

*Fellowship Baptist Church*

# **Child Abuse Prevention Policies & Procedures**



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## I. PURPOSE

In following the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ to “let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14), it is the purpose of the members and staff of Fellowship Baptist Church to provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth and persons with mental disabilities entrusted to our care.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at Fellowship Baptist Church.

## II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all sanctioned activities of Fellowship Baptist Church and includes current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising or being involved in sanctioned activities of children, youth, and persons with mental disabilities.

## III. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

1. “Child,” “children,” and “minor” shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18) (or whose mental capacity is that of a minor).
2. “Adult” shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age (except those whose mental capacity is that of a minor).
3. “Teenage” or “Teenager” shall be defined as any individual at least thirteen (13) years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18).
4. “Worker” shall be defined as any person who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of caring for, assisting with, or working with minors.
5. “Child Abuse” shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a child or minor.
6. “Criminal Background Check” is the procedure used to determine if a potential Adult Worker has a record of criminal activity. .

## IV. WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

It is necessary to call attention to one specific kind of Child Abuse called Child Sexual Abuse because of its sensitive nature. This policy defines Child Sexual Abuse in accordance with the definition from the *National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse* as: “Any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/ residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child.”

The book *Making Your Church Safe From Child Sexual Abuse*, from Church Law and Tax Report further says that “Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child’s vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action...”

“Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.”

## V. WORKER ENLISTMENT SCREENING PROCESS

The screening process for enlisting Workers who desire to work with minors consists of the following:

1. Whether a paid employee or a volunteer, any prospective Worker desiring to work with minors, will be required to complete a *Workers With Minors Application*. For more information regarding the *Working With Minors Application* see section VII below.
2. Any prospective Worker determined to have prior occurrences of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be allowed to serve in any capacity where he or she would have contact with minors.
3. Criminal Background Checks will be performed on each prospective Adult Worker after an acceptably completed *Workers With Minors Application* has been submitted, and prior to being approved as a worker, unless the worker is a minor. Annual Criminal Background Checks will be performed on Adult Workers, randomly or as deemed necessary. Teenage Workers are exempt from the Criminal Background Check.
4. No prospective Worker will be allowed or approved to work with minors until:
  - a. six months of consistent Fellowship Baptist Church worship service attendance has been observed,
  - b. the prospective Worker's application is submitted,
  - c. the Criminal Background Check is completed, and
  - d. the prospective Worker's application is approved as defined in Section VII.

## VI. WORKER TRAINING

Each new Worker will be given the Fellowship Baptist Church Child Abuse Prevention Policies & Procedures manual. New Workers will also be required to view Child Abuse prevention video(s) and read the written materials available on this subject to help them gain an appreciation for the reality of the concern. This will help Workers identify Child Abuse in the future if they see signs of it.

## VII. WORKERS WITH MINORS APPLICATION

As part of the Worker Enlistment Screening Process, all potential Workers (including employees, teachers of minors, and volunteers of activities or programs for minors) will complete a *Workers With Minors Application* providing required personal and confidential information necessary to perform Criminal Background Checks and reference checks on each individual Worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all Criminal Background Checks and reference checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity (due to such disclosure requirements) will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the Criminal Background Check, the following items will automatically disqualify a person from being a Worker in any leadership, sponsorship or supervising of any activities or programs with minors:

Any conviction for:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;

- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault (rape);
- Aggravated sexual assault;
- Injury to a child;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a child;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to children;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a child;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure;
- Enticing a child.

All charges for these crimes or charges or convictions for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the Fellowship Baptist Church pastoral staff and/or those approved by the Fellowship Baptist Church Deacon Board for reviewing prospective Worker applications and Criminal Background Check results. Only qualified persons (as stated above) may view information obtained by the Criminal Background Check.

### **VIII. SPECIFIC POLICY VIOLATIONS**

The following acts or omissions are violations of this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any Fellowship Baptist Church sanctioned activity or program and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff after the safety of the child, children, or minor involved has been assured:

1. Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
2. Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
3. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
4. Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.
5. Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Fellowship Baptist Church.
6. Mental or emotional injury to a minor caused or exacerbated by a Worker.
7. The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Fellowship Baptist Church.
8. The presence, possession, consumption, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol.

### **IX. SPECIFIC POLICIES**

1. Worker Leadership: Any volunteer who holds a leadership position must be a practicing believer.
2. “Two Adult” Rule: Fellowship Baptist Church will adhere to a “Two Adult” rule, whenever possible. This means no Adult shall be left alone with a child, and the two Adults shall not consist of only men.

3. Nursery: Only approved female Nursery Workers will be allowed in the Nursery. This means that only female Workers shall change diapers and supervise bathroom visits in the Nursery. Special teaching exceptions may be made when approved by the Senior Pastor and Nursery Coordinator.
4. Identification System: In Fellowship Baptist Church activities for children up to third grade, an identification system shall be adopted so that only authorized persons can “check-in/check-out” children. Permission slips will be available for an Adult Guardian(s) to authorize the release of their child(ren) to other adults.
5. Pastoral Counseling: In pastoral counseling sessions with minors, parental permission shall be obtained prior to any ordained pastoral staff meeting privately with a minor. In all other cases, the “Two Adult” rule shall be used. Prior permission may be granted by parents to cover a particular time period (i.e., a school year) for their child to receive counseling from an ordained pastoral staff member.

## **X. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION REPORTING**

Any person having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report the person’s belief in accordance with the following procedure.

1. Notify the Fellowship Baptist Church Senior Pastor or a Deacon Board Member.
2. In instances where there is an accusation of Child Abuse and a Worker is the alleged perpetrator, his or her immediate supervisor should be contacted and the employment or volunteer relationship will be suspended.
3. The Fellowship Baptist Church Senior Pastor or Deacon Board Chairman should immediately contact the insurance company to report the occurrence, and should contact the church’s attorney.
4. This procedure applies to all mandatory reporters of Fellowship Baptist Church as determined by the California State Penal Code.
5. Every allegation of physical or sexual Child Abuse should be investigated promptly and thoroughly. If such allegation is factual, the employment or volunteer relationship with the Worker will be terminated. It is unlikely the problem will ever be handled by relying on promises of the employee or volunteer to reform. Failure to take remedial action will make a claim difficult to defend.

## **XI. INSURANCE**

Fellowship Baptist Church maintains a sufficient level of liability insurance coverage that covers Child Abuse and sexual misconduct claims.

## **XII. CONCLUSION**

Fellowship Baptist Church desires to be “a church that cares” through the implementation of the above policy. Adoption of these provisions provides a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our church family and its guests.