



CHICOPEE

B A P T I S T C H U R C H

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROTECTION GUIDELINES

*“This is a place where the safety of the child is as important to us
as it is to any parent or guardian that comes here.”*

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Definition of a Child: An individual between the ages of newborn and 12 years of age and/or newborn thru the current or just finished public school grade of 6th grade but not yet started 7th grade.

Definition of a Youth: An individual between the ages of 13 years of age and 17 years of age and/or currently in 7th grade through 12th grade.

Pre-Service Qualifications

Any person or persons desiring to serve in any supervisory capacity with children/youth on or off campus and special events at Chicopee Baptist Church may be allowed to pursue said desire if they meet the following qualifications:

1. The individual is a current participating attendee of this congregation for at least three months.
2. A Minimum of 13 years of age and a freshman in high school.
 - a. Individuals under the age of 13 can serve on a limited capacity. They can be in drama, involved in music, or perform special tasks that do not require them to have the responsibility of supervisory duties over other children/youth in any capacity. They also must be in constant contact and supervision of a security level 2. This will be clearly explained by the designated pastor or ministry staff member and will be required to be followed or they will forfeit their involvement. The ratio of those under the age of 13 to a level 2 security clearance supervisor must not exceed 2:1.
 - b. Individuals between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age must be supervised by a children/youth's ministry individual at least 18 years of age.

Security Clearance Levels

Each individual working with or in close proximity with children/youth will be required to obtain a security clearance level based on the guidelines later defined. An individual may begin serving in the ministry once he/she has obtained a level 1 security clearance.

LEVEL 1. An individual will be classified as having a security clearance level 1 once the following has been completed:

1. The individual has filled out an application, providing four references, and having their signature verified by a witness.
2. The individual's identification will be verified by providing appropriate identification.
3. Selected references will be called and interviewed.
4. If at least 18 years of age, fill out a background investigation form which includes the authorization for a local, state, and national background check which is re-checked every three years.
5. The background investigation form has been returned and nothing was revealed to be dangerous, harmful, or compromising to the safety of the children/youth, the volunteer, or the church. If a background check

was performed by another institution, a copy of the results may be accepted based upon the ministry leader's discretion.

6. The individual's name will be checked against the GBI's registered sex offender's database.

Once an individual turns 18 years of age then a background check can be performed.

LEVEL 2. An individual will be classified as having a security clearance level 2 once the following has been completed:

1. Completed Level 1
2. All children/youth's ministry staff members, volunteer and paid, will attend a training session, which includes the "Child Protection Guidelines", within 90 days of beginning service and do a refresher training class every year. The training will not exceed 1 hour and 15 minutes. The training sessions may include but are not limited to the explanation and discussion of:
 - a. Mission, Vision, Values
 - b. Particular roles and impacts
 - c. Prevention guidelines
 - d. Symptoms of abuse
 - e. Procedures for reporting alleged abuse.
 - f. Procedures for a response.
 - g. Behaviors that signal problems.
3. Each individual will sign the *Chicopee Baptist Church Acknowledgement Form*

A survivor of Child Abuse will be interviewed by the pastor before beginning service.

All information collected will be kept confidential and kept locked.

The following guidelines and procedures have been set forth by Chicopee Baptist Church to ensure the **safety of all children/youth**, to **protect paid and/or volunteer workers**, and to **reduce the liability of the church from allegations of abuse**.

Abuse: Sexual, physical, neglectful, or emotional maltreatment of a child.

Prevention Guidelines

For Your Safety, Use the Two-Person Rule: An accusation can destroy your life. Be aware of any situation that may leave you or someone else exposed to a possible accusation. By having two adults present at all times, emergencies, accusations, and behavior can be handled more appropriately.

On Campus: All meetings involving children/youth on campus shall be governed by the following guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, Sunday and Wednesday night programming, small groups meeting on campus, Bible studies, special meetings, special events, outside people or organizations using our facilities, and whenever there is a need for childcare.

1. Sunday, Wednesday night programming, and all special events shall have security level 2's present. Security level 1's are permitted to serve, but the ratio of level 2's to all other security level 1 clearances must not exceed 5:1. There shall also be at least 2 security level individuals in a room.
2. For any and all on campus childcare, a childcare request form must be completed and returned to the office. If the individual serving is at least 18 years of age, they must be a level 2. If the individual serving is under the age of 18, they must be level 1 and must be supervised by a level 2 with the ratio not exceeding 3:1.
3. There shall be access to a phone.
4. In the event of a private conversation with a child, the conversation should take place where others can hold you accountable and/or be a witness of your time with the child to protect the child and you. A child should never find themselves alone with an adult.
5. Unauthorized individuals will not be allowed to remain with any group. An unauthorized visitor is one who does not have a security clearance either through training or a security pass for a child. For example, a parent may stay in a child's classroom to observe and assist his/her child only.
6. There should not be any child of grade school age in any preschool room.
7. A security number must be presented to a newborn to preschooler's ministry person before a child can be released. For security reasons, we cannot allow a child to be released to anyone without having the proper matching security number or being on the parental/guardian approved pick-up list.
8. No closed-door situations where there is a one on one situation.

9. Bathroom Procedures: NO CLOSED-DOOR SITUATIONS ALLOWED

Infant/ Toddlers: Diapering should be done in diaper stations in the room in view of others. Follow the diapering procedures located in the diaper stations.

2 to 4-Year-Olds: Children should use the restrooms located in the rooms. If a child requires assistance, the bathroom door should remain open. If the child needs to use a restroom that is not located within a room and should someone go to assist the child, the door should remain open at all times. Whenever possible, there should be 2 adults in a bathroom not located in a room.

Kindergarten to First Grade: Children/youth should use the restrooms located in the hallway. After granting permission to the child to use the facility, the care provider should stand in the doorway to monitor the needs of the child if needed. If assistance is required, either the door should be propped open or another adult should go with the care provider. The stall door should remain open when providing assistance.

2nd Grade and Older: Children/youth should use the restrooms located in the hallway. After being granted permission to use the facility, the child may leave their location and go to the restroom without an adult.

****ATTENTION****

As a staff person or volunteer, if you enter a bathroom and there are less than three children/youth present without an adult, prop the bathroom door open.

10. Physical Contact: Rules about physical contact work both ways. Make sure people are appropriate with you and you are appropriate with other people. Guidelines are as follows, but please ask your staff person if you have any questions.

Appropriate: Comes as an expression of affirmation such as a non-demanding, gentle touch on the shoulders, hands, arms, head, or back.

Inappropriate: Kissing, demanding hugs, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom or private parts, sitting on someone's lap (sitting on one knee is fine if below the age of 5), piggyback rides or anything that makes you or the other person uncomfortable. Any touching used to express power or control over another person is inappropriate, such as grabbing a person's arm or wrist, punching, slapping, poking a finger into a person's chest or at his/her face.

Off Campus/Overnight: All functions and/or meetings of children/youth off campus shall be governed by the following guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, special events held off sight during the day only or overnight such as trips or camps. These guidelines do not apply to adult small groups meeting off campus or in their homes.

1. A medical release and permission form shall be completed when groups leave the Chicopee Baptist Church campus.
2. Daytime trips and events shall have security level 2's present. The ratio of level 2's to all other security level clearance must not exceed 5:1. There shall be at least 2 security level individuals in a room.
3. Only level 2's can stay with a group overnight.
4. In case of using an off-campus daycare facility provider, the provider shall be licensed and regulated by the State of Georgia. The children/youth shall be signed in by the parent guardian and a security card or VIP pass must be presented to a designated children/youth's ministry volunteer before a child can be released. For security reasons, we cannot allow a child to be released to anyone without having the proper matching security number or being on the parental/guardian approved pick-up list.
5. There shall be access to a phone.
6. Unauthorized individuals will not be allowed to remain with any group overnight. An unauthorized visitor is one who does not have a security clearance either through training or a security pass for a child. For example, a parent or guardian deciding to "stay" for an overnight event without notice, etc...
6. No closed-door situations where there is a one on one situation.
7. In the event of a private conversation with a child, the conversation should take place

Where others can hold you accountable and/or be a witness of your time with the child to protect the child and you. A child should never find themselves alone with an adult.

8. Physical Contact: Rules about physical contact work both ways. Make sure people are appropriate with you and you are appropriate with other people.

Guidelines are as follows, but please ask your staff person if you have any questions.

Appropriate: Comes as an expression of affirmation such as a non-demanding, gentle touch on the shoulders, hands, arms, head, or back.

Inappropriate: Kissing, demanding hugs, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom or private parts, sitting on someone's lap (sitting on one knee is fine if below the age of 5), piggyback rides or anything that makes you or the other person uncomfortable. Any touching used to express power

or control over another person is inappropriate, such as grabbing a person's arm or wrist, punching, slapping, poking a finger into a person's chest or at his/her face.

Symptoms and Signs of Abuse

There may be physical, behavioral, or verbal indicators that a child is being abused. Below is a list of some of these indicators. (It is not a complete list.) **IF AT ANY TIME YOU SUSPECT A CHILD MAY BE ABUSED, REPORT IT TO YOUR STAFF PERSON IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURES BELOW.**

Physical Signs:

1. Lacerations
2. Bruises
3. Consistent hunger
4. Nightmares
5. Difficulty urinating
6. Discomfort when sitting

Behavioral Signs:

1. Nervous or hostile behavior towards adults
2. Aggressive
3. Self-consciousness
4. Begging, stealing food
5. Acting out sexual behavior
6. Withdrawal from activities and friends

Verbal Signs:

1. "I don't like to be alone with 'so and so'".
2. "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear."
3. "'So and so' wouldn't let me sleep last night."
4. "I know someone who is being touched in a bad way."
5. "I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell."
6. "Someone is doing things to me when we are alone."

What NOT to say when a child discloses abuse to you.

1. **"Why didn't you stop them?" or "Why are you telling me this?"**
2. **"Are you sure this is happening?" or "Are you telling the truth?"**
3. **"Let me know if it happens again."**
4. **"What did you do to make this happen?"**

Minimize the number of questions you ask and do not ask leading questions.

Procedures for Reporting Allegations of Abuse

Bill 1176 for the State of Georgia defines mandatory reporters of child abuse as every “persons employed by or volunteering at a business or an organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children/youth.” (H.B. 1176, pg. 33, line 1138-1141)

Beyond the letter of the law is our call and duty of Jesus Christ to care and love children/youth as He did. God may place you in the gap of a child who is being abused in order for them to experience God’s love by being rescued from the abuse.

Child Abuse Is Defined As:

- (A) Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, that physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
- (B) Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof;
- (C) Sexual abuse of a child; or
- (D) Sexual exploitation of a child.

The confidentiality and safety of all involved is of the utmost priority. If you suspect a child is being abused, then follow the following procedure:

Suspicion Concerning Someone Inside or Outside of the Church

1. Do not discuss your suspicions with other unpaid staff, members, attendees of Chicopee Baptist, friends, or family.
2. Record all the details of your suspicions on paper.
3. Give your report to the pastor and/ or the head of the deacons of the church. The pastor and head of the deacon will both be made aware of the report by the other. Your written report will be locked up and kept confidential.
4. Upon you reporting to the pastor or head of the deacons, a decision will be made on who will call Child Protection Services. Follow-up will be made concerning the reporting of the suspicion.
5. In the event you feel the abuse is physical (i.e. bruising) and/or immediately dangerous to the child, 911 should be called immediately so an officer can intervene and make a decision of protecting the child.
6. In the event you are suspicious or unsure, do one of the following:
 - a. Speak with the pastor
 - b. Speak with the head of the deacons
 - c. Call 911 and have an officer come and confirm or clear your suspicions

Suspicion Concerning the Pastor or Head of the Deacons

1. Do not discuss your suspicions with other unpaid staff, members, attendees of Chicopee Baptist, friends, or family.
2. Record all the details of your suspicions on paper.
3. Give your report to the one you do not suspect. Your written report will be locked up and kept confidential.
4. Upon you reporting to the pastor or head of the deacons, a decision will be made on who will call Child Protection Services. Follow-up will be made concerning the reporting of the suspicion.
5. In the event you feel the abuse is physical (i.e. bruising) and/or immediately dangerous to the child, 911 should be called immediately so an officer can intervene and make a decision of protecting the child.
6. In the event you are suspicious or unsure, do one of the following:
 - a. Speak with the pastor or,
 - b. Speak with the head of the deacons or,
 - c. Call 911 and have an officer come and confirm or clear your suspicions

Response to Abuse

If allegations of abuse are made, our response will be guided by the following principles:

1. All allegations will be taken seriously.
2. Respect for privacy and confidentiality will be maintained.
3. Victims include the abused, the family of the abused, the peers of the abused, the family of the accused, and the congregation.
4. The needs of the victim will be given high priority.
5. Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities.
6. The Pastor or another designated individual by the Pastor will be the church's ONLY spokesperson with the media.

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Safe Kids Guidelines

Bullying

Every individual should treat each child/youth as a special individual and not abuse a child verbally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. For more details on abuse, please refer to the previous section labeled “Child Abuse Prevention Policy.”

Communications

Texting, e-mailing, and other forms of electronic communication have become common today, especially among students. Texting and electronic communication can be a vital part of youth ministry work, but their improper use can produce serious consequences. Chicopee Baptist Church desires to promote safety and to create a healthy environment for texting and electronic communication between its children/youth workers and students who participate in youth ministry activities. As a result, Chicopee Baptist Church has developed the following guidelines:

1. Children/youth must have a consent form signed by their parent/guardian for any employee or volunteer children/youth workers to communicate with minors using text messaging, e-mail, social networking websites, or other forms of electronic media.
2. Children/youth workers who want to communicate with minors using text messaging, e-mail, social networking websites, or other forms of electronic media must first attend a ministry training class. The class will outline the recommended practices, limitations, and legal parameters for texting and other forms of electronic communication within the youth ministry.
3. Ministry children/youth workers may not transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, disrespectful, or may be deemed inappropriate when communicating with each other or with minors involved in ministry activities.
4. Except in an emergency, children/youth workers may not transmit any personal information pertaining to a minor without the youth ministry participant and his or her parents or guardians signing consent forms. This applies to group texting, group e-mail, or any other public method of electronic communication. Personal information may include such things as a minor’s name, phone number, e-mail address, or photograph.
5. Children/youth workers will instruct youth occasionally about the Youth Ministry Communications Policy and the dangers of such conduct as “sexting.”
6. Children/youth workers who become aware of possible child abuse through electronic media must immediately notify their supervisor. The ministry will consult with its attorney and report abuse as required by law.

7. All information, images, or videos shared electronically through public ministry communications channels aren't considered confidential.
8. To participate in ministry electronic communications, youths must sign a related consent form.
9. Youths who violate this policy may lose electronic communications privileges or be removed from the youth ministry program. The ministry's pastoral leadership will notify parents immediately of any violations.

Transportation/Bus Ministry

We have a van available to transport children/youth. We want to protect them and those transporting children/youth in the van or their own private vehicles.

1. There shall be at least two leaders present transporting a student.
2. Cellular phones can cause distractions if used while driving. For safety reasons, children/youth workers driving on ministry business are not to make calls unless they use a hands-free device. If they receive a cell phone call while driving, the children/youth worker should answer it using a hands-free device or pull off the road to a safe location as soon as possible.
3. Children/youth workers driving on ministry business are to avoid cell phone use — even hands-free — when transporting children, while driving in heavy traffic, during hazardous weather conditions, or when it violates local law.
4. Children/youth workers are never to send or read text messages while driving.
5. A minimum of two approved workers must be on the church bus at all times.
6. All bus participants must have the bus rider form completed by a parent or guardian before they are allowed to ride the church bus.
7. All instances of transportation by a children/youth worker shall be recorded using an approved video camera/recording device inside of the vehicle.
8. All children/youth workers must be a level 2 approved worker, have a DMV report run, pass a drug test, and be trained about using the van before becoming an eligible driver of the church van.
9. All children/youth workers must complete a safety training course before driving the church bus.

Behavior Management

The goal of behavior management is to help kids learn responsible behavior. This can be accomplished by using a positive approach to all matters dealing with discipline. You should model Christian behavior and principles in all that you do.

Acceptable Adult Behavior

1. Take a positive approach with each child from day one.
2. Encourage and praise good behavior.
3. Respect each child and his/her feelings at all times.
4. Be aware of each child's needs in any situation.
5. Be familiar with any special needs of the child.
6. Consider each child's age and emotional/intellectual development.
7. Use patience and understanding.
8. Always be fair and consistent.

Keep discipline constructive by guiding a child in the direction God wants him/her to grow. Pointing out how a child's action is tied to God's Word develops an awareness of sin.

Unacceptable Adult Behavior

1. Telling a child that he/she is "bad".
2. Telling a child to "shut-up".
3. Using physical punishment for any reason at any time.
4. Spanking, slapping, pinching, thumping, shaking, hitting, pushing, or jerking any child.
5. Verbally abusing, belittling, humiliating, intimidating, yelling, shaming, or frightening any child.
6. Rough play (for example: giving wedgies, lifting kids into the air and swinging them, piggyback rides, etc.)

Dealing with A Child's Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate Behavior:

Frequent biting

Repeated hitting of another

Acting in such a way as to cause, or to potentially cause harm to another or him/herself.

Uncontrollable or exciting action that could cause harm

Using bad language.

Repeatedly disrupting the class so as to interfere with the lesson.

Desirable Discipline Guidelines:

In a positive way, go directly to the child kneel down on their level and speak firmly, yet quietly while maintaining constant eye contact.

State the rule first, giving the child the benefit of the doubt.

Address the issues from a scriptural standpoint.

Age-appropriate "time outs" or withdrawal from activity.

Do not place a child in a room alone.

Keep parents informed of all disciplinary actions.

*Children/youth may be removed from a classroom when inappropriate behavior cannot be redirected.

Fire Escape and Emergency Plan

Escape plans will be posted in each room.

Sterilization Guidelines

Nursery and Preschool Areas are sterilized after each use. This includes after Sunday mornings, Wednesday nights, and after all occasions of childcare. We use professional products designed for cleaning nurseries that kill germs and bacteria.

Sickness and Illness Guidelines

In order to protect the children/youth participating in our programs, it is necessary that we all abide by certain guidelines with regard to sick children/youth.

Children/youth should not attend class or event when any of the following has been present within the last 24 hours:

Fever

Diarrhea or bloody stools

Vomiting

Mouth sores (cold sores or stomatitis)

Rash with fever or behavior change (unless a physician has determined the illness is not contagious)

Conjunctivitis ("Pink Eye")

Impetigo (weeping sores)

Strep Throat (until 48 hours after beginning treatment)

Head Lice (until the morning after the first treatment)

Scabies

Chicken Pox (until all sores are crusted and fever is gone)

Whooping Cough

Mumps (until 9 days after onset)

Hepatitis A (until 1 week after onset)

Common Cold, when associated with fever or heavy nasal drainage ***

***An exception is made for children/youth with allergies who are under the care of a physician.

All parents should strictly abide by the sickness and illness guidelines in order to keep problems (and illnesses) to a minimum. Thank you all for helping keep Chicopee children/youth healthy.

Incident Reports

An incident report will be filled out when any of the following occurs:

- An injury leaves a visible mark on a child
- If a child's head has been hit
- Blood is involved
- The child is still upset 10 minutes after the incident (if a child cries for more than 10 minutes, you should summon the parent or guardian).
- Children/youth being removed from the classroom/group for misbehavior

The ministry staff member for the area in which you are serving in will inform you of where and how to fill out an incident report. Notify or give the completed incident report to the Children/Youth Director. Also, pull the parent(s) or guardian(s) to the side and inform them about the injury/accident and give them a copy of the report if it is available.

A staff member will contact the family within 24 hours to follow-up.

General Rules of Safety

Please refer to the bathroom procedures in the Child Protection Guidelines.

No child is allowed on any playground without adult supervision.

Children/youth should not be allowed to wander.

Children/youth should be allowed to play within reason, but not endanger themselves or others. For example: jumping from a high point, running, etc...

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Hall County Sheriff's Department, Records Division: Stephanie Gilbert (September 2002)

Federal Bureau of Investigation: Leigh Gafford (September and November 2002)

Graceful Living Ministry Counselor: Scott Sklenar (December 2002)

Department of Family and Children/youth's Services: Pam Walden (January 2003), Mary Katherine Ambrose (January 2003)