SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

PCBC Childhood & Student Ministry

Putnam City Baptist Church

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Potential New Leader Process

Putnam City Baptist Church requires all potential leaders who have expressed interest in working with kids or students to complete the following steps before ministry work or placement in a Small Group.

Step One: Application Process

Leaders are required to complete an online application with references. A leader must be an active member of PCBC or pursuing membership before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to kids and students. All leaders must be willing to submit to an interview by either a director or coordinator on staff.

Step Two: Criminal Background Check

PCBC requires all leaders wishing to serve in PCBC Childhood Ministry and PCBC Students Ministry to undergo a criminal background check. Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on deferred adjudication or regular probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes, either misdemeanor or felony, cannot serve in any area of kids' ministry or students ministry. PCBC utilizes a comprehensive background check and relies upon the truthful answers of applicants and their references for this information.

Step Three: Policies and Procedures

Leaders are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

Step Four: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Leaders should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a victim for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a victim, win the victim's trust (and the trust of the victim's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the victim into sexual activity, and keep the victim from disclosing the abuse.

To equip leaders with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, PCBC requires all leaders to complete MinistrySafe sexual abuse awareness training once every two years.

PCBC's policies and procedures require that leaders avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Leaders are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor on staff with PCBC kids or students.

Church Membership

Church membership is a requirement for all volunteers serving in a teaching role. This also includes those that assume a primary leadership and oversight position in a baby or toddler room. All non-teaching roles do not require church membership in order to serve.

Abuse Prevention

There are children and students within PCBC Childhood and Student Ministries that are carrying wounds from traumatic experiences. Recognizing these wounds is the first step toward healing. There are four major types of maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

- **Physical Abuse:** Any act or omission that results in substantial harm to the child or youth, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child or youth, including any injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given. This does not include an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent or guardian that does not expose the child or youth to a substantial risk of harm.

- **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual conduct harmful to a child or youth's mental, emotional or physical welfare, including indecency with a child or youth, sexual assault or aggregated sexual assault of a child or youth, showing pornographic material to a child or youth or using them for the creation of obscene or pornographic material.

- **Emotional Abuse:** Any mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.

- **Neglect: Neglectful** *Supervision:* Placing an child or youth in, or failing to remove them from a situation in which a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child or youth's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child or youth.

  Medical Neglect: Failing to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for a child or youth with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of a child or youth.

  Physical Neglect: *Failure* to provide a child or youth with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child or youth, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

  Abuse can be recognized in the following ways:
  * The abuse is stated verbally to a leader by a child/student
  * The abuse is received in writing from a child/student
  * Signs of abuse are evident on a child/student (i.e., bruises, burns, etc.)
  * A leader personally witnesses abuse to a child/student
  * A leader observes behaviors and/or signs that may indicate a child/student being maltreated physically, emotionally, and/or sexually.
  * A leader suspects that a person is attempting to build a relationship with a child/student for an impure purpose, or to harm them.

Zero Tolerance

Putnam City Baptist Church has zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every leader to act in the best interest of children and students. In the event that leaders observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected grooming or abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect), it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to their respective supervisor on staff with the PCBC childhood or students' teams. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be handled promptly and appropriately, in accordance with this policy manual and Oklahoma state law.

Leaders should **always** contact a supervisor on staff with Putnam City Baptist Church when there has been any of the following:

* A report, implication, or suspicion of physical or sexual abuse
* A report of drug or alcohol abuse by a kid/student or kid's/student's family member
* A divorce or separation with parents of a kid/student
* A report of outbursts of anger by a kid/student or a kid's/student's family member
* A report of self-harm or threats of suicide by a kid/student or kid's student's family member
* A death in the family of a kid/student
* Any observed, implied, or suspected policy violation or inappropriate behavior by a leader

Reporting Requirements and Expectations

Leaders at Putnam City Baptist Church are required to report suspicions of child or student abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to an immediate supervisor on staff with PCBC Childhood or Students. Additionally, Oklahoma law says anyone who thinks a child or student is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it promptly and directly to the Oklahoma Department of Health and Human Services. Every adult is a mandatory reporter in the state of Oklahoma. Anyone may contact the Oklahoma Department of Health and Human Services 24 hours a day, seven days a week at *1-800-522-3511* or www.okhotline.org .

If a leader has cause to believe that abuse or neglect has or will occur:

1) Leaders are obligated to report such abuse or neglect to PCBC Childhood or Students staff who will walk leaders through the process of reporting such abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. All employees and volunteers of PCBC are mandatory reporters by state law.

   *Phone – 1-800-522-3511
   *Website: www.OKhotline.org

2) All information reported should be kept confidential and should only be disclosed to PCBC Childhood or Students staff and the proper authorities.

3) Any person making a report is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in good faith.

Leaders should never in any way discourage others from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate Oklahoma authorities. If a leader makes a report regarding a suspicion of abuse or neglect, the leader must immediately notify a supervisor on staff with PCBC Childhood or Students Ministries. Supervisors on staff will also take appropriate action on behalf of PCBC when a report of abuse occurs.

Enforcement of Policies

Putnam City Baptist Church staff who supervise leaders are charged with the diligent enforcement of all of PCBC's policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate removal from leadership with PCBC Childhood or Students Ministries. Even suspicions or accusations of acts considered to be harmful to a child or student may result in a leader being prohibited from current and/or future participation in PCBC Childhood or Students Ministries. If a policy is violated by a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment with PCBC. Final decisions related to policy violations and corrective action will be the responsibility of the supervisors on staff with PCBC Childhood or Student Ministries.

Interactions with Kids/Students

Putnam City Baptist Church intends to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of leaders, students and children. As a precaution and to ensure strict accountability, leaders must follow these policies:

Never Alone Policy

PCBC Childhood Ministry
No child should ever be left unattended or unsupervised during activities or events hosted by PCBC Childhood Ministry. Leaders are prohibited from being alone with an individual child outside the view of others. In the event a leader finds himself or herself alone with a child, that leader should immediately move to another location where others are present. After every event, leaders must ensure every room and restroom are checked prior to leaving. Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another location where others are present.

PCBC Student Ministry
No student should ever be left unattended or unsupervised during activities or events hosted by PCBC Student Ministry. Leaders are prohibited from being alone with an individual student outside the view of others. In the event a leader finds himself or herself alone with a student, that leader should immediately move to another location where others are present. After every event, leaders must ensure every room and restroom are checked prior to leaving. Any two students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another location where others are present.

Leaders should always make attempts to include another leader or student in meetings and communications with students. Leaders may occasionally minister to students on an individual basis. In this rare event, leaders should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a location where others are present. Leaders should not visit a student in the student's home without a parent present. Leaders should not host a student in their home without parental consent and other people present. Leaders should completely avoid one-to-one meetings or communication (Phone calls, text messages, direct messages, etc.) with students of the opposite sex. No phone calls with students of opposite sex. Texts with students of the opposite sex should include a parent or another leader.

Leader Ratios

PCBC Childhood Ministry

PCBC will adhere to its established limits for child-to-leader ratios and rooms. When these limits are reached, classrooms will be closed, and parents will be asked to keep their child(ren) with them as they attend service. Exceptions to these limits can be made on behalf of first-time guests, as PCBC's heart is to never turn away a first-time guest from a classroom.

Preschool Child-to-Leader Ratios

- Preschoolers under 18 months old: 3 to 1
- Preschoolers ages 18 months – 30 months: 5 to 1
- Preschoolers ages 2 years to 3 years: 6 to 1
- Preschoolers ages 3-4 years: 7 to 1
- Pre-K (age 4 by September 1): 8 to 1

Elementary Child-to-Leader Ratios

- Kindergarten – 5th Grade: 8 to 1

PCBC Student Ministry

PCBC is committed to providing adequate leader supervision in all PCBC Student activities and programs. This policy is to ensure that at least one adult leader is present for every eight students. This policy applies to Small Group meetings in homes and all ministry events, retreats, and programs. Leaders will be assigned to groups in order to maintain this ratio. Leaders should notify a supervisor on staff with PCBC Students ministries in the event that their group fails to maintain this ratio, and additional leaders will be assigned.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, Vaping, Etc.

Leaders are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, or any illegal drugs while in any of PCBC's facilities, while traveling with the kids/students, or while working with or supervising kids/students. (See page 11 for further expectations for leader conduct.)

Nudity

Leaders should never be nude in the presence of kids and students. Kids and students should never be nude in the presence of leaders. In the event there is a situation that may call for the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes due to an accident, changing clothes to go swimming, changing clothes during a weekend or overnight retreat, showering in a community bathroom at a retreat center, etc.) Leaders should make arrangements for showering or changing clothes at a time and place out of view of kids and students. Privacy should always be respected and prioritized. Leaders should seek to change clothing privately and not in front of students when attending overnight events.

Physical Contact

PCBC is committed to protecting the kids and students in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy ministry.

- Side hugs, pats on the back, fist bumps, and other forms of minimal, appropriate physical affection between leaders and kids/students are important for a kid's/student's development and are generally suitable in a ministry setting.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to a supervisor on staff with PCBC Childhood or Student ministries.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the kids and students, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a leader.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other kids, students or leaders. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of leaders must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Leaders should not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a kid or student. A kid's/student's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Leaders are responsible for protecting kids and students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

Discipline

Leaders are prohibited from using physical discipline for behavior management of kids and students. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, push-ups, running, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by kids/students.

If a kid/student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from leaders, that kid/student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the kid's/student's parent will be contacted to pick them up. In the event of a fight or physical altercation between kids/students, leaders will first seek to verbally redirect kids/students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and to a supervisor on staff with PCBC Childhood or Student ministries.

Taboo Topics

PCBC Childhood Ministries

Certain topics of discussion are best left for parents and their kids. A non-exclusive list of such topics is below. If a leader has questions about the appropriateness of discussing a particular topic, the leader should contact their immediate supervisor on staff at PCBC.

* Human sexuality or reproduction
* Female menstrual cycle
* Personal testimonies related to drugs, alcohol, or other questionable moral behavior

PCBC Student Ministries

Leaders are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships or sexual activities with any students in the program. However, it is expected that from time-to-time discussions and lessons may address age-appropriate issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey Biblical views on these topics with general information, but no explicit details. For younger students (grades 6-8), parents will be notified in advance of these lessons and offered feedback after these lessons.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between leaders, kids, and students should be positive and uplifting. Leaders should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging and constructive. Leaders should not talk to kids and students in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, leaders are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of kids and students. (Ephesians 4:29)

Sensitive Information

Leaders should never agree to keep something secret. Leaders should always clearly communicate to kids and students that what a kid/student shares with their leaders will be shared with others if it is determined that is the best way to love and help the kid/student. The most likely people leaders would share information with would be parents and the PCBC staff.

Parent Inclusion

Parents who leave a kid/student in the care of PCBC's leaders during church services or activities should be contacted immediately if their kid/student becomes ill, injured, inconsolable, a danger to himself/herself or others, wants to leave campus, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in PCBC Childhood or Student Programs

Parents who are interested in attending a NextGen class or event must receive permission to do so from a ministry leader.

Meta-Glasses

No use of Met-Glasses is allowed at any PCBC childhood or student ministry event or activity. Ownership of Meta-Glasses should be disclosed to NextGen ministry staff.

Pictures/Video

No pictures or video should be taken of any minor without permission from a ministry leader. Media for the purpose of church usage only is allowed.

Gay/Transgender Policy

Any student that identifies as gay, lesbian, or transgendered cannot attend an overnight student ministry event. Any student struggling with same sex attraction or gender dysphoria as a temptation cannot attend an overnight ministry event. We believe that the church is a place where all sin, including sexual sin, can be forgiven and redeemed. We hope that those who are struggling with these sinful desires and lifestyles will trust our church to walk alongside them into a new life of freedom from these desires. However, it would not honor Jesus to place these same students into situations that would yield greater temptation.

Leader Conduct

Leader Conduct in Daily Life

Leaders involved in PCBC's ministries are expected to display the highest Christian values and morals at all times and "always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people" (Acts 24:16). Leaders are expected to provide a good example and not engage in any behavior that could lead kids and students into inappropriate conduct themselves. If kids/students can see it on social media, leaders are sending them a message. If it is possible for leaders to be observed in a public place, they should assume young eyes are watching. Leaders should "put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that (their) ministry will not be discredited." (1 Corinthians 10:23-33, Acts 24:16, 2 Corinthians 6:3; Romans 14:13-19).

Leaders should always ask the following questions when considering activities in their personal life:

* Could it cause confusion, disillusionment, or disharmony with kids, students, parents, or other leaders?
* Could it cause the ministry to be discredited?
* How would I explain my behavior to kids, students, parents, and PCBC Staff?

Inappropriate Behavior

Leaders, kids, and students are to avoid all the behaviors listed below. Leaders are responsible to maintain these standards within their classrooms/small groups – no exceptions. PCBC should be a safe place. All speech and conduct should be above reproach. If a leader notices that any of these are becoming a problem for their group, please contact a supervisor on staff with PCBC Childhood or Student Ministries.

* No comments or jokes that may have a sexual innuendo
* No language that is suggestive, off-color, lewd, or otherwise inappropriate
* No conversations or jokes about private body parts
* No homosexual innuendoes of any kind. No gay or lesbian jokes, cross dressing, homosexual slurs, motions, etc.
* No racial put-downs or racial jokes
* No cursing or inappropriate slang
* Never do anything in the nude or in underwear (mooning, skinny-dipping, etc)
* No pulling down pants or anything putting hands on another person's clothing
* No physical touching or activity that might produce an appearance of impropriety
* Never engage in anything that would hurt personal property or a person directly.
* Never engage in any activity (movie, video game, outing, etc.) that is inappropriate or not pre-approved by the parents of all kids and students involved.
* Do not give gifts or special privileges to a specific kid/student. This is common grooming behavior of sexual predators.
*No placing hands on a child/student in a forceful or aggressive manner.

PCBC Childhood Ministries Addendum

Along with the preceding PCBC Childhood and Students policies, there are also some specifics to address for PCBC Childhood Ministries

Security

Strangers

Only Childhood Ministry leaders, PCBC staff, parents/guardians, and children are allowed in the Childhood Ministry area. All other adults (including other church members) should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the building.

Check-in and Check-out

*Children must have either a computer-generated or handwritten security nametag to be admitted to a classroom

*A child may not be released unless a parent/guardian has the security tag which corresponds to the name tag on that child.

Restroom Policy

For children who need assistance:

*Only female leaders can provide the direct assistance

*Must have 2 adults present. (A male can be the 2nd adult present but must never assist the child)

*Leaders should always wear gloves when providing direct assistance

For children who do not require assistance:

*Leaders should check the restroom to ensure the restroom is empty prior to allowing the child to enter.

*Leaders will step out of the bathroom while the child goes to the restroom and will not let anyone else (adult or child) into the bathroom until the child is finished.

Lap Sitting

No males may have a child in their laps ages 2 years or older. No leaders (male and female) may have an Elementary child (Kindergarten and older) in their laps at any time.

Incident Reports

An incident report should be written for any injury leaving a mark, cut, or bump (any that the child did not arrive with to service). Incident reports should be signed by the ministry leader, classroom leader, and parent at the end of service.

Biting incidents and aggressive behavior (hitting and pushing) must be reported to the parents of both children, both the biter and the bitten/the aggressor and the one who was hit. Leaders should immediately notify a Childhood Ministries staff member if such events happen. If a child exhibits persistent biting or aggressive behavior, the Children's Minister or Associate Minister will notify the parents for further discussion.

Health and Wellness

Allergies

Parents are responsible for informing leaders of allergies pertaining to their child at drop-off. Leaders are asked to be aware of children with allergies in their classroom.

Medication

Leaders are not allowed to administer any type of medication to any child at any time.

Sick Kids

If a child begins to exhibit any signs of illness while in class, the leader should contact a PCBC staff member to evaluate the child.

Volunteer Age Requirements for Preschool

Unless specific permission is granted by the Children's Minister or Associate Minister, volunteers in the nursery must be at least 15 years of age. Children under age 15 may only serve in the preschool area with a parent present.

Leader Conduct

Leaders must stay alert and attentive to the children at all times. Leaders may not eat meals, read personal materials, talk or text on their phones, write letters or perform any other task that takes their attention away from caring for the children in their room.

PCBC Childhood ministries requires that leaders refrain from posting pictures of children from their classroom or small group on social media without the consent of parents and their ministry director.

In the event of a last-minute illness or emergency, leaders should contact their ministry leader to let them know.

PCBC Student Ministries Addendum

Along with the preceding PCBC Childhood and Students policies, there are also some specifics to address for PCBC Students

Monitoring of Leaders

Monitoring of leaders will include regular visits in each program to provide supervisors with the opportunity to observe leaders' interactions with students.

Transportation

Leaders may occasionally be in a position to provide transportation for students. Leaders should have verbal permission from a student's parent or guardian before providing transportation. Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Leaders should avoid all physical contact with students while in vehicles. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while transporting students. Drivers should always obey traffic laws and be sure everyone riding in the car wears a seatbelt.

Sleeping Arrangements

Certain PCBC Student retreats and trips will occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and leaders. Leaders are required to plan out sleeping arrangements for their Small Group prior to an event and submit their plans in writing (via email) to parents. In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, leaders will strictly observe the following rules.

1. Leaders are responsible for monitoring everything.
2. Leaders don't go to sleep until every student is settled in bed.
3. Leaders never sleep in the same bed with a student.
4. Leaders never sleep alone in a room with only one student.
5. At least two leaders should be in each room where one or more students are sleeping.
6. Leaders are to ensure that everyone is wearing appropriately modest sleeping attire.

Statement of Acknowledgement & Agreement

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the PCBC Childhood and Student Ministries Safety Policies and Procedures Manual. I have read this manual in its entirety and understand the importance of the matters set forth within its pages. I agree to follow and abide by these policies and guidelines during my service at Putnam City Baptist Church. Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended or revised. As changes are made public, I understand that it is my responsibility to review changes and adapt accordingly.

Leader's name (please print) _____

Leader's signature _____

Date_____