

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Watch Care Volunteers



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: STRATEGY AND VISION..... 1

Welcome to the CHAPEL Team! 1

Our Ministry Aims..... 2

SECTION 2: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES..... 3

Serving Preparation:..... 3

 Volunteer Vetting Procedure..... 3

 Badge Issuance and Bracelet..... 4

 Logging volunteer hours 4

 Absentee Policy 5

 Arrival Time and On-Time Policy 6

Kid-Safe Policies and Procedures: 6

 Never-Alone Policy 6

 Classroom Ratios 7

 Diaper, Toileting, and Bathroom Policy 7

 Appropriate Touch Policy..... 9

 Crying Policy 10

Discipline Policy	10
Food and Drink Policy	11
Phone Policy	11
Cleanliness and Organization Policy	11
Well-Child Policy	12
First-Aid Procedures	113
Emergency and Evacuation Procedures	13
Active Participation:	13
Volunteer Shepherding	13
Feedback Policy	14
Responding to the Call!	14

SECTION 3: APPENDIXES 15

Appendix A: Checklist for Beginning of Service.....	16
Appendix B: Checklist for end of Service	17
Appendix C: Accident/ Incident Report Form	18
Appendix D: Sample Watch Care Schedule (3 Hour)	19
Appendix E: Sample Watch Care Schedule (1 Hour).....	20

SECTION 1: STRATEGY AND VISION

WELCOME TO THE CHAPEL TEAM!

"Religious Support Office provides support to the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart military community and advises the command on religion, morale, morals and ethics as affected by religion. In addition, plans and implements the Command Master Religious Plan and trains the ministry team to conduct military religious support in a combat environment to support deployment and redeployment operations."

"Chapel Watch Care is typically provided by approved chapel volunteers or NPS-contracted individuals. Watch care volunteers... will meet the requirement for all background checks and training necessary in order to be approved to work with children in accordance with DOD and Army policy." (AR 165-1, para 5-7.a.1.)

Watch Care Volunteers are Specified Volunteers and serve under the Army Chapel Watch Care Volunteer Position Description.

By becoming a volunteer with our children, you are helping Families continue to grow in their relationship with God. You serve God and Country by ministering to the children of the Chapel. The impact you can have is immense! You are not only ministering to the children, but also to the Families who rely on this care to get spiritually fed each week. They take the lessons they learn each week and support their families and communities. Without reliable and safe childcare, most would never have this opportunity.

We are dedicated to supporting you as you volunteer with us. We want to Lead, Teach, Develop, and Involve you so that you can excel in this work. This means that we will work together as a team with our leadership staff, parents, and Religious Support personnel. God has brought you here for a reason. We are so thankful for your support and without your help we could not achieve our aims!

Respectfully,
Dr. Becky Powell
Religious Education Program Director

OUR MINISTRY AIMS

- *Watch Care provides children with an essential element of religion in accordance with AR 165-1, para 5-7 and AR 608-10. Watch Care is provided using Army Chapel Watch Care SOP.*
- *Watch Care is for children aged 13 – 36 months while their parents are participating in a chapel program. (36-60 month olds may also be served on a space available basis.)*
- *All volunteers will work under the Supervision of the Garrison Chaplain through the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and Sponsoring Chaplain. Curriculum and resources will be approved and/or provided by the Garrison Chaplain's Office.*

SECTION 2: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SERVING PREPARATION:

Volunteer Vetting Procedure

The safety of our children is our top priority. We use a volunteer vetting procedure to ensure that adults with no history of abuse and/or neglect are working with our children. Only volunteers who have successfully completed the volunteer vetting procedures can work with children. These procedures are outlined below:

Step One: Form Completion

- Fill out electronic forms, print, and bring to RSO (Forms can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y24flt>) or emailed to volunteer coordinator

Step Two: Interviews

- Setup time to interview with Religious Educator and/or Chaplain

Step Three: Fingerprints

- Receive an email to get fingerprints taken at Security Office.
- Within 3 days make an appointment for fingerprints and email the Volunteer Coordinator that you have done so.
- Get fingerprints taken
- Up to 2 weeks wait. Volunteer will be emailed when fingerprints are cleared in San Antonio. After 2 weeks, if you have not heard results, check your status.

Step Four: Complete CPT

- Complete Child Protection Training by either attending training session or going online at http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/webs/sites/europe_life/religious/OCPT/index.html

- Print and sign form
- Give form to either volunteer coordinator or RSO

Step Five: Get Badge

- *Sign a badge agreement*
- Have volunteer coordinator or volunteer pick up badge and bracelet from RSO.
- Now you are all set to work in our childcare room! Please wear your badge and bracelet when working in the childcare room!

Badge Issuance and Bracelet

At the completion of the volunteer vetting process, you will be issued your volunteer badge and bracelet. You are responsible for bringing your badge with you each time you serve. It is important that you always wear these while working in the childcare rooms.

Logging volunteer hours

It is important to make sure that you log-in your volunteer hours. Sometimes we don't want to login our hours as Christian volunteers, because we feel like taking credit for doing something takes away from our service to God. Although this is a completely understandable reason, here are some reasons why you should log in your hours using the Army's Volunteer Information Management System (VIMS) and instructions on how to do that.

One of the reasons you should log your hours is because you can help the Religious Services at our garrison and CHAPEL. You may be unaware but often organizations like ours must meet basic requirements (e.g., volunteer hours) to be eligible for grants and funding. By logging in your hours, you can help us meet those requirements. Additionally, your data will help us keep track and

communicate our organizational needs for volunteers. Finally, having a record of your volunteer hours can be useful in many situations for you personally. Community involvement, measured in volunteer hours, can be helpful for students applying for programs and those looking to advance their careers. Now that you know the reasons why you should log your volunteer hours, here are the steps to do it.

How to Log Volunteer Hours in VIMS

- 1. Hours cannot be logged in until volunteer application is accepted by Chapel.*
- 2. Login at <https://vmis.armyfamilywebportal.com/> with username and password*
- 3. Click on "Volunteer Tools" in the upper right hand corner*
- 4. Click on "Volunteer Activity" tab (third from left)*
- 5. Click "Hours" on right side (blue font).*
- 6. Click appropriate yellow box- Add for open dates (recent) – Add for Day – Add for Period (month and year up to 19 yrs. ago)*
- 7. In "Hours" box, enter number of hours. Enter partial hours as a decimal fraction (ex. Volunteered 5 hours and 15 mins is 5.25 hours; 5 hours and 45 mins is 5.75 hours)*
- 8. Click on "Save and Return" in yellow box*
- 9. Date, hours and status will populate. Status is "submitted" until hours are certified by VMIS Organization Point of Contact.*

HOURS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE 10TH OF THE MONTH TO ENSURE CERTIFICATION BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH

Absentee Policy

We understand that things happen and last-minute emergencies (e.g., illness) are part of life. Grace abounds in these situations, but we ask that you take some steps to help us when you are not able to serve during your scheduled time.

You are an essential part of our team. Therefore, it is important for you to make every effort to come when you are scheduled to serve. If you cannot be present at the time you are scheduled, please contact another volunteer on your team's roster or your substitute list to fill in for you.

If you are unable to find another volunteer to serve in your place, please contact your watch care coordinator and let him/ her know that you will not be present and could not find a substitute. We also want to sincerely pray for you and support you during this time so please let us know how we can help you.

Arrival Time and On-Time Policy

All volunteers should do their best to arrive on time in order to serve God and the families of the chapel. You are expected to prepare the rooms and make sure you have everything you need to start the day, so we ask that you show 30 min before the start of service. We want all our children to be greeted warmly as soon as classrooms open (15 min before service starts).

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Never-Alone Policy

To preserve a safe environment for our children and the integrity of our volunteers, we will strongly enforce a 2-volunteer rule, also known as the Never-Alone policy. Anyone witnessing a violation of this policy no matter how innocent it appears, is required to inform the Chaplain of the service.

An adult must never be alone with any number of children. Ask another adult to stay until another volunteer arrives or keep the door open with someone directly outside watching (even the top of the dutch-doors) until another volunteer arrives. Whenever possible, rooms have cameras and video-recording devices as well as tv

monitors outside of the classroom. Volunteers should never turn off or interrupt the cameras or recording devices.

Classroom Ratios

The following are the ratios that we are required to follow. We consistently strive to have our ratios lower to have our ratios lower than these ratios so that we can best serve the children in Chapels¹. No matter the number of children, there will always be 2 vetted adults in each room.

Age Group	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Newborns (Birth – 6 weeks)	1 adult: 2 children	6
Infants (6 wks – 12 mos)	1 adult: 4 children	8
Pre-toddlers (13 months – 2 years)	1 adult: 5 children	10
Toddlers (2 years – 3 years)	1 adult: 7 children	14
Preschool (3 years – 5 years)	1 adult: 10 children	24
School-Aged (5 years – 8 years)	1 adult: 15 children	30

Diaper, Toileting, and Bathroom Policy

To preserve a safe environment for our children, and the integrity of our volunteers, we will strongly enforce the following policies

An adult should never be behind a closed door with a child in the bathroom. To protect our volunteers and children, parents will take the children to the potty (or change the diaper) before dropoff. If a child needs a diaper change or potty, the parent will be texted to return and take care of this private issue. In an absolute emergency, we have co-located bathrooms. These should be used and the door left open so

¹ Adult Child Ratios. AR 608-10, C1.

that the other volunteer can observe the interaction and assure compliance with our never-alone policy.

For our school-aged room, students are asked to use the bathroom before class. We will have a group bathroom break before snack to wash hands and use the toilet. If a student needs to use the bathroom at any other time during the session, they will be asked to do so with parent supervision.

Slippers or Socks Required

To keep the room clean, dry, and safe for the little ones, shoes that have been worn to the nursery will be removed. Parents should bring an extra pair of slippers or socks for each child to wear while they are in the nursery.

Snacks and Drink Policy

With COVID mitigations all food is restricted to absolute minimum. Parents should give their children a snack before drop off. The chapel will provide limited snacks (Goldfish crackers, Cheerios cereals, etc.) and Dixie cups of tap water for the younger children in watch care (Ages 13 months-3 years). For emergency, parents may pack snacks (*no nuts*), sippy cups (or bottles) for their children. A session typically lasts a couple of hours and small children tend to get hungry and want something more substantial to eat. Parents clearly label the containers with each child's name.

Personal Items

Children may need a special item or lovey to feel comfortable leaving their parents (and that's ok! 😊), but parents should leave toys and items that the child does not want to be lost or shared at home.

Diapering

For infants and small children who are still wearing diapers, volunteers do not change diapers. (AR 608-10, para 4-14.f) Contact the parent by text using the number provided at sign in, and let the parent change the diaper.

Toddlers and Preschoolers (Ages 2-5)

When a toddler needs to go to the bathroom, determine if they can toilet themselves by asking them "Can you go to the potty by yourself?"

- *If a child indicates verbally or thru body language that they can, let them go while propping open the door so you can assist if needed.*
- *If a child appears to need toileting assistance, please help them (lowering pants, hoisting onto the toilet, wiping, flushing) only to the degree they need help*

Appropriate Touch Policy

Touch is an essential part of nurturing little lives. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are to be promoted for genuine and positive displays of God's love. The USAG Stuttgart Chapels adhere to the garrison touch policy.

Hugs

One-arm side hugs are positive contact. Avoid initiating full contact, body-to-body hugs or kisses.

Lap sitting

Appropriate sitting on the lap of a trained, screened volunteer may occur with preschool-age and younger children.

Casual Touch

Gentle contact during activities may be on children's heads, shoulders, arms, and hands.

NOTE: *Physical discipline should never be used on children! Physical discipline is the responsibility of the parents.*

Crying Policy

The parents of any child crying more than 10 minutes, or the time specified by the parent, should be notified so the parents can attend to their child's needs.

Discipline Policy

All discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity and fragile self-esteem. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Disciplinary steps will be carried out through instruction, training, and correction. **Physical punishment will never be used!**

Please use the following steps if a child is disobeying or acting inappropriately:

Be Reminded

At the first occurrence of misbehavior that requires discipline, give the child a verbal reminder using positive words. Reminding them "to make good choices" when doing such and such or redirecting the child to another activity.

Be Warned

If behavior occurs a second time, the child should be given a verbal warning. You may need to separate the child from the group. At this time, talk to the child about the behavior that needs to be changed in loving and positive words. In addition, be sure to document the incident on the Incident/ Accident Form in Appendix C.

Be with Parent

If the behavior occurs a third time, the Volunteer Coordinator for Watch Care or Chaplain Sponsor will inform the child's parent who will be asked to remove the child from the nursery. This should also be noted on the Incident/ Accident Form in Appendix C.

Food and Drink Policy

If you are serving food/drink, then ensure that children cannot share food; this is important to minimize sharing germs. Please be attentive to the food and drink you bring into the serving area, being mindful that safety should always be top priority. DO NOT bring items containing nuts of any type into our classrooms as nut allergies are a serious concern for many children. Place beverages out of reach of children and assure that they are in a container with the lid if possible. Be especially cautious with hot coffee or tea.

Phone Policy

While phones are an essential part of our lives and connect us with friends and family, they can be distracting and potentially dangerous when we are working with children. Please limit phone use while volunteering and focus on the children during your time serving.

Cleanliness and Organization Policy

Providing a clean and organized environment for children is a priority. Every volunteer has a key role to play in helping us strive for excellence in this area.

Please remember to wash your hands thoroughly before serving with children. Bottles, pacifiers, and any other items brought into the watch care room should be clearly labeled and monitored to assure they stay with the appropriate child. Sippy cups should be placed out of reach of children. When the child is thirsty or at snack times, observe the children drinking then return their cups to its stowed location. Disposable cups (Dixie style) are also available in the care rooms and should be tossed after use.

Surface areas and toys should be cleaned as specified at the end of service to prepare for the next event. Blankets and sheets will be evaluated for cleanliness (send for laundering if dirty). Toys used by

children are washable and cleaned as specified. The *standard requires DAILY* cleaning and sanitation of toys shared by children under three years. Cleaning procedures are as follows:

- (a) Wash with soap and water to remove particular matter.
- (b) Rinse with water to remove soap solution.
- (c) Apply bleach solution of one tablespoon bleach per quart or 1/4 cup per gallon of water. Solution is to be made fresh daily.
- (d) Air dry.

Please ensure all toys are clean prior to placing them out. Remember that other ministries may have used the space, so be sure items left behind (especially those that may present a danger to kids) are properly stowed or removed. At the end of each service, please clean, organize and stow items in the room to make it ready for use by the next group.

Well-Child Policy

Any child who has congestion or has any of the following symptoms and/ or illnesses in the past 24 hours and has not been on an antibiotic for more than 24 hours cannot be left in any of our chapels.

- *Vomiting*
- *Fever greater than 99 degrees F*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Constant coughing*
- *Chest congestion/ raspy breathing*
- *Rash*
- *Head lice*
- *Runny nose (with thick discharge)*
- *Hand, foot, mouth disease*

If you suspect a child has one or more of these symptoms, contact your Chaplain Sponsor or Volunteer Coordinator for Watch Care immediately. If a child is in violation of the well-child policy, that child must be isolated from other children. We will then contact the child's mother and the child will be removed from the classroom. **Please note that we cannot administer any medicines!**

First-Aid Procedures

At any sign on serious illness or injury, alert parents immediately by contacting either the parent directly or location coordinator. Serious illness includes vomiting, difficulty breathing or any injuries with bleeding (not scratches).

First-aid kits are available in each location. Please become familiar with what is in these kits and where the kits are kept before you need them.

Parents should be made aware at the time of pickup of ALL injuries (regardless of severity). In addition to parent notification, an "Incident/ Accident Form" (available in each classroom and in Appendix C) must be completed to document the event. Completed forms must be given directly to the location coordinator for that service.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

The emergency procedures are specific to each location for Evacuation (Smoke/ Fire, Sheltering, Severe Weather, and Intruders). Your location team will provide specific instructions for these procedures. Please familiarize yourself with these.

In the event of an evacuation, be prepared to take direction from chapel leadership and the Volunteer Watch Care Coordinator.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:

Volunteer Shepherding

If you have volunteers helping in your classroom, please be sure to assist them in the classroom, as they may not be familiar with the policies, procedures and classroom specific issues. Make sure they have their badge, bracelet, and access to the handbook. If they have any questions, try your best to answer them. If you or the new

volunteer need additional assistance, please contact your watch care coordinator.

Feedback Policy

We are committed to making your serving experience enjoyable and rewarding. You are a critical component to this ministry's success. Please let your watch care coordinator or leadership team know of any problems or issues you might face. We are also interested in your suggestions for improvement.

Responding to the Call!

While we strive to adequately staff our childcare rooms, we may request additional volunteers based on the number of children who arrive or the number of volunteers that have not shown up at their scheduled time. We will make every attempt to get you back to the service if additional scheduled volunteers show up.

SECTION 3: APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST FOR BEGINNING OF SERVICE

Checklist for Beginning of Service

- Make sure you have all materials (e.g., books, name tags, wipes, cups, snacks, color sheets, etc.) necessary for the service
- Set up sign-in table
 - Make sure there is a sign-in sheet, fill in the correct date and service information, add your name and name of other workers
 - Make sure you have a pen for the parents to use to fill in the information
- Greet children and Parents as they sign-in
 - Make sure shoes are off
 - Give children name tags
 - Double-check with Parents/ sign-in sheet about allergies
 - Stow away personal items
- Say a little prayer and begin the service!*

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APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST FOR END OF SERVICE

Checklist for End of Service

- Prepare children for pick-up
 - Help them to help put toys away & pack up personal items
- As parents pick up children, make sure to:
 - *Check ID to make sure the correct child goes home with the correct Parents. **We cannot let children leave alone, with siblings, or with other adults.***
 - Notify Parents of any incidents/ accidents
 - Make sure Parents sign their children out on the sign-in sheet
 - Make sure children leave with their personal items
- Once children are picked up, clean up and organize the room by:
 - Surface areas and toys should be cleaned as specified at the end of service to prepare for the next event
 - Linens will be evaluated for cleanliness (and laundered).
 - Toys used by children are washable and cleaned as specified. The standard requires DAILY cleaning and sanitation of toys shared by children under three years.
 - Cleaning procedures are as follows:
 - (a) Wash with soap and water to remove particular matter.
 - (b) Rinse with water to remove soap solution.
 - (c) Apply bleach solution of 1 Tbs bleach per quart or 1/4 cup per gallon of water. Solution is to be made fresh daily.
 - (d) Air dry.
 - Put away and organize toys and stations
 - Take out trash
 - Sweep/vacuum and mop floor
- Turn in sign-in sheet and any accident/ incident report forms to the Chaplain Sponsor and/or DRE.

APPENDIX C: ACCIDENT/ INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Incident/ Accident Report

Name of Child

Date, Time, and Location of Incident

Description of Incident

If there were any witnesses, please their names and phone numbers

Name (Printed) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE SCHEDULE - 3 HOUR PROGRAM

8:45 - 9:15 – Clean classroom, make sure you have materials needed, set up sign-in table area

9:15 - 9:30 – 1 Volunteer is at the door welcoming children and parents and making sure they take off shoes, sign-in, have name tags, and personal belongings stowed. The other volunteers are interacting with children.

9:30 - 10:00 – Play time

10:00 – 10:10 – Song time

10:10 – 10:20 – Story time

10:20 – 10:45 – Craft or activity

10:45 – 11:00 – Clean-up from activity, prayer, wash hands

11:00 – 11:15 – Snack time

11:15 – 11:30 – Play time

11:30 – 11:45 – 1 Volunteer greets parents at the door with sign-out sheet. Parents pick up children. Notify parents of any incidents or accidents at this time, make sure all personal belongings go with parents, and that parents sign-out their children

11:45 – 12:00 – Clean and organize classroom (using Appendix B), take out trash, fill out any accident/ incident report forms, give a copy of the sign-in sheet and any accident/ incident report forms to location coordinator to be copied

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE SCHEDULE - 1 HOUR PROGRAM

8:45 - 9:15 – Clean classroom, make sure you have materials needed, set up sign-in table area

9:15 - 9:30 – 1 Volunteer is at the door welcoming children and parents and making sure they take off shoes, sign-in, have name tags, and personal belongings stowed. The other volunteers are interacting with children.

9:15 – 9:45 – Play time (congregation appropriate tv/music playing)

9:45 – 9:55 – Song time

9:55 – 10:05 – Story time

10:05 – 10:15 – Clean-up prayer, wash hands

10:15 – 10:30 – Snack time

10:30 – 10:45 – 1 Volunteer greets parents at the door with sign-out sheet. Parents pick up children. Notify parents of any incidents or accidents at this time, make sure all personal belongings go with parents and that parents sign-out their children

10:45 – 11:00 – Clean and organize classroom (using Appendix B), take out trash, fill out any accident/ incident report forms, give a copy of the sign-in sheet and any accident/ incident report forms to location coordinator to be copied