



Ministry **Safe**



Hunter Street Baptist Church

2600 John Hawkins Pkwy

Hoover, AL

205.985.7295

hunterstreet.org

Letter from the Pastor

To our potential volunteers with minors and employees,

In order to provide a safe environment for the children in our church, we have adopted a policy to reduce the risk of child abuse. Every individual desiring to be in leadership with minors must be familiar with this policy and complete our screening procedures satisfactorily.

This Ministry Safe Policy is motivated by several concerns. First, recognizing God's tender love and concern for children (see Luke 18:16), we want to do all that we can to protect our children from any kind of physical or sexual abuse. While we would like to believe that such abuse could never take place in a church, the fact is that many children are being abused within the Christian community every year. Our church is not immune to the effects of sin, and it would be presumptuous for us to assume that this problem could never occur in our church body. Therefore, while we should strive to be as "innocent as doves" we must also be as "shrewd (prudent, sensible, and practically wise) as serpents" (Matthew 10:16). This should be especially true with regard to the children God has placed under our care.

Second, we want to protect our adult leadership from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a child. Such accusations can do a great deal of damage even to an innocent individual. Our procedures for maintaining a safe environment and admonishing inappropriate behavior are designed to prevent compromising situations in the first place, and also to strengthen an individual's defense against false accusations.

Third, we want to protect our church from the scandal and trauma that an incident of abuse could bring upon our congregation. When someone accuses another person in the church of abuse, the entire church body can be drawn into a painful and costly conflict. Divisions in the congregation can arise because of disagreements over how the abuse was allowed to occur and how the situation is being handled. Church leaders would be distracted from important ministries. Legal charges can be filed that may result in a prolonged and expensive lawsuit, and if the news media learns of an abuse situation, it can draw all sorts of adverse publicity to the church. Obviously, these developments would wreak havoc on our ministry, this is another reason why this policy is needed. As Proverbs 22:3 warns, "A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it."

Finally, and most importantly, we believe that this policy will help us to guard the honor and reputation of our Lord Jesus Christ. If a child in our church is harmed through a member's sin, some people will inevitably think less of the church and of our Lord (Romans 2:24). We are committed to do everything in our power to prevent such dishonor from happening, and to protect our children from abuse is one way to do so.

Although the issue of child abuse is an unpleasant one, we believe that God can use our response to these concerns for good (see Romans 8:28-29). Instead of viewing the screening process as a "necessary evil", we see it as an opportunity to promote teamwork (I Corinthians 12:12-31), to demonstrate mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21), and to get to know one another better. During the interview process, the church staff will learn more about your gifts, abilities, and ministry goals, which will help them to guide your work and also to discern ways to spur you on in your walk with the Lord (Hebrews 10:24-25). As a result, the screening process will help not only protect our children but also to build up our church body by preparing us for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-13).

With these thoughts in mind, we ask that you support this Ministry Safe Policy to ensure that our leaders are well qualified for their ministry to the children of our church. Your completion of our screening process is an important part of this task. If you have any questions about procedures for maintaining a safe environment, please feel free to talk with one of the staff members.

Thank you for your cooperation in these matters. We look forward to working with you as you use your gifts and talents to nurture the children God has placed under our care.

In Christ,



Buddy Gray
Senior Pastor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

rev. 09-2024

Appendix List	4
Overview of Ministry Safe System	5
Volunteer Screening Process	7
Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse	8
Risk Reduction Policies	10
Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan	10
Safety Measures	11
Disciplinary Policies	12
Restroom Policies	14
Medication	16
Transportation	16
Overnight Policies	16
Verbal Interactions with Minors	17
One-to-One Interactions with Children	17
One-to-One Interactions with Students	17
Sexually-Oriented Conversations (Children)	18
Sexually-Oriented Conversations (Students)	18
Physical Contact	19
Intoxicants	19
Tobacco Use	19
Sexually-Oriented Material	20
Nudity	20
Parental Involvement	20
Technology and Social Media	21

APPENDIX

- A Ministry Safe Interview Form
- B Ministry Safe Policy Overview for Minors Form
- C Personal Reference Form
- D Personal Reference via Email Form
- E AL Code/The State of Alabama Child Abuse Reporting Requirements
- F AL Child Abuse Reporting Form

MINISTRY SAFE

Child Abuse Risk Reduction Policy for:



Overview of the Ministry Safe System

Thank you for your willingness to serve and invest in the next generation. At Hunter Street Baptist Church, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

We recognize that reports of child sexual abuse both in the community and churches are on the rise. We also understand and recognize that churches are not immune from this danger. Based on our desire and commitment to provide a safe and secure church environment for our children, Hunter Street Baptist Church has adopted the following policies and procedures. These include background screenings on all paid and volunteer personnel that serve in ministries and activities that involve children and students age 18 and under. These Ministry Safe Policies are intended to provide protection to our children, families, and volunteers while they are involved in church activities.

This policy refers only to the protection from sexual abuse of children under the care or direction of the leaders, employees, and volunteers of Hunter Street Baptist Church and is not designed to address other forms of abuse, harassment, or child abuse by or against persons other than those identified herein. Our policies are intended to create safe environments while protecting the children, the volunteers and staff, and the mission of Hunter Street Baptist Church. The following policies and procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

You will be asked to confirm receipt of and agree to adhere to the Ministry Safe policies at the time that your background check is initiated.

PURPOSE: It is the purpose and intent of Hunter Street Baptist Church to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for the children, youth, and individual with special needs (for ease of reference the terms "child" or "minor" will be used in this document) within this church.

GOAL: Our goal is to protect minors from sexual abuse or child molestation by employees or volunteers in this church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations. Hunter Street Baptist Church requires all employees and volunteers working with children, students, and individual with special needs to complete the Ministry Safe process. All Mission Trip participants are also required to complete the Ministry Safe process.

DEFINITION OF A MINOR: A minor is any individual birth through age 18.

DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: “Any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child provided the child is four (4) years older than the victim.” (Adopted from The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse.)

Child sexual abuse can be violent or non-violent. It is inappropriate behavior that involves children in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of the oral, genital, or anal areas; intercourse; or forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, pornographic videos and other materials, obscene phone calls, improper online or wireless communications, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Volunteer Screening Process

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, Hunter Street Baptist Church requires all employees and volunteers working with children, students, or individual with special needs to complete FOUR SAFETY STEPS before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the Ministry Safe screening process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- Complete a Leadership Application (volunteers) or an Employment Application (employees)
- Complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- Provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

*A volunteer must be a member of Hunter Street Baptist Church for six months before being eligible to serve in volunteer positions providing access to children, students, or vulnerable populations. Exceptions may be made for short-term, non-teaching roles.

STEP TWO: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and confirm that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements. Confirmation will take place when background check is initiated.

STEP THREE: Criminal Background Check

Hunter Street Baptist Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors. Background Checks will be renewed every three years for church members and will be renewed each year for non-members.

STEP FOUR: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

To equip Hunter Street's staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Hunter Street requires all staff members and volunteers to complete Ministry Safe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every three years.

Hunter Street Baptist Church's policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid Child Sexual Abuse of any kind. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the

process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or "gatekeeper"), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

FINAL STEP: Volunteer Placement

Once a volunteer has completed the previous steps, they are cleared to begin serving in ministries and programs that include children and students. The supervising minister over the particular program or area of ministry will work with the volunteer to find their place of service.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our minors, Hunter Street staff members and volunteers 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 Director of Church Safety, or the Executive Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be inappropriate or harmful to a minor will be immediately suspended from participation in Hunter Street ministries and activities involving minors. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be inappropriate or harmful to a minor will be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students, or individual with special needs at Hunter Street. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving minors at Hunter Street.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

Hunter Street is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for minors and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behavior or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and when required will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services or criminal law enforcement. As stated in the Alabama State Code, Clergy are mandatory reporters and will report suspicions or incidents of abuse.

Because sexual abusers “groom” children for abuse, it is possible that a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a minor for sexual abuse. Please report “grooming” behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, Director of Church Safety, or the Executive Pastor in order that the church may take appropriate action to safeguard minors in the program.

In Accordance with State Law We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of minors to the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR):

Child Abuse Hotline: 205-423-4850

Jefferson@dhr.alabama.gov

Because many adults are unfamiliar with Alabama’s reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, Hunter Street Baptist Church utilizes a “tandem” or “dual report” model, where permitted. A “dual report” occurs when a Hunter Street Ministerial Staff member reports the suspicion or allegation together with the individual who saw, heard, or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect. A written report of suspected child abuse, using the DHR Form 1593, will be completed as well. **When in doubt, report.**

* ALA. CODE, Title 26-14, 15, 16

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, DHR, OR THE ABUSE HOTLINE DIRECTLY. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children, and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse (or any inappropriate or “grooming” behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to an immediate supervisor, Director of Church Safety, or Executive Pastor. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in Hunter Street programs.

RISK REDUCTION POLICIES

Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

BUILDING SAFETY

Hunter Street staff members and ministry supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving minors. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes, or activities. Camera surveillance will also be used in areas for minors.

SUPERVISION

Only parents (dropping off/picking up minors), screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and minors are allowed in areas where ministry to minors is occurring. All other adults should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a Hunter Street staff member or ministry supervisor should be notified immediately.

TWO ADULT RULE

Two trained, screened adults should supervise children at all times. Avoid being alone with an individual child in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another volunteer or employee must be notified so that the Two Adult Rule can be followed. (Exceptions to this rule include the Hunter Street Weekday Education Program and the Hunter Street Homeschool Cooperative where a single teacher leads a classroom. In these instances, other safety measures will remain in place – ministry safe approved teachers, classroom cameras, view windows in doors, and staff/coordinator oversight.)

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, 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 staff members or volunteers are present.)

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area, and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

VIEW WINDOWS

Every effort will be made to place children, students, and individual with special needs in rooms with view windows to allow visual access into rooms from the hallway.

PLAYGROUNDS

On the playground Hunter Street staff members or volunteers should circulate, watching minors during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures.)

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

Safety Measures

WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS

Hunter Street Baptist Church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all age-graded Ministry programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-child ratios are recommended:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	6
Toddlers	2	8
Preschool, 2 & 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 & 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
Students	2	20

If a worker is “out of ratio,” it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the ministry leader or the Church Staff. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to bring worker-to-child ratios into compliance with church policy.

RELEASE OF MINORS

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Hunter Street, Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

CHECK-IN

Upon check-in, each child (birth through 3rd grade) will receive a nametag and their parent or guardian will be given a claim tag. Volunteers must match the claim tag to the minor's name tag before releasing a child at pick up. If a claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to the closest Ministry Welcome Desk where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child is released or tag replaced (have the child stay in the classroom; the parent may pick up the child once cleared).

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

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Minister in charge before releasing the child.

Disciplinary Policies

DISCIPLINE

It is Hunter Street Baptist Church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. 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 children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually, when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. *When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.
2. If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation and a clear explanation of your expectations. ("Terry, you didn't stop hitting Kelly when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.")
3. After a 3rd time, refer to a staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

*Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to a ministry supervisor.

NEVER...

- Never yell at a child.
- Never grab a child.
- Never threaten a child. Always follow through with your word.
- Never hit a child.
- Never confront a parent in front of others.
- Never openly humiliate a child in front of the class.
 - Exceptions include Separating minors in an altercation or restraining minors for their own safety or safety of others.

BULLYING

Verbal, physical, or emotional bullying is not acceptable in Hunter Street ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. First Offense: Issue a warning to the minor and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. Second Offense: Pull the offending minor(s) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the minor know that the next step is communication with a Hunter Street staff member and the child's parents. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a minor who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. **DO NOT SINGLE A MINOR OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP ... be discreet.**

3. Third Offense: Send the minor to a Hunter Street staff member or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

Restroom Policies

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a bathroom in use by children. Adults should use a restroom separate and apart from restrooms used by children during weekend services or when there are children present. No volunteer OF ANY AGE should enter or occupy a bathroom while children are using it. When no child is present, adults (and student volunteers) are allowed in a bathroom (one at a time) so long as there is another adult at the doorway keeping any child from entering.

NURSERY/PRESCHOOL

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

DIAPERING

- Only adult female nursery workers (19 and older) or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Children should be changed on changing stations only.
- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children should never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions should be communicated to the preschool volunteers.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

TOILET TRAINING

- If there is a child in training, a note should be included on the child's security nametag.
- Only adult female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- If needed, children can be assisted in the straightening of their clothing before returning to the room.
- "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing with the presence of another adult. Extra clothing and diapers are available from the preschool ministry if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

GRADES 1–6

Ideally, a child or group of children will be escorted to the bathroom by an approved adult. If a child requires immediate assistance in the restroom, a staff member or volunteer (of the same gender) may assist them as long as another approved adult can stand at the door and observe. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

When restroom use is required:

- Children should be escorted to the bathroom entrance by an approved adult.
- Only one child in the restroom at a time, in a single toilet facility.
- Only approved staff or volunteers will assist children in the restroom, with another adult present. The exception would be a parent assisting their own child with no other children present.
- When a volunteer is assisting a child, the door must not be closed or locked, and another approved adult should be present. In general, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- Be aware if a child repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor if it occurs.
- A single staff member or volunteer should never take a lone child to the restroom.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers regarding diaper changing or restroom needs of individuals with special needs. If someone with special needs requires assistance using the restroom, a special needs volunteer may assist them in the restroom or parents may be called for assistance.

STUDENTS

Be aware if a student repeatedly leaves to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor. In public contexts, send students to use the restroom in groups of at least three, when possible.

Medication

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child while serving in ministry programs, including “over the counter” drugs. For certain trips or activities (i.e., mission trips, camps, retreats), Hunter Street Baptist Church will bring a medical professional or specific leader who will dispense appropriate medications consistent with other policies and signed parent agreements.

Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for Minors. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when staff members or volunteers are involved in the transportation of minors:

- Minors should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one minor in transport.
- The Two Adult Rule must be in effect for transportation of minors.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with minors while in vehicles.
- No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving personal vehicles or vehicles owned or rented by Hunter Street Baptist Church, unless in an emergency.
- No drivers under age 25 may drive Hunter Street owned or rented vehicles.
- There should be enough seats and seatbelts in each vehicle for each person.

Overnight Policies

Beginning with elementary-aged minors, the ministries of Hunter Street may include optional, overnight trips, camps, or retreats. The following guidelines should be strictly observed during overnight activities:

- All adults attending the overnight ministry event must have completed the entire Ministry Safe process.
- Adults should never sleep in the same room as minors unless they are part of the same immediate family.
- In planning the event, every effort should be made to ensure that no person (adult or minor) should have to share a bed with another person (adult or minor).
- No person (adult or minor) should enter the room of a person of the opposite gender under any circumstances. The only exception would be married couples who are supervising the event and rooming together.
- Adult supervision of the facility and hallways should extend past the curfew or “lights-out” time to ensure that minors stay in their appropriate rooms.

Verbal Interactions with Minors

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and minors should be positive and uplifting. Hunter Street staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of minors.

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

One-to-One Interactions with Children

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with minors while participating in Hunter Street Ministry programs. Another adult who has completed the Ministry Safe process should always be present, or the conversation should take place in the open in view of others.

One-to-One Interactions with Students

Meeting the emotional or spiritual needs of students may occasionally involve interaction on an individual basis. Please observe the following guidelines when interacting with minors:

- The Two Adult Rule should be diligently followed during ministry programs: do not interact alone with an individual student in any room or building.
- In the event you find yourself alone with a single student, move to a room or area occupied by others or to a location easily observed by others.
- One-to-one meetings with an individual student must occur at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. Example: If a student desires additional conversation after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present or into a public space.
- If a closed-door meeting must occur, it should occur on church property with a second adult present. The door must remain unlocked and any window treatments open.
- When possible, avoid one-to-one meetings with a student who is the opposite gender. If a one-to-one meeting between a staff member and student of the opposite gender is unavoidable, it must be held in a publicly viewable room where both the staff and the student can be seen during the meeting. Another staff member must be aware and designated to periodically observe the staff member and student while meeting.

- Any ongoing meetings with students (such as counseling, one-to-one discipleship, etc.) should be discussed with a Student Ministry Staff Member and should comply with the Two Adult Rule OR occur in a public, easily observed location.
- Staff members and adult volunteer leaders may not date (or have any sort of romantic interaction with) students in the student ministry.

Sexually-Oriented Conversations (Children- thru 6th Grade)

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually-oriented conversations with minors and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any minor.

Sexually-Oriented Conversations (Students- 7th-12th Grade)

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually-oriented conversations with students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any student in the program.

However, it is expected that from time-to-time student ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the students the church's views on these topics. Students may have questions or struggles in this area and desire to confide in a trusted adult leader for guidance. Proceed with great caution, teaching with sensitivity and from a biblical perspective.

- Avoid discussing anything of a sexual nature with students of the opposite gender.
- If a student's questions or comments on a sexual matter become too detailed or explicit in a group setting, the leader should use discretion and set up another time to meet with this student. For any follow-up meeting, inform a Student Ministry Staff member first and comply with the Two Adult Rule OR meet in a public, easily observed location.
- When in doubt as to whether a conversation could be interpreted as a "sexually-oriented conversation," treat the conversation as such and follow this policy. When possible, clarify the question/topic with a Student Ministry Staff Member.

Physical Contact

Hunter Street Baptist Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Hunter Street has implemented a “physical contact policy” which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our ministries while protecting minors. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in ministries with minors:

- 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 Ministerial Staff, or the Executive Pastor.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the minor and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other minors or staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation. Appropriate physical contact includes actions such as: high-fives, fist bumps, side hugs, pat on the back, etc.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant minor. A minor’s preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting minors under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Ministerial Staff, or the Executive Pastor.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Hunter Street facility, while traveling with minors, or while working with or supervising minors

Tobacco Use

Hunter Street requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of minors or their parents, or during Hunter Street activities, programs or trips..

Sexually-Oriented Material

Staff members and volunteers at Hunter Street are prohibited from possessing any sexually-oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers at Hunter Street should never be nude in the presence of minors 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 ministry staff responsible for the event will ensure safe and private arrangements for both minors and adults to shower and change individually.

Parental Involvement

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Hunter Street staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in ministries or programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Hunter Street. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at Hunter Street will be required to complete the Ministry Safe process prior to volunteering.

Technology, Texting, and Social Media

All communication with minors must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the Ministerial Staff or a parent.

TEXTING/MESSAGING

Texting between Hunter Street staff members & volunteers and students is permissible only as outlined below.

In general, messaging should occur in group form, whenever possible. Though students may reply individually, make every effort to send messages in group form and encourage replies to the group.

- Prudent judgment must be used in the timing and content of messages. Communication should not take place late at night or early in the morning, unless it occurs as part of a programmed Ministry activity.
- Do not message inappropriate or off-color content or comment on inappropriate or off-color texts. When in doubt, treat a message as inappropriate.
- Avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via messages.
- Do not send photos and/or videos of a sexual or suggestive nature.

Guidelines for Volunteers

- Whenever possible, use group messaging to communicate with students. A volunteer should not initiate one-on-one conversation with an opposite gender student.
- When necessary, redirect to a face-to-face conversation or include another adult in your response. This includes when you receive one-on-one communication with an opposite gender student.
- Do not use social media direct messaging to initiate a conversation with a student. If a student reaches out to you through social media direct messaging, redirect the conversation to a group or text messaging or face-to-face conversation.
- If content of communication concerns issues of Child Sexual Abuse, reach out to student ministry staff immediately for next steps.

Guidelines for Staff

- Whenever possible, use group messaging to communicate with students. Staff should avoid initiating one-on-one conversation with an opposite gender student through their personal device.
- When necessary, redirect to a face-to-face conversation or include another adult in text response. This includes when you receive one-on-one communication with an opposite gender student.
- Do not use social media direct messaging to initiate a conversation with a student. If a student reaches out to you through social media direct messaging, redirect the conversation to a group or text messaging or face-to-face conversation.
- If content of communication requires mandatory reporting, take the appropriate steps to report.

APPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

It is permissible for Student Ministry leaders to use apps with messaging features (i.e. GroupMe, Remind, etc.) – At least one other Ministry leader or staff member must be included in the group messaging.

- Do not like, comment, or reply to a student’s post that is inappropriate or questionable.
- All interaction must be above reproach and reflect the integrity and values of Hunter Street Baptist Church’s ministries.
- Do not post inappropriate or off-color content or comment on inappropriate or off-color posts. When in doubt, treat a post as inappropriate.
- Interactions with minors through applications that allow anonymous or disappearing messaging are not permissible. (i.e. Snapchat, WhatsApp, etc.)
- Applications like GroupMe and Remind are ideal for group messaging. The Two Adult Rule still applies to the digital space.

MEET UP APPLICATIONS

Though the use of relationship applications is commonplace and acceptable, Ministry leaders are prohibited from participating in Meet & Date or Meet & Chat applications intended to facilitate sexual encounters.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

As a Ministry leader, maintain a high moral standard in your social media presence.

Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension from participation in Student Ministry at Hunter Street Baptist Church or termination of employment, if an employee. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media. Please ensure that photos or videos posted on social media reflect Hunter Street’s ministry guidelines related to alcohol, tobacco, and modesty (dress, posture, and content).

You will be asked to confirm receipt of and agree to adhere to the Ministry Safe policies at the time that your background check is initiated.

APPENDIX A

Interview for Serving in Ministry Programs Involving Minors

Name of Applicant: _____

Position: _____ Ministry: _____

* Interviewer: Communicate to applicant that the reason for these questions stems from our commitment to the safety of the minors in our care. We ask these questions of every volunteer that serves with minors in any capacity.

1. Have you worked or volunteered with children or students in the past? If so, tell me about it.
2. Do you have a preference concerning the age of children or students with whom you work? If so, why? (What is the basis for this preference?)
3. As a ministry, we are committed to the safety and well-being of our children and students. Is there anything in your past or present that would prohibit you from serving/volunteering with minors?
4. Have you ever abused or molested a child? Have you ever been accused of abusing or molesting a child?
5. Have you ever been convicted of or plead guilty or no contest to abuse or any sexual misconduct?
6. Have you ever been the victim of abuse or molestation? If so, have you received the care and counseling you need to recover? Is there anything your church can do to care well for you?

* Interviewer: At the end of the interview, communicate to the applicant about the next step of Ministry Safe Training. Please point out the nature and sensitivity of the content.

Date of Interview: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____

APPENDIX B

Ministry Safe Policy Overview for Minor Volunteers

Hunter Street Baptist Church is committed to providing safe, secure ministry environments for all people, and will take additional steps to aggressively protect children, students, and individual with special needs. Caring well for the safety and protection of our minors is critical for our on-campus and off-campus activities, trips, and events.

As a Volunteer in an upcoming ministry event or activity that involves minors (children 18 and under) we will ask you to read and acknowledge that you understand the guiding principles to keep everyone safe: including you, other minors, and the adults involved.

As part of our volunteer approval process, we ask all volunteers to complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This document serves as a substitute for the video training for minors where a parent/guardian prefers that their student not watch the Ministry Safe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training content. Please read and discuss the following principles with your parent/guardian. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Minister in charge of your event or trip.

Guiding Ministry Safe Principles:

- Whether on campus or off campus, encourage kids and students to stay close to their classroom or ministry site and to make sure adult leaders know where they are at all times.
- Adults and minors should never be in a room or secluded area alone. A minimum of 2 adults/leaders should always be present with minors. Your interaction with a child or student should always occur within sight of others.
- If a minor (not including other student leaders) is present in a restroom, please wait to enter until the minor has left the restroom.
- If working with babies or young children, diaper changes and restroom assistance should be handled by the adult leaders.
- Please limit physical interactions with minors to high fives, fist bumps, handshakes, and side hugs. These interactions should take place within sight of others.
- Physical affection with a child that is not appropriate includes: massages, games that involve touching areas covered by a bathing suit, and sitting older children/students on your lap (4yrs and older).
- If you observe anything out of place or inappropriate, report this to an adult leader or church staff member/minister immediately.

APPENDIX B Continued

Ministry Safe Policy Overview for Minor Volunteers

- If a minor, other student volunteer, or adult shares information with you about any kind of abuse, report that conversation to the minister in charge as soon as possible.
- Any inappropriate behavior or interaction with another minor or student will be taken seriously and may result in termination of volunteer opportunities or being sent home. This includes digital interactions and content, as well as interactions with other student or adult leaders.

Signature and Acknowledgement of Policies

I, the parent/guardian, acknowledge that I have read, understood, and discussed these principles with my student who will serve as a volunteer.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Name Printed

As a student leader, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and discussed these principles with my parent/guardian and agree to comply with these standards of safety.

Student Signature

Date

Student Name Printed

APPENDIX C

Personal Reference Form for Volunteers in Ministry Programs

Name of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Contact Info: _____

1. How long have you known this applicant? _____

2. What is your relationship to the applicant? _____

3. How would you rate applicant's ability to work with and relate to children?
_____ Above satisfactory _____ Satisfactory _____ Below satisfactory

4. Can you give me an example of how you have seen the applicant relate to children or students?

5. Do you know if the applicant has worked with children in the past? If so, what type of work or services with children has the applicant provided? (Example: Elementary School "room parent", little league assistant coach, reading mentor, etc.)

6. Have you known the applicant to use harsh or abusive discipline with a child? Do you know of any reason the applicant would pose a danger to any child? Are you aware of any claim of child abuse or neglect alleged against the applicant?

7. Would you be comfortable placing one of your own children in the care of the applicant? Why or why not?

APPENDIX C Continued

Personal Reference Form for Volunteers in Ministry Programs

8. Do you have any concerns about this person serving with minors? If so, please explain

Signature of Interviewer: -----

Printed Name of Interviewer: -----

Date of Interview with Reference: -----

APPENDIX D

Personal Reference Email Content for Volunteers in Ministry Programs

Name of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Contact Info: _____

Sample Email Content for Reference:

(Name of Reference),

Your name was given to us by _____ as a reference. This person either has joined or is considering joining our _____ Ministry as a volunteer at Hunter Street Baptist Church. Below are a few questions for you as a reference. We would appreciate it if you would respond to the questions below in email form by __ (Date) __.

At Hunter Street Baptist Church, we desire to offer a safe, excellent, and age-appropriate atmosphere for all age-graded ministries and programs. We ask all volunteers to complete applications and provide recommendations to us through references. Thank you, in advance, for assisting us through your thoughtful responses to this request.

All information is held in strict confidence, with limited access to this private information. If you would prefer to provide this reference information by telephone interview, please give me a call at this number: __ (Your Phone #) __.

Thank you for your timely assistance with this reference.

____ (Your Name & Title) ____

Please respond to these questions about the applicant:

1. What is your relationship to the applicant and how long have you known them?
2. How would you rate applicant's ability to work with and relate to children? (Above satisfactory, Satisfactory, or Below satisfactory) Why?
3. Do you know if the applicant has worked with children in the past? If so, what type of work or services with children has the applicant provided? (Example: Elementary School "room parent", little league assistant coach, reading mentor, etc.)

APPENDIX D Continued

Personal Reference Email Content for Volunteers in Ministry Programs

4. Would you be comfortable placing one of your own children in the care of the applicant? Why or why not?

5. Do you have any concerns about this person serving with minors? If so, please explain.

APPENDIX E

ALABAMA CODE § 26-14-3 MANDATORY REPORTING

<https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/code-of-alabama>

(a) All hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, physical therapists, nurses, public and private K-12 employees, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education, members of the clergy, as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, and shall be followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority.

(b)(1) When an initial report is made to a law enforcement official, the official subsequently shall inform the Department of Human Resources of the report so that the department can carry out its responsibility to provide protective services when deemed appropriate to the respective child or children.

(2) As soon as is practicable after a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect is made, the Department of Human Resources shall make efforts to determine the military status of the parent or guardian of the child who is the subject of the child abuse or neglect allegation.

(3) If the Department of Human Resources determines that a parent or guardian under subdivision (2) is in the military, the department shall notify a United States Department of Defense family advocacy program at the military installation of the parent or guardian that there is an allegation of child abuse or neglect that is being investigated that involves a child of the military parent or guardian.

(c) When the Department of Human Resources receives initial reports of suspected abuse or neglect, as defined in Section 26-14-1, including suspected abuse or neglect involving discipline or corporal punishment committed in a public or private school or suspected abuse or neglect in a state-operated child residential facility, the Department of Human Resources shall transmit a copy of school reports to the law enforcement agency and residential facility reports to the law enforcement agency and the operating state agency which shall conduct the investigation. When the investigation is completed, a written report of the completed investigation shall contain the information required by the state Department of Human Resources which shall be submitted by the law enforcement agency or the state agency to the county department of human resources for entry into the state's central registry.

APPENDIX E Continued

ALABAMA CODE § 26-14-3 MANDATORY REPORTING

<https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/code-of-alabama>

(d) Nothing in this chapter shall preclude interagency agreements between departments of human resources, law enforcement, and any other state agencies on procedures for investigating reports of suspected child abuse and neglect to provide for departments of human resources to assist law enforcement and other state agencies in these investigations.

(e) Any provision of this section to the contrary notwithstanding, if any agency or authority investigates any report pursuant to this section and the report does not result in a conviction, the agency or authority shall expunge any record of the information or report and any data developed from the record.

(f) Subsection (a) to the contrary notwithstanding, a member of the clergy shall not be required to report information gained solely in a confidential communication privileged pursuant to Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence which communication shall continue to be privileged as provided by law.

(g) Commencing on August 1, 2013, a public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

(Acts 1965, No. 563, p. 1049, §1; Acts 1967, No. 725, p. 1560; Acts 1975, No. 1124, p. 2213, §1; Acts 1993, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 93-890, p. 162, §3; Act 2003-272, p. 645, §1; Act 2013-201, p. 416, §1; Act 2016-354, §2; Act 2017-257, §1.)

APPENDIX F

Written Report Of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
WRITTEN REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Please print or type all known information. The Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Law and instructions are explained on the back of this form.

SECTION I – CHILDREN ALLEGEDLY ABUSED OR NEGLECTED				
NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	SEX	ETHNICITY	DATE OF BIRTH/AGE	
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
6. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	

ADDRESS _____

Street Address	City	State	Zip	Telephone Number
----------------	------	-------	-----	------------------

SECTION II – OTHER PERSONS LIVING WITH THE CHILDREN (Include parents/custodians and other children in the home)				
NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE	ETHNICITY	RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHILDREN	
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	

SECTION III – PERSON(S) ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ABUSE OR NEGLECT				
NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	SEX	ETHNICITY	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE	
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
Street Address _____	City _____	State _____	Zip _____	Telephone Number _____
Relationship To Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected _____				
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____	
Street Address _____	City _____	State _____	Zip _____	Telephone Number _____
Relationship To Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected _____				

SECTION IV – ABUSE OR NEGLECT ALLEGATIONS (Describe what happened, how it affected the children, and the date(s) occurred, if known.)

Did you see the abuse or neglect when it occurred? Yes No If no, how did you find out about it? _____

Please identify other people who witnessed the abuse/neglect or who may have information about the child's or family's situation.

Name	Address	Telephone #	Relationship to Children
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____

SECTION V - OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

SECTION VI - REPORTER

Name _____	Address _____	Telephone Number _____	Title/Agency/Relationship To Children _____
Did you verbally report the allegations to the Department of Human Resources or law enforcement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (specify to whom in section below) <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Signature _____	Name _____	Name of County DHR, Police Department, or Sheriff's Department _____	Date Reported _____
Date _____		Date Report Received _____	

For DHR Use Only County _____ Case # _____ Date Report Received _____

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

(This content will be added as a digital step prior to Background Check authorization)

I have received and read a copy of Hunter Street Baptist Church’s Ministry Safe policies and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Hunter Street Baptist Church.

I understand the manual may be modified and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Hunter Street Baptist Church.

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 Hunter Street Baptist Church 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 Hunter Street Baptist 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.

I acknowledge receipt of Hunter Street Baptist Church’s Ministry Safe manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer’s name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer’s signature

Date: -----