

The Heart of Christ Church Child Protection Guidelines

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1.0 CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES OBJECTIVES

1.1 PROTECT THE CHILDREN: The purpose of the Child Protection Guidelines is to help reduce the risk of harm to children and provide a safe and secure environment for children and adults participating in the various THOCC (The Heart of Christ Church) Children/Youth Ministries activities. The terms, children and youth will be used interchangeably throughout this manual to refer to minors.

1.2 PROTECT THE MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBER VOLUNTEERS: By implementing child protection policies and procedures, we also reduce the risk of misunderstandings and false accusations against members and non-member volunteers.

2.0 USE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES MANUAL

2.1 RESPONSIBILITIES: The Pastor, Christian Education Director, and Youth Director are responsible for the administration of, distribution of, and training on, the THOCC Child Protection Guidelines.

2.2 MEMBER: Except where specifically indicated to the contrary, all references to "member" in these policies and documents refer to THOCC Congregational Members and Ministry staff paid by The Heart of Christ Church.

2.3 VOLUNTEER: Except where specifically indicated to the contrary, all references to "volunteers" in these policies and documents refer to people who are selected and supervised directly by THOCC as non-member volunteers in THOCC sponsored ministry activities. This manual is for the sole use of THOCC employees, members, and volunteers.

2.4 CHANGES: No exceptions, changes or deletions can be made to this manual without the prior written consent of THOCC Board of Elders.

3.0 WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

3.1 CHILD ABUSE DEFINED : In general, child abuse is physical, mental, or sexual maltreatment; neglect of health and welfare; or exposure of a person under 18 years of age to an unreasonable risk. Abusing and mistreating children is prohibited. Members, employees, or volunteers engaged in abuse or mistreatment of children will be dismissed from ministry. If the action is criminal, the person and action will be reported to the police.

3.2 PHYSICAL ABUSE: Child abuse includes inflicting injury upon a child; placing a child in a situation where the child is likely to be injured; torturing a child; excessively punishing a child; allowing a child to be given illegal controlled substances; child neglect including the withholding of adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.

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3.3 SEXUAL ABUSE : Involving or allowing a child to be engaged in sexual activity; allowing a child to witness sexual acts or pornographic materials; allowing a child to witness the abuse of someone else.

3.4 EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL ABUSE: Emotional abuse includes physical or emotional abuse that causes or could cause serious emotional injury; verbal comments, actions or statements that would cause a child to believe that their person, emotions, physical form, race, family background, religious background or social status is somehow bad, inferior, unacceptable or shameful.

3.5 CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE/MISTREATMENT: Abuse and Mistreatment must not be allowed - Children are capable of inflicting the same types of abuse on each other as outlined in 3.1 through 3.4. They also use bullying, harassment, intimidation, innuendos, name calling and other ways of mistreating each other. Children that conduct themselves in this manner will be sent home by the THOCC Ministry Leader responsible for the activity.

4.0 SCREENING AND SELECTION

4.1 CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING PROCESS: NON-MEMBER VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers involved in THOCC sponsored overnight ministry activities with minors or in any volunteer service on behalf of THOCC, must be screened using the THOCC Child Protection process for volunteers. Process for volunteers being, (1) complete the THOCC Volunteer Application, (2) have a Pastoral Reference checked, (3) read the THOCC Child Protection Guidelines and complete the THOCC CPG Training and review the CPG as mandated for new updates, (4) sign the CPG acknowledgement form, (5) have two General References checked, (6) have an individual interview with the Christian Education Director, and (7) have a criminal background check, a child abuse clearance performed and checked be with www.nsopr.gov. (US Dept. of Justice, National Sex Offender Public Website)

4.2 CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING PROCESS: MEMBERS

All THOCC Members who are involved in THOCC Children and Youth Ministry must be screened using the THOCC Child Protection process for members. Process for members being, (1) read the THOCC Child Protection Guidelines and complete the THOCC CPG Training and review the CPG as mandated for new updates, (2) sign the CP acknowledgement form and (3) have a criminal background check a child abuse clearance performed and be checked with www.nsopr.gov. (US Dept. of Justice, National Sex Offender Public Website) before they may enter into Children and Youth Ministry.

4.3 VOLUNTEER APPLICANT GUIDELINESS

4.3.1 SIX MONTH RULE-All approved applicants will work with a Mentor for six (6) months, at which time they will be reviewed for continuing involvement in THOCC Ministries by the Pastor or Christian Education Director.

4.3.2 ABUSE VIOLATION: Anyone with a history of child abuse violations cannot serve as volunteers in any capacity.

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4.4 SCREENING SCHEDULE: MINISTRY MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS: All requirements from sections 4.1 and 4.2, applications, and background check authorizations, must be completed and received by the Church Administration at least sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the THOCC event. For example, if the event is scheduled for April 24, the completed applications must be sent to the Church Administration before February 24.

4.5 PRE-QUALIFICATION: No one will be allowed, even as a last minute substitute, to be involved in THOCC events without first having completed the requirements as listed in sections 4.1 and or 4.2 as applicable to the individual. All potential substitutes must be pre-qualified in order to participate.

4.5.1 Parents, grandparents or guardians that accompany a child to an in-house Church child event shall be allowed to stay for the event. This person needs to be identified by a visitor badge and shall not be allowed to be alone with any children except their own.

5.0 TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

5.1 TWO ADULT RULE: A minimum of two adults (both previously screened and CPG trained) must be present during all THOCC ministry activities. Larger groups require more supervision and groups of youth require the appropriate male to female ratio of adults to youth. See age appropriate appendix.

5.1.1 During all THOCC Ministry events children are to be supervised at all times. It is never appropriate to leave children unattended.

5.2 PERMISSION FORMS: Forms and liability waivers signed by the parent or guardian must be obtained for all external and overnight THOCC activities.

5.3 PROPER SUPERVISION OF YOUTH WORKERS: Supervision is to be provided at all times when they (member youth in grade 6-12 working in ministry) are working with children and youth. THOCC does not endorse or approve of unsupervised time alone with children or youth in the context of any THOCC approved event or activity.

5.4 BASIC CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS OF CONDUCT: All THOCC employees, members, and volunteers must read and follow the **Basic Child Protection Standards of Conduct** (See Appendix A) and agree to adhere to those standards of conduct. These standards of conduct and the age-appropriate conduct guidelines (See Appendix B and Appendix C) will be used to train people to work at THOCC ministry activities. Each of the age appropriate guidelines were written with specific ages in mind, however, each of them are to be applied to both age groups as appropriate.

5.4.1 DISCIPLINE: Appropriate discipline is positive and meant to disciple. The “Three Count” is used for individuals and the “Five Count” is used for groups.

5.4.2 VERBAL INTERACTIONS: Appropriate verbal exchanges are a must; we are to be an example to the children and youth. These exchanges must always be encouraging, uplifting and building

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positive relationships, not only with the kids but also with other adults. Reacting to kids and adults with hurtful words will not resolve the matter and likely will cause more problems.

5.5 BEHAVIOR AND CONTRABAND: Minors are not to bring items or devices such as fireworks, weapons and alcohol and/or illegal drugs to THOCC ministry activities. Violence or threats of violence towards another person, disrupting activities and severe behavior problems will not be tolerated. The minor exhibiting such behavior or bringing contraband items to ministry activities will be sent home by the Ministry Leader. To do this, the child will be counseled, the parents contacted and the child will be sent home with the parents

5.6 AFTER MINISTRY CONTACT: The scope and limit of responsibility of volunteers begins when the ministry activity starts and ends when ministry activity is finished. The addresses of minors will not be distributed by THOCC. Volunteers must not request or accept physical addresses, phone numbers or email addresses of the minors. Volunteers are not to solicit post ministry activity contact with the minors.

5.7 PHOTOGRAPHS: No photographs may be used for advertizing purposes. THOCC events and ministries are open for photos and must be stored on the Church computers.

6.0 REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

6.1 THE PURPOSE OF REPORTING : The governing principle of THOCC is that we know it is God's heart to care for and protect children (Matthew 18:1-10). Therefore, all members, paid employees and/or volunteers of THOCC have a responsibility to report any actual or suspected child abuse or neglect whether or not it occurred at a THOCC sponsored event.

6.2 HOW TO REPORT: If an incident of suspected or known child abuse or neglect should arise, the member, volunteer or employee must **immediately** notify the Ministry Leader; the reporting person has the responsibility to report to the appropriate state agency according to locally mandated laws; and notify the Church Administration in writing by means of an **Incident Report Form** and a telephone call to the Senior Pastor.

6.2.1 Incidents of severe behavior problems, bringing contraband to ministry activities, threats of violence or actual violence are to be reported on the Incident Report Form. See other examples of this behavior outlined in 5.5.

The written Incident report must be forwarded immediately (within 24 hours) to the Church Administration (See section 2.1) and followed up by a phone call to the Senior Pastor. The report must include the state agency the report was made to and the name(s) and phone number of the state employee that took the report.

6.3 IS THE ALLEGATION TRUE? It is important to remember that you do need to report abuse or suspected abuse; however, you do not attempt to investigate and determine if the abuse or neglect is true. Determining the particulars of what happened is to be left to the proper authorities.

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6.3.1 Cooperation with an Investigation-If an investigation is launched by the authorities into child abuse or some other incident involving a minor, THOCC members, employees, and volunteers must cooperate with the investigation. Just as it is our duty to report abuse, it is our duty to cooperate with an investigation.

6.4 VIOLATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY? Sometimes a child or youth will be surprised that a trusted adult reported what the child or youth disclosed to him or her. You should not feel that you have violated confidentiality by reporting abuse. Child abuse is illegal and must be reported. You may be the only one who knows about this situation and is in a position to report it. You need to take the proper steps to report the situation, it is the law.

6.5 CAN I INVESTIGATE? No THOCC employee, member, or volunteer shall conduct any investigation or attempt to “solve the problem” independently. Investigations are to be handled by the proper authorities.

6.6 CHURCH ADMINISTRATION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: The Church Administration shall forward reports of child abuse and neglect to the Senior Pastor in writing. The filed Incident Report Form will be included as part of the notice.

6.7 PASTORAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: The Senior Pastor shall immediately report any abuse incident to the Church Board President.

6.8 CHURCH BOARD PRESIDENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: The Church Board President shall immediately report any incidents to the Church Board.

7.0 RESPONDING

7.1 MEDIA AND PRESS: If an allegation of child abuse occurs, any media or public inquiry is to be directed to the Senior Pastor and Church Board President.

7.2 ACCUSED PERPETRATOR: Any person who has been accused of or is suspected of child abuse or neglect shall be removed immediately from any service that would require direct contact with minors. Additional action may be taken at the discretion of THOCC Church Board.

7.3 MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS: The Senior Pastor is responsible to inform and support employees, members, and volunteers in the case of child abuse during an THOCC event. Members, employees, and volunteers of THOCC are to speak truthfully with all possible candor and sensitivity. The rights and privacy of victims and those accused are to be protected. Members, employees and volunteers are requested to avoid statements or conversation that could fuel rumors.

7.4 VICTIM AND FAMILY: When an act of abuse that has occurred is made known, the Senior Pastor will determine how the family can best be assisted in the circumstances; this may include meeting with the family.

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8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING: All THOCC paid employees, members, and volunteers in THOCC Children/Youth Ministries involved with minors in overnight or extended ministry activities must review the CPG training as updated including acknowledgement of training and conduct expectations.

8.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORMS: All THOCC paid employees, members, and volunteers who participate with minors at THOCC Children/Youth Ministries events are required to acknowledge their receipt and understanding of the THOCC Child Protection Guidelines Standards of Conduct. (See Appendices A through C)

8.3 REVIEW REQUIREMENTS : All reference checks, interview notes, applicant interview notes and criminal background check data may be reviewed by THOCC Executive Committee.

8.4 STORAGE AND RETENTION OF CP FILES: The Church Administration will retain applications, reference checks; personal interview and criminal background check records in secure files as permanent records.

8.5 CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES INCLUSION REQUIREMENTS: Child Protection Guidelines and Standards are to be included or cross-referenced in all relevant THOCC training materials and workshops, employee handbooks, publications and Web sites.

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APPENDIX "A"

BASIC CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- 1 A minimum of two adults (preferably not a married couple) are required in attendance during all THOCC events and activities. There should be no time when children are alone or with only one adult.
- 2 Private one-on-one contact between adults and children or youth is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences the meeting is to be conducted in the church office and a witness (adult) must be in the adjacent office.
- 3 Adults must respect the privacy of children and youth in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- 4 In the event of children requiring diaper change two (2) adults must be present. With the exceptions of the parents. (Not a married couple.)
- 5 When youth go overnight and stay in a hotel etc., youth of the same gender must be in a room and adults of the same gender must be in a room. No adult is permitted to share a bed with a youth except a parent child (same sex) situation. Double occupancy rooms are needed for an odd number of youth; three (3) to one (1) room is permitted.
 - a) Overnight Youth activities must be chaperoned. Chaperones must be a minimum of two adults each male and female appropriate according to the youth present. A ratio of five youth to one chaperone with a minimum of two male and female appropriate.
 - b) On overnight away from church activities youth must be in groups of at least three when going to restrooms or any other places where youth are allowed to be unsupervised.
- 6 Male and female leaders require separate sleeping facilities. Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.
- 7 THOCC does not recognize any secret organization as part of its ministry programs or activities. All aspects of the THOCC ministry are open to visitation by parents and guardians.
- 8 Volunteers agree to abide by the dress code for the activity. If one is not provided and there are questions regarding the attire, those questions will be directed to the THOCC Ministry Leader responsible for the event/activity. That person will have final say in the matter. Remember as a member or volunteer of THOCC you are a testimony to the children/youth and all those you come in contact with.

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- 9** Discipline used during THOCC approved events and activities must be constructive and reflect the values of THOCC. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- 10** Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may never be included as part of any THOCC event or activity.
- 11** THOCC children must remain in groups of three (as per 5b) or more and are not allowed to pair off for any reason.
- 12** All activities away from Church require a signed parental permission slip and release from liability for leaders and chaperones.
- 13** Each THOCC event has one Ministry Leader set by the Church Board.

For age specific standards, please refer to the following documents:

Appropriate Standards of Conduct & Contact- Children 5th Grade and Under (See Appendix B)

Standards of Conduct & Contact- Youth 6th Grade and Above (See Appendix C)

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APPENDIX "B"

APPROPRIATE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT CHILDREN 5TH GRADE AND UNDER

1.0 GENERAL

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
1.1 Minimum of two unrelated adults in line of sight or close proximity to each other at all times when involved with children's activity.	1.2 Adult alone with a child
1.3 Another adult present or involved in any contact with child of same or opposite sex; no private one-on-one meeting or contact with child is permitted.	1.4 Meeting, conference, travel or other activity with same or opposite sex minor without supervision or witness.
1.5 Proper number of adults-to-participant ratio for the age of the children and the activity. One adult to 4-6 children are recommended for this age group	1.6 Inadequate number of volunteers and staff for the activity.
1.7 Respecting the privacy of children in bathroom situations and intruding only to the extent necessary for assistance requested by the child or for health or safety reasons.	1.8 Entering the bathroom with a child that doesn't need assistance or is not in any peril

2.0 DISCIPLINE

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
2.1 Praising and encouraging good behavior	2.2 Corporal punishment; treatment that is demeaning or intended to embarrass or harass the recipient
2.3 A firm yet gentle voice addressing the "offense". Making eye contact with the child when delivering instructions.	2.4 Any words or tone that would cause a child to think he or she, rather than a specific behavior, is the "problem". 2.4.1 Any words that could cause feelings of condemnation or shame in a child about any aspect of their person, including racial or ethnic comments.
2.5 Age appropriate time outs (about 1 minute per age of the child) in the "Timeout Chair". Confidential parental discussion when necessary	2.6 Any physical disciplinary contact, such as grabbing the child, unless the child or others are in immediate danger
2.7 If these methods are unsuccessful, call your supervisor to handle the situation.	

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Otherwise, the unwanted behavior may be reinforced and draw attention away from the rest of the group.	
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3.0 PHYSICAL CONTACT

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
3.1 Non-demanding, gentle touch of the shoulder, hand, arm, head or back	3.2 Kissing; demanding hugs and /or kisses; opposite sex piggy-back rides
3.3 Sitting the child on one knee (only appropriate at preschool or kindergarten level).	3.4 Sitting a child in center of the lap; sitting the child between the legs; sitting a child above age 6 on the lap- one or both legs
3.5 Physical contact which expresses affirmation and is not done for the satisfaction or pleasure of the adult	3.6 Touching chest, genital area, upper legs, buttocks, stomach; seductiveness or suggestive contact

4.0 HUGS-When a child asks for a hug, it shows there is a relational connection between two people and that the child has an obvious trust in the adult. The main point about giving hugs is that they need to be mutual. If there is any hesitation or resistance from the young person, the hug doesn't happen.

5.0 LAP SITTING-Children in first grade or above do not sit on the lap of an adult. Children can sit beside the adult on the chair or floor. Children kindergarten-age and younger may want or need the security of being held. If a child of this age positions himself/herself on a lap, gently pick the child up by the waist and set the child on one knee. This also leaves the other knee open for the next child that may come along. At no time will a child sit in the center of a lap or between the legs, regardless of the gender of the adult.

6.0 BATHROOM PROCEDURES-Permission to use the bathroom needs to be requested by children. An adult needs to wait outside the bathroom door in plain view of others. For situations in which children require assistance (very young children or children with medical conditions), an adult and assistant of the same sex as the child, if possible, would always be present.

7.0 CONTACT OUTSIDE USUAL MINISTRY FUNCTIONS-Generally there is no contact of adults with minors outside the normal ministry function if they are younger than 5th grade. An exception to this can be made ahead of time with agreement of the child's parents. An example of this would be a leader who wants to telephone his or her clubbers. Adults do not contact children younger than 5th grade via electronic means. Leaders are not advised to pick up or drop off younger children unless it is prearranged with the parents and there are two adults present with the children at all times.

Guidelines on issues for youth 6th grade and up, refer to Appendix C. Standards of Conduct and Contact- Youth 6th Grade and Above

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APPENDIX "C"

STANDARDS of CONDUCT and CONTACT YOUTH 6TH GRADE and ABOVE

- 1.0** A minimum of two adults is required in attendance during all THOCC sponsored activities and events, and these two adults must be CPG trained. Co-ed groups require co-ed chaperones.
- 2.0** Private one-on-one contact between an adult and youth is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted in the clear view of others or in the Church Office with a witness in the adjacent office.
- 3.0** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require some other action. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- 4.0 ACCOMODATIONS:** (See also Appendix A #5
- 4.1** When youth go overnight and stay in a hotel etc. Youth of the same gender must be in a room and adults of the same gender must be in a room. No adult is permitted to share a bed with a youth except a parent child (same sex) situation. Double occupancy rooms if needed for an odd number of youth. Three (3) to one (1) room is permitted.
- a)** Overnight Youth activities must be chaperoned. Chaperones must be a minimum of two adults each, male and female, appropriate according to the youth present. A ratio of five youth to one chaperone with a minimum of two male and female appropriate.
- b)** On overnight away from church activities youth must be in groups of at least three when going to restrooms or any other places where youth are allowed to be unsupervised.

5.0 PHYSICAL CONTACT

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
3.1 Non-demanding, gentle touch of the shoulder, hand, arm, head or back	3.2 Kissing; demanding hugs and /or kisses; opposite sex piggy-back rides
3.3 Physical contact which expresses affirmation and is not done for the satisfaction or pleasure of the adult	3.4 Touching chest, genital area, upper legs, buttocks, stomach; seductiveness or suggestive contact

- 6.0** Male and female leaders require separate sleeping accommodations, unless they are married.
- 7.0** THOCC does not recognize any secret organization as part of its ministry programs or activities.

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All aspects of THOCC ministry are open to visitation by parents and others.

8.0 Proper clothing is required for all activities. If there is a question regarding proper clothing, check with the THOCC Ministry Leader responsible for the event/activity. That person will have final say in the matter. Remember, as an employee or volunteer of THOCC, you are the testimony to the children/youth and all those with whom you come in contact.

9.0 Discipline used during THOCC -approved events and activities must be constructive and reflect the values of THOCC. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

10.0 Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may never be included as part of any THOCC event or activity.

11.0 Driving and Riding in Vehicles: Whenever possible the Two Adult Rule must be followed when transporting youth. If two adults are not available, then several youth must be in the car. Before transporting youth, the adult must have a signed permission slip from the parent (s). Also the parent(s) must have a clear understanding of (1) pick up and drop off times, (2) the intended destination and purpose of the trip and (3) the working cell phone number of the adult driver.

a) Roll call of passengers must be taken before each departure.

b) The Driver must have auto insurance for driving youth for any event.

Guidelines on issues for children 5th grade and under, please refer to Appendix B- APPROPRIATE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT CHILDREN 5TH GRADE AND UNDER