



**PART 1**

**VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. -2 Timothy 2:15 NIV*

As we grow and move forward together in Christ, we want to provide protection for our volunteers and provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and use our church facilities. We are asking that all volunteers involved with the children and youth ministries of the church complete the following screening form.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name you go by \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Work Status: \_\_\_\_ part time \_\_\_\_ full time

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ student \_\_\_\_ retired \_\_\_\_ other

Work phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this church? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No How Long? \_\_\_\_\_

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

To understand your call to serve this congregation, please respond to the following:

Tell us of your faith journey.

Why are committed to serve our church in the area of children and youth ministry?

What leadership roles have you held in this or other churches?

Please list any training or education, which you deem to be helpful preparation for children/youth ministry.

### REFERENCES

Please list three personal references

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Known \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Known \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Known \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### EXPERIENCE

(Please complete the two sections below if applicable.)

Please list all church work involving children and youth in the past five years.

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Dates served \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Dates served \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all non-church work involving children and youth in the past five years

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Dates served \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Dates served \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2  
CONFIDENTIAL**

Because of the nature of ministering to youth and children, this part of the Volunteer Application Form asks you to answer questions that are intended to protect the children/youth, the volunteers and the church. Because answers to these questions are personal and sensitive, access to this part of the application will be limited to church staff (Pastor(s), Director of Christian Education, and/or supervisory staff member)

Your service as a children/youth volunteer will be based upon the answers to the following questions. If you would like to discuss this part of the application, please contact the Director of Christian Education or supervisory staff.

Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked? Yes    No  
If yes, please explain.

Have you ever been arrested? If yes, please explain. Yes    No

Have you ever been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or are you currently charged with assault, kidnapping, abuse, neglect, possession or promotion of child pornography, indecency with a child, or sexual offense of any kind? Yes    No  
If yes, please explain.

Are you now, or have you in the past ever been subject to the reporting or registration requirements of Ch 62, Texas Code Criminal Procedure, The Sex Offender Registration Program? Yes    No

Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would affect your ability to supervise, guide, or care for children/youth? If yes, please explain. Yes    No

Has your application or request to be a children/youth volunteer, or application for employment in connection with a child/youth related job, such as at a school, day care facility, or other child/youth related activity ever been declined? If yes, please explain. Yes    No

May we have your permission to contact the organization, or group? mentioned in your response to the above questions? Yes    No

The information contained in this application is within my personal knowledge and is true and correct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please print your name

**PART 3  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have received and reviewed the following:

- Types of Child Abuse
- Indicators of Child Abuse
- Code of Conduct
  - Interaction Guidelines
  - Appropriate Contact
  - General Social Media Policy
  - Social Media Communications
  - Social Networking Code of Conduct
- Procedures for Youth and Children Attending St. Mark Events
- Texas Family Code

I agree to comply with and meet the standards in the above-named documents. If requested to do so, I will cooperate with any investigation of possible violation of St. Mark Presbyterian Church policies and rules providing complete and truthful information in an oral and/or written statement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print name

## PART 4

### Acknowledgment and Authorization For Background Check

I acknowledge receipt of the separate documents entitled DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION, and the SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT and certify that I have read and understand those documents. I hereby authorize the obtaining of "consumer reports" and/or "investigative consumer reports" by the Company at any time after receipt of this authorization and throughout my volunteer work, if applicable. To this end, I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, administrator, state or federal agency, institution, school or university (public or private), information service bureau, employer, or insurance company to furnish any and all background information requested by Verified First, Phone: 844-709-2708 / 844-709-2708, Fax: 208-848-3204, 1120 S Rackham Way, Suite 300, Meridian, ID 83642, <https://www.verifiedfirst.com> and/or Company itself. I agree that a facsimile ("fax"), electronic or photographic copy of this Authorization shall be as valid as the original. I understand that by checking the "I AGREE" box, typing my name and the last four digits of my Social Security Number or User ID, and clicking on the "SIGN ACKNOWLEDGMENT" button below, constitutes my electronic signature, dated as of when I click on the "SIGN ACKNOWLEDGMENT" button, and that by doing so: I am authorizing Verified First to conduct the background check(s) described above I am consenting to use electronic means to sign this form and have read and understand the above disclosure I acknowledge I may request a hard copy of this Disclosure and Authorization form after agreeing to the background check electronically by calling Verified First at Phone: 844-709-2708 / 844-709-2708, Fax: 208-848-3204

I agree.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*You will receive an email to login for background check within 14 days. Upon logging in, you will complete this form and the Disclosure Regarding Background Investigation. Please be sure to complete this portion in a timely manner.

## TEXAS FAMILY CODE

Vernon's Texas Statutes and codes annotated Family Code  
Title 5. The Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship  
Subtitle E. Protection of the Child  
Chapter 261. Investigation of Report of Child Abuse or Neglect  
Subchapter B. Report of Abuse or Neglect; Immunities  
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Current through End of 1999 Regular Session

### S 261.101. Persons Required to Report; Time to Report

- (a) A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.
- (b) If a professional has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected or that a child is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code, the professional shall make a report not later than the 48<sup>th</sup> hour after the hour the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected or is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code. A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. In this subsection, "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, employees of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services, juvenile probation officers, and the juvenile detention or correctional officers.
- (c) The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, a mental health professional, and an employee of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services.
- (d) Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only:
  - (1). As provided by Section 261.201; or
  - (2). To a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

**As stated in Texas Family Code S261.101 Persons Required to Report; Time to Report (a) and (b), if you have cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect, you are to make a report immediately to Child Protective Services 1-800-252-5400**

## TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Generally, child abuse is categorized in five primary forms: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse** Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, and so forth), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.
2. **Emotional Abuse** Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness and of one not only unloved but also undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.
3. **Neglect** Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.
4. **Sexual Abuse** Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exposure to child pornography or prostitution.
5. **Ritual Abuse** Abuse in which physical, sexual, or a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare, inflict psychological violations of a child regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports must not be ignored.

## INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. Individually, any one of the indicators may be a sign of a number of other more or less serious problems. When these indicators are observed in a child, they can be considered as warning and lead you to look into the situation further.

### Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

1. Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others
2. Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
3. Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property
4. Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage.
5. Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

### Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

1. Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
2. Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
3. Failure to thrive
4. Threatens or attempts suicide
5. Speech and/or eating disorders
6. Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
7. Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

### Possible Signs of Neglect

1. Failure to thrive
2. Pattern of inappropriate dress
3. Beggars or steals food; chronic hunger
4. Depression
5. Untreated medical conditions
6. Poor hygiene

### Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

1. Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage
2. Depression – cries often for no apparent reason
3. Promiscuous behavior
4. Runs away from home and refuses to return
5. Difficulty walking or sitting
6. Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
7. Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, and extreme fatigue
8. Sexually transmitted diseases



## CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct defines individual responsibilities as Ministers, leaders, employees or volunteers to meet the expectations of St. Mark Presbyterian Church with respect to behavior or conduct in the service of the ministries the church, especially those which serve children, youth and “vulnerable adults”.

### **General Requirements—**

Each person subject to this Code shall

1. Act as a team member in fulfilling ministry objectives
2. Treat children and “vulnerable adults” with respect, and fairly without regard to race, age, gender sexual orientation or religion
3. Practice those behaviors we regard as necessary and positive as well as to refrain from those behaviors which have been defined as prohibited.

### **General Prohibitions—**

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times:

1. Display affection toward a child in privacy
2. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes
3. Discuss their sexual encounters with or around youth or children or in any way involve children in their personal problems or issues
4. Date or become romantically involved with youth or children
5. Use or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of children or youth
6. Possess sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on St. Mark property or at St. Mark events
7. Have secrets with youth or children
8. Stare at or comment on youth or children’s bodies
9. Engage in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children
10. Work one-on-one with children/youth in private setting
11. Abuse youth/children in any way including (but not limited to) the following:
  - a. Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily retrain
  - b. Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
  - c. Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations
  - d. Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly
  - e. Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter
  - f. Permit children/youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation or sexual activity.
12. Manipulate or exploit a “vulnerable adult” in any way

## Specific Interaction Standards

1. **Approval and Affection** – In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

<b><i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul> <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a child</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul>

2. **Verbal Interactions** – The manner of speaking with children establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

<b><i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Appropriate jokes</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name-calling</li> <li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</li> <li>• Secrets</li> <li>• Cursing</li> <li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li>• Shaming</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks</li> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family</li> </ul>

3. **Out of Program Contact** - the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

<b><i>Appropriate Outside Contact</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Outside Contact</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking groups of children on an outing</li> <li>• Attending sporting activities with groups of children</li> <li>• Attending functions at a child's home, with parents present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking one child on an outing without the parent's written permission</li> <li>• Visiting one child in the child's home, without a parent present</li> <li>• Entertaining one child in the home or employee or volunteer</li> <li>• A lone child spending the night with an employee or volunteer</li> </ul>

4. **One-on-One Interactions** – Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth or child, private one-on-one meetings with a child are prohibited unless approved in advance by (Chair, Employment Committee). When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply:

<b><i>One-on-One Interaction Guidelines</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When meeting one-on-one with a youth/child, always do so in a public place in full view of others.</li> <li>• Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.</li> <li>• If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.</li> <li>• Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a youth/child and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)</li> <li>• Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.</li> </ul> <p><i>To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a child.</i></p>

5. **Social Media – Electronic Communications –**

**General Social Media Policy** -- No Minister, employee, or volunteer shall create or use a media site (web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the St. Mark without the explicit permission of the Communications Committee, Director of Christian Education or Pastor. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the St. Mark, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official St. Mark

sites/channels when they have been made available by the St. Mark. These may include web pages, Facebook, e-mail and similar means.

### **Social Media Communications –**

In order to extend the life of the Church, enhance communication and develop participation of young people in the life of the St. Mark and its ministry, St. Mark will authorize certain persons to manage the official website, Youth Instagram page and organization Facebook page. Use by Ministers of private pages and private profiles are prohibited.

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of St. Mark programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with youth/children.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the St. Mark, shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from youth/children under age as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by under-age children is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

If a child reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse”.

When using Facebook/Instagram/Snap Chat (or the like) to communicate with youth/children, the authorized employee or volunteer shall inform parents/guardians of each child that the latter is communicating with the person via social media, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a Group.

### **Social Networking Code of Conduct –**

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the Code of Conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized employee or volunteer shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children (or other client group) and parents/guardians.

## PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ATTENDING ST. MARK EVENTS

### Defining ages—

Nursery: includes both Infants and Pre-k Students

Infants: Birth to age 2 years

Pre-K Students: 3 – 5year old children, whom have not entered kindergarten

Elementary Students: Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Youth: 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

### Regular On-Campus Events—

This includes Sunday school classes, nursery care, youth meetings, etc.

- Nursery children will be signed-in and out by parent/guardian/appointed adult on Nursery Sign-in/out Sheet (APPENDIX E) with a nursery employee.
- Elementary students should be escorted to and from classes by parents, volunteers or staff.
- Youth may be dropped off by parents or drive themselves to regular on-campus events. A Transportation Form (APPENDIX G) is required.

### On-Campus Special Event Procedures—

Special Events include, but are not limited to: Vacation Bible School, First Fridays, God's Gift Factory and any drop-off event. These events usually include children from the community that are not members of St. Mark.

- All children left on campus without parents must have Permission Form (APPENDIX F) on file. This permission form includes medical release, medical/dietary/special needs, photo release, and release of liability. It is updated annually and a new form should be filled out each year so information is kept up to date.
- Nursery Children will be signed-in and out by parent/guardian/appointed adult on Nursery Sign-in/out Sheet (APPENDIX E) with a nursery employee.
- Elementary Children will be signed-in and out on a roster by parent/guardian/appointed adult.
- Youth do not require an adult to sign-in or out, however a Transportation Form with contact information for parents must be on file.

## **Off-Campus Event Procedures—**

Off-Campus Special Events include, but are not limited to: youth outings, All-Church Retreat, service projects, pool parties and riding on the St. Mark float during parade.

- Children attending off-campus events should be accompanied by parent or an adult designated by parent.
- Youth attending off-campus events should have permission from parent to attend and a Transportation Form (APPENDIX G) should be on file.
- Youth may not drive themselves to off-campus events when leaving from St. Mark without special permission from parent or youth director.
- For over-night events, youth will have at least one sponsor of each sex that is attending event. (ie. 2 female youth and 4 male youth = 1 male and 1 female adult sponsor).