



Children and Youth Safety Policy

Definition of Terms

While exact definitions differ from state to state, most agree on several common elements of an abused or neglected child: "... a child whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by acts or omissions of his/her parent or other person responsible for his/her welfare."¹

Sexual Abuse

- A. *Sexual abuse* can be defined broadly as "any activity, verbal, visual, or physical, engaged in without consent which may be emotionally or physically harmful and which exploits a person in order to meet another person's sexual or emotional needs. The person does not consent if he or she cannot reasonably choose to consent or refuse because of the age, circumstances, level of understanding, and dependency or relationship to the offender."²
- B. The term *sexual abuse* includes:
1. "The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct."³
 2. Contacts or interactions between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. Sexual abuse may also be committed by a person under the age of 18 when that person is either significantly older than the victim or when the perpetrator is in a position of power or control over another child.
 3. Specifically:
 - a. Touching a child's private parts for sexual purposes
 - b. Making a child touch someone else's genitals or play sexual games
 - c. Contact of objects or body parts with a child in a sexual manner for sexual gratification
- C. *Non-contact sexual abuse* includes but is not limited to:
1. Photographing or videotaping a child in sexual poses
 2. Encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
 3. Inappropriately watching a child undress or use the bathroom
 4. Texting, instant messaging, or emailing sexually explicit messages to a child

Abuse (Non-Sexual)

Non-sexual abuse can be defined as the physical or mental injury of a child by a permanent/temporary care guardian under circumstances indicating harm of or substantial risk to the health or welfare of the child. It includes but is not limited to:

- A. Any intentional act by an adult or by another child that harms or threatens to harm a child's physical, mental, or emotional health
- B. Abuse by another child can be an older or stronger individual who exerts his or her position of power
- C. Neglect is another form of abuse that occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs
- D. Emotional abuse can occur when words or actions are used that cause extreme emotional pain

¹ U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families

² Kubetin & Mallory, 2004. *Shelter from the Storm*, p. 26.

³ Child Welfare Information Gateway. Available online at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.cfm>

Abandonment

Now defined in many States as a form of *neglect*. In general, a child is considered to be abandoned “when the parent’s identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.”⁴

Harassment

Sexually harassing conduct, whether committed by supervisors or non-supervisory personnel, paid or volunteer ministry workers, is strictly prohibited. Such conduct includes but is not limited to:

- A. Sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior, unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements, in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, ministry, or colleague relationship between the persons involved.
- B. Sexual flirtation and innuendo, touching, advances, or propositions.
- C. Verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
- D. Sexually degrading words to describe an individual.
- E. The display of sexually suggestive objects/pictures

Exploitation

- A. The development, or the attempted development of a sexual or romantic relationship between a church or lay worker and any person with whom he or she has a pastoral and/or ministerial relationship, whether or not there is apparent or deliberate consent from the individual.
- B. Exploitation is understood to be synonymous with abuse and/or harassment.

Children and Youth

These policies encompass all ministry activities that involve those under the age of 18. Herein, “children” and “youth” will refer to minors of any age.

Approved Volunteer

Anyone who has successfully completed all the items listed under “Policies and Procedures, A” of this document.

⁴ Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Policies and Procedures

- A. Before permission will be granted to serve in any of the children and/or youth ministries of Lebanon Baptist Church, potential workers must:
1. Be faithful members at LBC for at least 3 months and be 18 years of age or older⁵
 2. Read and agree in writing to abide by these policies
 3. Submit to a background/reference check
 - a. A background check is required for those seeking to work with youth and children.
 - b. Those who have prior convictions of sexual abuse or molestation, whether standing or expunged, will not be permitted to serve in any children's or youth ministry.
 4. Successfully complete the training course provided by LBC⁶
 5. Assistants with the youth and children
 - a. Under no circumstance may an assistant under the age of 18 be in charge and/or left alone with children.
 - b. Teen girls 14+ may act as *helpers* in the nursery and in children's ministries with a trained adult worker.
 - c. Teen boys 16+ may assist only assist in the children's ministry with a trained adult worker for first grade and above.
- B. Only approved youth workers and assistants (i.e., those who have successfully completed the training) will be allowed to help in any class, nursery, or youth activity. The ministry director must grant permission before allowing someone to help or visit in a classroom except when that person is a parent of a child in the class. Parents are always given access to their child's class or activity. **Exception:** *only nursery workers and nursing mothers will be permitted in the nursery during scheduled services.*
- C. Parental permission is to be obtained when having official church-sponsored overnight activities or when spending one-on-one with a child. There is to be absolutely no mixed-gender sleeping arrangements. At no time should adults or children of the opposite gender enter the sleeping area of the other children.
- D. Bathroom Procedures
- In cases where younger children require assistance with their clothing (i.e., belts, pants, zippers, pull-ups, etc.), a female monitor is to assist them, exercising caution and discernment.
- E. Church Van Procedures
- All drivers and van workers must be an approved to serve in children's ministry (see point A. above).
 - All passengers must have a consent form containing parent/guardian contact information.
 - Do not exceed the maximum capacity of 15 passengers.
 - Two adults are required in the van while transporting children.
 - All passengers must be in a seat and properly buckled.
 - No child under the age of 12 may ride in the front passenger seat.
 - Children 8 years of age and younger must be in a child safety seat.
 - Passengers may only be dropped off at parent/guardian-approved locations.
 - Unless there is an emergency situation, all physical contact should be avoided.
- F. Unless otherwise indicated, the children's workers will only release children to the child's parent or legal guardian. Children may not be released early.

⁵ Applies to Nursery, Sunday School, and Children's Church Ministry. Wednesday night Awana Clubs will provide opportunity for parents to serve in limited ways. All Awana volunteers are subject to LBC policies.

⁶ Provided by *Protect My Ministry, Child Safety Training for Abuse Prevention* (www.protectmyministry.com)

- G. Children’s workers must obtain permission from parents and ministry leader before taking children off the church property.
- H. Immediately report any suspicious activity to the ministry leader.
- I. When demonstrating affection, children’s workers should avoid questionable or inappropriate behavior as outlined in Appendix A.
- J. Physical force is not permitted in any form unless necessary to prevent the child from hurting himself, you, or other children. **There is to be no corporal punishment administered under any circumstances.**
- K. Youth workers are not to be alone with a member of the opposite gender. Teens may only be alone with a youth worker or mentor of the same gender with parental permission.
- L. Publications, other than those associated with the Sunday School or AWANA curriculum or with LBC in general, are not to be distributed or sent home without permission from the pastors or ministry directors. Likewise, videos are not to be shown without permission from the ministry leader.
- M. If an emergency or unavoidable circumstance arises, use wise judgment, stay in public view, and contact the ministry director immediately.

Reporting Procedures

A. Overt acts of abuse/harassments

1. What Constitutes Abuse: Act or omission to sexual assault, molestation, exploitation, emotional abuse or prostitution; where child is in need of food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision because parent or guardian fails to do so; where child exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, burns, fractures, etc.; or circumstances indicate a condition that may not be the product of an accidental occurrence.
2. Mandatory Reporting Required By: Physicians, child health associate, dentist, chiropractor, nurse, hospital personnel, school employee, social worker, mental health professional, veterinarian, peace officer, pharmacist, psychologist, fireman, victim's advocate, commercial film and photographic print processor, clergyman.
3. Basis of Report of Abuse/Neglect: Reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child is subject to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.
4. To Whom Reported: County or district department of social services or local law enforcement agency.
5. Penalty for Failure to Report or False Reporting: Willful violation: Class 3 misdemeanor plus liability for proximately caused damages.
6. Timely reporting is key. This is key for those with mandatory reporting requirements (see above). Do not wait 24 hours to report.

B. Policy Deviations

1. The witness(es) should report the deviation to the ministry leader.
2. The ministry director will advise a pastor of the policy deviation.
3. Based on the deviation, this may result in dismissal from the respective ministry.

C. Allegations

1. Every allegation given by a child should be treated as sincere and legitimate.
 - a. Whoever receives a complaint should listen calmly and carefully, taking note of the child's behavior.
 - b. Do not panic or overreact to the information disclosed.
 - c. Do not criticize or suggest that the child is not telling the truth.
 - d. Be careful to not lead the child by putting words in his mouth.
 - e. Respect and protect the child's privacy by not having the conversation become the topic of discussion with others.
 - f. Do not deny or minimize the allegation or blame the victim.
 - g. Never promise confidentiality or to "keep a secret." Always answer such requests by affirming that only those that need to be informed or involved will be notified.
2. Inform the Ministry Leader immediately (within 24 hours) and go with them to the child's parent(s) or legal guardian.
3. The Ministry Leader will immediately report the information to a Pastor.
4. If a paid employee of the church or a volunteer has been accused that person will be immediately relieved of all youth or child ministry duties.
5. In the event that the media were to become involved, only the church's attorney or the official church spokesperson may speak on behalf of the church. All requests for information from or about the church are to be directed to one of these two people.

Injuries and Medical Assistance

- A. Because of the risk of blood borne pathogens and complications that can arise from contact with bodily fluids, great caution must be exercised when assisting with a medical injury or illness, especially when it involves blood. When possible, seek the help of someone who has been trained in First Aid or other medical personnel.
- B. Each wing of the building is to be equipped with accessible First Aid Kits. It is the responsibility of the ministry directors to ensure the First Aid Kits are well stocked at all times.
- C. Always wear gloves before dealing with blood or any body fluid.
- D. Once the situation is under control, wash your hands immediately!
- E. In the event of an emergency, call 911 and notify any medical personnel available in the church.
- F. Fill out an Incident Report Form and turn into the office.

APPENDIX A:

Guidelines for Discretion in Showing Affection

The following lists are not meant to be exhaustive, but to serve as a guideline. As always, common sense and discernment should be exercised.

1. Appropriate behavior

- a. Giving or receiving a short hug
- b. Briefly placing a comforting arm around the child
- c. Carrying younger child to parent or nurse
- d. Nurturing touches to the head or shoulders

2. Questionable or Inappropriate behavior:

- a. Long embraces
- b. Back rubs
- c. Tickling
- d. Kisses of any kind
- e. Touching private areas
- f. Slapping on the buttocks
- g. Sitting on a child or teenager's lap
- h. Corporal punishment or discipline that inflicts pain on the child (i.e., hitting, slapping, spanking, shaking, squeezing, biting, etc.)

APPENDIX B:

Potential Signs or Behavioral Indicators of Abuse (collected from various legal studies)

Most children do not tell in words that they have been sexually assaulted. Often the reason they don't tell is because they think no one will believe them. Or they may lack the vocabulary to talk about it. They are often afraid of what might happen, and predators instill fear into them during an assault. They may even feel responsible for what happened. They may however, tell by their actions.

The following behaviors are common indicators of possible abuse. Please note that they do not necessarily mean that a child has been abused. Some of these indicators can be attributed to other ordinary circumstances.

Group 1: children, 0-5

Group 2: children, 5-11

Group 3: adolescence, 11-18

Groups 1 and 2

- Fear of restrooms, showers, or baths
- Specific knowledge of sexual facts and terminology beyond their development age
- Fear of disrobing in front of particular persons
- Moodiness, excessive crying
- Bed wetting (those already potty trained)
- Unusual need of assurance of love
- Regressive behavior (fantasies and/or infantile behavior)
- Aggressive or violent behavior toward other children
- Clinging behavior
- Passive or withdrawn behavior
- Indirect hints or statements about abuse
- Uncharacteristic hyperactivity
- Development regression
- Explicit sex-play with other children, toys, or dolls

Groups 2 and 3

- Being uncomfortable around someone previously trusted
- Wearing multiple layers of clothing
- Constant, unexplained anxiety, tension or fear
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school
- Eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia, obesity)
- Reluctant to go home after school or expresses a desire to live elsewhere
- Nightmares on a regular basis
- Abrupt personality changes
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Lack of self-worth, low self-image
- Poor peer relationships
- Role reversal, overly concerned about siblings
- Self-destructive behavior
- Running away
- Withdrawn, less verbal, depressed, or apathetic
- Sexually acting out with other children
- Seductive toward peers and adults

Group 3

- Suicidal gestures or attempts
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Self-mutilation (cutting, etc.)
- Extreme hostility toward a parent or caretaker
- Self-conscious behavior, especially regarding the body
- Chronic depression
- Social isolation
- Defiance or compliance to the extreme
- Friends tend to be older
- Promiscuity, prostitution, sexual abuse of younger children