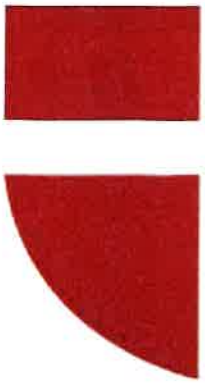

Ministry Safe

Hutto Discovery United Methodist Church

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

2019 EDITION

Approved by Annual Conference Vote on June 12, 2019

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Dear Volunteer or Staff Member,

At our church, we take our responsibility to care for children, youth, and vulnerable adults very seriously. These policies are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children, youth, and vulnerable adults can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for our volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, protecting them, you, and the mission of this church. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Hutto Discovery United Methodist Church

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Policies & Procedures for Ministries with Protected Persons

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Definitions

Protected Persons, when used herein, shall be defined as all children and youth participating in, and served by, programs and activities of the church.

Child, when used herein, shall be defined as anyone age birth through fifth grade.

Student or Youth, when used herein, shall be defined as anyone in sixth through twelfth grades.

Vulnerable Adult, when used herein, shall be defined as an adult who because of physical or mental infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction may be vulnerable to maltreatment. There is not a separate or unique MinistrySafe policy for such vulnerable adults. However, these policies could be a starting point for best ministry practices for protecting and supervising such persons.

Director, when used herein, shall be defined as the person in charge of a particular ministry.

Workers, when used herein, shall be defined as all ministers, employees, program directors, and volunteers involved in programs and activities of the church that are a part of any of the ministries with Protected Persons. Workers may be paid or unpaid.

Safety System Administrator (SSA), when used herein, refers to the person/s who is responsible for administering the MinistrySafe system at this church.

Abuse, by definition, is an act or omission that endangers or impairs a person's physical, mental or emotional health and development. Abuse may take the form of physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, physical neglect, medical neglect or inadequate supervision. It may occur as: adult to Protected Person; adult to adult; or Protected Person to Protected Person.

Act of Abuse, when used herein, shall be defined as any occurrence in which:

- Any person has threatened or inflicted emotional or physical injury upon a Protected Person or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Any person commits or allows any sexual offense to be committed against a Protected Person or engages in any sexual contact with a Protected Person or is reasonably suspected to have done so. This includes any kind of sexual advance including, but not limited to: making a request for sexual favors, engaging in sexually motivated physical contact, engaging in other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a Protected Person, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- A Protected Person makes any kind of unwanted emotional, sexual, or physical advance. This includes, but is not limited to, making a request for sexual favors, engaging in sexually motivated physical contact, or engaging in other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.

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Overview of the Safety System

Because we desire to protect people under our care, our church requires all Workers to complete all **SAFETY STEPS** before working or volunteering in ministries with Protected Persons. This includes all pastors under appointment whether they work directly with Protected Persons.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Our policies and procedures require that Workers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Workers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of our Safety Committee. Workers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a person for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a potential victim, win his/her trust (and the trust of the potential victim's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the potential victim into sexual activity and keep him/her from disclosing the abuse.

To equip our Workers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, we require all Workers to complete MinistrySafe sexual abuse awareness training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Workers are required to complete our Screening Process, which requires a Worker to:

-complete an Employment Application (employees only)
-complete the Safety Application (employees and volunteers)
-complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
-provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)
-a volunteer must attend this church for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Workers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Our church requires that all Workers in ministries that involve Protected Persons undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required. The background check will be renewed every two years.

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Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Our church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every Worker to act in the best interest of all Protected Persons in every program.

In the event that Workers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations in accordance with this policy.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Our church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for Protected Persons and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to our Safety Committee Chair and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or a member of our Safety Committee. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a Worker may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a Protected Person for sexual abuse. Workers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of our Safety Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Our Workers who supervise other Workers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all our policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from ministries with Protected Persons. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Pastor and the Church Council*.

(* See page #19 for Key Staff/Volunteer List for our Church)

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for Protected Persons, Workers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the ministry director, or Pastor*.

(*See Page #19)

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CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a Protected Person will be immediately suspended from participation in ministries with Protected Persons. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a Worker in all activities and programming that involves Protected Persons at our church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from our church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving Protected Persons at our church.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Under Texas law (Texas Family Code — Chapter 261), all adults are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. This responsibility is not discharged until the matter is actually reported. Accordingly, all Workers of this church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

A Worker must report to an immediate supervisor, ministry director, or the pastor, and may allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies on his or her behalf. In no way is any provision in this policy meant to discourage any Worker from personally reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. If the matter is communicated to a supervisor, it remains the underlying Worker's responsibility to ensure the matter is reported to the appropriate authority.

Workers at this church are required to report any inappropriate behavior or policy violation by a colleague or co-worker to the immediate supervisor of the area, the ministry director, or the pastor. These are behaviors that do not necessarily rise to the level of a suspicion of abuse or neglect but DO constitute behaviors that should be communicated to leadership.

Licensed Professionals

Different obligations may exist if the Worker is a 'professional'. Under Texas law, a professional who has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected must make a report no later than 48 hours after the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected and may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. Under Texas law, a "professional" includes any individual who is licensed or certified by the state, and who, in the normal course of his or her duties for which licensure is required, has direct contact with children. Professionals include:

- Teachers or daycare employees
- Nurses, doctors, or employees of a clinic or health-care facility that provides reproductive services
- Juvenile probation officers or juvenile detention or correctional officers.

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Adult Expressions of Past Child Sexual Abuse
In addition, a Worker must make a report if he or she has cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child, and the Worker determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another Protected Person.

The person making a report must identify, if known:

- The name and address of the Protected Person
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the Protected Person, and
- Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged abuse or neglect.

If the Worker is a 'professional', that Worker is required to make the report to the appropriate authorities (the 'professional' cannot delegate the report).

Supervisor Response
Workers — whether or not a professional — are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a Worker in a ministry with Protected Persons, the ministry director, or the pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the Protected Person spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.
If appropriate, the ministry director or the pastor will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services. Church leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: 1-800-252-5400

- www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
Our Safety Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs. Criminal investigation is handled by law enforcement. Administrative review will be initiated by the safety committee or pastor.

- If the allegation involves a layperson, the complaint is forwarded to the pastor and district superintendent.
- If the allegation involves a pastor, the complaint is forwarded to the bishop, assistant to the bishop, and district superintendent. (¶2704.2)
- If the allegation involves a bishop, the complaint is forwarded to the president and secretary of the College of Bishops (jurisdictional body) (¶2704.1)

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Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for Protected Persons, our church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable our church to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee includes the following members*:

1. The Safety System Administrator (SSA), who may also hold one of the following titles
2. the Senior Pastor or other clergy staff assigned by the Senior Pastor
3. the Children's Pastor/Director (staff or volunteer)
4. the Student Ministries Pastor/Director (staff or volunteer)
5. a member of SPRC
6. a member from the Board of Trustees
7. other optional members that may be determined by our church leadership

*(*These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within a church body.)*

MEETINGS

Meetings will be chaired by the Safety System Administrator (SSA) or another committee designee. Meetings of the Safety Committee will be held on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing policies and procedures related to the safety of Protected Persons and risk management issues.

2. Monitoring all ministries with Protected Persons for ongoing compliance with safety policies.

3. Making recommendations to our Church Council regarding safety issues.

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Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of Workers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe Worker interactions with Protected Persons. Supervisors will provide verbal and written feedback as appropriate.

Best practices might include:

- **Each supervisor** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each week for programs that occur on a daily basis.
- **The ministry director or pastor** conducts written performance evaluations every six months for individuals in paid staff positions.
- **The ministry director or pastor** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
- **The Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation of a ministry with Protected Persons at least once each quarter.
- **The Pastor** meets with the ministry director once monthly to discuss programming.
- **The SPRC/PPRC** meets with ministry directors once each year to discuss ministries with Protected Persons, including safety training and procedures.
- **The ministry director** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.

Building Safety

The ministry director will be responsible for ensuring that any area designated for ministries with Protected Persons is monitored during programming or classes. This will include unobserved monitoring of Workers and Protected Persons. After every programming event, Workers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

CHILDREN

No child will ever be left unattended during children's ministry programming or classes, which is understood to include 15 minutes before and until reunited with a parent/after scheduled times. Children's Ministries Workers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a Worker finds he/she is alone with children after departure of other adults, that Worker will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other Workers are present.) Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

Workers are to circulate, watching children giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

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STUDENTS

No student will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during student ministry programming or meetings. Workers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student in any room or building. In the event a Worker finds himself/herself alone with a single student, that Worker will take the student to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a student desires additional conversation or counsel with a Worker after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other Workers are present.)

Any two students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

Worker to Child/Student Ratios

This church is committed to providing adequate supervision in ministries with Protected Persons. In the Central Texas Conference, a minimum of two unrelated adult Workers are required at all times.

CHILDREN

Program	Unrelated Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20

The Central Texas Conference recommends any additional helpers be at least 5 years older than the oldest child participant. If a Worker is 'out of ratio' it is his/her responsibility to immediately notify the ministry director. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute Workers to immediately bring Worker to children ratios into compliance with this policy.

STUDENTS

Central Texas Conference recommends that the primary student leader be at least 5 years older than the oldest student, and any main helpers be 1 year post high school or equivalent and 3 years age difference from oldest youth participant. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for Student Ministry activities and programs:

> For groups up to and including 30 students, there will be a minimum of 2 unrelated Workers supervising. For groups larger than 30 students, there will be a minimum of 3 unrelated Workers supervising. For every additional 15 students, 1 additional Worker will be required.

If a Worker is out of ratio it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the responsible ministry director. This person will make diligent efforts to immediately bring Worker to student ratios into compliance with this policy.

The above ratios are MinistrySafe minimum recommendations. Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better.

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Discipline

It is the policy of this church that Workers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of Protected Persons. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by Protected Persons. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents/guardians and the ministry director. Therefore, Workers must always have contact information for each Protected Person.

For **children**, the CTC recommends the following **best practices**:

- Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management.

- Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).

- If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).

- Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with a clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.

- Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.

- Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).

- Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")

- Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

For **youth**, the CTC recommends the following **best practices**:

- If a youth is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from Workers, that youth will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the youth's

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parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the youth. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, Workers will verbally redirect youth involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents/guardians and the ministry director.

Bathroom Supervision and Assistance

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all Workers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery Workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.").
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- Children should be changed on changing stations or diaper mats only.

Toilet training

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- Young children will never be left unmonitored in bathrooms.
- Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").

It is understood that following bathroom activities all Workers will wash hands and sanitize all necessary surfaces. MinistrySafe recommends that only females or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering or toilet training efforts of children of either sex.

Elementary age children

Elementary age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Workers should never be unmonitored with a child in the restroom.

If a Worker must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another Worker to accompany him/her. If another Worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the Worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

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Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another Worker.

Special Needs
Parents will offer instruction to Workers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

INTOXICANTS
Workers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any of our church facilities, while traveling with Protected Persons, or while working with or supervising Protected Persons.

MEDICATION
Prescription medication may be given to a Protected Person by a designated Worker with a doctor's prescription. All medication must be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication, and a health information sheet must be signed by a parent or guardian. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment and insect bite cream.

NUDITY
Workers should never be nude in the presence of Protected Persons in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the lead Worker must arrange for individual and private spaces for showering and changing clothes for all participants.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH PROTECTED PERSONS
Workers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with **children**. Another Worker who has completed the application and screening process should always be present.

We recognize that meeting the emotional needs of **students** may occasionally require Workers to minister to them on an individual basis. Workers should conduct any one-to-one meetings at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. Privacy should be respected but not secrecy.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION
Social Media is defined as social networking websites or applications that foster interactions in a virtual environment, including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Flickr, blogs, dating websites and apps, and video calling services such as FaceTime or Skype, as well as email, instant messaging, texting and phone calls.

Seeking to provide a safe environment for Protected Persons, it shall be within the scope of our ministry to educate parents/guardians, youth, and children on the safe use of social media platforms. It is recommended that parents/guardians always monitor their child's/student's social media interactions.

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To the best of their ability, church Workers shall NOT:

1) Use social media of any type to share photographs or video of Protected Persons anywhere on the internet except with specific written permission, given to the church, by their parents/guardians to post on official church pages/groups. In certain limited circumstances, a partner organization may invite church staff and volunteers to share photos of children from their organization on the church staff and volunteer's personal social media account. In this case, church staff and volunteers may defer to the partner organization's guidelines. This DOES NOT apply to Protected Persons from our church.
2) Post personal or identifying information of Protected Persons with or without photos or videos, anywhere on the internet without specific written permission, given to the church, by their parents/guardians. For example, pictures of Protected Persons will not have names posted or have parents "tagged."
3) Ask a Protected Person to be a "friend" using any type of social media, such as Facebook. Adults may accept a "friend" request from Protected Persons with the knowledge and permission of their parents/guardians.
4) Ignore or fail to act upon any material that raises suspicion that a Protected Person has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited. The pastor should be contacted immediately in compliance with Texas law and this policy.
5) Use email, texting, phone calls, or other social media to communicate with Protected Persons in inappropriate ways. Inappropriate communication may involve, but is not limited to, discussions of a sexual nature, sexting, sharing inappropriate pictures, manipulation, harassment, intimidation, or grooming issues. Prolonged private discussions between an adult and a Protected Person are also inappropriate, much like it is inappropriate for a face to face discussion of this type to take place with no additional supervision. Conversations through social media should always be conducted by means that can be recoverable (e.g. email, text message, voicemail, Facebook). It is always strongly recommended that parents/guardians be aware of communication that exists between their child and any adult.

TRANSPORTATION

Workers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for Protected Persons. The following requirements must be strictly observed when Workers are involved in the transportation of Protected Persons:

1. Protected Persons should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Best practices of ministry recommend two Workers in every car. **Never will there be a Protected Person alone with an adult in a vehicle.**

2. Workers should avoid physical contact with Protected Persons while in vehicles.

3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving church vans, or vehicles owned or rented, unless in an emergency.

4. Drivers must meet the age requirement of their local church insurance policy.

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PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents/guardians who leave a Protected Person in the care of our Workers will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in ministry programs. Therefore, you must always have contact information for each Protected Person.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents/guardians have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their Protected Person is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's/student's programs will be required to be MinistrySafe compliant.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Our church is committed to protecting those in its care. To this end, our church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our ministries with Protected Persons. The following practices are to be carefully followed by anyone working in ministries with Protected Persons:

1. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between Workers and Protected Persons are important for healthy development and are generally suitable in the church setting.

2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the ministry director or the Pastor.

3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the Protected Person, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a Worker.

4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other Protected Persons or Workers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of Workers in ministries with Protected Persons must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.

6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant Protected Person. A Protected Person's preference not to be touched must be respected.

7. Workers are responsible for safeguarding Protected Persons under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a Worker must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the ministry director or the Pastor.

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SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Workers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with Protected Persons and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any Protected Person in the program. However, it is expected that from time to time ministry discussions and lessons may address age appropriate issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey the church's view on these topics. For youth, it is recommended that parents be notified in advance of these lessons. For children, a parent/guardian signature is required.

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

Workers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of Protected Persons except for lesson material approved by a designated supervisor. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding media used in programming and during events including movies, TV shows, and images. No R-rated movies are permitted.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for Protected Persons and Workers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, Workers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult nonrelated rule must be followed. The 2 adult Workers present must have previously completed our church's application and screening process.

2. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Pastor prior to the activity and have signed approval by parents/guardians. It is recommended that this information be included in the permission slip for the event and signed by the parent/guardian.

3. As long as any Protected Persons are awake, one of the Workers must also be awake and monitoring the Protected Persons to ensure safe behavior.

4. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.

5. In the event of a sleepover that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by Workers of the same gender.

6. Workers will monitor sleeping Protected Persons by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping Protected Persons remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, Workers should never physically touch a Protected Person.

8. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each Worker and Protected Person will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

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TOBACCO USE AND VAPING

Our church requires Workers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco or vaping products in church facilities, while in the presence of Protected Persons or their parents, or during any activities or programs. Our church is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between Workers and Protected Persons should be positive and uplifting. Our Workers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of Protected Persons.

To this end, Workers should not talk to Protected Persons in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, Workers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of Protected Persons.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to our Workers, our church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Workers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Workers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that Workers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the ministry director before releasing the child.

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MinistrySafe Key Staff/Volunteers

Indicated below are the names of people who hold key areas of leadership (whether staff or volunteer) and their contact information. This list will be updated on an annual basis or when changes occur and provided to all active volunteers. It will be maintained with the official policy document.

Job Title	Name	Phone #	Email
MinistrySafe Lead Pastor	Yvonne Coon	512-846-1707	yvonne@huttodiscovery.org
Children's Director	Allison Amling	512-846-1707	allison@huttodiscovery.org
Associate Pastor	Kristen Von Gonten	512-846-1707	kristen@huttodiscovery.org
MinistrySafe Trustee Rep.	George Johnson	512-846-1707	geocom@aol.com
MinistrySafe SPRC Rep.	Ben Cody	512-846-1707	ben@cody.family

Other Supervisors in Children/Youth Ministries:

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Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of the Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at this church.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by this church. Any changes will be made public.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at any time. (If possible, I will provide two weeks notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and this church. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures manual.

_____

Worker's Name (Please Print)

_____

Worker's Signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the Policies and Procedures.]

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Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

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I acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures manual.

_____

Worker's Name (Please Print)

_____

Worker's Signature

Date: _____

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the Safety System Administrator (SSA)]

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