

Parkhills Baptist Church

Child Protection Policy

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I. Purpose

Parkhills Baptist Church (PBC) is a growing and diverse community of faith consisting of hundreds of families, many of whom have children who participate in our Preschool, Children, and Student Ministries. Additionally, PBC acknowledges the trust that parents extend by permitting PBC workers the privilege of caring for their children and conveying to them eternal truth. Therefore, our obligation and commitment as a church is to provide an environment that is as safe as possible for the children who participate in church activities and one that protects our workers. Thus, these formal, written policies and guidelines are provided to help prevent any opportunities for abuse and to continue an atmosphere of trust for children, parents, and workers.

II. Definitions

- A. **Children** (or singular **child**) includes all persons who are minors (ages birth thru 17 years).
- B. **Adult** includes anyone 18 years of age or older.
- C. **Worker** includes anyone, paid or volunteer, who may be enlisted to work with children in a ministry or program of PBC.
- D. **Church-Sponsored Event** is an activity endorsed by PBC in which the church might be understood as having control and responsibility for the event.
- E. **Church-Authorized Vehicle** is a vehicle that is owned, leased, or rented by the church, or provided by a church member who has shown proof of current valid driver license and current liability insurance coverage.

- F. **Child Abuse** includes acts or omissions which cause or permit:
- i. **Physical Abuse.** Physical abuse is non-accidental physical injury and may include severe beatings, burns, human bites, strangulation, or immersion in scalding water, with resulting bruises and welts, broken bones, scars, or serious internal injuries.
 - ii. **Physical Neglect.** Physical neglect is the withholding of or the failure to provide a child with basic necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene, or supervision needed for optimal physical growth and development.
 - iii. **Sexual Abuse.** Sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult. It may range from exhibitionism and fondling to intercourse or use of a child in the production of pornographic materials. Additionally, sexual misconduct includes all crimes involving sexual conduct under the Texas Penal Code. It also includes conduct that may not violate a penal statute but is still sexually oriented, such as sexual harassment and sexual suggestion.
 - iv. **Emotional Abuse.** Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. Examples include: constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, rejection and providing no love, guidance, or support.
- G. **The Chief Compliance Administrator** is the primary staff person responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the Child Protection Policy.
- H. **The Age-Group Minister** (Minister to Children, Minister to Students, etc.) is the staff member responsible in his or her respective area for achieving and maintaining compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

III. Recruitment and Selection of Workers (Paid and Volunteer)

A. Adult Workers

1. All persons 18 years of age and older who are interested in working with children at PBC will be given a package that contains the following:
 - a. Church Worker Application (volunteer) and/or an Employment Application (paid worker), and
 - b. A request for a criminal background check and authorization to do so.
2. Upon the complete review of the package, potential workers must comply with a screening procedure that includes the following:
 - a. A personal interview,
 - b. In the case of volunteer workers, a confirmation that the potential worker has been member of PBC for at least six (6) total or combined months,

- c. To serve in a teaching capacity, a person must be a PBC member.
 - d. The PBC ministerial staff shall have the right to approve/disapprove volunteers who may wish to serve in ministry who do not comply with the provisions of paragraph "b" above.
 - e. Reference checks,
 - f. A criminal records check, and
 - g. Provided with and become familiar with our child safety policies and procedures.
3. PBC will not knowingly allow any person who meets the following descriptions to work with children:
- a. A person who has entered a plea of guilty, or deferred adjudication or no contest, or who has been convicted of any criminal activity involving violence against a person or assault, child abuse or neglect, sexual misconduct, gross irresponsibility, or disregard for the safety of others;
 - b. In the case of child abuse or neglect, a person who has been found by a court to be a perpetrator of child abuse, or who has made an admission of guilt to a person authorized by state or federal laws to investigate child abuse; or
 - c. A person who has entered a plea of guilty or no contest or who has been convicted of any criminal activity involving alcohol offenses or the possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs.

If an applicant's background check reveals any of the above, he or she cannot be employed nor serve in any church-sponsored event involving children.

4. The Chief Compliance Administrator and/or the Age-Group Minister reserve the right to determine whether or not an applicant may work with children.
5. Each worker at PBC has an affirmative duty to inform the PBC Chief Compliance Administrator of all actions committed by the worker which have occurred after he or she began working at PBC, where such actions constitute a violation of PBC policies and procedures.

B. Teenage Workers with Children

1. PBC realizes that God often uses teenage experiences like working with children to guide teenagers in discovering their gifts and even occasionally in sensing calls to future ministries. Therefore, workers under the age of 18 may assist adult workers with caring for children. However, workers under the age of 18 should not to be isolated from adult workers while caring for children.

2. A volunteer application must be completed by any potential worker under the age of 18 desiring to work with children.
3. Workers under the age of 18 are encouraged to attend PBC Student Ministry activities.

IV. Worker Supervision of Children Birth thru 5th Grade

- A. The *Two-Worker Rule* is in effect, subject to the provisions set forth in subparagraph "B" below. No fewer than two workers may be alone with children in a private setting. Other than for one-on-one counseling or similar previously approved (by the Chief Compliance Administrator) ministries or situations, at no time should a child be alone in a private setting with only one worker.
- B. All ministering with a child is to be done in a facility or location in which the worker and child could be seen at all times.
- C. For private music lessons or similar teaching/ministry situations previously approved by the Chief Compliance Administrator, the teacher or worker may be alone with a child only when granted prior written permission by the parent or guardian (completed permission forms are to be permanently filed in the office of the Chief Compliance Administrator).
- D. Upon transporting children to and/or from church sponsored activities or in any connection with a church sponsored activity, an approved adult worker/church member must be in the vehicle at all times. All transporting must be done in church authorized vehicles.
- E. In the case of children's restroom needs:
 1. Workers are to change diapers in accordance with the two-worker rule.
 2. If the child is too young to care for his/her own restroom needs, the restroom door is to be left open with one worker standing in the doorway, able to see the worker in the restroom with the child.
 3. If the child can attend to his/her own restroom needs, the worker should stand outside the doorway with the door closed, or if needed, slightly ajar.
- F. The Chief Compliance Administrator and/or the Minister to Children will, on an occasional but regular basis, make unannounced visits to classes or other ministry sites. Records will be kept, as needed, of the locations and dates of these visits and of any unusual or suspicious observations made.
- G. The PBC-adopted identification/security tag system is to be used for all children ages birth thru pre-kindergarten during normal church activities.
- H. For special events approved guest leaders will be brought in for ministry. As a part of their ministry, and upon the orientation of our child protection policies, the approved guest leader will be given the rights of a worker as set forth in this policy. These leaders must be approved by the Chief Compliance Officer and/or the Minister to Children.

V. Worker Supervision of Children Grades 6-12

- A. For special events approved guest leaders will be brought in for ministry. As a part of their ministry, and upon the orientation of our child protection policies, the approved guest leader will be given the rights of a worker as set forth in this policy. These leaders must be approved by the Chief Compliance Officer and/or the Minister to Students.
- B. Church staff or volunteer workers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before spending one-on-one ministry time.
- C. Upon transporting children to and/or from church sponsored activities or in any connection with a church sponsored activity, an approved adult worker/church member must be in the vehicle at all times. All transporting must be done in church authorized vehicles.
- D. All ministering with a child, or similar ministry situation, must be done in a facility/location in which the worker and the child could be seen at all times.
- E. The Chief Compliance Administrator and/or the Minister to Students will, on an occasional but regular basis, make unannounced visits to classes or other ministry sites. Records will be kept, as needed, of the locations and dates of these visits and of any unusual or suspicious observations made.

VI. Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Abuse

These guidelines are to be followed by PBC immediately upon first suspicion of an instance of child abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct involving a child:

- A. All allegations need to be taken seriously and will be reviewed and managed by the Chief Compliance Administrator and the appropriate age-group minister (i.e., the Minister to Children or the Minister to Students).
- B. Situations must be handled forthrightly and confidentially, with due respect for people's privacy.
- C. Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of PBC's legal counsel.
- D. Appropriate care must be shown for the well-being of the victim.
- E. Documentation should be kept of all efforts in handling the incident.
- F. 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 will report his or her belief in accordance with this procedure. Non-accusatory reports (reports that identify the victim of abuse or neglect whether or not the person responsible for the abuse or neglect is known) will be made *by the person suspecting the abuse* to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (1-800-544-9731 or 1-800252-5400) as follows:
 - 1. An oral report will be made immediately upon learning of the alleged abuse or neglect.
 - 2. All reports must contain the name and address of the child, the name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, if available, and any other pertinent information.

[The above procedures are not only required as a condition for working with children at PBC, but are required by law.]

3. A report will be made to the Chief Compliance Administrator and/or the appropriate age-group minister. At this point, PBC will suspend (with pay, if employed) any accused from the performance of duties involving children pending a final decision when legal investigation is completed.
- G. Any media coverage will be handled by an official appointee of PBC. For the protection of the child, workers are discouraged from discussing allegations with the media.

VII. Compliance

- A. The Chief Compliance Administrator is the primary person responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.
- B. Age-group ministers (i.e., the Minister to Children, the Minister to Students, etc.) are responsible in their respective ministry areas for achieving and maintaining compliance with the Child Protection Policy.
- C. Compliance with the PBC Child Protection Policy is not optional. Failure to comply may result in the termination of one's employment or volunteer position with children.

VIII. Amendments

Changes to this policy may be made by the PBC Safety and Security Council, established for the consideration of needed changes. The determination of the council concerning needed changes will be considered as authoritative and binding, and in full force and effect pending consideration by the PBC congregation meeting in the soonest subsequent business conference.

IX. Field Trips

All field trips must be approved by the appropriate age-group minister. A separate field trip packet must be completed and approved before any field trip may be taken.

Adopted and Updated 3/4/01
Revised by Safety and Security Council 2/10/2005
Amended by Quarterly Church Conference 5/1/05