



MINISTRYSAFE

Central Texas Conference

Central Texas Conference
Sponsored Events
YOUTH MINISTRIES

POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES
MANUAL

Dear Youth CTC Event Leader*/Group Leader**,

In the Central Texas Conference (CTC), we take our responsibility to care for youth very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which youth 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 youth, protecting youth, 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
Assoc. Director of Faith Formation
Central Texas Conference
3200 E. Rosedale St.
Fort Worth, TX 76105
817.877.5222
ambermassingill@ctcumc.org

*The Event Leader is the individual responsible for coordination/leadership of the CTC Sponsored Event.

**The Group Leader is the individual responsible for coordinating/leading a group who is participating in the event.

Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events Safety Policies & Procedures for Youth Ministries

Contents:

• Overview of Safety System	4
• Youth Safety Policy	4
• Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse.....	5
• Youth Ministry Monitoring Plan.....	6
• MinistrySafe Oversight Committee	7
• Building Safety.....	8
• Worker to Youth Ratio	8
• Discipline	9
• Intoxicants	9
• Medications.....	9
• Nudity.....	9
• One-to-One Interactions with Youth	9
• Transportation.....	10
• Parental Contact.....	10
• Physical Contact.....	10
• Sexually Oriented Conversations	11
• Sexually Oriented Materials	11
• Sleeping Arrangements.....	11
• Tobacco Use.....	12
• Verbal Interactions	12
• CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee List	13

Overview of the Safety System for Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

Because we love youth and desire to protect them, the Central Texas Conference requires all event leaders/group 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.

Youth 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 every event leader/group leader/volunteer participating in CTC Sponsored Events to act in the best interest of all youth in every program.

In the event that event leaders/group 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 youth 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' youth for abuse, it is possible an event leader, group leader or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a youth for sexual abuse. Event leaders, group leaders and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the event leader or a member of our CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

The event leader who supervises other group 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 participation in CTC Sponsored Events. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee.
(See page #13)

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

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for youth, our event leaders/group 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 event leader of the sponsored event or the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. *(See Page #13)*

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 youth will be prohibited 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/group leader/volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children or youth 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 or youth at our CTC Sponsored Events.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Event leaders, group 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 event leader of the event, or a member of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. *(See page #13)*

Texas law requires that any person having cause to believe a youth'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/group leader/volunteer prefers, the group leader/volunteer may request reporting assistance from the event leader of the event, or CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee; and together with this event leader, committee member, group leader or volunteer will make a report to the appropriate authorities. If the event leader, group leader or volunteer makes a report regarding a suspicion of abuse or neglect without assistance, the event leader, group leader or volunteer will immediately notify an immediate event supervisor, or CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any event leader, group leader or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate Texas authorities.

If appropriate, the Event Supervisor or member of the 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 for your local listing in your community

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

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

**Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events
Student Ministries Monitoring Plan**

Monitoring of event leaders/group 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/group leaders/volunteers interactions with youth.

MinistrySafe Oversight Committee Central Texas Conference

MINISTRYSAFE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for youth, our Central Texas Conference will appoint and maintain a CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee. 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 youth 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 #13)

MEETINGS

Meetings 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 CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing policies and procedures related to youth and children safety and risk management issues to all Central Texas Conference sponsored events.
2. Monitoring all CTC Youth and Children Ministry 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 the CTC sponsored events.

Building Safety

Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events

The Event Leader for CTC youth sponsored events will be responsible for ensuring that the Youth Ministry Building/Area is monitored during the event. This will include unobserved monitoring of event leaders/group leaders/volunteers and youth in youth classrooms/area.

Every attempt should be made so that no youth will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during youth ministry events sponsored by Central Texas Conference. Event leaders, group leaders or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual youth in any room or building. In the event an event leader, group leader or volunteer finds him/herself alone with a single youth, that event leader/group leader/volunteer will take the youth to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a youth desires additional conversation or counsel with an event leader, group leader or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other event leaders/group leaders/volunteers are present.)

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

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

Worker to Youth Ratio

The Central Texas Conference is committed to providing adequate supervision at all CTC sponsored youth ministry events. Central Texas Conference recommends that the primary youth event leaders be at least 5 years older than the oldest youth, and any main helpers be 1 year post high school or equivalent and 3 years age difference from oldest youth participant. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for CTC Youth Ministry sponsored events:

For groups up to and including 30 youth, there will be a minimum of 2 unrelated event leaders, group leaders or volunteers supervising. For groups larger than 30 youth, there will be a minimum of 3 unrelated event leaders, group leaders or volunteers supervising. For every additional 15 youth, 1 event leader, group leader or volunteer will be required.

If a worker is “out of ratio” it is his/her responsibility to immediately notify the event leader. The event leader will make diligent efforts to immediately bring event leaders/group leaders/volunteer to youth 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, group leaders and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or youth. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by youth. If a youth is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from event leaders/group leaders/volunteers, that youth will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the youth's parent will be contacted to pick up the youth. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, event leader/group leader/volunteer will verbally redirect youth involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the event supervisor.

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

INTOXICANTS

Event leaders/group 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 youth, or while working with or supervising youth.

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/group leaders/volunteers in our Youth CTC Sponsored Events should never be nude in the presence of youth 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 YOUTH

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

TRANSPORTATION

Event leaders/group leaders/volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of youth:

1. Youth 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 youth alone with an adult in a vehicle.**
2. Event leaders, group leaders and volunteers should avoid physical contact with youth 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 our owned or rented vehicles on CTC sponsored events.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a youth in the care of our event leaders/group leaders/volunteers during a CTC Sponsored Event will be contacted if their youth 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 youth at all times.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

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

1. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between event leaders/group leaders/volunteers and youth are important for youth'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 event leader.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the youth, 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 youth or youth event leaders. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such 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/group leaders/volunteers in CTC Sponsored Youth Ministry Events must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant youth. A youth's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Youth CTC Sponsored Event Leaders/Group Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for protecting youth under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by event leaders/volunteers must be reported immediately to the event supervisor or member of the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Event leaders/group leaders/volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with youth and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities 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 purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the youth the United Methodist Church's view on these topics. A parent/guardian signature will be required for each youth.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

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

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain CTC Sponsored Youth Ministry Events may require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for youth and event leaders/volunteers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, retreats, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, event leaders, group leaders and 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 by the event leader in writing to and approved by the CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee prior to the event. Information about sleeping arrangements will be included in registration material and include permission slip to be signed for approval by parent/guardian. 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 youth event leaders of the same gender.

3. As long as any youth are awake, one of the event leaders/group leaders/volunteers must also be awake and monitoring youth to ensure safe behavior.
4. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
5. Event leaders/group leaders/volunteers will monitor sleeping youth by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping youth remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, event leaders/group leaders/volunteers should never physically touch a youth.
6. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each event leader/group leader/volunteer, and youth will use single air mattresses, 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/group 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/group leaders/volunteers and youth should be positive and uplifting. Our event leaders/group leaders/volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their youth.

To this end, event leaders, group leaders and volunteers should not talk to youth 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, group leaders and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of youth.

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	livinggrace777@yahoo.com
Children's Ministries Representative	Rev. Tina Schramme, FUMC Mansfield	817-477-2287	tinas@fmc.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 Acknowledgment and Agreement

As the group leader, I have received and read a copy of the Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events Youth Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the matters set forth within this handbook. I agree to follow and 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 guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time 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 I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours that I have worked.

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

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures handbook.

Name of CTC Sponsored Event

Event Leader/Group Leader/Volunteer's name (please print)

Event Leader/Group Leader/Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

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

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

As the group leader, I have received and read a copy of the Central Texas Conference Sponsored Events Youth Ministries Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the matters set forth within this handbook. I agree to follow and 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 guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time 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 I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours that I have worked.

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

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the policies and procedures handbook.

Name of CTC Sponsored Event

Event Leader/Group Leader/Volunteer's name (please print)

Event Leader/Group Leader/Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

(This page must be signed, detached and delivered to the CTC Sponsored
Event Supervisor prior to the group's participation)