



**Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc.**

**Volunteer Handbook**

**2021**

## Table of Contents

Welcome .....	4
Introduction to Voice of Hope Ministries .....	4
Our Organization.....	4
Our Statement of Faith .....	4
Our Mission.....	5
Our Philosophy.....	5
Our History.....	5
Our Vision.....	6
Our Long-Term Goal.....	6
Core Programs .....	6
ASPIRE .....	6
Summer Day Camp .....	6
Family and Community Services .....	6
What you can expect as a Voice of Hope Volunteer .....	7
Equal Volunteering Opportunity.....	7
What Voice of Hope expects of you .....	7
Background Checks .....	8
Statement of Felonies or Misdemeanors .....	8
Volunteering Policies and Procedures .....	8
Attendance.....	8
Time Tracking.....	8
Absences or Lateness.....	9
Dress Code .....	9
Nametags .....	9
Expenses.....	9
Communication.....	9
Emergency Contact Information.....	9
Curriculum and Property .....	9
Standards of Conduct.....	9
Health and Safety.....	10
Confidentiality.....	11
Report of Child Abuse / Neglect .....	11
Firearms and Weapons Policy.....	11
Gifts, Tips and Soliciting .....	11
Co-Worker Relationships .....	11
Harassment.....	12
Cell Phones.....	12
Political Activities .....	12
Smoking.....	12
Substance Abuse .....	12
Social Media and Photography .....	12
Supervision.....	13
Evaluations .....	13
Termination.....	13

Exit Interviews.....	13
Guidance Policies .....	13
Reasons for Misbehavior .....	14
Preventing Misbehavior.....	14
Responding to Misbehavior .....	15
Useful Phrases.....	15
Removing a Scholar from the Classroom.....	16
Receipt and Acknowledgement of Voice of Hope Handbook (Volunteer Copy).....	17
Receipt and Acknowledgement of Voice of Hope Handbook (Voice of Hope Copy) .....	18

## Welcome

Welcome to the Voice of Hope Volunteer Program. Voice of Hope is a ministry operating on Biblically based principles in the context of an urban Christian community development center. We consider your contribution to be a valuable part of our ministry. We know and understand that your time is valuable, and we sincerely appreciate you donating your time to Voice of Hope. We believe that it is a wonderful opportunity to have an effect on the future of Dallas by helping raise up a generation of Christian leaders.

The Voice of Hope volunteer program is based on the Christian principles of prayer, Bible Study, commitment, stewardship, services and evangelism. We need volunteers to further these principles throughout the community. With your help, we will be able to accomplish our goals. There are many ways for you to help and no matter how you choose to help, a child will be uplifted by your generosity and God will be glorified.

Voice of Hope recognizes that without the skills, generosity and commitment of our volunteers, it would be extremely difficult to maintain either the range or quality of our services. As a volunteer, you have the right to be given meaningful assignments, to be treated as equal co-workers, to receive effective and ongoing supervision and the right to ongoing support and recognition for your contribution to Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. In return, we ask that you agree to actively perform your duties to the best of their abilities, be accountable to Voice of Hope, and remain faithful to the philosophies, policies and procedures. Additionally, we ask that you work cooperatively with staff, volunteers and youth, to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information and to positively represent Voice of Hope to the community and participants.

The following pages include additional information about Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. This information will help you better understand Voice of Hope and your role at Voice of Hope. Please feel free to ask the volunteer coordinator any questions that you may have.

Welcome to Voice of Hope! Thank you for committing yourself to the important work we do for children and their families! Together we can accomplish much more than we could ever accomplish without you. Each and every time you volunteer, you will have the opportunity to change the lives of children.

We look forward to working with you in rebuilding our community. God is the key to our success as we work together as a team. And, together we can continue “changing lives...one child at a time”.

## Introduction to Voice of Hope Ministries

### Our Organization

Voice of Hope Ministries is a 501(c) (3) non–profit corporation, established in November 1982. The activities of the ministry are overseen by a Board of Trustees comprised of individuals with professional, academic, and ministry interest in our Mission. The financial support of Voice of Hope Ministries comes exclusively from the private sector, including individuals, churches, private foundations, corporations, and civic groups.

### Our Statement of Faith

Voice of Hope Ministries Affirms the Following:

- We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, divinely inspired in all parts and free of error in the original writings.
- We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s eternal Son, who became a man by being born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a life of perfect obedience, died for our sins in our place, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended

to the right hand of God the Father. He is now in a position of authority over all things and is our only advocate before God. We believe in His personal, visible, imminent return from heaven as Lord and Judge of all.

- We believe that the Holy Spirit is the work of God to people – that He renews our hearts persuades us to repent of our sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and empowers us to live our lives pleasing to God.
- We believe that human beings are created in the image of God. Tempted by Satan, they rebelled against God and became tragically estranged from their Creator. Now all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are incapable of returning to God apart from faith in Jesus Christ.
- We believe that both the just and the unjust will be raised bodily at the end of the age, some to everlasting blessedness and some to everlasting punishment.
- We believe that the Church is the living body of Christ and is made up of all who are united to it by faith. Christ calls His Church to offer acceptable worship to God; to love and care for one another, to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing and teaching; and to strive for social justice and relief to human distress and need.
- We believe that the Church as the living body of Christ is to enjoy relationships of reconciliation among all who are united to Him by faith. We believe Christ calls His Church to a life of reconciliation that is unhindered by racial, cultural, economic, social, national and other barriers.

## **Our Mission**

Voice of Hope Ministries exists to extend the love of Jesus Christ by nurturing and training children and youth through Biblical teaching, Christian character models, life skills coaching and educational support.

## **Our Philosophy**

We are committed to equipping inner-city families with the resources and skills required to overcome and break the poverty cycle. Voice of Hope Ministries offers an integrated, cross-generation ministry, reaching the spirit, body, and mind.

The task of rebuilding inner-city neighborhoods requires the dedication, cooperation and creative energies of America's finest leadership. Our nation's future lies in the hands of this upcoming generation, many of whom are ill-equipped for the challenge.

We believe that Christian community development is to meet the needs of our citizens in a holistic manner: spiritual, physical, and mental. For that reason, our objectives include teaching the truth of God's word, meeting the physical needs of our constituency, and developing the capabilities of all our members.

## **Our History**

Founded in 1982, Voice of Hope has grown to serve over 300 children daily in our ASPIRE after-school program and Summer Day Camp. Following Mrs. Dudley's leadership, several others have taken the reins of Voice of Hope's presidency: Norman Henry, Aaron Gaddis, Daniel Prescott, and our current president since 2004, Edward Franklin.

Voice of Hope has been recognized and received numerous awards over the years. In 1991, Voice of Hope was presented the "424<sup>th</sup> Point of Light" award by President George Bush for outstanding service to the West Dallas community. Voice of Hope is a three-time Crystal Charity Ball beneficiary - in both 1998 and 2004, and most recently in 2012. We were also recognized as a Dallas Morning News Charity. In addition, Voice of Hope has received recognition from The Hillcrest Foundation, Meadows Foundation, etc.

Voice of Hope has operated from the same facility on Gentry Drive, in Dallas, Texas, since 1982. Since then many children and teenagers have participated in our programs.

All of the children who have participated in our program for at least 3 years have also graduated from high school (a great accomplishment considering the 66% dropout rate in this area).

Graduates have continued on to attend college or trade school and/or raise families of their own. Some graduates have even returned to the community to give back.

## **Our Vision**

Voice of Hope children will become adults who are:

PRODUCTIVE Voice of Hope children and youth will become career and college ready, and ultimately contributors to the economic vitality of their communities and world.

CHRISTIAN Voice of Hope children and youth will be exposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sound Biblical discipleship, so that their hearts are transformed, and so that they are equipped to live an informed, committed, and passionate life for Christ and His kingdom mission.

CITIZENS Voice of Hope children and youth will develop a Christ-like concern for their communities, both local and worldwide and will responsibly give back to these communities above and beyond what they themselves were given.

## **Our Long-Term Goal**

Over the past 35 years we have reached thousands of children. Now we seek to serve thousands more by expanding the ministry to over 20 school-based sites over the next 10 years.

## **Core Programs**

### **ASPIRE**

The ASPIRE after-school program begins with us picking up children and youth in grades K-12 from their schools and bringing them to Voice of Hope. Each child is fed a meal each day through our partnership with the North Texas Food Bank. After eating a meal, our children have playtime to release energy, then they complete their homework and other enrichment activities. Our faithful volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to help children with their homework or problem areas. The ASPIRE after school program follows the Uplift calendar and operates from 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

### **Summer Day Camp**

Voice of Hope has offered **Summer Day Camp** since 1986. Our Summer Day Camp provides a safe haven for children during the summer months while sustaining educational achievement in a recreational atmosphere. Our Biblically based camp provides a stimulating environment where students can: improve in reading, writing and math; gain technological skills; explore areas of science, arts and community involvement through field trips; and, of course, have fun because kids, summer and fun belong together! Summer Day Camp generally runs June – July each summer, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

### **Family and Community Services**

In order to holistically minister to west Dallas children, we recognize that we are also called to serve the families of those children. Our **Family and Community Services Outreach** provides food, encouragement, prayer and

assistance to the families of the children and youth that are a part of our programs and also other families living in west Dallas.

**Food Pantry:** Our Food pantry provides food and prayer with dignity to our working poor. Through our food pantry, we provide not only physical needs, but through prayer and support, we provide for spiritual needs as well. We are the only food pantry in West Dallas that serves evening and weekends by appointment to accommodate to families that work.

**Fresh Fruits and Vegetables:** We are fortunate to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to families each day through a generous partnership donation. For many of our families, fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive and most often not very fresh at local supermarkets.

**Seniors Bible Study:** We minister to widows and seniors weekly through Bible Study and fellowship. In the past, there was a strong division between African American and Spanish-speaking seniors; however, through this fellowship, barriers have been broken, creating an atmosphere where African American seniors and Spanish-speaking seniors build mutual friendships.

## What you can expect as a Voice of Hope Volunteer

As a volunteer, you do not replace our paid staff but you greatly enhance and expand our work when you come alongside and join in the effort. Because of volunteers, we are able to provide services to children and families that they would not receive otherwise. We are committed to a Volunteer Program that will bring benefits to both the community and the volunteer.

Voice of Hope volunteers have the right to:

- Clear and specific job descriptions.
- Be assigned to appropriate assignments according to skills, interests and availability.
- Receive thorough orientation, training and supervision for the jobs they accept.
- Expect that their time will not be wasted by lack of planning and coordination by the Voice of Hope.
- Be trusted with confidential information as necessary to carry out their assignment.
- Receive appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
- Be reassigned if a position is not a good fit.
- Expect that volunteer records will be kept documenting volunteer experience, positions held, training evaluation and commendation.
- Receive ongoing feedback, encouragement and training.
- Offer suggestions about your assignment and the Volunteer Program.
- Be treated as a fellow Voice of Hope staff member who contributes to the goals of the organization through your volunteer work.
- Have all these things done in a spirit of friendliness and cooperation.

## Equal Volunteering Opportunity

The VOH provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious preference, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as availability and reliability.

## What Voice of Hope expects of you

We recognize that your time is your own and you serve at your pleasure. Every VOH volunteer has the right to refuse any assignment that they are unable to do or would rather not do. Please let your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator know in the event that an assignment has become undesirable or unmanageable. You will be offered the opportunity to serve in another capacity that is more of a fit for your skills and interests. Additionally, the Voice of Hope expects every volunteer to:

- Know your own duties and how to do them promptly, correctly, and pleasantly.
- Ask for assistance whenever needed.
- Voice your opinions and contribute your suggestions to improve the quality of the VOH programs and services at the appropriate place and time.
- Cooperate with VOH staff and fellow volunteers and maintain a good team attitude.
- Attend all training sessions scheduled for your assignment.
- Report for assignments on time.
- Inform your Volunteer Coordinator or Supervisor as soon as possible of any planned absences or lateness.
- Express problems or concerns to appropriate staff in a timely and professional manner.
- Completely and promptly submit documentation as appropriate.
- Keep all communication with or concerning clients confidential.
- Follow the VOH guidelines, curriculum and procedures, including drug and alcohol policy, dress code and confidentiality.

## **Background Checks**

To ensure a safe environment and comply with Texas Safety and Child Care Licensing Guidelines, all volunteers 14 years and older will be required to submit to a criminal history background check prior to acceptance as a volunteer. Volunteers younger than 15 years will be required to be accompanied by an adult who has submitted an application and background check. Please make VOH aware of any changes in your criminal record. Background checks expire every two years and will be resubmitted automatically when possible. For more frequent volunteers, it may be necessary to do a fingerprint background check which will be determined on an individual basis.

## **Statement of Felonies or Misdemeanors**

Upon orientation, volunteers must sign a statement verifying their criminal history. Statements of convictions of felonies, misdemeanors, and deferred adjudication, along with identification as a Community Service Restitution volunteer, are required for volunteer files. An explanation of criminal history is required as well.

## **Volunteering Policies and Procedures**

As a new VOH volunteer, you may have many questions. We suggest you carefully read this Handbook so that you will know exactly what is expected of you as you volunteer for the VOH. Keep it handy and refer to it often, but don't hesitate to ask your Volunteer Coordinator for help. We want you to feel comfortable whenever you are volunteering for the VOH.

## **Attendance**

When you make a commitment to volunteer for a specific date and time, our staff and clients will depend on you to fulfill your commitment. An unexpected absence may disrupt the delivery of services to our clients. If you anticipate an absence, please attempt to call your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

You may also be required to attend monthly staff meetings. Your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator will let you know in advance of any required meetings.

## **Time Tracking**

Time Tracking is necessary for us to keep an accurate record of your contribution to VOH. Please record all hours served when you serve. Donated time may include all time spent in orientation and training, travel time to and from locations, as well as the hours given performing specific duties. The Volunteer Coordinator will monitor

volunteer shifts and hours and update information in the volunteer's profile. Please be sure to sign up for your shifts via our online calendar and report your hours upon completing your shift at Voice of Hope or one of the on-site campuses at the digital kiosk.

## **Absences or Lateness**

If you anticipate an absence or tardiness, please attempt to call or text the Director or Volunteer Coordinator. Email may not reach the appropriate contact as quickly - please call or text.

## **Dress Code**

All VOH volunteers are expected to exercise good judgment in determining what is considered to be in good taste by the community, the work environment, and the particular needs of the position. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that your clothing be neat, clean, and conservative. Keep in mind that volunteers are Christian role models for the children and teenagers. A good rule of thumb, "When in doubt, don't wear it!"

## **Nametags**

Volunteers should wear a VOH nametag to identify themselves as a representative of the VOH. This will help you build relationships with the clients and with the VOH staff.

## **Expenses**

You must have written permission from the Director or Volunteer Coordinator prior to incurring an expense on behalf of the VOH. In order to be reimbursed, you must provide an expense report, accompanied by receipts and approval from the appropriate supervisor.

## **Communication**

Open communication between volunteers and VOH staff is crucial to fostering a spirit of unity and cooperation. Volunteers are encouraged to call, text or email the director or coordinator with concerns or suggestions for improving VOH services and programs. The Director or Volunteer Coordinator will communicate regularly with volunteers through text, personal emails, notes, and phone calls.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Volunteers are asked to provide emergency contact information and cell phone numbers to VOH to be kept in the volunteer's file. The person listed will be the first contact attempt in the case of a VOH or a personal emergency.

## **Curriculum and Property**

All curriculum and supplies provided to the volunteer are the property of the VOH and must be returned to the agency in good condition when a volunteer separates from the organization.

## **Standards of Conduct**

Volunteers are expected to conduct all duties in a Christ-like manner. The continued impact of VOH is dependent upon the community's trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Each volunteer owes a duty the Lord, to VOH and to the community to act in a way that will honor the Lord and will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

Even if an action is legal in the sight of the law of the US, it may not be an action that is necessarily the highest Biblical standard and so volunteers yield to the even higher standard of God's Law.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on Biblical principles, will guide you with respect to the lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with the Volunteer Coordinator or CEO for advice and consultation. Each volunteer's conduct reflects on Voice of Hope and its mission.

Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of the VOH. If you have questions about any volunteer or safety rule, please see your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator for explanation.

- Willful violation of any VOH rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to the VOH.
- Willful violation of safety rules or practices.
- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at any VOH event or activity designed for the participation of minors.
- Possession or use of illegal drugs or other legal substances is prohibited.
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism.
- Possession of dangerous or illegal firearms is prohibited on VOH property or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or threatening anyone on agency premises while representing the VOH.
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions issued by your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.
- Theft of agency property or the property of fellow volunteers.
- Willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application or records.
- Breach of confidentiality of client information.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord; interfering with another volunteer on the job.
- Engaging in a relationship with any client that is solely personal in nature. No physical contact should be initiated by the volunteer. If a client asks for or initiates a hug, it is at the volunteer's discretion to return it. No sexual contact is allowed.
- Any sin as clearly defined in Scriptures.

## Health and Safety

VOH intends to provide a safe and healthful environment for all staff, volunteers, scholars, and visitors while they are on its premises or attending VOH programs. All guests are encouraged to follow the safety procedures. Please report any potentially unsafe or hazardous conditions, or any injuries to the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

With regards to covid guidelines, VOH strives to provide a healthy and safe for all those entering the campus, and we require all staff, volunteers, scholars, and visitors to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and practice frequent hand-washing, as recommended by the CDC.

For all volunteers planning to come to a VOH campus in person\*, please complete the pre-screening prior to arrival: <http://www.voiceofhope.org/covidprescreen>

We recommend you save this link to your phone home screen as a shortcut for ease of use.

All volunteers will be temperature-checked upon arrival. It is recommended to arrive 5 minutes prior to your shift to allow time for this procedure.

\* For volunteers who can show proof of full vaccination, they will no longer be required to complete the pre-screening or be temperature-checked upon arrival.

## **Confidentiality**

We have an obligation to our clients, donors, and volunteers to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every “customer” served by VOH has the right to confidentiality. If you are aware of a client issue that requires immediate help, please inform your Volunteer Coordinator or Supervisor. As you work with the staff, information of a confidential nature may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know or with anyone outside of the VOH staff. No one is permitted to make copies of any VOH records, reports, or documents without prior approval. Release of confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service and could involve you in legal proceedings. A volunteer whose assignment with the VOH terminates may not subsequently disclose, directly or indirectly, any sensitive or confidential information about VOH or its “customers” acquired during his or her association with VOH.

## **Report of Child Abuse / Neglect**

As professionals entrusted with the care of children, all Voice of Hope staff are mandated under law to immediately report any suspicion of child abuse to the designated authorities at 1 (800) 252-5400. Training in child abuse prevention and reporting requirements is required for all staff members and will be provided by the Director.

## **Firearms and Weapons Policy**

Regardless of license to carry, concealed handguns and any type of weapons are not allowed on VOH property. VOH property is defined as buildings, driveways, walkways, parking lots, VOH vehicles, lockers, desks, and files. The “Concealed Handgun Act” gives employers the right to prohibit persons from carrying a concealed handgun on property owned or controlled by the employer.

## **Gifts, Tips and Soliciting**

Do not accept any gifts or tips from clients, their families or friends. We do not want to create an atmosphere where our clients feel obligated to reward VOH volunteers for doing their job. Do not give gifts to clients or their families unless it is part of a planned project. If you have concerns about clients who have expressed ongoing needs, please provide this information to the Director so that they may find the appropriate community resource to assist them. Volunteers are not permitted on VOH premises or in its facilities to solicit or to distribute articles or printed matter to VOH’s employees and visitors, or to post printed matter anywhere on VOH’s premises. We also ask that you not promote or solicit your own business enterprise, political agenda, or religious beliefs while volunteering with us.

## **Co-Worker Relationships**

Staff members are always expected to keep a positive work environment. If a situation arises where you disagree with another staff member:

- Discuss it directly and professionally with the person involved.
- Surface problems or conflicts as soon as possible.
- Focus your concern with the behavior that is bothering you, not the person.
- Concentrate on positive feedback and constructive criticism over negativism, personal attacks, gossip and/or slander.
- Refrain from discussing concerns with co-workers, customers or the general public.

If you are unable to resolve the problem with the person involved, ask the Director for help.

## **Harassment**

Voice of Hope intends to provide a working environment that is pleasant, healthy, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility, or other offenses that might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment of any sort – verbal, physical, sexual, visual – will not be tolerated.

## **Cell Phones**

It is important that every staff member's attention always remains on the children. A second's lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore, cell phones are not permitted in any of the program rooms. Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in a purse, bag, coat, classroom cell phone box, or the office while a staff member is clocked in. Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved break, and never in a classroom. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved break.

It is expected that when leaving the Center for any reason (walk, field trip, etc.), one staff member will carry with them a cell phone. In this circumstance, the cell phone should only be used in the event of an emergency and not for personal calls/text messaging.

In the event of an emergency, the staff member must inform the Director of the situation. In this case, cell phones must be set to vibrate. Calls may be answered only after the staff member has been relieved and is outside of the classroom. Ratios must be maintained at all times.

## **Political Activities**

All volunteers are prohibited from soliciting funds for any candidates or causes. In any outside work on behalf of a political candidate or party, you may not publicly present yourself as providing any expressed or implied endorsement of VOH.

## **Smoking**

The VOH offices and centers are non-smoking facilities. If you smoke, there are outdoor places for you to enjoy a short break. Please be courteous and concerned about the needs of your fellow volunteers and others.

## **Substance Abuse**

The VOH has no intention of intruding into the personal lives of its volunteers. However, both on-the-job and off-the-job use of mood-altering substances can have an effect on our agency and on the VOH's ability to achieve our objectives of safety and security. Therefore, you are expected to report for your assignment with no mood-altering substances in your body. The possession, sale or use of mood-altering substances while volunteering will be a violation of volunteer standards of conduct and be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## **Social Media and Photography**

Please do not photograph VOH children or staff. This is for their protection and to respect that they have given permission to VOH to use their images, but not to other parties. If you would like or need a photo posted to social media or any publication, please make the volunteer coordinator aware and he/she will provide and/or post the information and media which you can then share and use.

## Supervision

Volunteers are under the management and supervision of appropriate staff at all times. You will be assigned to specific staff members who act as your Supervisor. The Supervisor is most often the coordinator of the program to which the volunteer is assigned. The Supervisor is a volunteer's first "go-to" person for questions about specific client needs, how duties should be performed or changes in the volunteer's availability or schedule.

## Evaluations

Evaluations by staff and volunteers serve the organization and the volunteer as we work together to maintain a standard of excellence in all our programming and services. Evaluations will be scheduled on an individual basis.

## Termination

The VOH is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. In general, failure to adhere to the policies and guidelines of the VOH is cause for immediate release.

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Theft of property or misuse of equipment, funds, or materials.
- Falsifying statements on the Volunteer Application or during the interview process.
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts.
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients or volunteers.
- Release of confidential information.
- Unwillingness to support and further the mission of the organization.
- Immoral or indecent conduct.

## Exit Interviews

In instances where a volunteer voluntarily leaves, the VOH would like the opportunity to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions that you may have of the VOH. If you decide to leave, you will be asked to grant us the privilege of an exit interview. During the Exit Interview, you can express yourself freely. It is hoped that this interview will help us part as friends, as well as provide insights into possible improvements to the program. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that VOH will provide to another agency about you.

## Guidance Policies

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, is likely to encourage healthy development.

Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. Voice of Hope staff will use only positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions:

#### **“Am I...”**

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children’s choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child’s eye level?

### **Reasons for Misbehavior**

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Some possible reasons why children misbehave are:

- A child wants to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- A child experiences different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or is held to expectations beyond their developmental level.
- A child wants to assert themselves and their independence.
- A child feels ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- A child lacks accurate information and prior experience.
- A child has been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.
- A child is frustrated as a result of learning disabilities.

### **Preventing Misbehavior**

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior:

- Set clear, consistent rules. (e.g., walking feet; gentle touches)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested for longer periods)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (e.g., “You may pick up the blocks or art center.”)
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (e.g., “Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.”)
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one step at a time.
- Say "Yes" whenever possible.
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., “Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.”)
- Encourage children often and generously.

- Set a good example. (e.g., using a quiet voice when children should be quiet)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

## Responding to Misbehavior

Below are strategies Voice of Hope staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

**Redirection** - This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."

**Logical consequences** - These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.

**Child participation in solutions** - If a child damages something, they need to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, they should help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please come apologize and help me make him feel better."

**Natural consequences** - Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.

If a child continues to misbehave, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director.
2. The Director will observe the child and meet with the Coach to develop a behavior management plan.
3. The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
4. The Director, Coach and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

**NOTE:** If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period.

## Useful Phrases

The following phrases are useful when problem-solving with children.

**Instead of:** "No" or "Don't"

**Say:** "Please stop", "I don't like that", "That's not OK", or "That is not a choice"

**Instead of:** "That's not nice"

**Say:** "That's not OK", "Please use gentle touches", or "That hurts Jordan"

**Instead of:** "No running"

**Say:** "I need you to use your walking feet" or "You may run when we go outside"

**Instead of:** “Stop crying”

**Say:** “I need you to use your words to tell me what is wrong”

**Instead of:** “Can you put away your toys?” (If it is not a choice, do not pose it as a question.)

**Say:** “You may help me pick up the blocks, or help Alyssa pick up the puzzles”

**Instead of:** “I said yes” (when a child tells you “no”)

**Say:** “No is not a choice, I need you to...”

## **Removing a Scholar from the Classroom**

Children cannot be removed from the classroom as we do not have extra staff available to correct ratios. In rare instances, children may be brought to the main office and the Director will assist the child in calming down and/or help staff manage the classroom.

Teachers must use a walkie talkie to call the office and speak to the Director before removing a child from the classroom. If at any time a child’s behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the Director should be immediately notified.

## Receipt and Acknowledgement of Voice of Hope Handbook (Volunteer Copy)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand all of the Volunteer Packet guidelines for being involved at Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. and agree to work within the guidelines. I have had an opportunity to ask any questions about the material.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I give permission to Voice of Hope and a third party (food banks, partnering churches and agencies) to use photographs or video images of myself in print or electronic media for the purposes of marketing the work of the ministry.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Receipt and Acknowledgement of Voice of Hope Handbook (Voice of Hope Copy)

**Please bring this signed copy with you when you volunteer!**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand all of the Volunteer Packet guidelines for being involved at Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. and agree to work within the guidelines. I have had an opportunity to ask any questions about the material.

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