

Encounter Staff and Full-Time Volunteer Handbook

Revised September 3, 2019



For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all,
and therefore all died.

And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves
but for him who died for them and was raised again.

II Corinthians 5:14-15

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Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction	3
Section 2: Mission, Vision, and Beyond	4
Section 3: Statement of Faith	7
Section 4: Overview of Ministries	8
Section 5: Roles & Responsibilities	11
Section 6: Schedule & Calendar	13
Section 7: Finances & Resources	15
Section 8: Organizational Chart	18
Section 9: ENCOUNTER Leadership Expectations	20
Section 10: Conflict Resolution Policies & Procedures	22
Section 11: Child Safety Policies and Procedures	24
Section 12: Communication	26
Section 13: Evaluation, Review, & Improvement Process	28
Appendix A: Staff & Volunteer Commitment Forms	
Appendix B: Time off Request Form	
Appendix C: Absence for Appointment Request Form	
Appendix D: Record of Meeting Form	
Appendix E: Photo Opt. Out Form	
Appendix F: Evaluation of Encounter Staff and Volunteers	

Introduction

Section 1



On a warm, Mediterranean night the disciples eat their evening meal when quietly Jesus slips away from the table to wrap a towel around his waist. He loosens the sandal straps on the dusty feet of his followers and begins to gently wash the dirt and mud from their skin. When finished, he speaks these words.

“Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:12-14, NIV)

The staff, volunteers, and interns that make ENCOUNTER possible are not employees. They are family, a part of the body of Christ serving together, a team who passionately desires to see people experience a genuine, maturing walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are a group of servant leaders who believe in creating effective learning experiences that lead to an understanding of God’s creation, knowledge about the ever-unfolding story of humanity, and proficient communication skills.

We are convinced that learning and growing happens best in the context of loving, respectful relationships and strive to bring the peace, joy, and love of Christ into the ENCOUNTER experience.

We are committed to nurturing our own relationships with Christ continually growing in our trust, love, understanding, and obedience, knowing that as we abide in Him, He bears fruit through us.

We are dedicated to the belief that all people are God’s image bearers with passions, abilities and potential which should be encouraged, nurtured, and applied for the Glory of God and the furtherance of his redemptive work.

So come and join us.

If you are a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, willing to do what is needed, humble enough to serve without personal gain, and teachable enough to listen, learn, and grow, there is a place for you at ENCOUNTER.



Mission, Vision, & Beyond

Section 2

The Mission

Connecting people to Christ,

Promoting education, and

Supporting workers in the harvest.

The Vision

ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS LEARNING CENTERS will stretch around the world creating opportunities for Christ-centered education which leads to...

Making disciples of all nations

Supporting cross-cultural missionaries

Encouraging skill acquisition, cognitive development, and critical thinking in children and youth.



The Philosophy

ENCOUNTER: Education in Missions is founded on the belief that Christian education is...

- An effective platform for teaching people who God is and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ
- A means of helping cross-cultural missionaries serve and thrive in needy areas around the world
- A key to breaking the chains of generational poverty and building a dynamic, healthy local church



Key Verse

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” – **Matthew 9:37-38**

Non-Discrimination Statement

ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability.

Core Values

We show love and respect for others by...

- Sharing the truth in love
- Choosing kind, considerate words and actions which will bless others
- Keeping appropriate physical boundaries
- Avoiding gossip, boasting, and slander
- Actively listening and seeking to understand others
- Practicing forgiveness in our relationships
- Choosing to see current strengths and future potential in others
- Submitting to authority as unto the Lord

We demonstrate godly character in ourselves by...

- Committing to personal growth and Christian maturity
- Praying continually through ups and downs
- Working diligently at the tasks assigned to us
- Choosing faith and optimism in the face of challenges
- Sacrificing our time, comfort and convenience for the benefit of others
- Not thinking of ourselves as above others
- Being willing to do any job to the best of our ability
- Refusing to harbor bitterness or hold grudges in our heart
- Exercising patience in the face of setbacks and delays
- Showing perseverance in tasks and relationships
- Possessing a teachable spirit that responds well to correction
- Cultivating an ever-deepening, trusting, dependent relationship with the Father

Statement of Faith

Section 3

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals

Overview of Ministries

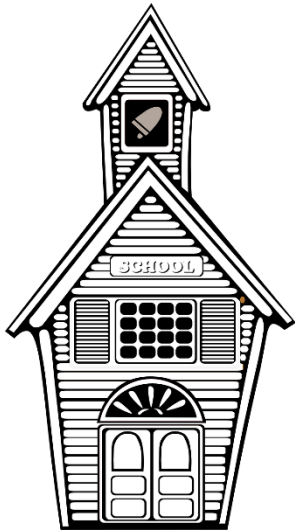
Section 4

Encounter Academy

The purpose of ENCOUNTER ACADEMY is to see children, youth, and adults grow and develop cognitively, socially, spiritually, physically, and emotionally by providing educational activities and support for expatriates who speak English as their first language. The program is targeted first at providing services to native English-speaking missionary families and then to other children, youth, and adults in need of English education. ENCOUNTER is not designed to accommodate families desiring their children to receive an English education as a second language. During the admissions process, need for a highly subsidized English education must be verified for admittance. ENCOUNTER defines a family to be in need of an English education when at least one parent in a native English speaker, English is a dominant language of the home, and legal ties to English-speaking countries are present.

The ENCOUNTER ACADEMY program is designed to allow families the flexibility to build a school plan that works for them. Families pay a fee for each block in which they enroll students as well as for other educational activities and services. Fees are kept to a minimum to ensure accessibility for as many families as possible. The curriculum is

intentionally designed in such a way so that all learning tasks may be completed at the ENCOUNTER LEARNING CENTER or from home keeping in mind that internet may be very limited for students and electricity availability irregular.



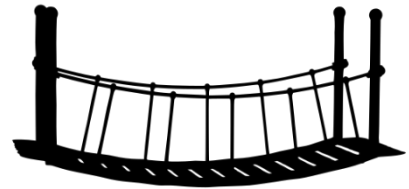
The ENCOUNTER classes, activities, and curriculum point students to the Father and His Son Jesus Christ as revealed in God's Word, cultivating in students a desire to know Him, love Him, and serve Him. They are intended to serve as a tool, platform, and space for helping students grow and mature. The first priority of ENCOUNTER Staff, Volunteers, and Interns is the holistic development of students in the context of loving support and respect for parents.

ENCOUNTER ACADEMY is a place where grace, forgiveness, and second chances as well as discipline, correction, and high expectations exist believing that God is a patient Father who desires all of us to mature and grow. It is a place that offers a rigorous education while also offering programs and courses in which a wide variety of students can develop and experience achievement. Emphasis is not placed on advancing from one grade to the next with a peer group, but rather challenging each student as individuals while also learning as a community.

Bridge

BRIDGE exists to open the doors for young adults (ages 16-25) to assist missionaries now, while also preparing and mobilizing the next generation of goers and senders for the future. Whether God leads these young people to pursue a career in overseas missionary work or stay home, ENCOUNTER believes early discipleship plays a critical role in shaping the lives of the next generation. These goals are accomplished in the BRIDGE program through part-time ministry internships, academic studies, Christian community living, and on campus discipleship classes.

The BRIDGE program is designed for a minimum one-year time commitment starting in July and ending in June, but students may continue in the program for multiple years. Students only able to participate for one semester will be considered on a case by case basis, but priority will be given to students able to commit for a year. Bridge students must speak English fluently.



Students live on the ministry campus along with assigned dorm parents. The ENCOUNTER staff assist students in preparation, ensure to their well-being while in country, and serve as loving mentors.

Each student is enrolled in academic classes with at least a half time course load. These classes may be through ENCOUNTER ACADEMY if still completing high school credits or through an institution of higher learning. The Bridge schedule includes time to work on classes in the ENCOUNTER Study Zone with the assistance of staff members. Support, mentoring, and accountability is also provided to realize each student's goal of successfully completing coursework.

A network of ministry partnerships with Bridge, allows students to choose from a variety of internship positions in which to serve. Students commit to internship positions for one semester at a time and receive training in good employee practices through ENCOUNTER. ENCOUNTER also plays the roll of mediating between conflicts which may

arise between interns and missionaries. ENCOUNTER is also responsible for arranging transportation to and from the ministry location for students. A portion of the BRIDGE student involvement cost is given to the ministry with which the student is interning to help cover ministry costs and materials. It is of utmost importance that the reputation and work of local ministries is not hindered by the presence of a BRIDGE student, and ENCOUNTER seeks to be a supportive productive partner for these other ministries.

English Bible Clubs

The purpose of ENGLISH BIBLE CLUBS is to bring activities to the children and youth of the local community which will strengthen cognitive development, teach and reinforce productive skills, and provide knowledge about God and His world. English Bible Clubs meet for 90-minutes weekly during the four eight-week quarters of the ENCOUNTER ACADEMY schedule.

ENCOUNTER's aim is to see many children benefit from this program therefore, any involvement fee should be kept at a minimum and not be a hindrance to participation.

Participants are encouraged to increase their English fluency through, songs, games, and conversation. Critical information and foundational spiritual truths will be provided in both English and the dominate local language to ensure full understanding.



ENCOUNTER staff, volunteers, and interns actively seek to teach and disciple in the context of developing loving relationships with students.

Staff & Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Section 5

Encounter Staff Members

Staff members are those persons who intend to make ENCOUNTER their full-time ministry. If married both husband and wife must join the ENCOUNTER staff team. Volunteer work outside ENCOUNTER should be considered secondary to their staff commitment. Staff Members do not engage in employment or business for financial support.

Encounter Full-Time Volunteers

Full-Time volunteers are men and women who serve with ENCOUNTER in a full-time capacity on a year by year commitment. Full-Time volunteers may have other work commitments and serve as an individual or a couple.

Role and Responsibility:

- ✓ Serve cheerfully and to the best of their ability in their assigned tasks as the hands and feet of Jesus.
- ✓ Report promptly to serve during regularly scheduled work hours and periodic ENCOUNTER events. (If a staff couple has children only one spouse is required to be in attendance. Schedule and work responsibilities will be divided, and an appropriate plan formed to ensure the needs of the children are also met.)
- ✓ Follow the ENCOUNTER Dress Code – Clothing should touch the top of the knees when standing and all the way up to the waist without slits or holes. Tops should fully cover the chest and include straps or sleeves over the shoulders. At no time should undergarments be visible or any clothing be worn which contains vulgarity or an offense to the Christian faith.
- ✓ Live and serve in agreement with the ENCOUNTER “Statement of Faith” and “ENCOUNTER Leadership Expectations”
- ✓ Play a vital role in the continuing improvement process of all ENCOUNTER ministries through the yearly Evaluate and Grow Cycle by proposing innovative ideas, voting on propositions, and enacting improvements.

Time Commitment and Furloughs:

Staff: All new staff begin with a three (3) year commitment. (See appendix for commitment forms.) All commitments begin with the first day of the ENCOUNTER

ministry year in July and end with the last day of the ENCOUNTER ministry year in late May or early June. After the first three (3) year commitment, commitments will be renewed on a year by year basis. (See Appendix for Staff & Full-Time Volunteer Commitment Form.)

Extended Deputation/Furlough time will be granted after a segment of three years of ministry service. Requests for extended Deputation/Furlough time must be submitted no later than three months before the requested leave date to the ENCOUNTER office and/or a direct supervisor. Exceptions may be granted by the leadership on a case by case basis.

Full-Time Volunteer: Full-Time Volunteers commit to serve on a full-time basis for one ministry year at a time. They are expected to work full time with the ministry and follow the same protocols as staff members unless otherwise noted.

Staff and Full-Time Volunteers may choose to return to their home country throughout the year during breaks in the ENCOUNTER schedule.

New Staff/Full-Time Volunteer Entrance

Staff: All new Staff Members begin with a three-month country Initiation Period before beginning to report for regular work hours. During this time new Staff Members will secure and move into their new homes, setup bank accounts, enroll in health insurance, learn how to navigate the surroundings and purchase supplies, take Spanish language classes, and complete Post-Arrival Homework. New staff will also be regularly included with the ENCOUNTER community, but no responsibilities will be placed on them during this period.

Full-Time Volunteer: Full-Time Volunteers previously living and established in the host country may begin serving at ENCOUNTER after completing both the Pre-Service Homework and Post-Arrival Homework.

Full-Time Volunteers new to the host country will complete a one-month initiation period for every year they intend to serve with ENCOUNTER. During this time new Full-Time Volunteers will secure and move into their new homes, setup bank accounts, enroll in health insurance, learn how to navigate the surroundings and purchase supplies, take Spanish language classes, and complete Post-Arrival Homework. New Full-Time Volunteers will also be regularly included with the ENCOUNTER community, but no responsibilities will be placed on them during this period.

Schedule & Calendar

Section 6

The following schedule and policies are created with the expectation that those coming to serve at ENCOUNTER are truly interested in the work of the ministry and are willing to go above and beyond when called upon. ENCOUNTER seeks to create a ministry schedule that makes the most of our opportunity to serve while ensuring that staff and volunteers also have sufficient time to rest, worship, spend time with family, and take care of personal needs. We seek to be good stewards of the time given to us to serve by those who are supporting us, often sacrificially, back home while understanding that there are sometimes unique needs for those living and working in a cross-cultural context.

Yearly Schedule:

The ENCOUNTER year of ministry activities begins in mid-July and ends at the end of May/early June. The work week runs from **Tuesday to Friday** Staff also work four (4) Saturdays a year on Community Days and during the weekend of Back to School Retreat. Some staff may also be asked to participate in the three (3) Bridge Trek Trips throughout the year.

Recommended Staff / Full-Time Volunteer Arrival Dates:

Staff and Full-Time Volunteers are welcome to schedule their move to the new country of service **any time of the year**. The best time for new staff and volunteers to come is in the spring months. This allows them the time needed to fulfill the 1-3 month required Initiation Period and be ready to start working in mid-July at the start of the ministry year.

Recommended Approximate Dates:

Staff: Arrive April 1st

2 Year Full-Time Volunteer: Arrive May 1st

1 Year Full-Time Volunteer: Arrive June 1st

Start Up is a four-week segment of the ENCOUNTER ministry year running from mid-July to mid-August. All Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers in country will take part in the Start-Up morning classes held T-F; 8:00-10:00 AM during those four weeks whether or not they have completed their Initiation Period. Staff and Full-Time Volunteers coming after Start Up will review the Start Up notes and materials independently and with a supervisor before beginning to work full-time.

Daily Schedule:

Tuesday through Friday, the ENCOUNTER workday begins promptly at 8:00 AM with our Regroup & Refocus (R.R.) Meetings. Staff are dismissed at 4:30 PM each day. ENCOUNTER holds to the timeless saying “On time is late and early is on time.” Please be sure to be present at starting times.

Hours for other ministry activities such as Learning Expedition Days, Bridge Trek Trips, Back to School Retreat, and Community Days will vary.

At times individuals may need to request an alternative work schedule due to circumstances. Necessary alternative schedules can be arranged with the administration and supervisors.

Vacation/Deputation Time:

Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers take Vacation/Deputation time for six (6) weeks in June and July, two (2) weeks during Christmas time, one (1) week in October, and one (1) week in March. Staff will also take off Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving week and Thursday and Friday prior to Easter Sunday.

Time Off:

Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers are highly encouraged to not request time off outside of the scheduled Deputation/Vacation times. Should time off be necessary, the individual must complete the Time Off Request Form (See Appendix) at least two weeks before the requested absence. If the absence is approved, the individual requesting the absence will be responsible for making arrangements to cover his or her responsibilities while away. Time off taken outside of scheduled Vacation/Deputation will be made up during regularly scheduled Vacation/Deputation time, so that all receive an equal amount of days off. Emergency and unexpected situations will be handled by the leadership on a case by case basis.

Illness & Appointments:

Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers experiencing illness should stay home and rest. Sick days will not be counted as Vacation/Deputation time. Please inform the ENCOUNTER office that you are unable to report to work as soon as possible so arrangements can be made to cover any responsibilities.

Appointments should be scheduled on non-workdays as much as possible to prevent disruption of the ministry activities. Should an individual need to take time off for an appointment, the “Absence for Appointment Request Form” should be filled out and submitted to the office as soon as the appointment is scheduled (see Appendix). Deputation/Vacation time will not be deducted for necessary appointments.

Finances & Resources

Section 7

Financial Responsibilities

ENCOUNTER Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers are expected to raise or provide the funds necessary to cover personal living expenses, individual ministry expenses, airfare, medical costs, transportation, insurance, ect. ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS does not ask for additional funds from Staff Members and Volunteers to serve at ENCOUNTER. If Staff Members choose to eat at the ministry kitchen, stay in available ministry housing, participate on Bridge Trek Trips, or enroll their children in ENCOUNTER ACADEMY, they will pay the standard fees given to all other participants. ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS does not seek to make a profit on any of its activities. The ministry does aim to cover expenses while keeping costs as low as possible for all who wish to be involved.

Financial Support

ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS does not employ individuals. ENCOUNTER provides a place for men and women to serve with their God given gifts and abilities. Financial support for Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers is commonly obtained by building a team of ministry partners who invest in the individual's ministry at ENCOUNTER through regular financial donations. ENCOUNTER does provide ongoing support to individuals in building and maintaining a ministry team.

Support Levels: *Preparing to Serve* is a manual given to staff and full-time volunteers after application acceptance. The purpose of this manual is to provide the information and details necessary to prepare individuals and families for their transition into full-time cross-cultural ministry. This manual also gives guidelines of minimal levels of support which should be maintained while ministering in a full-time capacity.

Contribution Processing: Typically, finances are raised through a partnering organization in the host country that processes contributions and deposits those funds monthly into a bank account. These organizations retain a percentage of contributions to cover their operating expenses and deposits the remainder of the contributions into a US bank account. *Preparing to Serve* provides contact information for several different organizations that can process the new missionary's finances, and ENCOUNTER will provide an acceptance letter and any

other assistance needed in creating this partnership for new Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers.

Building a Ministry Team: Building a team of ministry partners who agree to pray, invest, and support a new missionary on the field will typically take 2 to 6 months. All accepted applicants, whether or not they are asking others to support them or using another financial source, are required to complete the “Ministry Team Building Assignments” included in *Preparing to Serve*. These assignments help new missionaries build a biblical understanding of missions, fundraising, and the importance of the body of Christ as a support network for missionaries.

All ENCOUNTER missionaries, whether or not they are requesting financial support from individuals build a team of at least ten individuals or couples to serve as the missionary’s ministry team. These team members commit to staying informed about the ministry by reading the missionary’s updates, praying for the missionary, and sending their own prayer requests to the missionary.

Note: ENCOUNTER Staff and Full-Time Volunteers are not permitted to directly ask another ENCOUNTER Staff, Volunteer, Intern or Community Member for financial support.

Low Support: Should an individual or family serving with ENCOUNTER repeatedly fail to receive minimal levels of support, Member Care and leadership will work with that family or individual to assist them in raising their support level. This may mean giving additional time in the weekly schedule to just connect with people back home, providing time to visit the home country, providing training materials and resources, and/or giving individualized support raising training.

Housing:

At times ENCOUNTER housing may be available for Staff Members or Volunteers to rent, but the typical protocol is for Staff and Volunteers to find a home to rent in the area. New Staff and Full-Time Volunteers will secure temporary housing for initial arrive and then find more permanent housing once in country. ENCOUNTER personnel will provide assistance in locating housing as needed and many resources are available in *Preparing to Serve*.

Emergency Fund:

Staff Members are required to keep an emergency fund. Full-Time Volunteers are highly encouraged to keep an emergency fund. For an individual, this emergency fund should

be no less than \$1000, \$1500 for a couple without children, and \$2500 for a family. The emergency funds should be easily accessible with a bank card. Should emergency funds be needed, Staff Members will put into place a plan to replenish the emergency account.

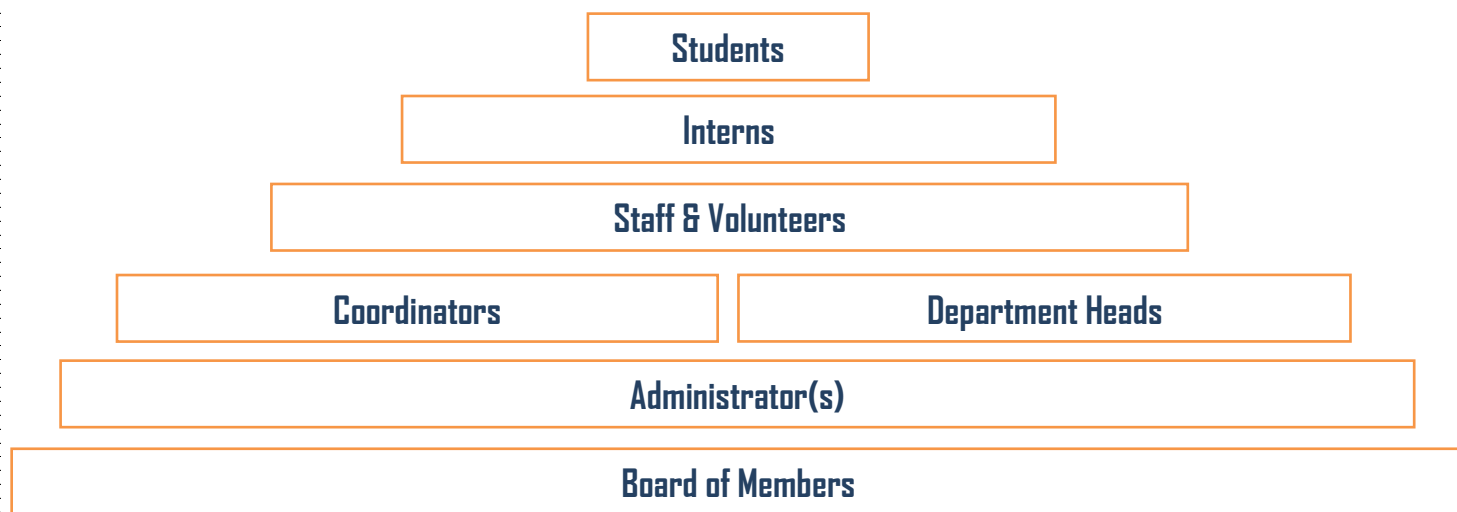
Ministry Funds & Resources:

In order to keep ministry involvement costs low, Staff Members and Full-Time Volunteers are asked to include in their packing list equipment and supplies they will be personally using in their ministry work. A list of specific items is provided in *Preparing to Serve*.

It is important that ENCOUNTER staff members raise support not only the amount needed for living expenses, but also funds for ministry activities, personal supplies used in ministry, and keeping up with their ministry team back home.

Organizational Chart

Section 8



The Inverted Leadership Pyramid

The **ENCOUNTER Organizational Chart** is based on the conviction that Jesus called leaders to be servants rather than to enjoy benefits of hierarchy. Therefore, the members of the ENCOUNTER Community with the heaviest loads of responsibility are at the bottom, indicating that their task is to carry out their duties sacrificially for the benefit of those they support.

BOARDS OF MEMBERS is the foundational body of leadership given the task of appointing and supporting Administrators and setting vision and direction for the future. Board members may also serve in a dual capacity as Administrators, Coordinators, Staff Members or Volunteers. Board Members may not receive financial compensation for their services.

ADMINISTRATORS(S) are one to three persons appointed to the task of overseeing and carrying out the day to day operations of ENCOUNTER. They support Coordinators, Department Head, Staff, Volunteers, & Students by providing mentorship, direction, encouragement, and correction. Their sacrificial love and care for the ENCOUNTER community lays the foundation for a warm and accepting atmosphere. Despite their

heavy responsibility, there is no task too lowly for an Administrator, and an Administrator should never ask a Coordinator, Department Head, Staff, Volunteer, Intern, or Student to do a task they would be unwilling to undertake themselves. Administrators serve as members of the board and may also serve in dual capacity in another position(s) on the organizational chart. Administrators may not receive financial compensation for their services.

COORDINATORS & DEPARTMENT HEADS see to the management of the various ministries and departments of ENCOUNTER. Like administrators they support Staff Members, Volunteers, and Interns through mentorship, direction, encouragement, and correction and are also key players in setting a welcoming, Christ-focused atmosphere at ENCOUNTER. Coordinators and Department Heads may also serve in a dual capacity as staff in other ministry departments. Coordinators and Department Heads may not receive financial compensation for their services.

STAFF MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS serve Interns, Students, and others benefiting from the ministry of ENCOUNTER by carrying out the tasks of each ministry department to the glory of God. At times Staff and Volunteers are appointed to lead a committee, project, or event. Other Staff, Volunteers, Interns, Coordinators, Department Heads and Administrators should follow the leadership of the appointed Staff Member in the activities relating to that appointment. Staff and Volunteers may also serve in a dual capacity in another position(s) on the organizational chart. Staff Members & Volunteers may not receive financial compensation for their services.

INTERNS are young adults learning while serving. They support Students and other members of the ENCOUNTER Community by using their skills and abilities to carry out the mission of the ministry. Interns may not receive financial compensation for their services.

Supporting the Leadership of Others – From the Board making directional decisions to the Intern assigned to oversee a school activity, members from the ENCOUNTER community are regularly asked to step into leadership positions. We enable our fellow missionaries to lead and serve by joyfully submitting ourselves to their directives. Criticizing their performance to others, complaining about their actions, or failing to provide full-hearted cooperation, tears down community members and creates a hostile atmosphere. We support our co-workers through an encouraging spirit and by refraining from giving negative opinions at the inappropriate time to the inappropriate people.

Note: More specific job descriptions are located in the “Roles and Responsibilities” sections in the various ENCOUNTER handbooks and manuals.

Encounter Leadership Expectations

Section 9

Persons holding leadership positions (board members, administrators, coordinators, staff, volunteers, and interns) *in Encounter: Education in Missions are held to the following expectations....*

Core Values – While we are all continually growing in Christian maturity, ENCOUNTER leaders commit to adhering to the Core Values of the organization, recognizing wrong attitudes and actions, and seeking reconciliation with God and man as needed. ENCOUNTER leaders should seek to promote peace, restoration, and healing in the community and avoid words and actions that breed division.

Spiritual Growth – Participate actively with a local, Bible-believing church. Regularly set aside time to pray, read God’s Word, and worship.

Policies and Procedures – Follow and abide by the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook and other ministry and department handbooks and manuals.

Secondary Doctrines – In the matter of secondary doctrines (views concerning baptism, communion, works of grace, gift of prophecy, gift of tongues, security of salvation, end times events, ect...) we choose to accept that a variety of views will be represented. We do not diminish the importance of those topics, but we believe it is the duty of parents and the local church to teach secondary doctrines. In an effort to maintain unity and focus on the primary Christian doctrines as laid out in the statement of faith, we choose to put these topics aside while at ENCOUNTER. Teachers, guest speakers, and others in leadership positions are not permitted to teach secondary doctrines or discuss their personal secondary doctrinal views while participating in an ENCOUNTER activity. Speaking in tongues, slaying in the spirit, healing services and the like, will not be a part of ENCOUNTER activities due to the interdenominational nature of the organization.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco – Abstain from any use of drugs other than for medical purposes. Do not drink alcohol to the extent of entering into a state of drunkenness. Refrain from the use of tobacco products on the ENCOUNTER property or while participating in ENCOUNTER activities.

Dress Code – While on the ENCOUNTER property or participating in ENCOUNTER activities, leaders should follow the same dress code guidelines required of students. Any type of clothing is acceptable that touches the knees when standing, covers the midriff area, and fully covers the area that would be covered by a standard tank top. Clothing should never reveal undergarments or any parts of the body considered to be “private” while the person is in any position.

Punctuality – Out of respect for the community, for the sake of efficiency, and to set a good example for students, leaders arrive to activities in a timely manner.

Sexual Purity – ENCOUNTER holds to the Word of God as the authoritative source governing right and wrong. Actively engaging in any sexual sins as defined by God’s Word is prohibited. This includes viewing pornography, sexting, or sexual relations towards any person outside of the covenant of a marriage between a male and female. To avoid the appearance of evil, ensure proper boundaries are maintained. To keep focus on ministry goals, prolonged physical contact or any contact involving intimate areas with others is not tolerated between unmarried persons. Married couples should also exercise discretion when in public.

Legal Adherence – Respect the local and national laws both inside and outside of ENCOUNTER activities. Show respect and cooperation with governing authorities.

Flexibility – Organization and preparation are important characteristics of ENCOUNTER Activities, but things do not always play out as planned in ministry. Leaders are asked to maintain an attitude of flexibility, recognize that God is ultimately sovereign over all circumstances, and refrain from grumbling when faced with unplanned discomforts and inconveniences.

Discretion – Leaders should always exercise appropriate discretion in speaking about the business of ENCOUNTER, avoiding gossip about persons in the ministry, and not sharing information which has not been made public knowledge.

Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures

Section 10

The overarching principle for resolving conflict within the ENCOUNTER community follows the guideline presented in Matthew 18:15-17. When living and working within community hurt feelings, miscommunication, unloving interactions, and conflict will arise from time to time. And these can be great opportunities for growth if handled God's way or situations that cause lasting damage to ourselves and others if we choose to go our own way.

PRAY ABOUT THE ISSUE We must all make personal choices about how to respond to conflict, and the first response should always be to pray about the issue with an open, teachable heart. Often the Holy Spirit reveals to us truths and alternative perspectives that make us rethink that troublesome interaction with the other person.

CALLING THE FIRST MEETING If a person feels that they need to address the issue, it will be discussed in face to face meetings, rather than through emails or other written communication. If a leader receives an email or letter containing complaints or concerns, the response of the leader will be to kindly help arrange a time and place for the sender and involved parties to discuss the issue.

ARRANGING THE SECOND MEETING Meetings addressing issues at ENCOUNTER should include the parties directly involved. The Coordinator or Administrator should be called in only after the people involved have attempted reconciliation without a third party.

MEETINGS WITH ADMINISTRATORS If an ENCOUNTER community member would like to discuss issues with the Administrator that pertain directly to one of the ministry departments (ENCOUNTER ACADEMY, BRIDGE, or ENGLISH BIBLE CLUBS), the Coordinator must be present. Other involved parties must also be present.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD The ENCOUNTER Board does not play a role in solving personal conflicts within the ENCOUNTER Community. Community Members are not permitted to address their issues directly to Board Members. Any communication of this nature received by a Board Member will be passed to the Administrator(s) and sorted out with the appropriate parties.

ADMINISTRATION FEEDBACK FORM ENCOUNTER Community Members may anonymously complete the Administration Feedback Form detailing the circumstances of their conflict if it is felt the issue was not resolved or handled satisfactorily. These forms are given to the Board to evaluate the job performance of the ENCOUNTER Administration and provide accountability.

DISCRETION AND REFRAINING FROM GOSSIP Maintaining discretion and refraining from gossip while in the midst of a conflict resolution process is imperative for community health and ministry effectiveness. ENCOUNTER community members must not share the details and information about the conflict with other Community Members. This constitutes gossip and slander and demonstrates a lack of love and a spirit of retaliation and self-justification that will not be tolerated at ENCOUNTER. ENCOUNTER Community Members may confidentially discuss ministry related issues with a neutral counselor outside of the ENCOUNTER Community with the intention of receiving biblical guidance and counsel.

Conflict remains and grows when accompanied by pride, mistrust, and a lack of transparency. We do not want to create a community in which people feel as if meetings are taking place behind their backs. Face to face discussions ensure that we are treating the parties involved with the utmost level of respect as a person of value and worth despite the conflict. We are more likely to write things we would never say to someone's face, so save the writing for positive communication. We want to always strive to make our words and actions uplifting and beneficial to all even in the midst of conflict resolution.

Refusing to follow the Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures may result in temporary suspension from the Encounter Community.



Child Safety Policies and Procedures

Section 11

ENCOUNTER EDUCATION IN MISSIONS seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in the programs and activities. Persons accepting a Staff or Full-Time Volunteer position with Encounter, agree to protect and care for the children within the ministry community in alignment with biblical precepts and local laws.

Providing Children with Supervision

While on the ENCOUNTER campus during regularly scheduled hours, children are under the supervision of the ENCOUNTER Staff, Volunteers, and Interns. ENCOUNTER personnel should ensure that children are supervised, and the environment is free of hazards. At no time on the ENCOUNTER campus or during an ENCOUNTER activity should children be left without adult supervision.

Maintaining Cleanliness & Health

ENCOUNTER is committed to providing children with appropriate care in the event of illness and to preventing the spread of illness to other children. Children who demonstrate or report illness will be moved to a separate comfortable area for rest. Over the counter medications may be administered by the ENCOUNTER personnel as deemed appropriate provided such allowances are granted by parents on the child's health status form. In emergency situations children will be taken to a hospital by the quickest means possible and parents will be immediately informed.

It is the responsibility of ENCOUNTER personnel to ensure that students are not sharing drinks and food, hands are being washed thoroughly before meals and after putting fingers in the mouth or nose, and items that have been "tasted" are placed into a separate container for proper cleaning. Personnel also assist with daily cleaning and sanitizing of the facilities.

Protecting Children from Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another dominating child, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **NEGLECT** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

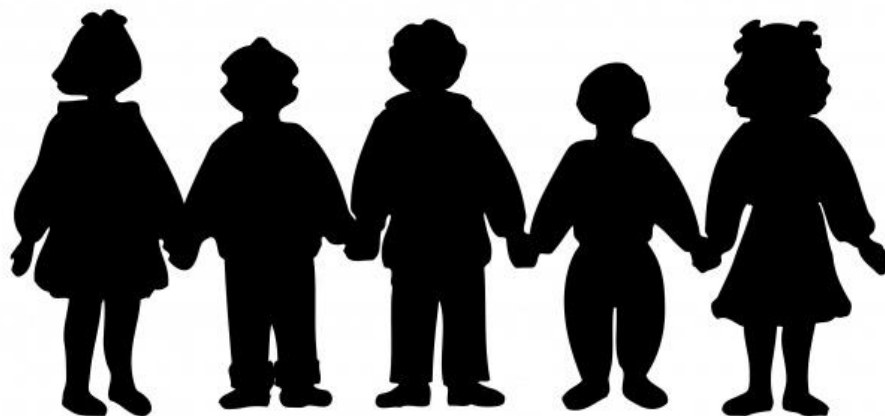
Children may be abused by adults or other children. Any form of child abuse from an ENCOUNTER personnel will not be tolerated, and personnel have a responsibility to step in when they suspect a child in the community is being abused. In the interest of maintaining transparency, ENCOUNTER personnel are not permitted to be alone in a room, vehicle, or other isolated place with any ENCOUNTER students. Doors should be kept open to rooms, meeting spaces should be visible, and physical touch limited to cultural greetings, brief side hugs, and a comforting hand on the shoulder.

Preparing Students for Emergencies

Encounter personnel assist and lead students in learning the appropriate procedures in the event of a lock down or evacuation. Drills are held bi-annually.

Child safety topics will be addressed more thoroughly during Start Up, and Staff and Full-Time Volunteers will complete Child Abuse Prevention Training.

Adapted from template provided by www.ChurchSafe.com



Communication

Section 12

Face to Face Meetings

Face-to-face meetings are the preferred form of communication within the ENCOUNTER Community and should be the first option. Meeting with individuals in person ensures the information is delivered and received, allows for questions and feedback, and reduces the incident of misunderstandings. Also, it is not always possible for personnel to be near a phone or computer. Formal meetings and group meetings should be followed by or accompanied with a written memo summarizing the key points of the discussion and next steps. A record of all group and formal meetings are kept on file. The “Record of Meeting Form” is located in the appendix and should be completed and submitted after holding a formal meeting with another individual within the ENCOUNTER Community.

Resolving Conflicts in Person

As stated in the “Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures” if an Encounter Community Member has an issue that needs resolved with another Encounter Community Member, this information and any details related to it should not be communicated through any form other than in a face-to-face meeting or video chat. Texts or emails with such information will be discarded, and the sender will be assisted with finding an appropriate time to discuss the issue with the appropriate parties.

Communication Tools

Staff and Full-Time Volunteers will be issued an email address, and ministry business should primarily be conducted using this address. Using an instant messaging service to communicate when appropriate is acceptable, but please do not create messaging groups.



Communication with Minors

ENCOUNTER personnel should never email, message, or call a minor in the ENCOUNTER community without the parent or guardian also being included in the communication.

Maintaining Boundaries

Mass communicating with ENCOUNTER Community Members in any form to express political views, discuss views on secondary doctrines, or express personal issues that would jeopardize the ministry or a member of the ENCOUNTER Community is strictly prohibited. Therefore, staff and volunteers using social media sites must either filter their communication on such sites through these guidelines or choose to not invite ENCOUNTER Community Members to access personal sites.

No communication to the ENCOUNTER Community should be in contradiction to the mission, statement of faith, policies and procedures, or goals of ENCOUNTER: EDUCATION IN MISSIONS.



Evaluation, Review, & Improvement Processes

Section 13

Feedback Forms

These forms are designed to provide ENCOUNTER Community Members with an ongoing channel of communication. They are intended to be completed anonymously and cover a wide range of ministry areas. Forms may be completed at any time by any Community Member and placed in the Feedback Forms Box. At times groups of Community Members may be specifically asked to complete a Feedback Form. Feedback Forms are greatly valued and used to improve the programs of the ministry. Submitted forms are regularly disbursed to the appropriate persons for review. After review, a Feedback Form Response Card is completed and attached to the form detailing the next action which will be taken in response to the feedback provided. Feedback Forms should not be used to resolve conflicts between specific individuals.

Program Improvement

Feedback forms will assist ENCOUNTER Personnel in making ongoing improvements to the ENCOUNTER programs. It is the duty of the Administration, Coordinators, and Department Heads to carefully review Feedback Forms and summarize key areas in need of improvement. Key areas will be brought before the ENCOUNTER Personnel during the July ENCOUNTER Servicing Weeks, and they will be part of the discussion and voting on program changes. Approved changes will be made by assigned ENCOUNTER personnel.

Votes are weighted according to the position of the Encounter personnel.

Voting Weights	
Staff Member	1
Full-Time Volunteer	.5 (.75 after 2 years of service)
Part-Time Volunteer / Intern	.25

Evaluations

All ENCOUNTER personnel are regularly evaluated for the purpose of ongoing growth and accountability. In order to get a more complete picture, ENCOUNTER uses a 360 evaluation process, meaning besides supervisors giving evaluations, parents, students, and coworkers are randomly selected to complete evaluations on personnel as well.

All evaluations completed by persons other than director supervisors shall be completed anonymously. The Evaluation & Growth Conference is conducted by immediate supervisors. The purpose of the conference is to help ENCOUNTER Personnel identify areas of strength and weakness and develop a Growth Plan for the next semester.

