



MINISTRYSAFE

Central Texas Conference
Sponsored Events
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES
MANUAL

Dear Children's CTC Event Leader/Volunteer,

In the Central Texas Conference (CTC), we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for our event leaders/volunteers during Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events. These policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of the Central Texas Conference. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy handbook, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page to your Event Leader.

Sincerely,

Amber Massingill
CTC Assoc. Director of Faith Formation
Central Texas Conference
3200 E. Rosedale St.
Fort Worth, TX 76105
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Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events Policies & Procedures for Children’s Ministries

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Overview of the Safety System for Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

Because we love children* and desire to protect them, the Central Texas Conference requires all event leaders/volunteers working with children or youth to have completed all steps of the MinistrySafe training through their local church.

The event supervisor will send to each event leader's/volunteer's church a MinistrySafe Compliance Form to be filled out by the church's MinistrySafe System Safety Administrator and signed by the pastor.

**Children pertain to those in age from Infant to 5th /6th grade or approx. 12 years of age.*

Children's Safety Policy for Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

ABUSE TOLERANCE

The Central Texas Conference has **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of event leaders/volunteers participating in CTC Sponsored Events to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event that event leaders/volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the immediate supervisor of the event.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

The Central Texas Conference is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to our CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor of event or a member of our CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible an event leader or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Event leaders and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the event supervisor or a member of our CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. (*See page #16*)

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Our event supervisor who supervises other event leaders or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all our policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from participating in CTC Sponsored Events. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee.

(See page #16)

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse at Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for all children, our event leaders/volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor of the sponsored event or the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. *(See Page #16)*

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the Central Texas Conference to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Central Texas Conference sponsored events. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as an event leader/volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, youth or vulnerable populations at a Central Texas Conference sponsored event. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from our Central Texas Conference.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations at our CTC Sponsored Events.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Event leaders and volunteers of Central Texas Conference sponsored events are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the immediate supervisor of the event, or a member of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. *(See Page #16)*

Texas law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency pursuant to Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code. If the event leader/volunteer prefers, the event leader or volunteer may request reporting assistance from an immediate supervisor of the event, or CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee member; and together with this supervisor, committee member or volunteer will make a report to the appropriate authorities. If the event leader or volunteer makes a report regarding a suspicion of abuse or neglect without assistance, the event leader or volunteer will immediately notify an immediate event supervisor, or CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee member. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any event leader or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate Texas authorities.

If appropriate, the Event Supervisor or member of CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee will inform the following:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400

Child Protective Services at 817-321-8680 or check your local listing in your community

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

Our CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of the Central Texas Conference when a report of abuse occurs.

Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events Children's Ministries Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of event leaders/volunteers at CTC sponsored events will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits at sponsored events to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe event leaders/volunteers interactions with children.

MinistrySafe Oversight Committee Central Texas Conference

MINISTRYSAFE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, our Central Texas Conference will appoint and maintain a CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. This committee will be appointed after approval of the CTC policy at Annual Conference. This committee will meet once each quarter.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee is to enable our Central Texas Conference sponsored children's events to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Central Texas Conference MinistrySafe Oversight Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. CTC Assoc. Director of Faith Formation
2. CTC Coordinator of Youth Ministry
3. Two Children's Ministry Directors from CTC
4. Two Youth Ministry Directors from CTC
5. Two Clergy Representatives from CTC
6. Conference Trustee

(See page #16)

MEETINGS

Meeting will be chaired by CTC Assoc. Director of Faith Formation or his/her designee. Meeting of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee will be held on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. This Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Central Texas Conference MinistrySafe Oversight Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing policies and procedures related to youth and children's safety and risk management issues to all Central Texas Conference sponsored events.
2. Monitoring all CTC Youth and Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to our CTC ministry leadership regarding safety and policy issues.
4. Responding to allegations of abuse or misconduct in CTC sponsored events.

Building Safety at Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

The Event Director for CTC children sponsored events will be responsible for ensuring that the Children's Building/Area is monitored during the event. This will include unobserved monitoring of event leaders/volunteers and children in children's classrooms/area.

No child will ever be left unattended in the ministry area or on the children's playground during Children's Events sponsored by Central Texas Conference. Event Leaders, staff members or volunteers, are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event an event leader finds him/herself alone with children after departure of other adults, that event leader will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other event leaders or volunteers are present.)

After the event, event leaders must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the children's playground, event leaders are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

The Central Texas Conference is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events. In the Central Texas Conference, a minimum of two unrelated adults are required at all times using the following ratios:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Unrelated Workers</u>	<u>Children</u>
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20

The Central Texas Conference recommends any additional helpers be at least 5 years older than the oldest child participant. If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his/her responsibility to immediately notify the event supervisor. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with this policy.

The above ratios are MinistrySafe minimum recommendations.

Where supervision is concerned, more is generally better.

Discipline Policy of Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

It is the policy that event leaders/volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. (“Jamie, you didn’t stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.”) In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a “spot” to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child’s life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. (“Jamie, you’re doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.”)
- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Event Director.

Therefore event leaders and local church sponsors must have contact information for each child at all times.

Bathroom Supervision and Assistance Guideline

For Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all event leaders/volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Best practices of childcare suggest that only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Best practices of childcare suggests that only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

School age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Event leaders/volunteers of the event should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If an event leader/volunteer of the event must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom

door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another event leader/volunteer.

Special Needs

Parents will offer instruction to event leaders/volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

INTOXICANTS

Event leaders/volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while leading any CTC Sponsored Events, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

MEDICATION

Medication may be given to a child by an Event Leader with a doctor's prescription. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment/medication and insect bite cream, after a parent information sheet is signed by a parent or guardian.

NUDITY

Event leaders/volunteers in our Children's CTC Sponsored Events should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the Event Director will submit a plan for approval to his/her supervisor concerning arrangements for individual and private spaces for showering and changing clothes for all participants.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Event leaders/volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in our Children's CTC Sponsored Events. Another adult who has completed the application and screening process should always be present.

TRANSPORTATION

Event Leaders/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. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Best practices of ministry

recommend two adults in every car. **Never will there be a child alone with an adult in a vehicle.**

2. Event leaders/volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving church vans, or vehicles owned or rented, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive the church owned or rented vehicles on CTC sponsored events.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of our Event leaders/volunteers during a CTC Sponsored Event will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in a CTC Sponsored Event. Therefore, event leaders must have contact information for each child at all times.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved with a CTC sponsored event. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs will be required to complete our MinistrySafe volunteer application and screening process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Central Texas Conference is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, our conference has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's CTC Sponsored Events while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all CTC Sponsored Event Leaders/Volunteers:

1. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between event leaders/volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in a CTC Sponsored Event setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate event supervisor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of an Event Leader/Volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's events leaders. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of event leaders/volunteers in CTC Sponsored Children's Ministry Events must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children CTC Sponsored Event Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by an event leader/volunteer must be reported immediately to the event supervisor or a member of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Event Leaders/Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child at any CTC Sponsored Event. However, it is expected that from time to time, Central Texas Conference may hold a Sponsored Event where discussions and lessons may address age appropriate issues related to human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the children the United Methodist Church's view on these topics. A parent/guardian signature will be required for each child.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Event leaders/volunteers of any CTC Sponsored Events are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) at an event or in the presence of children.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain CTC Sponsored Children Ministry Events may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for children and event leaders/volunteers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, all event leaders/volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult nonrelated rule must be followed. The 2 adult leaders present must have previously completed the CTC MinistrySafe screening process.
2. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee prior to the event, and have signed approval by parents. It is recommended that this information be included in the permission slip for the event and signed by the parent.

3. As long as any children are awake, one of the event leaders/volunteers must also be awake and monitoring children to ensure safe behavior.
4. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. No R-rated movies are permitted.
5. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
6. 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 event leaders/volunteers of the same gender.
7. Event leaders and volunteers will monitor sleeping children by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping children remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, event leaders/volunteers should never physically touch a child.
8. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each event leader/volunteer and child will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances a “one-person-to-one bag or blanket” rule will be observed.

TOBACCO USE

Central Texas Conference requires event leaders/volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products during any CTC Sponsored Event. Our CTC Sponsored Events are tobacco-free.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between event leaders/volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Our event leaders/volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, event leaders/volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, event leaders/volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to our CTC Sponsored Event leaders or volunteers, Central Texas Conference incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Event leaders/volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Event leaders/volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of the event.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that event leaders/volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their Event Director before releasing the child.

SUPERVISION

Event leaders/volunteers of CTC Sponsored Events are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care.

Central Texas Conference MinistrySafe Oversight Committee

Indicated below are the names of person who hold these key areas of leadership (whether staff or volunteer) and their contact information. This list will be updated on an annual basis or when changes occur and provided to all active event leaders/volunteers. It will be maintained with the official policy document.

Job Title	Name	Phone #	Email
CTC Assoc. Director of Faith Formation	Rev. Amber Massingill	817-877-5222	ambermassingill@ctcumc.org
CTC Coord. of Youth Ministry	Claire Condrey	817-877-5222	clairecondrey@ctcumc.org
Children's Ministries Representative	Melissa Howell	817-481-2559	livinginrace777@yahoo.com
Children's Ministries Representative	Rev. Tina Schramme, FUMC Mansfield	817-477-2287	tinas@fmcm.org
Youth Ministries Representative	Patrick Turkett, China Spring UMC	972-617-8840	patrick.turkett@gmail.com
Youth Ministries Representative	Jason Westbrook, FUMC Midlothian	972-775-3993	jasonw@fumcmidlo.org
Clergy Representative	Rev. Janette Miller, Harker Heights UMC	254-413-2908	hhumc.pastor@gmail.com
Clergy Representative	Rev. Eric Douglas, FUMC Mineral Wells	940-325-4707	eric@fumcmineralwells.org
Conference Trustee	TBD		

Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events
Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

As the group leader, I have received and read a copy the Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at a Central Texas Conference Sponsored Event.

I understand the Policies and Procedures may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Central Texas Conference.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and Central Texas Conference. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed as well as Policy and Procedure guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures manual.

Name of CTC Sponsored Event

Event Leader/Volunteer's name (please print)

Event Leader/Volunteer's signature

Date

[This page to remain attached to the Central Texas Conference
Sponsored Events Children's Ministries Safety Policies.]

Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events
Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

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I acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures handbook.

Name of CTC Sponsored Event

Event Leader/Volunteer's name (please print)

Event Leader/Volunteer's signature

Date

(This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the CTC Sponsored Event Supervisor)