



**Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc.**

**Parent Handbook**

**2021**

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# Welcome

We are pleased you have chosen Voice of Hope to provide a quality out of school experience for your scholar. Voice of Hope has been offering out of school programs in West Dallas for 40 years and we have a proven record of success. Thank you for entrusting us with your most valuable treasures – your scholars.

This handbook contains vital information regarding services, payments and programming. Please read through this handbook thoroughly and become familiar with all policies and procedures. If you need additional information, feel free to contact the Program Manager at 214-631-7027.

For the past 40 years, Voice of Hope has provided youth development programs in west Dallas. The focus today and going forward is giving youth what they need to be Christian leaders *now*. The Voice of Hope promise is to “light the fire within,” helping each scholar reach their full potential.

# Hours of Operation Year Round

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00AM – 5:00PM

ASPIRE Hours: Monday – Friday 2:30PM – 6:30PM

Holiday Closures:

- One week in November for Thanksgiving
- Two weeks in December/January for Christmas
- MLK Day in January
- Presidents Day
- One week in March/April for Spring Break
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day

## Discuss Policies and Procedures of Operation with Director

Parents/guardians can review minimum standards and licensing information in the Director's office where a copy is available any time parents/guardians want more information.

Parents/guardians are welcome to discuss all policies and procedures with the Director at a time that is convenient for both parties. The Director can be reached by the following methods:

- Face to Face meeting
- Email
- By phone

## Reservation of Right to Change Policies and/or Procedures

Voice of Hope reserves the right to add, delete, modify or amend the policies and procedures provided for the program or program handbook, upon a ten-day written notice to the parents/guardians.

# Voice of Hope Ministries COVID-19 Protocols

Voice of Hope (VOH) has instituted new protocols and procedures for staff and visitors in order to provide a safe and healthy campus. By following these guidelines and practices we can mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 at VOH.

<http://www.voiceofhope.org/covidprescreen>

## Employee Requirements:

- All team members must watch the designated training video.
- All staff must wear a mask while on campus and a face shield while doing outdoor activities that do not permit social distancing.
- All staff are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines of washing hands often, using hand sanitizer when hand washing is not an option, cover your cough and sneezes then wash hands immediately, and stay home when feeling sick.
- Staff members must notify their supervisor if they need to stay home due to illness or exposure.
- All staff members must complete the screening each day before entering the campus:
  - Download the Envoy mobile app in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#).
  - If you cannot download the app, you must complete the screening on the iPad kiosk upon entering the reception area.

## Employee Guidelines:

- If you are sick and experience any of the following symptoms stay at home:
  - Fever of 100 F (37.8 C) or above, or possible fever symptoms like alternating chills and sweating
  - Cough
  - Trouble breathing, shortness of breath or severe wheezing
  - Chills or repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle aches
  - Sore throat
  - Loss of smell or taste, or a change in taste
  - Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
  - Headache
- If you have been tested for COVID-19 and have received a positive result or are waiting for your results, stay at home.
- If you have had these types of contact with someone with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 stay at home:
  - While you weren't both wearing masks or, when touching shared items, you weren't wearing gloves
  - Shared a home
  - Been within 6 feet of each other for at least 5 minutes
  - Been sneezed on or coughed on
  - Shared eating or drinking utensils or other items
  - Hugged or kissed
- If you have symptoms, have been tested, or have been around someone who has tested positive you may be required to stay home and self-quarantine for up to 14 days.

- Contact your supervisor immediately to determine the necessary action steps based on your symptoms, exposure, and test results.

### **Facilities and Sanitizing**

- The VOH support services team will undergo training with sanitizing equipment and best practices for cleaning and sanitizing.
- The high traffic areas of campus will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- We must all do our part in helping to maintain a safe and clean campus:
  - Keep your office and workspace clutter free so that it is easy to sanitize and keep clean.
  - Throw away tissues and any food items immediately.
  - Wipe down frequently used objects such as keyboards, mice, phones, light switches and doorknobs.
  - Plexiglass dividers have been provided and are encouraged when interacting with other staff or guests when distancing is not possible.
  - Wear gloves when working with food or donated items.
  - Only one person should use the restroom at a time and use sanitizing spray before you leave.
  - The water fountains will not be available during this time. Water bottles or personal drinking cups should be used and taken home daily.
- If you need any cleaning or sanitizing supplies contact the support services staff for items such as masks, gloves, sanitizing spray, or wipes.

### **Volunteers and Guests:**

- All volunteers and guests must complete the screening questions and be approved to be on campus.
- All volunteers and guests will be required to wear a mask while inside the building.
- If they are performing outside duties and can maintain distancing, then a mask is not required.
- Volunteers should be assigned to tasks encouraging distancing and numbers should be kept below 50 total on campus at any one time and with groups assigned to various areas on campus.
- After a group of volunteers has completed their activity, the campus will be cleaned and sanitized.

### **Programs and Sites:**

- All VOH sites will operate with the same health and safety procedures
  - Scholars must wear masks
  - Handwashing frequently
  - A support services staff member will be onsite to perform cleaning and sanitizing and to support health protocols and practices.
  - All staff and scholars will be screened before entering the program area. Anyone experiencing symptoms will be required to isolate and be picked up as soon as possible.
  - Any scholar who is experiencing symptoms will be accompanied to the isolation room and the school's procedures for communicating possible sickness or exposure will be followed.
  - No water fountain use
  - Scholars will be kept in groups encouraging distancing and enabling contact tracing with as few classroom/section changes as possible.
  - Scholars will be escorted outside for pick-up

For more information and updates to prevention and how to keep healthy and safe see the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>.

# Voice of Hope Programs

## ASPIRE

ASPIRE is an after school program at multiple sites for pre-K through high school. For details, see [Voice of Hope ASPIRE](#).

## Virtual Tutor

Virtual Tutor provides 1:1 tutoring for free. For details, see [Voice of Hope Virtual Tutoring](#).

## Redeeming STEM

Redeeming STEM is an out of school program on Saturdays at our Main Campus in West Dallas serving primarily middle school girls to help them develop their natural talents and interests in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. For details, see [Voice of Hope Redeeming STEM](#).

## SOAR Summer Camp

SOAR Summer Camp is an out of school program summer day camp in June and July. For details, see [Voice of Hope SOAR Summer Camp](#).

# Program Enrollment Process

Voice of Hope operates in accordance with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission policy, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, disability, religion, political belief or national origin.

Pre-registration is strongly recommended due to capacity limits determined by State Licensing Requirements.

Enrollment is done on a first come, first served basis and is not “rolled over” from the previous year. If no space is available, applications will be placed on a waiting list. Completing the application is not a guarantee of a spot in a program.

Enrollment may vary by program but, before a scholar attends a Voice of Hope program, a current enrollment form signed by a parent or guardian must be submitted along with any applicable enrollment fees. The enrollment form includes all immunization and consent forms pertinent to the specific program. This form can be obtained at any of the program sites or from the Voice of Hope website: [www.voiceofhope.org](http://www.voiceofhope.org).

In general, there are 3 steps to the Enrollment Process:

1. **Application:** Complete the specific program application online at [www.voiceofhope.org](http://www.voiceofhope.org). (Optionally, you can download and print the application and fax it to 214.631.7877 attention to Alex Hardesty. Or download it, complete it on your computer, and then attach it to an email to [Ahardesty@voiceofhope.org](mailto:Ahardesty@voiceofhope.org).)
2. **Payment:** your monthly payment is due to reserve a spot in the specific program. Payment can be made online or at the main campus with a debit/credit card, money order or check.



3. Confirmation: You will receive an email or call with confirmation and start date for the specific program.

## Meals and Food Services

Depending on the program, Voice of Hope provides meals and snacks. Voice of Hope participates in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program, ensuring that all meals are providing the highest quality and nutritional value according to their guidelines. At least the minimum portion of food, milk and other beverages for all scholars and adults will be given per CACFP guidelines.

*Our facility is nut-free. Please do not send any food items with your scholar that contain nuts or nut butters.*

## Procedures for Meal Time

**Appropriate staff/scholar ratios and group sizes shall be maintained at mealtime.**

All staff and scholars will wash their hands with soap and warm running water, using proper techniques before coming to the eating area. All scholars will be instructed to wash their hands again if their hands are used to cover for sneezing or to wipe their nose.

All scholars will stay seated at the table until everyone is done eating, unless an Instructor, Director, or designated person supervises them.

## Scholar Code of Conduct

The Scholar Code of Conduct is offered as a guide to the development of scholar expectations. These standards assert that scholars should be encouraged and taught to:

### Exercise self-control

- Resolve conflict in an appropriate manner.
- Refrain from name calling, teasing, hitting, pinching, kicking, biting, swearing, or use of bad language.

### Demonstrate a positive attitude

- Take a leadership role.
- Be polite.
- Use courteous language.
- Be cooperative.
- Be appropriately dressed and groomed.

### Respect the rights and feeling of others

- Behave in a manner that does not disrupt others.
- Treat others with courtesy and respect (i.e., put oneself in the place of the other person, whether that person is another camper, Instructor, parent/guardian, community person, administrator, lunchroom or custodial worker, or volunteer.)

### Take responsibility for Voice of Hope property

- Respect the building, ground and property.
- Refrain from standing or climbing on toys, chairs, tables, or furniture.
- Keep the campus free from trash and graffiti.

### Support the learning process

- Attend regularly and on time.
- Be prepared (i.e., bring assignments, books, and supplies).
- Listen carefully to instructions.
- Participate in class activities.

## Proper Scholar Dress Code

### Appropriate Attire

- All on-site scholars shall wear clean clothing that is not torn or damaged. Shirts shall be worn inside slacks, pants or shorts with belts at all times unless the shirts are designed to be worn without a belt.
- All scholars shall wear appropriate footwear. Scholars shall not wear house slippers or shoes that look like house slippers.
- All scholars must wear appropriate clothing for specific on-site programs, such as Voice of Hope camp shirts for SOAR Summer Camp field trips.

### Inappropriate Attire

- Low-cut pants, low-rise pants, sagging pants and shorts.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, hair rollers, hair curlers, plastic hair bags, hair nets, sweat bands, skull caps, and other similar clothing.
- Low-cut blouses, spaghetti straps or revealing provocative clothes.
- No derogatory insignia on clothes.
- The length of dresses, skirts, and shorts shall be no shorter than "finger-tip length" with arms in normal position, i.e., with arms hanging naturally, as the scholar is standing straight and upright.
- Scholars shall not wear bedtime attire, such as pajamas, or undershirts or undergarments as outerwear.

## Disciplinary Action System


**Attention Parents/guardians & Scholars: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.**

Voice of Hope takes a positive approach to discipline. Discipline is used to teach a scholar, not to punish a scholar. We achieve this through positive redirection and consistent routines. Instructors and other Voice of Hope personnel will use redirection and reminders as a form of guidance. In addition, if a scholar misbehaves, the following Disciplinary Action System will be implemented:

### Verbal Warnings

- ① *Written warning*- Instructor informed
- ② *Written warning*- Instructor calls parent or guardian and receives documented response
- ③ *Written warning*- Scholar is brought to the Director, Program Manager or designated person who schedules a Parent Conference (**Parent Conference is MANDATORY**)

### Suspension

 If your scholar receives 3 written warnings, a Parent Conference will be scheduled to inform the parent/guardian of the suspension and the reason(s). The Conference must include the scholar, Instructor, parent/guardian, and Director and any involved party. If a parent/guardian refuses to have a conference within 3 days of occurrence, the scholar will be suspended for THREE (3) program sessions.

***NOTE: Fighting and/or cursing will result in an automatic suspension.***

## Dismissal

☹️ If a scholar is suspended two times, the scholar will be dismissed for the rest of the enrolled program. The Program Manager will consult with the Director before anyone is dismissed. Before a scholar is dismissed, Instructors and the Program Manager must have had a Parent Conference. The outcome of the Parent Conference must be documented and placed in the scholar's folder.

## Attendance

- ⇒ Two UNEXCUSED absences in a row will result in a Parent Conference.
- ⇒ EXCUSED absences include the following:
  - Sickness:* If there is a fever or if the sickness or rash is contagious.
  - Death:* Family member and/or a close friend

# Procedures for Releasing Scholars

For on-site programs, when picking up your scholar, please sign them out on the sign out sheet for departure. Please talk to one of our staff for suggestions and help if the drop-off or pick-up time is especially difficult for you and/or your scholar. We want to make these pleasant times for you.

1. A scholar may only be released to a parent/guardian or other authorized individual listed on the Enrollment form, even if a parent/guardian's permission was given to other individuals.
  - We will also keep copies of the identifications of the parent/guardian and other approved pick-up persons with the scholar's file.
2. A scholar will not be released unless a parent/guardian gives verbal or written consent.
  - When a parent/guardian calls to say someone else will pick up their scholar, they will be asked if they are at home or at work, then using the numbers listed on the enrollment application a staff member will call them back to verify it is really the parent/guardian placing the call. The parent/guardian placing the call cannot give us a number. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will not release the scholar.
  - If someone comes to pick up a scholar without a parent/guardian's permission and their name is on the Enrollment form, we will call the parent/guardian before releasing the scholar to make sure this is what they want.
  - If a written letter is given, we will call the parent/guardian to verify it was they who actually wrote the note. This can be done prior to pick-up time. (This is not necessary if the note is handed directly to a staff person who knows the parent/guardian).
3. If a person unknown to staff picks up your scholar, we will ask for picture identification. We will compare the picture with the person and make sure the name is listed on the Enrollment form. This even applies to parents/guardians who are unknown to the releaser.
4. The approved pick-up person must sign out to prove the scholar was released in their care.
  - The pick-up person must make contact with the releaser to state that they are going to take the scholar from the program site.
  - If the pick-up person forgets to sign out, the releaser must call to make sure the scholar is with them.

## **ASPIRE After School Pick-Up**

### Heights Primary and Secondary Preparatory

Voice of Hope Buses/van will be at all schools at release time to pick up scholars\* \*\*. Monitors will go into Heights Primary and pick up all scholars that are held by their Instructors and check them off on the Bus Route Attendance sheet. Monitors will remain outside in vehicles at Heights Secondary while middle school scholars are released outside.

\*We DO pick up on Early Release Days.

## Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

Scholars attending VOH ASPIRE shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Time planned for outdoor and physical activity depends on the age group and weather conditions. Activities shall include structured play (led by the Program Educator) and free play (not led by the Program Educator).

- **Scholars shall be dressed appropriately for the weather**, including wearing appropriate seasonal clothing and footwear, so they can participate fully, move freely, and play safely.
- While outdoors, children are encouraged to exercise, run, and play with friends.

## Field Trip and Water Activities Procedure

Listed below are the steps we take when we go on field trips:

- Each scholar wears a Voice of Hope shirt with our logo on it and each caregiver has a Voice of Hope shirt and large identification badge.
- Each caregiver has an attendance sheet with scholars names and parent/guardian numbers to take attendance.
- Transportation: Each scholar is checked before they get on the bus or van, once they arrive at their destination, before they depart back to Voice of Hope and once they get off the bus or van. All our buses and vans have numbers so whatever van or bus scholars ride on when going on the trip is the same van or bus they will return to Voice of Hope on.
- One caregiver that is not assigned to any scholars will sit in the designated area with the medical kit, parent/guardian information, extra water and food for when a scholar needs medical care.
- Each caregiver has a two-way radio for communication purposes.
- Parents/guardians are notified through flyers and phone calls when the scholars are going on a trip. We also ask parents/guardians if they want their scholar to participate. When a parent/guardian doesn't want the scholar to go on a particular field trip, the scholars will stay at the program site doing activities.
- For 4-6 years old we use a ratio of 1:5 (one caregiver for every five scholars)
- For 7-10 years old we use a ratio of 1:7 (one caregiver for every seven scholars)
- For 11-18 years old we use a ratio of 1:10 (one caregiver for every ten scholars)

Listed below are the steps for water activities:

- Ages 5-8 will have water activities though sprinkler systems and water ring games only (no wading pool). Each scholar will be supervised by a caregiver during the activities and will be limited to 8 scholars at a time.
- Ages 9-18 will go to the Dallas Parks and Recreation swimming pool where there are at least 4 lifeguards on duty during rotating shifts. We will only take 25 scholars at a given time to the swimming pool. There will be two caregivers with the scholars. One caregiver will get in the pool with the scholars and the other caregiver will be watching scholars in the water and will have a medical kit present.

## Parent Notification Procedure

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures and protocols for the dissemination of notices, e-mails, telephone calls, and other methods of communication sent home for the purpose of informing parents/guardians of any issues relevant to their scholar's educational and spiritual growth as well as sickness.

Instructor Notices – The most frequent communication between the school and parents/guardians of school-aged scholars is the notice sent home by the Instructor regarding the progress of scholars. Such notices are provided on an as-needed basis as determined by the Instructor. Instructors may seek to inform parents/guardians of regular progress, concerns, upcoming events, or requested support. Parents/guardians may request a Parent conference to gain further insight into the progress and performance of their scholar. These notices are voluntary and do not require a Director’s input or approval.

Newsletters – Another frequent communication between the school and parents/guardians is the newsletter typically provided by the Director on a regular basis. Newsletters provide information to parents/guardians on special events, upcoming activities, and selected topics of interest or importance to families. Such newsletters offer an overview of activities usually comprised of Instructors’ contributions.

Bus Routes Notification – Prior to the start of each school year, the transportation department posts the bus routes for each area in West Dallas. The reminder is mailed to every household in the community so the parent/guardian has all appropriate information on bus routes. Concerns regarding bus routes can be directed to the Transportation Director or Program Manager.

School Cancellations/Delays – When school must be delayed, cancelled or dismissed early, the school department notifies parents/guardians through the public radio and television stations. The decision to consider school closing is made with the safety of scholars and staff in mind.

Parent Conferences – Voice of Hope will have a time where Instructors and parents/guardians can meet. These conferences provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to briefly discuss the progress of their scholar. Additionally, Voice of Hope offers an open house early in the school year. This provides parents/guardians with an opportunity to visit the classroom. The combined opportunities of Instructor Notices, scholar work, and Parent Conferences provide multiple opportunities for parents/guardians to monitor and support scholar achievement.

School Notices – On an as-needed basis, schools send home notices related to such things as field trips, lunch menus, calendars, language surveys, permission slips, and parent/guardian meeting notices.

Health Information/Emergency Procedure – Annually, and on a regular basis, Voice of Hope requires parents or guardians to provide health information and emergency procedure cards for Voice of Hope to maintain accurate information on the health needs and communication protocols for scholars and families. State regulations require that scholars receive regular medical check-ups and inoculation.

Medical Notices – When an outbreak occurs, particularly where the medical condition is contagious, Voice of Hope will notify parents/guardians in a timely manner. Medical outbreaks, including head lice, follow a standard protocol of notification. Voice of Hope always works to ensure that medical conditions are contained, that scholars are protected from exposure to the extent possible, and that parents/guardians are notified. Please know that the health and welfare of your scholar is at the forefront of any decision of the school system at all times.

Fire and Safety Issues – When a school identifies a concern with fire or safety, a plan is followed that has been developed. The first effort is to ensure the safety of the scholars and staff. This may require being sheltered in place and Voice of Hope locked down from perceived threats. Or, the scholars may be immediately evacuated such as in the case of a fire. Voice of Hope has an emergency plan that is followed. First actions are to ensure scholars and staff safety. Parents/guardians are notified subsequent to taking the required action to ensure safety. If Voice of Hope remains open during a reported threat, please be assured that local authorities have fully investigated the matter and have determined that no danger is present for scholars.

# Open Door Policy

Voice of Hope has an open door policy for all parents/guardians. Parents/guardians can drop in at any time to observe their scholar, program activities, the building, ground, and equipment. They must first check in with the Director and secure a visitor's badge before they can walk the grounds of Voice of Hope.

# Parent Participation on Activities

Voice of Hope offers parents/guardians numerous opportunities to participate in activities with their scholar. Parents/guardians receive a calendar with all planned activities. Parents/guardians can let the Instructor/caregiver or Director know what activities they want to participate in so Voice of Hope can include them in the scholar/chaperon ratio and cost.

# Texas Penal Code

Voice of Hope will inform parents verbally that under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child -care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

# Security

Voice of Hope is committed to actively safeguarding scholars from harm and to ensuring that scholar's right to protection are fully realized. We take seriously our responsibility to promote scholar-safe practices and to protect scholars from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in any form.

In addition, we will take positive action to prevent scholar abusers from becoming involved with Voice of Hope in any way and will take stringent measures against any Voice of Hope Board members, volunteers, interns, sponsors, consultants, contractors, vendors, advisers, and guests.

To this end, All Staff and Caregivers:

- Familiarize themselves with situations that may present risks and learn how to deal with those situations.
- Contribute to an environment where scholars are able to recognize unacceptable behavior and feel able to discuss their rights and concerns;
- Wherever practical, ensure that they and other meet scholars openly;
- Raise concerns about any case of suspected abuse in accordance with applicable procedures.

Further, as participation in Voice of Hope programs, a bond of trust between Voice of Hope, scholars in involved in Voice of Hope programs, and their families, and all Voice of Hope Staff and Caregivers must also:

- Refrain from disclosing information (including the use of scholar's last names and their community information, including name and location) that could be used to identify where they live or their families to unauthorized persons, including the general public;
- Handle with sensitivity scholar's and family's personal information and images.

## 1. How do you know your scholar is safe?

All Voice of Hope Staff and volunteers are background checked by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

## 2. Visitors and Approved Pick up.

All visitors entering the building must check in at the front desk. They must show identification and sign-in and sign-out.

Only approved people will be able to pick up your scholar. If a person comes to pick up a scholar that is not on the approved list, they will be turned away and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

### 3. Sign-In and Sign-Out

All scholars will be signed into the program by VOH staff using the scholar specific QR code. All parents, guardians and approved individuals must have the scholar designated QR code/carline tag to pick up the scholar. The QR code/carline tag must be placed on the dashboard of the individual's car. If the QR code is not available, the primary parent will need to confirm/approve pick up.

## Local Licensing Office, DFPS Child Abuse Hotline and Website Information

### Local Licensing Office

- **Dallas**  
8700 North Stemmons Freeway,  
Suite 104  
Dallas, Texas 75247  
(214) 212-5603 (Licensing Rep- Janet Bates)  
(800) 582-6036  
[www.dfps.state.tx](http://www.dfps.state.tx).

### Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

For information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation, visit: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_Us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp)

### Abuse Hotline and Website

- Call the Texas Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1-800-252-5400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide
- Make your report through their secure website and you will receive a response within 24 hours:

[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)

## Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children

Voice of Hope staff is trained annually to recognize signs of scholar abuse and neglect. Texas law says anyone who thinks a scholar is being abused, neglected or exploited must report it to DFPS. Voice of Hope will work with various community resources to better inform parents and staff about issues regarding scholar abuse and neglect and prevention techniques by suggesting opportunities to learn more. One such option is to take the free online course offered by TDPRS. If you have reason to suspect scholar abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you of next steps. Scholar Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

# Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse

## Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

## Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children



## Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

## Medical Policies

### Exclusion Due to Illness

Each day when the scholars arrive at the facility we will:

- Check the overall health of each scholar, noting any unusual symptoms and asking parents/guardians about any unusual health or behavior while the scholar was not in our care.
- If a scholar does not appear well enough to participate in activities as usual and/or has any symptoms requiring removal from the Voice of Hope setting (see below), the scholar will not be allowed to attend the onsite program at that time.

We will continue to watch each scholar's health throughout the day while in our care. Because infections spread easily among scholars, we will look for symptoms requiring removal of a scholar from our program (see below).

If we see these symptoms in a scholar, we will:

- Immediately separate the scholar from the other scholars.
- Contact the parents/guardians to have the scholar picked up.
- Continue to observe the scholar for other symptoms.

*If the scholar does not respond, is having trouble breathing, or is having a convulsion, we will call 911.*

### Symptoms Requiring Removal of a Scholar from the Voice of Hope Setting

- Fever: temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally.
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, or bloody stools, not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Vomiting: 1 instance unless a health care provider had determined the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the scholar is not in danger of dehydration.
- Body rash with fever.
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands.
- Severe coughing: wheezing or the scholar gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- Eye discharge: thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye (conjunctivitis).
- Yellowish skin or eyes.

- Persistent abdominal pain: continuing for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other symptoms of illness.
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider has determined the sores are not contagious.
- Head lice: until after first treatment.
- Scabies: until treatment has been completed.
- Tuberculosis: until a health care provider states that the scholar is on appropriate therapy and can attend the program.
- Impetigo: until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Hand Foot and Mouth: until sores have dried and crusted and no fever.
- Scholar is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention that can be provided without hurting the health and safety of other scholars in our care.

When a scholar is sent home with any of these illnesses, that scholar may not return until he/she has been free of these symptoms for at least 24 hours, or if a note from the scholar's health care provider is provided that confirms the illness is no longer contagious.

For the benefit of all the scholars, this policy will be strictly enforced. Voice of Hope reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the scholar is not contagious.

*If your scholar contracts a communicable illness or disease soon after being onsite for any Voice of Hope programs, please notify us as soon as possible so that the parents/guardians of other scholars in your scholar's room may be notified of the illness.*

## **Medication**

Voice of Hope acknowledges that some scholars may require prescribed drugs or medication during the day. This policy sets forth the provisions that must be followed when administering non-emergency prescription and/or over the counter medication to scholars at Voice of Hope. The Director or designated person will administer medications in accordance with the law and label on the prescription or medication.

- Parents/guardians must complete a Parent Consent and Instructions for Administration of Medication form to be kept on file at Voice of Hope. The form requires a start date, end date, reason for the medication, and the dosage required.
- If a scholar becomes ill while at Voice of Hope, the parent/guardian can provide the information for the form to the Director who can complete the form so that the medication can be administered. The parent/guardian must sign the form when picking up the scholar that day.
- If an Epi-pen is required, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide Voice of Hope with a current Epi-pen.
- Sunscreen or bug spray can be applied to a scholar only if a parent/guardian requests in writing that Instructors to do so and if the parent/guardian provides the product.

### **Procedure for Dispensing Medicine**

A. The administration of any medication or drugs at school requires a completed signed request from the scholar's parent/guardian as well as the appropriate prescription label and container.

B. A "Medical Release" form must be completed annually (once per year) and/or when a change in the prescription or requirements for administration occurs.

- C. All medication must come to Voice of Hope in the original container. Further, prescription medication must be labeled for the scholar, and must be administered in a manner consistent with the instructions on the label.
- D. Voice of Hope may request to receive further information about the medication, if needed, prior to administration of the substance.
- E. Upon arrival at Voice of Hope, scholars will leave medications with the Director or designated personnel. Exceptions to this requirement are: prescription asthma medications self-administered with an inhaler.
- Medications must be stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at Voice of Hope.
  - The Medication Authorization Form must always remain with the medication.
  - Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at Voice of Hope.
  - Medications may be administered only by Instructors or the Director.
  - When a medication is given, the Instructor will document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given as well as any unusual reactions or circumstances.
  - Expired Medication Authorization Forms must be placed to in the scholar's permanent enrollment file.
- F. The school must be notified immediately by the parent/guardian or scholar 18 years old or older in writing of any change in the scholar's prescription medication administration. A new medical authorization or container label with new pharmacy instructions shall be required immediately as well.
- G. The Director, or other designated person, shall be responsible for the filing of the Procedures for Dispensing Medicine at Voice of Hope form in the scholar file. The Director, or designated person, shall be responsible for providing a copy of form to the parent/guardian and to other personnel designated to administer the medication.
- H. Procedures for administration of drugs and medicine at Voice of Hope and Voice of Hope activities shall be developed in consultation with the Director, parent of the governing body of the ministry.

## **Medical Conditions and Allergens**

If you indicate during enrollment that your scholar has any chronic medical condition or allergies {other than seasonal}, you will receive a request to have a Care Plan meeting with the Director. This meeting will allow us to better understand your scholar's health history and needs, ensuring a safe environment.

A scholar with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the food service area. All staff working in the scholar's classroom must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of the emergency process.

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any scholar with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a scholar's specific health care needs.

## Medical Emergencies

A medical emergency is an injury or illness that is acute and poses an immediate threat to a person's life or long-term health, once all available first aid measures have been attempted and further treatment is required.

In the event of a medical emergency, Voice of Hope will follow this procedure:

A staff member with first aid training will remain with the scholar.

- We do not move the scholar if there is a possible broken bone, neck, or back injury. The scholar will be kept still and covered to prevent shock.
- Direct pressure will be applied to bleeding areas.
- CPR will be administered if the scholar is not breathing.

If an ambulance is needed, another staff member will:

- Call 911 or 9-911 from the nearest phone.
- Provide dispatcher with:
  - Location of emergency
  - Type of injury, if known
  - Brief description of injured person (gender, age, etc.)
- Contact parents/guardians.
- Notify the Director.
- Complete the appropriate incident form.

If an ambulance is not needed:

- Render first aid, as trained.
- Complete the appropriate incident form.
- Call parents/guardians within 30 minutes of the incident and provide all information.

If there is a need for a person to be transported to a medical facility:

- The Director or designated staff will take the information sheet for the ill or injured person, and a communication device. The emergency contact person will be given updated information as necessary.

Parents/guardians will also be notified for injuries that are not of an emergency nature (pinched fingers, bumps on hand...) that might require a physician's consultation, but are not serious. We believe that each family should make these decisions individually.

Staff members shall document accidents and illnesses that occur at Voice of Hope using an Accident/Incident Report. The parent/guardian will be given a copy and will sign the report the same day as the incident. All Accident/Incident Reports will be given to the Director to be placed in the scholar's permanent file.

## Immunization Requirements

Each scholar enrolled or admitted to Voice of Hope must meet applicable immunization and hearing/vision requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of higher Education. This requirement applies to all scholars enrolled in our program. All immunizations and Hearing/Vision required for the scholar's age must be completed by the date of admission.

The following is required for each scholar attending a pre-kindergarten program or school away from VOH:

1) A copy of the current immunization record and hearing/vision screening that is on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends; or

2) A signed statement from the child's parent that the child's immunization record and hearing/vision screening is current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school that the child attends. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the pre-kindergarten program or school listed in the statement.

### Tuberculin Test

Each scholar will need to have a Tuberculin Test (TB) before they are enrolled in our program. If a parent/guardian refuses TB testing, their scholar will not be allowed to enroll in our program.

### Staff Immunization

Voice of Hope staff is not required to have any immunizations to work.

## Emergency Contacts

**Listed below are emergency contacts depending on what type of help need:**

- **911 for serious emergency such as allergic reaction to medication**
  - **Emergency medical services**
    - 214-67-4311
  - **Law Enforcement**
    - Non-emergency 311
    - 214-744-4444
  - **Fire Department ~ Station 16**
    - 214-670-5466
- **Poison Control**
  - 1-800-222-1222
- **DFPS Scholar Abuse Hotline**
  - 1-800-252-5400  
Call our Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide.
  - [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)
- **Nearest Licensing office telephone number and address**
  - **Dallas**  
8700 North Stemmons Freeway,  
Suite 104  
Dallas, Texas 75247  
(214) 212-5603 (Licensing Rep- Janetria Bates)  
(800) 582-6036  
[www.dfps.state.tx](http://www.dfps.state.tx).
- **Operation Information**
  - **Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc.**  
4120 Gentry  
Dallas, TX 75212  
Business: 214-631-7027  
Fax 214-631-7877

# Communications with Law Enforcement Officials

Any staff member, volunteer, other adult, or participant may call 911 on behalf of the program if a staff member deems it necessary.

## Inclement Weather Closings

Although it is our desire to remain open, our first priority must be the safety of our staff and families. In order to ensure the safety of our families and staff, Voice of Hope may delay opening or close due to inclement weather conditions that make travel hazardous.

Voice of Hope is closed when Dallas Independent Schools close. Please watch WFFA News the morning of inclement weather or call the designated person or and there will be a voice mail message with closing information. Many of our staff live outside the immediate Voice of Hope area, and treacherous driving conditions put them, as well as your family, in danger.

## Emergency Procedures

### Fire

*Each class has a Fire Safety plan located by the door*

- Fire drills are executed monthly.
- Instructors and scholars are to immediately stop what they are doing and proceed in an orderly fashion to the designated exit.
- The Instructor will take the attendance sheet and lead the scholars to a pre-assigned area outside.
- The last person to leave the room will check the room for scholars and close the door behind them.
- Once outside, the Instructor counts the scholars to make sure all are present.
- Instructors wait until the signal by the Director before everyone proceeds back into the building.
- Parents/guardians are notified subsequent to taking the required action for safety.
- Voice of Hope will remain open during a reported threat only if local authorities have fully investigated the matter and have determined that no danger is present for scholars.

### Bomb Threat

- Based on how the threat was delivered, the staff member will document the threat:
  - If a bomb threat is received by phone, the staff member will immediately complete the Checklist for Telephone Threats.
  - If a bomb threat is received by a written note, the staff member will preserve the evidence by placing the note in a plastic bag.
  - If a bomb threat is written on walls, the staff member will photograph the wall.
- The staff member will then notify law enforcement and the Director and/or Program Manager.
- The Director or Program Manager will order an evacuation or other actions according to the threat assessment. If a decision is made to evacuate:

- The Director or Program Manager will notify all staff via the phone system. (Cell phones, radios, or fire alarms will not be used because of the risk of activating the device.)
- While notification is being made, other staff should survey the grounds to clear exits and all areas where scholars and staff will be going.
- When evacuating, staff and scholars will leave everything as-is and room doors unlocked.
- Staff will take participant rosters and emergency forms with them.
- Parents/guardians will be notified subsequent to taking the required action for safety.

### **Flooding**

- Staff will monitor Weather Radio and emergency alert radio stations.
- The Director or Program Manager will determine if evacuation is needed, which options for relocation are safe, and what transportation resources are available.
- If evacuation is required, staff members will take participant rosters and emergency forms and will ensure all participants are included.
- Parents/guardians will be notified subsequent to taking the required action for safety.

### Flood Relocation Centers

#### **Primary Relocation Center:**

**West Dallas Community School**

2300 Canada Dr. Dallas, TX 75212

214-634-1927

1. *Depart Gentry Dr toward Canada Dr*
2. *Turn right onto Canada Dr*
3. *West Dallas Community School on the right*

#### **Secondary Relocation Center:**

**YMCA**

3737 Goldman St., Dallas, TX 75212

214-630-9880

1. *Depart Gentry Dr toward Canada Dr*
2. *Turn right onto Canada Dr*
3. *Turn right onto Westmorland*
4. *Turn left on Bickers St.*
5. *YMCA on the right*

### **Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm**

Tornado drills will be done every three months. Staff and scholars are to immediately stop what they are doing and proceed to a pre-assigned inner wall away from windows and doors at the lowest level of the building. Scholars are to sit with their knees to their chest facing the wall and clasp their hands behind their neck. Instructors sit behind the scholars facing the wall until the danger has passed. Blankets and pillows may be used to cover the scholars to protect them from flying objects.

Signs preceding a tornado include one or more of the following:

- Severe lightning.
- Destructive high winds.
- Heavy rains.
- Large, heavy hail.

Signs of a tornado:

- Funnel-shaped, rotating clouds.
- Protuberances or rotary motion at the base of a thundercloud system.
- Any rotating cloud, debris, or dust near the ground.

- A distinctive roaring sound similar to an aircraft or train.

If a Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm WATCH or WARNING has been issued in an area near the site, staff members will:

- Monitor Weather Radio, National Weather Service, or emergency alert radio stations.
- Bring all persons inside building(s), or, if directed by emergency personnel, escort everyone to a ditch or hollow.
  - If remaining in building, staff members will:
    - Prop open vents and doors between rooms and hallways.
    - Open all windows slightly.
    - Have everyone sit in “tuck” position.
  - If evacuating building, staff members will:
    - Take participant rosters to take attendance and ensure all participants are safe.
    - Have everyone lie down with hands locked covering their heads.
- Have everyone remain in a safe area until the watch/warning expires or emergency personnel have issued an all-clear signal.

Post-Tornado:

- If a tornado passes without striking, staff members will be cautious, as there may be other funnels in the area.
- If the building is struck by a tornado, staff members will:
  - Call to have gas and electricity turned off as soon as possible.
  - Administer first aid as necessary.
  - Evacuate the damaged area cautiously.
  - Move injured as little as possible.
  - Note all injured and immediately report all missing,
  - Retain participants in the area until it is considered safe for participants to return to programming, go home or be released to parents/guardians.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Staff members will:

1. Call 911, indicating the need of assistance from the local Fire Department and law enforcement.
2. Make certain all scholars and staff members are accounted for and are safe.
3. Evacuate all scholars and other staff members to an area as far from the building as safely practical.
  - a) Adhere to predetermined evacuation routes, when possible, but will adjust these routes to avoid dangerous areas.
  - b) All scholars and staff members with special needs will be assisted as needed.
  - c) Attendance will be taken upon exiting the building and upon arrival at a designated location.

In the event the Evacuation procedures need to be fulfilled, Voice of Hope will utilize all accessible vehicles and owners to transport participants to our Main Campus located at:

**Uplift Grand Preparatory** Address: 118 NE Second St. Grand Prairie, TX 75050, Phone: 972-854-0600

### **Lock Down**

The Lock-Down procedure will take place in the event that there is a perceived threat from an intruder, or if a warning from the police department is issued.

A Lockdown alert is given by a call over the walkie-talkie to all staff.

Staff members will ensure that:

- Doors to classrooms are closed and locked.



- Students are moved to the safest part of the room, away from windows and doors, to the interior walls.
- Everyone drops to the floor or out of the line of vision from the door.
- Window shades are pulled down.
- Any windows in doors are covered.
- Classroom lights are turned off.
- No one except emergency personnel will be allowed to enter or leave the building.
- Everyone will remain in position until notified by law enforcement, the fire department or the Director.