



MINISTRYSAFE

First United Methodist Church of
Hurst, Texas

POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES
MANUAL

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR MINISTRIES WITH CHILDREN, STUDENTS, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

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Thank you for your desire to partner with us in ministry! We are thrilled to serve alongside you as we follow where God leads us in our many missional endeavors.

Many of our ministries engage with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We honor the unique needs of serving these beloved ones by intentionally focusing on creating a safe ministry environment in accordance with our MinistrySafe policy.

The guidelines, policies, and procedures we have established allow us to protect each person involved in our ministries – children, youth, and vulnerable adults as well as volunteers and staff members. As you read through this manual, I pray you will recognize the sacred trust we hold as we minister to these beloved ones.

These guidelines, policies, and procedures have been adopted by the FUMC Hurst Board of Trustees and are strictly adhered to in all ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. By signing and returning the covenant agreement (last page), you are acknowledging your willingness to share in this sacred commitment with us.

DEFINITIONS

Protected Persons, when used herein, shall be defined as all children, students (youth), and vulnerable adults participating in, and served by, programs and activities of First United Methodist Church of Hurst.

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 requires special care and supervision because of a mental, emotional, or physical condition or disability.

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

Workers, when used herein, shall be defined as all ministers, employees, Boy/Cub Scout leaders, program directors, and volunteers involved in programs and activities of First United Methodist Church of Hurst 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 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.

OVERVIEW OF THE SAFETY SYSTEM AT FUMC HURST

Because FUMC Hurst loves children, students, and vulnerable adults and desires to protect them, FUMC Hurst requires all Workers to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before working or volunteering in ministries with Protected Persons. This includes all pastors under appointment whether they work directly with Protected Persons or not. If the process is not completed within 90 days, a worker may be asked to start the process again.

STEP ONE: ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

FUMC Hurst policies and procedures require that:

- Workers avoid abusive behavior of any kind.
- Workers 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 Parents/Guardians or ‘gatekeepers’), 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 online training must be renewed every two years in order to continue working with Protected Persons.**

STEP TWO: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Workers are required to attend live Policy Training, review the policies contained in this manual, sign the last page indicating that he/she has read and understood the material, agree to comply with policy requirements, and sign a Code of Conduct.

Leaders for outside groups/organizations bringing Protected Persons onto the campus of FUMC Hurst must read and review the policies contained in the *MinistrySafe Policies and Procedures Manual for Outside Groups* and sign the last page indicating that they have read and understand the material, and agree to comply with policy requirements.

STEP THREE: 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)
 - If Worker prefers, he/she can request this to be done with a staff/clergy person.
 - In limited circumstances, and with approval of the Safety Committee, this may be accomplished via Skype, Facetime, or other similar technology.
- Provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)
- Be an active member of this church for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to Protected Persons. (This does not apply to paid staff.) An exception may be made with the approval of the Safety Committee.

STEP FOUR: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

FUMC Hurst requires that all Workers in ministries that involve Protected Persons undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the position, differing levels or intensity of the background check may be required. **This will be renewed every four years.**

SAFETY POLICY FOR FUMC HURST

DAY SCHOOL

The Day School of FUMC Hurst is a licensed facility regulated by Texas Health and Human Services. As such, it operates under the auspices of Licensing and the separate MinistrySafe Policies and Procedures Manual for Day School. In situations where there are discrepancies, licensing and the MinistrySafe Policy for Day School will supersede this policy.

ZERO TOLERANCE

FUMC Hurst has **zero tolerance for abuse**. It is the responsibility of every Worker at this church 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.

COMMITMENT TO REPORT

FUMC Hurst 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, 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' Protected Persons for abuse, it is possible a Worker will 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 in accordance with this policy (See Reporting Abuse, Suspicion of Abuse, or Violations of Policy).

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Our Workers who supervise other Workers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all our policies. Violations of these policies by both paid and unpaid Workers 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 Lead Pastor, Safety Committee, and/or the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).

This policy may be superseded by investigative procedures by Law Enforcement or Department of Family and Protective Services.

REPORTING ABUSE, SUSPICION OF ABUSE, OR VIOLATIONS OF POLICY

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our Protected Persons, our 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. Therefore, they shall immediately report and document any violation of this policy that they have observed. 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, the Lead Pastor, or Chair of Safety Committee (see page 24). While these behaviors may not necessarily rise to the level of a suspicion of abuse or neglect, they DO constitute behaviors that should be communicated to leadership. Any person making and/or receiving such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing an act of abuse, as defined by this policy (see page 3), 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, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), other appropriate agencies, or the Lead Pastor and SPRC.

Any person found to have committed an act of abuse, as defined by this policy, should be prohibited from future participation as a Worker in all activities and programming that involve Protected Persons. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from FUMC Hurst.

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

IMMINENT THREAT

In all cases where an imminent threat of continued or additional abuse exists, any person with knowledge or information about such alleged abuse shall, in consultation with the Director or Lead Pastor, call 911 to notify the appropriate law enforcement officials, and then follow procedure for reporting to DFPS.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Texas law states anyone who suspects a child (age 17 or younger), a person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) immediately (per Texas Family Code 261). A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. **Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony.** Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. Reporting suspected abuse makes it possible for a family to get help. 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 also report to an immediate supervisor, ministry director, or the Lead Pastor. A worker may request assistance in reporting or allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies on his/her behalf. (NOTE: This does not comply with Texas Family Code 261.101(b) for 'professionals'). If the Worker makes a report regarding a suspicion of abuse or neglect without assistance, the Worker will immediately notify a direct supervisor, Ministry Director or Lead Pastor, and **provide the confirmation number for the report.** 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. Even though the matter is reported to a supervisor, it remains the underlying Worker's responsibility to ensure the matter is reported to the appropriate authority.

In settings outside of Texas, appropriate law enforcement will be contacted.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has a central place to report:

- Child abuse and neglect
- Abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of the elderly or adults with disabilities living at home
- Abuse of children in child-care facilities or treatment centers
- Abuse of adults and children who live in state facilities or are being helped by programs for people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. These are run by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)

To file a report, call **1-800-252-5400** or visit www.txabusehotline.org.

Reports must be made to DFPS within 48 hours.

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, juvenile detention, or correctional officers.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (CONTINUED)

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).

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

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.

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)

FUMC HURST SAFETY COMMITTEE

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for Protected Persons, FUMC Hurst appoints and maintains a Safety Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable FUMC Hurst to carry out appropriate ministries with Protected Persons while striving to prevent the emotional, physical or sexual abuse of all persons participating in the church's ministries.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee is comprised of the following members:

- A Chairperson,
- The Safety System Administrator (SSA), who may also hold one of the following titles
- Senior Pastor or other clergy staff assigned by the Senior Pastor
- Children's Minister/Director
- Student Minister/Director
- A member of Staff Parish Relations Committee
- A member from the Board of Trustees
- Other optional members that may be determined by FUMC Hurst leadership

A list of Key Staff and Safety Committee Chair can be found on page 23.

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Safety Committee are 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 is charged with the following duties:

- Applying existing policies and procedures related to the safety of Protected Persons and risk management issues
- Monitoring all ministries with Protected Persons for ongoing compliance with safety policies
- Making recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding safety issues

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 of Directors will monitor their direct reports by:

- Conducting unscheduled observations of Children's and Student ministry programs a minimum of four times per year
- Meet monthly with program Directors to discuss their areas of ministry, ongoing risk management training, and adherence to risk management procedures
- Conduct written performance evaluations every six months for direct reports
- Provide written monitoring report to Lead Pastor every six months.
- Lead Pastor will report on Children's and Student Ministry at least once a year to the SPRC.

Directors will:

- Conduct unscheduled observations at least once each quarter for programs occurring monthly.
- Conduct unscheduled observations at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.
- Conduct unscheduled observations at least once each week for programs occurring daily.
- Conduct written performance evaluations every six months for paid Workers who are direct reports to the Children's/Student Directors.
- Conduct ongoing risk management training.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Ministry Director will be responsible for ensuring that any area designated by the church for ministries with Protected Persons is monitored. This will include unobserved monitoring of Workers and Protected Persons in classrooms.

Classes shall remain in the assigned classroom location. If there is to be a change of classroom location or an activity requires leaving the assigned space, the Ministry Director must be notified and approve the change, and a sign must be posted on the door providing notice of any change of class location.

After every programming event, the Workers must ensure all Protected Persons are accounted for and every room and restroom in the designated area is checked prior to leaving.

CHILDREN

No child will ever be left unattended or unsupervised in the designated children's area or on the children's playground during Children's Ministry programming, classes, or childcare, which is understood to include 15 minutes before and until reunited with a parent/guardian after schedule event. Children's Ministry Workers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room, building or isolated area of the playground, with the exception of circumstances outlined under *One-to-One Interactions* (see page 15).

In the event a Worker finds he/she is alone with a child/children after departure of other adults, that Worker will take the child/children to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. A note will be left on the door notifying where children are. (Example: If a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a Parent/Guardian, move to an adjoining room where other Workers are present.)

Workers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to isolated areas that are 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.

STUDENTS

No student will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during Student Ministry programming or meetings. Student Ministry Workers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student in any room, building or outside. Exceptions for staff members are outlined under *One-to-One Interactions* (see page 15). In the event a Worker finds himself/herself alone with a student(s), that Worker will take the student(s) 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.

Off-Site Safety

All Building Safety guidelines shall be applied in all off-site settings.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONTACT

Parents/Guardians of Protected Persons in the care of our Workers will be contacted if the Protected Person becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem. Therefore, Workers must have contact information for each child/student at all times. Please ask parents of children to make sure their cell phone number is on child's nametag.*

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit any services and programs in which their Protected Person is involved at FUMC Hurst. Parents/Guardians have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their Protected Person is involved. However, Parents/ Guardians who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's/student's programs will be required to complete the Ministry Safe Process.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to our Children's Ministry Workers, FUMC Hurst 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.

Children's Ministry Workers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to Parents/Guardians or other persons designated by Parents/Guardians at the close of services or activities.* In the event that Workers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their direct supervisor or the Ministry Director before releasing the child.

It is presumed that a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up the child. Parents/Guardians shall be responsible for providing the Minister/Director with any special circumstances as they arise relating to the custody of a child. Parents/Guardians should pick up a child immediately following the Sunday school class or event and before going to Coffee Fellowship or other activities.

Sunday Morning

A positive identity security system is in place so that the person picking up a child can be positively matched to the child. All children, birth through fifth grade, must be picked up by a Parent/Guardian or other designated adult with the matching nametag. Special exceptions need to be approved through the Ministry Director.

Ministry Events Not Utilizing the Electronic System

Parents/Guardians or their designee will sign their child in and out at the beginning and end of an event. If an adult other than the parent/guardian will be picking up the child, the parent/guardian should notify the ministry leader.

* It is understood that in some off-site mission contexts, the ability to gain this information for community children coming to participate in an activity may not be possible. Mission teams will operate out of the best interest of the child under the guidance of the agency/agencies through which they are working.

WORKER TO CHILD/STUDENT RATIOS

This church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all ministries with Protected Persons.

A minimum of two unrelated Adult Workers is required at all times.

Any volunteers or staff age 17 or younger qualify as Protected Persons, **NOT Workers**, in the ratios below. Exceptions may be made for Licensed Professional Counselors or others with similar credentials, provided parents have agreed to a 1:1 meeting and space has been approved for such purposes.

It is also understood that in some off-site mission contexts, it may not be possible to maintain these ratios. In these cases, every effort will be made to maintain adequate supervision.

CHILDREN

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>UNRELATED WORKERS</u>	<u>CHILDREN</u>
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary (K-6)	2	20

In the case of an event or childcare with a mixed-age group, the ratio related to the youngest child will be followed.

If a Worker is out of ratio, it is his/her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children's Director/Staff. The Supervisor will make a diligent effort to find substitute Workers to immediately bring the Worker to child ratio into compliance with this policy.

STUDENTS

The Central Texas Conference recommends that the primary Worker be at least 5 years older than the oldest student participant. All other Workers should be at least 1-year post high school or equivalent and be 3 years older than the oldest student participant.

For groups up to and including 30 students, there will be a minimum of two unrelated Workers. For every additional 1-15 students, one additional Worker will be required.

If a Worker is out of ratio, it is his/her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Student Director(s). This person will make a diligent effort to immediately bring the Worker to student ratio into compliance with this policy.

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

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS

We recognize that meeting the emotional needs of Protected Persons may occasionally require a staff member to minister to them on an individual basis. It shall not be a violation of the two-adult policy for the staff person to meet with the Protected Person, when the Protected Person or his/her Parents/Guardians have requested the closed meeting, provided:

1. Parents'/Guardians' permission will be sought.
2. The meeting is for a relatively brief time.
3. The Minister/Director informs another paid member of the FUMC Hurst staff at the beginning and end of the meeting.
4. A confidential record of the meeting, its duration, and the identity of the Protected Person involved is kept.
5. Such meetings are infrequent for children. Meetings may happen more frequently with youth, given parent permission.

INFORMAL CONTACT

Informal contact independent of FUMC Hurst activities refers to phone calls, letters, email, messaging, or face-to-face contact between a Worker and a Protected Person that is not connected to official FUMC Hurst activities. FUMC Hurst recognizes that informal contact between Workers and Protected Persons frequently occurs; for example, Workers may hire teens as babysitters for their own children, or Workers may see kids during social events with the student's family. This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, Workers should seek permission of Parents/Guardians before having informal contact with their child. The Worker should clearly let the Parents/Guardians know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of a church activity. Parents/Guardians are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.

DISCIPLINE POLICY OF FUMC HURST

The setting of appropriate boundaries for children and students is encouraged and supported as a loving act and will often prevent the need for disciplinary interactions.

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

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, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by Protected Persons. This holds true even if Parents/Guardians request otherwise.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between Workers and Protected Persons should be positive and uplifting. Workers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding Parents/Guardians 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.

CHILDREN

Strategies such as positive reinforcement, close proximity to Workers, choices, and redirection should be used to guide the behavior of children. In the event these interventions do not work, Workers will use time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, Workers should observe the following guidelines. In cases of children with special needs, please see the Director for suggestions specific to the child's needs.

1. 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).
2. If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child to another area of the room, away from the group (avoid being alone with the child).
3. 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.
4. Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until his/her time-out is complete.
5. 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 age (3 years old, 3 minutes).
6. 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 him/her on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
7. 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 the child that repeating his/her initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Ministry Director. The Director may offer suggestions on how to speak with Parents/Guardians or may choose to speak to them personally. When speaking with Parents/Guardians, always try to end on a positive note. Never give the impression that a child is no longer welcome in a ministry event/class.

STUDENTS

If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from Workers, report it to the Ministry Director immediately. The Ministry Director or his/her designee may contact the student's Parents/Guardians, and that student may be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student's Parents/Guardians will be asked to pick up the student. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, the Workers will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Ministry Director who will contact the Parents/Guardians.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

FUMC Hurst is committed to protecting the children, students and vulnerable adults in its care. To this end, FUMC Hurst has implemented a “Physical Contact Policy,” which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our ministries with Protected Persons, while protecting children, students and vulnerable adults, as well as those who work with them. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in ministries with Protected Persons:

1. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the Protected Person, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a Worker.
2. Side hugs, pats on the back, “high fives,” handshakes, 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. Touching need not be completely avoided, but is acceptable only in public. Workers must be aware of how it looks and how the person being touched may interpret the contact.
3. Workers should be aware that physical contact can be interpreted differently across cultures.
4. Inappropriate touching, which includes, but is not limited to: frontal hugs, back rubs, massages, lap sitting, kissing, and any other inappropriate displays of affection between Workers and Protected Persons, are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Ministry Director or the Lead Pastor. Furthermore, if you see Protected Persons engaging in these behaviors with one another, you are to instruct them to stop.
5. 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.
6. 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. Remember: Perception is reality.
7. 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.
8. Workers are responsible for safeguarding Protected Persons under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others, including that initiated by other Protected Persons (peers).
9. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a Worker or Protected Person must be reported immediately to a direct supervisor, the Ministry Director or the Lead Pastor.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

NURSERY CHILDREN

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

Diapering

1. Only paid nursery/childcare Workers or the child's Parents/Guardians will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
2. Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery/childcare Workers.
3. Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
4. Any special instructions given by Parents/Guardians leaving children in the nursery will be recorded ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
5. Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
6. Children should be changed on changing stations or diaper mats only.

Toilet Training

1. No child will be forced to toilet train.
2. Only paid nursery/childcare Workers or the child's Parents/Guardians will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
3. When children are taken into bathrooms, the door will be left partially open.
4. Young children will never be left unmonitored in bathrooms.
5. Parents/Guardians should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with Workers. Any special instructions given by Parents/Guardians will be recorded. ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.")
6. Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
7. "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available in the nursery area if the Parents/Guardians have not furnished a change of clothing.

PRE-SCHOOL AND SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

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. An individual worker should never take a lone child to the restroom.

When a child is taken to a bathroom outside the classroom, a Worker must check the bathroom before the child enters to ensure it is safe. Ideally, he/she will remain outside the bathroom while the child is inside.

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. If assistance was needed, worker shall notify parent upon pick up.

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

BATHROOM SUPERVISION (Continued)

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents/Guardians will offer instructions to Workers to change the diapers of individuals with special needs. After the age of four, it is preferred that the Parents/Guardians assist individuals with special needs. If Parents/Guardians are not available, two adult Workers, preferably the same gender as the Protected Person, will assist with needs.

NUDITY

Workers should never be nude in the presence of Protected Persons. 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 Director will submit a plan for approval to the Lead Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes so that every person has a private area to bathe and/or change clothes (no group changing rooms). Changing and shower areas should be monitored from the outside door at all times while Protected Persons or Workers are changing or bathing to prevent both Worker to Protected Person abuse and Protected Person to Protected Person abuse.

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. retreats, lock-ins, mission trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, Workers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The two unrelated Worker rule must be followed. The two adult leaders present must have previously completed FUMC Hurst's MinistrySafe process.
2. Overnight arrangements, including sleeping, bathing, and changing, must be submitted in writing to, and approved by, the Lead Pastor prior to the activity, and have signed approval of Parents/Guardians. It is recommended that this information be included in the permission slip for the event and signed by the Parents/Guardians.
3. As long as any Protected Persons are awake, two of the leaders must also be awake and monitoring Protected Persons to ensure safe behavior.
4. Workers and Protected Persons must wear modest sleeping attire.
5. In the event a sleepover on the FUMC Hurst campus involves males and females, males and females must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by leaders of the same gender. If sleepover event is off-site and separate rooms are not available, a plan for separation will be submitted and approved prior to the event.
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.
7. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each Worker and Protected Person will use single air mattresses, sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

TRANSPORTATION

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

1. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have a valid driver's license and current insurance.
2. Best practices of ministry recommend two unrelated Workers in every car; however, this is not always possible. In the case of one adult per vehicle, each vehicle must remain within sight of another vehicle in the caravan. **Never will there be an individual Protected Person alone with an adult in a vehicle.**
3. Protected Persons should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops should be avoided. In the case of an emergency, a passenger should notify another vehicle in the caravan.
4. Workers should avoid physical contact with Protected Persons while in vehicles.
5. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Protected Persons, unless in an emergency. In these cases, hand-free is preferred.
6. No drivers under age 25 may drive the church owned or rented vehicles.
7. Students who are licensed drivers will not be allowed to drive themselves from the church to an off-site church event. Occasional exceptions may be made in consultation between the Director, Parents/Guardians, and student.

Parents/Guardians are discouraged from asking leaders to transport children or youth. However, if a leader does transport a child or youth at the Parents'/Guardians' request, this should be recognized as informal contact (not part of church activities), and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see page 16).

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, VAPING, AND DRUG USE

Workers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, and illegal drugs, or impairing medications while on church property, while traveling with Protected Persons, or while in the presence of Protected Persons or their Parents/Guardians.

MEDICATION

Medication may only be given to a Protected Person by a Worker with written instructions from the Parents/Guardians. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Workers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with Protected Persons and are not permitted to discuss with any Protected Person any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities. However, it is expected that from time to time the ministry discussions and lessons may address age appropriate issues related to dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the Protected Persons the church's view on these topics.

CHILDREN

A Parent/Guardian signature will be required for each child involved in such lessons.

STUDENTS

It is recommended that Parents/Guardians be notified in advance of these lessons.

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

Workers in our ministries with Protected Persons are prohibited from possessing any graphic, violent, and/or sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, games, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of Protected Persons, with the exception of approved teaching materials discussed above. Workers should check with Parents/Guardians and use good judgment regarding media used in programming and during events including movies, TV shows, and images. No R-rated movies are permitted.

PHOTOS

Please be aware that not all Parents/Guardians have consented to having their child photographed. Paid Workers, or their designee(s), should be the only ones photographing Protected Persons during official church events. In the case of large events, the designee(s) will be provided with a badge identifying them as such.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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.

As FUMC Hurst seeks 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/student's social media interactions.

SOCIAL MEDIA (Continued)

To the best of their ability, 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 FUMC Hurst, by their Parents/Guardians to post on official FUMC Hurst pages/groups. In certain limited circumstances, a partner organization may invite Workers to share photos of children from their organization on the Workers' personal social media account. In this case, Workers may defer to the partner organization's guidelines. This DOES NOT apply to Protected Persons from FUMC Hurst.
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 FUMC Hurst, 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 Ministry Director or Lead 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.

KEY STAFF/VOLUNTEERS AT FUMC HURST

2024*

Indicated below are the 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.

Title	Name	Phone	Email
Neighboring Pastor	Rev. Matt Ybañez	817-282-7384 x1246	mybanez@fumchurst.org
Children's Director	Jennifer Acker	817-282-7384 x1235	jacker@fumchurst.org
Youth Director	Jorden Martz	817-282-7384 x1237	jmartz@fumchurst.org
MinistrySafe Trustee Rep.	Guy Rhodes	Contact Church Office	
MinistrySafe SPRC Rep.	Glen Whitley	Contact Church Office	
MinistrySafe SPRC Rep.	Margaret Coleman	Contact Church Office	
MinistrySafe Administrator (SSA)	Roberta Ballester	817-282-7384 x1230	rballester@fumchurst.org
MinistrySafe Administrator (SSA)	MaDora Ratliff	817-282-7384 x1221	mratliff@fumchurst.org

Other Supervisors in Children's/Student Ministries:

Children's Volunteer Coordinator	Abbie Arellano	817-282-7384 x1220	aarellano@fumchurst.org
Director of Music & Worship/Youth Choir	Patricia Neighbors	817-282-7384 x1239	pneighbors@fumchurst.org
Nursery Coordinator	Misty Miller	817-217-3917	mmiller@fumchurst.org

* For Latest Update go to www.fumchurst.org/ministrysafe

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT TO FUMC HURST POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I have received and read a copy of the MinistrySafe Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines during my service 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 at least two weeks notice to my supervisory/ministry director.

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual 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 Staff/Volunteer Safety Policies.]

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Date: _____

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the MinistrySafe Administrator.]