



THE SHEPHERD'S CHURCH

Thank you for your desire to serve!

What you are about to read is a policy manual for those who minister to children and students at The Shepherd's Church. Before you go any further, we want you to understand the heart behind this document. Our goal is to always point children and students toward the God who loves them. We partner with parents in helping their child know God, think biblically and live wisely. To achieve these objectives, we need policies and procedures in place to develop our programs and ministries safely and effectively. We wrote this document out of our deep love for the children in our care; our appreciation and admiration of the volunteers; and most importantly, out of our desire to bring great honor to Christ.

We want every child and student in our care to grow and learn in an atmosphere that is loving, nurturing and safe. We want our staff and volunteers to serve effectively and without fear of false accusation or suspicion. To that end, all adults involved in ministry to children and students have a part to play in achieving these objectives. The policies and procedures in this document outline the steps we take to protect the children in our care, and the response we would have if a child in our care became the victim of abuse.

The guidelines that follow apply to anyone whose ministry or employment involves interaction with children or students. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children and students, protecting them, you, and the mission of The Shepherd's Church. After you have carefully read this document, you will be asked to sign and return an agreement form located on the last page. If you have any questions, please speak with your ministry supervisor. By signing, you are agreeing to abide by the terms of this policy manual.

The Shepherd’s Church Policies & Procedures for all Programs and Ministries Involving Children and Students.

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Overview

Definitions

For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are assumed in this document:

- “Shepherd’s” refers to The Shepherd’s Church of Cary, North Carolina.
- “Children and Students” refers to any minor child or student (Birth through age seventeen) involved in a program or ministry of The Shepherd’s Church.
- “Program” refers to any ministry, team, club, class or activity that is designed for or involves the care and supervision of minor children or students.

Child Safety Policy Overview

PERSONS COVERED UNDER THIS POLICY

Shepherd’s abuse prevention policy, as outlined in this document, applies to you if you work or serve directly with children and students or if you have regular access to children and students as part of your employment or volunteer service. **This policy applies to those ages 14 and older.**

ABUSE TOLERANCE

The Shepherd’s Church has no tolerance for abuse in any of our programs. It is your responsibility to act in the best interest of children and students at all times.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

You should consider the implementation of these policies to be your responsibility. You and the team you serve with must help, encourage, and hold each other accountable. Please don’t take offense if someone reminds you of a policy that you’ve forgotten, and please demonstrate love for your teammates by reminding and helping them comply with these policies.

Staff and Volunteer Screening

Screening of Staff and Volunteers

Before placing you in an employment or volunteer ministry to children, we conduct a four-part process.

STEP ONE: APPLICATION PROCESS

Depending on your status, you will complete one of the following two checklists:

For Employees:

- * Signed Employment Application
- * Signed Background Check Release Form
- * Face-to-face interview
- * Reference check
- * Signed “Leadership Agreement”

For Volunteers:

- * Signed Volunteer Application
- * Signed Background Check Release Form
- * Face-to-face, phone or written interview
- * Reference check
- * Signed “Volunteer Covenant”

STEP TWO: SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

To equip you with information necessary to prevent and recognize child abuse, Shepherd’s provides sexual abuse awareness training. This training is delivered online. **If you have reached the age of 14, taking the online Sexual Abuse Awareness Training is mandatory.**

STEP THREE: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

You must read this document and sign the statement on the final page affirming that you have read, understood and are committed to abiding by these policies.

STEP FOUR: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

If you have reached the age of eighteen, we will conduct a criminal background check. Depending upon your ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

Additional Training

In addition to Sexual Abuse Awareness Training, the staff and volunteers may receive periodic training relating to other forms of misconduct, including: bullying; harassment; hazing; emotional misconduct; physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct.

Special Situations**POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS**

There may be times when a person wants to observe a ministry before making a commitment to join the volunteer staff. Potential volunteers may enter and observe ministry areas one or two times, but must always be under the direct observation of an approved worker.

SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS

There may be times when people serve with children on a very limited basis, as a last-minute substitute **or for special events**. Those situations are acceptable, provided that unapproved workers are always under the direct observation of an approved worker. Anyone who serves more than three times per year must go through the screening and approval process.

MINORS

We are blessed with many students who have not reached the age of fourteen, but who desire to serve with children. This is permissible. If you are a student, you must complete the application and screening process, with the exceptions noted in this document. Student volunteers are expected to follow all the same policies as adult volunteers.

VOLUNTEERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We are blessed with a population of adults with special needs, many of whom serve with children. Adults with cognitive limitations should complete as much of the application and screening process as possible. Those who are unable to understand these policies or the abuse prevention training must serve under the direct observation of an approved worker, and may not be counted in the mandatory teacher to student ratios.

NURSING MOTHERS

Our designated area for nursing mothers is located inside the nursery area. Nursing mothers are granted access to the nursery for the specific purpose of using the Nursing Mother Room.

Ministry Supervision and Reporting Structure

Reporting Abuse or Policy Violations

ENFORCEMENT OF THESE POLICIES

Staff members and volunteers who supervise others are charged with faithfully and diligently monitoring the ministries, seeking to ensure the safety of children and students at all times. (See the section below entitled “Ministry Monitoring and Supervision”.) In addition, the Family Ministry Pastor and Executive Pastor will appoint a Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer will assist the church in implementing, overseeing and monitoring these policies church-wide.

When an issue or concern arises, Ministry Leaders and Department Directors will seek to resolve the concern and restore a safe environment as quickly as possible. If there is a willful policy violation or the suspicion of abuse, the Compliance Officer, Family Ministry Pastor and Executive pastor must be notified. If the circumstances surrounding an incident are unclear or in dispute, the Compliance Officer, Family Ministry Pastor and Executive Pastor will resolve the issues involved and implement whatever corrective steps are necessary.

REPORTING POLICY VIOLATIONS AND SAFETY CONCERNS

If you observe a willful disregard for these policies, (i.e. a volunteer has spanked a child) or a situation that could endanger a child, (i.e. a child has wandered off unsupervised) you must report it immediately to your Ministry Leader or Department Director. Ignoring risky or inappropriate behavior is never the loving choice, and we must always act in the best interest of the child. Ministry leaders will take immediate action to correct situations where a child is at risk.

REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT

If you have reason to suspect that a child is the victim of abuse or neglect, no matter where that abuse or neglect may have occurred, you must report it as promptly as possible.

Suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services, or another appropriate government agency.

The steps to follow when abuse or neglect is suspected include:

- Verbally report your observations or suspicions to your Department Director, Ministry Leader, or the Family Ministry Pastor. If a report is made to a Department Director or Ministry Leader, that person must promptly notify the Family Ministry Pastor.
- The Family Ministry Pastor will notify and meet with the Executive Pastor, Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Security as quickly as possible.
- The Family Ministry Pastor or Executive Pastor will speak with the person who suspects the abuse or neglect to get detailed information about his or her observations or conversation with the child.
- If appropriate, the Family Ministry Pastor, Executive Pastor, Chief Administrative Officer or Director of Security will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services in accordance with North Carolina law.

CONSEQUENCES OF A POLICY VIOLATION OR ABUSE OF A CHILD

- If you inadvertently violate these policies, and no child or student is harmed, your Ministry Leader will remind you of the policy and work to quickly bring the ministry back into compliance. For example, if a teaching team inadvertently exceeds the ratio of children to teachers, another worker may be shifted into that room or one of the children may be assigned to a different room where the ratio is in compliance.
- If you willfully or repeatedly violate these policies, and no child or student is harmed, you may be reassigned or suspended from ministry involvement.
- If you commit any act that is harmful to a child, you will be immediately suspended from participation in any ministry involving children or students. This suspension will continue during any investigation by either the church or a government agency.
- Under no circumstances will anyone who has sexually abused or committed a crime against a minor be allowed to serve in any ministry to children or students. The length of time that has passed since the incident occurred is not a factor. For staff members, sexual abuse of a minor is grounds for immediate termination of employment from The Shepherd's Church.

We don't approach ministry with an attitude of suspicion. However, the good of the children in our care is our top priority and ignoring potentially harmful situations could have tragic consequences. Therefore, if you observe behavior that is prohibited by these policies, or if you notice a potentially harmful situation, you must report it. Say for example that you notice a volunteer take a child into a restroom and close the door. That is clearly prohibited behavior and is potentially dangerous for the child and for the reputation of the volunteer. An appropriate response would be to open the door to monitor the situation and contact your Ministry Leader. Ignoring or failing to report prohibited behavior could result in you being restricted from participation in future activities involving children or students at The Shepherd's Church.

Ministry Monitoring and Supervision

Ministry leaders must make sure that programs and activities are adequately and regularly monitored and supervised.

1. Ministry Leaders conduct unscheduled observations at least once each week for programs that occur weekly.
2. Department Directors and Pastors conduct unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs that occur in their department. They should also communicate frequently with Ministry Leaders to discuss procedures, risks, and volunteer performance.
3. The Family Ministry Pastor and/or Compliance Officer conducts unscheduled observations of each ministry to children and students at least once each quarter.
4. The Family Ministry Pastor and/or Compliance Officer meets with the Department Directors at least once monthly to discuss each ministry to children and students, including safety training and procedures.
5. The Compliance Officer consults regularly with the Family Ministry Pastor regarding safety training and procedures.

The Shepherd's Church Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children and students, The Shepherd's Church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

COMPOSITION

The permanent members of the Safety Committee are the Compliance Officer; the Family Ministry Pastor; the Executive Pastor; the Director of Safety and Security and the Chief Administrative. Any Department Director whose department offers programs and activities for children and students may attend when appropriate.

MEETINGS

The Compliance Officer will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates.

The permanent members of the Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Church policies and procedures related to children and student's safety and risk management issues.

2. Monitoring all ministries to children and students for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Board of Elders regarding safety issues.

Policies for Ministry to Children and Students

Building Safety

The leadership of each ministry, in partnership with the Director of Safety and Security, are responsible to ensure that the areas housing any ministry to children and students are appropriately secured and monitored. If you notice a situation that seems unsafe, please notify your ministry leader immediately.

If your ministry responsibilities are with young children (Birth through grade 2) they must never be left unattended in the building, playground, fields or grounds during any program, ministry, or class. Their Guardian must drop them off and pick them up. Do not dismiss young children on their own. If your ministry responsibilities are with children grades 3 and up, they may arrive and dismiss unaccompanied, but must be supervised while in your care.

If you are serving at the conclusion of an event, program, or ministry, please verify that every child has been picked up. Check the room, restrooms, and other ministry areas to verify that no child has been left behind.

When young children use the playground, please circulate through the area and monitor the children as they play and interact. Pay special attention to areas that are not easily seen from all viewpoints such as under the slides, in corners, behind structures.

For all ages and groups, when you notice any two children or students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area, redirect them back to the group.

One-To-One Interaction with Children

One of the key guiding principles of our abuse prevention policy is that while you are serving at The Shepherd's Church or on a church sponsored outing, you must never be alone with a child for whom you are not the legal guardian. (Counseling situations are discussed in the next section.) By "alone" we mean in a secluded, closed or private location where you are not easily observed. An example of this would be one worker alone with a child in a bathroom or supply closet.

Here are some examples of how we implement this policy:

- During dismissal, you would make sure that at least two workers remain in the room until all children have been picked up.
- During arrival at a class of older children or student, you would keep the classroom door open until several students or a second approved adult have arrived.
- You would never take a child into a restroom and close the door or take a child with you to retrieve supplies from a closet.

If you inadvertently find yourself in a situation where you are alone with a child, you must immediately relocate to a room or building where others are present; or to a location easily observed by others.

COUNSELING SITUATIONS WITH CHILDREN

Part of our ongoing ministry to children and students may include counseling and private conversations.

Counseling offered to children or students must never take place in an unobservable location. Another trained and screened adult should always be present, or the meeting must take place in an easily observable location. For example, meeting in an office at the church, with another staff member or a parent outside the door would be allowed.

Staff members may not have “after-hours” office appointments with children unless another adult is present in the immediate area of the office. All office doors must have a window. Staff members must ensure that office door windows are not blocked or obscured when meeting with a child or student.

If a volunteer is providing counseling, the relationship and setting must be approved in advance by the Department Director and the child’s legal guardian.

Worker to Child Ratios

Shepherd’s is committed to providing adequate supervision in all ministries to minors. Accordingly, the following worker to child **minimum ratios** will be observed. Programs and ministries may provide more supervision than these ratios indicate, but may never provide less supervision than these ratios indicate.

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery (0-12 months)	2	6
Nursery (13+ months)	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	16
Elementary	2	20
Middle and High School	1	20

If you inadvertently find yourself ‘out of ratio,’ notify your Ministry Leader immediately. Your Ministry Leaders will assist in bringing your room back into compliance.

Physical Contact

The Shepherd’s Church is committed to protecting children and students in its care. To this end, we have implemented a ‘physical contact policy’ that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following policies apply to times when you are serving at Shepherd’s or in the context of a Shepherd’s event. They apply to children for whom you are not the guardian. However, we believe these policies reflect general wisdom for all of your interaction with children. We recommend that you implement these guidelines as a general way of life when interacting with children outside your family or for whom you are not the guardian.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

1. “Side-Hugs,” pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between you and the children or students in your care are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Physical contact should only be for the benefit of the child or student.
3. You should reserve physical contact and affection for times when you are easily observable and you are in the presence of other children, students, or adults. It is much less likely that your actions will be misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
4. Your physical contact with children or students should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. You should always seek to foster trust and pursue conduct that is above reproach.
5. Some additional examples of appropriate physical contact between you and a child include:
 - a. Embracing a crying child in a public place or circumstance.
 - b. Putting an arm around a participant while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”).
 - c. Lifting a participant who has fallen, and encouraging them to continue participation.

PROHIBITED PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

There are some forms of physical contact that prohibited when you are serving at Shepherd’s or in the context of a Shepherd’s event. The following list is not exhaustive, but represents prohibited behavior. As with the items above, we believe these policies reflect general wisdom for all your interaction with children. We recommend that you implement these guidelines as a general way of life when interacting with children outside your family or for whom you are not the guardian.

1. Do not ask a child or student to sit on your lap. If a very young child wants to climb onto your lap to read a book, that is allowed provided it is in the open. Do not allow a child to remain on your lap for an extended period. Rocking a baby or temporary placing a preschool child on your lap to provide comfort is appropriate provided it takes place in the open. If using a blanket while rocking a baby, your hands should remain outside the blanket.
2. Do not allow or participate in lingering or repeated embraces that go beyond the criteria set forth in the previous section on acceptable physical contact.
3. Never slap, hit, punch, kick or spank a child; and avoid any form of physical contact that is intended to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from the child.
4. Avoid “cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact.
5. Avoid playful, yet inappropriate contact such as butt-pats, tickling or wrestling with a child.
6. Do not continue any physical contact that makes a child or student obviously uncomfortable, whether the child expresses it or not.

Every adult is responsible for protecting children and students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others. If you notice any inappropriate behavior toward

a child or student, you must report it immediately to a Ministry Leader, Department Director, the Compliance Officer or the Family Ministry Pastor.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

During sports related activities, the safety of participants is paramount. In many instances we make activities safer through appropriate physical contact. If you are involved in sports related activities, the following items would apply.

1. It is appropriate for you to ‘spot’ an athlete so that he or she will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment.
2. There may be times when you need to position an athlete’s body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill, gets a better sense of where his or her body is in space, or improves balance and coordination.
3. It is appropriate for you to act quickly in moving a participant out of harm’s way.

Sports and other games or activities are physical by definition. We recognize that participants often express a joy of participation, competition, achievement, and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, and the following are some examples of appropriate responses.

1. Greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs.
2. Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, “jump-arounds” and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

Gift Giving

There may be times when you want to show appreciation for children in your care or recognize a special achievement. In a classroom or ministry setting, you may not single out individual children or students to whom you give gifts or special privileges. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition. If your family is using the church as a common location for a gift exchange with another family, that should take place outside of the classroom or ministry setting.

Bathroom Supervision and Assistance

Nursery / Preschool children

Because nursery children require complete assistance, and preschool children often need some assistance, please observe the following policies:

DIAPERING

NOTE: Only adult female nursery workers or the child’s parent or legal guardian undertake the diapering of children of either gender. If you meet that qualification, here are the policies for diaper changes:

1. Change diapers only in the designated areas and in plain sight of other nursery workers.
2. Use caution to never leave a child unattended on a changing table.
3. Check the child’s registration card to see if the parents have left any special instructions.

4. Re-diaper and re-clothe the child immediately upon the completion of changing the soiled diaper.
5. Upon request, parents will be paged to the nursery and allowed to change their own child's diaper instead of nursery workers providing this service.

TOILET TRAINING

NOTE: Only adult female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian participate in the toilet training of a child of either gender. If you meet that qualification, here are the policies for toilet training:

1. Do not force a child to toilet train.
2. When you take a child into a restroom, leave the door partially open.
3. If you are working with children who are not self-sufficient in the restroom, do not leave them unattended as a restroom can pose some risks to a child who is not properly toilet trained.
4. As much as possible, consult with the parents regarding each child's progress in toilet training. Record any special instructions given by parents on the registration card. (I.E., "Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").

BATHROOM USE BY TOILET TRAINED PRESCHOOLERS

1. Even a toilet-trained child occasionally needs assistance. Whenever possible, choose to give verbal assistance over physical assistance. (I.E., "Don't forget to wash your hands, Johnny.")
2. If a child needs physical assistance, make sure to leave the bathroom door partially open, and make sure another adult is nearby.
3. When a child has an "accident," try to reassure the child and assist as much as necessary in getting the child cleaned and dressed. Extra clothing is available in the children's area so ask your Ministry Leader for a change of clothes if necessary.

School age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

BUDDY SYSTEM If a staff member or volunteer 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. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Participants with special needs sometimes need assistance, or even diapering, into the adult years. It is important that parents or guardians of those with special need provide instructions regarding how that should be handled. We seek to accommodate the unique

challenges of our special needs members. The procedure will vary from person to person, but the following principles must always be followed.

1. Our care for our special needs members will always be done with dignity and respect.
2. Special needs workers will never be alone with a child or adult with special needs.

Medication

During our regular ministry activities, we do not administer medication to children or students. The exception would be for a child who needs life-saving medication for an emergency such as an allergic reaction. During special extended activities such as a camp or retreat, the Ministry Leader will submit a plan for dispensing necessary medications to the Compliance Officer.

Parental Contact Information

Parents who leave a child or student in the care of The Shepherd's Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities should leave information regarding how he or she can be contacted in the event of an emergency. Each Program must provide a means for collecting and storing this information. Parents will be contacted if a child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in ministry programs.

Parental Involvement

Parents may observe any program and activity in which their child or student is involved, but that does not include access to the classroom. (Parents may observe or listen from the doorway when it is appropriate and provided it does not disrupt the class.) If a parent needs direct access to a child for any reason, the child will be checked out of the program, and turned over to the care of the parent or legal guardian. Parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's or student's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process and become an approved worker.

Release and Dismissal of Children

Any time that a young child (birth through grade 2) has been placed into a Church program or activity, that child remains in the care of the Church until picked up by a parent, guardian or a surrogate approved by the parent or guardian. Each program or ministry must have a system in place for identifying those who are authorized to pick up a child. You must use care to only release a child to those who are authorized to retrieve that child.

If you were present when a child was dropped off, it is presumed a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up that child. However, you must follow the dismissal protocol for your program or ministry.

If you are uncertain about releasing a child, or if the guardian is unable to comply with the retrieval protocol, you must not release the child. Contact your Ministry Leader or your immediate supervisor for assistance.

Staff and volunteer policies and standards

Intoxicants and Tobacco Products

While you are serving at Shepherd's or at a Shepherd's sponsored event, you may not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug. The use of all tobacco products is also prohibited.

Nudity

There are legitimate ministry events that require the changing of clothes. (Examples include overnight events or events involving swimming.) In those situations, you must never be nude in the presence of children or students. If an event calls for the possibility of nudity, the Ministry Leader must develop a plan for providing accommodations for showering or changing clothes. That plan must be approved by the Compliance Officer. Please use great care to make sure that this policy and the plan for your event is followed.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Providing biblical ministry to children and students will include instruction and teaching on biblical standards and principles related to sexuality. 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 occur in group settings and will convey the Bible's and the Church's views on these topics. However, you must use care in dealing with sexually oriented topics. You may not discuss any inappropriate or explicit information, and you may not discuss your personal sexual activities with children and students in your ministry.

Sexually Oriented Materials

While you are serving at Shepherd's or at a Shepherd's sponsored event, you may not possess (or transmit to a child) any sexually oriented materials such as magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.

Verbal Interactions

As you are interacting with children and students, those verbal interactions should be positive and uplifting. Please strive to keep your conversations encouraging and constructive, always being mindful of your mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children and students. Avoid speaking in ways that could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

Electronic Communications & Social Media

Any electronic interaction that you have with a child or student must be professional in nature and related to pursuing the mission, goals, and values of The Shepherd's Church. As with any communication, the content of your electronic communication should be readily available to share with the child's guardians. Whenever practical, a parent should be copied in electronic communication to a child or student. The wishes of the parents regarding electronic communication must be honored. Parents have the right to ask that their child or student not receive electronic communication.

You may never communicate or send information to the children or students in your ministry using technology that is designed to automatically delete.

The following policies apply to your electronic communication with children and students in your ministry. However, we believe these policies reflect general wisdom for all your interaction with children and students. We recommend that you implement these guidelines as a general way of life when interacting with children outside your family or for whom you are not the guardian.

FACEBOOK, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES

Communication is important but can also be challenging. Your ministry communication strategy cannot include requiring children to have or join a social media page. For example, a Facebook page could not be the only means of communicating ministry information. If you use social media, all posts, messages, texts, or social media interaction with children or students must be directly related to a specific ministry purpose.

TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA

You may “follow” children and students on social media and similar technologies. However, you may not “re-tweet” or in any way spread further a child’s or student’s message post. You may respond to, but should not initiate a “direct message” with a child or student. Do not engage in an extended electronic conversation of more than a few messages. Your electronic communication with a child or student must serve a definable ministry purpose. You may not interact with children or student using technologies that are designed to self-delete.

EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

You may use email and similar technologies to communicate with children, students and families. All content between you and a child or student must be professional in nature and directly related to a definable ministry purpose. Where possible, you should copy guardian on e-mail communications to a child or student.

TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

You may use text messages and similar technologies to communicate with children, students, and families. All texts and similar technologies between you and a child or student must be professional and directly related to a definable ministry purpose. When possible, include a guardian on your text messages to a child or student.

ELECTRONIC IMAGERY

From time to time, we may take digital photos, videos, and other publicly obtainable images of ministry participants. These photos and/or videos may be used for promotional materials. It is our default policy to allow this practice as long as subjects of the photo or video are in public view and the imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the participants. Children and students may not be identified by name in photos or videos posted to a website. We will seek to honor any parent’s request that their imagery of their child not be posted on promotional material or ministry associated websites, with the understanding that group photography or videography may render this impracticable.

Misbehavior

Discipline

It is our policy that you don't use physical discipline for behavioral management of the children and students in your care. This includes a prohibition against spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children.

If you work with young children, you will have times when a child's behavior needs to be managed. When that happens, use strategies such as time-outs and other non-physical methods. Please observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children, you may need to do some physical redirection such as 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 away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting.
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and 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 a child in time-out.
- 4) A time-out becomes ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life.
- 5) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
- 6) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

If you experience unusual or uncontrollable behavior and with a child, seek help from your Ministry Leader and follow-up with a conversation with the parents.

If you have one of your own children in the program where you serve, please follow the same guidelines. Physical forms of discipline that you might practice in your home should not be practiced in the ministry setting.

Misconduct

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

The Shepherd's Church does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. We are committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying or harassment does occur, you and your Ministry Leader must respond promptly.

Harassment can take on many forms. It is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance; that offend or

degrade; that create a hostile environment; or that reflect discriminatory bias based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or mental or physical disability.

Examples of bullying and harassment that we prohibit include, but are not limited to:

1. Throwing an object at a participant or hitting a participant with objects;
2. Making negative or disparaging comments about a participant's disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits;
3. Displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols;
4. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping

It is your responsibility to monitor the children and students in your ministry area. You must never ignore or fail to intervene when bullying or harassment occurs.

Offsite and overnight events

Offsite Events / Sleeping Arrangements

Some of Shepherd's activities involve overnight sleeping arrangements. In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, you must observe the following guidelines:

1. Every adult chaperone on an overnight event must have previously completed the Church's screening and training process.
2. An adult chaperone must never share a sleeping accommodation with an individual child or student.
3. Plans for overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing and approved by the Compliance Officer.
4. While any children or students are awake, one trip leader must be awake and monitoring the children or students to ensure safe behavior.
5. All participants must wear modest sleeping attire.
6. Any overnight event that involves both genders must include separate sleeping accommodations, properly supervised by leaders of the same gender.
7. There should be periodic, visual checks throughout the night to ensure that students remain in designated sleeping places.
8. In dormitory or cabin style accommodations, at least one adult leader will be assigned to sleep in each room, dorm or cabin. Alternatively, the assigned leader may sleep in an immediately adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open.
9. When possible, each participant should have his/her own bed or cot. If overnight accommodations do not include standard beds, each staff member, volunteer, and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

Transportation

There are times when staff members and volunteers provide transportation for children and students. You must observe the following guidelines when transporting children or students:

1. You should transport children and students directly to their destination. When you need to stop for food and restroom breaks, avoid any non-public places.
2. Be mindful to avoid physical contact with children or students while in vehicles.

3. Do not use your cell phone to text or make unnecessary calls while transporting participants.
4. Carefully follow all posted speed limits and traffic signs.

STAFF MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

When a Shepherd's event takes place at a camp, retreat center or any off-site location, all policies in this handbook remain in effect for the duration of the event. During travel and all event activities, you must follow, and help participants follow, the guidelines in this document.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of The Shepherd's Church's Child Protection Policies and I understand the importance of the matters set forth within the document. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at The Shepherd's Church.

Further, I understand that the policies may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by The Shepherd's Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Child Protection Policies. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this document in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between The Shepherd's Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of The Shepherd's Church Child Protection Policies.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to remain attached for your reference.]

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[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to your Ministry Leader.]