



Policies & Procedures

Children & Student Ministries (Birth-12th grades)

1. Introduction & Commitment

Henderson Hills is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and Christ-centered environment for all children and students, from birth through 12th grades. This handbook outlines the policies and procedures that ensure the safety and security of those entrusted to our care and provide peace of mind to their families and our ministry leaders.

- Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the HHBC Recognizing & Reporting screening process, which includes a Confidential Application, Photo Identification, Child Abuse Resolution, Statement of Faith (for volunteers who are not yet members and are serving in non-teaching positions), and a clear Background Check.
- Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies in this document, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with the policies.

Any report of inappropriate behavior or suspicion of abuse will be taken seriously. Staff and volunteers are required to report suspicious behaviors and any policy violations. Volunteers will report to a ministry staff member, while staff members will report to their immediate supervisor. If a parent or another individual raises a concern or witnesses a policy violation, that parent or other individual should make a report to the ministry staff member.

All reports should be documented in writing and reviewed regularly for a resolution. The resolution should also be documented, and the reporting individual should be notified of the outcome. Reports require the signature of at least two staff members to be considered reviewed and/or resolved.

Oklahoma state law requires every person over the age of 18 to promptly report suspected abuse to Oklahoma Department of Human Services at 1-800-522-3511. Failure to report suspected abuse is a crime and punishable by law.

2. Safety Protocols

a. Security Tags (birth –3rd grade)

- Purpose: Security tags ensure that each child is released only to an adult with a matching security code tag.
- Check-in: Parents print two-part security tags at self-check-in kiosks.
 - First part: Nametag with security code (to be placed on each child)
 - Second part: Tag with matching security code x 2
 - Child's nametag is placed visibly on their back.
- Check-out: Adult must show security code to classroom teacher
 - Parent keeps security code tag to show at pick-up (an extra code is provided for adults sharing pick-up)

- Children from birth through 3rd grade will only be released to the bearer of the matching security code tag.
- No child will be released to anyone under the age of 16.
- Lost Tags:
 - Parents must report to a Hillside Kids staff member to confirm their identity.
 - Children will not be admitted to a classroom without a name tag.

b. Dismissal of children 4th–12th grade

- Leaders will dismiss 4th-12th grade students at the conclusion of class.
- Parents should arrange a pre-designated meet-up location for kids and students being released without security code matching.

c. Health & Allergy Information

- Parents will inform staff AND teachers of any life-threatening allergies, serious medical conditions, or other concerns that would affect the health and safety of their children prior to drop-off.
- Allergies can be added to the child’s database profile for reference and/or to print on a security tag for birth-3rd grade. Parents can add allergy information themselves or ask a staff member for assistance.

d. Classroom Guidelines

- Each classroom (Birth – Pre-K) must have:
 - One adult over age 21 and a second person as an assistant.
 - One leader must be female in each of these classrooms.
- One adult can lead children from kindergarten to 12th grade; however, appropriate support and regular supervision will be provided for solo teachers.
- Every effort will be made to maintain standard teacher-to-child ratios inside classrooms (K- 5th grade with the ratio goal of 1:12)
- Each classroom and area is equipped with age-appropriate furnishings and supplies to ensure the safety of children and students. Ministry leaders and volunteers should ensure that children are in designated rooms and areas to maintain this safety (for example, small items are not permitted in infant to toddler classrooms to prevent choking, popcorn and latex balloons are not allowed in Hillside Little Kids to prevent choking, playgrounds are designated for particular age groups to prevent injury).

e. Supervision of Children and Students

- Children and Students will be supervised during all HHBC programming. Parents should be informed of drop-off and pick-up times and reminded that supervision and responsibility is transferred to HHBC staff and volunteers only when the child makes contact with a volunteer or staff member during designated times. This contact can be verified by a sign-in sheet, roster, or visual recognition by the parent and/or volunteer. Older Children and students should NOT be dropped off in the parking lot unless parents visually witness the child or student entering a designated and specific door for the event.
- It is the responsibility of the parents to make a safe and visual hand-off to an adult volunteer or staff member. Although it can be inconvenient for parents to walk into the building for drop-off, it is the safest way to ensure children arrive at a designated location.

- Parents will be notified of the designated drop-off and pick-up time AND location for each ministry event or regular program. Parents will be notified promptly by the communication means on file if the schedule or location changes after the beginning of an event.
- After every program or event, adult volunteers and/or staff will remain until every child has been released to the appropriate adult and classrooms, and restrooms have been checked to make sure they are empty.

f. First Aid Kits

- Locations:
 - First and second-floor office areas (wall-mounted) in Hillside Kids
 - Second-floor supply room in Hillside Kids
 - Near the Women’s restroom in the Student Area.
- First aid kits contain basic supplies, along with emergency oxygen and an AED (automated external defibrillator). The children’s area also contains a choking device for younger children.
- Children or Students will not be given any medication (including topical ointment) by a staff member or volunteer with the exception of an epinephrine auto injector (which requires a prescription). If medication is required, parents will be notified and asked to report to the area to administer medication.

3. Emergency Procedures

Emergency Procedures should be explained to all new volunteers and staff at the beginning of each school year or prior to the start date. Procedures should also be reviewed quarterly with volunteers and referred to often to ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of protocol. Reviews can be written and handed out, emailed, texted, or all the above. Overcommunication in this area is a must.

a. Emergency Information

- An Evacuation Map is posted near the door in each classroom.
- A phone number that rings to the office area in Hillside Kids is posted on a yellow strip by each classroom door.
- An intercom button is in each HK classroom. Teachers should press and release then wait for assistance.

b. Tornado Procedures

- Volunteers and staff will follow posted tornado routes on maps inside classrooms (to safer, interior rooms).
- Leaders will escort children and remain until an “all-clear” is given.
- Every effort will be made for parents to pick up children or students prior to a tornado.

c. Fire Procedures

- Everyone should follow posted evacuation routes to ensure a safe exit and locate individuals following an emergency evacuation.
- Teachers will escort children outside and carry the class roster to make sure all children and students have exited the building.

- Teachers should text the ministry leader immediately upon confirmation of all students on roster once they have arrived at their designated location.
- Children and students will not be released to their parents until they are safely outside the building.
- Parents will be encouraged to accompany classes to outside locations prior to release.
- Teachers will remain with students and monitor the roster until all children have been released to parents, or the class has returned to the building.

d. Intruder / Lockdown Procedures

Hillside Kids Instructions:

- Stay calm and remain in the classroom.
- Shut doors and close the upper half if necessary (doors should always remain locked from the outside).
- Teachers should cover windows on doors and follow posted instructions.
- Close any blinds and additional doors.
- Place any available furniture between doors or windows and children.
- Move children as far away from doors and windows as possible.
- Keep children as calm and quiet as possible.
- Remain in place until “all-clear” is announced.

Student Ministry Instructions:

- Follow the above procedures if students are located inside a classroom with a lockable door.
- Older students should follow the multi-option response “Run, Hide, Fight.” They should run if there is an accessible exit, hide if there is not an accessible exit, and fight if they are directly confronted.
- Adult staff and volunteers should direct students on responses to aid with the safety of all students.

4. Accidents & Injuries

a. Serious Injury

- 911 will be notified immediately.
- Parents will be notified as quickly as possible.

b. Minor Injury

- Injury should be treated with standard first-aid procedures
- Details of injuries will be documented on a designated accident form.
- Parents, witnesses, and supervising staff or volunteers will be asked to sign the form.
- A copy of the form will be given to parents, and the other form will be turned into the offices for filing and insurance purposes.
- Photos or videos of an injury can be maintained for documentation.

5. Communication Procedures (6th-12th grade)

a. Adult/Student Interaction

These procedures establish a safe environment in which leaders can act “above reproach.”

- Staff and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student of the opposite gender in an isolated setting. This includes any classroom, behind closed doors, or in a vehicle.
- Staff and volunteers will inform parents of the schedule and location of students and will maintain supervision of students while they are in the care of HHBC.
- Students of opposite genders will not be allowed to be alone in an isolated setting. This includes any room alone, behind closed doors, or in a vehicle.
- If activities or events take place outdoors, students and volunteers will remain in a public setting, where everyone can be seen, to protect the safety of everyone.
- If students or adults are witnessed in any of the above areas, they will be promptly redirected to a public area. Any repeated infractions will be reported to a staff member which may result in the student and/or adult being asked to leave the event or activity.

b. Communication Procedure Between Students, Staff, and Volunteers

These procedures help create a secure opportunity that ensures leaders remain above reproach.

- Electronic communications (includes texting or app with communication ability):
 - Private (one-on-one) communication between students and adults must have parental approval prior to any private communication. However, even with parental approval, private communication is discouraged between students and adults.
 - Electronic communication is restricted to group settings, which include at least two adults in the chat, text, or email group.
 - Parents will be informed about communication methods and consent will be required. An opt-out option will be provided for all methods of communication.
 - All electronic communication must maintain appropriate propriety and brevity.
 - Parents should be copied on all communication regarding events, activities, times, plans, etc. so they can support the safety of children and students during HHBC activities and programming.

c. Transportation Procedure Between Students, Adult Staff, and Volunteers

- These procedures foster a safe environment that allows leaders to operate with unquestionable integrity.
- Only adults 18 or older may provide transportation to and from locations during an HHBC sponsored special event, such as camps or Big Weekend.
- All adult drivers must have a valid driver’s license and complete the Recognizing & Reporting Training prior to driving.
- An additional license plus training is required for anyone driving a commercial vehicle.
- Written parental consent for each child or youth being transported is required for every event.
- Two adults are required in any vehicle transporting children or students.
- Unless the adults are married, the two adults must be of the same gender to ensure their safety after the drop-off of students. In specific cases where required adults are of the opposite gender and unmarried, a third adult will be required.
- The church will provide safe and dependable vehicle maintenance and inspections on all church-owned vehicles.

- Vehicles will be inspected after drop-off to ensure that all items have been removed and that individuals have exited the vehicle.
- Staff and/or volunteers will not provide transportation to and from regular activities to students without written prior consent from parents AND two adults in the vehicle prior to all students being dropped off.
- Students should follow appropriate state laws regarding the number and age of passengers in their vehicles.
- Any passengers in student vehicles will be arranged by their parents ONLY. Staff and volunteers will NOT make arrangements for students without expressed consent from parents and are not responsible for passengers in student vehicles. This is the sole responsibility of the parents.
- Parents are responsible for making transportation arrangements and completing necessary consent forms for their child or student.

d. Relationships

- Staff or volunteers, regardless of age, may not date students or imply any future intent.
- One-to-one meals with members of the opposite sex are prohibited between students and adult volunteers or staff members. For members of same gender meetings, parents/guardians must be informed of time, place, and location of meeting, as well as take place in a public setting, which includes church offices.
- Adult staff and volunteers will encourage safe and healthy relationships between students but will not arrange outside (not HHBC sponsored) communication, meet-ups, or rides between students.
- Students will be encouraged to report any suspicious or uncomfortable behaviors to their parents and a ministry staff member if it involves an HHBC participant.

e. Physical Contact Between Adults and Students or Older Children

Appropriate Physical Contact Includes:

- Side hugs
- High-fives, fist bumps
- Pats on back/shoulders
- Placing an arm around shoulders (in group/public settings only)
- Holding hands during group prayer (in public setting only)
- Sitting beside a student with appropriate space (in public setting only)

Inappropriate Physical Contact:

- Front-facing hugs or prolonged side hugs
- Kissing (never appropriate)
- Sitting on laps (only appropriate for children under 3)
- Touching any body parts other than shoulders or hands
- Private or isolated physical affection of any kind
- Wrestling, tickling, or massaging
- Commenting on physical development or appearance is also inappropriate and prohibited.

6. Staff and Volunteer Training and Conduct

- All staff and volunteer workers must complete the Recognizing & Reporting Training
 - This includes completing the Volunteer Application and the Recognizing & Reporting Resolution, along with a Photo ID and Background Check.
 - The training and required forms are located at www.hhbc.com/rr.
- Training includes:
 - Child abuse prevention
 - Emergency procedures
 - Mandated reporting responsibilities

c. Code of Conduct

- Volunteers and staff are expected to:
 - Model Christ-like behavior
 - Maintain confidentiality
 - Report any concerns about child safety immediately

7. Reporting Concerns

- Any suspicion of abuse or neglect must be reported immediately to a staff member and the Department of Human Services at 1-800-522-3511.
- All reports are handled promptly and confidentially.

8. Child Abuse Reporting Procedure

- Mandatory Reporting: All staff and volunteers will be trained, recognizing that Oklahoma is a jurisdiction that mandates reporting (by anyone over the age of 18) of suspected child abuse.
- Staff and volunteers will be provided with clear definitions of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse, and will be trained to recognize the indicators.
- Staff and volunteers will be provided a clear reporting protocol, including contact information for designated agencies (e.g., state child protective services, law enforcement), information required in a report (child's name, age, address, alleged perpetrator's name and relationship, nature of abuse), and timelines for reporting.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained regarding Clergy-Penitent Privilege: Understand that mandatory reporting obligations will not be excused under clergy-penitent privilege, depending on state laws and the specific circumstances.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained to document incidents: maintain a written record of all reported incidents and the actions taken, including the date, time, individuals involved, and the report filed.
- Staff and volunteers will undergo ongoing Training: Conduct annual training and quarterly refreshers on recognizing and reporting suspected abuse.