



HORICON
BAPTIST

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Partnering with parents
to make disciples that
delight in Jesus Christ.

This overview and policy document is designed to familiarize parents and volunteers with our children's ministry procedures and our child protection policy. The specifications contained in this document apply to all official ministry events of HBC Church.

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OUR VISION

What would happen if children began learning about the greatness of God at an early age? What if they began to recognize in concrete ways how God relates to absolutely everything in life? Imagine if they not only learned about God's great love for them in Jesus Christ but also began to embrace it with all their hearts. Imagine the impact if week in and week out they were taught by people who loved God and treasured His Word. We want kids at HBC Church to have this kind of story.

OUR MISSION

HBC Kids exists to partner with parents to make disciples that delight in Jesus Christ.

This ministry aims to equip, support, and encourage parents to fulfill their God-given responsibility to train their children in the "instruction and discipline of the Lord." We do more than provide childcare so parents can attend our Sunday morning gatherings. We disciple children in a safe environment by intentionally teaching them about Jesus Christ and how the entire Bible tells the story of his redeeming, lavish grace. We strive to do this in a way that is not only faithful, but also fun for the kids.

The members of Horicon Baptist Church have covenanted together to raise the children under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The ministry of HBC Kids is not only beneficial for the children but for all members. It helps those who do not have children meaningfully understand the importance of family and discipleship. It is beneficial for the entire body of Christ to see and hear the children in our church because it calls us to pray for them, disciple them and care for their souls.

The kids of HBC bring an energy and joy to the rest of the church body that reminds us of life in our church. Our prayer is that as we make disciples of the children God has entrusted to HBC Church, they will come to understand the character of God and walk in the goodness of His grace at an early age.

SUNDAY EXPERIENCE

HBC Kids provides care for children up to seven years old. All classes are structured environments where basic childcare is provided in a safe and secure environment. All of our leaders have been carefully screened and are committed to the safety of the children.

Typically, a short lesson is taught and Bible songs are sung in an age-appropriate manner. The children will play with one another, worship through song and Scripture, and participate in lesson activities.

Beginning with those in kindergarten, we ask kids to attend the first part of the worship service with their family until they are dismissed to their class for the duration of the service. Our goal is to prepare children for the transition of worshipping God in the main corporate service with their family.

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

Discipling the children in HBC Kids is both a privilege and responsibility, so it's our desire to do all we can to provide a safe, welcoming, and organized environment. To this end we:

- Reserve all HBC Kids volunteer positions for active members in good standing who are at least 18 years of age (children of active members under the age of 18 who have aged out of HBC Kids and are permitted to serve alongside two other qualified adult volunteers)
- Screen all children's ministry volunteers including questionnaire and background checks.
- Require training for all children's ministry volunteers.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

All HBC Kids volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them

- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way they live their lives
- Ministering to the children
- Understanding that the opportunity to care for children is not a right but a privilege, and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children

Scheduled Rotation for Workers

Every volunteer will receive the volunteer schedule weeks in advance of their scheduled rotation.

If the volunteer is unable to work during their scheduled time, it is up to the individual to trade with another volunteer who is comfortable teaching in the assigned classroom, and then email the coordinator with the replacement. *It is not the responsibility of the coordinator to find a replacement.*

Also, each volunteer should manage their schedule the best way possible, so that an individual is not out of town one week and then in childcare the next week and *missing two or more Sunday services in a row.*

Setup and Cleanup

Work is required in setting up and cleaning up HBC Kids. A checklist is provided for each classroom. Each discipler is expected to arrive before at 9:45am to set up and pray, as well as stay after the service until everything is cleaned up.

Safety Procedures

We take precautions to ensure that the children are safe while they are in our care.

To this end we:

- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Provide a first aid kit
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to children's ministry

Social Media

We reserve the right to post HBC Kids-related pictures to the official HBC social media account. If any children's faces are in the pictures, permission **must** be given by parents first.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN: ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival and Departure Times

Volunteers should arrive promptly and be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of the service so that parents have enough time to transition their children before the service begins.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the service. In the event that a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of the service, volunteers will locate the parents.

Checking a Child into HBC Kids

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a children's ministry program will check the child into the appropriate classroom when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that HBC event or program. This will authorize HBC to secure medical services for the child in the event of an accident or injury if the parents or legal guardians are unavailable. The parent should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have.

At check-in the child will receive a sticker with a family-specific identification code. We will also provide a matching sticker for the parent. This is used to match parent to child. At the end of the service when the parent comes to pick up the child, the children's ministry volunteer will ask for the parent's sticker and will bring the child with the matching sticker to the door and remove the child's sticker. A child is officially checked out of HBC Kids when their sticker is removed.

After the child is checked in, elementary-aged children will go with the parent into the service until dismissed to their classes. For children in non-elementary-aged classes, parents will immediately drop the children off to their classes once receiving a sticker.

Due to safety reasons, parents are asked to remain outside of the classrooms so that all kids are only with volunteers who have been background checked, trained, and scheduled to serve in the HBC Kids ministry that Sunday.

We understand some children may have a hard time adjusting to a new classroom environment. Our volunteers will do all they can to engage the children and make them feel safe. If after 10 minutes of continuous crying, the child is unable to calm down, the parents/caregiver will be notified to come to the classroom. At that point, if the child is unable to be calmed down, it may be necessary for the parent to take the child to service or the overflow room.

PROTECTING THE CHILDREN IN OUR CARE

Two Volunteer Rule

At least two qualified adult volunteers must be present in the classroom at all times. We consider adults to be age seventeen and older. Two male volunteers may not serve together without a female volunteer also being present.

Bathroom Basics

Transparency is the heart of this policy. We can't anticipate every situation. But our responsibility in every situation is to cheerfully assist in a way that maximizes openness and transparency in order to protect the children.

Parents are asked to take their children to the restroom and/or put on a fresh diaper prior to checking them into HBC Kids. Therefore, most children will not need a diaper change or require the restroom during HBC Kids. However, in the case where a child requires a diaper change or needs to use the restroom, parents will be contacted via text so they can care for their child. Presently, HBC Kid disciplers do not take any children to the restroom nor do they change diapers.

Appropriate Discipline

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children).

Children's ministry volunteers and staff members should never yell, spank, or hit a child. If behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents will be called out of the service to attend to their child.

Accidents and First Aid

The HBC Kids is equipped with a basic first aid kit. Volunteers should be familiar with its contents and uses. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called first and the volunteers will locate and inform the parents immediately. Volunteers will fill out an accident report if an accident occurred in HBC Kids and either 1. a parent was needed during service, or 2. a volunteer needed to administer

some sort of first aid to the child.

Snacks and Food

We do not regularly provide or administer snacks and beverages during HBC Kids. Some lessons may utilize food or candy. If food is provided, it will not include any ingredients that any child in the classroom is allergic to. Parents should inform the HBC Kids ministry coordinator of any allergies their child has, so that the coordinator can plan accordingly. If candy is provided, it will be wrapped and peanut-free. Children will not be permitted to eat the candy in class, but rather will be told to ask their parents for permission to eat it after class. At pick-up, volunteers will tell parents if candy was distributed during class.

HEALTHY CHILD POLICY

Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, five rules are in place concerning disease. Both parents and volunteers must be familiar with these policies.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
2. Volunteers will use latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to wipe noses, and handle blood spills.
3. Hand washing or usage of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and volunteers.
4. Toys and equipment are disinfected regularly.
5. Volunteers and church leaders have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the following guidelines. A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:
 - Fever (Note: Children should be free of a fever for 24 hours after a contagious disease before coming back to church.)
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
 - Common cold – from onset through one week
 - Sore throat
 - Croup
 - Any unexplained rash
 - Any skin infection – boils, ringworm, impetigo
 - Pink eye or other eye infection
 - Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
 - Any communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the HBC Kids check-in table with a volunteer until the parents are located.

Please inform the volunteers or church leader(s) if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending an HBC Church event so that other parents may be notified if necessary.

Neither volunteers nor church staff is allowed to give any medication to any child.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in a nursery setting and should be utilized. The method is very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers in the nursery from illness. This is not to imply that

any children or volunteers in the nursery are carrying infectious diseases. By treating all bodily fluids as if they are infected, any infections or contaminants can be avoided at all times, providing a safer and healthier environment for volunteers and children alike.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- Remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Disinfect them with Lysol.

CHILD PROTECTION: NEGLECT, ABUSE, PREVENTION, REPORTING & RESPONSE

Definitions

What is child neglect and abuse? It is important to define our terms.

Child neglect is failure, whether intentional or not, of the person responsible for the child's care to provide for the child's basic needs such as adequate food, clothing, medical and dental care, supervision, and/or proper education, or the failure to protect the child from harm.

Child abuse is any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk or serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual harm or exploitation of a child by a parent or a caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.

Child sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact with a minor, non-touching offenses, or sexual exploitation of a minor. This is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they cannot be personally, socially, and developmentally ready. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered to be forced whether or not the child consents to it.

Child spiritual abuse the use of spiritual authority (the Bible or church authority) to emotionally, physically, and/or sexually abuse a child.

Prevention

HBC takes protection against and reporting of neglect and abuse very seriously. In an effort to prevent abuse and neglect, we:

- Educate and equip staff, deacons and volunteers about neglect and abuse •
- Adhere to the procedures and guidelines as set out in this policy manual. Many of the policies are written to protect children, including the two-adult rule, visibility guidelines, and diaper and bathroom policy.
- Train and screen volunteers prior to contact with any children. Screening includes filling out an application, getting feedback from references and requiring a criminal background check.
- Require all full-time staff to submit to a criminal background check within a month of joining staff.
- Repeat screening procedures and criminal background checks for full-time staff and volunteers every five years.
- Require volunteers and staff to be members, or qualified children of members.

Any instance of suspected or observed abuse or neglect should be handled with the following guidelines.

Reporting of Neglect & Abuse

Point of Contact for Reporting

Anyone who suspects, witnesses, or has any reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be neglected and/or harmed or threatened with abuse in any form should contact a pastor or a deacon.

This reporting includes questionable behavior (overly flirtatious behavior, shoulder massages or other intimate acts, etc.) and/or possible offenses (volunteers observing actual abuse or possible evidence of abuse, like abrasions, lacerations, etc.).

Any person who serves as the initial point of contact is required to report all allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to all the pastors.

Guidelines for Mandatory and Permissive Reporters

In reporting of neglect or abuse to the authorities, it is important to distinguish between permissive and mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter may include social workers, teachers and other school personnel, physicians and other health care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement officers, and domestic violence workers. Permissive reporters include anyone who is not a mandatory reporter, which will be the majority of HBC's volunteers and staff.

The church has a moral and ethical obligation to report any neglect and abuse, so if the person suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse, the person must talk to a pastor or deacon.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a mandatory reporter, he or she must follow the guidelines and laws set out for mandatory reporters. He or she must fulfill his/her obligations to the law, including reporting to Child Protective Services or the police.

At no time will the mandatory reporter be prohibited or discouraged from reporting, even if their consultation with staff or leadership in the church results in a disagreement. If you are a mandatory reporter, it is important that you know whether you must report only in the context of your professional duties or whether the obligation to report also applies when you're away from your professional duties or functioning as a volunteer at our church.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a permissive reporter, they should contact a member of the CPT. Because permissive reporters do not have professional training or experience in recognizing abuse, and because many of HBC's volunteers are unmarried adults with little or no experience with children, they are asked to report first to a member of the CPT.

If reporting to Child Protective Services or police is deemed as warranted by a pastor or a deacon, then this person who suspects or witnessed abuse must report. At all times, this person will be required to fulfill their obligations to the law.

The goal is to help volunteers who have no training or experience in recognizing abuse and little to no experience with children get guidance on what's best to do. At no time will the permissive reporter be prohibited from reporting, even if their consultation with staff or leadership in the church results in a disagreement.

District and federal laws authorize civil or criminal penalties or civil liability for failing to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. In addition, obstructing or interfering with an investigation of child abuse can result in criminal charges.

The church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has a reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse.

What should a volunteer, staff, deacon or pastor do when they suspect, hear about or observe what appears to be a sign or symptom of neglect or abuse?

Talk immediately with a pastor or a deacon. The volunteer, staff, deacon or pastor should document this information on the Child Abuse Reporting form, which is available in every classroom.

After a pastor or a deacon serves as an initial point of contact, they are required to report all allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to all the pastors.

What should a leader in the church say or do with the child who is allegedly neglected or abused?

Talk with the child and find out how the injury happened, though be careful of the level of detail you pursue. Asking for too much detail might be harmful for a child as it causes them to relive the abusive experience. If the child is describing what might be abuse, the objective is to obtain very general information that may help substantiate or alleviate the suspicion.

Ask the child open-ended questions and get them to relay the event in their own words. Be careful to not suggest answers to the child and be sensitive to the fact that the child will be scared to tell the story, sometimes out of fear that it will upset adults or will not be believed. Write out a report that should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of the conversation with the child, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not ask the child to undress in order to show bruises or injuries that are not visible. Include all of this information on the Child Abuse Reporting form, which is available in every classroom.

What should someone report when they hear of a story of abuse?

Note what the child said happened, who the child was with when it happened, where it happened, and when it happened. All of this should be documented.

What should a volunteer or staff do when they observe an incident that may be abusive?

Immediately intervene to protect the child; follow-up immediately a pastor or deacon who oversees children; write out a report about the incident; and act in accordance with all reporting laws. The volunteer or staff should keep an on-going log of the suspected person's behavior and anything else that is relevant concerning the person or the child or their relationship.

Response to Neglect & Abuse

HBC Church will ensure that a caring response is always provided to any suspicion or witnessing of neglect or abuse. Every allegation of neglect or abuse will be taken seriously. Proper guidelines for handling such complaints will be followed diligently and exhaustively. The victim(s) and victim's family will be cared for by the church in whatever way is available. Situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for all parties' privacy and confidentiality.

Who Should be Notified?

The church will seek professional assistance when deemed appropriate by the pastors. Notification will be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to neglect or abuse. The church may:

- Report suspicions or firsthand accounts or any knowledge of abuse to civil authorities. Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities.
- Notify church disciplers, counselors or medical personnel in order to obtain ongoing care for the victim(s) and victim's families.
- Notify an insurance agent, denominational leaders, or any other outside officials.

- Notify and consult with a church attorney.

How Will HBC Church Respond to Allegations, Admission or Criminal Conviction?

Allegations of neglect or abuse, admission of child abuse by staff, a pastor, a deacon, a volunteer, a helper, or any member of HBC, or criminal conviction of abuse should:

- be reported to a pastor or deacon. This disclosure of abuse is to be done regardless of the source of the information and should be conveyed within 48 hours of the allegation being made or the admission of child abuse or criminal conviction.
- immediately result in removal of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any activity or program involving children;
- result in immediate ineligibility of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from being granted approval to participate in any activity or program involving children.

The pastors will decide on other appropriate responses to allegations, self-admission of guilt, or criminal conviction, some of which may include:

- Contacting police or CPS.
- Notification of staff, deacons and any volunteers.
- Reporting allegations, self-admission or criminal conviction to the congregation during HBC's public services or members' meeting
- Barring from any activities or church programs with children or the children's ministry floors at the church building.
- The pastors will designate HBC member(s) or staff who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on HBC's property or anywhere in HBC's buildings. The alleged perpetrator will be notified of this requirement immediately after allegations are made known to a pastor or a deacon.
- Disciplining (removal from membership) of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender in a public members' meeting by the congregation.
- Barring the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any and all church property.
- Suspension or termination of a paid staff member or volunteer position.
- Acknowledging to another organization about allegations against or termination of staff, a pastor, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of HBC Church for misconduct or abuse against children.

If anyone in a position of leadership at HBC learns from CPS or police that allegations of neglect or abuse are being investigated or criminal charges have been filed, the HBC pastors should:

- Be careful to not interfere with the investigation by police or CPS;
- Prevent contact between the accused and the accuser if appropriate;
- Remove the accused from activities or programs involving children, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Appoint a pastor or deacon to be a liaison with CPS and the police.

If an adult alleges an incident of neglect or abuse that happened when he was a child in a HBC program, then:

- The pastors should hire a trained mental health professional (preferably who is not associated with the church) who can provide the pastors with an assessment. The victim will have to provide consent for such an interview and to have the assessment released to the pastors in confidence.
- If the accused is no longer a part of HBC, then the pastors should consult with the pastors and legal counsel to determine legal and moral need to report to police or CPS and any other organization that the accused may be a part of since his departure from HBC.
- Even if government officials are no longer bound to investigate due to a statute of limitations, HBC Church should respond to all allegations with the care and diligence traced out in this policy manual.

Confidentiality

The church, as well as permissive or mandatory reporters, will maintain confidentiality to the extent that it deems appropriate for the care of its members and consistent with applicable law. Allegations and suspicion should be reported only to the persons specified in this policy manual.