

Student Ministries Safety Policies & Procedures For Heritage Baptist Church

POLICY – Recognizing that the safety and well-being of minors entrusted by the LORD to Heritage Baptist Church is of the highest importance it is therefore the policy of HBC that these children be protected by all practical means. This would include, but not be limited to, continuous supervision by screened, qualified, and trained adults, real-time monitoring by remote cameras and room administrators where deemed necessary.

ACTION – It is the responsibility of the Student Ministry Pastor, Student Ministry Staff and volunteers to ensure that the actions detailed below are routinely carried out. If it becomes necessary to change any of the requirements below, the Student Ministry Pastor will advise the Executive Pastor in advance of the change to allow time for discussion and resolution. Any deviation from the requirements below should be brought to the attention of the Student Ministry Pastor, and, if necessary, elevated to the attention of the Executive Pastor or Senior Pastor.

The Student Ministries Team Includes:

Pastor Nathan Fox, Pastor of Student Ministries

Elizabeth Huggins, Ministry Assistant

Syri Pendelton, Youth Ministry Pastoral Assistant

VOLUNTEER WORKER SELECTION

Qualifications

- Knows Christ personally as Lord and Savior.
- Models Christ-like character, a Christian life-style and evidences continuing spiritual growth.
- Has attended Heritage Baptist Church for at least 6 months (occasional exceptions may be made to the 6 month rule per recommendation of pastoral staff).
- Agrees to uphold the ministry in prayer.
- Commits to conscientious preparation and carrying out of responsibilities.
- Room Admins and Teachers (Sunday Morning) are members of Heritage Baptist Church and attend the worship service at Heritage regularly (at least twice a month).
- Small Group Leaders, Cafe Workers and Event Helpers attend the worship service at Heritage regularly (at least twice a month).

Application/Screening of Adults

- Complete online application.
- Applications are reviewed by the Student Ministry team.
- A background check is conducted.
- A follow-up interview is set up and completed for positions that have direct discipleship involvement with a teen (ex. Small Group Leader). This interview will be with the Student Ministry Pastor.
 - Approved applicants will receive information on procedures, policies and specific ministry information.
 - Applicant signs a statement agreeing to abide by the Student Ministries Safety Policies and Procedures.
 - Applicant completes MinistrySafe training.

An observation period may be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the ministry fit. All observations will be evaluated and discussed with the volunteer as a helpful learning experience.

VOLUNTEER WORKER GUIDELINES

General Security

During services teens 7th-12th grade are to be in the appropriate classroom or with their parent(s). No teen should be wandering the halls unsupervised. In general, only adults those who are serving are allowed in the youth area during services. The Youth Pastor and Room Admins will redirect people when necessary.

Most youth rooms and hallways have video camera surveillance that not only records, but is monitored live.

When in use, classroom or room lights should remain on.

Only authorized volunteers are allowed in the classroom. Family members of the volunteer need to wait outside until teens are released (Sunday) or small groups let out (Wednesday). For teens who require extra parental oversight, a special request may be submitted to the Student Ministry Team, with the Student Ministries Pastor making the final decision on a case by case basis.

Any vehicle transportation that involves an adult and teen is first arranged and run through the teen parent(s).

Please keep general security in the forefront of your mind at all times. Be observant. Contact the Student Ministry Pastor with any concerns. Let's work together to keep our environment safe and secure.

Contact Persons

- The Student Pastor oversees the youth ministry.
- The Student Pastor's number is given to all volunteer leaders in case he needs to be contacted.
- In his absence, room administrators (a married male and female couple) oversee a respective room as monitors and supervisors.
- Each small group leader in a respective room will be given their room administrator's cell phone number to contact as needed.

Visiting Adults

On occasion, an adult (parent, potential youth leader candidate, LU Student getting Practicum Hours) who has not gone through the volunteer worker selection process will request to visit in the classroom. These guidelines will be followed.

- The Youth Pastor will notify the room admins of the visiting adults presence, to insure a monitoring.
- Observation may take place for three weeks, except in specific cases approved by the Student Ministries Pastor.

Extracurricular Student Events

- Outside activities must be approved by the Student Pastor. Teens are not to be taken off the premises without parental knowledge and approval.
- Drivers must be adults that have a valid driver's license and liability insurance. Proof of both will be requested. The number of passengers should not exceed the number of seat belts. (Teens must be buckled up.)
- Bus arrangements must be made with the Student Pastor.

Discipline Procedures

Discipline should be carried out through instruction, training, and correction. Physical punishment, such as hitting, is never appropriate in Student Ministries. Volunteer small group leaders are encouraged to consult with the Room Administrators and Student Ministry Pastor regarding teen's discipline issues.

Teach the Honor Principle. "Treat people as special, doing more than what's expected, and have a good attitude." Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another."

Rules for teens:

- *Respect Those in Charge* — This includes listening to instruction and following directions as is necessary and appropriate for the well-being of all involved.
- *Respect Each Other* — This includes using good manners, being kind, and treating others the way you wish to be treated.
- *Respect Our Church Facility* — This includes picking up papers from the floor, wiping mud off feet before entering, taking care of restrooms, using whiteboards, and other equipment only when supervised by a teacher.

Physical Contact

Physical contact with teens is an aspect of communicating God's love and is an essential part of the nurturing process of our ministry. Workers need to be sensitive to the needs and preferences of each teen. Considerations for physical contact must include age, gender and the development of the teen.

Examples of Appropriate Touch

- Speaking to the teen at eye level
- Put your arm around the shoulder of a teen when comforting or quieting is needed
- Gently touch a teen's shoulder when redirecting behavior
- High fives, handshakes and fist bumps

Examples of Inappropriate Touch

- Kissing a teen or coaxing a teen to kiss you
- Extended hugging or tickling
- Putting your arm around the waist of a teen

Teen Abuse or Inappropriate Behavior

Student Ministry Volunteer workers will be accountable to the Student Pastor.

If any evidence of abuse, inappropriate behavior, or illegal activity is suspected by a worker that occurred off of HBC property, volunteers will contact the Student Pastor immediately. The Student Pastor will:

- Determine what actions need to be taken at that time.
- Notify and/or Advise the Executive Pastor or Senior Pastor of the Situation.
- Notify and/or advise the Safety Team of the situation.
- Document the findings and actions taken.

If any evidence of abuse, inappropriate behavior, or illegal activity is reported to have occurred on HBC property, workers will contact the Student Pastor immediately. The Student Pastor will: (Some of these may be done simultaneously)

- Notify a parent/guardian.
- Notify the proper authorities.
- Notify the Safety Team (see below for Safety Team description))
- Follow up as necessary.
- Document all actions taken.

The Safety Team is a group of volunteers who assist as needed based on the situation. Their mandate is to develop and oversee emergency response measures which will assist in improving overall safety and security for Heritage Baptist Church. The Safety Team operates under the direct supervision of the Executive Pastor. They provide direction and assistance relating to threats and emergencies such as medical, weather, fire, terrorism, and accidents **until the appropriate police, fire, or medical personnel arrive.**

Child Abuse

Any worker who has a suspicion of a child being abused is to immediately notify the Student Pastor. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person to substantiate any allegations or suspicions.

Types of Abuse:

- Sexual abuse includes inappropriate touch, inappropriate talk, or sexual activity.
- Physical abuse is assault that could cause injuries such as burns, bruising, and/or broken bones.
- Neglect is parental disregard of basic needs.

Indicators of Abuse in Children

- An unexplained injury—patches of missing hair, burn, bruise, limp, abrasion.
- An inordinate number of unexplained injuries over a period of time.
- Verbal or written testimony.
- Complaints about others doing harmful things to them.
- Excessive fear or repulsion when touched.

Steps of Reporting Abuse

A. Abuse occurring outside HBC

- Responding to the teen: Take the teen seriously. Stay calm and listen. Tell them that he/she is not at fault and was right in telling you. If asked, indicate to the teen that you may need to relay this information to someone. (Make no promise of "not telling anyone else.")
- Report your concerns to the Student Ministry Pastor. He will discuss the situation with you.
- If it is determined that there is a suspicion of child abuse, HBC staff will contact the local child protection authorities. The identity of the initial reporter will remain confidential.
- HBC staff will keep documentation on file.
- Confidentiality of everyone involved will be maintained as much as possible.

B. Abuse occurring inside HBC

- Responding to the teen: Take the teen seriously. Stay calm and listen. Tell them that he/she is not at fault and was right in telling you. If asked, indicate to the teen that you may need to relay this information to someone. (Make no promise of "not telling anyone else.")
 - If you **witness** the abuse, and can safely remove the teen then do so. Call 911 and then notify the Student Ministry Pastor immediately.
 - If you **suspect** the abuse, but you did not witness the violation, notify the Student Ministry immediately.
 - If it is the Student Ministry that is suspected, notify another pastor immediately.
- All allegations will be reported to the proper authorities within 24 hours.
- Confidentiality of everyone involved will be maintained as much as possible.
- The pastoral staff will determine the course of action as directed by church policy, but the following guidelines apply:
 - Care and support of the victim and the victim's family will be a top priority.
 - The accused will be treated with dignity and support. If the accused is a church worker, that person will be relieved of duties until the investigation is complete.
 - All efforts involving handling the allegation will be documented.
 - The Senior Pastor will address the media.
 - The privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be maintained as much as possible.

MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Medications

- Workers do not give or apply any medications. If a teen needs medication, the parent must give it.
- In extreme cases, such as allergies or asthma, arrangements should be made with written instructions from the parent allowing the worker to administer medication (such as the epi-pen).

Universal Precautions for Disease Control

Universal precautions are observed in order to prevent contact with bodily fluids since they may be potentially infectious.

Precautions Include:

- Careful hand washing with antiseptic soap or hand sanitizer before and after contact with individuals and belongings. Volunteers must wash hands:
 - Before any food preparation.
 - After assisting a teen with a medical situation that involves blood or body fluids.
- When there is contact with blood or body fluids:
 - Wear gloves if available
 - Wash your hands
- Volunteers who are concerned about blood or bodily fluid exposure should immediately contact a member of the Student Ministry team for further procedural instruction.

Communicable Diseases

We understand our responsibility to ensure the health and well-being of both our staff and those who attend. As a result, we have instituted universal precautionary measures to minimize the risk of spreading communicable diseases.

As part of these measures, parents who have children that have communicable diseases should inform the Student Ministry Pastor.

First Aid

Universal precautions must be taken to prevent contact with blood or other body fluids.

There are band aids and gloves in each youth classroom in a designated container called the Mini First Aid Kit. Contact the Student Ministry Pastor if you are out of supplies.

Medical Emergencies

If a medical emergency occurs, volunteers will:

- Dial 911
- Press the “safety” button (for example, at the Student Info Center desk)
- Notify their supervisor

The Student Ministry Pastor will:

- Have child’s emergency information available for medical personnel.
- Verify 911 has been called.
- Notify the parents/guardians.
- Notify the Safety Team.
- Ensure the incident report is completed.
- Follow up as necessary.

The Safety Team will:

- Make sure 911 emergency personnel are directed to the appropriate location.
- Assist as needed.

Non-Emergency Situations

For any situation where a teen is involved in any type of accident where they are injured, however they are completely coherent and an emergency response is not needed, volunteers will:

- Notify the supervisor who will locate the parents, then notify the Safety Team for needed medical advice.
- The supervisor will assist in obtaining information to complete an incident report form.
- The Student Ministry team will be responsible to determine the cause of the accident and determine if any corrective measures can be taken to prevent further similar incidents from occurring.

CHURCH WIDE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Bomb/Terrorist Threat

In the event of a bomb/terrorist threat, the following procedure will be followed:

- Pastoral leadership and the Safety Team will be notified immediately.
- 911 will be called.
- In cooperation with the proper authorities, an evaluation will determine the legitimacy of the threat, probable location of the bomb/terrorist, and subsequent action to be taken.
- Everyone will be notified in the event of a lock down, and the teacher should lock the doors and move everyone to an area of the room where someone looking in the window in the door cannot see them.

No child or youth is allowed to bring any type of weapon (gun, rifle, pellet/BB gun, knife, etc) or any instrument resembling a weapon on campus without the permission of the pastor in charge of that area.

Fire Alarm

Should the fire alarm sound, each class needs to exit their room following the evacuation plan that is posted in the room. Become familiar with the exit plan, so that you know what direction you are to take once you exit the room and to what location you are to take the class after leaving the building. An adult should be the last one to leave checking that no child is left behind. Parents are not to come to their teen's room, but instead should go to where their child's class is being evacuated to.

Snow/Ice Storms

In the event of snow/ice conditions prior to services, the Senior Pastor (or his representative) will make the decision regarding canceling services. If local authorities advise all traffic to stay off of roadways, services will be canceled.

If a snow/ice storm begins while services are in progress, the Senior Pastor will be advised of these conditions and a decision will be made about continuing services.

Severe Thunder Storm/Tornado Warnings

If severe storm warnings are issued prior to services the Senior Pastor will make the decision regarding canceling services.

If there is knowledge that a severe storm or a tornado watch has been issued while services/activities are taking place, the Safety Team will be notified. A member of the Safety Team will monitor the weather radar to determine the location and direction of the storm. If the storm is located in the vicinity of the church or is reported to be headed in the direction of the church a decision will be made regarding what action needs to be taken to ensure the safety of the congregation.

The safest areas in the building are identified by “Severe Weather Shelter” signs. All classrooms have signs posted indicating the closest designated safe area in case of severe weather and will be notified if they should move to this safe location.

If it is determined that safe areas should be sought, a message will be posted on the screen in the Worship Center. The Safety Team will assist pastors in notifying all teachers/leaders to evacuate to the closest designated safe area.

Teen Custody/Safety Policy

If a volunteer in Student Ministry is notified of a potential hostile custody issue with a teen the volunteer will immediately notify the Student Ministry Pastor. The Student Pastor will meet with the parent, assess the situation, take appropriate action and will notify the Safety Team.

Teen Abduction

If a teen is abducted, or there is an attempt to abduct, volunteers will:

- Protect the teen in all ways possible that will not jeopardize their own safety.
- Call 911 and report the incident to the police.
- Activate the safety button most closely located.
- Be a good eye-witness by obtaining the description of the individual(s) involved including the make, color and license plate number of the vehicle if possible. A description of the teen and what the teen is wearing should also be noted.
- Contact the Student Ministry Pastor who will notify the parents.