



HINSON BAPTIST CHURCH

Youth & Volunteer Protection Policy

Revised 5/19/2023

Welcome!

Welcome to Youth Ministry at Hinson Baptist Church (HBC). It is our goal to create a safe and loving environment in which the youth 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, youth, and volunteers with our procedures and our Youth and Volunteer Protection Policy. The specifications contained in this handbook apply to official Youth ministry occurring during the our Sunday morning meetings, Wednesday night Youth Group, and special events throughout the year. "Youth Ministry" refers to the organized classes and programs for children in the 6th grade through the 12th grade.

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MISSION

The Youth 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)
- Helping students develop the tools to study the Scriptures on their own. (2 Timothy 2:13-17)
- 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 Youth 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)

BECOMING A YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEER

To ensure safe and quality care, Hinson Baptist Church has established a screening process for all Youth Ministry Volunteer applicants to complete prior to working with the students. To be an approved Youth Ministry Volunteer, a person must (1) be a member of Hinson Baptist Church for at least 6 months and (2) submit to the following Youth Ministry Volunteer screening procedure.

Screening Process

1. Youth Ministry Volunteer applicants must complete the Youth Ministry Volunteer Questionnaire.
2. Applicants must also agree to and sign the [Electronic Communication, Retention, and Data Release Form](#) (appendix 1) before being approved to serve as a Youth Ministry Volunteer.
3. Watch the MinistrySafe videos and complete the criminal background check.
4. Applicants must satisfactorily complete an interview and ministry orientation with the pastoral assistant or pastor who oversees Youth Ministry.

To stay active as a Youth Ministry Volunteer, the Youth Ministry Volunteer must partake in our annual training and make sure that their background check is up to date.

PROTECTING YOUTH BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER YOUTH MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Arrival Times

Youth Ministry Volunteers should try to be ready to welcome students 10 minutes prior to the start of any HBC meeting and event.

Two-Volunteer Rule

At least two Youth Ministry Volunteers must be present at youth meetings and events at all times. Youth Ministry Volunteers should never leave a student isolated in a room by himself or herself. If it is necessary for a Youth Ministry Volunteer to meet with a student during a youth meeting or event in a private setting to discuss a personal or private matter, the Youth Ministry Volunteer must receive permission from the Pastoral Assistant overseeing Youth or the Deacon of Youth and the meeting must take place in a room with a window (open door if no window) where another Youth Ministry Volunteer can and will monitor the room at all times.

Rule of Three

At least three individuals (at least one must be a Youth Ministry Volunteer) must be present in each room or other enclosed building area during all youth meetings and events.

Student-to-Youth Ministry Volunteer Ratios

In addition to always having two Youth Ministry Volunteers present during a youth meeting or event, there should always be at least 1 Youth Ministry Volunteer for every 15 students.

Restroom Policy

Anatomic males must use men's restrooms. Anatomic females must use female's restrooms. This rule applies to both Youth Ministry Volunteers and students. No Youth Ministry Volunteer or other student should accompany him/her.

If a Student Leaves Meeting or Event Without Permission

In the event that a student leaves a meeting or event without permission, the student's parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

Departure Time

Parents are encouraged to pick up their student immediately following the conclusion of a HBC Youth meeting or event. In the event that a student is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of a meeting or event, Youth Ministry Volunteers will attempt to contact and locate the student's parents or guardians. At least two Youth Ministry Volunteers will remain at the church building or place of meeting until the last student is picked up. At least one of the volunteers should be the same gender of the student remaining.

PROTECTING YOUTH DURING OFF-SITE YOUTH MEETINGS OR EVENTS

Students will never be taken off-site without their parents'/guardians' consent. To this end, Hinson Baptist Church requires parents of any students wishing to participate in any official off-campus

activities to sign a release and waiver of liability (this either needs to be made for each event or part of the annual release/waiver).

Parents will be notified of any pertinent information regarding any trips or off-site meetings, including transportation, addresses, contact numbers, and overall schedule. Parents should notify the Trip Leader of any necessary medication or special instructions involved in caring for their student. When traveling, a student may not be alone with a Youth Ministry Volunteer in route to a meeting or activity location *unless* cleared by the student's parent or guardian. A Youth Ministry Volunteer may only transport a student of the opposite sex if another leader or student is in the car with them.

Any Youth Ministry Volunteer who will be driving students must provide a copy of their drivers license and valid insurance to the pastor or pastoral assistant overseeing Youth Ministry to be kept on file.

If an official HBC Youth meeting or event is held at a private residence, it must be at the home of a Hinson member; and the pastor or pastoral assistant over Youth Ministry must have approved of the event.

Overnight Sleeping Arrangements

A Youth Ministry Volunteer may not sleep in the same bed or sleeping bag as another student. At least three individuals shall be in a room or other sleeping area for overnight events. Female sleeping quarters will only be supervised by female Youth Ministry Volunteers, and male sleeping quarters will only be supervised by Youth Ministry Volunteers. If the activity is co-ed, male and female students will sleep in separate places. Youth Ministry Volunteers will ensure that male and female students remain in their separate places throughout the night. If a student is anatomically male, he may not sleep in the female sleeping quarters. If a student is anatomically female, she may not sleep in the male sleeping quarters.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

In the event that a student's behavior becomes uncontrollable or a student does not respond to Youth Ministry Volunteers' attempts to resolve the situation, the parents/guardians of the student should be contacted immediately. If the student assaults, harasses, or bullies other students, or has a pattern of misbehavior, he or she should be immediately removed and the parents should be called. Youth Ministry Volunteers are allowed to physically intervene and restrain a student if he or she is physically endangering themselves, other students, or a Youth Ministry Volunteer. If an incident occurs, the Youth Ministry Volunteer should report the incident and appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior to the pastor overseeing Youth Ministry and the pastoral assistant AND should submit an [Incident Report Form](#). The pastor and/or pastoral assistant will annually review with the Youth Ministry Leaders how to effectively manage the classroom.

Reinstatement of a student previously removed from the Youth Group is optional and determined by the pastor overseeing the Youth Ministry.

CONDUCT AND PHYSICAL TOUCH POLICY

We believe that respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact with one another. Love and affection are a normal part of church life and ministry, but we want to set guidelines to protect Youth Ministry Volunteer and Students. There are two types of relationships that are important to consider: Youth Ministry Volunteer to Student and Student-to-Student.

Youth Ministry Volunteer-to-Student

While physical touch with students can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, or showing godly love and care, it can also easily be misinterpreted. Therefore, the following guidelines will help Youth Ministry Volunteers avoid any compromise or concern in this area.

The following types of physical interaction between Youth Ministry Volunteers and Students are prohibited: shoulder rides, massaging (student massaging leader or leader massaging student), sitting on laps, and any other physical activity that requires extended periods of physical contact.

Youth Ministry Volunteers are not allowed to date students. This includes expressing interest in dating them in the future. Any violation, no matter how minor, will result in immediate removal from this ministry.

If you have more questions on what is appropriate, please contact the pastor or pastoral assistant overseeing Youth Ministry.

Student-to-Student

Students may not separate themselves from any group during an organized youth group or event unless specifically permitted by a Youth Ministry Volunteer and their whereabouts are monitored by a Youth Ministry Volunteer.

No inappropriate touching of any kind will be accepted. Inappropriate touching can include, but is not limited to: extended hugging, kissing, rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder rides, massaging, sitting on laps, and other physical activity that requires extended periods of physical contact

Bullying will never be tolerated. If a student is found to be bullying another student during a youth meeting or event, the pastor and pastoral assistant over Youth Ministry reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Student's participation in the Youth Ministry. Reinstatement of a student previously removed from the Youth Group is optional and determined by the pastor overseeing Youth Ministry.

SPENDING TIME WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF YOUTH EVENTS

Youth Ministry Volunteers are encouraged to invite groups of students into their homes and into their rhythms of life, but they need to use wisdom. Youth Ministry Volunteers cannot be in their home alone with a student. There always has to be another adult or multiple students present.

Youth Ministry Volunteers are encouraged to cultivate discipleship relationships with the students. To that end, any type of one-on-one discipleship needs to be done in a public setting. The Youth Ministry Volunteers needs to inform the student's parents/guardians when they will spend time with the student as well as necessary details: location, time-frame, nature of the meeting, etc.

Youth Ministry Volunteers should never spend one-on-one time together alone with the opposite sex. If while talking to a student of the opposite sex in a public setting, the conversation becomes inappropriate, immediately stop the conversation and find another person to bring into the conversation. Report any instances of inappropriate conversations with students to the pastor and pastoral assistant overseeing Youth Ministry. Always err on the side of caution.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

We believe communication via texting, email, and social media can be a highly valuable outlet in which Youth Ministry Volunteer engage with students, but we want to encourage Youth Ministry Volunteer in how to use each platform in the safest way possible. Therefore, the following guidelines will help Youth Ministry Volunteers avoid effectively and appropriately use various forms of communication with the students.

General Communication Guidelines For Texting and Email

Always err on the side of caution when communicating with students via texting and email. You should rarely have an extended direct/personal message conversation with a student via text or email. If a student messages with a question, feel free to respond to that question but seek to end the conversation quickly and move toward face-to-face/public interaction.

Private communication with the opposite sex puts the Youth Ministry Volunteer and student at risk. The Youth Ministry Volunteers should strive to direct the opposite sex to a Youth Ministry Volunteer of the same sex. In a situation where a Youth Ministry Volunteer receives or needs to text or email the opposite sex, include the pastor or pastoral assistant overseeing Youth Ministry or the deacon of Youth in the text thread or email.

Social Media Boundaries

Whether a Youth Ministry Volunteer uses social media is the Youth Ministry Volunteer's decision. If a Youth Ministry Volunteer does use social media, they need to abide by these guidelines.

Facebook/Instagram/Twitter: Youth Ministry Volunteers may friend request/follow students and vice versa. This can be a great way to interact with the students. However, a Youth Ministry Volunteer should rarely engage in an extended direct/personal message conversation with a student on social media. Strive to direct your extended conversations to face-to-face and public interactions.

If a Youth Ministry Volunteer sees something concerning or inappropriate on a student's social media account, they should treat it as if they were told in person. Discuss the concern over the phone, in-person, or with a parent or staff. Always err on the side of caution and report concerning posts/comments to the pastor or pastoral assistant overseeing Youth Ministry.

Snapchat: You may not use Snapchat with any student for any reason. It is never wise to use a form of communication with a student when your communication disappears. This provides the opportunity for temptation or accusations. If anything were to happen, it would be the student's word against the Youth Ministry Volunteer's word.

Any violations of these policies will lead to the immediate removal of the Youth Ministry Volunteer.

APPENDIX #1 | ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION, RETENTION, AND DATA RELEASE FORM

I, a screened and approved Youth Ministry Volunteer, at Hinson Baptist Church agree not to transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, unlawful, or disrespectful with the Youth involved with Hinson Baptist Church. This prohibition extends to communication through any electronic medium, such as texting message, group chat, or social networking platforms. Should I receive any such content from a Youth or become aware of another Youth Ministry Volunteer communicating in this way, I agree to immediately notify the Pastor and Pastoral Assistant overseeing Youth Ministry at Hinson Baptist Church. I also agree to fill out and submit an [Incident Report Form](#) to the Pastor and Pastoral Assistant overseeing Youth Ministry at Hinson Baptist Church. Furthermore, I agree to not take pictures of Youth and post them on any social media account without the express written consent of their parents or guardians.

I understand that if I violate any of the provisions above, I may be removed from the Youth Ministry at the sole discretion of the Pastor and Pastoral Assistant overseeing Youth Ministry.

Additionally, in signing this document, I give permission to the Pastor and Pastoral Assistant overseeing Youth Ministry to examine my electronic communication devices and electronic accounts for any communication made to or received from a Youth in the Hinson Baptist Church Youth Ministry during my time as a Youth Ministry Volunteer and to fully cooperate with such examination (including providing any passwords or other information needed to facilitate such examination). I understand and agree that as part of the privilege of serving in the youth ministry at Hinson Baptist Church, I have no expectation of privacy in any electronic or other communication with a Youth (except for my own child) while serving as a Youth Ministry Volunteer. I understand that any examination of my electronic communication devices and electronic accounts will be made only as it relates to communication with Youth so as to verify my appropriate engagement with the Youth. Furthermore, I agree to (a) retain all electronic communication with Youth during my service in the Youth Ministry for a period of three years after the official termination of my service as a Youth Ministry Volunteer or (b) provide the Pastor or Pastoral Assistant overseeing Youth Ministry with an authentic copy of any electronic communication with Youth during my service as a Youth Ministry Volunteer prior to the deletion or destruction of such communication.

SEVERABILITY: I understand that the provisions of this Release Form are severable, and, should be found unenforceable, the other provisions shall remain fully valid and enforceable.

I further state that I HAVE READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE FORM, UNDERSTAND THAT I AM RELEASING LEGAL RIGHTS, UNDERSTAND THAT IT CONTAINS A BINDING ARBITRATION CLAUSE THAT MAY BE ENFORCED, HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK LEGAL COUNSEL, AND SIGN THIS RELEASE FORM AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement that I have read and understand and to which I hereby agree.

Signature: _____

APPENDIX #2 | INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Names of Person(s) Involved:

Phone Number(s) of Persons Involved:

Location of Incident:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s), if applicable:

Description of Incident:

Action Taken:

APPENDIX #3 | RESPONDING TO ISSUES OF ABUSE AND SELF-HARM

For informational purposes, the following set of guidelines pertains to information that a Student may wish to disclose to a Youth Ministry Volunteer.

1. If a student asks to talk with you at church, provide a room (with a window or open door) in which to speak privately. Ideally, let someone know this conversation is happening too.
2. Listen carefully to what the Student tells you and respond in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner. Recognize that disclosing Abuse or thoughts of self-harm is a scary thing for persons of any age, and they need to know they are supported and cared for.
3. Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the Student's story, since this may cause the Student to stop talking or to believe you are upset with him or her. We encourage you to continue praying for guidance and discernment throughout the entire conversation.
4. In the case of Abuse, avoid asking leading questions. Examples of what you could say: "Can you tell me more?" "Is there anything you need to add?" Do not try to convince the Student that the story isn't true or that it didn't happen the way he or she reports it did.
5. Do not attempt to assess the truthfulness of the Student's disclosure - that will be for trained professionals to decide. Assure the Student that you care about him or her and are extremely thankful for him or her sharing the information.
6. If Abuse, do not tell or suggest to the Student that he or she has been abused.
7. Reassure the Student that he or she did the right thing by telling you.
8. Do not promise confidentiality. Tell the Student that you need to find help so the incident can be prevented from happening again (if Abuse) or so that safety can be assured (if suicide).
9. If Abuse, do not frighten the Student by talking about police involvement or medical examinations to verify complaints. Instead, share with the Student that other people need to know what happened and that they will talk to him or her later.
10. Do not ask the Student to show you any bruises, cuts, or abrasions that are beneath the Student's underwear or clothing; observe only those bruises, cuts, or abrasions that are accessible.
11. If a Student confides in you about Abuse or self-harm, seek to comfort the Student, pray with the Student, remind the Student of the gospel, and report the conversation to the pastor and pastoral assistant overseeing Youth Ministry so that appropriate action can be taken.
12. If you feel comfortable doing so, speak to the Student and offer support in the following weeks and months. Of particular importance is pointing the Student to the truths of Scripture and the redeeming love of Christ.
13. If you suspect abuse of any kind, you are a mandatory reporter. Therefore, reach out to the pastor who oversees Youth Ministry and he will help walk you through the process.