)
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Nursery Diaper Bags and Child Belongings

All children attending a nursery program are required to have diaper bags and personal belongings labeled with the child's name. This can be accomplished with name labels, tape, or a permanent marker. This process helps to ensure volunteers are able to maintain proper sanitation and safety while children are present. Items to label include diaper bags, bottles or cups, snack containers, baby wipes, blankets, spare clothes, pacifiers, etc. Due to child safety, personal toys are not permitted in the nursery.

***Note:** The classroom is equipped with assigned lockers available for each child's belongings.

Nursery Changing Station and Restroom Use

PMBC nursery volunteers will provide proper care and supervision, such as diaper changing and restroom use. All volunteers will follow PMBC volunteer guidelines in regard to child safety, restroom use, and supervision. The following outlines best practices in childcare for changing diapers in the nursery:

- Only female nursery workers or a parent/guardian will change diapers
- Diaper changes will occur while other volunteers are present
- A child is never left unattended on a changing table
- When completing a diaper change, a child is re-diapered/re-clothed
- Diaper changes occur on changing stations only

In addition to diaper changing, nursery staff will assist in the potty training process, as directed by the parent or guardian. The following outlines best practices in childcare for toilet training in the nursery:

- The nursery program cannot force a child to toilet train
- Only female nursery workers or a parent/guardian will escort children to the restroom
- A child will never be left unattended in the restroom

Nursery Nursing Mothers

An area is provided for nursing mothers in the infant (birth - 1 year) nursery classroom. The area is located in the back of the classroom and includes a rocking chair, a side table, and a curtain for privacy.

Nursery Snack Time

All children will be offered a snack during the nursery program. The snack will consist of water and small finger food, such as fruit snacks, Goldfish, or pretzels. If preferred, parents of children in the nursery are permitted to provide a snack for their child, as long as the snack is labeled according to the child's name.

Peanut-free: Due to the high frequency of peanut-related allergies, the children's ministry program requests that parents make an effort to refrain from sending snacks that contain peanuts to children receiving care in the nursery.