

Safe Sanctuary Policy for Lake Houston United Methodist Church
Texas Annual Conference Effective January 1, 2022

Introduction

OUR CALLING AND OUR MANDATE IS TO ENSURE SAFE SANCTUARY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God's people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18:15-17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary.

Scriptures provide examples of how sanctuary is to be a community of protective nurture and harmony (Psalms 20:1-2, 27:4-5). As Christians, we are called to create a safe sanctuary in our churches. They must be holy, safe, and protective communities for all of God's children, regardless of age or ability. The purpose of this policy is to address the safety of our children and youth at events sponsored by this church. This church recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy with procedures in place (1) to help prevent the opportunity for the occurrence and/or the appearance of abuse of children and youth and (2) to help protect workers from false accusations and/or suspicions.

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, workers, employees, volunteers and the entire church body. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

Scope of Policy

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all persons including all paid and unpaid adults, whether lay or clergy who have any direct or indirect contact with children and youth who participate in any activities or events sponsored by this church.

Supervision

An adult is anyone 18 years of age or older.

A youth assistant is anyone under the age of 18 who may work with children and youth only when supervised by at least two adults over the age of 18 years. Youth assistants cannot be in charge of, nor left alone with children and youth. Background checks on youth under the age of 18 are inaccessible, so choose youth with great care.

To achieve compliance with the Safe Sanctuary policy it may be necessary to combine groups; recruit, train, and reference additional volunteers; or cancel an event. Recognizing that there is safety in numbers, children and youth will be instructed to use the "buddy system." It is also

strongly encouraged that there be at least one adult who is trained and certified in First Aid and CPR.

Observation of activities in rooms is essential, whether it is done by windows, open doors, glass doors, electronic technology, etc.

For all persons seeking to work with children and/or youth, membership in this church shall be at least 6 months (*OR written recommendation from the senior pastor at the church most previously attended OR written recommendation from two current members of this church who have been members at least one year.*)

Supervision for Nursery/childcare

- There shall be a minimum of two (2) adults per room or within line of sight.
- Whenever possible State Childcare Minimum Standards shall be followed, particularly in relation to the number of adults to child ratio.

Supervision of children and youth

- The “2 Adult Rule” shall be observed (2 adults per classroom, 2 adults within line of sight.)
- Any one-to-one mentoring or consulting shall be conducted in sight of another adult.
- Understanding that there is safety in numbers, one adult can be in contact with multiple youth (6th-12th grade) so long as they are in line of sight of other adults.

Overnight Accommodations

At events that require overnight accommodations:

- We strongly recommend that at least (2) adults be present in every room.
- When staying in a hotel, adults shall sleep in separate rooms from children/youth; or if necessary for children/youth to share a room with an adult, adults shall sleep in separate beds from children/youth so long as any one adult shall not be alone with any one child/youth.
- Recognizing accommodations may be restrictive in some cases; one adult is adequate, so long as any one adult shall NOT be alone with any one-child/youth.

Definitions of Abuse

Verbal Abuse- Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades or threatens any child or youth.

Physical Abuse – Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person’s physical or mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual’s caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual’s age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health of a child or youth.

Sexual Abuse – Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Incest
2. Rape
3. Prostitution
4. Romantic involvement with any participant
5. Any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with, or fondling of an individual enrolled as a child or youth in sponsored activities of this church
6. Sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. *Examples are not limited to: displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body, touching another person's body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse. (#6 taken from Resolution #30 Book of Resolutions 2000).*

Screening for Adults

Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of children and youth. Screening calls for a careful gathering and review of information in search of those who can provide safe and caring supervision in a safe environment.

Prior to employment or acceptance as a paid or unpaid adult worker/volunteer, the event leader in charge of an event or program shall direct each prospective applicant to complete the application/consent form. By signing the form, the applicant gives permission to this church to contact references and perform the necessary investigation to complete the review of the application.

This church is responsible for conducting at least two references and screening. This screening shall be done through Ministry Safe (as recommended by our Ins. Agent). All Persons who continue to serve as a Children's or Youth volunteer every other year of service (per our Ins Agent instead of the annual screening recommended by the conference).

If any of the reports raise questions about the fitness of the applicant, this church will disapprove the application. This church reserves the right to turn away any persons for service.

If the applicant (paid or unpaid) is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children or youth, the applicant will not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children or youth shall disqualify any applicant.

Results of screens shall be kept confidential. The determination of whether a particular crime is serious enough to result in this church giving a negative recommendation shall be made by this church in its sole discretion. Without in any way limiting those crimes which this church may determine to be serious, these are guidelines:

Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children and youth:

- Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful
- Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc
- Persons having a Criminal History of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.
- Persons having a Criminal History of a drug-related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to participate in the event.

Training

Lake Houston United Methodist Church will implement training and orientation procedures for all persons (including youth assistants) who work with children and youth. Training shall include this policy, and appropriate discipline, appropriate physical and emotional boundaries, and leader misconduct as described in this policy. No person shall, after this policy becomes effective, have any direct or indirect contact with children and/or youth until they have completed this training program. We recommend that at the beginning of each event a review of this policy be conducted.

The guidelines of these policies and procedures create a status of Safe Sanctuary Certification with this church. Adults thus certified are entrusted with the title "Certified Local Church Safe Sanctuary Worker with Children and Youth".

All Persons who continue to serve as a Children's or Youth volunteer will go through Safe Sanctuary training every third year of service.

Reporting of Incidents

When an adult leader of an event or activity suspects that abuse or any suspected violation of the Texas Penal Code is taking or has taken place, he or she shall call 911 when needed and report the abuse to the appropriate local law enforcement agency and/or the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (800-252-5400). The adult leader shall contact the administrator or event leader immediately, and cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officials or child protective services.

Address any needs the child or youth may have, medical or otherwise. Report to the parent(s) and/or legal guardians(s).

The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and well being of the children or youth, be removed with dignity from further contact with the children and youth until an appropriate investigation has taken place. The matter shall remain confidential. If the adult event leader is the respondent, then the report should be made to that person's supervisor.

Following the report of an incident, the adult event leader, or supervisor in charge shall document the report, and then speak with the alleged victim, being careful to use open-ended questions.

All such conversations shall be documented. Careful and confidential documentation is essential. The documentation should include the following:

1. The name of the adult leader observing or receiving the disclosure of abuse, including the date, time and place and any action taken by this person.
2. The alleged victim's name, age, and date of birth.
3. Any statement made by the alleged victim.
4. Name of the respondent, the date, time and place of any conversation or any statement made by the respondent.
5. Any action taken, i.e. suspension of the respondent.
6. Date and time of call to the appropriate agency, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation and case number assigned.
7. Date and time of call to law enforcement agency, name of officer spoken to and content of that conversation.
8. Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
 1. Notify the Senior Pastor.
 2. It shall be the goal to provide supportive care to both the victim and the respondent and to restore such persons to wholeness. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system, provisions of the current Book of Discipline, appropriate counseling referrals and continued pastoral visitation.
9. Confirmed reports of proven incidents of abuse shall be retained in a confidential file for future screening purposes.

Media Response

The Senior Pastor, District Superintendent and Bishop shall be informed of all investigations or allegations of abuse. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from a designated church spokesperson or a spokesperson in the Conference Communications Office or as designated by the Bishop. Refer all inquiries to the spokesperson. Do not give out any information, simply state that all inquiries will be answered by our spokesperson.

Appropriate Discipline

Children and youth should be made aware that appropriate behavior is expected at all events. Gentle reminders are always necessary when dealing with children and youth. When these reminders don't work, then discipline needs to move to the next step. In cases where behavior has to be addressed, designated event adults should handle it. In no case is physical discipline an appropriate measure to deal with problems. A reasonable response might include a period of

“time out” for the child or youth. This should be done with necessary supervision keeping safe sanctuary guidelines in mind.

Keeping parents involved is important. They need to be kept up to date on their child’s behavior. For serious offenses, the appropriate response will be to send the child or youth home immediately. Parents and the leaders will help make proper arrangements.

Appropriate Physical and Emotional Boundaries

Physical boundaries are most important in dealing with children and youth. Persons working with children and youth have to understand and respect those boundaries. Obviously these boundaries change as children grow older. A young child sitting in the lap of a caregiver is most appropriate, whereas an older child or youth sitting in an adult's lap would not be acceptable. Hugs and kisses from a toddler to an adult are entirely different from the same from a youth.

Emotional boundaries are also important. As a child grows older it is important for the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships. It is important for those working with children and youth to not step outside of those lines and allow the younger person to become too attached to them. It is important for the older person to be careful where conversations might lead and to steer clear of inappropriate talk. When an adult recognizes that there might be an issue with these boundaries, great space should be allowed to come between them and the child or youth in question. If that does not solve the problem, then the event leadership should address the issue.

Leader Misconduct

It is a privilege to work with youth. Great responsibility is required. Those who violate this policy shall immediately be removed from contact with children and youth and appropriate authorities shall be notified immediately.

Spiritual Boundaries for Safe Sanctuary

As we seek to lead young people in the development of their faith story, it is essential that we guide them and do not manipulate their emotions. This is especially true at longer youth/children’s events. The attendees may be exhausted by longer and more active days than they are accustomed to and thereby more susceptible to emotional manipulation. It is therefore necessary that, as we present the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the opportunity to follow Jesus in a life-long journey, we present the invitation with “no-strings-attached.” We must allow each person involved to make their own decisions without stigma, coercion, or pressure in any form. As we do this faithfully, we will see more fruitful commitments in the lives of all our participants.

SUMMARY

APPLICATION PROCESS

- All adults shall complete an application/consent form. By signing the form, the applicant gives permission to have references checked and background screening completed by the appropriate authority.
- The application will be processed with all references checked and background screening will be completed by Ministry Safe.
- All applicants must attend Local Church Safe Sanctuary training.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

1. If an adult worker/volunteer observes or suspects a violation of the Safe Sanctuary policy, these steps must be taken immediately.
 - A. Address any immediate needs the child or youth may have.
 - B. Report concerns to the event coordinator.
 - C. Cooperate with leadership and authorities throughout the crisis.
2. If an adult suspects that abuse or any suspected violation of the Texas Penal Code is taking or has Taken place, he or she shall call 911 when needed and report the abuse to the appropriate local Law enforcement agency and/or The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. (800.252.5400)

Recommended Resource: Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church by Joy Thornburg Melton (Discipleship Resources, ISBN 0881772208)

*Background checks through Background Information Systems (214) 360-9159,
dale@criminalbackground.com*

1.0 BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

1.1 Unacceptable / Prohibited

A. The following are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at any ministry:

- Tobacco/Vaping
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Firearms or other weapons
- Foul or offensive language

B. The following behaviors are prohibited for Workers:

- Threatening or intentionally inflicting emotional or physical injury
- Committing any sexual offense or engaging in any sexual contact
- Making any kind of sexual advance or making a request for sexual favors
- Engaging in verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, e.g. backrubs, massages, kissing, or similar contact
- Physical discipline, such as spanking

1.2 Other

The said examples are not "all-inclusive". Any inappropriate behavior that contravenes the Statement of Purpose shall be considered prohibited behavior.

1.3 Appropriate / Permitted

Touching to comfort or affirm a Protected Person in an age-appropriate manner is permitted. Such as...

- Side-by-side hugs
- Putting a hand on a shoulder or holding a hand during prayer when appropriate
- On lap; infant through 4 yrs old
- Occurring in public view

Workers shall be aware of how others and the person being contacted may interpret the contact.

2.0 APPLICATION, CERTIFICATION, and APPROVAL PROCESS

Persons shall meet the requirements and approvals for service set out herein in order to be a Worker in a Ministry with Protected Persons.

2.1 Application Process

a. Sunday School teachers/ Small group leaders shall be members of LHUMC for three (3) or more months prior to beginning service. Exceptions will be allowed only if the applicant provides a recommendation letter from a pastor and/or relevant staff person at a prior church of the applicant, or if written recommendations are received from three (3) current members of LHUMC, who have been members for more than one (1) year.

b. Workers shall complete an interview with the applicable Director, and fill out the Employment or Volunteer Application (Appendices B or C), which includes Authorization for Release of Information for a criminal records/background check.

c. Workers who may serve as a driver within their area of ministry service shall be required to comply with LHUMC's Transportation Policy criteria. (Appendix

d. Workers shall participate in safety policy training session, administered by any of the following individuals: LHUMC Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, Program or Ministry Director, applicable minister sponsoring a community ministry event.

E. Workers shall agree to comply with LHUMC safety policy, and attest to their agreement by their signature on the Employee/Volunteer Policy Agreement Form (Appendix H).

f. In accordance with Section 3.2.a of "Certification Process", if worker has participated in training within 5 years of applying for the position, this requirement is considered fulfilled.

g. Individual survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of LHUMC. Individuals who have such a history are encouraged to discuss their desire to work with Protected Persons with one of the ministers prior to applying to work in any Ministry.

2.2 Certification Process

a. A criminal records check shall be made on applicants by an outside source Specializing in such confidential screening. Results will be given to the applicable Director. Issues requiring a discussion with the Senior Minister or designate will be treated with confidentiality. The applicant will be extended the care and ministry of the church in determining appropriate placement for service. Re-checks of each Worker shall be conducted every five years or as necessary.

b. The applicable Director will check at least two of the references found on the Employment and Volunteer Application. The Employee and Volunteer Reference Check Form (Appendix D) shall be used to document discussions and findings.

c. The information on the Employment and Volunteer Application will be used to screen any potential driver(s) through the church's insurance company and the State's Department of Motor Vehicles, to determine if the potential driver is a safe driver. Refer to LHUMC Driver's Policy for complete criteria. (Appendix G)

2.3 Approval/Disapproval Process (Initial certification and while serving in a Ministry)

a. Persons may begin working in a Ministry when;

- The application paperwork and certification work is complete and the person is found to meet the acceptance standards, or
- The application paperwork is complete and the applicable Director has checked at least two (2) of the references.

Persons found to be out of compliance following the completion of the certification and acceptance process shall be immediately removed from serving in any Ministry.

b. Persons having a Criminal History of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any Ministry with protected persons: Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc.

c. Persons having a Criminal History of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver. Refer to LHUMC Driver's Policy for complete criteria. (Appendix G)

d. Lying on an application may be cause for removal from service in a Ministry.

2.3 Approval/Disapproval Process (cont'd)

e. Other offenses, depending on how recent, the frequency, and nature may also preclude an applicant or Worker from serving in a Ministry. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Minister and the applicable Director. In such cases, the determining factors will be the best interests, safety and well being of the Protected Persons. Any applicant or Worker whose Criminal History is such that his or her approval is subject to decision by the Senior Minister and the applicable Director, will be given the opportunity to explain the circumstances to the Senior Minister and the applicable Director.

f. Workers who refuse to comply with this policy or repeatedly fail to follow it shall be subject to dismissal.

g. Workers who do not attend mandatory training on LHUMC's Safe Sanctuary policy are subject to dismissal.

3.0 Continuing Education & Certification Renewal

3.1 Continuing Education

a. Directors shall encourage and may require Workers to attend continuing education opportunities.

b. Training of Workers shall be provided through the Directors on a regular basis and may include:

- Fire and Building Safety (Appendix I)
- CPR and first aid certification
- statutory requirements for the mandatory reporting of child abuse and the identification of abuse as defined by the Texas Family Code (Appendix A)
- other operational guidelines

3.2 Certification Renewal

a. The Coordinator, Directors, and Ministers shall reserve the option of communicating the substance of LHUMC's safety policy to Workers within the recertification time, as deemed necessary.

b. Certification renewal will be required every five (5) years; in accordance with certification Process, Sec. 2.2(a).

c. Amendments or changes to this policy shall be deemed as a suitable reason for requiring recertification training for individuals within their five (5) year renewal timeline.

4.0 GENERAL POLICIES

4.1 Staffing

Please refer to the criteria for Workers/Volunteers, as detailed in "Definitions" section of this document, as the initial standard for the following staffing requirements.

a. While on campus, there shall always be a Director or their designee on duty while the Ministries are in session who shall make random checks.

b. A minimum of two (2) Workers shall be present in any room or area where Protected

Persons are participating. A single worker in a room is permissible in the following situations:

- Escort of Protected Persons between on-campus buildings or in hallways
- Monitoring the arrival or departure of Protected Persons
- Monitoring Protected Persons to restrooms and teacher restroom breaks
- In cases of emergency care

c. If the required number of Workers cannot be obtained for the number of rooms or areas, then the group shall be combined with another group or the Ministry canceled.

d. When family members work together (husband/wife/parent/child/siblings/etc.), an additional Worker shall be present. An exception may be allowed only in cases where both family members have actively served in the Church for at least one (1) year and then only after Senior Minister and applicable Director approval.

4.2

On Campus Practices

a. Doors to rooms shall be kept open or, in the case of rooms with Dutch doors, the top half of the door shall be kept open.

b. It is acceptable to close the door to a room if there is a window to the hallway that allows observation of activities in the room.

C. Under no circumstances shall a Worker be alone with a Protected Person behind a closed door with no window. Doors shall never be locked while occupied by Workers and Protected Persons, unless such doors are of the "Dutch Door" variety, and the top portion of said doors are left completely open.

d. Classes shall remain in the assigned room location. If there is to be a change of location, a sign shall be posted on the door providing notice of any change of location.

E. Workers shall wear their name tags while working on campus in a Ministry.

4.3

Discipline

- a. The applicable Director shall advise Workers on the best Age-Appropriate Discipline Methods (Appendix E & F).
- b. The behavior of a Protected Person who is a constant disruption shall be discussed with his or her parents or legal guardian and the applicable Director. Parents or legal guardians shall be asked to attend the Ministry to observe or control the problem behavior.
- c. A Protected Person who is disruptive or a danger to him/herself or others shall be removed immediately by the Worker and the parents, legal guardian and the applicable Director shall be promptly notified.

4.5 Communication with Parents/Legal Guardians

- a. Workers should attempt to keep open lines of communication with parents or legal guardians.
- b. Parents and legal guardians shall always be permitted to observe in a classroom.
- c. Parents and legal guardians shall be advised by the applicable Director that they must pick up their respective Protected Person no later than ten (10) minutes after the Ministry is over unless special arrangements have been made with the Workers concerned.
- d. Parents and legal guardians shall be advised by the applicable Director where to report suspected abuse or other concerns regarding a situation and be assured that reports shall remain confidential.
- e. Information concerning the sleeping accommodations for Protected Persons at any overnight event shall be made available to parents or legal guardians by the applicable Director.
- F. A signed Emergency Medical Release Form shall be obtained for each Protected Person in order to participate in any ministry off campus using church organized transportation.
- g. A signed Parental/Guardian Consent Form shall be obtained for each Protected Person in order to participate in any off-campus Ministry. The consent form may cover events for a stated time period or it may cover specific events.

5.0 MINISTRIES OF CHILDREN BELOW GRADE SIX

Please refer to the criteria for Workers/Volunteers, as detailed in "Definitions" section of this document, as the initial standard for the following staffing requirements.

The following details / procedures are in addition to the general policies outlined in STAFFING POLICIES, SECT. 4.1.

5.1 Child Security Policies

- a. For Ministries with Protected Persons four (4) years and younger, a positive identity security system shall be used to match the Protected Person and the person picking them up.
- b. For Protected Persons, five (5) years through second grade and the day school, the parent shall complete a Child Custody Release form that identifies who may pick up the Protected Person and where the parents) are likely to be found while the Protected Person is participating in the Ministry. Only a parent or other person specifically designated by the parent may pick up children. Workers shall be permitted to request id. from anyone different than the dropping off adult, or different from the original designee.
- c. Third through fifth grades may be released from Sunday School by the Workers without being picked up by a parent or other designated person if the parent provides the Workers written permission to do so. For these Protected Persons in Ministries other than Sunday School, the procedure outlined in Section 5.1.b shall be followed.
- d. Parents shall provide the Director with any special information regarding a possible child custody dispute where Workers shall pay particular attention to who picks up the child

5.2 Bathroom Policies

For rooms that have attached bathrooms:

- A Worker may assist a Protected Person in the bathroom, while keeping the door open
- Diaper changing shall be done in the open and not behind closed doors.
- Workers are required to use plastic gloves, and to dispose of diapers in plastic bags before putting them in a large garbage can in the preschool common area (near large sink outside of classroom)
- Children under the age of 7, and who are able to tend to their own needs in the bathroom, should be monitored by a Worker posted outside of the bathroom. This worker should also insure that other children are not able to enter the bathroom until it is unoccupied.

Bathrooms located outside of classroom

Workers shall permit students 1st through 5th grade to go to the bathroom, unescorted, as needed; use of a hall pass and/or keeping the classroom door propped open while student is out of the class is suggested for insuring the location of the student, and to alert of possible need to check on the student.

6.0 MINISTRIES OF YOUTH GRAD 6-12

Please refer to the criteria for Workers/Volunteers, as detailed in "Definitions" section of this document, as the initial standard for the following staffing requirements.

The following details / procedures are in addition to the general policies outlined in STAFFING POLICIES, SECT. 4.1.

6.1 Staffing Policies

Recognizing there is safety in numbers, it is possible to permit exceptions to the two (2) Worker rule. HOWEVER, generally speaking this will always put a worker in a vulnerable position and is discouraged.

- a. On-Campus the two (2) Worker rule shall be followed, except as noted below:
 - Group is meeting in an open or public area on LHUMC Campus
 - Youth Director - Student conferences or meetings, occurring under the following conditions:
 - A. on-campus policies are followed (Sec. 4.2.a & 4.2.b);
 - B. Director informs another Worker at the beginning and end of the meeting;
 - C. conference is for a relatively brief time
- b. Off-Campus ministry staffing requirements are detailed in Sect. 7.2

6.2 On-Campus Practices

Section 4.2 provides the underlying criteria for LHUMC on-campus policies. The following are of particular importance to the success of LHUMC's Youth Ministry and are, therefore, emphasized below:

- a. 10-minute Rule - Parents and legal guardians shall be advised by the applicable Director that they must pick up their respective Protected Person no later than ten (10) minutes after the Ministry is over unless special arrangements have been made with the Workers concerned.
- b. Discipline - The applicable Director shall advise Workers on the best Age-Appropriate Discipline Methods (Appendix F).
- c. The behavior of a Protected Person who is a constant disruption shall be discussed with his or her parents or legal guardian and the applicable Director. Parents or legal guardian shall be asked to attend the Ministry to observe or control the problem behavior.
- d. A Protected Person who is disruptive or a danger to him/herself or others shall be removed immediately by the Worker and the parents, legal guardian and the applicable Director shall be promptly notified.

7.0 DRIVING, TRIPS AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

7.1 Driving Policy

PLEASE REFER TO LHUMC's Transportation policy (APPENDIX G). The following criteria are to be considered in conjunction with the LHUMC Transportation Policy.

a. Initial key criteria:

- Drivers transporting passengers should be between 25 and 70 years of age;
- Drivers under 25 years of age must be pre-approved by the Business Administrator.
- Anyone desiring to drive for church events must fill out the Volunteer/Employee Driver Application Form, Attachment A (Appendix G). This requirement applies to church sponsored and budgeted events that require more extensive driving, eg, UM Army, retreats, etc.
- The following precludes anyone from approval on the Registered Drivers List.
 - Invalid, out of date drivers license
 - More than two traffic tickets in the last 3 years
 - More than two accidents in the last 3 years
 - More than one accident in any one year
 - Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
 - Any other criminal use of a motor vehicle

b. When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-adult rule applies. When multiple vehicles are used for an event, a single Worker may drive if all vehicles travel together, caravan style.

C. Protected Persons, twelve (12) years and younger, shall not sit in the front seat of vehicles with airbags

7.2 Overnight and Trip Rules

Please refer to the criteria for Workers/Volunteers, as detailed in "Definitions" section of this document, as the initial standard for the following staffing requirements.

Overnight On-Campus - While on campus, there shall always be a Director or their designee on duty while the ministry event is in session, who shall make random checks. (Sec. 4.1)

a. The ratio of adults to Protected Persons shall be approximately 1:6.

b. If the group of Protected Persons contains both males and females, there shall be at least one (1) female Worker and one (1) male Worker on the trip.

C. A minimum of two (2) Workers shall be present in any room or area where Protected Persons are participating. A single Worker in a room is permissible in the following situations: (Sec. 4.1)

Escort of Protected Persons between on-campus buildings or in hallways

Monitoring the arrival or departure of Protected Persons

Monitoring Protected Persons to restrooms and teacher restroom breaks

In cases of emergency care

Group meets in an open or public area on LHUMC Campus (Sec. 6.1.a)

d. If the required number of Workers cannot be obtained for the number of rooms or areas necessary for the event, then the Ministry shall be canceled. (Sec. 4.1)

e. No volunteer worker under the age of 18 shall be placed in a position of supervision over protected persons. Adult supervision shall be required for such workers. (Sec. 4.1)

f. Volunteers shall be at least five (5) years older than the protected persons they work with. College age students may volunteer as a helper to another adult volunteer, but should not be given sole responsibility for any group. (Sec. 4.1)

g. When family members work together (husband/wife/parent/child/siblings/etc., an additional Worker shall be present. An exception will be allowed only in cases where both family members have actively served in the Church for at least one (1) year, and then only after approval by the Senior Minister and applicable Director. (Sec 4.1)

h. Doors to rooms shall be kept open whenever possible. It is acceptable to close the door to a room if there is a window to the hallway that allows observation of activities in the room.

Under no circumstances shall a Worker be alone with a Protected Person behind a closed door with no window. Doors shall never be locked while occupied by Workers and Protected Persons (Sec. 4.2)

Overnight Off-Campus Trips -

The two-adult rule shall be followed throughout the trip. Medical emergencies will be the only exception to this rule while on an overnight, off-campus trip.

REFER TO DRIVING POLICIES, SEC. 7.1 FOR ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

- a. The ratio of adults to Protected Persons shall be approximately 1:6. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirement of the planned activities.
- b. If the group of Protected Persons contains both males and females, there shall be at least one (1) female Worker and one (1) male Worker on the trip.
- c. A signed Parental/Guardian Consent Form shall be obtained for each Protected Person in order to participate in any off-campus Ministry. The consent form may cover events for a stated time period or it may cover specific events. (Sec. 4.5.g.)
- d. A signed Emergency Medical Release Form shall be obtained for each Protected Person in order to participate in any Ministry off campus using church organized transportation. (Sec. 4.5.f)
- e. Information concerning the sleeping accommodations for Protected Persons at any overnight event shall be made available to parents or legal guardians by the applicable Director. (Sec. 4.5.e)

REMEMBER!

*No volunteer worker under the age of 18 shall be placed in a position off supervision over protected persons. Adult supervision shall be required for such workers.

*Volunteers shall be at least five (5) years older than the protected persons they work with.

*College age students may volunteer as a helper to another adult volunteer, but should not be given sole responsibility for any group.

8.0 WAIVERS AND REVOCATIONS

Waivers may be made to the policies outlined in Sections 4.0 through 7.0, utilizing the following procedure:

The Director prepares a Waiver / Revocation form highlighting those areas where the policies will not be followed and the duration of the waiver

The parents/legal guardians of the Protected Persons sign and date the waiver.

Parents/legal guardians may revoke any waiver.

The revocation shall be in writing and given to the applicable Director.

9.0 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

9.1 Notification Requirements

a. Workers shall immediately notify a Director of any incident of abuse or violation of the above policies. However, in cases where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom notification should be given, he or she shall be considered absent for purposes of this reporting procedure, and the notification shall be made to that person'S immediate supervisor.

b. Subject to his or her obligation to report such an incident as set forth hereinafter, any person making and/or receiving such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

9.2 Imminent Threat

a. Where an imminent threat of continued or additional abuse exists, any Worker with knowledge or information about such abuse shall immediately contact another adult and take steps to ensure the safety of the Protected Person. In connection herewith, any needed emergency healthcare shall be provided, such as (1) first aid, (2) emergency services, and/or (3) transport to a hospital emergency room. The alleged victim shall be immediately removed from contact with the suspected abuser. The Protected Person's safety is paramount before any reporting.

b. Where the abuse of a Protected Person is alleged to have occurred at home, and the Protected Person's safety at home is in doubt, the Worker reporting the alleged abuse shall call 911 to notify the appropriate law enforcement officials.

9.3 Reporting Procedure

a. In cases where any Worker has cause to believe that a Protected Person may have been abused or neglected, the Worker is required by state law to make a report to the State of Texas Child Protective Services, "PS". Pertinent portions of the law relating to timing and substantive requirements of such reports to PS are set forth in Appendix A, attached hereto. Since such law may be changed from time to time, the reporting person shall follow the law covering such reporting procedures which is in effect at the time the report is made.

b. Contact the proper civil authorities following the guidance of the church's insurance company and attorney.

c. Allegations shall be taken seriously and no pre-judgments shall be made.

d. Situations shall be handled confidentially with due respect for the privacy of the alleged victim and others involved in the incident.

e. The person making a report shall provide the facts known with respect to the incident.

f. The Director, together with the person making the notification shall complete an Accident / Incident Report Form (Appendix J).

9.4 Responding to the Report

a. The Director receiving a report of policy violation shall:

Document the alleged violation

Counsel the alleged wrongdoer

Determine the necessary corrective actions that may include dismissal

Contact Senior Minister or Supervisor

If the alleged violation involves ordained ministry the chairman of S.P.R. shall be notified as well as the District Superintendent.

In case of alleged violation by a staff member the chairman of S.P.R. shall be contacted first.

At the discretion of the Director or Senior Minister the District Superintendent will be notified.

b. The Director receiving a report of an Incident of Abuse shall:

Immediately contact parents or guardian of the alleged victim and inform them of the alleged incident. If one parent or guardian is the alleged wrongdoer, the person receiving the report shall not contact either parent or guardian until after Child Protective Services has conducted their initial investigation.

Immediately contact legal counsel who shall within seventy-two (72) hours of the report conduct an investigation (with the assistance of the Senior Clergy and the applicable Director if the attorney requests such assistance) and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the abuse may have occurred.

Take reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending the investigation.

9.5 Investigation

a. Upon notification of an Incident of Abuse a "Supervising Committee," consisting of the Senior Minister or applicable Director and an attorney, shall select an appropriate "Investigative Team". The charge of the Investigative Team is to determine if there is reasonable cause of abuse.

b. The Supervising Committee shall take reasonable steps to ensure:

- That the investigation is kept strictly confidential and that evidentiary privileges are maintained

That the investigation is thoroughly documented and that a confidential file is maintained

- That witnesses with information concerning the alleged abuse are contacted and interviewed

- That the interests of the alleged victim and alleged wrongdoer are protected during the investigative phase

9.6 Finding of No Abuse

a. If the Supervising Committee finds that there is not reasonable cause to believe the alleged abuse may have occurred, the committee shall provide a report to the Trustees, preserving the identity, confidentiality and privacy of the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and witnesses.

b. If there is a finding of no abuse the Worker may resume his or her position of service upon approval of the Senior Minister and the applicable Director.

a. If the Supervising Committee finds that there is reasonable cause to believe abuse may have occurred, the Supervising Committee shall provide a written report to the Trustees and/or Staff Parish Relations (SPR) committee, as appropriate, and shall meet with the governing body to discuss the report.

b. The written Investigation Report shall include:

Preservation of the identity, confidentiality and privacy of the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and witnesses

The allegations and the steps taken to investigate the allegations

The facts discovered during the investigation

The conclusion reached as a result of the investigation and the reasons supporting the conclusion

Recommended actions as to the level of participation in Ministries for the alleged wrongdoer

C. The Senior Minister shall ensure that the following actions shall be taken:

Send notice of a claim or potential claim to the general liability insurance carrier and, if appropriate, the sexual misconduct liability insurance carrier

Cause the Media Response Plan to be implemented

Report the incident to the District Superintendent and the Bishop

d. In addition, the Supervising Committee may recommend the need for, and may assist in making necessary arrangements for counseling for the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, their respective families and others who may be aware of the incident. 10. MEDIA RESPONSE PLAN

a. The Supervising Committee shall:

Select a spokesperson to handle dissemination of information to staff, media and congregation. In his or her absence, the Senior Minister will be the spokesperson

Have ready for release a clear position statement outlining LHUMC's policy regarding any abuse of Protected Persons and the established safeguards

Select an attorney who will be present with the spokesperson while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies

b. The Church spokesperson shall:

Use text or a prepared public statement to answer questions from the media and/or inform the congregation

At all times, the identity, privacy and confidentiality of those involved shall be strictly maintained

Keep in mind that information given to or obtained by media may have a bearing on the church's liability, so careful judgment shall be exercised

Anticipate media questions

c. Guidelines for Spokesperson

Be prepared

Define strategy

Be candid and honest

Be clear, concise and in context

Do not answer more than what is asked

Do not volunteer information

Do not ask for quote review

Do respond to calls and questions as quickly as possible

When an answer is unknown, the spokesperson shall simply state, " I don't know, but I'll do my best to find out the information for you." Never say "no comment"

11. POLICIES APPLICABLE TO OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

a. Any outside organization, group(s) or individual(s) who use any of the facilities of LHUMC on a regular basis, shall sign Hold Harmless & Indemnity Agreement (Appendix

K) stating that they are in compliance with this policy.

b. Any outside organization, group(s) or individual(s) who do not use the facilities of LHUMC on a regular basis, shall sign Hold Harmless & Indemnity Agreement (Appendix K) stating that they understand and are in compliance with the policies outlined herein, except Sections 3, 8, 9 and 10.

c. Certified leaders of the Boy's & Girl's Scouts of America shall be subject to their rules and policies. These Certified leaders shall be made aware of this policy and encouraged to attend training sessions.

AMENDING POLICY CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES This policy may be amended as needed by the Ministry Team responsible for the Child/Youth Protection Program and approved by the Church Council. APPENDIX A

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Texas Family Code

TITLE 5 – THE PARENT – CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND THE SUIT AFFECTING THE PARENT – CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Subtitle E – Protection of the Child

Chapter 261 – Investigations of Report of Child Abuse or Neglect

Subchapter A – General Provisions

Sec.261-001, Definitions,

In this chapter:

1. “Abuse” includes the following acts or omissions by a person:
 - A. mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning;
 - B. causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning;
 - C. physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
 - D. failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child;
 - E. sexual conduct harmful to a child’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare;
 - F. failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child;
 - G. compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct as defined in Section

43.25 Penal code; or

- A. causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene as defined in Section 43.21 Penal Code, or pornographic.
2. “Department” means the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.
3. “Designated Agency” means the agency designated by the court as responsible for the protection of children.
4. “Neglect” includes:
 - A. the leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the
 - B. which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, and day-care employees.
 - C. The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, and a mental health professional.
 - D. The identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only on the order of a court or to a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

Sec. 261.102 Matters to be Reported

A report should reflect the reporter's belief that a child has been or may be abused or may be abused or neglected or has died of abuse or neglect.

Sec. 261.103 Reports Made to Appropriate Agency

A report shall be made to:

1. any local or state law enforcement agency;
2. the department if the alleged or suspected abuse involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child;
3. the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; or
4. the agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of children.

Sec. 261.104 Contents of Report

The person making a report shall identify, if known:

1. the name and address of the child
2. the name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child
3. any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

Sec. 261.106 Immunities

a) a person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of alleged child abuse or neglect or who testifies or otherwise participates in a judicial proceeding arising from a report, petition, or investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

Texas Penal Code – Section 43.21, and 43.25

Sec. 43.21 Definitions

a. in this chapter:

1. "Obscene" means material or a performance that:
 - A. the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest in sex;
 - B. depicts or describes:
 - i. patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual intercourse, sodomy, and sexual bestiality; or
 - ii. patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, sadism, masochism, lewd exhibition of the genitals, the male or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal, covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state or a device designed and marketed as useful primarily for stimulation of the human genital organs; and

- C. taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value.

Sec. 43.25 Sexual Performance by a Child

1. "Sexual conduct" means actual or simulated sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, sexual bestiality, masturbation, sado-masochistic abuse, or lewd exhibition of the genitals.

Texas Family Code – Chapter 71

Sec. 71.01 Definitions

1. "Family" includes individuals related by consanguinity or affinity, as determined under Sections 573.022 and 573.024, Government Code, individuals who are former spouses of each other, individuals who are the biological parents of the same child, without regard to marriage, and a foster child and foster parent, whether or not those individuals reside together.

For more information on The Texas Family Code go to e-provider.org/familycode
APPENDIX B

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

Lake Houston United Methodist Church
 23606 FM 2100
 Huffman, Tx 77336

Personal Information

Date: _____

Name (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name)		Social Security Number	
Present Address	City	State	Zip Code
Permanent Address	City	State	Zip Code
Phone No ()	Referred by		
Are you under the age of 18 YES NO	Drivers License Number & State		

Employment Information

Position	Date you can Start	Salary Desired
Are you YES NO employed	If so, may we inquire of your employer:	YES NO

Education History

Name & Location of School		Yrs Attended	Did you graduate	Subjects Studied
High School				
College				
Other				

Former Employers

Date (Month & Yr)	Name & Address of Employer	Position	Reason for Leaving
From			
To			
From			
To			
From			
To			
From			
To			

References: Give below the names of 3 persons not related to you, whom you have known at least 1 year

Name	Address	Phone	Business/Title	Yrs Known

General Information

Special training or skills, organizations, etc.

Have You Ever...

Been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic violations YES NO	If yes, please explain
Been convicted of a traffic offense in the last five (5) years YES NO	If yes, please explain

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluation to you, provided they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf. Should my application be accepted I agree to be bound by the policies of this church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my service on behalf of this church.

I understand and agree that, if hired, my employment is for no definite period and regardless of the date of payment of my wages or salary, I may be terminated at any time without any prior notice. Further, I understand and agree that no oral representations made by anyone on behalf of the employer may change the at will status of my employment and/or service with Lake Houston United Methodist Church.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing releases. This is a legally binding agreement that I read and understood.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date ___/___/_____

Do Not Write Below This Line

Remarks

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION & CONSENT TO PERFORM CRIMINAL HISTORY / BACKGROUND CHECK*

*In Compliance with the FCRA (Fair Credit Reporting Act)

Lake Houston United Methodist Church & Texas Annual Conference

Date: ___/___/_____ Position/Area of Ministry: _____

Start Date: ___/___/_____

Personal Information

Name (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name)		Social Security Number	
Maiden or other name(s) used in any and all other records of birth or records of residence		Gender / Race* Not used as a part of personnel file	
Present Address	City	State and County	Zip Code
Permanent Address	City	State and County	Zip Code
Phone No ()	Emergency Contact – Name & Phone		
E-Mail	Photo ID? Yes No		
Are you under the age of 18? YES NO	Drivers License Number & State	Member of LHUMC? YES NO	

Special Skills & Gifts

Please list any special training or skills, organizations, hobbies

BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION Required for all applicants seeking to serve in ministries involving Protected Persons (individuals under the age of 18 years.)

Former Residences (List all counties and states of residence since high school graduation or age 18)

Date (Month & Yr)	Previous Address (Street, City, County, State, Zip)	Reason for Moving
From		
To		
From		
To		
From		
To		
From		
To		
From		
To		

Personal References: Please list at least 2 personal references.

Name	Address	Phone	Business/Title	Yrs Known

I, _____, am an applicant for employment volunteer work with Lake Houston United Methodist Church, and have been advised that as a part of the application process, the Church conducts a criminal history background check. I do hereby consent to the Church's use of any information provided during the application process in performing the criminal history check. The Church has informed me that I have the right to review and challenge any negative information that would adversely impact a decision to offer employment / volunteer work. In addition, I have been informed that I will have a reasonable opportunity to clear up any mistaken information reported within a reasonable time frame, established within the sole discretion of the Church. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I have been advised that upon request I will be provided the name, address and telephone number of the reporting agency as well as the nature, substance and source of all information. All information relative to the background investigation is confidential and any dissemination will be in accordance with state and federal law.

Have You Ever...

1) Been convicted or plead guilty before a court for any federal, state, or municipal criminal offense? (Exclude minor traffic misdemeanors.) YES NO	If yes, please explain:	
	State: _____ County: _____	Date of Offense: ___ / ___ / ___
Details of conviction:		
2) Received deferred adjudication or similar disposition for any federal, state or municipal offense? YES NO	If yes, please explain:	
	State: _____ County: _____	Date of Offense: ___ / ___ / ___
Details of offense:		
3) Received probation or community supervision for any federal, state, or municipal offense? YES NO	If yes, please explain:	
	State: _____ County: _____	Date of Offense: ___ / ___ / ___
Details of supervision:		
4) Been convicted of any criminal offense in a country outside the jurisdiction of the United States? YES NO	If yes, please explain:	
	Country: _____ City: _____	Date of Offense: ___ / ___ / ___
Details of conviction:		

5) As of the date of this consent form, do you have any pending charges against you? YES NO	If yes, please explain:	
	State: County	Date of Offense: ___/___/___
Details of pending charges:		

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS CONSENT FORM IS CORRECT AND COMPLETE. IF ANY INFORMATION PROVES TO BE INCORRECT, "ALL OFFERS OF EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTEER ARE CONTINGENT UPON APPLICANT'S SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION, AS DETERMINED IN EMPLOYER'S SOLE DISCRETION, OF THIS CRIMINAL HISTORY / BACKGROUND CHECK

I authorize any references listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work. I hereby RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS Lake Houston United Methodist Church, and all of the herein referenced agencies which provide the contents of said files from all liability that may result from any said request and/or disclosure made in response to such request.

Should my application be accepted I agree to be bound by the policies of Lake Houston United Methodist Church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my service on behalf of Lake Houston United Methodist Church.

I certify that I have read and understand the foregoing language, that information developed as a result of my authorizing this investigation shall only be shared with the Senior Clergy and the appropriate Director(s) of Lake Houston United Methodist Church.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date ___/___/___

Applicant (Print Name) _____

Lake Houston United Methodist Church
 23606 FM 2100
 Huffman, Tx 77336
 DISTRICT

Authorized Personnel Requesting Check :

(Print Name) _____ (Signature): _____

Ministry Work Area (circle all that apply): Youth Children Other

_____ DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE _____

Remarks

APPENDIX D

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH - **EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER REFERENCE CHECK FORM**
(One Sheet per Reference)

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Reference: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and/or youth?
4. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children and/or youth? If so, please describe.
5. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.

Additional Comments:

Reference inquiry completed by (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/_____

Please return to:

Lake Houston United Methodist Church
23606 FM 2100, Huffman, Tx 77336

Attn: Administrative Assistant

(281) 324-1541

fax (281)324-6254

APPENDIX E

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH - Age-Appropriate Discipline Methods - Children Lake Houston United Methodist Church

Our goal is to ensure that every child who participates in a Ministry is offered a safe environment where God is the center of all that we do and say.

To do this, we need the children to follow these basic rules:

1. Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
2. Follow directions given by the teacher or leader of a ministry.
3. Stay in the classroom at all times unless escorted by a teacher or leader.
4. Remember, there is no fighting, name calling or rude behavior.
5. Use all equipment properly. Treat property with respect and clean-up after yourself (remember this is God's House)

As parents and teachers we realize that children are filled with energy; However, should a child's behavior become disruptive to the class or any ministry, the following actions shall be taken:

Pre-School:

1. The teacher/leader shall redirect the child's focus to an activity.
2. A verbal warning and separation from the source of disruption Ex: separate children, put a toy away, etc.
3. Time-out in the classroom. Use this time to explain to the child why it is important to exercise proper behavior.
4. As a last resort, the parent/guardian shall be located and asked to sit with the child or remove them from the activity for that day.

Elementary:

1. The teacher/leader shall redirect the child's focus to an activity. Ex: ask the child to help.
2. A verbal warning and separation from the source of disruption Ex: separate children, put a toy away, etc.
3. Time-out in the classroom. Use this time to explain to the child why it is important to exercise proper behavior.
4. Discuss the behavior with the appropriate Director.
5. As a last resort, the parent/guardian shall be located and asked to sit with the child or remove them from the activity for that day.

APPENDIX F

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH - Age-Appropriate Discipline Methods – Youth Covenant of Conduct
Lake Houston United Methodist Church

Galatians 5:22-23

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with passion and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

I agree to participate in activities of the Revolution Youth and other youth sponsored activities. During these events I agree to:

- treat all persons, regardless of race, religion, and culture, with respect and consideration
- respect the facility we are using
- portray a positive role model for others by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, tact and maturity

During these events I agree to not:

- use profanity
- purchase or participate in the use of drugs or alcohol
- participate in inappropriate displays of affection or sexual activity
- conduct myself recklessly such that I cause injury to myself or others
- make terroristic threat that would indicate intent to do bodily harm to self or others
- participate in criminal mischief, reckless damage or destruction of property, structures, equipment, or vehicles, and theft
- bring or use any weapon(s), fireworks, pets, pornographic materials or any other inappropriate items
- abuse others; physically (e.g. strike, spank, shake, slap), verbally (e.g. humiliate, degrade, threaten), sexually (e.g. inappropriate touching, exposure or comments), or mentally (e.g. inconsistent standards, communicating one behavior and rewarding the opposite)
- bring any electronic game, equipment, boom boxes, tape players or other items that may distract attention from my participation in Revolution Youth or use when it would prevent others from getting appropriate and necessary rest

Above all, I agree to have fun at all youth sponsored activities.

I understand that:

- I am financially responsible for any damage that should occur because of my negligence

- all penalties are left up to the discretion of the Director of Youth Ministries, or his/her representative, with consultation of other Youth Counselors. Note that penalties may include the possibility of being sent home at the parents expense.
- The Revolution Youth Covenant of Conduct does not cover all situations and is not all inclusive. In the event that something arises that is not mentioned, the Director of Youth Ministries, or his/her representative, reserves the right to make all necessary decisions.

I have read the "Covenant of Conduct" and fully agree with the conditions. I understand that I will be excused from participating in Revolution Youth or other youth sponsored activities if I violate any conditions of this covenant.

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Parent, if Participant is under 18: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

APPENDIX H

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH - **Employee/Volunteer Policy Agreement Form**
Lake Houston United Methodist Church

This is to confirm that I have received and read a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policies of Lake Houston United Methodist Church of Huffman, Texas. Included within these policies is a legal definition of child abuse and neglect from the Texas Family Code and written information describing the Texas Laws regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Worker Name: (please print) _____

Worker Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/_____

APPENDIX I

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Fire & Building Safety Guidelines

Lake Houston United Methodist Church

Prevention Measures

Be alert to any potential causes for accidents, injuries, or fire in your area and during your event. If repairs are needed in an area, (frayed cords, broken chairs/tables, water on the floor, etc.) notify the Applicable Director or leader of the ministry event. The buildings, grounds, and equipment must be maintained in order to protect the safety of all.

First Aid

First Aid care shall be administered as soon as possible. First Aid kits and a guide to emergency care shall be available. If necessary, 911 shall be called for local emergency services to respond. Advance emergency medical release forms from the parent/guardian shall be obtained granting permission for a child's emergency medical care.

If a child/youth arrives ill or becomes ill (fever, vomiting, etc.) during a ministry event, the parent/guardian shall be contacted and asked to pick up their child/youth.

These steps shall be followed when providing first aid that involves cleaning an open wound, bleeding cut, or examining the mouth:

- Wear disposable gloves
- Wash hands before and after administering aid
- Use care when disposing trash. Place refuse that contains body fluids or blood in a sealed plastic bag and place in a trash can with a plastic liner.
- Clean the area with a disinfectant spray.

Accident / Incident Response

After first aid has been administered and the injured person has been cared for, complete a LHUMC Accident/Incident Report and notify the applicable Director. The Director shall follow through with any additional actions to be taken.

Fire Evacuation & Response

Fire evacuation plans shall be posted in each room. Workers shall be trained to understand evacuation procedures and locations of fire alarms, extinguishers and flashlights in the event of electrical failure. In the event of a fire, the first priority is to ensure the safety of all persons in your care. Secondly, pull the fire alarm or dial 911. Only if it is safe to do so, then attempt to

contain the fire by shutting the door or using a fire extinguisher. Do not use the elevator for evacuation. Evacuation plans shall be reviewed with children/youth periodically.

Severe Weather Response

Severe weather plans shall be posted in each room. Workers shall be trained to understand safety procedures including evacuation plans and location of flashlights in the event of power outages. Do not use the elevator for evacuation. Evacuation plans shall be reviewed with children/youth periodically.

Vandalism & Suspicious Behavior

Any suspicious behavior or activity shall immediately be reported to the Worker in charge of a Ministry. If necessary, 911 shall be called for local police services to respond. All precautions shall be taken to maintain safety and security. This may include moving children/youth to a safe location, locking doors, etc. In cases deemed to pose an imminent danger to persons or property, no one shall attempt to intervene but shall wait for police to assess and act. After assuring that a situation is secure, the Worker shall complete a LHUMC Accident/Incident Report and notify the Applicable Director.

Automobile Incident Response

In the event of an automobile accident during a ministry event, the driver shall first ensure the safety of all passengers, administer first aid and/or call 911 for emergency services as necessary. After assuring that the situation is safe, the driver shall notify the Worker in charge of the ministry event and complete a LHUMC Accident/Incident Report. The Worker shall contact the applicable Director and/or Sr. Pastor. The applicable Director or Sr. Pastor shall notify parents/guardians promptly.

APPENDIX J

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH - **ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT**
Lake Houston United Methodist Church

Date: ___/___/___ Time: ___:___ am/pm

Name of Injured Person: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Program or Event: _____

Description of Injury: _____

Description of how the incident occurred: _____

Supervisor of event at time of Incident: _____

Witness(es) to Incident: _____

Procedures followed: _____

Other pertinent information: _____

Name of person completing Incident Report: _____

Phone Number:(_____)_____-_____

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICABLE DIRECTOR OR SENIOR CLERGY

Reported to Director or Senior Clergy (Name): _____

Date: ___/___/_____

Summary: _____

Time: _____:_____ am/pm

Contact with victim's parent/guardian:

Date/time: ___/___/_____ _____:_____ am/pm

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Contact local children and family service agency (if necessary)

Date/time: ___/___/_____ _____:_____ am/pm

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Contact local law enforcement agency (if necessary):

Date/time: ___/___/___ :___ am/pm

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

Other contacts:

Date/time: ___/___/___ :___ am/pm

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

APPENDIX K

POLICY OF Lake Houston United Methodist Church FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH - **HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT**
Lake Houston United Methodist Church

WHEREAS, Lake Houston United Methodist Church ("Church"), has allowed _____ ("Organization") to use its campus facilities;

WHEREAS, the Organization desires to use said campus facilities on a one time or repetitive basis

NOW, THEREFORE, KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that for and in consideration of the Church allowing the Organization to use the Church's campus facilities on a repetitive basis;

The Organization hereby INDEMNIFIES, RELEASES, DISCHARGES AND HOLDS THE CHURCH HARMLESS from and against any and all actions, claims and/or damages arising from the Organization's use of the Church's campus facilities;

The Organization hereby represents that it has read The Policy Of Lake Houston United Methodist Church For the Prevention Of Abuse Of Children And Youth, and that it will adhere to all rules, policies and procedures set forth therein;

The Organization hereby agrees this Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement shall include all costs, including, but not limited to, attorney's fees and costs of court;

The Organization hereby agrees that in the event that the Organization is notified of, or should have knowledge of, any action, claims and/or damages covered by this Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement, it shall promptly notify the Church's Senior Clergy in writing, and the Organization shall immediately assume the cost of defense of such actions, claims and/or damages.

Executed this day of ____/____/____ .

By: _____ Printed Name: _____
(Signature)

Title/Position: _____