

LEXINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Child Safety Program Manual

Protection Suggestions for Staff and Volunteers Who Work With Children

The following suggestions are meant to be guidelines only. The intent of this list is to create and instill an awareness of vulnerability to civil and criminal liability.

DO:

- Team up with another adult staff member or volunteer when counseling minors.
- Meet in public places.
- Advise other staff of your activities (where, when, who you are meeting with).
- Be accountable.
- Be gender sensitive.
- Have a policy for screening staff and volunteers who work with minors.
- Have two (2) adults take younger children to the bathroom.
- Have two (2) adults present when changing children's clothing.
- Keep physical contact to a minimum, *i.e.*, a "hello hug".
- Have two (2) adult workers (minimum) on extended activities, *i.e.*, all day or overnight.
- Keep groups together, use "buddy system" for older children.

DON'T:

- Meet one-on-one with minors behind closed doors.
- Hold "secret" meetings with minors.
- Check a minor for injuries under clothing without another adult present.
- Exchange kisses with children.
- Allow an older child to take a younger child to the restroom.
- Transport a child by yourself.

Guidelines for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

We recognize that expressing love and affection to children is necessary, especially within the Church setting. We also recognize there have been well-publicized incidents where trusted adults have sexually abused children. This can create a climate of fear and suspicion in which misunderstandings can easily occur. The purpose of these guidelines is to prevent unfounded allegations of child abuse and to prevent undue fear on the part of parents and other responsible adults. Since all of our children and youth programs are operated by volunteer members, we are also attempting to avoid any undue administrative burdens for these volunteers.

- 1) Each worker/volunteer must have a completed Application on file and have been approved.
- 2) Every attempt should be made to have at least two (2) adults in the nursery, kindergarten and preschool classrooms.

Reporting Procedures

- 1) Any suspected incident of child sexual abuse shall be reported to the Pastor/Pastors and Deacons. If the incident involves the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons shall be notified in place of the Pastor.
- 2) If the report appears true, the Pastor and/or Deacons shall contact the victims to express Lexington Baptist Church's apology, and shall confront the offender with the incident.
- 3) If the report appears false, the Pastor/Diacons shall attempt to clear up any misunderstanding.

Policy and Procedures for Those Working With Children, Youth, and the Disabled

Volunteer Worker Screening Procedures:

- 1) Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children, youth, or the disabled will complete and return an Application.
- 2) The Application will be carefully reviewed by the Pastor/Pastors or Deacons to make

certain the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based upon the information provided.

- 3) If the person appears to be appropriate for ministry work with children, youth, or the disabled, then at least two (2) of the references may be checked to confirm the information provided on the Application.
- 4) Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry position within the Church.
- 5) A criminal background check may also be performed with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children, youth, or the disabled.

Employee Screening Procedures:

- 1) The same procedure set forth for volunteer workers will apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered.
- 2) In addition, a criminal background check may be performed with respect to all candidates for employment.
- 3) Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment within the Church.

Waiting Period:

No volunteer worker candidate will be considered for any leadership position involving contact with children, youth, or the disabled until the candidate has been regularly involved in Lexington Baptist Church for six (6) months or more. Worker candidates must read and understand the *Child Safety Program Manual*.

Supervision:

- 1) At least two (2) adults (at least one over the age of 21) should be present at every

function, and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area, during every child, youth, and disabled ministry program.

- 2) During services/events, multiple workers (who have been approved as volunteer workers through the above screening process) will be appointed to supervise activity where the service/event is held.

Work Restrictions:

- 1) For children over the age of five (5), a worker shall provide proper supervision to and from the restrooms.
- 2) Children five (5) years of age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
- 3) Never touch a child's private areas except when necessary (as in the case of changing a diaper).
- 4) Workers should avoid even the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children/youth on their lap, kissing, embracing, stroking hair, and giving prolonged hugs to members of the opposite sex.
- 5) Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person. Please check for proper identification if necessary.

Discipline:

- 1) Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Workers are also never to withhold food or drink as a form of discipline.
- 2) Any and all disciplinary problems are to be reported to the worker's coordinator/supervisor and to a parent or guardian as soon as possible.

Injuries and Illness:

- 1) Persons who are ill (with a fever, or having a communicable disease which can be

transmitted by cough or by touch) may not be permitted to participate in the ministry event/activity.

- 2) Participants who are ill should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as the illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to his or her parent or guardian.
- 3) Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids of any kind.
- 4) Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
- 5) Persons who have received an injury which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The person's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when he or she picks up the injured person.
- 6) Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with the worker's coordinator/supervisor. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

Notice of Injury, Abuse, or Molestation:

- 1) Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor of such injury, abuse, or molestation.
- 2) Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform the Pastor/Pastors and Deacons of such injury, abuse, or molestation and will complete an incident report.
- 3) Any Pastor/Pastors and Deacons who become aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant will ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The Pastor/Pastors will also see that legal counsel is promptly contacted to provide an opinion as to whether the abuse or molestation should be reported to law enforcement authorities.

- 4) Upon notice of abuse or molestation, the Church's insurance carrier, Goodville Mutual must be promptly notified, as well as any organizational entity to which Lexington Baptist Church has a duty to report such allegations.

Violation of Policy or Procedures:

- 1) Workers must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy and/or procedures.
- 2) Any coordinator/supervisor or Pastor who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

Internal Investigation:

- 1) Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously and will be investigated by the Pastor/Pastors and Deacons and/or leaders.
- 2) Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from his or her position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case he or she will be terminated in accordance with organizational employment practices).
- 3) Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from his or her position pending completion of the investigation.
- 4) Any person who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children, youth, or the disabled and from Church membership, in accordance with the Church Constitution.

Dealing with Law Enforcement/Media:

- 1) All Pastors, leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury,

abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of the organization.

- 2) Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance as soon as possible after the organization receives notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection with organization activities.
- 3) There will be a spokesperson (namely, the Pastor or Deacon Chairman) who will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation and (to avoid compromising any on-going investigation) will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances.

Revision of the Policy/Procedures:

This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and the insurance agent and can be modified in accordance with the Bylaws of the Church. Any such modification will be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.