



lhKID'S SAFETY AND OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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We are excited to have you join us in ministry and hope that this time of service will be a blessing for you and for those you are serving!

The information provided is a review of child safety policies and procedures for Living Hope volunteers and staff members. The following policies and procedures are now in affect and will be strictly enforced. We ask that all volunteers and staff working in areas of ministry involving children be aware of these. As you read, we ask that you digitally initial after each section where prompted to confirm you have read and understand what has been presented. When completed, please submit the form located at the end of the document.

At Living Hope, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously and are committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. These policies and procedures are intended to facilitate that commitment and create opportunities within it so children can grow in a relationship with Jesus. We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to mistreatment of children or behavior that jeopardizes the safety and wellbeing of children in our care. To this end, any report of inappropriate behavior or 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 and/or criminal law enforcement.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to set up a meeting with our Children's Pastor at 979-690-1911. A hard copy of this document can be requested through the office or our Children's Pastor.

Thank you,
Living Hope Staff



ABUSE POLICY AND REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT ABUSE

Living Hope has zero tolerance for any forms of abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Living Hope to act in the best interest of all children in every program. To maintain a safe environment for our children, Living Hope staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies.

If staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, “grooming behaviors”, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their immediate supervisor, the Children’s Pastor, or the Pastor. Employees who fail to report suspected abuse to a designated person is in violation of this policy and is grounds for termination. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students, or vulnerable populations at Living Hope.

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

If a child reports abuse to a staff member or volunteer it is the staff member or volunteer’s responsibility to immediately inform their Floor or Room Supervisor, the Children’s Pastor, or the Pastor.

Because many adults are unfamiliar with Texas reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, Living Hope utilizes a ‘tandem or dual report’ model, where permitted. A ‘dual report’ occurs when a Living Hope supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation together with the individual who saw, heard, or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect. While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse, neglect, and any inappropriate or ‘grooming’ behaviors of a volunteer or staff member to an immediate supervisor or Howard Tipton, our Student Pastor, 979-204-0067. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in Living Hope programs.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, CPS OR THE ABUSE HOTLINE DIRECTLY. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children, and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone. ***NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED*** from Living Hope before reporting to law enforcement personnel or the Child Abuse Hotline.

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400.



PARENTAL OBSERVATION AND VOLUNTEERING

PARENTAL OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities their child is involved in. To attend, they will be required to check in with our LhKid's Staff and be given a guest tag. If parents desire to participate in or have continuous interest in being present during an activity or program at Living Hope, they will be required to complete the Living Hope Volunteer Application and screening process.

BACKGROUND CHECK

Living Hope requires all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities to undergo a criminal background check. Different background checks may be required depending on position. Individuals who have committed sexually oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors. Living Hope prohibits anyone that views or struggles with pornography to serve in any area with our children.

MINISTRY SAFE VOLUNTEER TRAINING VIDEOS

Potential volunteers are required to complete training through Ministry Safe, which provides sexual abuse prevention training through their website. This information is included in the volunteer application process.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCESS

A volunteer must attend Living Hope for six months before being eligible to serve in volunteer positions providing access to children, students, or vulnerable populations. Any person that is interested in serving in any area that involves children, youth, or college will be required to complete a volunteer application and complete a face-to-face interview before being approved.



VOLUNTEER CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR

ATTENDANCE

If you are scheduled in one of our LhKid's areas and unable to serve, please give as much notice as possible. You are responsible for finding another volunteer to serve in your place. When you have exhausted all your means, please contact the supervisor in your area so they can work to get it covered. In the event of a last-minute emergency, communication directly with your supervisor is appreciated.

CHECKING IN

Volunteers are required to check in at one of the kiosks and print off a nametag. After receiving your name tag, please go immediately to your designated area. No individual will be permitted into a children's area or room without proper identification.

ACCOUNTABILITY

There must be at least two adults in the room at all times with any minor. If you need to leave the room for any reason, please notify the Floor Supervisor (Preschool) or Children's Leader (Children's and Fusion) so they may step in to replace you.

If two individuals serving in a room are related to one another, ideally a third unrelated volunteer or staff member should be present.

If you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room occupied by others, the hallway, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway, a highly visible area, or have another volunteer be with you.

TOBACCO USE

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using any tobacco products while working with or supervising children at Living Hope, while traveling with children or on the premises of Living Hope.



ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from being in possession of, under the influence of, and/or using alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with or supervising children at Living Hope, while traveling with children or on the premises of Living Hope.

Supervisors should be notified if you are currently taking prescription drugs that may impair or inhibit you while supervising or traveling with minors.

SEXUAL ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

In general, members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexual oriented conversations with children in preschool or in children's worship. In youth, these topics may be discussed during Hot Topic Night and only in an appropriate group setting. Any explicit information about a volunteers own personal relationships, dating, or sexual experiences is prohibited.

DISCIPLINE

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to an immediate supervisor. Parents who leave a child in the care of Living Hope staff members or volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in a program or activity.

When a child is misbehaving, the following steps may be applied:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. Give a warning, remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually, when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting. When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary, such as removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.
2. If the child repeats the action, guide them to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. (“Terry, you didn’t stop hitting Kelly when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.”)
3. If behavior continues, refer to a staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.



PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. All contact should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children and/or children's staff members and volunteers. Hugging, pats on the back, high fives, and other forms of appropriate physical affection are considered acceptable.

It is the responsibility of staff members and volunteers to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected. Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Pastor, or the Pastor.

CLOTHING AND CHANGING POLICY

Staff members and volunteers should never change clothing or be partially clothed in the presence of other adults or minors in their care. In the event there is a situation where the possibility of changing clothing would be necessary for adults and/or minors, the Children's Pastor must have a plan detailing the arrangement for showering and changing clothes for minors and adults.



CLASSROOM OPERATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FOOD AND DRINKS

No hot drinks are allowed in the classrooms for the safety of the children. The volunteer may drink it before they enter the room or throw it away. If there is a minor or adult with a food allergy in the room, food and drink coming in will be handled on a case by case basis depending on allergy and severity.

CHECK IN/CHECK OUT PROCEDURE FOR CHILDREN

When checking children in, confirm each child has a computer-generated name tag on before they enter their area/room. Children will not be accepted into the preschool or classroom without a name tag.

When a parent comes to pick up a child, make sure the number on the name tag matches the number on the computer-generated security sticker the parent/guardian has. If they do not have this, proper identification will be required to release the child. It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

After every service/ministry event, ensure that every room, area, and restroom is checked prior to leaving to ensure there are no children left.

CURRICULUM

Volunteers should read over the lesson to be taught before Sunday. Leaders will provide a copy of the lesson via email and/or in the classroom for the volunteers.



PLAYGROUND AND OUTSIDE PLAY SUPERVISION

Volunteers need to have a head count of the number of children they are taking outside, do random head counts while outside, and again before returning inside to the classroom.

While outside, volunteers are to circulate through the area, watching children during play periods. They are to give particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures). Any children together in a less easily viewed area should be redirected to another more open area of the playground.

No children will be released to parents or guardians while outside. If a parent or guardian comes to pick up while the class is outside, it is the responsibility of the Floor Supervisor to go outside and bring the child back inside to their parent or guardian.

DIAPERING AND RESTROOM PROCEDURES

DIAPERING

Volunteers must wash hands before and after each diaper change and put on gloves that are provided in each room. A new set of gloves must be used with each diaper change. Children should be changed on changing stations only and in plain sight of other workers. Do not leave children unattended on changing tables.

Children should be re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their diaper and changing station should be cleaned with a disinfecting wipe.

Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the preschool should be filled out on the instruction card (Example: Billy has medicine in the bag for his rash.)

POTTY TRAINING

Parents must fill out a potty-training card for their child. This card will be put on the classroom board for reference. We do not force potty training at any age.

If a child requires assistance, the volunteer must wear gloves. After assisting the child, the gloves are to be thrown away and volunteers must wash their hands. When helping a child, the restroom door must be left partially open. Young children should never be left unattended in the restroom.

Ensure clothing is straightened before returning to the room to wash hands and resume classroom activities.



RESTROOM POLICIES

No child will go to the restroom by themselves. If assistance is needed, an adult volunteer will go in and assist the child, ensuring the stall door is partially open and remains unlocked. Another volunteer or additional children should be in the restroom area, while maintaining privacy for the child needing assistance.

CLEANING PROCEDURES

BEFORE SERVICE

Check the dishwasher in the serving area for cups, baby spoons, bins, and unload, if necessary. Distribute clean items to rooms.

Volunteers need to check the room and make sure all the supplies are stocked. A list of supplies is provided in each room for reference.

AFTER SERVICE

Volunteers should clean and disinfect the room. Items used from other areas of the building should be returned. Dishes should be collected and taken to the dishwasher to be loaded and started.

If supplies are low, notify floor supervisors or leaders. Trash should be taken out to the large dumpster behind the building by a volunteer. Before leaving, ensure all children have been picked up.



EMERGENCY SITUATION AND MEDICATION DISPENTION POLICY

MEDICATION

Medication of any kind cannot be administered to any child while serving in ministry programs, including 'over the counter' drugs and/or homeopathic remedies and essential oils. If medication needs to be administered, the parent/guardian will have to come and give it to the child. The only exception to this will be diaper rash cream. Diaper rash cream can only be administered if given written permission by parents on child's care card.

Parents are to notify the appropriate leader of the location of any "emergency medication". (Example: EpiPen, etc.) In case of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) or other medical emergencies where there is a small window of time to administer medication, the medication may be administered by the group leader if parents are not available in that time frame.

INJURIES AND EMERGENCIES

The ministry leader or floor supervisor must be notified immediately if any injury or an emergency has occurred. Proper first aid/treatment should be administered to an injured child or adult, depending on the injury. An incident report will be filled out and signed by a Floor Supervisor and a witness. A copy will be given to the parent/guardian.

FIRE EVACUATION

In case of a fire, see the evacuation route located in the classroom to see how to safely exit the building. The Ministry Leader or Floor Supervisor will instruct the volunteers to line up the children, perform a head count, and safely exit the building to a designated meeting place. Volunteers that are in the baby and crawler rooms will have help getting the babies safely out of the building.

The Ministry Leader or Floor Supervisor will quickly do a final sweep of all classrooms before exiting to ensure no child or volunteer has been left behind. Parents may pick up their children during this time, but check out procedures will be strictly enforced. The parent or guardian should show you the computer-generated security tag or their driver license. Pick up will not be allowed until it has been confirmed that all children have exited the building safely.



SHELTER IN PLACE

Shelter in place means finding a safe location indoors and staying there until you are given an “all clear” or told to evacuate. You may be asked to shelter in place due to tornado, severe weather, an active shooter, or any other hazard. In the event of a shelter in place, do the following:

1. Proceed to a location that can be secured, and lock or secure the door. If necessary, move something in front of the door to ensure it cannot be forced open. In case of an active shooter, the volunteers will shut the door, engage the locking mechanism on the door and gather the children to the furthest corner of the room away from view.
2. Turn off all lights, silence all phones, and wait for further instructions. Instruction will come via e-mail or text, so keep your silenced phone nearby.
3. Do not open the door until instructed by responding authorities.



**IhKid's SAFETY AND OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT**

I have read a copy of IhKid's Safety and Operating Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Living Hope.

I understand the manual may be modified, and any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Living Hope. In the event of changes, a copy will be distributed via email and made available in hard copy. I understand it is my responsibility to review updated guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge and understand the policies and procedures contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Living Hope and myself. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

Full Name (please print)

Signature

Date