

CHILD PROTECTION FIRST POLICY

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
Birmingham, Alabama

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INTRODUCTION

The safety and well being of our children is very important to Hunter Street Baptist Church. We recognize that reports of child sexual abuse both in the community and the church at large are on the increase. We also understand and recognize that churches are not immune from this danger. Based on our desire and commitment to provide a safe and secure church environment for our children Hunter Street Baptist Church has decided to implement quality child care screening in all its children/student ministries as one means of providing protection to our children while they are involved in church activities.

This policy refers only to the protection from sexual abuse of children under the care or direction of the leaders, employees, and volunteers of Hunter Street Baptist Church and is not designed to address other forms of abuse or harassment or child abuse by or against persons other than those identified herein.

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
CHILD PROTECTION FIRST POLICY

CHILD PROTECTION FIRST!

CHILD ABUSE RISK REDUCTION POLICY FOR HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

PURPOSE: It is the purpose and intent of Hunter Street Baptist Church to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for the children and youth (for ease of reference the term child or children will be used) within this church.

GOAL: Our goal is to protect children from sexual abuse or child molestation by employees or volunteers in this church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations.

DEFINITION OF A CHILD: A child is any individual birth through grade 12.

DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: “Any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child provided the child is four (4) years older than the victim.” (Adopted from The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse.)

Child sexual abuse can be violent or non-violent. It is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of the oral, genital, or anal areas; intercourse; or forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, pornographic videos and other materials, obscene phone calls, improper online or wireless communications, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

This policy refers only to the protection from sexual abuse of children under the care or direction of the leaders, employees, and volunteers of Hunter Street Baptist Church and is not designed to address other forms of abuse or harassment or child abuse by or against persons other than those identified herein.

This policy will address four (4) areas that are critical for the goal of protection of the children, our employees and our church: selection process, risk-reduction policy, reporting procedures, and responses to allegations.

I. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. Employee - anyone who is paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis, whether or not they work directly with preschoolers, children or youth. Short term contract (whether written or oral) labor hired for such things as seminars, conferences, camps, retreats, and special events are not considered employees under this section.

Church employees will (i) be required to complete a confidential application form, (ii) be interviewed by the Executive Pastor or his designees, (iii) have references checked and verified, and (iv) give written permission for a criminal and DHR records check.

- B. Volunteer - anyone who is not paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis, and is serving in any position involving the supervision or custody of children.

A volunteer will (i) be required to complete a confidential application form, (ii) be interviewed by their age group minister or their designee, (iii) have references checked and verified, and (iv) give written permission for a possible criminal and DHR records check.

- C. Deleted

- D. General Requirements - In addition to the above requirements, a volunteer must be a member of Hunter Street Baptist Church for at least six (6) months before they will be allowed to serve in any position involving the supervision or custody of children. A volunteer who has been a member for less than six (6) months may serve upon satisfaction of the above requirements and written approval of the age-group minister. All adults who come in contact with a minor must be approved through this process.

- E. In addition, for purposes of this policy, these definitions include only those under the direct auspices of Hunter Street Baptist Church and does not refer to those employed by other individuals or groups and/or those that may at times avail themselves of the Church's facilities or services.

II. RISK REDUCTION POLICY

A. Two Adult Rule

Every attempt will be made to have two (2) adult workers (whether employees or volunteers) present with children and youth at all times during church activities. In addition, age-group ministers, division directors, hall monitors, greeters and/or the program director will be present and available on each floor, in the hallways where children are present. Every effort shall be made to assure that one (1) adult is not left alone with a child.

Exceptions to this Rule:

1. The Weekday Education Ministry and Wee Care may staff a room with a single adult teacher provided that:
 - (a) The teacher is a paid employee and has been subjected to and passed the screening process set forth above;
 - (b) The room has visual access from the outside at all times; and
 - (c) Random, unannounced visits are made to the room regularly by another adult.
2. Rooms may be staffed by one adult and one youth, age sixteen (16) or older, if:
 - (a) The adult has been subjected to and passed the screening process set forth above (either for volunteers or employees);
 - (b) The youth has been approved by a minister to work in the area; and
 - (c) Another adult, serving as coordinator or division director, makes periodic, unannounced checks on the room and is available to assist in the room if needed.

B. View Windows

Every effort shall be made to place preschoolers, children and youth in rooms with view windows for all teaching/learning and other activities.

C. Over-Night Activities

Volunteer adult chaperones and supervisors will be required to comply with all of these policies as outlined.

D. Within Town Activities

Volunteer adult chaperones and supervisors will be required to comply with all of these policies as outlined.

E. Out-of-Town Activities

Volunteer adult chaperones and supervisors shall be required to comply with all of these policies as outlined. In addition, all participants shall have written parental consent and a notarized medical release form (See Appendix A). Consent forms may be completed for a one year period and will be renewed annually.

F. Preschool Security Policies

Hunter Street has a well thought out, working program that should be conscientiously followed. See CHILD/STUDENT MINISTRY DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES in this manual.

III. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Observed or reported child sexual abuse or child molestation should be reported immediately to the Executive Pastor or to the church Administrator if the Executive Pastor is not available or has a conflict of interest that would make reporting to the Executive Pastor inappropriate. (In compliance with applicable law, abuse will be reported to DHR or other duly constituted authority. Individual ministers employed by the church and workers/employees of the church's weekday children's program have an individual obligation to report abuse to DHR or other duly constituted authority.)

IV. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS

- A. All allegations will be taken seriously and church staff will take appropriate action.
- B. The official spokesperson for the church in any of these matters will be the Executive Pastor or such person as may be designated by the Executive Pastor. No staff members or church members shall speak to the media in an official capacity unless so designated by the Executive Pastor.
- C. The church staff will document (in writing, with date and signature) all efforts in the handling of any incident or report.
- D. The church staff will not deny, minimize, or blame any individual involved in allegations. Hunter Street staff will minister to all involved, as well as investigate, and cooperate with authorities.

**HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES
THE SCREENING PROCESS**

All information acquired during the screening process will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to others outside the necessary ministers of the Hunter Street Baptist Church staff. The only exception would be if an age-group minister or the Executive Pastor deems that limited disclosure is necessary to protect a child from possible harm. The process should be completed in the sequence outlined below.

I. CONFIDENTIAL APPLICATION

Every individual must complete the confidential application form (See Appendix B). It should be signed and returned to the Church Office or the appropriate age group minister in a sealed envelope before continuation of this process occurs.

II. PROCEDURE FOR CONTACTING PERSONAL REFERENCES

- A. Mail a letter or send a fax to the references listed (including personal, employment and church references) on an individual's application. Indicate your intent to call on a certain date at an approximate time to secure a reference for the named individual. Include with the letter or fax a copy of the signed and notarized "Consent to Release of Confidential Information." (See Appendix C)
- B. Place telephone call and explain that you are conducting a standard confidential background check under the Hunter Street Child Protection First Program.
- C. Complete the "Reference Contact Form," (See Appendix D). Be sure to answer all questions, on the form note the date and time of the process.
- D. Turn in the signed and completed "Reference Contact Form" to be placed in the applicant's permanent, confidential record folder. These files shall be held in a locked cabinet in the church office.

III. CONDUCT A PERSONAL INTERVIEW

- A. In order to be properly prepared to conduct an interview and answer possible questions, you should read the screening policies and guidelines very carefully. If you are uncertain about the meaning or purpose of any question, talk with the staff member responsible for overseeing the screening program.
- B. It is your responsibility to go over any and all questions contained in the "Personal Interview" (See Appendix E), the "Reference Contact," and the "Confidential Application." In addition, you are to assess the applicants' gifts, abilities, and experience for ministry at Hunter Street.

- C. Although the screening process could easily be viewed negatively, take the initiative to cast it in a positive light. Your attitude is likely to be contagious, so make a deliberate effort to make it a positive one. Emphasize the fact that God can use all things for good, even our response to an unpleasant problem like reducing the risk of child abuse. (Romans 8:28-29). Among other things you can mention the fact that you see the interview as an opportunity to learn more about applicants' gifts, abilities, and ministry goals, which will help you to guide them in their work with children and also to discern ways that you can spur them on in their walk with the Lord (Hebrews 10:24-25). As a result, the screening process will help not only to protect our children but also to build up our body by preparing us for works of service. (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- D. As you go through the interview, there are a few things to look for that may indicate a security question. These include:
1. Gaps in church attendance or employment history.
 2. Answering yes to one of the questions involving abuse.
 3. A negative comment by a reference.
 4. The fact that an applicant was sexually molested as a child or as an adult.
 5. Multiple addresses over a short period of time.

Although none of these factors alone necessarily disqualifies an applicant for work with children, they may raise a concern that warrants further investigation before approval is granted.

- E. There are a variety of sensitive issues you could encounter during an interview. Here are some general guidelines:
1. An applicant admits that he or she was sexually abused as a child. Response: This can be an extremely delicate issue, so take great care to respond gently and with sensitivity. Once the issue is raised, however, you will need to get more information to determine whether the person might be likely to abuse others. Questions to ask: How long ago? What effect has it had on you? Have you had any counseling? How has God ministered to you through this? Where do you need further healing? Depending upon the answers you receive, it may be necessary to do a more thorough background check on the person to eliminate any doubt about his or her suitability for work with children (e.g., criminal records check and/or church record and additional references).
 2. An applicant admits that he or she has sexually touched a child (not including child-to-child touching that occurred more than ten years ago) or has been involved in other sexual immorality. Response: Such an admission raises serious questions about a person's suitability for work with children. It may also indicate a need for pastoral or professional counseling to deal with a sinful habit pattern. You should consult with the pastor or supervising minister responsible for overseeing the screening process.

3. When interviewing a member of the opposite sex, the discussion begins to include detailed sexual issues. Response: This could become awkward or embarrassing for the member of the opposite sex and compromising for the interviewer. At the very least, you should make sure that you are talking in a place where other people can see you through a window or are at least present in an adjoining room with the door ajar. You should also ask the member of the opposite sex if he/she would prefer to postpone further discussion until their spouse or another member of the opposite sex can join you. When in doubt, postpone the meeting and invite an appropriate person to join you.
 4. The person may wish to withdraw his application rather than continue with the interview process.
- F. After you have completed the interview, send all of the forms to the staff member responsible for overseeing the process. If you have any doubts or questions about a particular applicant, note them clearly, and in objective, informative terms so the other staff member will know to discuss them with you. If you believe that an applicant should be approved, write your signature in the box on the bottom of the confidential application form. If you noticed any particular strengths or weaknesses for work with children, make note of them on a separate sheet of paper. Copies of which will be passed on to the appropriate ministry leader. Sign and date your notes at the bottom.

IV. QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING A PERSONAL INTERVIEW

- A. To break the ice, engage in casual conversation for a few minutes; thank the applicant for his or her interest in working with preschoolers, grade-schoolers, preteen, youth, etc. Ask some general, non-threatening questions about his or her background, hobbies, interest, why he or she chose this church, etc. (Appendix E)
- B. When and how did you become a Christian?
- C. Describe your walk with Christ since conversion.
- D. What are your ministry strengths?
- E. What are some ministry areas that you would like to strengthen?
- F. Why do you want to work with children (state an appropriate age group)?
- G. When considering prior positions you have held, what particular tasks did you enjoy the most?
- H. Does your spouse support your involvement in this ministry? How?
- I. Describe the relationship among your family members as you were growing up.

- J. What types of disciplinary measures were utilized in your family?
- K. Have you ever been physically or sexually abused?
- L. Go over the questions contained in the confidential application form. In addition to gathering general information:
 - 1. Clarify any gaps in church attendance history (periods when an applicant was not attending church)
 - 2. Clarify any gaps in employment history; if an applicant had many job changes, find out why.
 - 3. If an applicant answered “yes” to any questions pertaining to child abuse, get complete details. If the process becomes uncomfortable, refer further questioning to a member of the ministerial staff.

V. ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF APPLICATION

- A. If the designated age group minister (and executive pastor or pastor, if applicable) is satisfied with the responses provided on the Application and with the results of the personal references, employment references, church references and criminal background checks, the minister will notify the volunteer of his or her approval and shall place his or her name on a list of approved workers.
- B. If upon receipt of all information related to the screening process the designated age group minister remains dissatisfied with or concerned about any information obtained, he shall discuss such information with the Executive Pastor or Pastor, as well as any mitigating factors and/or any approaches to pastoral care for the applicant in dealing with the issue(s) in question. The minister and/or Executive Pastor and/or Pastor may then discuss the issue(s) further with the applicant and/or offer pastoral or counseling resources to the applicant, where appropriate. The designated minister, with the advice and concurrence of the Executive Pastor or Pastor, shall then return the applicant to the screening process to obtain any further information necessary or shall disapprove the application and inform him or her accordingly.
- C. No applicant will be authorized to work with children if:
 - 1. He or she has ever been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or otherwise has been adjudicated guilty of, any crime involving child sexual abuse (as defined under this policy);
 - 2. He or she has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or otherwise been adjudicated guilty of any crime involving physical abuse or violence within the ten (10) years preceding the application;

3. He or she has a pending charge of sexual or physical abuse or any other sex-related offense or offense involving violence;
4. He or she fails or refuses to satisfactorily complete or provide all of the information on any form or release related to the screening process, fails or refuses to be available for or participate in any interview requested by the designated minister, Pastor or Executive Pastor, or fails or refuses to authorize any reference, criminal or other background check requested;
5. Based on any aspect of the screening process, the designated minister (or pastor or Executive Pastor, if applicable) determines that the applicant is not a suitable candidate for volunteer work with children.

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HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
CHILD/STUDENT MINISTRY DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES

Worker supervision is a necessary component of an excellent church child care program. Supervision enhances the visibility of the leaders and the workers. Proper supervision promotes a healthy accountability and gives parents confidence in the overall program.

Worker supervision is not meant to threaten workers by giving them the impression that someone is “looking over their shoulder.” Rather, it is to be an outgrowth of the attitude that we intend to provide the safest environment possible for our children. Accountability and visibility are adequate vehicles toward minimizing the risk of negligence and enhancing overall child safety. These can be accomplished by implementing the following policies and procedures.

I. GUIDELINES FOR ALL CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES

1. Children’s Christian Ministry department directors, or their assistants, should be available each Sunday, to be certain that Sunday School classes are operating according to supervisory guidelines.
2. During the week, it is the responsibility of the ministry activity leaders and helpers to oversee that their ministry activity is in accordance with respective children’s ministry guidelines.
3. Occasional classroom visitations will be made by directors or their helpers.
4. Directional assistance should be provided to visiting parents and their children.
5. Children’s departments’ directors or helpers should assist children back to their respective classrooms when it is practical to do so.
6. Directors, teachers and their helpers should follow the “two adult rule” except when in the open corridors.
 - a. The “two adult rule” states that it is not permissible for one adult to be alone with any individual child, behind any locked door or closed door that does not have visible access.
 - b. It is not permissible for a Sunday School teacher to escort a child, alone, into a restroom, except in the case of a “clear emergency” (examples can be sickness or injury).
 - c. If a child needs restroom assistance (except in the case of a “clear emergency”), the “two adult rule” must be followed. It is most preferable for the second adult to be a director, helper, or classroom aide.
7. As the classroom leader, the teacher may face situations where it becomes necessary to exercise disciplinary measures.

NOTE: If a child is removed from a class for disciplinary measures and is placed in a more private, isolated area, the “two adult rule” must be applied. An exception can occur where there is an open door to the hallway, or an adjoining classroom door, or in cases where there is unrestricted visibility to the child.

8. Every effort is to be made to see that a child is not left alone by himself/herself in a room without two (2) adults present.
9. Under no circumstances is a director, helper, teacher, aide, etc. to touch a child for disciplinary reasons. The parents are to be notified if any child’s behavior needs correction beyond verbal warnings or removal from class.
10. When necessary, parents are to be notified about the misbehavior of their child.
11. Disparagement, harassment, or negatively critical demeanor toward a child are never exercised as a means of discipline. Any words or actions toward these ends should be reported to the appropriate department leader, as soon as is possible.

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II. PRESCHOOL CARE MINISTRY GUIDELINES, FOR AGES BIRTH THROUGH K5

1. Children should be signed in and released from the classroom by a parent or a preauthorized adult. Under no circumstances are Preschool workers to release children to any person(s), other than those adults who have “signed in” the children, or present a security tag or other security policy followed by the church.
2. A pre-authorized adult is one who is at least nineteen (19) years of age and who possesses the security tag.
3. Children should not be responsible for drop off, sign in, or pick up of Preschool children, even if they are the child’s siblings.
4. In addition to the guidelines set forth previously, workers must have no record of arrests or convictions for child abuse, or any crime dealing with the welfare of a child.
5. In addition to the guidelines set forth previously, workers must be free of any and all accusations or allegations of child abuse.
6. Every effort will be made to staff all Preschool rooms with adults (age 19 and up).
7. Ministry leaders who coordinate and/or supervise preschool workers must be members in good standing of Hunter Street.
8. Effort will be made to provide at least one helper for each Preschool room, when numbers warrant.
 - a. Helpers in the Baby Rooms should be adults (19 years old or older).
 - b. High schoolers at least fourteen (14) years of age may serve as extras, on an as-needed basis, with the approval of the age group minister in crawlers through K5.
 - c. Children under age fourteen (14) may accompany their parents, as “third persons” in any of the crawlers through K5 rooms. They will be considered ‘in training’ and not responsible as a scheduled worker or helper.
9. All parents who have children in the Preschool program are encouraged to participate in the program on a rotational basis.

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III. CHILDREN'S MINISTRY GUIDELINES, FOR GRADES 1 THROUGH GRADE 6

1. In the case where the classroom teacher or activity leader is not familiar with the person to whom the child is to be released, it is permissible to retain the child until a parent/guardian personally requests the child's release.
2. In addition to the guidelines set forth previously, children's ministry worker's must have no record of arrests or convictions for child abuse, or any crime dealing with the welfare of a child.
3. In addition to the guidelines set forth previously, children's ministry workers should be free of any and all accusations or allegations of child abuse.
4. All Sunday School teachers and children's ministries' program leaders must be at least 19 years of age, and must be members, in good standing, of Hunter Street.
5. Every effort will be made to secure a yearly commitment from each child care worker, at Hunter Street.
6. Safety procedures observed in Sunday School include but are not limited to:
 - a. All children grade 1 through grade 4 must be picked up in their rooms by their parents or by someone else so designated in a written permission slip, unless there is a signed statement by the parent permitting their child to leave the classroom on their own.
7. A designated room supervised by two approved workers may be provided for minors who arrive early or stay late for activities such as, but not limited to, Sunday School.
8. All workers with minors shall wear name tags for easy identification.

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IV. GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT MINISTRY, FOR GRADES 7 THROUGH 12

1. In addition to the guidelines set forth previously, student ministry workers must have no record of arrests or convictions for child abuse, or any crime dealing with the welfare of a child.
2. In addition to the guidelines set forth previously, student ministry workers should be free of any and all accusations or allegations of child abuse.
3. Student ministry workers must be at least nineteen (19) years of age.
4. Student ministry "leaders"*** must be members, in good standing, of Hunter Street.

Student Ministry Behavior Guidelines (See Appendix F)

1. Any verbal or non-verbal sexual behavior with the student is inappropriate
2. Dating any of the student is inappropriate.
3. Discretion should be used in dealing with all students, especially regarding physical contact. Innocent gestures can be misinterpreted.
4. Sexual gestures by staff to students should be reported to the Student Pastor or other staff.
5. Two adults should be present at all times, especially when working with students of the opposite sex.
6. One-to-one counseling with any student should always occur in a public place - - never alone in a car or in a private place.
7. The two adult rule should be observed when driving with students. Driving alone with a student of the same or opposite sex should be avoided as much as is reasonably possible, with particular care extended to troubled teens.
8. In the event circumstances require you to drive alone with a student the following special care is to be taken:
 - Do not sit close to one another in the car.
 - No physical contact.
 - Do not stop the car to talk.
 - If you must stop, turn the light on inside the car.
 - If at all possible, get out of the car to talk.
 - Avoid physical contact in saying goodbye (hugs/kisses).

- Be aware of the time you leave the meeting and the time you arrive at the student's house.
9. Romantic/sexual attraction for a student should be discussed with the Student Pastor or other staff for prayer and guidance.
 10. All suspicions of child abuse/sexual abuse should be reported immediately to the Student Pastor or other Church leader(s).

** Student Ministry Leaders can be defined as any adult (age 19 or older) that serves as a leader with students grade 7 through grade 12.

V. CHILD/STUDENT MINISTRY DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The technology of communication is a rapidly expanding and changing dynamic of our culture. As teachers and leaders it is incumbent that we stay educated and informed regarding “social networking” and other forms of electronic or online communication.

The term, “social networking,” as used in these guidelines, should be understood broadly to include not only websites such as “Facebook,” “MySpace,” “Twitter,” and similar services, but also any form of online or electronic communication. As such, “social networking” should be understood to include email, text messages, instant messages, use of web cameras, cell phone or smartphone communications, and other means of communicating where an individual may have communication with a minor in a private or semi-private forum.

The church's goal for a social networking guideline is to protect our students, our adults, and the reputation of our church for Christ. A fallacy with “social networking” is the opportunity for adults to have “private” relationships and/or conversations with minors. “Private” relationships and/or conversations between teachers/leaders and minors are never appropriate or acceptable.

Acceptable social networking practices are as follows:

- A teacher or adult leader may create an email list, group, or directory to communicate with the class as a whole. A copy of the email must be sent to the following email account: childprotection@hsbc.org
- Responding to an email from a minor requires that a copy of the response be sent to: childprotection@hsbc.org
- Messages from teachers and other leaders may be posted on open forums, bulletin boards, etc. (“Open” refers to a forum that anyone may access –as opposed to a closed forum that would be private.)

- Communication with students in general through accounts like Facebook and Twitter, along with text messaging, requires prior approval from a parent or guardian. (A release form provided by the church must be signed by a parent or guardian.)

There are practices associated with social networking that are not permitted by teachers and adult leaders, even when a parent has signed a release form. These practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Private conversations/communications using “social networking” whereby the parent may not have full access to the content of the conversation.
- Private posts to a social networking site.
- Use of web cameras
- Responding privately to emails, text messages, or other communications through a form of “social networking.”

Violation of the terms of the social networking guidelines will result in church discipline.

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
HANDLING ABUSE/MOLESTATION INCIDENTS

I. THE CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

- A. The accused party will be presumed innocent until proven guilty. In an appropriate case, the accused party may be placed on paid or non-paid leave where there are no witnesses other than the accused and the accusers. However, where two (2) adults were present at the time of the alleged incident, one of whom was the accused, and the other adult (not the accused's spouse or blood relative) states in writing that he or she observed no incident to occur, then the accused employee or volunteer shall remain as a church employee or volunteer throughout the investigative process.
- B. Upon an accusation being made (Appendix G), a representative of the Church Staff will notify and consult with the Executive Pastor, the church attorney, and the liability insurance carrier representative for the church. Recommendations received from these sources should be adhered to. A report will be made to the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) immediately if required by statute. The validity of any accusation is to be determined by DHR. It is the intention of Hunter Street to comply with all child abuse reporting laws (See Appendix H).
- C. Besides any other investigative process that may ensue, the church itself will implement the following procedure for investigation of the incident. When required by statute, the church will contact the Alabama Department of Human Resources and conduct its own investigation in full cooperation with DHR. DHR shall be the lead agency and provide guidance to the church regarding the church's investigation. It is recognized that DHR has expertise and knowledge of local resources that will be of benefit in an independent investigation. Church staff should not attempt to personally interview the accused, the accuser, or any other involved party without professional assistance. This may cause harm to the investigation and the individuals involved, and requires professional skills. The church may take other steps as deemed prudent by the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, Church Staff, church attorney, and church insurer.
- D. The church will, on a regular basis, keep all interested parties notified of the progress in the investigation and other matters, subject to counsel from the church's lawyer or church insurer.
- E. If the investigative process, or the church's own investigation, shows a high probability that the accused is in fact guilty of the incident, then the church will take all reasonable steps to cooperate with law enforcement authorities in any action they may take against the accused. The church staff will attempt to minister to all involved.

II. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Observed or reported child sexual abuse or child molestation should be reported immediately to the Executive Pastor or to the church Administrator if the Executive Pastor is not available or has a conflict of interest that would make reporting to the Executive Pastor inappropriate. Reporting will be made as required to the Alabama Department of Human Resources. The reporting person will complete the Abuse/Molestation Incident Report Form (See Appendix G).

- A. Indications of physical abuse: child reports injury by others; unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, burns, fractures, abdominal injuries, or human bites; child is unusually wary of physical contact with adults, demonstrates extremes in behavior, or seems frightened of parents or caretaker.
- B. Indications of sexual abuse: child reports abuse by others; has difficulty walking or sitting; torn, stained, or bloody underclothing; complaints of pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters; or other unusual and excessive behaviors inappropriate for a child of that age.
- C. Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, you should talk with the Executive Pastor who will take the appropriate action.

III. RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- A. The church shall prepare a written statement based on the advice of the church's attorney.
 - 1. This statement will serve as the only official word about the matter.
 - 2. Periodic official written statement(s) and update(s) may occur, with the advice of the church's attorney.
 - 3. No questions and answers will be permitted on the part of the media due to issues of confidentiality, safety, and the health of the involved parties.
 - 4. Official statement(s) may only be read by the Church spokesperson(s).

IV. RESPONDING TO THE CHURCH CONGREGATION

- A. Discretion is to be exercised by the church pastoral staff for reasons of confidentiality and the safety of the parties involved.
- B. Each accusation and allegation is to be considered individually and confidentially, and shall be assessed as to its value for church-wide dissemination.

- C. Upon the request for information, the party addressed shall respond with the recognition of the problem, and communicate the need to respect the confidentiality of the matter and the safety of those involved.
- D. Every effort will be made to route all queries to the attention of the Church spokesperson(s).

V. RESTORATION

- A. Without minimizing any concerns, every effort will be made toward the healing of the wrongs committed, and the restoration* of those involved toward supportive and vibrant Christ-centered fellowship.
- B. *"Restoration" is not meant to communicate a placement or a movement back towards children's ministry. Rather, it is meant to communicate the process of moving all parties toward wholeness and forgiveness.
- C. Biblical principles will be applied during the on-going process of restoration.

VI. CHRISTIAN CONCILIATION

Christians are commanded by the Bible to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8). Therefore, the church and its members commit that if a claim or dispute arises concerning the church's handling of abuse/molestation allegations, that claim or dispute shall be settled by biblically based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation.

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
PARENTAL CONSENT, CERTIFICATION, AND MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth _____
Father's Name _____ Mother's Name _____
Home Phone _____ Home Phone _____
Work Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Cell Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Doctor's Name _____ Doctor's Phone _____

Name of Insured _____ Carrier _____
Policy Number _____ Group Number _____

Known Allergies _____

List any medication or drugs taken regularly _____

LOCAL Relative or friend to notify in case of an emergency and we cannot locate parents
Name _____ Phone _____

As the parent (or legal guardian), I the undersigned, certify that my child, named above, has my express permission to participate in all activities, of any nature, sponsored by Hunter Street Baptist Church for the calendar year _____. I fully release Hunter Street, its authorized representatives and staff from all liability of any kind and character upon any claim, demand or cause of action which might be asserted in our behalf against said church, representatives or staff. I further agree that any claim or dispute arising from or related to this agreement shall be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration, in accordance with the Rules of the Institute for Christian Conciliation; judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

It is my understanding that the church will attempt to notify me in case of a medical emergency involving my child. If the church cannot reach me, then I authorize the church to hire a doctor or other health-care professional, and I give my permission to the doctor or other health-care professional to provide the medical services he or she may deem necessary. I will pay for any medical expenses so incurred. I will notify the church if I feel there are any health considerations that would prevent my child's participation in an activity. I also give my permission for church leaders to restrict my child from participating in any activity which they have any question about for health or other reasons.

I hereby allow photographs and video of my child's participation in Hunter Street events to be published via print, video or website which are affiliated with Hunter Street Baptist Church. I understand that publications may be accomplished electronically via the Internet/World Wide Web, copying my child's photographs and video there from, and subsequently using, altering or republishing it without my consent. I waive any claim for damages against Hunter Street Baptist Church from the un-consented-to use, alteration or republication of my child's photographs and video by third parties accessing the Internet/World Wide Web or obtaining copies of the print or video material.

A photocopy of this Authorization shall have the same effect as the original.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

State of Alabama, County of

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this _____ day

of _____, 20____.

My commission expires _____

Notary Public

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
CONFIDENTIAL VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

This application is to be completed by all volunteers for any position involving the supervision or custody of children and by all church employees who could have contact with children in church facilities or on church sponsored activities. It will help our church family provide a safe and secure environment for all boys and girls who participate in our ministries and use our facilities.

Ministry Area _____

PERSONAL

Name _____ Date _____
Present Address _____ SS# _____
City _____ Zip _____ Male Female
Phone (Evening) _____ Marital Status* _____
Phone (Day) _____ Maiden Name _____
On what date would you be available to begin? _____ Occupation _____

Do you have a current driver's license? No Yes,
State _____ Driver license number _____

Have you ever been convicted of, arrested for, or pled guilty to a felony or an offense involving a minor?
 No
 Yes, please describe all convictions

Were you a victim of abuse or molestation as a minor or as an adult? No Yes
(If you prefer, you may decline to answer this question, or you may discuss your answer in confidence with one of the ministers rather than answering on this form. Answering yes or leaving the question unanswered will not automatically disqualify you.)

I have read the Child Protection First Policy and affirm that at no time in the past have I engaged in conduct that would fall within the definition of child sexual abuse. Yes No

PRESENT EMPLOYMENT

Employer _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Supervisor's Name _____ Employment Date _____ to _____
Hours/Week _____ Your Position _____
Job Description _____

PREVIOUS ADDRESSES

If you have lived at your current address for less than two years, please provide information on all addresses during that period of time

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

If you have been employed at your present position **for less than two years**, please provide information for each job held in the last two years.

Employer _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Supervisor's Name _____ Employment Date _____ to _____

Employer _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Supervisor's Name _____ Employment Date _____ to _____

Employer _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Supervisor's Name _____ Employment Date _____ to _____

CHURCH ACTIVITY

When did you make your profession of faith in Christ? _____

When were you baptized? _____

Church Member? Hunter Street Baptist Church Elsewhere _____

List other churches (name and address) you have attended regularly during the past five years:

Church Name	Address	Dates Attended
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

List all previous church work involving minors:

Church name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type of work performed _____ Dates _____ to _____

Supervising Minister _____

Church name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type of work performed _____ Dates _____ to _____

Supervising Minister _____

Church name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Type of work performed _____ Dates _____ to _____

Supervising Minister _____

List all previous non-church work involving minors:

Organization	Address	Telephone number(s)	Reference
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for teaching minors:

PERSONAL REFERENCES

(Not former employers or relatives)

Name _____ Nature of Association _____
Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Length of time known _____ Occupation _____

Name _____ Nature of Association _____
Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Length of time known _____ Occupation _____

Name _____ Nature of Association _____
Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____
Length of time known _____ Occupation _____

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

I certify that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the Child Protection First policies of Hunter Street Baptist Church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

Applicant Signature Date

For Office Use Only

Member attend six months..... Yes No Personal Interview satisfactory Yes No
Application satisfactory Yes No Former church record satisfactory. Yes No
Release satisfactory Yes No Employment record satisfactory Yes No
Personal references satisfactory ... Yes No Record check satisfactory Yes No
.....
Circle One Used. DHR Criminal

Approved by _____ Date _____
Interviewer

Approved by _____ Date _____
Age Group Minister

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
CONSENT TO RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Having made application to work at Hunter Street Baptist Church and desiring the church to be informed as to my past record and character, I authorize any persons, references, employers, churches, or organizations with whom I have had any contact to release to Hunter Street any information (including opinions) they may have regarding my record, character, and fitness for work. I also authorize Hunter Street, at its discretion, to contact any law enforcement and social service agency to determine whether I have ever been charged or convicted of a crime, and I authorize such agencies to release such information to Hunter Street. I fully release Hunter Street, its agents, and all persons, organizations, corporations, and agencies from any right or claim of confidentiality and from all claims, actions or causes of action which may arise as a consequence of exchanging such information, and I waive any right that I may have to inspect any such information, letters or statements, provided on my behalf.

Full Legal Name _____ Maiden Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____
 Date of Birth _____ Social Security No. _____ Drivers License No. _____

 Signature _____ Date _____

State of Alabama:

County of _____:

 Witness _____ Subscribed and sworn to before me on this _____
 day of _____, _____

OR

 Witness _____ NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: _____

Statement from Law Enforcement or Social Service Agency

- I have checked our records regarding the person named above and have found no indication that this person has ever been charged, arrested, or convicted of a crime, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, assault or any other acts of violence.
- I have found some problems with this person's record: please call me for more information.

Signed _____ Date _____

Agency Name _____ Telephone _____

Please return this form to: Hunter Street Baptist Church.

A PHOTOCOPY OF THIS AUTHORIZATION SHALL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT AS THE ORIGINAL.

**HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
REFERENCE CONTACT FORM**

Applicant: _____

Reference: _____

Organization: _____

Telephone: _____

- How long have you known the individual and in what capacity?

- What type of experiences have you had with the individual in relation to their teaching and leadership with children?

- What do you consider to be this individuals strengths in working with children?

- What do you see as their weaknesses in the area of teaching children?

- Would you have any hesitancy in hiring this individual again? OR.. in hiring this individual to work with your child? Explain.

- To the best of your knowledge, has this person had any previous incidents related to child molestation or child abuse or any other accusations of impropriety involving a minor?

- To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant ever been involved in any kind of conduct or activity that indicates he or she might mistreat, molest or abuse a child?

Summarize any other pertinent conversation on reverse side.

Signature

Date/Time

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING PERSONAL INTERVIEW

- To break the ice, engage in casual conversation for a few minutes; thank the applicant for his or her interest in student work; ask some general, non-threatening questions about his or her background, hobbies, interests, why he or she chose this church, etc.
- When and how did you become a Christian?
- Describe your walk with Christ since conversion.
- What are your ministry strengths?
- What are some ministry areas that you would like to strengthen?
- Why do you want to work with children or students?
- When considering prior positions you have held, what particular tasks did you enjoy the most?
- Does your spouse support your involvement in ministry? How?
- Describe the relationship among your family members as you were growing up.
- What types of disciplinary measures were utilized in your family?
- Have you ever been physically or sexually abused?

Go through application for student work and references, and clarify any information that is incomplete or questionable. In particular:

- Clarify any gaps in church attendance history (periods when applicant was not attending church).
- Clarify any gaps in employment history; if applicant had many job changes, find out why.
- If applicant has criminal record, get complete details.

Signature

Date

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRY BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Written guidelines for appropriate behavior – to be read and signed by all returning and new student ministry volunteers.

1. Any verbal or non-verbal sexual behavior with students is inappropriate.
2. Dating any of the students is inappropriate.
3. Discretion should be used in dealing with all students, especially regarding physical contact.
4. Sexual gestures to staff by students should be reported to the Student Pastor.
5. Two adults should be present at all times, especially when working with students of the opposite sex.
6. One-to-one counseling with students should always occur in a public place – never alone in a car or a private place.
7. Driving alone with a student of the same or opposite sex should be avoided as much as is reasonably possible, with particular care extended to trouble teens.
8. In the event circumstances require you to drive alone with a student the following special care is to be taken:
 - Do not sit close to one another in the car
 - No physical contact
 - Do not stop the car to talk
 - If you must stop, turn the light on inside the car
 - If at all possible, get out of the car to talk
 - Avoid physical contact in saying good-bye (hugs/kisses)
 - Be aware of the time you leave the meeting and the time you arrive at the student's house
9. Romantic/sexual attraction for a student should be discussed with the Student Pastor or other ministerial staff for prayer and guidance.
10. All suspicions of child abuse/sexual abuse must be reported immediately to the Student Pastor, or other Church leaders(s).

I certify that I have read the above guidelines and I agree to abide by them.

Signature

Date

CONFIDENTIAL

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH ABUSE/MOLESTATION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, you should document and report incidents to the appropriate age-group minister.

- I have observed or suspect conduct that I believe is child abuse or neglect.
- I have observed or suspect conduct that I believe would fall under the definition of sexual abuse as defined in the Hunter Street policy:

DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: "Any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child provided the child is four (4) years older than the victim." (Adopted from The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse.)

Child sexual abuse can be violent or nonviolent. It is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of the oral, genital, or anal areas; intercourse; or forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, pornographic videos and other materials, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

I understand that this material is to be treated as highly confidential and that I am not to discuss it with anyone else other than the age-group minister to whom I make this report and the Alabama Department of Human Resources, if appropriate.

Your Name _____

Date this report was made _____

REPORT OF THE INCIDENT:

Date of incident _____ Time incident occurred _____

Adult's Name (suspected abuser) _____

Minor's Name (victim) _____

Minor/Victim's location or whereabouts: _____

Name and Address of Minor/Victim's Parents, Guardian, or Caretaker: _____

Describe nature of the incident that occurred in your presence, evidence of any previous injuries, and any other information that might establish a cause of injuries and the identity of the person responsible (use additional pages if necessary):

Personal observations of indications of suspected abuse that are not readily explained:
(check any or all that apply)

Physical Abuse

- unexplained bruises
- welts
- lacerations
- burns
- fractures
- abdominal injuries
- human bites
- child unusually wary of physical contact with adults
- demonstrates extremes in behavior
- seems frightened of parents or caretaker

Sexual Abuse

- child reports abuse by others
- has difficulty walking or sitting
- torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- complaints of pain or itching in genital area
- bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area
- unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters
- unusual and excessive behaviors inappropriate for a child of that age.

Provide a complete description for the personal observations of indications of suspected abuse you have checked above (use additional pages if necessary):

I have reviewed the above report. It is true and correct, based on my personal observations.

Signature

Date

Witness to Signature

Date

THE STATE OF ALABAMA CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following information is from the Code of Alabama:

I. MANDATORY REPORTING

“(a) All hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, members of the clergy as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report, or cause a report to be made of the same, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority.” Ala. Code § 26-14-3(a) (2009). (The referenced Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence defines a member of the clergy as “any duly ordained, licensed, or commissioned minister, pastor, priest, rabbi, or practitioner of any bona fide established church or religious organization.” The definition of a clergyman “includes, and is limited to, any person who regularly, as a vocation, devotes a substantial portion of his or her time and abilities to the service of his or her church or religious organization.” Ala. R. Evid. 505(a)(1).)

II. PERMISSIVE REPORTING

“In addition to those persons, firms, corporations and officials required by Section 26-14-3 to report child abuse and neglect, any person may make such a report if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.” Ala. Code § 26-14-4 (2009).

III. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY

“Any person, firm, corporation or official participating in the making of a report or the removal of a child pursuant to this chapter, or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting therefrom, shall, in so doing, be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.” Ala. Code § 26-14-9 (2009).

IV. PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO MAKE A REQUIRED REPORT

“Any person who shall knowingly fail to make the report required by this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than six months’ imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.00.” Ala. Code § 26-14-13 (2009).

V. CONTENTS OF REPORTS

“The reports provided for in this chapter shall state, if known, the name of the child, his whereabouts, the names and addresses of the parents, guardian or caretaker and the character and extent of his injuries. The written report shall also contain, if known, any evidence of previous injuries to said child and any other pertinent information which might establish the cause of such injury or injuries, and the identity of the person or persons responsible for the same.” Ala. Code § 26-14-5 (2009)

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

1. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS A CRIME

“Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.” (Church Law & Tax Report, Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, p. 13, 1993)

2. GENERAL DEFINITION

A general definition of child sexual abuse consists of “any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator.” (Church law & Tax Report, Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, p. 13, 1993)

3. COMMON DEFINITION

“Any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.” (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992)

4. ALABAMA STATE DEFINITION

“Sexual abuse includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law. Sexual exploitation includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes.” Ala. Code 26-14-1(1) (Supp. 1996)

TYPES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: TOUCHING AND NON-TOUCHING

THIS LIST IS NOT-ALL INCLUSIVE

Types of Abuse that Involve Touching Include:

- Fondling
- Sexual Gratification
- Oral, genital, or anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible Rape

Types of Abuse that DO NOT Involve Touching Include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity
- Electronic communication of any nature

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF AN ABUSED OR MOLESTED CHILD

Physical signs may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty while sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavior signs may include:

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Acting out of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs may include one or more of the following statements:

- “I don’t like (the name of a particular worker).”
- “(A church worker) does things to me when we’re alone.”
- “I don’t like to be alone with (a church worker).”
- “(A church worker) fooled around with me.”

Re: Child Protection Policy

To any individual desiring to give leadership to minors,

In order to provide a safe environment for the children in our church, we have adopted a policy to reduce the risk of child abuse. Every individual desiring to be in leadership with minors must be familiar with this policy and complete our screening procedures satisfactorily.

This risk reduction policy is motivated by several concerns. First, recognizing God's tender love and concern for children (see Luke 18:16), we want to do all that we can to protect our children from any kind of physical or sexual abuse. While we would like to believe that such abuse could never take place in a church, the fact is that many children are being abused within the Christian community every year. Our church is not immune to the effects of sin, and it would be presumptuous for us to assume that this problem could never occur in our church body. Therefore, while we should strive to be as "innocent as doves" we must also be as "shrewd (prudent, sensible, and practically wise) as serpents" (Matthew 10:16). This should be especially true with regard to the children God has placed under our care.

Second, we want to protect our adult leadership from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a child. Such accusations can do a great deal of damage even to an innocent individual. Our procedures for maintaining a safe environment and admonishing inappropriate behavior are designed to prevent compromising situations in the first place, and also to strengthen an individual's defense against false accusations.

Third, we want to protect our church from the scandal and trauma that an incident of abuse could bring upon our congregation. When someone accuses another person in the church of abuse, the entire church body can be drawn into a painful and costly conflict. Divisions in the congregation can arise because of disagreements over how the abuse was allowed to occur and how the situation is being handled. Church leaders would be distracted from important ministries. Legal charges can be filed that may result in a prolonged and expensive lawsuit. And if the news media learns of an abuse situation, it can draw all sorts of adverse publicity to the church. Obviously, these developments would wreak havoc on our ministry. This is another reason why this policy is needed. As Proverbs 22:3 warns, "A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it."

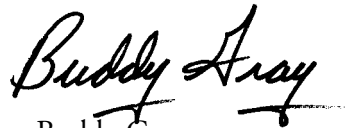
Finally, and most importantly, we believe that this policy will help us to guard the honor and reputation of our Lord Jesus Christ. If a child in our church is harmed through a member's sin, some people will inevitably think less of the church and of our Lord (Romans 2:24). We are committed to do everything in our power to prevent such dishonor from happening, and to protect our children from abuse is one way to do so.

Although the issue of child abuse is an unpleasant one, we believe that God can use our response to these concerns for good (see Romans 8:28-29). Instead of viewing the screening process as a “necessary evil”, we see it as an opportunity to promote teamwork (I Corinthians 12:12-31), to demonstrate mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21), and to get to know one another better. During the interview process, the age-group minister will learn more about your gifts, abilities, and ministry goals, which will help him to guide your work and also to discern ways to spur you on in your walk with the Lord (Hebrews 10:24-25). As a result, the screening process will help not only to protect our children but also to build up our church body by preparing us for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-13).

With these thoughts in mind, we ask that you support this risk protection policy to insure that our leaders are well qualified for their ministry to the children of our church. Your completion of our screening process is an important part of this task. If you have any questions about procedures for maintaining a safe environment, please feel free to talk with one of the staff members.

Thank you for your cooperation in these matters. We look forward to working with you as you use your gifts and talents to nurture the children God has placed under our care.

In Christ,



Buddy Gray
Pastor

PERMISSION SLIPS

I hereby authorize my child(ren) _____

To leave their (check all that apply)

- Sunday School class
- Sunday Events and Activities
- Children/Student Worship
- Wednesday Evening Activities

Without me being present to pick them up.

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form is to be renewed annually.

PERMISSION SLIPS

I hereby authorize my child(ren) _____

To leave their (check all that apply)

- Sunday School class
- Sunday Events and Activities
- Children/Student Worship
- Wednesday Evening Activities

Without me being present to pick them up.

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form is to be renewed annually.

**HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
POLICY COMPLIANCE FORM**

I have read the Child Protection First Policies of Hunter Street Baptist Church. I agree to follow and be bound by the policies while performing services for Hunter Street Baptist Church. I also agree to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my service on behalf of the Church.

Signature

Date

HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
CHILD PROTECTION FIRST POLICY

**HUNTER STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
SOCIAL NETWORKING RELEASE**

My child has permission to engage in social networking with the adult leadership in his/her area of ministry in accordance with the Child/Youth Ministry Departmental Guidelines for Social Networking and Electronic Communications contained within the Child Protection First policy. Social networking encompasses any form of electronic or online communication and includes, but is not limited to, email, text messaging, Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace.

As the parent or legal guardian, I understand that it is my responsibility to remain informed and educated regarding my child and his/her social networking activities.

I also understand that Hunter Street Baptist Church has included guidelines for social networking as part of the Child Protection First policy. I understand that all adults affiliated with Hunter Street Baptist Church have a responsibility to me, as the child's parent or guardian, to first seek my written permission before engaging in any social networking with my child.

I, _____, grant the right and give permission to the Ministers and Ministry Staff at Hunter Street Baptist Church to engage in "social networking" with my child.

Following is the listing of other adults to whom I grant the right and give permission to "social network."

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name of Minor: _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian: _____

Date: _____