

**HODGES BOULEVARD
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
4140 HODGES BOULEVARD,
JACKSONVILLE, FL**



**Handbook of Volunteer
Policies and Procedures**

March 3 2021

HBPC HANDBOOK OF VOLUNTEER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church

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HBPC HANDBOOK OF VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

OUR VISION:

Connecting people for whole-hearted discipleship in Jesus Christ

PREFACE:

At Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church (HBPC), we take seriously our scriptural and historical mandates to welcome and educate God's people. We thank all those who wish to aid our church and serve God in this important mandate. A significant part of the educational process is providing a safe place. We work hard to provide an environment for spiritual growth in a context of healthy, positive relationships with adults. We take seriously our responsibility to shield all who attend and participate in our activities from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Equally, we desire to protect our adults from accusations of abuse and to limit the exposure of the church to legal risk and liability.

When working with children and youth we need to be clear in thought, word, and deed. Thus creating a safe space for children, youth and adults to gather for education and fellowship is about setting boundaries. Please do not regard these boundaries as restrictions. The boundaries are put in place to create freedom from fear and concern for our safety.

Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church recognizes and appreciates the importance of our volunteer workers and we welcome all such participation in the work and ministry here. In order to be good stewards, however, we must balance the desire with the need to ensure the safety of the children, volunteers and staff.

For purposes of this Handbook, volunteers are non-staff people who have voluntarily offered to lead, play a leadership role or are supporting events or ministries (with 'supporting' meaning more than merely attending or participating) of HBPC. Examples include actions such as (this is not meant to be an exhaustive list) VBS volunteer, FLAME sponsor, Sponsor of trip to Montreat or Camp Montgomery, 'in charge' of a group to Jumbo Shrimp ball game, Sunday School Class Facilitator, leading/planning Wednesday evening program or other special educational programs, confirmation, working in sound booth, member of Session, Member of Diaconate.

The following document defines/lays out ground rules for appropriate behavior across the wide spectrum of situations in our church life. Part of building the body of Christ and educating that body is about creating and maintaining a safe place to gather in Christ's name.

HBPC reserves the right to revise, modify, revoke or change any policy, benefit or provision at any time, with or without notice. Questions should be directed to the volunteer and/or staff member in charge of the event or opportunity for which you are volunteering.

This Handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise or to create specific policy to be applied at every instance. NOTE: THIS DOES NOT REPLACE ANY OF THE HBPC SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICIES/PROCEDURES OR REQUIREMENTS.

Employees and/or volunteers must bring any violation of these policies to the immediate attention of the Head of Staff or the Human Resources Mission Team. The Church will thoroughly investigate all such claims with due regard for the privacy of the individuals involved. Retaliation against the individual who has reported such violation by either a volunteer or staff member is expressly prohibited.

I. Background Check

- A. Anyone who volunteers must have been attending HBPC for a minimum of 6 months and be 'interviewed' by the staff member in the area for which the individual is volunteering.
- B. Anyone who volunteers to work with children or youth will be required to undergo a background check including local and state law enforcement criminal records.

II. Training

- A. All volunteers must complete the current curriculum on Safeguarding Our Children/Youth I training conducted by the Director of Faith Formation or other qualified staff member.
- B. Refresher training will be offered annually
- C. All volunteers are required to take the training every 5 years

III. Code of Conduct

Just as HBPC is required to provide a safe working environment for employees; so we are required/expected to provide a safe working/volunteering environment for volunteers. Therefore, HBPC requires some specific behaviors of all volunteers including (but not limited to the following):

- A. Timely arrival for all events for which you are volunteering
- B. Respectful treatment/management of church property, as well as any non-HBPC facilities or property.
- C. Wearing of appropriate, modest, inoffensive clothing, and follow the dress code for off-site activities. The following are examples of clothing that is inappropriate when volunteering and representing HBPC:
 - 1. Shirts which expose the midriff.
 - 2. Shirts with low cut necklines / narrow straps.
 - 3. Shirts which are see-through.
 - 4. Shirts or other clothing with offensive slogans or which advertise alcohol, tobacco, drinking establishments, musical groups or concerts.
 - 5. Pants off the hips that expose underwear
 - 6. Generally, anytime groups are representing HBPC, whether on Mission Trips or social events (concerts, for example) clothing should reflect positively on HBPC.
- D. The use of profane, foul, sexist, homophobic, crude, curse or other inappropriate language in person or in any social media, email or other methods of communication is expressly prohibited. The use of such by any volunteer that is brought to the attention of any member of session and/or staff member shall be immediately investigated and may result in the removal of the individual from his/her position as a volunteer at HBPC and may prevent him/her from consideration for future volunteer opportunities at HBPC.
- E. Display of any violent, aggressive or threatening behavior (verbal or physical) that may result in physical or emotional injury is strictly prohibited and may be grounds for immediate dismissal as a volunteer. Examples of conduct that may be considered threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. Threatening physical or aggressive contact directed toward another individual
 - 2. Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, associates or property with harm
 - 3. The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of HBPC or another's property
 - 4. Harassing or threatening phone calls
 - 5. Surveillance

6. Stalking
 7. Veiled threats of physical harm or like intimidation
 8. Communicating an endorsement of the inappropriate use of firearms or weapons
- F. Volunteers, as well as staff members, are required to report any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors of children, youth or other volunteers.
1. Any person accused of any act considered to be harmful to a child, student, staff or volunteer will be immediately suspended from participation in Children and Youth Ministries.
 2. Failure to report such violation may result in the individual being restricted from participation in such activities in the future.
 3. The Staff of HBPC is responsible for reporting any suspected physical or sexual abuse to the appropriate authorities. Volunteers will raise any concerns to the staff; if the concern is with a staff member, the volunteer will go to another staff member.
- G. The presence of weapons, or explosives on the grounds of the Church or at any HBPC sponsored event is expressly prohibited
- H. The presence of lighters or fireworks, except for a specific event (such as candles used in a service or for lighting, a cook-out or celebration) on the grounds of the Church or at any HBPC sponsored event is expressly prohibited. Should there be a time when the use of such is required; they should be handled and used by the adult volunteer ONLY.

For events on HBPC property, written permission must be secured from the HBPC Property Committee in advance. For events on non-HBPC property, permission must be secured from the appropriate governing body.

- I. The presence of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs on the grounds of the Church or at any HBPC sponsored event is expressly prohibited
- J. The use of tobacco in any form (cigarette, e-cigarettes, snuff, chewing, etc., on the grounds of the Church or at any HBPC sponsored event is expressly prohibited
- K. The use of your cell phone should be avoided, except in the case of an emergency, when serving as a volunteer.
- L. Additional rules/guidelines may be required for specific events/situations. Volunteers are expected to follow any additional rules or guidelines set by staff or 'volunteer-in-charge' at the time

IV. Discipline / Behavior Situations

Volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for managing behavior of children or youth. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors. Using time-outs and other non-physical methods (for children, such as removing a toy) are better options.

- A. For children, the rule of thumb for time out is one minute per age (3 minutes for a 3-year-old, etc.).
- B. Praise the child when the time-out is over and return the child to the group
- C. Uncontrolled behavior should be reported to staff who will report to parents.
- D. For youth whose behavior is 'out of control' and who refuses to comply with instructions; contacting the parents to pick-up the youth, is an appropriate response, if this is possible.

- E. If this not an option (group is out-of-town, for example) the leader will contact the parents to advise the parent and youth that the youth's participation in events may be limited during the time the group is out-of-town and in future events, based on consultation with the parents.
- F. Should the out-of-control behavior continue, the youth may be separated from the group under the care of another adult sponsor.

V. Dangerous/Emergency Situations

If you encounter an armed or dangerous person, do not attempt to challenge or disarm the individual. Remain calm, make constant eye contact and talk to the individual. If a Staff Member can be safely notified of the need for assistance without endangering your safety or the safety of others, such notice should be given, emergency agencies (911) should be contacted, if possible. Otherwise, cooperate and follow the instructions.

If you receive or overhear any threatening communication from anyone associated with HBPC, report it to the Head of Staff or chairperson of the Human Resources Team. Do not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual.

VI. Building and Classroom Safety

- A. The building is equipped with camera surveillance. This may include unobserved monitoring of staff, volunteers and children/youth during activities.
- B. No child or student should ever be left unattended in a classroom during Children's or Youth Ministry programming.
- C. No Staff or volunteers should be alone with an individual child or youth in any unobservable space.
- D. After every children or youth event, staff and/or volunteers must check every room and restroom prior to leaving the facility.
- E. Worker to Child Ratios

HBPC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children and Youth programs. The following volunteer to child/youth are the minimum acceptable ratios:

<u>Age Level</u>	<u>Workers</u>	<u>Children/youth</u>
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 & 3 years old	2	12
Preschool 4 and 5 years old	3	18
Elementary School	2	20
Junior High	2	20
Senior High	2	20
Vacation Bible School	2	20

VII. E-mail and Social Media

At no time, under any circumstances, or by anyone, communications tool (written, verbal, photographic, or technological) be used in any form of harassment, shaming, or issuing of threats to any individual or individuals. Any such behavior will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal as a volunteer.

A. E-mail

E-mail has replaced many methods of communication because of its ease of use and the footprint and/or chain of evidence and decisions provided. However, there are certain protocols which must be maintained. Following are examples; but by no means an exhaustive list of those protocols. The HBPC Session is the final arbitrator should there be any question of the appropriateness of the use, or content, of any email sent/received by HBPC volunteer.

1. E-mail users must realize that no E-mail communication is private or confidential.
2. E-mail messages may be retrieved and may be subject to disclosure to third parties, including the press, the courts and governmental agencies. Accordingly, such messages, like other communications, must be professional, comply with HBPC's rules and policies and reflect well upon the sender and the image of Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church.
3. The following uses of E-mail are inappropriate and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including being removed as a volunteer:
 - a. Engaging in unlawful and malicious activities which reflect on HBPC
 - b. Using abusive, profane, sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise objectionable language in emails distributed to HBPC volunteers and/or on behalf of volunteers.
 - c. Misrepresenting oneself or Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church.

B. Electronic Social Media

Electronic social media is a great way to share ideas and a powerful tool for building community and connection. It builds and encourages a web of relationships that can be nurturing, bless others, and share the Good News. However, electronic social media has potential for harm, whether that harm comes from use of the social media itself or from avoidance of "in person" relationships. The use of social media (Facebook or Instagram, for example, but by no means intended to be an exhaustive list of social media to which this applies)

The church must engage in electronic social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, for example, but by no means an exhaustive list); however, this engagement must be in a way that is safe and responsible. Staff, Volunteers and/or other users are prohibited from using electronic social media in a manner that directly or indirectly adversely affects the perception of HBPC in public opinion. The following guidelines apply to HBPC staff and volunteers in the use of electronic social media.

1. Choose the appropriate form(s) of electronic social media based on the purpose of the communication and the audience to be reached while also communicating in alternate ways (e.g., postal mail or a phone call) with individuals who do not or cannot receive electronic communications.
2. Be aware that once something is shared by electronic means, control of re-transmission to other persons and groups is out of the hands of the original communicator. For example, surveys have confirmed that many non-Facebook users who live with an account holder look at posts or pictures on the user's account.
3. Be careful to ensure the content of electronic social media honors Jesus Christ, the mission of Christ's church and HBPC. Be thoughtful, truthful and respectful toward your audience. Correct mistakes as quickly as possible.
4. Be careful about linking to other websites and/or articles to avoid linking to what some users might find inappropriate or offensive content (word and/or media).
5. Do not share confidential, personal, or sensitive information, such as health concerns of others without their consent.
6. Never use language that is offensive, including, but not limited to, abusive, profane, sexist, racist, or homophobic; NEVER use electronic social media as a bully-pulpit or Cancel Culture to have someone ostracized based on whatever the writer "finds offensive in another".
7. The use of social media to threaten the job/position of ANY staff or volunteer is expressly forbidden. Such behavior may result in the volunteer being asked to leave his/her position as a volunteer and may prevent him/her from being a volunteer in the future.

8. Volunteers must check with the appropriate staff member before sharing images of youth and children.
9. Electronic social media shared with children and youth must also be shared with their parents or guardians in the manner the parents or guardians prefer. For example, if parents/guardians don't Tweet or use Facebook, share the communication with them another way in timely manner so the parents or guardians have the information without delay. While electronic social media ministry with youth has potential for being positive, the possibility of inappropriate communication is also present. Guidelines for relating to children, youth and vulnerable adults in other contexts should be applied carefully to electronic social media.
10. Ensure that all content complies with copyright, fair use, and any other pertinent laws.

VIII. Texting

Just as with email and social media, texting is an accepted method of communication. However, this communication tool must be used with the same care and carries the same potential for quick, immediate communication while also having the potential for causing harm to both the sender and the receiver. The following guidelines (this may not be an exhaustive list) must be followed:

- A. Never use language that is offensive, including, but not limited to, abusive, profane, sexist, racist, or homophobic; NEVER use texting as a bully-pulpit.
- B. Texting for 'sexting' is expressly forbidden. Such behavior may result in the volunteer being asked to leave his/her position as a volunteer and may prevent him/her from being a volunteer in the future.
- C. The use of texting to threaten the job/position of ANY staff or volunteer is expressly forbidden. Such behavior may result in the volunteer being asked to leave his/her position as a volunteer and may prevent him/her from being a volunteer in the future.
- D. Be aware that once something is shared via texting, control of transmission to other persons and groups is out of the hands of the original person texting.
- E. The use of profane, foul, sexist, homophobic, crude, curse or other inappropriate language in person or in texting or ANY methods of communication is expressly prohibited. The use of such by any volunteer that is brought to the attention of any member of session and/or staff member shall be immediately investigated and may result in the removal of the individual from his/her position as a volunteer at HBPC and may prevent him/her from consideration for future volunteer opportunities at HBPC.

IX. Event Site Safety

- A. It is the goal of HBPC for all staff, children, youth, and volunteers ensure they take appropriate steps to ensure a safe event site. To that end, the following actions are required:
 1. Electrical extension cords, if / when used, shall be placed in such a way to avoid the potential for anyone to trip on the cord.
 2. Boxes, books, etc., when placed on top of the book cases shall be placed in a manner to prevent anyone from pulling the item off and causing injury
 3. Standing on chairs, tables and/or other furniture is expressly prohibited. Should there be a need to hang decorations or other items from the wall and/or ceiling; the church sexton will provide a ladder and assist with hanging the items.
 4. Drawers of cabinets shall be opened in such a manner to prevent the cabinet from tipping over and shall not be left open to become a tripping hazard.
- B. Should an accident occur, an accident report shall be completed by the person involved, if able. If the person involved is unable to complete the accident report; an adult (volunteer and/or

staff) will do so and have the report signed by the in-charge staff member (Director of Faith Formation or Pastor, for example)

1. If an accident occurs, the volunteer should assess the situation and manage it appropriately.
2. If the accident requires immediate medical attention:
 - a. Send someone to call 911
 - b. Notify Staff person in charge
 - c. Staff person will notify parents, if needed
 - c. Document ALL aspects of the situation carefully including 'how/what occurred, any injury, etc. (bruise, scratch, bump, any and all details)
3. If a youth/child becomes ill, the volunteer shall:
 - a. Notify the Staff member in charge
 - b. Staff member will notify parents, if needed
 - c. Volunteer and Staff member will take steps to isolate the child, if deemed appropriate
4. Medications
 - a. Volunteer and/or Staff will not give medication without written authorization from parent.

X. Guidelines Specific to Children (birth – 8th grade) Including Nursery & Preschool

- A.** Diapering, when required, will be performed only by assigned nursery workers, child's parents or legal guardian in plain sight of other nursery workers and only on a changing table.
- B.** Toilet Training, when required, will be managed only by assigned nursery workers child's parents or legal guardian.
 1. When a nursery worker takes a child into the restroom, the door will be left partially open
 2. The child will never be left unattended in the restroom
 3. Accidents, if/when they happen, should be remedied as quickly as possible; reassure the child and change the clothing.
- C.** School age children may be accompanied to the restroom, for supervision/assistance, when needed. If the child prefers to not have adult accompany him/her and if the child does not return in a 'reasonable' time, the volunteer may go to the restroom to see if the child needs assistance.

XI. Guidelines Specific to Youth (6th – 12th grades)

D. Personal Contact

1. HBPC is committed to protecting children and students in its care. To this end, we have implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and students. The following guidelines are to be followed:
2. Appropriate Touching, such as Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of age-appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting and should ONLY occur in observable places or when in the presence of other children, students or ministry staff members and volunteers.
3. Inappropriate touching (out of sight of others, for example) or to meet the needs for physical contact of a staff member or volunteer is expressly forbidden, .

E. Trips

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Parent/guardian approval must be secured prior to trips or any situation when HBPC Staff or volunteers are responsible for youth transportation.
2. When using the HBPC Bus, all HBPC Property Bus Policy guidelines must be followed.

3. Cell phone may not be used by the driver while driving Church vans, or any vehicles (including personal vehicles driven by parents) carrying HBPC youth/volunteers/children except in emergency situations.
4. Staff and volunteers will abide by all applicable state vehicle safety regulations (including regulations regarding cell phone use), etc.
 - a. Florida department of transportation has a 16-hour on-duty limit:
 - A driver may not drive after having been on duty for 16 hours, in any one 24-hour period. On-duty includes any time the driver is required to be available for duties other than driving . . . for example, loading or unloading the bus. Off-duty time is not included in the 16-hour period.
 - b. For HBPC trips, the following guidelines related to the driver apply:
 - The driver must have a 30-minute break after driving 3 hours
 - Once the driver has had a break, and driven another 3 hours, a second driver should assume driving duties. Example: For a 7-hour trip; 2 drivers would be needed.

F. Events / Retreats

When events or retreats are held offsite, staff / volunteers are responsible for ensuring students are aware of guidelines set forth by the location holding the event and ensuring those guidelines are followed. (For example, if the event is at a camp, students will be told the rules and boundaries for where they are able to be at the camp and staff and volunteers will monitor those areas appropriately).

Certain Student Ministries activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students, staff members and volunteers (i.e. mission trips, ski trips, camping trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. Staff and volunteers share 'on duty' hours; that is, no staff member is 'on duty' 24 x 7. Rather, the staff member may be on duty 8 hours with the volunteer(s) covering the balance of the day. The staff member may, however, be contacted in the case of an emergency. The staff and volunteers will determine, and announce to the youth, which volunteer is on-duty during the time the staff is unavailable.
2. The 2-adult rule must be followed; a single child or student will not be alone with a staff member or volunteer in an unobservable area.
3. All adult leaders must have previously completed the Church's screening and training process.
4. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by children or student leaders of the same gender.
5. Staff members and volunteers will ensure that students remain in designated sleeping places.
6. Whenever possible, at least one staff member or volunteer will sleep in the same room as children or students, or in an adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open. At no point will any leader share a bed with a child or student (except in case of familial/guardian relationship with pastoral approval)
7. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds or air mattresses, each staff member, volunteer, and child or student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

NOTE: EACH VOLUNTEER MUST ALSO MUST BE PROVIDED A COPY OF THE HODGES BOULEVARD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HUMAN RESOURCES SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

