

Houghton Wesleyan Church
Youth and Children's Ministries Code of Conduct

We, as youth and children's ministry workers (hereafter "Staff"), at HWC, are people who acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives and have a personal relationship with God through faith in Him. As a community we are committed to growing and maturing in our relationship with God through quiet times, active attendance at HWC and involvement in accountability. We commit together to stop serving if, at any time, our personal spirituality becomes compromised.

1. To protect HWC staff and program participants (hereafter "PP"), at no time during a HWC program may a staff person be alone with a single PP where the staff person cannot be observed by others. There will always be two approved adults, 18 or older, present.
2. Staff shall never leave a PP unsupervised.
3. Staff will make sure a restroom is not occupied before allowing PPs under the 1st grade level to use the facilities, and will stand in the doorway while they are using the restroom. If staff are assisting younger PPs, doors to the facility must remain open.
4. Staff will respect PP's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. Their right to say "no" is to be encouraged and respected. Other than diapering and wiping of children who need help, PPs are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
5. Staff will conduct and supervise private activities (diapering, putting on bathing suits, showering) in pairs. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
6. Staff shall not abuse PPs or use corporal punishment of any kind. This includes physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, mental abuse or neglect. No type of abuse will be tolerated and is cause for immediate dismissal.
7. Staff will use appropriate touch including pats on the back or shoulder, side hugs, handshakes and high fives. Staff will refrain from full frontal hugging, touching of personal areas, or patting of the buttocks.
8. Staff will not give gifts or special favors to individual PPs, or show preferential treatment to an individual or group of PPs to the exclusion of others.
9. Staff will maintain only positive and appropriate social media and/or web presence. Any social media or electronic interactions with PPs will be appropriate and documented. Any inappropriate communication received from children or youth will be brought immediately to the attention of a supervisor.
10. Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward others.
11. Staff will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all PPs equally regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual identity or culture.

12. Staff are committed to a lifestyle that is both godly and above reproach, recognizing that their lifestyle and decisions are a model for PPs. Therefore:
 - Smoking, use of tobacco, or using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of PPs or parents during church sponsored activities is prohibited.
 - Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment is prohibited.
 - Staff will not wear inappropriate or provocative clothing.
 - Staff will not possess or use music or other media items containing explicit or sexual language, images or messages.
13. Staff may not be alone with PPs they meet in HWC's programs outside of HWC without parental permission. Group activities require written parental permission. Activities with individuals require verbal parental permission.
14. Staff are not to transport PPs in their personal vehicles without parental permission.
15. Staff may not date PPs. Any knowledge or suspicion of an inappropriate relationship between a staff member and a PP should be reported immediately.
16. Under no circumstances should staff release PPs to anyone other than the authorized parent/guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with HWC). Nursery children may be given in exchange for the pager the child was signed out with.
17. Staff are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the proper authorities and are required to read and sign all policies relating to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse and attend prevention training.
18. Staff commit to attendance at training meetings and to be consistent and timely in the programs they commit to. They agree to communicate with their supervisor if they will be absent.

I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.

Print Staff Name

Staff Signature & Date

Supervisor Signature & Date