



HINSON BAPTIST CHURCH

# Child & Volunteer Protection Policy

Revised 5/23/2022

## Welcome!

Welcome to children's ministry at Hinson Baptist Church (HBC). It is our goal to create a safe and loving environment in which the children entrusted to our care are taught about the character of God, discover biblical truth, and learn what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

This handbook is designed to familiarize parents and volunteers with our procedures and our child protection policy. The specifications contained in this handbook apply to official children's ministry occurring during the four regularly scheduled weekly meetings of the church (Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening, and Wednesday Women's Bible Study). "Children's ministry" refers to classes and programs for children aged newborn to eighteen. In addition, this applies to Hinson Small Groups that provide childcare.

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## Mission

The Children's Ministry of Hinson Baptist Church exists to glorify God by:

- Maintaining a safe and secure environment
- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children. (Ephesians 6:4)
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word. (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with one another, and with the world around us. (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)

## Volunteer Expectations

All volunteers are expected to:

- Be on time, prepared and ready to accept children at the designated start time
- Get a substitute for yourself when you are sick or away
- Love the children as Christ loves them
- Set an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Understand that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children
- Regularly attend the main morning church service

## Child Protection Policy Overview

Our primary concern is that the children are safe in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all volunteers
- Require annual training for all volunteers
- Release preschool age children ONLY to the parent/guardian or mature sibling with the corresponding sticker
- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Have a first aid kit readily available
- Educate our volunteers to signs of potential child abuse and encourage them to report any known or suspected abuse to church leadership and to appropriate governmental authorities consistent with applicable laws
- Adhere to a "healthy child" policy for admittance to classes
- Adhere to a two-volunteer/room policy
- Ensure that volunteers are not in isolated settings with children
- Have installed and monitor security cameras in the children's ministry area

## Protecting the Children Before They Arrive

### Volunteer Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, HBC has established several criteria that all volunteers must meet in order to work with our children:

- Be HBC members in good standing who have been members for at least six months prior to serving (exceptions require approval from a pastor)
- Be eighteen years of age or older. Youth who are at least twelve years of age and are children of members are welcome to assist but must go through an appropriate screening process for youth
- Complete the volunteer application
- All reference checks must be satisfactorily completed
- Criminal record checks and other appropriate screening checks must be completed for all volunteers over the age of 18
- Take a tour of children's area
- Be approved by the Children's Ministry Staff

### Volunteer Training & Remaining Cleared

In order to remain cleared to serve in Family Ministry, we require the following:

- Participate in annual training session as required
- Stay current with background checks

## Protecting the Children As They Arrive and Depart

### Arrival and Departure Times

Volunteers should be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of any session, so that parents have enough time to transition their children. Be in the classroom for the Sunday Morning Service at **10:00 am**, and at **4:45 pm** for Sunday Evening prayer service.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately at the conclusion of the service.

In the event that a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of any church service, volunteers will send other volunteers to locate the parents.

### Special Needs

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Deacon of Children's Ministries before signing their child into class. This is to give us any particular instructions or suggestions on how to care for the child.

### Child Arrival & Departure

The parent/guardian must check-in preschool aged and under using the online check-in system. The parent/guardian of preschool children must return with the corresponding child's sticker to remove the child from class. We will only release the child to the parent/guardian or older sibling who has the corresponding tag.

On Sunday night, parents are welcome to drop off or pick up their youth at the designated location for

regularly scheduled youth group events and meetings. There is no online checkin-in procedure.

## Youth Arrival & Departure

Parents are welcome to drop off or pick up their youth at the designated location for regularly scheduled youth group events and meetings. There is no identification system or sign-in procedure for this age group.

## Protecting the Children While They Are In Our Care

### Reducing Isolation

- For Nursery and Children’s Ministry, two “cleared” volunteers must be present in each classroom at all times. One of those volunteers must be a woman.
- If two family members serve together, a third non-family member must also serve in that classroom.
- Volunteers must interact with youth and children in a context where they can easily be observed by other volunteers and/or parents.

### Volunteer-to-Child Ratios

In addition to always having two adult volunteers present, the following ratios are maintained during the regularly scheduled meetings of the church:

- Children ages 0-24 months: 1 volunteer to 3 children
- Children age 2: 1 volunteer to 4 children
- Children ages 3-5: 1 volunteer to 6 children
- Children 1st<sup>st</sup>-5th grade: 1 volunteer to 7 children

### Restroom Procedure

#### Infant

Parents are encouraged to take their children to the restroom or change a soiled diaper prior to signing them into a class.

#### Preschool

In the event that a child needs to use the restroom, a female volunteer stands outside the restroom but must not enter the restroom unless the child asks for help. In the event that the child needs help, another volunteer (male or female) will stand outside the restroom while a female volunteer assists. Both children and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water before returning to the classroom.

#### Elementary

Any child needing to use the restroom shall go by themselves. If accompaniment is required, only female volunteers can accompany children to the restrooms.

#### Youth

Youth (Middle & High School) shall use the appropriate restroom on their own. No volunteer or other child should accompany him/her.

## Appropriate Discipline

All volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior includes:

- Correcting the child verbally
- Name on the board
- Withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his/her behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).
- If the behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents will be notified to retrieve their child from class. Depending on the severity of the offense some of the above steps could be omitted.
- Volunteers should communicate to parents any inappropriate behavior.

Be consistent with all the children in your care. Volunteers should never yell at, spank or hit a child. For further information regarding discipline, please speak with appropriate church leaders.

## Physical Touch Policy (Volunteer-to-Child)

While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or of showing godly love and care, it can also be easily misinterpreted.

- Always remain in open sight of other adults
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting in laps, assisting in the restroom, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children
- In the nursery, only females will take children to the bathroom and/or assist in the restroom.
- No diaper changes are to be administered by volunteers. If a baby/toddler needs to be changed, the volunteers will notify the desk worker who will contact the parents.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 through pre-K
- All volunteers should refrain from the following activities: rough-housing, wrestling, or giving shoulder or piggy back rides to children.
- Use care and discernment when hugging a child. Brief side-hugs when greeting or comforting a child are generally appropriate. Prolonged, frequent, or frontal hugs are not appropriate. In older classes, workers should not initiate hugs, particularly towards children of the opposite sex; if an older child initiates a hug, redirect them to a more appropriate contact, such as a brief side hug or a gentle "high-five," etc.
- Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief times, with no rubbing or massaging. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of a child's head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is considered private or personal, unless assisting preschool children in the restroom.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.
- If there are any questions about how to interact with children in an appropriate manner, feel free to direct your concerns to appropriate church leadership.

## Accidents and First Aid

The children's area is equipped with basic first aid kits (mounted on the wall outside of the children's bathroom near Room 115). Volunteers should be familiar with their contents and uses. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services (9-1-1) will be called first and the parents will be informed immediately. Volunteers will complete two Incident Report Forms for all injuries, whether major or minor. A copy of this form will go to the parent upon pickup of the child and to the Children's Ministry Department.

## Food & Drink

One of the ways we protect children is to limit food and drink allowed in classrooms. Children may bring in a water bottle but no outside food is allowed in the classrooms. If you need to give your child a snack, you should do that in the Community Hall or Welcome Center. Contact the Children's Ministry Department for questions regarding approved food/snacks. If a teacher wishes to bring in any outside food or drink, they must contact the Children's Ministry Department ahead of time.

### **Administering Food to Infants**

No snacks will be provided for infants in the nursery. Parents are encouraged to provide an appropriate labeled cup for their own child to drink from. Once the child is done drinking a bottle/cup, it must be put back into the diaper bag of that child.

### **Administering Food to Toddlers and Preschool Children**

Every child with a diagnosed food allergy will have a RED card posted in their box. Volunteers should check that card to determine the nature of the allergy present before offering snacks. If instructions are not clear, no food should be given to the child without clarification from the parent/guardian. No food except for the church-supplied snack and water will be permitted to be eaten anywhere in the classrooms for newborn-preschool children. If a parent desires to feed their child a specific, non-church provided snack during the services, we ask that they check their child out of class and administer the food personally to their individual child in the Community Hall. This is to reduce the risk of allergic reactions.

## Snacks for Elementary & Youth

### **Elementary Age**

Teachers may on occasion serve a snack in class or send home a treat as long as they notify Children's Ministry Department of what snack they plan to provide.

### **Youth**

Food is often served at the weekly youth group meetings or at activities. We expect that youth are old enough to know of their allergies or limits and parents should have conversations with their youth about what is allowed within their family.

## Food Allergies

Parents are responsible to inform the Children's Ministry Staff of any significant food allergies their child has. If an Epi Pen may be needed, the location of that resource should be clearly communicated to the Children's Ministry Staff and all front desk workers. Unless otherwise instructed, no volunteer should administer an Epi



Pen without parental consent. If a child does have an allergic reaction, the front desk worker will coordinate with the security team to immediately contact the child's parents. In case of emergency, 9-1-1 should also be called immediately.

Any child with significant food allergies will have a bright RED card posted on their personal box.

## Healthy Child Policy

### **Universal Precautions**

Universal precautions are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in a nursery setting and should be utilized. This method is very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers in the nursery from illness. This is not to imply that any children or volunteers in the nursery are carrying infectious diseases. By treating all bodily fluids as if they are infected, any infections or contaminants can be avoided at all times, providing a safer and healthier environment for volunteers and children alike.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- Remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. After the toys have been sprayed with the provided disinfectant, they may be reintroduced.
- At the end of the session, volunteers will thoroughly disinfect the room. Surfaces will be wiped down and toys will be sprayed with the provided disinfectant.

### **Communicable Disease Policy**

HBC is dedicated to preventing the spread of communicable diseases among the children and volunteers. Volunteers do have the right to refuse a child because of questionable symptoms. Both parents and volunteers must be familiar with these policies.

A child should be kept at home when any of the following exist:

- Fever (100.0 degrees or higher)
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Any symptom of childhood diseases such as Chicken Pox, German Measles, Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease, Mumps, Scarlet Fever, or Whooping Cough
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Any unexplained rash or open sores
- Any skin infection – such as but not limited to; boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any communicable disease
- Lice (untreated)

Note: Children need to be free of any of these conditions for 24 hours without medication before returning to children's ministry

Volunteers should use latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to handle blood spills or vomit.

Hand washing is a recommended regular habit for both children and volunteers. Hand sanitizer is also provided for all volunteers and parents.

Toys and equipment are washed and disinfected regularly.

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the children's desk with a volunteer until the parents are located.

Please inform the Children's Ministry Staff if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending a HBC event so that other parents may be notified if necessary.

Neither volunteers nor church staff are authorized to give medication to any child. In the event that a child needs medication during class, their parent must be present to administer the appropriate dose. Please see the "Food Allergies" instructions for further information and exceptions.

## General Information

### Visiting Adults in the Classroom

If a new child is visiting HBC and would feel more at ease, it is permissible to allow a parent to join the child in class until the parent and the child feel comfortable. However, the presence of an adult non-member in the classroom should not become normative, and the guest is not to be considered as a volunteer, and therefore is not entrusted with caring for the children. Give the parent a "visitor" badge if they will be staying in the classroom for longer than 30 minutes. We recommend that this procedure only be allowed twice.

### Mobile Devices

Volunteers must refrain from using mobile devices while serving in classrooms except for emergencies. If a volunteer must use their mobile device, he/she should step outside of the classroom.

### Photography

We ask our volunteers to not take pictures or selfies with the children. Photos may be taken for bulletin boards, cubbies and special events by pre-approved volunteers. If a parent desires that absolutely no photos be taken of their child they should submit a request in writing to the Children's Ministry Staff so plans can be put in place.

### Documenting a Physical Injury or Exposure Incident

If a child or teen is injured while attending our church or using our facilities or is exposed to bodily fluids (blood, urine, stool, or vomit) other than their own as a result of a child or teen's injury or illness, the ministry supervisor (or designee) must immediately:

- Seek proper medical care for the child
- Complete an *Injury or Exposure To Bodily Fluids Incident Report*
- Forward a copy of the report to the appropriate Children's Ministry staff member

## Lost and Found

The Lost & Found is located beneath the Staff/Elder/Deacon mailboxes (in the hallway leading down to the Children's Wing - directly adjacent to the Community Hall). Items left in classrooms longer than one week will be taken to the Lost and Found cabinet. Lost and found items are periodically displayed on tables outside the library before being donated.

## Hinson Small Groups

- If children from more than one family are not visible during the majority of the small group meeting, two cleared Hinson volunteers must provide childcare. \*
- Small Groups must present the Family ministry pastor or administrator with their child care plan for pre-approval
- Children must go to the bathroom alone. If a child requires bathroom help, ONLY that child's parents may provide help.
- Bedrooms: Children are never to be alone with another child or adult (other than parent) in a bedroom.

\* Two unrelated teen helpers who are Hinson "cleared" may provide the childcare. At least one must be female.