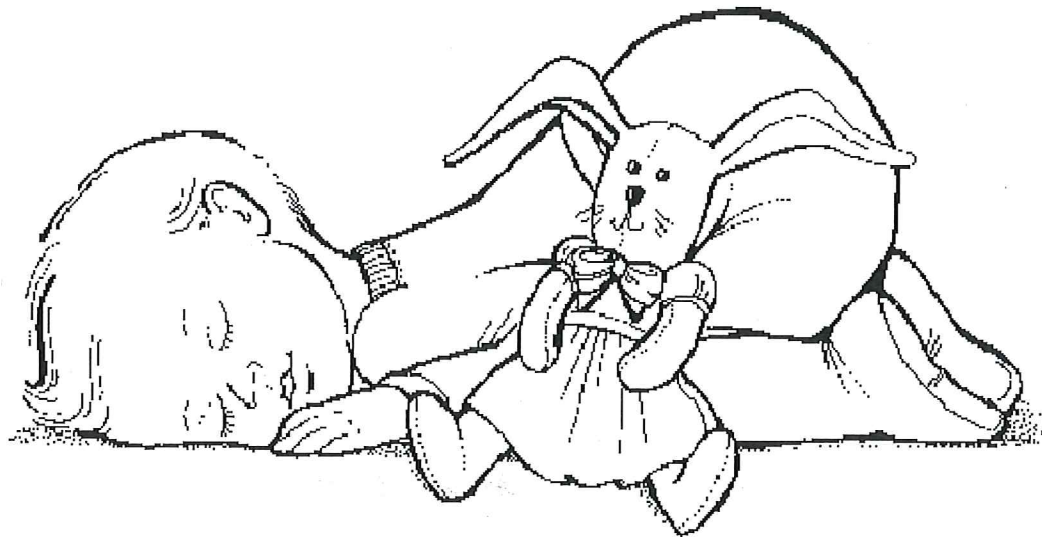


**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

**ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN**



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## **Sample Forms**

1. Children/Youth Work Application
2. Children/Youth Work Renewal Application
3. Reference Response Information
4. Notice of Injury

## Policy Statement

In order to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry's and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

## Volunteer Worker Screening Procedures

1. Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children, youth, or the disabled will complete and return an initial "Ministry Application".
2. The "Ministry Application" will be carefully reviewed by a pastor to make certain that the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based on the information provided.
3. This "Ministry Application" is to remain a part of the church records, and be accessible only to the pastors or their assignees.
4. If the person appears to be appropriate for the ministry work, then at least two of the references will be checked to confirm the information provided on the "Ministry Application".
5. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a children's or youth ministry position with this organization.
6. A criminal records check will be conducted through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children, youth or the disabled.
7. The pastors will have the final judgement as to whether an application is accepted or rejected.

## Employee Screening Procedures

1. The same procedure set forth for volunteer workers will apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered.
2. In addition, a criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to all candidates for employment.
3. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment with this organization.

## Waiting Period

No volunteer worker candidate will be considered for any ministry involving contact with children, youth, or the disabled until the candidate has been regularly attending First Baptist Church for at least one year.

## Supervision

1. At least two adults (at least one over the age of 21) should be present at every function, and in each classroom, vehicle, or enclosed area, during every child, youth and disabled ministry program.
2. Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person. Do not send children out to find their parents, and do not release any child or youth to await transportation.
3. Minors shall have written parental permission for any activity off the church property.
4. An individual designated by the pastors shall make random visits to each of the classrooms to monitor activity and teaching procedures.
5. Teachers should attempt to situate themselves in a classroom so that they may be seen by anyone passing by in the hallway.
6. All classrooms shall have doors with windows that provide a clear view of the teaching area.

## Work Restrictions

1. For children ages six through ten, at least one adult female should take girls to the restroom, and one adult male should take boys to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe, and then wait outside the restroom until the children come out.
2. Children five years of age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
3. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
4. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.
5. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person.

## Discipline

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to a pastor or ministry leader (i.e. Awana Commander) or to a parent or guardian.

## Injuries or Illness

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or having a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.
4. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids of any kind.
5. Any pastor or ministry leader who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
6. Persons who have received an injury which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The person's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when they pick up the injured person.

7. Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention: the parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with a pastor or ministry leader. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

## Record Keeping

1. An attendance list should be kept for all of the ministry's functions involving children, youth, and the disabled. The date of the function, along with the names of all participants and responsible adults should be recorded.
2. Workers should prepare a written incident/notice of injury report whenever an injury should occur during a ministry function. The incident report will be forwarded to the pastor overseeing the ministry promptly upon completion.

## Notice of Injury, Abuse, Or Molestation

1. Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform the pastor overseeing the ministry or the ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation.
2. Any ministry leader who becomes aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform the pastor overseeing the ministry of such injury, abuse, or molestation and will complete a "Notice of Injury" form.
3. Any pastor who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant will ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The pastor will also see that an attorney is promptly contacted to provide a written opinion as to whether the organization should report the abuse or molestation to law enforcement authorities. The written opinion should be obtained within 24 hours of when the pastor first becomes aware of the abuse or molestation, and the attorney's advice should be followed. If the attorney recommends that an incident be reported, the advice should be acted upon immediately.
4. Upon notice of abuse or molestation, the ministry's insurance carrier, must be promptly notified, as well as any organizational entity to whom the organization has a duty to report such allegations.

## Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Workers must promptly notify the pastor overseeing the ministry or ministry leader of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.
2. Any pastor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

## Internal Investigation

1. Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously and will be investigated by the pastor who oversees the ministry.
2. Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with organizational employment practices).
3. Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
4. Any person who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children, youth, or the disabled within the organization. The church will consult with legal counsel for advice if termination of employment is indicated.

## Dealing with Law Enforcement/Media

1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of the organization.
2. Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance as soon as possible after the organization receives notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection with organization activities. Decisions concerning the ministry's response to the allegations will be made in accordance with such advice.
3. A single organizational leader will be designated as spokesperson following notice of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, and (to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation) will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances.

## Annual Employee/Worker Review

1. This policy and procedures will be conveyed for review annually to all workers, employees, coordinators, supervisors, and leaders to whom it applies.
2. All ministry employees will complete a brief "Annual Renewal Application" once each year. A renewal application will also be completed annually by all volunteer workers associated with the organization who will be working in any capacity with children, youth, or the disabled.
3. Should the renewal application show that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children, youth, or the disabled, they will be immediately removed from their current position, and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children, youth, or the disabled.

## Revision of Policy/Procedures

This Policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and can be modified in accordance with the bylaws of the organization. Any such modification should be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.