

Hillside Church

Safety Policies & Procedures

For Ministry with Children & Youth

(Revised 6/2013)

Volunteer Screening and Training

In order to provide the safest possible worship and discipling experience, employees and volunteers of Hillside Church working with children or youth will be required to undergo the following confidential Screening Procedure.

Volunteer and Employee Screening and Training Procedure:

- Waiting period of 6 months attendance at Hillside Church
 - (does not apply to employees)
- Review **Safety Policies & Procedures Manual** & sign agreement (part of application)
- Application and Personal Interview Questions completed and turned in
 - Based on these forms, the pastor or ministry leader may deem it necessary to meet in person with the applicant to further discuss the specific ministry role and the applicant's capacity to fill said role, particularly if the applicant is not personally known by the pastor or leader.
- 1 personal reference provided and checked via mail, email, or phone
- Complete "Sexual Abuse Awareness" training provided by MinistrySafe
- Strive to keep all employees and volunteers up-to-date on CPR, first aid and AED training

All documents in this process will be retained in a confidential personnel file, available only to pastoral staff and the applicable ministry leader.

Child-to-Worker Ratio

The following **minimum** child-to-adult ratio should be maintained:

Age	Minimum Child-to-Adult Ratio
1-12 months	3:1
12-36 months	6:1
3-5 years	8:1
K-5th grade	10:1
6th-12th grade	15:1

Supervision

- Childcare provided by the church will involve screened adults at all times.
- When unavoidable circumstances make it impossible to provide the necessary child-to-adult ratio (as outlined above), one screened adult will be present in each classroom with regular checks by a supervising adult.
- At no time should children under 6th grade be left unsupervised.
- Parents of nursery and early childhood-aged children must sign their children into, and out of, a classroom or program location.
- Verbal permission (or the volunteer's personal knowledge of the family) will be required to authorize the release of children to adults other than the parent who signs the child into a classroom or program location.
- Volunteers should remain in their assigned ministry location until every minor in their care has been picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized person.
- No minor should wait unattended for transportation.
- Counseling with a minor should take place only in a space where observation windows are available.

Restroom Procedures

- Children under age 5 years should be given the opportunity to use the restroom and be physically assisted by an adult female.
- The adult should first check the restroom to determine that the facility is safe (adults have vacated the restroom) before allowing the children access. The adult should wait outside the restroom with the door remaining open until all of the children have exited.
- Children should not be allowed to walk to or from the restroom alone or unattended.
- No adult should ever be in the restroom with a child with the door closed.
- Adults should never touch a minor's private areas except when diapering a young child.
- A child's diaper should be changed only by the parent/guardian or by the adult responsible for the classroom.

Job Descriptions and Training

- All staff and volunteers should be provided with a written job description that clearly defines the expectations and boundaries for the assigned role(s).
- All staff and volunteers should be provided with the name of the supervisor for their assigned role(s).
- The form to be used for reporting an abuse (witnessed or disclosed by minor) will be available in the church office.
- Annual training should be scheduled to refresh all volunteers and staff members regarding the church policies and any changes that may have been adopted.

Discipline

It is the policy of Hillside Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the Children's Ministry Director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Liability and Medical Release Forms

- Students and adults participating in events sponsored by the church should have a completed liability release form on file with the church, including emergency contact, insurance information, and a parent's signature.
- Every attempt should be made to collect new forms annually.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for updating information on their child's release form.
- The ministry leader should be in possession of release forms during off-site events.
- The original of each completed release form should remain on file in the church office.

Special Events, Offsite, and Overnight

- The leader must have a registration/permission form signed by the parent of each child traveling with the group that gives permission for their child to participate.
- The appropriate child-to-volunteer ratio should be maintained throughout the event.
- Gender appropriate sponsors are required for overnight events.
- All chaperones are required to go through the screening process.
- Only one person per sleeping bag or single bed.
- Sleeping areas should be gender specific.
- Chaperones should be placed in gender specific areas for lodging.
- At no time should one chaperone and one minor sleep in a room without a third person present.
- Under no circumstances should an adult be in the same bed as a minor.
- Shower use must be separate for boys and girls (when only one shower facility is available, separate times must be designated).
- No tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs, knives, fireworks, or weapons of any type should be brought on special events by chaperones or minors.

Transportation

- All drivers should have a copy of a valid driver's license with the appropriate endorsements and insurance in force, with current registration.
- All drivers must obey all laws and observe safe driving habits.
- Adults should never drive a minor of the opposite sex alone.

Facilities

- First aid kits should be stocked and provided in all ministry areas.
- Electrical outlets should have covers in the nursery and early childhood classrooms.
- Low cabinets and drawers should be equipped with safety latches and free of cleaners and chemicals that are harmful to children.
- Cribs, rocking chairs, and all equipment should be kept in good repair.
- Periodic sanitization of toys and equipment in the nursery should be done.

Adult-Child Relationship

In no case should any adult ever have a romantic relationship with a minor. (Exception may be made for an appropriate relationship between an older teen and a very recent high school graduate, but the couple should be counselled on right and safe behavior.) The senior pastor should be notified immediately and police must be contacted if any allegations or confessions of inappropriate relationship and/or physical contact are made. Church leaders must work with the child's parents and the public authorities, always with the protection of the child in mind.