



# **SOUTHBROOK** CHURCH

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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## Section One | INTRODUCTION

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### STAFF AND ELDER CONTACTS

|                    |                     |  |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| KIDS DIRECTOR      | Amber Freeman       | afreeman@southbrookchurch.com<br>Extension 418   |
| KIDS ASSISTANT     | Nicole McGuff       | nmcguff@southbrookchurch.com<br>Extension 504    |
| STUDENT PASTOR     | Dan McChesney       | dmcchesney@southbrookchurch.com<br>Extension 407 |
| STUDENT ASSISTANT  | Samantha Meyer      | smeyer@southbrookchurch.com<br>Extension 502     |
| COMPLIANCE OFFICER | Christopher Secrest | compliance@southbrookchurch.com                  |

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### DEFINITIONS

- **CHILD:** minors from birth-6th grade
- **MINOR:** any person under the age of 18 years old
- **STAFF MEMBER:** any employee of Southbrook Church
- **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM:** Southbrook's highest level of staff leadership, comprising the lead pastor, executive pastor and ministry development director
- **STUDENT:** minors from 6th-12th grade (18-year-old students currently enrolled and attending high school are permitted to participate in student ministry).
- **VOLUNTEER:** any unpaid person serving in a ministry of Southbrook Church.
- **WORKER:** any paid person providing childcare for a Southbrook Church event.

### PURPOSE

Southbrook Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the minors who participate in our regular programming and other activities/events.

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are intended to keep minors safe and protect them from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior, while also protecting our staff, workers, and volunteers from false accusations.

Southbrook Church takes its obligation to protect minors seriously and requires all staff members, workers and volunteers to follow these policies and procedures.

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## **Section Two | PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

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### **PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order to provide the utmost care and safety to minors, we ask parents/guardians to partner with us. We ask that all parents/guardians who use our services read and familiarize themselves with this Child Protection Policy to understand our policies and procedures to protect minors. In addition:

- Parents/guardians utilizing Kids Ministry during service hours must remain on church property.
- Parents/guardians must not leave minors alone in an unsupervised area while on church property or during a church-sponsored off-site activity/event.
- Parents/guardians must comply with check-in and checkout procedures for Kids/Student Ministry.
- Parents/guardians must ensure that Southbrook Church is made aware of any changes in their marital or living arrangement status, protection orders, or court ordered documents regarding child custody.
- Parents/guardians must not bring sick minors to Kids/Student Ministry or church-sponsored offsite activities/events.
- Parents/guardians must ensure that required medication is given to minors before they are checked in to Kids/Student Ministry or church-sponsored off-site activities/events.
- We ask that parents/guardians take their children to the restroom prior to dropping them off in their respective Kids Ministry classrooms.
- Parents/guardians must provide or arrange transportation to and from Kids/Student Ministry, and to church-sponsored off-site activities/events where the church has elected not to provide transportation.
- Parents/guardians must immediately report to a staff member any situation they see or hear that could compromise a minor's safety.
- Except for babies and toddlers who are permitted to have a bottle of milk, water or juice, parents/guardians must not allow their child to bring food into Kids Ministry due to various food allergies.
- Parents/guardians must notify a staff member of any medical conditions, allergies or medications that may be needed during Kids Ministry/Student Ministry and fill out the Healthcare Plan form completely in order for this information to be passed on to the appropriate staff members/workers/volunteers.
- Any prescription medications for children should be dropped off by the parent and given to the group leader for proper storage. Parents/guardians must retrieve the medication upon pick-up/ All prescription medications must be in the original packaging with the child's name and dosage. Refer to the Medication Policy section for additional policy and procedure information.
- We ask that parents/guardians not allow children to bring toys to Kids Ministry to avoid lost toys and distractions.

- Parents/guardians must label a child's belongings with their name prior to drop-off, including diaper bags, bottles, and sippy cups to ensure the proper child has and uses their own items.
- Should a parent/guardian want to observe a class/group, they must obtain permission from a staff member and wear a visitor badge at all times.
- In the event of a fire or severe weather, we will not release any minors in our care until the "all clear" has been given. Parents/guardians must not attempt pick up during this critical time so that we can properly carry out our procedures to keep minors safe.

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### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Southbrook Church does not require written consent for minors to participate in regularly scheduled Kids and Student ministry programming, including planned activities/events at leaders' homes and other locations for which the church is not responsible for transportation.

From time to time, minors may have the opportunity to participate in church-sponsored activities and events that are beyond the scope of regularly scheduled Kids and Student ministry programming. Such activities/events may be on- or off-campus and may take place overnight.

In these cases, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the nature of the activity/event and knowledgeable sign a **Minor Participation Authorization and Consent to Emergency Medical Treatment Form** and any additional documents that may be deemed necessary in order for their minor to participate.

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### CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

#### Kids Ministry

In order to participate, children must be checked-in at one of the computer kiosks where a security tag will be provided. Each child participating in Kids Ministry must have their own name tag. If a parent has difficulty checking their child in or obtaining a name tag, they should consult a staff member or volunteer.

The check-in system, "Realm", will assign each child to the correct class based on their birth date.

Children with a medical condition or allergy should be checked using the designated computer which will print a red name tag to identify this. Refer to the Medication Policy section for additional policy and procedure information.

Parents/guardians must present the name tag to the designated staff member or volunteer provider to check their child into their class/group. The nametag should then be placed on the child so that it is clearly visible and not on an outer garment that may be removed. The parent must retain the separate security tag at all times and must present it when checking their child out.

Should a parent be paged during a service, the code found on the security tag will appear on the screen in the worship center. It is the parent's responsibility to respond to

a page and report to the Kids Ministry' area immediately.

First-time guests will be checked-in by volunteers at one of the designated check-in stations and receive light blue name tags and security tags.

### **Student Ministry**

Students will be checked-in using Realm by a staff member or volunteer upon arrival.

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## **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

### **Kids Ministry**

Drop-off will begin once classes/groups are staffed with at least 2 adults. No minor will be dropped off without 2 adults present.

All doors to the Kids building will be locked 10 minutes after each service has begun, after which a staff member or volunteer will open the office door for entry.

Children must be dropped off in the class they have been assigned to. In order for children to be picked up, the person picking up must present their security tag to the staff member or volunteer conducting the checkout process, who will confirm that the codes on the security tag and name tag match. Children will not be released to minors.

In the event of a lost security tag, a staff member or the volunteer Service Leader must be involved to address the situation, and parents/guardians will be required to show picture identification.

If parents/guardians are late for pick up, 2 adults must always remain present. A staff member or the volunteer Service Leader should be notified of the late pick-up so they can decide whether to combine the child with others who are left behind and contact the parents/guardians.

### **Student Ministry**

Students can be dropped off no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of the event, unless they are scheduled to serve on that specific night. Volunteers are in a pre-service meeting until 15 minutes prior to the start of the event; therefore, adult supervision will not be available.

Upon leaving, students should be picked up or drive themselves no later than 15 minutes after the event is over. Two staff members or volunteers will remain present until all students have left church property or the location of an off-site activity/event.

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## **CUSTODY**

Parents/guardians must ensure that a staff member is made aware of any changes in their marital or living arrangement status, protection orders, or court ordered documents regarding child custody. The staff member will then document, keep on file, and notify other staff members or volunteers as needed based on the information received. If there is a protection order, the staff member will also notify the volunteer Security Team. Any documentation to be shared with staff members, workers or volunteers will be stored in the Service Leader binder.



## **SICK CHILDREN**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Southbrook Church. Parents/guardians are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. We cannot accept children who exhibit any of the following within the 48-hour period prior to service:

- Fever, diarrhea, nausea, scarlet fever, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- Discoloration of discharge of the nose and eyes;
- Croup, thrush, pink eye, chicken pox, unexplained rash;
- Lice (A staff member will need to check the child for head lice before returning into the classroom. If a nit or lice is still present, the child will not be able to enter the classroom)
- Measles, strep throat, poison ivy;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed to be ill will be separated from other children, and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up immediately.

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## **MEDICATIONS**

It is the policy of Southbrook Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the minors under our care. We do not allow minors to come with medication unless it is for a potential emergency and/or life-threatening condition. Medications such as an EpiPen or AUVI-Q are acceptable. Wherever possible, medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents/guardians are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents/guardians of children in Southbrook Kids with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) and for Southbrook Students who self-carry for potential life-threatening conditions. Parents/guardians of such minors should address their situation with a staff member to develop a plan of action.

In the event that a prescription medication exception is granted for a minor participating in Kids Ministry, please follow the following protocol:

- Parents/guardians should ensure that the child is wearing a red name tag to indicate an allergy. The tag should say “EpiPen or AUVI-Q” if the child has been given an EpiPen/ AUVI-Q, and we have the proper paperwork to administer the EpiPen/AUVI-Q.
- It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to give the Kids Ministry staff member/volunteer the medication. Children are not allowed to possess medication.
- It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the medication is returned by the Kids Ministry staff member or volunteer when the child is picked up.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Southbrook Church does not allow staff members/volunteers/workers to communicate with minors privately unless their parent/guardian has given consent (see “Relational Ministry” below). We encourage parents/guardians to talk to their children and educate them about the proper use of social media and its potential dangers.

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## **Section Three | SCREENING AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS/WORKERS**

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### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Persons who have been convicted of or pled guilty to physical and/or sexual harassment, abuse, or neglect of minors, or against whom such charges are pending, will not be allowed to work/volunteer with minors.
  - Persons who have been convicted of or pled guilty to other serious crimes against persons, or against whom such charges are pending, will not be allowed to work/volunteer with minors.
  - Failure to complete information on the application or providing false or withholding information may result in the person’s termination.
  - Southbrook Church, and any person authorized to act on its behalf, reserves the right to restrict any worker/volunteer from working with any department or group within the church at its discretion.
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### **SCREENING OF VOLUNTEERS/WORKERS**

All persons who desire to volunteer with the minors participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

#### **a) Six Month Rule**

No potential volunteer/worker will be considered for any position involving supervision of minors until they have attended Southbrook Church for a minimum of six (6) months.

#### **b) Child Protection Policy Handbook**

All persons seeking to work with minors must review the Child Protection Policy Handbook and sign the appropriate acknowledgement.

#### **c) Application**

All persons seeking to work with minors must complete and sign an electronic volunteer application form to be found on the Southbrook Church website. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with minors, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file electronically at the church.

#### **d) Background Check**

- The following are required for all volunteers, prior to serving/working and every 2 years thereafter:
  - \* National Criminal Database search
  - \* National Sex Offender Registry search
  - \* Social Security Number Trace
- Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she/he will be unable to work with minors.
- A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with minors will be determined by the Executive Pastor and appropriate staff member(s) on a case-by-case basis considering all the surrounding circumstances.
- Generally, convictions for an offense involving minors and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with minors. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.
- The following internet searches may also be conducted: sex offender databases, online search engines, and social media sites.
- The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

#### **e) Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with minors, three references will be contacted of whom at least two must respond. Applicants may not use family references. Applicants may use personal references, though institutional references, especially where the applicant has worked with minors in the past, are preferred. Southbrook Church reserves the right to make a determination about whether a reference qualifies as adequate.

Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence electronically on file at the church.

#### **f) Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face and/or phone interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

#### **g) Training**

Once the screening process has been completed, volunteers/workers will then go through the onboarding process of setting up a date to shadow their prospective area of ministry, receive proper training, and then be placed on the schedule. Periodic ongoing training will also be conducted.

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## **CONTINUING DUTY TO SELF-REPORT**

Once approved by the church to volunteer/work with minors, the staff member/volunteer/worker must notify the respective department leader or administrator if his/her status changes with regards to criminal activity. This includes being accused, even though not convicted.

Depending on the circumstances, the staff member/volunteer/worker may be removed from any leadership/volunteer responsibility until completely cleared by local, state and/or federal authorities.

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## **Section Four | SUPERVISION PROCEDURES**

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Churches can use reasonable care in selecting staff members/volunteers/workers but still be liable for injuries sustained during church activities/programs/events on the basis of negligent supervision. Negligent supervision refers to a failure to exercise reasonable care during church activities. To ensure that we meet the adequate standard of care staff members/volunteers/workers should read and be familiar with the following rules:

### **I.D. SECURITY BADGES**

All staff members/volunteers/workers are required to wear security/identification lanyards when serving. After you enter the building, please immediately obtain your security/identification lanyard and wear it visibly.

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### **CHECK IN AND CHECK OUT PROCEDURES FOR KIDS MINISTRY**

Staff members/volunteers/workers must be alert and pay attention to check-in and checkout procedures. Observe the following rules:

- Ensure that each child has a nametag visibly and clearly affixed to their person before taking them into your care.
- Upon drop-off, volunteers must sign children in on the rosters provided.
- Ensure that the child is in the correct group/class upon drop-off. If the child is not in the proper group/class according to his/her name tag, notify the parent of this and have the parent bring the child to the proper group/class.

Due to the nature of child custody laws, staff members/volunteers/workers must act diligently in making sure the correct people are picking up minors. Please be aware that only parents/guardians with custody of their minor may pick up the minor.

If there is a change in the parent's/guardian's marital or living arrangement status, staff members/volunteers/workers will be notified and any protection orders or other custody-related documents the parent has provided will be stored in the Service Leader binder for reference.

If there are any questions regarding this procedure, please contact a staff member for clarification.

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## **VISITORS**

A parent/guardian or other visitor may only observe a class/group if authorization is given by a staff member. They must wear a visitor badge at all times and must never be left alone with children. If a parent/guardian or other visitor wishes to observe on more than an occasional basis or participate in a class/group, they will be required to complete the screening procedure.

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## **UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS IN KIDS AND STUDENT MINISTRY AREAS**

Only parents/guardians, children/students, staff members and scheduled volunteers/workers are allowed Kids and Student Ministry areas. All other adults (including any other church members) should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of these areas. This does not apply in situations where these areas are legitimately being used for other ministry purposes (e.g. worship team green room, volunteer refreshment areas). If there are any questions or concerns associated with an unauthorized person in the area, a staff member or volunteer Security Team member should be notified immediately to question the stranger. Parents/guardians, volunteers and workers are encouraged to report any suspicious persons or persons not wearing an identification badge to a staff member immediately.

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## **SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

Minors will inevitably share private and sensitive information with you at times. Please know that your first responsibility is to their well-being and not to their trust. Any information that can fall under the category of violation of law, potential physical danger to themselves or others, or being harmed themselves, should be shared with a staff member immediately. Whenever in doubt, share with a staff member, regardless. See also the “Reporting Procedures” section below.

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## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All staff members/volunteers/workers are expected to be professional and maintain the highest level of confidentiality at all times, whether dealing with actual records, documents, conversations, or situations, and – if requested to sign one – abide by the obligations of confidentiality agreements. Violation of this policy may result in a release of duties.

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## **PARENT CALL**

In the event where a parent call needs to occur, a staff member or the volunteer Service Leader should be notified. They will then communicate it to the main building.

The person who is delivering the parent call must provide the following information:

- Child's Name
- Child's security number
- Reason for the parent call
- Location of child

The child's security tag number will appear on the large screen in the worship center.

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## **ADULT TO MINOR RATIO RULES**

Wherever possible, a minimum of 2 adults should be present with a minor during Kids and Student Ministry programming and church-sponsored off-site activities/events, to reduce the risk of both abuse and false accusations.

Except as provided for under the "Relational Ministry" section below, no adult should ever be left alone with a minor. Always be sure to be in a group of 3 or more (i.e. a minimum of 2 or more adults with 1 minor, or 2 or more minors with 1 adult).

### **Kids Ministry**

For children birth-3rd graders, there should be 2 adults per group if using the small group classrooms and in order for Kids Ministry to open up that classroom to accept children. If it is necessary for one of the adults to leave the group, a staff member or the volunteer Service Leader must be notified so they can ensure there will be 2 adults in these classrooms at all times.

For 4th- 6th graders, it is acceptable for there to be only 1 adult volunteer present during the small group session; however, in these instances, the door to the room must remain open, and there must be no fewer than 3 people in the group.

The following overall adult to minor ratios will be maintained:

- 0-24 months - 2:8
- Two-year-olds - 2:10
- Three-year-olds - 2:16
- Four- and five-year-olds - 2:16
- Kindergarten-3rd grade - 2:16
- 4th-6th grades - 2:24

### **Student Ministry**

For regular Student Ministry programming, an overall adult to minor ratio of 2:30 will be maintained.

It is acceptable for there to be only 1 adult volunteer present during the small group session; however, in these instances, the door to the room must remain open, and there must be no fewer than 3 people in the group.

## **RELATIONAL MINISTRY**

Relational ministry for the purposes of connecting, mentoring and counseling is an important part of discipleship. Therefore, with the following protections in place, staff members/volunteers may interact with minors of the same gender on a 1:1 basis:

### **In Person**

For individual occurrences, the minor's parent/guardian must give prior written permission and be notified of the date, time and location of the meeting.

A volunteer must notify a staff member, and a staff member must notify a second staff member prior to an individual occurrence.

For regular occurrences (e.g. a weekly meeting), the minor's parent/guardian must give prior written permission, be notified of the schedule and location of the planned meetings, and receive prior notification of any changes to the agreed-upon schedule and/or location.

A volunteer must notify a staff member, and a staff member must notify a second staff member prior to the start of a regular occurrence, and regarding any changes to the agreed-upon schedule and/or location.

1:1 meetings with minors may be conducted at the church during office hours.

1:1 meetings with minors conducted at the church must take place in rooms with a window and security camera, and the door must remain unlocked.

1:1 meetings with minors may also be conducted in public places off-campus.

Staff members/volunteers must keep a record of the dates, times, locations and participants of all 1:1 meetings with minors, and must produce those records upon request by a staff member or the minor's parent/guardian.

### **Electronic**

A staff member/volunteer may interact with a minor on a 1:1 basis via text, social media or other electronic means if their parent/guardian gives prior written permission.

A volunteer must notify a staff member, and a staff member must notify a second staff member of the names of any minors they are interacting with electronically on a 1:1 basis.

Staff members/volunteers must ensure that the content of all electronic interactions with minors is above reproach, edifying, and appropriate for the context of a discipleship relationship.

Staff members/volunteers must keep a record of all electronic interactions with minors for at least twelve months and must produce those records upon request by a staff member or the minor's parent/guardian.

### **Absence of Permission**

In the event that a parent/guardian is not involved in the minor's spiritual life and permission for relational ministry cannot be obtained, staff members/volunteers should consult with the Kids Director or Student Pastor to determine whether and under what protections to proceed.

## CONDUCT

We strive to live our lives above reproach and never want to find ourselves in a questionable position. For this reason, we have established the following conduct expectations by which all staff members/volunteers/workers are required to abide by during all church-sponsored activities/events:

1. Never discipline a minor physically.
2. Never speak harshly or yell at a child and always stay in control of your emotions.
3. If discipline of a minor is required you should gently pull them aside to avoid embarrassment, get on eye level with them, and speak in a calm, firm voice explaining why their behavior is a problem. If misbehavior cannot be restrained, you should contact the volunteer Service Leader or a staff member.
4. Always encourage “side hugs” as opposed to full frontal hugs with a minor.
5. Never allow yourself to be alone with a minor (except as provided for under the “Relational Ministry” section above).
6. Never enter a restroom alone with a minor.
7. Only adult females are permitted to change diapers.
8. Never allow school-age children (kindergarten and older) to sit on your lap. Please use your best judgment if you are serving in the younger classrooms and be aware of your hand placement.
9. Never engage in a conversation or use language that would be considered questionable or inappropriate. This includes profanity, gossip, harmful, hateful, and demeaning speech.
10. Do not utilize media that isn’t clearly biblically based without obtaining prior approval from a Kids or Student Ministry staff member.
11. Avoid negativity, gossip, and the spreading of rumors as it only leads to division. Strive to be uplifting, supportive, and encouraging of the ministry of Southbrook Church.
12. As a staff member/volunteer/worker, you must uphold the biblical perspective, as adopted in the church’s “Core Beliefs” and “Core Distinctives” in both your ‘on-line’ and ‘off-line’ relationships. It is your responsibility to raise any concerns with respect to these positions (available for review at [southbrookchurch.com/beliefs](http://southbrookchurch.com/beliefs)) with a Kids or Student Ministry staff member.
13. Never publicly criticize decisions made by Southbrook Church or any of its ministries; instead, please address any concerns with a staff member privately.
14. Always keep your reputation as a Christian in the forefront of your mind. Remember that we represent Jesus at all times and in all of our words and actions.

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## HARASSMENT

No harassment of any kind toward minors or adults will be tolerated by Southbrook Church. Because children are minors, they are not capable of consent. Therefore, what



might be labeled sexual harassment if directed toward an adult by another adult, is sexual assault/abuse when it is directed toward a minor by an adult.

Southbrook Church strongly supports the policy that allows all staff members/volunteers/workers to work in an environment free from unwelcome attention by fellow staff members/volunteers/workers and those participating in our ministries. This policy includes not only sexual harassment, but also harassment related to an individual's race, color, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or physical or mental handicap/disability. If you feel that you are being, or have been harassed, please notify a staff member or the Compliance Officer of the Elder Board immediately.

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## **USE OF TOBACCO AND INTOXICANTS**

Staff members/volunteers/workers are prohibited from the possession, use of, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or any illegal drugs while working with or supervising minors at Southbrook Church.

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## **USE OF MEDICATION BY A MINOR**

Except as provided for below, our policy is to prohibit minors from possessing medication or being dropped off with medication.

If a parent asks you to administer medication to a child, please explain to them that you are not allowed to do this, and that medication is not allowed in a minor's possession while on the premises.

If you observe medication of any kind in the possession of a minor you must remove it from their possession and put it in a safe place until they are picked up, at which point it should be given to the parent/guardian with instructions that medication is not allowed in the possession of minors.

If a minor has a potential medical emergency or prescription which necessitates medication being with them during Kids or Student Ministry programming, their parents/guardians must first request permission from a staff member. The staff member may then grant permission for a staff member or volunteer to accept the medication to administer to the minor if needed. The following protocol should be followed whenever any emergency or prescription medication is accepted on behalf of a child:

- Child should be wearing a red name tag to indicate an allergy. The tag should say "EpiPen or AUVI-Q" if the child has been given an EpiPen/AUVI-Q, and we have the proper paperwork to administer the EpiPen/AUVI-Q.
- It is the parent's responsibility to give the staff member/volunteer the medication.
- If a child's name is not already visible on the medication or package, the parent/guardian must write the child's name on a label and affix it to the medication.
- The staff member/volunteer will place the medication in a safe place.
- In the case of EpiPen/AUVI-Q medication it should be placed in a red drawstring bag

and hung on the wall in the classroom, above the First Aid kit away from children's reach (the red drawstring bag will be located in the classroom plastic tub and returned after every Sunday in this tub). When leaving the room, the staff member/volunteer must carry the red drawstring bag wherever they go to ensure safety while outside of the classroom. Upon returning to the classroom, hang the red drawstring bag back on the wall, above the First Aid kit.

- Upon parent pick-up, return all medication to the parents/guardians. If applicable place the red drawstring bag back in the plastic tub for use the following week.

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## **VISIBILITY & SECURITY CAMERAS**

It is important that all interaction between children and volunteers happens in a location where others can observe what is going on for safety and accountability purposes.

At no time should a child and volunteer disappear behind a closed door with no visibility to outsiders.

Many areas where children and volunteers are present on church property are equipped with video surveillance equipment for the protection of both minors and staff members/volunteers/workers. As a staff member/volunteer/worker you acknowledge that you are being recorded for safety and security purposes.

After every ministry programming event, each room, area and restroom should be checked prior to leaving.

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## **KIDS MINISTRY ROSTERS**

Rosters should be filled out upon arrival every time children are in our care.

Rosters should be taken with the group wherever you go (large group, small group), for use in the event of an emergency.

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## **ILLNESS OUTBREAK**

In a pandemic or epidemic situation, we will first follow public health advice.

For information on current outbreaks or material from previous ones, visit the Centers for Disease Control's [Outbreaks page](#).

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## **HAND WASHING**

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick, spreading germs to others, and avoid cross contamination with possible food allergies. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

Hands should be washed as necessary and at the following times if applicable: upon

arrival and dismissal, after toileting, after assisting children in toileting, after diapering, after the playground, before eating, and before serving food/drinks.

### **How to Wash Your Hands:**

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
  - **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
  - **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
  - **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
  - **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air-dry them.
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### **USE OF PHONES**

It is important that when we have minors in our care, we give them our utmost attention. Therefore, please refrain from using the phone or other technology devices that could be a distraction.

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### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Please place all personal belongings, such as purses, in a safe place out of reach of children as they may contain items that could potentially harm them.

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### **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND PHOTOGRAPHY OR VIDEO**

We love social media when used properly and we want to show parents/guardians and church members what our children/students are up to. It is also our duty to protect minors and staff members/volunteers/workers, and the following guidelines therefore apply:

- Only staff members and designated volunteers who have reviewed and signed the separate Social Media Policy are permitted to post on Southbrook Church’s social media accounts.
- Other staff members/volunteers/workers are not permitted to take or post photos or videos of minors under their care.
- Parents/guardians must grant permission by signing a **Media Release Form** before any picture, video or other type of media featuring their child is posted on the internet or on social media.
- Staff members/volunteers/workers are encouraged to post positive and encouraging content regarding church-sponsored activities/events on their personal social media accounts – provided they don’t include images or other content identifying minors.

- Concerns, injuries, sensitive information or negative content should not be posted on social media.

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## **CLASSROOM DOORS**

Classroom doors should remain open unless the room has a window in the door or a side window. Doors should never be locked while rooms are occupied.

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## **PLAYGROUND**

There should always be 2 adults out on the playground. Children should not go outside to play if the temperature is below 40 degrees. While children are in our care, we need to be sure that they are being supervised at all times. Staff members/volunteers/workers must supervise children by placing themselves strategically around the playground area. Children may escape or get injured if not properly supervised.

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## **ON-SITE CHURCH RESTROOM GUIDELINE**

We strongly urge parents/guardians to take their children to the restroom prior to dropping off.

- Males (birth gender) are to use the male bathroom and females (birth gender) are to use the female bathroom.
- Student volunteers are not permitted to escort children to the restroom.

In the event where a child (up to 3rd grade) needs to use the restroom, it is important to know the following:

- Never be alone with a child. Obtain a second adult (staff member/volunteer/ worker) to escort children to the bathroom. One of the two adults should be a female.
- Never be alone in the restroom with a child.
- Remain outside the restroom.
- If at any time, the child needs assistance in the restroom, there should always be two adults to enter into the restroom with the stall door propped open.
- When the child is done using the restroom, both adults are to escort the child back to their group.

4th graders and above are more than capable of going to the restroom on their own. However, on Sunday mornings, a security team member will be stationed by the entrance/exit doors as a precaution. Volunteers should always be mindful of a child's whereabouts.

## **STAFF MEMBER/VOLUNTEER/WORKER RESTROOM USE**

Kids Building: Please use the individual private restroom located between the side and rear exits. Refrain from using the girls/boys restrooms.

Student Building/Main Building: Please use the women's/men's restrooms but check prior to entering to be sure no minors are currently using the restroom alone. If so, wait outside until it is clear for usage.

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## **DIAPER CHANGING**

Due to safety reasons, male volunteers and student volunteers are not allowed to change diapers. Only adult females are allowed to change diapers.

Never turn away from a child on the changing table, even if a child is strapped onto the table.

Please follow the guidelines for proper diaper changing:

- a) Gather supplies: gloves, clean diapers, wipes, bags, etc.
  - b) Sanitize hands and put clean gloves on for each child.
  - c) Talk with the child about what you are doing.
  - d) Place the child on the surface using a disposable changing pad.
  - e) Open wet or soiled diapers.
  - f) Use a wipe to clean the diapered area, wiping from front to back. Place used wipes in the dirty diaper. Fold up a dirty diaper and place in disposable plastic bag. Tie bag and place in diaper trash can. For cloth diapers: dispose of wipes in disposable plastic bag and place in trash; put soiled cloth diapers in plastic bags or bags provided by parents/guardians, tie off and place in child's diaper bag.
  - g) Put a clean diaper on the child and remove the child from the changing table.
  - h) Clean the changing table thoroughly with Clorox cleaning wipes and dry with a paper towel before the next diaper change.
  - i) Remove gloves and place in the wastebasket.
  - j) Sanitize hands.
  - k) Document on roster the time of the diaper change.
- .....

## **SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT**

In the event that small groups break up to meet and are separated via gender, all participants (minors and adults) will be recognized, addressed and required to participate corresponding with their birth gender.

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## **STUDENT VOLUNTEERS**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for students who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to student volunteers:

- Must be at least in 3rd grade to serve alongside a parent/guardian (except that dancer volunteers may serve without their parent/guardian).
- Must be at least in the 6th grade to serve without a parent/guardian.
- Must be screened as specified above in “Section 3: Screening and Training of Volunteers/Workers” (except that background checks are not completed for Student Volunteers).
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Dancer volunteers for the K-6th area are not allowed to be unsupervised. Therefore, after dancing, they must either:

- Attend service
- Serve in a position for which they have been scheduled
- Leave with a parent

## **FOOD**

We do not serve food in Southbrook Kids classes due to many and various food allergies; it is safer to not have food in the classroom.

Babies and toddlers are permitted to have baby bottles of milk, juice, and/or water in their classrooms. Please do not allow them to share.

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## **DISCIPLINE**

Misbehavior, including but not limited to disobedience, disrespect, unkindness, bullying and physical violence, is not acceptable and should be addressed.

It is the policy of Southbrook Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents/guardians have suggested or given permission for it. Do not spank, grab, hit, or otherwise physically discipline a minor.

Using physical restraint to prevent a minor from doing something disruptive or dangerous is permitted and may, in some instances, be necessary. Affirmation and encouragement are always preferred. Staff Members/volunteers/workers should consult with a Kids or Student Ministry staff member if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

If a minor misbehaves severely by hitting, kicking, scratching, or spitting on either children or staff members/volunteers/workers:

1. The minor will be removed from the classroom/group and spend a time-away with a Kids or Student Ministry staff member (keeping in mind never being alone with a minor).
2. Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident upon pick up.

3. After the second severe incident, parents/guardians will be notified to come and pick up their minor immediately.
4. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the child may be permanently removed from care at Southbrook Church.

Follow these discipline values:

- Consistency: Discipline must be consistent to be effective. Do not threaten a consequence without the intention to follow through.
- Response: Make a prompt and individualized response to inappropriate behavior. Correct a behavior the first time and every time.
- Resolution: Seek to both resolve the conflict and reconcile relationships.
- Reward: Acknowledge and reward positive behavior. Encourage children who are behaving well and following the rules.
- Prayer: Pray for your kids and your patience. Ask the Lord to guide you throughout the class.

### **Kids Ministry Discipline Steps & Procedures**

Children are to be disciplined using time-aways and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members/volunteers/workers should observe the following guidelines:

1. Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some gentle physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another).
2. If the behavior does not cease, gently remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room, facing the classroom (not the wall), where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-away, and provide the child with a clear explanation of your expectations (“Jamie, you didn’t stop screaming at 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-away.
4. Follow the rule of thumb that a time-away is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child’s life (i.e. 3 years old = 3 minutes).
5. Monitor the child through the entire time-away without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-aways 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”).
6. Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-away 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-away. Follow this with praise. If the behavior continues, volunteers should contact a volunteer Service Leader or staff member for assistance. They will determine what further action should be taken.

7. If the verbal and physical harm continues for a total of 3 times in one day, staff members/volunteers/workers should contact a Kids or Student Ministry staff member for assistance. The staff member will page the parents/guardians for an immediate pick up. Should this behavior occur 3 more times, a meeting with the parents/guardians and a staff member will be conducted to determine what further action should be taken. The plan of action will be determined on a case-to-case basis depending on the severity of the behavior (e.g. parent may need to stay with child in classroom, child may not participate in Kids Ministry for x weeks, etc.).
8. Document any actions taken – see also “General Incident Reporting Procedures” on page 32.

### **Biting**

For the health and safety of the children in our care the following policy will be in effect for all children two years and older. Children any younger than this do not have the words to express frustration or pain to their teachers or their friends and so will be disciplined according to age and situation when biting.

If the child has bitten three times in a single day, the Kids Director will contact the parent to ask that the child be removed from the classroom for the remainder of the time. The child may return to the classroom the next week.

If the child bites a total of six times during a two-week time span, the Kids Director will ask the parent to temporarily remove the child from our care for one or two weeks (this will be at the discretion of the Kids Director).

If the child has been temporarily removed from care three times, the Kids Director will request a meeting with the parents/guardians, where an evaluation of the child's biting issues will be discussed. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the Kids Director reserves the right to request the child be permanently removed from care at Southbrook Church.

### **Steps for Dealing with a Biting Incident**

1. Comfort and treat the injured child. Wash the bite mark with warm water. Look for broken skin. If the skin is broken, page the child's parents/guardians, and let them decide if they need to consult their family doctor. If there's a red mark and the child will tolerate it, hold a small cold compress on the spot while reading a book to or rocking the child. Don't overreact. As soon as the child is comforted, give him/her a hug and encourage him/her to get a toy and play.
2. Talk to the biter. Have another staff member/volunteer/worker take the biter aside, get at eye-level, and talk quietly. Set the biter in a child-sized “time away” chair or other acceptable “isolation spot” for a very short time.
3. Write two incident reports. One is for the parents/guardians of the injured child, and it details what was done to treat and comfort the child. It doesn't name the biter. The other one is for the parents/guardians of the biter, and it states the circumstances of the biting incident and what was done as discipline. It does name the child who was bitten. This allows those parents/guardians to approach the injured child's parents/guardians.



Give a copy of both incident reports to the Kids Director.

4. Upon pick-up, present both parents/guardians of the parties involved with the incident report and explain what occurred in the incident without naming the biter.

5.If the same child bites again, repeat the procedure with two additional steps:

a) The Kids Director will talk with the parents/guardians and ask for their cooperation in changing the behavior.

b) The Kids Director will notify staff members/volunteers/workers of the name of the repeat biter so they can watch this child carefully to intercept a biting attempt.

### **Student Ministry Discipline Steps & Procedures**

It's our desire at Southbrook Students to provide a safe environment where students can grow in their relationship with God and with each other. We expect students to hold to the guiding cultural values for our boundaries and expectations with all participants of sponsored events/activities both on/off campus. When violated, the responsible student or adult will be approached as discreetly as possible unless the nature of the offense presents an immediate threat to themselves or others. When necessary, the following action steps will be taken at the discretion of the Student Ministry staff in effort to maintain a safe and healthy environment. In all cases, we will strive to protect the hearts of everyone without compromising the safety of anyone.

At Southbrook Students, we will seek to resolve actions in need of disciplinary action by:

1. First Offense: Student Pastor and Student Group Leader will hold a meeting with the student(s).

2. Second Offense: Student Pastor will meet with the student(s) and the student's parents/guardians.

3. Third Offense: The student(s) will then be temporarily suspended from attending any Southbrook Students related activities and/or events upon a scheduled meeting and discussion with the students(s) and their parents/guardians. This period will be jointly pre-determined by the Student Pastor and Executive Pastor.

4. Reinstatement: A meeting will be conducted with the Student Pastor, the student(s) and their parents/guardians for permission/approval to return as an active participant in church-sponsored activities/events.

Any/all action taken will be documented by the Student Pastor.



### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Southbrook Church is committed to protecting the minors in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy ministry. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by Southbrook Church staff members/volunteers/workers.

Using good judgment, the following are appropriate ways to interact with minors:

- an arm around the shoulder
- walking hand in hand with children 1st grade or younger
- short, congratulatory, or greeting hugs, preferably “side hugs”
- a brief, reassuring pat on the back or shoulder, handshakes, high-fives, and knuckle bumps
- sitting beside a minor
- holding children in lap if preschool age or younger when comfort is needed
- holding hands during prayer
- holding or carrying a children preschool age or younger

The following are actions one should NEVER take:

- never touch a minor in anger or disgust
- never touch a minor in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- never touch a minor to express power or control
- never touch a minor in the bathing suit area
- never touch a minor’s private parts (with the exception of changing a diaper)
- never hug a minor from behind
- never give piggyback rides to minor
- never kiss minors on the lips, and never let a minor kiss you on the lips
- never tickle minors
- never engage in rough play, physical play, including horseplay and wrestling with minors
- never give inappropriate or lengthy embraces with minors
- never give any form of unwanted affection
- never give any physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of care providers

Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of staff members/volunteers/workers must foster trust at all times. Do not force physical contact or affection on a reluctant minor. A minor’s preference not to be touched must always be respected.

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## **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between volunteers and minors should be positive and uplifting. Keeping in mind that we are with minors and are here to set an example.

Staff members/volunteers/workers should strive to keep verbal interactions

encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of glorifying God by making disciples.

To this end, one should not talk to minors in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Never make a comment or compliment that relates to the physical appearance or development of a minor. In addition, staff members/volunteers/workers are expected to refrain from using profanity in the presence of minors.

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## **SENSITIVE TOPICS**

Certain topics of discussion are best left for parents/guardians to discuss with their own children/students. However, we understand these topics will come up in conversation as trust grows.

Use your best judgment when these sensitive topics are brought up and keep the following guiding principles in mind:

1. Do not lead or engage in conversations that intentionally incite fear.
2. Do not lead or engage in conversations that intentionally create confusion.
3. Do not lead or engage in conversations that intentionally glorify sin.
4. Do not judge appropriateness of the conversation based on the minor's age and stage of their discipleship.

Any questions about the propriety of discussing one of these topics, speak with the appropriate staff member responsible for overseeing the specific ministry area for the minor.

Here are some examples of sensitive topics:

- The rapture
  - The tribulation
  - Satan – if the purpose is to incite undue fear or confusion
  - Hell – if the purpose is to incite undue fear or confusion
  - Denominations
  - Speaking in tongues
  - Human sexuality or reproduction
  - Female menstrual cycle
  - Drugs, alcohol, or other questionable behavior before salvation
  - Social issues – death penalty, abortion
  - Global issues – terrorism, persecution
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## TRANSPORTATION

Staff members are permitted to drive minors to and from campus-based programming and offsite activities/events, and for the purposes of relational ministry, subject to the following requirements:

- The staff member must be at least 25 years old.
- A Motor Vehicle Background Check must be completed (this will be updated every two years).
- Written permission for each occurrence must be obtained from the minor's parent/guardian.
- The staff member must notify the minor's parent/guardian of the journey's origin, destination and any planned stops; unplanned stops are not permitted
- The staff member must notify a second staff member prior to each occurrence.
- The staff member must never be alone in a car with a minor; at least one other adult or minor must always be present.
- The staff member must comply with all applicable laws at all times, including but not limited to those related to seatbelts and cell phone use.
- The staff member must keep a record of the dates, times, destinations and participants of all occurrences, and must produce those records upon request by another staff member or the minor's parent/guardian.

Southbrook Church does not ask or encourage volunteers/workers to drive minors to and from campus-based programming or for the purposes of relational ministry.

Volunteers/workers may occasionally be asked by a staff member to drive minors as part of the transportation plan for offsite activities/events, subject to the requirements listed above.

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## Section Five | CHILD ABUSE AND PROTECTION

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Southbrook Church supports and maintains a ZERO TOLERANCE policy against child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment.

Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation or such conduct) for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution, or incest with children.

It is against the law and against Southbrook Church policy for any staff member/ volunteer/ worker, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

Southbrook Church reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss, or to exclude from affiliation with Southbrook Church any staff member/volunteer/worker who has been convicted of child abuse or neglect of any child.

Southbrook Church staff members have been trained to recognize behaviors intended to “groom” children for sexual abuse. These behaviors will be immediately investigated and reported to the appropriate authorities.

## **PREVENTATIVE GOALS**

Prevention of child abuse for Southbrook Church is twofold:

1. To provide protective care for our children and students.
2. To maintain proper supervision and training for staff members/volunteers/workers.

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## **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Child abuse is a serious crime, and Southbrook Church intends to prosecute child abuse in any form to the fullest extent of the law. As a staff member/volunteer/worker, you are agreeing to adhere to and uphold all policies and procedures as follows:

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burning, and biting. Has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, student worker, or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography. Commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, student, or vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so. With respect to a child, student, or vulnerable adult makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact, or is reasonably suspected to have done so. Exposes a child, student, or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Neglect – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Staff members/volunteers/workers may become aware of abuse or neglect of minors under our care. Abuse is the intentional or knowing maltreatment of a child and can be physical, sexual, or emotional in nature. Neglect, on the other hand, is the failure to give children the necessary care they need. Any person who becomes aware of such abuse or neglect has a legal duty to report the case to the Department of Social Services of the county where the child resides or where the neglect or abuse is observed. Do not be afraid to report; as long as you are acting in good faith, you cannot be held liable.

If a minor shares this information with a student volunteer, the student volunteer is strongly encouraged to tell an adult (adult volunteer or staff member).

This is the North Carolina statute regarding the duty to report abuse:

**[N.C.G.S. § 7B-301](#)**

This is the North Carolina statute establishing immunity for reporting in good faith:

**[N.C.G.S. §7B-309](#)**

Contact information for mandatory reporting in several local counties is as follows:

**Union County Department of Social Services**

**[Website](#)**

1212 West Roosevelt Blvd. Monroe, NC 28110

P.O. Box 489, Monroe, NC 28111-0489

State Courier#: 03-07-01

(704) 296-4300 / Fax: (704) 296-6151

Child Protective Services (CPS) Fax: (704) 296-6148

**Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services**

**[Website](#)**

Wallace H. Kuralt Centre, 301 Billingsley Rd. Charlotte, NC 28211

Youth and Family Services 5800 Executive Center Drive, 4th Floor, Charlotte NC

P.O. Box 220999, Charlotte, NC 28222

State Courier#: 05-14-12

(704) 336-3000 / Fax: (704) 353-1325

Emergency Phone: (704) 336-2273

**Lancaster County Department of Social Services**

Lancaster County DSS

1837 Pageland Hwy.

Lancaster, SC 29720

(803) 286-6914 (Press 2)

After Hours Reporting:

(803) 283-4136 Law Enforcement Dispatch

911 Lancaster County Law Enforcement

## **York County Department of Social Services**

York County DSS

933 Heckle Blvd.

Rock Hill, SC 29732

(803) 909-7446 (Press 1)

(803) 684-2315 (Press 1)

After Hours Reporting:

911 Abuse & Neglect

In addition to the mandatory reporting requirement to the applicable agency, volunteers/ workers who observe or suspect abuse or neglect are also strongly urged – but cannot be required – to notify a staff member.

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### **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Southbrook Church or during Southbrook Church sponsored events/activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. Staff members/volunteers/workers/students/children must report this information to the Student Pastor or Kids Director immediately
2. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified by the appropriate staff member.
3. The individual(s) alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave (if applicable) pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from church premises during the investigation. They will also be instructed to have no contact with the alleged victim or witnesses.
4. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
5. The Student Pastor or Kids Director will report to the Executive Pastor who will notify the Strategic Leadership Team and Compliance Officer of the Elder Board immediately.
6. The Executive Pastor and Compliance Officer of the Elder Board will engage Southbrook Church legal counsel to provide guidance and conduct such additional investigation as may be deemed necessary.
7. Southbrook Church will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other persons, including workers and volunteers, should refrain from speaking to the media.

8. A pastoral visit will be arranged for any involved parties who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
9. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from his/her position working with children or students.
10. If Southbrook Church legal counsel concludes that there is not reasonable cause to believe the abuse may have occurred, the legal counsel shall provide a written report to the Elder Board documenting the conclusions reached and the basis for those conclusions.

The contents of the report presented by legal counsel where no abuse was found shall be confidential unless requested by law enforcement officials.

**The written report shall:**

- Identify the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and all witnesses identified and contacted.
- Set forth the allegations and the steps taken to investigate the allegations. Set forth the facts revealed by each significant witness.
- Set forth the temporary actions to be taken by the Compliance Officer of the Elder Board, as well as a recommendation of additional actions to be taken by the Elder Board.

**In addition, Southbrook Church legal counsel shall:**

Report the incident of abuse to any other appropriate authorities and conduct all further investigations as directed by the Elder Board.

**Training for Staff Members/Volunteers/Workers**

Southbrook Church will provide child protection policy training to all new staff members/volunteers/workers prior to the start of employment/volunteering. Ongoing child protection policy training opportunities will also be provided.

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## **Section Six | INCIDENT PROCEDURES**

### **GENERAL INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES**

It is important that the proper reporting procedure is followed to ensure appropriate action, documentation, and notification of correct parties. All staff members/volunteers/workers shall immediately report and document incidents as follows:

1. Staff members/volunteers/workers/students/children must immediately report sensitive matters, accidents, injuries and other incidents involving actual or potential harm to the Student Pastor or Kids Director.
2. The Student Pastor or Kids Director will determine the appropriate course of action based on the specific circumstances involved, including the severity of the situation.



3. If deemed necessary, medical attention will be obtained by calling 911 or transporting the minor (in compliance with the requirements listed in “Transportation” above).
  4. If deemed necessary, the Student Pastor or Kids Director will contact proper authorities within 24 hours (law enforcement, local agencies, parents/guardians etc.)
  5. If deemed necessary, the Student Pastor or Kids Director will notify the Executive Pastor within 24 hours.
  6. If deemed necessary, the Executive Pastor will notify the Compliance Officer of the Elder Board.
  7. The person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall complete a written report of the incident.
  8. The Student Pastor or Kids Director will maintain written documentation of all reported incidents and the action steps taken, including persons spoken to and names of all parties involved.
  9. All reporting and information will be kept strictly confidential within the parties involved for the protection of all parties.
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## **FIRST AID**

Medical incidents can range from minor injuries requiring only First Aid to major medical emergencies. Knowing what to do when faced with these situations can prevent such situations from developing into a crisis.

In the event of an accident/injury that needs medical attention, call 911 immediately and notify a staff member.

According to the American College of Physicians, an emergency can best be handled by remembering four things: **Prevent, Prepare, Recognize, and Act**. By taking these steps we will be able to better protect the staff members/volunteers/workers/students/children involved in our ministries:

### **Prevent:**

- Before beginning any job or activity, leaders should always determine the abilities and limitations of the participants. Ask yourself what risks there may be in doing the job or activity.
- Inspections also can be a great deterrent in preventing unwanted accidents. It is important to look at the location and equipment being used to determine if they are safe.

### **Prepare:**

- See “General Incident Reporting Procedures” above.
- First Aid kits are located in each classroom in the Kids building, behind the production booth in the Student building, and in the metal cabinet in the back office hallway in the main building.
- All staff members will receive basic First Aid and CPR training.

**Recognize:**

- When an incident happens, it is important to be able to distinguish between what is minor versus injuries that are life threatening. Caution should be used. Without any training or knowledge, an injury could be exacerbated.

**Act:**

Once you have made a determination that something needs to be done, it is time to act. The following are steps to take when responding to an emergency:

1. Act immediately. Examine the person who is injured. If needed, call 911 for assistance or send someone else to do so. Act promptly, but not so quickly that you miss something or respond incorrectly.
2. Check breathing. If the person is not breathing, start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, if you have been trained.
3. Stop any bleeding. A snug bandage or pressure dressing can often stop or slow bleeding. If this does not work, press firmly at the point that cuts blood flow off to the injured area.
4. Check for shock. Is the face drained of color, skin cold and moist? Is there a rapid, weak pulse or fainting? If so, have the victim lie down and attempt to calm them.
5. Give attention to the possibility of poisoning. If poisoning is suspected, use the syrup ipecac, and call the Nationwide Poison Center at (800) 222-1222.
6. Should You Move Them? Unless the victim is in immediate danger, do not attempt to move them. If you must move the victim, and a stretcher is available, use the stretcher and try to keep their head immobile.
7. Splint broken bones. If a broken bone is obvious, try to splint the injury so that the joints are immobilized. Any stiff object can be used to set the injury. Cloths or bandages can be used to wrap around the stiff object and broken appendage.
8. Treat burns. Burns may be caused by chemicals or heat. Small burns should be placed in cold water. More severe burns should be covered with a large, clean cloth. Get emergency help immediately.
9. Bandage wounds. When it is necessary to bandage a wound, a sterile dressing should be used. This will help keep infection down, reduce bleeding and lessen pain.

By preventing, preparing, recognizing and acting, lives can be saved and injuries prevented.

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**ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO MINORS**

In the event that a minor is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, staff members/volunteers/workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the minor's parent or guardian

of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care. An incident report will be completed by the staff member/volunteer/worker and turned into the Student Pastor or Kids Director.

2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be paged in addition to the Student Pastor or Kids Director. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. See “General Reporting Procedures” above.

4. Once the minor has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed by the staff member in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

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## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

According to Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE: [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)), food allergies affect up to 15 million people in the United States. The National Center for Health Statistics indicates four out of every 100 children have a food allergy, and the prevalence is increasing. This medical condition can cause life-threatening situations, especially if it is not managed properly. There are only eight foods that account for 90 percent of allergic reactions related to food in the United States: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. It is important to be aware of potential food allergies and know how to respond in an emergency.

### **Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction:**

Symptoms of an allergic reaction can range from mild to severe. Some symptoms can lead to the life-threatening condition anaphylaxis ([www.foodallergy.org/anaphylaxis](http://www.foodallergy.org/anaphylaxis)), which can affect a person’s breathing and blood circulation.

While some signs may appear within a few minutes of eating an allergen, others could become evident hours later.

### **Mild symptoms include:**

- Hives;
- Eczema;
- Redness of skin around the eyes;
- Itchy mouth or ear canal; and
- Vomiting, diarrhea or stomach pain.

### **Severe symptoms include:**

- Swelling of lips, tongue or throat obstructing airways;
- Shortness of breath;
- Drop in blood pressure (feeling faint, confused, weak);
- Weak or “thread” pulse; and
- Loss of consciousness.

Severe symptoms, alone or in combination with milder systems, may be signs of anaphylaxis and require immediate treatment.

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## **RESPONDING TO AN ALLERGIC REACTION**

Depending on the severity of an allergic reaction, there are various treatments and drugs to utilize when responding in an emergency. For mild symptoms, those with allergies may carry over the counter or prescribed antihistamines to relieve itching or hives. In cases with severe symptoms, an injection of epinephrine or a visit to the emergency room may be necessary.

People with allergies often carry an epinephrine auto injector, also known as an EpiPen. An EpiPen allows someone to inject a single dose of medication when experiencing severe allergic reaction symptoms. However, those actively suffering from an allergic reaction may not be able to administer the medication themselves. It is therefore a good idea to educate employees and volunteers on the use of an EpiPen in the event of a serious allergic reaction. For minors with known food allergies, a staff member will have a discussion with their parent or guardian about responding to a reaction, and secure authorization/consent for administration of medication in an emergency situation.

The person administering the medication should verify the accuracy of the information for administering the medication.

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## **FOOD ALLERGIES AT SOUTHBROOK**

An allergic reaction may occur while a minor is under the supervision of the church. It is important that we take the necessary precautions to protect minors in the event of an emergency:

- Staff members will have parents/guardians complete and submit the appropriate plan located at [southbrookchurch.com/health-care-plan](https://southbrookchurch.com/health-care-plan). All plans will be kept on file and readily available for staff members/volunteers/workers to reference if the need arises.
- Discuss these filled out forms with parents/guardians in detail. This information should be shared with staff members/volunteers/workers.
- These forms should be updated and followed up on annually.
- Kids Ministry, birth-3rd grade, will properly store the medication in a red drawstring bag out of children's reach above the first aid kits in each classroom.
- Kids Ministry, 4th-6th grade, will properly store the medication in a red drawstring bag out of children's reach behind the production booth, next to the First Aid kits.
- Parents/guardians are to hand the medication to the group leader volunteer upon arrival and take it home upon leaving.
- Adequate training should be provided for staff members/volunteers/workers. For healthcare plans and emergency care plans to be effective, all personnel should be properly trained how to react in a situation.

- Qualified personnel should provide information to staff members/volunteers/workers to increase the knowledge about food allergies. Parents/guardians of children with food allergies also can present valuable information.

**Protection Checklist:**

FARE has developed a checklist for parents/guardians in a guidance document for managing food allergies in a school setting. While the checklist is intended for parents/guardians, we can take advantage of the information as well when developing an allergy protection plan. Consider the following:

- Become informed and educated;
- Prepare and provide information on the minor's food allergy and medication;
- Reduce food allergens in the room;
- Consider what is being served at meals and other activities;
- Address transportation issues for the procedure of managing food allergies in vehicles going to and from off-site events;
- Plan ahead when organizing an off-site event;
- Prevent and stop bullying; and
- Assist the child with self-management.

Food allergies are a serious medical concern in all environments. It is crucial to be aware of the symptoms and how to react. Furthermore, ensuring that churches, schools, parents/guardians and children are educated and aware of food allergy situations can help prevent allergic reactions.

**SEVERE WEATHER**

In the event of severe weather (e.g. tornados, wind, hail), follow the guidelines below (further instructions will be given by a staff member):

Tornado Watch: Weather conditions are favorable to the formation of tornadoes.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted in the area.

**Arrival of Severe Weather:**

- Stay calm.
- Staff members should listen closely to weather reports.
- Do not go outside.
- Keep any drapes, blinds, or window shades closed to protect occupants from the possibility of breaking glass.
- Seek shelter. Move minors in a quiet and orderly manner away from the windows and to an interior wall of the classroom. Take your clipboard with the roster.
- Await further instructions from a staff member.
- Do not release any minor in your care until the "all clear" is given by a staff member.

- Once the “all clear” is given by a staff member, classrooms/groups may resume normal activity.

#### **After Severe Weather:**

- The Facility Department should assess any possible damage to the building and outside and take pictures.
  - Treat those who have an injury or seek medical attention for them.
  - Call 9-1-1 if necessary.
  - Facility Department to protect property from further damage using tarps, etc.
  - Facility Department to contact building contractors, utility companies, etc.
  - The Executive Pastor will fill out an incident report and contact the insurance company.
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### **FIRE**

The first priority in any fire is that the safety of all minors and staff members/volunteers/workers is maintained. Once the evacuation process has been executed and all persons are out of the building, any attempt to put out a fire is absolutely discouraged due to the risk of possible injury. However, if the circumstances present no possible danger to anyone present, best judgment is to be used on the part of staff members/volunteers/workers as to how to proceed.

Please follow the directions below in the event of a fire:

#### **a) How will you know of an alarm?**

- Audible sound of alarm.
- Flashing strobe lights in every room.

#### **b) What do you do?**

- Stay calm.
- Grab your clipboard and roster.
- If you are a staff member/volunteer/worker who is not assigned to a classroom, report to the nearest classroom to provide assistance or report to a staff member for further instructions.

#### **c) When do you go?**

- As soon as you hear the alarm.
- When ordered to evacuate by a staff member/volunteer Security Team member.
- When you are in immediate danger (see smoke or flames).

#### **d) Where do you go?**

- To the nearest exit – follow the fire escape map posted in the classroom.
- Parents/guardians may stay with you and assist, but they MAY NOT take their child and leave during an evacuation.

- Do not release any minor in your care until the “all clear” has been determined by the First Responders.
- Once the “all clear” is given, the staff members will notify their teams, classrooms/ groups may resume normal activity.

## **MISSING MINOR**

Time is critical if a minor is reported missing. Volunteers/workers should immediately notify a staff member and a volunteer Security Team member with the following information:

1. Minor’s information
  - a) Name/age/gender.
  - b) Color of hair, shirt and skin.
  - c) Ministry where the child was checked-in.
2. The person reporting the lost child should remain with the staff member until further direction is given by a member of Southbrook Church security team.
3. Search the area the minor was last seen. Repeat if necessary.
4. See “General Incident Reporting Procedures” on page 32.
5. If necessary, secure the area for law enforcement.

## **LOCK DOWN**

- Staff members are to ensure that groups are aware of the lock down call.
- Close and lock the classroom/office.
- Turn off classroom lights.
- Contact law enforcement if necessary.
- Make sure minors are huddled in the safest corner of their classroom.
- Keep minors as quiet as possible.
- If there is gunfire during a lockdown, use tables as a shield by propping the table on its side with minors behind it.
- Take account of all minors.
- Do not release any minor in your care until the “all clear” has been determined by the First Responders.
- Once the “all clear” is given, staff members will notify their teams, classrooms/ groups may resume normal activity.

## **BOMB THREATS**

- Notify 9-1-1 immediately.
- Notify a volunteer Security Team member and appropriate staff members.
- Obtain as much detailed information about the threat as possible from the person reporting the incident.
- If a staff member makes the decision to evacuate the building, follow the evacuation plans.
- After the buildings are evacuated, assist law enforcement with checking the building for anything that appears suspicious.
- Do not release any minor in your care until the “all clear” has been determined by the First Responders.
- Once the “all clear” is given, the staff members will notify their teams, classrooms/groups may resume normal activity.

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## **MEDIA RESPONSE**

No volunteers/workers serving or not, should ever give a response to the media. If you are prompted to do so, please direct all media inquiries to a staff member of Southbrook Church.

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## **Section Seven | CAMPS/OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES**

Although camps and off-site activities are not held on the campus, it is expected that all volunteers continue to follow and uphold Southbrook Church’s Child Protection Policy. All policies and procedures remain the same whether on or off-site. In addition, we will also commit to abiding by the camp’s/organization’s policies and procedures.

### **CHOOSING CAMPS/OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES**

It is at the discretion of the Kids Director or Student Pastor to choose camps/off-site activities. These staff members will choose camps/off-site activities that are in proper accordance with the insurance company and will seek counsel from the Executive Pastor prior to booking new camps/off-site activities.

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### **CAMP PAPERWORK**

Prior to attending camp, waivers, liability forms, video/photo release form, copy of medical insurance card, applications, health care plan forms, and any other necessary forms must be filled out in their entirety and turned into the appropriate staff member



## **PARENTAL PERMISSION**

With the exception of off-campus regular programming (e.g. planned gatherings at leaders' homes) parental permission is needed for all off-site church-sponsored programs or activities involving minors. This is documented with a **Minor Participation Authorization and Consent to Emergency Medical Treatment Form** and **Media Release Form**.

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## **NEVER BE ALONE**

Volunteers should never be alone with a minor during camps/off-site activities, and minors should never be alone with other minors; always be in a group of three or more.

There should be assigned groups of students/children for volunteers to lead according to the minor to adult ratio policy who are in "charge of" the following: the minors' whereabouts, group assignments (rosters), schedules, etc.

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## **BATHROOM GUIDELINES**

Males (birth gender) are to use the male bathroom and females (birth gender) are to use the female bathroom. There should never be a time where the opposite sex is in the bathroom.

In the event where bathrooms are not in the same building, it is best practice to have 2 adult volunteers of the same sex to escort minors to the bathroom. In addition, if the bathroom is located where the students cannot be seen, it would also be best practice to have 2 adult volunteers to escort the student/child to the bathroom.

In the event where 2 adults are not available, wherever possible be in a group of 3 or more, and an adult should never be alone with a minor.

There will be times where there are community showers, sinks, and toilets. Staff members/volunteers should do whatever is necessary to avoid any full bodily exposure. Please use the individual stalls to change and dress.

The male/female gender is defined as the gender assigned at birth and not gender identity or expression.

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## **SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Males (birth gender) will be assigned to the male cabin and females (birth gender) will be assigned to the female cabin. No adult or child of the opposite sex should be in the room of the opposite sex. There should always be 2 adults in each cabin/room. No adult/volunteer should ever be in the room alone with a minor; remain in the hallway/doorway until another adult or minor arrives. Never sleep in the same bed with a minor.

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## **MEDICATIONS**

Some of our students/children will need their medication daily. It is important that the proper medication and dosage is given appropriately. If you are not clear as to what the dosage is, please call their parents/guardians for clarification.

Only designated staff members/volunteers (appointed by the Kids Director or Student Pastor) are to distribute medication to ensure proper dosage is given and taken.

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## **VIOLATION OF POLICY**

In the event where there is a violation of policy, it is at the discretion of the Kids Director or Student Pastor to make the determination if the minor can no longer participate. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to pick up the minor if asked to leave camp/off-site activity.

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# ***AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FORM***

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By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand Southbrook Church's "Child Protection Policy" in its entirety. I understand that the church must provide safety and protection for our minors. I have asked questions concerning its contents and will comply with all policies and procedures to the best of my ability. I unconditionally agree to hold Southbrook Community Church, its officers, employees, or other agents blameless should any accusation be made against me. I understand the church has the responsibility and liability to report any allegations to local, state and federal authorities.

I understand the church reserves the right to disallow my services now or in the future. My services may be discontinued by Southbrook Community Church at any time for any reason without advance notice.

I understand that my signature below holds Southbrook Community Church, its officers, employees, or other agents harmless for any liability, personal damage or loss to me.

I understand that the statements contained in this Policy are intended to serve as information concerning Southbrook Church and its existing policies, procedures, practices of employment/volunteers.

I understand that, from time to time, Southbrook Church may clarify, amend, and/or supplement the information contained in this Policy and that Southbrook Church will post the updated revisions on the website.

By signing this Policy, I hereby certify that I have read this document, understand its meaning, and that violation of this policy is just cause for disciplinary action up to, and including termination of employment/volunteering rights.

Staff Member/Volunteer/Worker Name

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Staff Member/Volunteer/Worker Signature

Date

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