

Children’s Ministry “Bump Up” Guidelines

When and how to communicate with the next level of CM leadership

Steve Alley

Foundational Principles

In any ministry or leadership structure, there are situations that need to be “bumped up” to higher levels for wisdom, direction, permission, or simply as a courtesy to the leadership. These situations are specific to each ministry or department, but there are some “basic principles” that apply to all of these considerations. The “basic principles” are:

- **“When in doubt, check it out”** – “Doubts” that are not communicated can quickly become damaging situations that cause a lack of trust among the leadership team.
- **“Too much communication is always better than too little”** – Over time, the relationships between the various levels of leadership will “season” and mature. This “seasoning” clarifies which situations need to be “bumped up,” and which ones don’t.
- **“Leaders don’t like surprises”** – Generally, those in leadership don’t like surprises. This is especially true for situations that weren’t discussed until it is “too late.”
- **“Bump before you jump”** – It is always best to discuss the situation before a decision or action is taken.



Children’s Ministry “Bump Up” Situations

1. **Policy Questions, Challenges, or Changes** – When a situation “doesn’t fit” within a normal policy boundary, it suggests an “exception” to a policy, or when a policy “needs” to be changed.
2. **New/Significant Changes To Program** – When a new program or a “significant” program change is considered.
3. **New/Significant Changes To Curriculum** – When a major change to the curriculum is considered.
4. **Team Member Issue** – When a team member must be asked to “step down” due to repeated behavior challenges or a failure to abide with the ministry standards or policies. This situation must include previous discussions with the team member about the issue. Those previous situations must have already been communicated to the supervising leader.
5. **Parent Issue** – When a parent complains and demands to “speak with a pastor,” or when a parent complaint cannot be resolved by an initial conversation.
6. **An Injured Child** – This may just be a notification if the injury was minor (bruise or scrape). For major injuries (broken bone, concussion, transport in ambulance) the leadership will want to know more details and may desire to become involved in the “follow-up.”
7. **A Security Issue** – When a “security breach” occurs that involves a lost child, an accusation of abuse, a “dangerous” intruder, or any other security threat.
8. **A Significant Expenditure or Budget Increase** – When the budget is proposed, reviewed, or a significant expenditure is requested.

