

Child Protection at Shades

Process Steps

1. Volunteer application
2. Background check
3. Awareness training
4. Reference check
5. Personal follow-up meeting

Volunteer Implementation

- January 15, 2020 Application available for completion by all adults who volunteer where minors are present
- » Background check sent by email upon completion and submission of application, if not current
 - » Awareness training sent by email upon completion and submission of application
- January 2020 Personal reference contact begins for endorsement
- February 2020 Scheduling for personal follow-up meetings begin
- March 15, 2020 Application, background check, and awareness training deadline for all adults who volunteer where minors are present
- June 15, 2020 Process completion deadline (steps 1-5 listed above) for all current adults who volunteer where minors are present
- June 15, 2020 Adult volunteers who have not completed the child protection process will not be able to volunteer where minors are present until the process has been completed in full

* All adults who volunteer where minors are present will continue serving during implementation unless otherwise stated.

* During implementation adults who desire to begin volunteering in a role where minors are present must complete the volunteer application, background check, and awareness training before they are approved to do so.

* During implementation adult volunteers who participate in overnight activities where minors are present must complete the volunteer application, background check, and awareness training before they are approved to do so.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I get a copy of the full Child Protection Policy?

Copies of the Child Protection Policy are available at the church office or online at shades.org/cp.

Why has the policy been updated? Has something happened at Shades?

No, nothing has happened at Shades to prompt changes to the Child Protection Policy. There has not been an occurrence of abuse to a minor under our care reported at Shades for at least the past 22+ years - during the time that Danny has been our pastor. The previous policy was implemented in 2003 and needed to be reviewed in light of changes in facilities and technology, and to include best practices in preventing abuse.

Who created the updated policy and process?

In February 2019, a Child Protection Team was formed at Shades after a series of articles were published in the Houston Chronicle revealing cases of abuse within several other Southern Baptist Churches. The team is comprised of ministers from Preschool, Children, Student, and Community Life ministries, as well as directors from the Early Learning Center, Human Resources, Contingency Operations, and Administration. This group was tasked with reviewing our policies and procedures related to the adult supervision of minors, and with developing a comprehensive plan for abuse prevention and care for those who have been abused. They evaluated common best practices, attended workshops and conferences, and spent hundreds of man-hours prayerfully deliberating the best next steps for us here at Shades.

Who approved the updated policy and process?

The Child Protection Team unanimously recommended the updated policy and volunteer process to the Executive Pastor. The Senior Pastor endorsed the policy. The Deacon Body and Finance Committee reviewed and approved all aspects.

I completed documents several years ago that address Child Protection. Are those directives still in place?

The new policy dated January 1, 2020 requires that all volunteers complete the newly implemented application process for serving with minors.

Who qualifies as an *adult who volunteers where minors are present*?

Anyone who serves in a reoccurring or event volunteer position where minors are present. Examples of this are Sunday School leaders, Worship Care volunteers, DGroup leaders, MIT leaders, Student & Kids Choir leaders, tech and First Impression Team members who volunteer in areas where minors are present, mission team leaders/chaperones, camp and trip chaperones, VBS volunteers, etc.

Who qualifies as a *minor*?

A minor is anyone under the age of 18 or any person over the age of 18 who remains under the legal care and guardianship of an adult.

Are minors who volunteer with minors required to complete this process?

Currently, minors are not required to complete the Child Protection process. The Child Protection Team is still working on volunteer protocol for minors.

How much time is this process going to take?

Altogether, volunteers will give just over 2 hours to the process during the time of completion. Only three of the five process steps require time from volunteers. The Adult Volunteer Application should take a maximum of 15 minutes if the applicant has all of the information required with them at the time of completion. The awareness training consists of 9 videos that together total 1 hour and 20 minutes. Videos do not have to be viewed in one sitting. The 25-question online quiz required after the completion of the training videos should take a maximum 10 minutes. The Personal Follow-up Meeting should require a maximum of 20 minutes.

What is the Personal Follow-up Meeting?

Each interactive, personal meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss volunteer experiences, questions about the Child Protection Policy, and ways that we can best equip each volunteer to lead and care for minors at Shades. Meetings will include the volunteer applicant and two leaders at Shades. Meetings will last approximately 20 minutes, will take place on campus at Shades, and must be done in person.

How do I schedule a time for my Personal Follow-up Meeting?

Scheduling can be done online at shades.org/cp beginning February 1, 2020. Current volunteers will receive a reminder email to schedule their meeting time.

Can my spouse and I have our Personal Follow-up Meetings together?

Each meeting is intended to be with each individual volunteer. Married couples should schedule individual meeting times.

How do I know if I "passed"?

Once your application has been processed, references checked, and personal follow-up meeting completed, a Shades minister will contact you.

What if I don't have a computer or need assistance?

Please let us know and we'll be glad to help. Call 205-822-1670 to get connected with someone who can assist you.

What safeguards are in place to protect the personal information shared as part of the application process?

As with other private information shared with Shades for tax, financial, or personal matters, confidentiality and security are paramount. All paper files are kept in locked and secure cabinets. Information shared electronically will be accessible only to individuals with high-level authorization. All Shades staff operate under a policy of non-disclosure of confidential information as outlined in the employee handbook.

What is the renewal process for volunteer where minors are present?

The details of the volunteer renewal process are still being determined, but will include an updated background check and additional training among other requirements. This will likely take place every 3 years.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Contact the Executive Pastor's office with any questions or concerns by emailing cp@shades.org or by calling 205-822-1670.

January 20, 2020