

Salem Baptist Church of Fredericksburg, Inc.

Policy Area: Child and Youth Safety	Subject: Child and Youth Protection
Approved Date: February 28, 2016	Approved by: Corporate Business Meeting
<p>This policy has been reviewed and cross checked with the Children and Youth Protection Policy of Salem Baptist Church approved on January 28, 2015. Upon approval of this policy, the Children and Youth Protection Policy of Salem Baptist Church will be cancelled.</p>	
<p>Background:</p> <p>Children and youth are our most precious and vulnerable asset. They must have a safe and secure environment at Salem Baptist Church (SBC). They should be protected from preventable accidents. Since children are innocent and naive with the potential to be exploited by predators there must be special safeguards in place to ensure they do not become victims of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional child abuse.</p>	
<p>Policy Statement:</p> <p>SBC will actively plan and review child/youth safety and security procedures throughout the year. Through a combination of physical security, sound policy, inspections and enforcement SBC will make sure its children remain safe and secure and that none of them become a victim through accident or design.</p> <p>NOTE: For the purpose of this policy the term child is defined as any individual 12 years of age or under. Youths are defined as 13 to 18 years of age.</p>	
<p>Procedures:</p> <p>A. Enlistment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Any member wishing to serve as a new worker in children's/youth ministry will:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Have been a member of SBC for a minimum of 6 months.b. Individuals working with children will be at least 12 years of age. Individuals working with youth will be at least 20 years of age.c. Complete a written job application (Child/youth worker application form)d. References will be provided by prospective applicants. Responses from inquiries will be documented.e. Be required to participate in an orientation session for prospective workers in children and youth ministry. During this time of orientation, prospective workers will receive a copy of all policies and procedures relating to the desired area of ministry and will receive guidance in their implementation as well as recognition, intervention and reporting of abuse.	

f. Have affirmed by signature a Children's and Youth Ministries Worker's Covenant.

2. Upon fulfillment of these criteria, an individual will be eligible to begin service within their desired area of ministry in accordance with the recruiting and election process as established by the church.

B. Supervision (Newborn through Grade six):

1. There will be an adequate number of approved workers, a minimum of two, in each classroom and/or accompanying each group of children at all times. Except in extenuating circumstances workers should avoid any situation that would cause them to be isolated with an individual child away from the sight and sound of others.

¹Recommended Ratios:

Children's Ages	Adult to Child Ratio
2 weeks to 2 years	1:4
2 years	1:6
3 years	1:8
4 years	1:12
5 years and up	1:15

2. All classrooms utilized by children will remain unlocked.
3. During children's activities, program coordinators and/or church staff members will randomly visit rooms and areas in which the activity is taking place.
4. All activities will be conducted as "open door" activities where a parent or caregiver may visit or check-in at any time.
5. Dismissal of children from activities, through the teamwork of workers and the children's parents/caregivers, will require the child to be signed in and out by a previously identified, authorized adult.
6. The appropriate staff minister will approve in advance all children's activities occurring off church premises. For off-premise activities the parent/caregiver will be informed of the location and details of the activity, date, time of departure and return, mode of transportation, responsibilities to be borne by the children and/or parents, and the coordinator for the event. In order for a child to participate in an activity away from SBC premises, a signed parental permission form and medical release form must be received by the appropriate worker or staff minister in advance of the activity.
7. Each vehicle transporting a child(ren) will contain at least two approved workers (at least one of whom must be an adult). Church-owned vehicles, operated by drivers according to church policy, should be used for transportation. **Private vehicles should be used only in extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the appropriate staff minister.**
8. The coordinator or sponsor of any children's activity will provide responsible and appropriate supervision. For example, if the activity involves swimming,

water skiing, boating, etc., workers will be provided capable of reacting promptly and effectively in an emergency situation. The parental permission form for a water activity will indicate a child's swimming proficiency and whether any restrictions are to be in effect. For any activity away from the church premises, **a first aid kit will be taken and available in the case of an accident.**

9. Medications required by children while at a church sponsored activity will be administered as follows:
 - Workers will maintain children's medications in a secure location.
 - At church, the parent will assume responsibility for administering any medication(s) to their child(ren). Workers will administer medication only in extenuating circumstances and after having received prior signed, written permission and instruction from the parent.
 - While away from the church premises the worker may supervise the administration of medications to the children. The parent will provide signed, written permission and detailed instructions regarding dosages, method of application, and any other pertinent information.
10. The worker in charge of an activity will document in writing all accidents, especially those involving an injury to a child's head or face or the letting of blood, on the SBC accident/incident form. The worker will inform a parent/caregiver of the circumstances of the accident and remedial actions taken, when the parent picks up the child. The worker will forward the documentation of the accident to the appropriate staff minister. In the event of an accident requiring professional medical treatment, the worker will immediately summon the proper medical authorities and notify the parent/caregiver as quickly as possible.
11. All toys and furniture within areas utilized by children will be periodically inspected and those that pose a potential safety hazard will be repaired or replaced.

C. Supervision (Youth Grade Seven through Grade Twelve):

1. There will be an adequate number of approved workers, a minimum of two, overseeing each youth activity.
2. During youth activities the program coordinator and/or church staff members will be responsible for randomly visiting rooms and areas in which the activity is taking place.
3. All activities will be conducted as "open door" activities where a parent or caregiver may visit or check-in at any time.
4. Upon completion of an activity at the scheduled time, youth will be dismissed and their parent/caregiver will assume responsibility for their youth unless the worker or staff minister is instructed otherwise, in writing, by the parent/caregiver.
5. All youth activities occurring off church premises must be approved in advance

by the appropriate staff minister. For off-premise activities the parent/caregiver will be informed of the location and details of the activity, date, time of departure and return, mode of transportation, responsibilities to be borne by the children and/or parents, and the coordinator for the event. In order for a youth to participate in an activity away from SBC premises, a signed parental permission form and medical release form must be provided to the appropriate worker or staff minister in advance of the activity.

6. Any vehicle transporting youth for a church sponsored activity will contain at least three occupants, one of whom will be an adult worker/driver. Church-owned vehicles, operated by drivers according to church policy, should be used for transportation. **Private vehicles should be used only in extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the appropriate staff minister.**
7. The coordinator or sponsor of any youth activity will provide responsible and appropriate supervision. For example, if the activity involves swimming, water skiing, boating, etc., workers will be provided capable of reacting promptly and effectively in an emergency situation. The parental permission form for a water activity will indicate a youth's swimming proficiency and whether any restrictions are to be in effect. For any activity away from the church premises, a first aid kit will be taken and available in the case of an accident.
8. Unless specified otherwise to the worker in writing by a parent/caregiver, youth will be responsible for securing and administering their own medication while at a church sponsored activity. The worker may assist in securing and administering medications for youth as requested. If the worker, on instruction of the parent/caregiver, assumes the responsibility for securing and administering medications, the parent will provide signed, written permission and detailed instructions regarding dosages, method of application, and any other pertinent information.
9. Any accident requiring professional medical attention shall be documented by the worker in charge and reported as soon as possible to the appropriate staff person. A parent will be informed as soon as possible regarding the circumstances of the accident and remedial actions taken. The worker will provide documentation concerning the accident to the appropriate staff minister.
10. When counseling or working with youth individually, the worker will avoid meeting with the youth behind closed doors or in secluded areas. Meetings should occur in a public setting within view of others.
11. The workers at any youth activity will strive to structure the activity so that one-on-one contact between youth of the opposite sex will not occur in private or secluded areas. Workers will have knowledge of the whereabouts of all youth during the activity.

D. Worker Training:

1. All children's and youth workers will be offered periodic training in topics and areas appropriate for their ministry. Topics will include, but not be

limited to, understanding the necessity of using appropriate language, appropriate means of behavior management, and appropriate touch in working with children and youth; instruction in child abuse issues and signs that would indicate possible abuse situations; and methods and forms of supervision.

E. Procedures for Instances, or Suspected Instances, of Abuse, Sexual Molestation, and Sexual Assault:

1. The following procedures will be utilized in response to any situation involving actual or suspected abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual assault of a child or youth. All matters related to the implementation of the following procedures shall be held in strictest confidence.
 - a. Procedures for Workers: Any worker who notices marks of a suspicious nature on a child or youth (such as unusual bruises, burns, or hand prints across the face or upper arms) or who hears from children or youth comments of concern and/or stories of unacceptable or extreme methods of punishment, times of questionable deprivation, or details that suggest neglect should:
 1. refrain from asking the child leading questions regarding the marks or any statements they make, but should listen carefully to any statement the child or youth may voluntarily offer.
 2. contact as soon as possible (within 1 hour) the appropriate staff person or activity coordinator who will view the markings in a discreet manner.
 3. assist the appropriate staff person or activity coordinator in documenting the day, time, and circumstances under which the markings were first discovered and any statements made by the child or youth.
 - b. Procedures for Activity Coordinators: Any children's or youth program or activity coordinator who receives information from a children's or youth worker of a suspected instance of abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual assault should:
 1. Respond to a worker's request to view any suspicious marks on a given child or youth and listen carefully as the worker relates any information shared by the child or youth. With the assistance of the worker, document all pertinent information in writing.
 2. See that the appropriate staff person is notified of the situation as soon as possible (within 1 hour) and given all available information.
 3. Encourage the worker to continue being observant and sensitive to all signs a child or youth might display and to bring any further information to the attention of the activity coordinator or the appropriate staff person.
 - c. Procedures for Pastor(s), Staff Persons, and Minister of Outreach: Church staff members who receive information of a suspected instance of abuse,

sexual molestation, or sexual assault from a children's or youth worker or activity coordinator should:

1. Respond to a worker's or coordinator's request to view any suspicious marks on a given child or youth and listen carefully as the worker or coordinator relates any information shared by the child or youth. With the assistance of the worker or coordinator, document all pertinent information in writing.
2. Encourage the worker or coordinator to continue being observant and sensitive to all signs a child or youth might display and to bring any further information to the attention of the appropriate staff person.
3. Notify appropriate authorities as soon as possible (within 1 hour). All requirements as set forth in the Code of Virginia will be satisfied.
4. All written documentation regarding incidents of actual or suspected abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual assault of a child or youth will be maintained in a confidential file available only to the Pastor, appropriate staff persons, and the Church Administrator.

F. Safety Issues: Guidance follows for specific situations:

1. Age Appropriate Touching: Recommend SBC follows The Missing Ministry guidelines found on page 122.
2. Restroom Procedures: In order to protect children the following restroom procedures are recommended²:
 - a. Children 5 and under should be taken to the bathroom as a group by at least 2 workers preferably.
 - b. Once at the bathroom, a worker checks to make sure the bathroom is empty then allows the children in.
 - c. The workers stay outside the bathroom.
 - d. If all children do not finish in a timely manner, a worker will open the door and call the child's name.
 - e. If a child requires assistance, a worker will prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as they assist.
 - f. "A worker should never take a child to the bathroom alone." (p. 130) A worker should **never** be in a bathroom stall with the door closed.
 - g. For children above 5, at least one but preferably two workers of the same sex as the child will escort the child to the bathroom.
 - h. A worker will check to make sure the bathroom is empty before the child enters.
 - i. Once finished, the worker(s) will escort the child back to the classroom.
3. Playground Safety:
 - a. Install proper surface³ of 12 inches of safe material for equipment 8 feet high.
 - b. All equipment should be inspected regularly.
 - c. A fence should surround the playground.
 - d. Adults should be present to supervise.

4. Computer Safety:
 - a. Filters or firewalls should be installed to block inappropriate material.
 - b. Chat rooms, blogs or other online forums should not be used due to the amount of information a predator can gain.
 - c. All computer use should be monitored.
 - d. The history of computer searches should be reviewed on a regular basis.
5. Nursery Safety⁴:
 - a. Inspect nursery or toddler area on a weekly basis for hazards.
 - b. Electrical outlets should have covers.
 - c. Doors should have windows and the top half should not be locked.
 - d. Windows should be locked.
 - e. Workers should be supervised on an unannounced but regular basis.

G. Communication:

1. Parents and/or Guardians should always be informed as soon as practical or possible depending on the seriousness of an accident/incident.
Communication is key to any relationship and parents must be able to trust SBC.
2. Only a qualified SBC staff member should respond to questions from authorities or media in regards to situations which may be criminal or negligent in nature. This will ensure the proper response is sent to the public and that mixed messages are not sent.
3. Recovery Plan: Since so many scenarios are possible general guidance in the event of an accident/incident is:
 - a. Ensure proper medical treatment is administered ASAP.
 - b. Notify SBC staff members ASAP
 - c. Notify parents ASAP
 - d. Depending on the incident, notify the Soul Care team.
 - e. Document the incident as soon as practical and keep on file.

Citations:

1. *"The Missing Ministry"* by The GuideOne Center for Risk Management, pg. 130
2. *"The Missing Ministry"* by The GuideOne Center for Risk Management, pg. 130
3. *"The Missing Ministry"* by The GuideOne Center for Risk Management, pg. 134
4. *"The Missing Ministry"* by The GuideOne Center for Risk Management, pg. 132