

# COMPLIANCE

## Volunteer Compliance

The Malachi Dad ministry has earned the trust of the prison system, and it is vital to keep that trust by staying in compliance. If you have questions about compliance, please consult your volunteer leader or the MD coordinator.

### Rules of Conduct for Volunteers

For more details, refer to the TDCJ Volunteer Guidelines. Inmates are familiar with these rules and understand they must be followed at all times.

1. **Allowed Items:** Bring only your driver's license, books, pen, keys, and approved medications. Leave wallets, money, and cell phones in your car. Some prisons may prohibit devices like Fitbits or Apple Watches. Perform a self-check before approaching the guardhouse.
2. **Dress Code:** Do not wear white shirts, white pants, or tank tops. Wear shoes (not sandals).
3. **Food Restrictions:** Do not bring candy, treats, or food for inmates. Do not accept or remove items such as letters or gifts from inmates.
4. **Personal Information:** Keep your private information confidential. Do not share your address, phone number, email, or family photos. Share about your life only as proper in group discussions, avoiding details like family last names.
5. **Communication with Inmates:** Do not engage in outside contact, exchange letters, or interact with inmates' families. Direct inmates to the Chaplain for help with these matters.
6. **Family Restrictions:** Do not encourage inmates who have no-contact orders to reach out to their no-contact family members. Instead, encourage prayer for their families.
7. **Victim Contact:** Inmates are prohibited from contacting victims or the victim's families. Volunteers must be mindful that a victim may be a family member of the inmate.
8. **Personal Endeavors:** Do not help inmates with personal projects like publishing books or songs, newsletters, or other similar activities. Refer them to the Chaplain for help.
9. **Avoid Favoritism:** Treat all inmates equally. For example, bringing in a special meal for one inmate during a celebration could lead to complaints or conflict.
10. **Financial Assistance:** Volunteers nor their family members must not deposit money into an inmate's Trust Fund Account or purchase items for them through services like eCommDirect.
11. **Reentry Assistance:** Do not help inmates with housing, money, or aid upon release. There are other ministries and government agencies that are trained and prepared to help with this. Refer them to the Chaplain for reentry resources.
12. **Material Donations:** Do not bring books or materials for specific inmates. Any materials brought in must be given to all participants to avoid favoritism. Books can be donated to the chapel library using a Property Donation Form and an inmate can then check it out.
13. **Chapel Needs:** If inmates request items for the chapel (e.g., drums), coordinate with your volunteer leader and the Chaplain. Donations require approval through a Personal Property Donation Form.

14. **Respect Administration:** Avoid criticizing prison administration in front of inmates, even if delays or inefficiencies occur.
15. **Visitation Restrictions:** Volunteers may not visit inmates as part of regular visitation.
16. **Parole References:** Volunteers may write parole references for inmates taking part in Malachi Dads. Focus comments on observed behavior during meetings (e.g., attendance, preparation, and effort).

## Inmate Correspondence

The prison system has transitioned to digital communication via Securus eMessaging in order to communicate with inmates from the outside. MD focuses on in-person engagement in small groups, and outside communication with inmates is not part of our mission.

The volunteer leader(s) may want to establish Securus contact with field ministers to help communicate about the MD ministry but care should be taken to not exclude or go around the chaplain concerning key decisions-communications. The chaplain must always be in control.

Volunteers still choosing to correspond must follow all TDCJ guidelines:

- Communications are monitored for compliance.
- Do not share private information (e.g., vacation details, photos).
- Identify yourself as a volunteer in all correspondence.
- Correspondence should focus on spiritual encouragement and support.
- Violating these guidelines may result in revoked volunteer privileges.

If you still wish to correspond then you can google Securus EMessaging and follow the instructions to set up your account.

### *Official TDCJ Policy on Correspondence:*

“Volunteers may correspond with an inmate (s). Appropriate correspondence should be focused on rehabilitation and reentry efforts and in line with approved volunteer programming. Promoting illicit behavior may lead to termination of the volunteer’s approved status. Unless it is specifically approved correspondence shall not include disclosure of intimate information, providing legal and/or financial advice (other than through an approved program utilizing approved content), promoting of inappropriate sexual activity, correspondence that circumvents security, use of or transfer of contraband, establishing inappropriate relationships, promoting actions that are inappropriate, such as soliciting money.”