



Grace Baptist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for those participating in our ministry activities, especially children, youth, and disabled adults. We also seek to minimize any vulnerability to unwarranted accusations of improper behavior that our organization, volunteers, and employees may experience as they fulfill their ministry responsibilities. To fulfill these commitments as fully as possible, our church has adopted the following procedures to be used, without exception, when selecting ministry volunteers and employees.

### **Volunteer Screening Procedures**

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a volunteer position that involves working with children, youth, or disabled adults will complete and return an initial ministry application. Candidates seeking to volunteer at GBC must be members who are eighteen years old or older. (Members who are under the age of eighteen are only allowed to serve with certified adults when working with children.)
2. The ministry leader, or designee, will carefully review the application, ensuring that the candidate is an appropriate match for the ministry position. The ministry leader also will store the application form and background check in a locked file cabinet or other secure location.
3. If the individual appears to be an appropriate candidate for the ministry position, the ministry leader, or designee, will conduct a criminal background check.
4. When indicated by our reference and/or background checks, volunteer candidates who have a prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person, will be removed immediately from consideration for children's ministry positions anywhere within our organization.

### **Employee Screening Procedures**

1. The same procedures required for volunteer workers also apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered. (In addition, other background checks may be performed as needed.)
2. When indicated by our reference and/or background checks, employment candidates who have a prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person, will be removed immediately from consideration for employment anywhere within our organization.

### **Supervision**

1. At least two adults must be present at every function or program involving children, youth, or disabled adults. This includes each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area. One or more of these adults must be 18 years of age or older. For large groups, the number of adult supervisors must be increased in accordance with the practical nature of student/teacher ratios.
  - a. In the event that two teachers are unable to be present in a room, the room MUST have a large window and door that cannot be locked.
  - b. In the event that two adults are unable to be in the vehicle, there must not be one adult and one student of opposite gender in the same vehicle.
2. Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity. They must remain at their assigned post until all people in their care have been picked up by an authorized person. No children or youth should be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation.
3. The only non-members that are allowed to be with children are parents whose children are in that particular activity/classroom. There must always be another screened member over the age of 18 in that activity area/classroom at all times. Non-members are not to be entrusted with the care of children (who are not theirs).

## **Restrictions**

1. Children age 5 or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
2. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
3. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety— such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing, or embracing others, etc.
4. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child.

## **Discipline**

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming himself or another individual.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the ministry activity coordinator or supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

## **Injuries or Illness**

1. Persons who are ill (have had a fever or vomited in the last 24 hours) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If immediate return is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that allows an adult worker to monitor the participant until he/she can be returned to a parent or guardian.
3. Ministry coordinators and supervisors who become aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure that proper medical attention is given to the injured person and provide for continued monitoring of the remaining activity participants.
4. Persons who have received an injury that is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The individual's parents or guardians should be notified of the injury when they pick up the injured person.
5. Any injury that may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parents or guardians of the injured person should be notified immediately, along with the ministry worker's coordinator or supervisor. If warranted by the injury, emergency medical personnel should be called.
6. Ministry workers MUST prepare a written Incident Report Form whenever an injury occurs during a ministry function. Promptly forward the incident report to the ministry coordinator or supervisor.

## **Reporting Physical and Sexual Abuse**

1. Any worker of the church who has cause to believe that a child's physical or emotional health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse/neglect must report in the following manner:
2. The worker needs to report this to the pastor (preferably), other staff member, or deacon immediately, and if necessary, fill out an incident report form. (As you report, please remember that much is at stake when dealing with abuse. The lives and reputations of everyone involved hang in the balance when dealing with abuse, and inappropriate speech can cause great collateral damage. When reporting abuse or suspected abuse, include no more and no fewer than the essential ministry leaders.)
3. Also remember that time is of the essence. It is crucial to report incidents immediately so that the appropriate steps can be taken quickly to deal properly with any issue.
4. The pastor (or staff member/deacon) will immediately notify the following (in the order given):
  - a. The Illinois DCFS Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-2873.
  - b. The parents of the child (unless the parent is the person responsible for the abuse/neglect).
5. In the case that the alleged abuse took place by a church member/volunteer during a church activity or on church grounds, the pastor (or staff member/deacon) will form a response team which must include at least one pastor (unless the pastor was the one accused), one deacon, one trustee, and at least one respected female in the church. This response team will be responsible for:
  - a. Temporarily suspending that staff member/volunteer from all church related activities until the internal investigation is complete.
  - b. Seeking appropriate legal counsel.

- c. Notifying the church's insurance agent.
- d. Keeping everything highly confidential.
- e. Internal investigation of any abuse or misconduct. (If the internal investigation finds the allegations to be true, the response team will be the ones to recommend action to the church.)
- f. Choosing the liaison with the community. This person will be the church's sole access to the media.

### **Violation of Policy or Procedures**

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator or supervisor when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. Ministry coordinators, supervisors, and ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.

### **Revision of Policy and Procedures**

The leadership of this ministry, with the assistance of legal counsel, will regularly review this policy and the procedures established within it. If necessary, the policies and procedures will be modified in accordance with the bylaws of the organization. When changes are made, ministry leaders will communicate them to all employees and volunteers affected by the policy changes.