

Hillcrest Bible Church
Youth Protection Policies
(Updated May 2017)

Introduction

The children God has entrusted to us, as a church, are a great responsibility. When children are placed in the care of Hillcrest Bible Church, we are responsible to protect them physically, spiritually, and emotionally, and also to nourish their growth in those areas. Our purpose for this policy is to provide an environment where children can grow, parents are assured of their children's safety, and volunteers are protected from false accusation so that we may most effectively spread the Gospel to the next generation.

All Ages, Nursery – Student Ministries

Screening Procedures

All staff (paid and volunteer) working in any capacity with children 17 years of age or younger must complete the screening process below:

- Six month waiting period for new attenders
- Criminal background check – 17 & over
- Possible reference check
- All helpers must be approved by the ministry deacon or Student Ministry pastor
- All teachers must be members.
- Read and sign this Child Protection Policy.
- All information obtained through the screening process will be treated as confidential.

Training Procedures

- Ministry workers are expected to attend training pertinent to their ministry.

Protection Guidelines

- Two-Worker Rule: Volunteers must not be alone with a child on any part of the church property, inside or outside, or off-campus during any church function/activity. Exceptions are laid out under age-specific sections within this document.
- An approved worker must supervise children.
- Parents are responsible for their children when not in the care of a Children's Ministry volunteer.
- If the front grass area or parking lots are used for supervised games the area must be sectioned off.

Registration Procedure

- Children must be registered for any activity/program where Hillcrest volunteers are responsible for the care of the child.

Environmental Safety Guidelines

- Correct unsafe conditions such as food or liquid spills, extension cords on the floor, etc.

- Report unsafe conditions or fire hazards to a ministry leader or the church office.

First Aid

If an accident occurs, follow the proper First Aid procedures:

- First aid kit locations:
 - Main Building behind welcome center (defibrillator on wall)
 - Activity Center Titus Room drawer with first aid symbol
- If the injury/incident is beyond the scope of your First Aid training, notify the parent and make a decision of what care the child needs.
- If the injury/incident is serious, call 9-1-1.
- Complete incident reports found in first aid box & return to church office. Notify parents.

Healthy Discipline

- No form of corporal punishment or discipline that involves physical pain or discomfort (e.g. striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, pinching) may be used.
- Punishment may not involve humiliating, degrading, threatening, or name-calling.
- Children may be restrained physically if they are in danger of hurting themselves or others.
- A time-out (sitting apart from the group for a short period of time) may be used with a child who is misbehaving or disobedient.
- A disruptive child may be taken to another side of the room or outside of the classroom to be spoken to. The door should be fully open and the teacher should be within sight of the others. Explain the inappropriate behavior to the child and preferably pray with the child.
- If the disruptive behavior persists, a parent may be contacted. Explain exactly what prompted the child's removal from the classroom.

Child abuse symptoms, prevention and reporting procedure:

- Suspicions should be brought to the director.
- Child Abuse is categorized into four areas: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Proper Displays of Affection

Hugging and holding are acceptable and important ways of communicating love and care to young children and are appropriate when done publicly. As children get older, less physical contact is suggested. Kindergarten and school age children should not be permitted to "climb on" children's workers. In addition to the danger of rough play causing possible injury to a child, the risk or accusation of inappropriate touch is too great.

- Genital areas should never be touched except during diaper changing or toileting as is appropriate.
- Children should never be tossed in the air or swung by their arms or legs.
- A child has the right to refuse touch, except for safety or cleansing. Touching must always be done respectfully.
- Allow a child to only touch you respectfully as well.

Off-Campus Special Events and Overnight Policies

- Off-Campus Special Events are church-sponsored events that take place off the premises owned by Hillcrest Bible Church and do not occur on a regular basis.
- All off-campus special events and overnight activities must be pre-approved by the Student Ministry Pastor.
- Medical release forms are required for each child participating in off-campus activities. Youth leaders must have emergency numbers for parents during the activity.
- A consent form must be signed by a parent/guardian. The consent form should include the child's name, type of outing, and a description of the activities to take place. Multiple events may be included on a single form.
- Emergency contacts for activity leaders and students must be available to church staff.
- All off-campus and overnight activities should strive to have two approved adults while with students. Parents may give consent if that looks not to be possible or have made the necessary arrangements.
- Chaperones must be approved workers.
- All supervision guidelines apply.
- Overnight accommodations must include approved youth workers in each room.
- At no time will students be allowed to be unsupervised when on an off-campus activity.
- The supervising Pastor will determine the curfew for the group when participating on overnight activities.
- Any student participating in an overnight activity must remain with the group for the entire event unless prearranged.
- An accompanying parent may not give special permission for his/her child to violate church policy when involved with a church activity.

Drivers

- All drivers must be at least 18 years old, have a valid driver's license and at least two years driving experience.
- Drivers must show current automobile liability insurance with minimum limits of \$100,000/300,000 per occurrence.
- All minors in the car should have parental approval.
- The number of occupants of each car may not exceed the number of seat belts, and each occupant, including the driver, must wear a seat belt.
- Speed limits are not to be exceeded and all traffic laws and courtesy rules are to be obeyed.

Nursery – 4th Grade

Bathroom Policy

Nursery through Preschool:

- We are not responsible for potty training.
- Volunteers should not be alone with a child in an unsupervised restroom, and should not go into a cubicle with a child and shut the door. Two approved workers (Nursery, Pre-K or Security) must escort and assist a child to the bathroom.

Kindergarten – Fourth grades:

- Should use the restroom without assistance. Special exceptions may apply (i.e. disability).
- Children may go with a buddy of the same sex for a short time limit.

Classroom Supervision Guidelines

- No unauthorized persons, including parents or unscheduled workers, are permitted in the Kid Safe Zones.
- Children will not be released without the unique claim tag. If the claim tag has been lost ask for a photo ID. After the parent has left, notify the deacon or student ministries pastor via email or text.
** It is easy to become familiar with regularly attending families and not require the tag. Be consistent.*
- Wear your picture identification tag.
- Two –Adult Rule (18 & over). Any time a worker leaves, the door must be left wide open until he/she returns.
- Two volunteers at all times when in a closed room without windows.
- Only the responsible deacon, or a staff person is authorized to bring in additional non-scheduled approved volunteers.
- Adult workers cannot be replaced with youth/teen workers, unless the responsible deacon or staff person gives permission.
- At no time may any unapproved worker be substituted or utilized!
- No child is to ever be left in a classroom without approved supervision.
- Children may not be left in any nursery until at least two approved workers are present. A parent who is an approved worker may remain in a nursery during drop-off times until the regularly scheduled worker arrives.

Nursery

Diaper Changing Policy:

- Approved workers age 16 and over should change diapers.
- Change diapers in the specified diaper changing area in the nursery when other workers are present.
- Use disinfecting wipes to clean the area used after the diaper has been changed.
- Use antibacterial on your hands after changing a diaper.

Infant Care Policy:

- Approved workers 13 and over should care for the infants.

Unsettled Child Policy:

- If a child in the nursery cries for 15 minutes or more continuously without being able to be calmed, the parents should be paged.

Staff members who are sick with the following illnesses should NOT take care of infants:

- Diarrhea and or vomiting
- Chickenpox or shingles
- Tuberculosis
- Head cold and coughs
- Measles, mumps or rubella
- Skin infections
- Hepatitis

The following is a list of signs and symptoms of infection in infants that exclude them from the nursery:

- Fever (rectal temperature of 101 degrees or higher)
- Rash with fever
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Pink eye
- Breathing difficulties or persistent coughing

Student Ministry (5th Grade & Above)

- Fifth and sixth grade can have one leader but must be in a room with a window and have more than two students. If there are less than three students they will join another classroom.
- At no time should anyone working with teens pursue a dating relationship with a student.
- One-on-one off-campus appointments should be conducted in public places when possible. If that's not possible, youth leaders should receive written permission from the parents.
- Youth leaders are not to be alone with a student of the opposite sex in an automobile or behind closed doors. When counseling in private, leaders should strive to counsel those of the same sex. If it is necessary to counsel someone of the opposite sex, it must be done in an open room or room with windows with clear sight of others at all times.
- When giving rides home, leaders should arrange to drop off a young person of the same sex last.
- Youth leaders should not engage in extended telephone/email or text conversations with a student of the opposite sex.
- Even with same sex mentor relationships, great care must be taken to display an "above reproach" testimony. Meetings should take place in public places and limited demonstrations of affection must take place tastefully and only in public. Typically it should be reciprocated when initiated by the students.
- At no time is any student to be alone in the home of any youth leader unless the spouse of the youth leader is also present and/or the student's parents or guardians have given full permission. Youth leaders are also not to be in a student's home unless a parent or guardian is present or the parent has given permission.
- All youth leaders, even when not acting in an official church capacity, must adhere to these guidelines. As a youth leader, you are a representative of Hillcrest Bible Church and they and others will understand any contact you have with teens, within or outside of the church, as an extension of your ministry with Hillcrest.

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Youth Ministries Protection Policy
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Acceptance,

I, _____, hereby acknowledge receipt of the Hillcrest Bible Church Youth Protection Policies and further affirm that I have read, understand and agree to comply with the provisions of the policy. I understand these policies as they specifically apply to the ministry where I serve.

I agree to provide a safe, fun, and loving place for the children/teens to grow in the knowledge of Christ as their Savior.

_____ Date: _____
(print name) (signature)

Office use only:

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Background approved date: _____