

Child Safety and Protection Guidelines

Berean Baptist Church (BBC) is committed to providing an environment that is as safe as possible for preschoolers, children, and youth who attend the church or any sponsored programs or activities, and to take the necessary precautions to protect church leaders, church staff, and volunteers from accusations and/or suspicions.

Church leadership recognizes the need to have written guidelines to help prevent the opportunity for or the appearance of abuse to a minor. Abuse is defined as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse as well as neglect. The following procedures are not based on a lack of trust in a particular individual but instead are needed to protect our entire church body.

A criminal background check is required for all adults 18+ (regardless of position) prior to serving in the following ministries: Sunday School, Nursery, Children's Church, Awana, Youth Group, Church-Sponsored Children's Events (ex. Parents Night Out), and Summer Children's Programs. Parents or adults without a completed background check are not permitted to stay within the classrooms or with the children.

In extenuating circumstances when volunteers are needed and there has not been sufficient notice to submit the normal background check, a state ID can be scanned through the Raptor system to provide an immediate background check. This system is not to be used regularly in lieu of the formal submission of background check forms.

All individuals working with children must sign the written guidelines confirming they have read, understood, and will abide by the church's Child Safety and Protection Guidelines.

Definitions

- For purposes of these guidelines, the terms "child," "children," and "youth" includes all persons under the age of 18 years. The term "worker" includes both paid staff and volunteer persons who work with children.

Check-in/Check-out Guidelines

- BBC has partnered with *KidCheck* to enhance child security through the check-in process. Every child in sixth grade and younger must be registered with *KidCheck* and be checked in by a parent or guardian. *KidCheck* registration will include information such as special needs, disabilities, allergies, medical conditions, and authorized persons for child pick-up.
- For children in 6th grade and younger, a parent or guardian must drop them off and sign them in at the appropriate location. A parent or guardian with a 6th-grade child or younger participating in a program must remain on the campus for the duration of the class or program unless otherwise stated, such as with a Parents Night Out event.

- Only authorized individuals who are listed on a child's *KidCheck* account and have the guardian receipt sticker will be allowed to pick up a child, no exceptions. Authorized individuals must be at least 12 years of age and one grade level older than the child they are picking up.
- To pick up a child, individuals must show their *KidCheck* tag, and the code on their *KidCheck* tag must match the code on the child's *KidCheck* sticker. If the individual does not have their tag, the ministry director must authorize the individual to be able to pick up the child. A picture of the tag may be used as an acceptable replacement for the physical sticker as long as a chain of custody can be demonstrated. This can be accomplished in several ways and a ministry director should be consulted when doing so.

Classroom Guidelines and Adult Ratios

- It is our goal to have a minimum of two adult workers to be present in each room at all times when children are being supervised during our classes, programs, and activities. The target ratio for children's programs with small group interaction is 1 adult worker to 5 children. On occasion, some youth and older children's classes may have only one adult worker in attendance during the class session; in these instances, the classroom must have a viewing window. The older the child, the higher the ratio will be of students to adults.
- Classroom doors should be closed and locked at all times.
- BBC recognizes the importance of children below the age of 18 being allowed to participate in service to the church. We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for classroom workers (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under the age of 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:
 - Youth workers must be at least age 12.
 - Youth workers must be informed of safety guidelines.
 - All youth workers under the age of 16 will be under the direct supervision of an adult at all times.
- Classes are to remain in the assigned spaces. If there is a need to change locations, the ministry leader must be informed of the need and approve the change prior to relocating children. The ministry leader is then responsible to inform parents of any necessary changes to drop-off or pick-up locations.
- Care should be taken by workers so that young children do not leave the classroom unattended. Special care will be given when children are transported to different areas of the building, such as taking children to the MPR or playground. Children will be counted by the workers before leaving and returning to the classroom to ensure no child is left unattended.
- All doors should be closed and locked within 15 minutes after the start of each service.

Parent/Family Visitors

- Occasionally, there is a need or desire for a parent to be in the room with their child. While we want to accommodate these needs, security cannot be ignored. Any non-worker adult guest must have either a background check on file with the church or be run through the *Raptor* database. In either instance, the guest needs a sticker from either *KidCheck* or *Raptor* identifying that they have been screened properly. The parent is not a volunteer and should not be left to supervise children other than their own. If regular visitors become an issue, speak with your director about signing up the guest as a regular volunteer.

Restroom/Diaper Guidelines

- Workers should escort children to the bathroom and allow the children inside while the worker should remain outside the door. Workers should avoid taking only one child to the bathroom at a time. It is recommended that there be at least two children with the adult. The outer door should be propped open if using a main hallway bathroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the worker should prop open the outer bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child. For the protection of all, workers or other adults should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.
- **Nursery Worker Specific**
 - No male workers will be allowed to change diapers or assist toddlers when using the restroom.
 - Rubber gloves must be worn while changing soiled diapers.
 - When assisting toddlers in 2s-5s, leave the top half of the bathroom door open.

Physical Contact and Discipline

- It is the policy of BBC not to administer corporal punishment as discipline, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. Parents or legal guardians are the only persons allowed to administer corporal punishment at their own discretion on church grounds. There will be no spanking, hitting, grabbing, or other harsh physical discipline of children by the church workers. Any verbal discipline should be done in a loving and positive manner for training and correction and will be age appropriate. No yelling, belittling, persistent teasing, or constant criticism will be tolerated. When a worker notices a child is not behaving appropriately, the problem will be explained to the child calmly and the child will be given the opportunity to correct their actions. In the event that initial steps do not remedy the problem, the Ministry Director will speak with the child. If further action is needed to correct the behavior the Ministry Director or Commander will contact the child's parent and document the incident on a Disciplinary Incident Form. In this case, it is also necessary for the parent to pick up the child at that time. This is a very rare action and is only used when all other attempts to correct the behavior have been exhausted.

- Appropriate touching interaction need not be completely avoided, but workers must be aware of how it looks and how the person being touched may interpret the contact. Touch to comfort or affirm a child in an age-appropriate manner is permitted, such as a high five, a pat on the shoulder, or a handshake. Side-by-side hugs are to be used instead of full-body contact hugs. Unwelcomed touch of any kind is not allowed. Children of kindergarten age and older should not be permitted to sit in the lap of workers.

AWANA Specific

- During Awana Clubs, we will use the “5 Count” method for gathering attention. The 5 count is used in group situations by the person responsible for the group. This person asks for quiet, then starts counting slowly. By the time the count reaches five (or before), the group should be quiet. Workers should assist the person counting by holding up their fingers, following the count, and setting the example.

Media Policy

- Pictures taken of church events with other children in the photo should only be posted to official church social media platforms. Pictures of children other than your own should not be posted to a personal social media platform. If you choose to capture moments on camera, please share them with ministry directors or parents directly.
- While rooms are equipped with screens and streaming apps are available, shows and movies are to be the exception, not the rule. If you choose to play a show, it must be distinctively Christian and focused on teaching biblical truth, such as Veggie Tales or Super Book Bible Stories. Under no circumstances should anything from Disney or similar companies be watched.

Accidental Injuries to Children: Follow these steps

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc) as appropriate, will fill out an Accidental Injury report, and will notify the child’s parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker’s immediate supervisor/Ministry Director. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an Accidental Injury report will be completed.
- In either incident, once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an accident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional, as well as the records of the church. A copy should be signed by the parent and worker, the parent should get a copy and one should be filed with the church office.
- First aid kits are located at the nursery office, chapel, MPR closet, and classrooms.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

- Child abuse and neglect refers to any behavior or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults, or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviors may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. Neglect) or commission (i.e. Abuse) for purposes of these guidelines, “child abuse” is any 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.
 - **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
 - **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 or verbal abuse.
 - **Neglect** – depriving a child of their essential needs and medical care.
- Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse of the children under our care. In the event that a worker involved in the care of children at BBC becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, he/she must immediately report it to the Ministry Director and Pastor oversight for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law. Any suspected abuse or neglect must be reported immediately so that an investigation can be started within 24 hours for abuse or 72 hours for neglect.

Security Protocols

- Ministry Directors keep walkie-talkies in case of emergency. Please report any suspicious activity to them to follow up with the security team.
- Color-coded security details are kept in each classroom to reference. (Code red, blue, yellow, white, and fire alarm)
- Care should be taken while transporting children. While leaving the classroom and traveling through the building, teachers and leaders must have a clipboard with the class roster, count children, and have a leader in the front and in the back.
- All classrooms, hallways, and common areas used by the nursery and children’s ministry are monitored by video and audio surveillance and recording.

Acknowledgment Volunteer Copy

- By signing below, I agree that I have read this document in its entirety and agree to comply with the safety regulations herein stated and that willful noncompliance may result in my inability to serve in ministries with children at Berean Baptist Church. I understand that a policy is not a replacement for Biblical wisdom and discretion as I participate in the service of the Kingdom and the discipleship of the saints and will seek to glorify God first and foremost in all of my actions and speech while serving in a ministry.

Print

Signature

Date

Acknowledgment Church Copy

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