NEXTGEN

# NextGen Policy 2026-2027

**Bloomingdale Church** | Kids - PAK - Youth

**REVIEW THE POLICY**
THEN COMPLETE THE NEXTGEN APPLICATION >>
**BLOOMINGDALECHURCH.ORG/NEXTGENVOLUNTEERS**

# NEXTGEN VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

*Bloomingdale Church prioritizes the safety of the children, teens, and families we serve.*

***NextGen volunteers:***

1. Are safe people who love God and others, including:
   - Satisfactory references check completed by church staff (at least every three years)
   - Clear criminal background check (at least every five years)
   - Abstain from pornography, non-marital sexual relationships, illegal consumption, drunkenness
2. Have character that is known publicly and privately, and therefore: *have regularly attended Bloomingdale Church for at least six months, which includes attending service on a regular basis or group with other church attendees present and/or meeting regularly with a church member*
3. Read and agree to follow NextGen Volunteering with Minors Policy
4. Complete annual application by clicking here
5. Receive church staff approval

# NEXTGEN SAFETY POLICY

*We desire to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which healthy spiritual formation can take place.*

**TWO ADULTS IN EACH SPACE**

All activities with children shall be planned in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other adults when working with children.

- There are to be a *minimum of two adults present in any physical space with minors at all times* during a NextGen program or event.

**ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

We have zero tolerance for *any intentional harassment or possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or weapons.* Any individual who does not adhere will 1) be removed from the group and request an immediate pickup from a parent/guardian and 2) not be allowed to return for at least one additional program occurrence.

**SAFE TOUCH**

- Appropriate H's: *Handshake, high-five, half-a-hug, hold a young child's hand, hold an infant*
- Inappropriate: Non-brief contact *or* any contact focused on volunteer interests
- Only children under 3 years old may be picked up or sit in a volunteer's lap to be comforted. *Picking up a child in the gym to play with them is not safe touch.*

**SAFE DISCIPLINE**

- *Affirm good behavior*.
- *Redirect* a misbehaving child/teen by asking them to stop the disruptive behavior. If the behavior continues, guide the child/teen to move to a new area, asking another leader to support/assist. If a child is not able to safely rejoin the group, request a parent/guardian to pick up the child/teen.

- Physical contact is never to be used in any sort of disciplinary action. If a child/teen is disruptive with other students, leaders can physically put themselves in front of the individual to protect him/her and others but should not physically restrain a child/teen.

**SAFE COMMUNICATION**

- *Never promise to keep information secret if: 1) a person shares that they are being harmed, 2) are self-harming (or intending to self-harm), 3) harming others (or intending to).* (See Reporting - Abuse/Harm, pg 4)
- *Opt for face-to-face* communication in public settings.
- *Do not privately contact students of opposite sex.* The only exceptions are if you include another adult of same sex as student in the message or send a group message.
- Self-deleting messaging apps (i.e. Snapchat, BeReal).

**INCIDENTS**

Incidents include administering first aid (more than a bandaid), a head collision, and any of the incidents below. The program point person or classroom teacher is responsible to first communicate the incident to the parent/guardian no later than at the conclusion of the event

*An Incident Report is needed whenever:*

- ❏ Anyone was involved in an incident that resulted in personal injury requiring medical attention
- ❏ Anyone was involved in an incident that resulted in property loss over $25
- ❏ Intentional violation of Bloomingdale Church's NextGen Safety Policy
- ❏ Violation of zero tolerance: a*ny intentional harassment or possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or weapon*

*Complete the Incident Report at www.bloomingdalechurch.org/report* immediately following conclusion of program/event, and no more than 24 hours after incident.

**MOBILE PHONE USE**

*We are present people* and limit our mobile phone use when volunteering.

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

*Volunteers are requested not to take or post photos at NextGen programs/events.*

*Approved photographer takes photos.*

- To become an approved photographer, volunteers must indicate their interest on the NextGen app.
- Approved photographers will receive a lanyard/sticker that identifies them. All photos should be shared with the program's staff member/point leader and may not be posted on personal social media.

**PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINE**

*Please use good judgment*. Please ask yourself: *Are you comfortable with others viewing what you post? Does it honor Jesus Christ and adhere to Ephesians 4:29?* (Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.)
*Read Bloomingdale Church's Social Media Policy.*

**DRIVING & CHURCH VEHICLE USE POLICY**

- *If driving a student(s) of opposite gender*, at least one additional passenger must be present in the car.
- *When giving a minor a ride home*, volunteers *must* obtain verbal/written/text parental approval.
- *Drivers for offsite events must adhere to the following: 1)* Be at least 21 years old 2) Submit driver's license for driving record check (via NextGen application), and not have major violations in past 10 years (reckless/negligent driving, DUI/DWI, hit and run, fleeing from law enforcement) 3) Follow all rules of the road and passenger safety.

- Approved drivers must adhere to the Church Vehicle Use Policy when using the church vehicle.

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC POLICIES

### VOLUNTEER AGE MINIMUMS

- PAK leaders must be in at least 10th grade.
- Jr High youth leaders must have graduated from high school at least one year ago.
- High School youth leaders must be at least 21 years old.

### PAK/YOUTH OFFSITE EVENTS & TRIPS/RETREATS

- *Parental consent forms are required* for each child to participate.
- Events must be supervised by a *minimum* of two approved adults, maintaining at least a 1:7 ratio.

### CHILDREN CLASSROOM DOORS

- All children's classroom doors are to be closed and locked as soon as children have entered the room (typically 10 minutes after the program has started). Door remains closed until the event concludes or the parent arrives for pickup.

### NURSERY

- Children (including volunteer's children) over the age of 2.5 are not allowed.
- Diapering can only be completed within the Nursery by parents, or by female nursery volunteers if approval is given.

### RESTROOMS [BCKids]

- *We recommend that parents take their children to the restroom prior to the program.*
- If a child needs to use the restroom:
    - *At least one female volunteer must be present outside the* doorway of the restroom; and another volunteer within direct view of the restroom.
    - In case of emergency or if a child needs assistance, female volunteer should intervene (and notify staff members or ministry leaders as soon as possible).
    - If possible, direct children to use restrooms adjacent to the Kid's Quad/Check-in desk.
- *Only one child should go into the restroom at a time* to prevent child-on-child abuse, if possible.
    - Day Camp only**:** Multiple children may be in the restroom with the door propped open.
- *If a child is potty-training:*
    - Volunteers should stay outside the door and give verbal assistance. Female volunteers may assist with clothes and wiping needs in the nursery if written approval is given.
    - Parents are to use discretion in preparing their potty-training child (i.e. wearing pull-up).

### FOOD & ALLERGY

- *Be mindful of a child's allergies, including food, insects, and pollen.* Allergies are listed on name tags.
- *No food containing peanuts/tree nuts are to be given as snacks, prizes, or used in crafts.* Please make every effort to avoid food processed in the same manufacturing facility as nuts especially if there is a known allergy.
- *Prizes are built into programming design and budgets.* Please make every effort to limit candy prizes to special occasions.

### CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT [BCKids]

*We require an adult to check-in their children* (age 0 - 3rd grade)*:*

1. Child will receive a name tag with security code.
2. Adult will receive a matching security code to be used at check-out (printed; on mobile app)

*An adult with the matching security label must pick up child(ren) in their classroom, as follows:*

1. NextGen volunteer collects / reviews matching security label from adult.
    - *If security label is misplaced or a designated adult is picking up a child*: ask for photo ID that matches parent, emergency contact, or designated pick-up adult. (If no photo ID: call listed parent to verify *or* ask them to recite listed phone #)
2. Child is checked out and exits classroom with the adult.

**CHILDCARE (Non-NextGen Program)**

- Only volunteers approved to work with minors may oversee children.
- Children's classrooms must be scheduled via Breeze in advance.

# REPORTING - ABUSE & HARM

**Definitions of Abuse**

- *Physical Neglect*: Failure to regularly meet the basic requirements for supervision, housing, weather-appropriate clothing, medical attention, and nutrition for the child
- *Physical/Sexual Abuse*: When a perpetrator intentionally harms a minor physically, psychologically, sexually, or by acts of neglect

**Signs of Abuse to Watch For:**

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or abrasions
- Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, or unattended medical needs
- Moves with discomfort and shies away from physical contact; difficulty sitting or walking
- Extremes of aggression or withdrawal including listlessness and depression
- Inappropriate sex play or knowledge
- Sudden changes in school performance, appetite, or self-worth

**Disclosure of Abuse Or Neglect**

- *If an individual is being abused or neglected, we protect their privacy and ensure that they get help:*
    - *Immediately notify the staff member/program point leader.*
    - *If you think something is wrong, contact Bloomingdale Police Department - 630.529.9868. (They will contact DCFS based on their investigation.)*

**Disclosure of Self-Harm or Suicide**

- *If an individual is being harmed or has intention to harm, we protect their privacy and ensure that they get help.*
- *Proactively get the individual help:*
    - *Immediately notify the staff member/program point leader.*
    - *If you think something is wrong, contact Bloomingdale Police Department - 630.529.9868.*
- Discern and implement an action plan.

**TRAUMA INFORMED CARE & STOPPING SEXUAL PREDATORS TRAINING**

We recommend that all NextGen volunteers have a working knowledge of trauma-informed care and how to spot and stop child predators.

# EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

*Adapted from Bloomingdale Church Protection & Emergency Operations Plan v1.1*

## EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS DRILLING

*Annual evacuation drilling (fire, severe weather, lockdown) is to be scheduled as follows:*

- **BC Staff**: At least once annually on a Wednesday during staff meeting
- **Ushers & Security Team**: At least once annually during volunteer training meeting
- **NextGen Volunteers:** At least once annually during volunteer training meeting
- **Day Camp:** Annually during volunteer training meeting

## FIRE

**Fire evacuation commences immediately** upon fire alarm siren and/or identification of threat of fire.

1. **Evacuate**
    a. Security Team, staff and/or program point leader will instruct all attendees to remain calm and to immediately evacuate using primary and secondary evacuation routes.
    b. NextGen programming: Point leader/classroom leader should line up attendees and exit using the designated route. If possible, collect outdoor wear and classroom roster.
        i. Parents requesting to be near their child will be instructed to follow the evacuation route with class *with the point leader remaining in charge* until accountability and release.
    c. Nursery programming: Children can be placed in a rolling crib.
    d. *Evacuate all NextGen participants/volunteers* to grass area between the parsonages and/or inside the garages. Parents will be reunited with children after accountability.
    e. Evacuate all other individuals in the building to the southwest corner of the parking lot, or east sidewalk parallel to Glen Ellyn Road.
2. **Accountability**
    a. *Take attendance* and report all people accounted for to the designated staff/point leader.
    b. *Insist that no one gets in their car* and attempts to exit the property as this may clog the pathway for the emergency vehicles.
3. **Communicate**
    a. Once all evacuation has commenced, the Security Team or onsite staff member will respond to the Fire Alarm Control Panel (Sprinkler Room) and determine the reason for the activation.
    b. If it is determined that the reason for the fire alarm is a false activation:
        i. A courtesy call to the Bloomingdale Fire Department (630-894-9080) can be made, however the Fire Department must respond to the call regardless of reason.
        ii. The fire alarm can be silenced via the Fire Alarm Control Panel. *Do not reset.*
    c. Designate a Security Team, Staff and/or Program Point Leader to be a communication liaison with arriving Bloomingdale Fire Department units.
4. **Return to normal**
    a. When Bloomingdale Fire Department has determined that the building is clear, Security Team, staff and/or program point leader will instruct attendees to return to normal activities.
    b. Communicate safety by first contacting parents (text or call), and posting an update to 1) BC mobile app 2) BC website notification bar and 3) BC social media account(s). Contact info@bloomingdalechurch.org for access.

# TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER

**Severe Weather Definitions**

- ➔ ***Tornado Watch***: Issued when weather conditions are favorable for the development of severe (supercell) thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes. *A tornado watch therefore implies that it is also a severe thunderstorm watch.*
- ➔ ***Tornado Warning***: An alert issued by the national weather forecasting agencies to warn the public that severe thunderstorms with tornadoes are imminent or occurring.
- ➔ ***Thunderstorm Watch/Warning****:* Issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms in and close to the watch area.
- ➔ ***Snow/ice closing****:* A significant snowfall in which the plows have a difficult time keeping up with the snow that occurs close to the beginning of a scheduled program.
- ➔ ***Extreme cold***: When the predicted wind chill is -20° or lower.

**Pre-Closure of Programming**

If there is severe weather prior to any event including services, the staff person overseeing the program will make a decision concerning cancellation. If not available, the program point leader should confer the decision with an available staff person. If a decision has been made to close a program, communicate first to attendees/parents (email, text, or call), and posting an update to 1) BC mobile app 2) BC website notification bar and 3) BC social media account(s). Contact info@bloomingdalechurch.org for access.

**Monitoring a Severe Weather Watch - Programming is in Progress**

- *If a Watch is in effect*, Security Team, staff and/or program point leaders will be notified of the situation.
- Preparations are to be made to move participants into designated shelter areas if instructed.
- Security Team or designated adult is to continue to monitor the weather situation:
    - "Red Cross Emergency" or "Weather Channel" mobile app
    - Weather radio is available in copier area south of South Lobby

## *Responding to a Severe Weather Warning*

- **The decision to move all participants** to designated shelters should be made by following the chain of command, and *immediately adhered to if a Warning is issued* for the area.
    - Security Team, staff and/or program point leader will instruct all attendees to remain calm and to immediately move to designated shelter areas.
    - NextGen programming: Point leader/classroom leader should line up attendees, collect classroom roster, and move together.
- **Designated shelter locations:**
    - Seek to place as many people as safely possible in designated shelter areas first. (e.g. 4 stall restrooms become a holding room for 25 people)
    - Secondary locations include interior rooms or stairwells, preferably in the basement, without direct exterior windows or doors (e.g. gym kitchen, west Youth Quad hallway, Nursery rooms, Theater Room)
    - Stay away from windows and areas with truss roofs or wide spaces (e.g. gym, sanctuary, common grounds) or elevators.
- **Accountability**
    - Security/assigned adult is to check all areas to confirm everyone is accounted for.
    - In the event that there is a child missing, the teacher/leader should immediately alert the Security Team, staff and/or program point leader of the name and age of the missing child, but stay with their class. Assign individuals to locate the child.
- **Return to Normal:**
    - Security Team, staff and/or program point leader determine when it is safe to return based on clearance from the National Weather Service.
    - Communicate safety by first contacting parents (text or call), and posting an update to 1) BC mobile app 2) BC website notification bar and 3) BC social media account(s). Contact info@bloomingdalechurch.org for access.

## HANDLING A DISRUPTIVE PERSON

- ***Be proactive***. Be alert for anyone that appears out of place or suspicious. The best way to ensure that no aggressive activity occurs is to stop it before it happens.
    - If leading a NextGen program, children/teens are your primary concern. Do not leave your group unattended. Ask another adult to assist.
- ***Do not interact with the individual alone***. Ask another person to assist you and/or request someone to be waiting nearby.
- ***Be friendly and engage the individual in a conversation***. Introduce yourself, ask them their name, where they are from, what brought them to church, how long they have been coming, etc.

**If an individual escalates:**

1. Ask the person to come to a less-crowded area (but do not go alone). This can be a less used hallway or empty room that is nearby.
2. Deescalate the situation if possible by using a non-confrontational, calm manner. Attempt to find out the nature of the problem. *Do not make physical contact with the person*.
3. If the person will *not* come peacefully, or acts aggressively toward others/property:
    a. Make your personal safety and the safety of those around you the highest priority.
    b. As a *last option*, ask the individual to leave. If they will not leave, remove other people from the area. Be ready to lock down the building.

# LOCKDOWN

The decision to initiate a lockdown will be made by the onsite staff person, and then the program point leader. This decision will be made based on an evaluation of potential threats located in and/or outside the building. A lockdown will also be initiated when the church is contacted that there is a threat in the community.

**If it is determined that there is any potential or immediate threat:**

1. **Call 911**. Communicate with emergency responders.
2. **Initiate lockdown**: Security Team, staff and/or program point leader will be notified and all parties involved will move as quickly and calmly as possible to initiate lockdown. Be concise but specific, sharing only necessary information: "We have an emergency in [specified area]. We are locking down all securable spaces."

First priority: **Hide in securable spaces**

1. Find a securable space to hide in (e.g. classroom, gym kitchen, office, storage closet)
2. Manually close and lock all doors. Barricade doorway if possible.
    a. Monitor the door. Open door only to give protection to an individual that does not appear to pose any type of threat (i.e. child).
3. Turn off lights. Move individuals away from the door and out of line of sight from windows.
    a. Quads: Pull divider curtain closed, hiding on opposite side of hallway windows.
4. Silence all mobile devices. Stay very quiet.

Second priority: **Attempt to evacuate** if there is an accessible escape path and/or in an non-securable place

**Fight as a last resort**, and only when your life is in imminent danger.

**Lock Down Cancelled**

1. Law Enforcement (if on site) or Security Team/staff will clear the room and then inform each room that it is safe.
2. Parents will be reunited with minors following NextGen check-out policy in designated location.
3. Communicate safety by first contacting (text, call) parents of minors.

## EVACUATION MAPS

*Emergency procedures and evacuation maps are posted in classrooms and on check-out clipboards.*




