

Eastern Heights Baptist Church Child Protection Policy

I. EHBC Child Protection Policy

- A. Eastern Heights Baptist Church (EHBC) is committed to protecting preschoolers, children and youth from sexual, emotional and physical abuse. EHBC has a Zero-Tolerance Policy prohibiting any act of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse. (Sexual harassment is a form of sexual abuse and is absolutely prohibited as well.) The zero-tolerance policy requires of all EHBC staff and volunteers the immediate reporting to the EHBC child protection designee(s) of any occurrence or suspected occurrence which violates this policy.
- B. Any EHBC staff or volunteer who comes into direct contact with children (age 17 or under) will be given the definition of child abuse in writing, as well as the policy on reporting child abuse and child abuse training prior to working with children. **Child abuse training should be repeated every three years.**
- C. All EHBC staff and volunteers should have an application on file that includes a legal release statement allowing EHBC to conduct criminal background checks. The application includes questions pertaining to working with children and/or youth. The application process may include personal interviews, current address information, former churches, references, and general experience in working with children and/or youth and will include a legal definition of child abuse.
- D. A criminal background check will be completed on all EHBC staff and volunteers who come into direct contact with children and/or youth. In addition, the criminal background check may be repeated every three years or conducted periodically at random. Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a criminal background check, any prospective EHBC staff or volunteer that has a conviction for any of the following offenses will be **permanently disqualified** from participating in any activities or programs with minors:
- Criminal homicide
 - Aggravated assault
 - Sexual abuse
 - Sexual assault (rape)
 - Aggravated sexual assault
 - Injury to a child
 - Incest
 - Indecency with a child
 - Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child
 - Possession or promotion of child pornography
 - The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor
 - Abandonment or endangerment of a child
 - Kidnapping or unlawful restraint

- Public lewdness or indecent exposure
- Enticing a child

E. Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a criminal background check, any prospective EHBC staff or volunteer that has a conviction for the possession, use or sale of illegal drugs or controlled substances will be disqualified from participating in any activities or programs with minors for three years from the date of conviction. If, after the three year period, the person has a clear criminal record with no additional arrests, charges, or convictions for drug offenses and has successfully participated in at least one drug treatment or drug prevention program authorized, approved, or endorsed by a local law enforcement agency, the person may, with proper supervision, work as a volunteer with activities or programs with minors within the church. [A plea of nolo contendere (no contest), First Offender Status, Conditional Discharge, etc. will be considered a conviction for purposes of this policy.]

The 3-year period may be reduced after review of the individual case by the Child Protection Team, the Child Protection Designee, and at least one church pastor.

Other criminal activities, offenses, charges, or convictions disclosed through a criminal background check or other means will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Child Protection Team, but a conviction or plea of nolo contendere, etc. for any felony offense will be treated, at minimum, like a conviction for a drug offense.

F. EHBC practices the two adult rule which provides that a minimum of two workers should be present at all times when children are participating in an activity in a room without a door window. When children are participating in an activity in a room with a door window, a single adult may be present, but should conduct any activity with children in an area of the room which can be observed from the hallway.

G. EHBC staff and volunteer directors should supervise children and youth ministries on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time.

H. Teenagers under eighteen (18) years of age desiring to serve as volunteers who work directly with preschoolers or young children will be required to complete and submit a Volunteer Information form and participate in the child abuse training provided for EHBC staff and volunteers. Under most circumstances, teenagers who have not attained the age of eighteen (18) years will not be the subject of a criminal background check.

I. Visitors, guests and parent observers may come into contact with children, while in church facilities or at church activities, but any such direct contact should be under the supervision of or in the presence of a staff member, an approved volunteer, or the child's parent. Visitors, guests and parent observers will not be

subject to background checks and will not be required to complete a volunteer application. Visitors may periodically assist with children under the supervision of a staff member or approved volunteer. If a specific visitor assists with children on a regular basis, to be defined as more than twice a month, then the visitor will be required to complete a volunteer application and will be subject to a criminal background check.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Defining Child Abuse

- (1) Emotional Abuse: The failure to provide for or to act in such a manner as to adversely affect a child's emotional and mental health to include, but not to be limited to, acts of omission or commission by parents or other caregivers that could cause a child to have serious behavioral, emotional or mental disorders.
- (2) Neglect: The failure to adequately provide for a child's needs for food, shelter, clothing or supervision to the extent that a child's health and safety are jeopardized or adversely affected.
- (3) Physical Abuse: The infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child.
- (4) Sexual Abuse: Conduct of a sexual nature by any person with a child which may involved sexual advances, sexual activity, sexually oriented communication, exposing a child to inappropriate sexual information, images, pictures, language, etc. Such behavior may involve sexual battery or sexual touching of a minor with or without the consent of the other party.
- (5) Sexual Harassment: Conduct or communication of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, verbal harassment or abuse, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, and suggesting or demanding sexual involvement or sexual activity accompanied by implicit or explicit threats concerning possible physical harm, involvement in or exclusion from church activities, or injury or harm to anything of value to the child, and other such actions. (Sexual harassment is a form of sexual abuse.)

B. Identifying Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

Disclaimer: These indicators are not exhaustive and do not verify actual abuse; however, when observed, they may warrant further investigation. If these indicators are detected, see reporting protocol.

- Wary of others
- Clingy (clinging to others)
- Uncomfortable with emotions (crying)
- Emotionally detached

- Extreme changes in behavior when not around parents
- Manipulative or controlling/Poor self image
- Delinquent behavior
- Self-mutilation, drug, and alcohol abuse
- Bruises, welts, burns, bite marks, bed wetting, and fractures
- Reluctant to change clothes in front of others
- Questionable sexual behavior, knowledge beyond their developmental age
- Promiscuous
- Withdrawn, distant
- Self-conscious
- Obsessively clean
- Extreme compliance or defiance
- Anxious
- Fearful
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Injury to genital area

C. EHBC Child Protection Definitions

- **Indirect Volunteer:** A person who does not regularly assist with children's ministry and has not been through child protection training at EHBC. (Indirect Volunteers must be supervised by staff, approved volunteer or other approved personnel while interacting directly with children).
- **Approved Volunteer:** One who assists with the ministry of EHBC of their own volition and has been through a background check and child protection training.
- **Visitor:** Church guests, parents, relatives, observers, etc. that may be called upon to assist or volunteer during church functions or in other circumstances where needed due to lack of available approved personnel (Must be supervised by staff, approved volunteer, or other approved personnel while interacting directly with children).
- **Child Protection Designee:** A person voted on by the congregation of EHBC to be in charge of all matters relating to child protection at EHBC.
- **Child Protection Team:** A committee of EHBC members voted upon by the church to supervise matters related to child protection.

III. REPORTING PROTOCOL

- A. Any suspicion or allegation of abuse, sexual harassment, and/or neglect of a child by a staff member, family member, or any individual, including another child, shall be confidentially reported immediately to the EHBC Child protection designee(s) and/or the director of the ministry during which the incident which is the basis for the allegation of abuse and/or neglect occurred. All allegations of abuse, harassment, and/or neglect of a child shall be fully investigated. The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the church's legal obligations, and with the church's responsibility to investigate the allegation of misconduct and take corrective action.

- B. The accused may be suspended from the performance of all duties involving children until the investigation has been completed.
- C. The decisions regarding further assessment of any danger, seeking consultation, notification of parents/guardians, and any further necessary services will be based on the decision of the EHBC child protection designee(s) following consultation with legal counsel and, if necessary, notification of local law enforcement.
- D. EHBC, through the Child Protection designee and other staff members, will cooperate fully with law enforcement officials and immediately inform EHBC's liability insurance company of the allegations.
- E. In cases where abuse, sexual harassment, or neglect is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken, including the probability of the immediate dismissal of the staff member whose actions have been confirmed.

IV. MEDIA COMMUNICATION

The EHBC child protection designee(s) shall handle all communications with the press regarding child abuse at EHBC. All questions and inquiries should be referred to this individual.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

To fulfill this policy, this application form needs to be completed. Please answer or acknowledge every question. A resume may be attached, but cannot be used as a substitute for completion of the application.

Please print legibly.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION INFORMATION

Date of application: _____

Social Security Number: ____ - ____ - ____

Birth Date: (MM/DD/YYYY) ____ / ____ / ____

Name: Last _____ Maiden _____ First _____ Middle _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

County: _____ How long at present address? _____

Former Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

How long at former address? _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work: _____

Cell: _____

E-mail address: _____

Have you ever been know by any other name? Yes No

If yes, what name? _____

Drivers License Number: _____ State of License: _____

Is there any reason, including those that are physically, mentally or emotionally related, that might keep you from effectively working with children or that might cause a child potential harm? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been refused participation in any child or youth program? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been charged with, arrested, indicted for, or pled guilty to a crime?
 Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

REFERENCES

List names and telephone numbers of three business/work references that are not related to you. If not applicable, list three school or personal references that are not related to you. Please PRINT all responses.

Name	Relationship	Telephone	Years Known
1) _____			
2) _____			
3) _____			

EHBC USE ONLY - REFERENCE RESPONSES

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

AGREEMENT STATEMENT & SIGNATURE

I have read and understand this EHBC Child Protection document. I agree to abide by the policy and procedures as detailed in this document.

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Witness to Signature _____ Date: _____

CONSENT/PERMISSION STATEMENT

Are you willing to undergo a criminal background check? Yes No

Please initial each statement below.

_____ I authorize EHBC to obtain information from references, employers and churches herein.

_____ I authorize any references, churches or other organizations or employers listed in this application to give you any information, including opinions that they may have regarding my character and fitness for work.

_____ In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by EHBC, I hereby release and agree to hold harmless any individual, church, children's organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization.

_____ I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

_____ I understand that EHBC desires to protect its children; therefore, I give permission for EHBC leadership to conduct a criminal background check, which may include a review of sex offender registries, child abuse and criminal history records and to maintain my fingerprints and photo ID on file.

_____ I understand that EHBC has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual misconduct and abuse and any incident will disqualify me from participation in EHBC activities.

_____ I understand that this information will be used only for volunteering purposes and will not be re-disseminated to other persons or used for any other purposes.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the contents thereof, and sign this release as my own free act. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission of a material fact on my application may be justification for refusal of acceptance of my service as a volunteer.

I understand that any misrepresentation made by me in completing this application shall be considered as sufficient cause for removal from service without advance notice.

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Witness to Signature _____ Date: _____

CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION CONSENT/INQUIRY FORM

I hereby authorize **Eastern Heights Baptist Church** to conduct an inquiry for the Purpose(s) listed below and receive and Georgia and/or national criminal history record information as authorized by state and federal law.

Name				
Address				
Email				
Sex	Race	Date of Birth	Social Security Number	Telephone

This authorization is valid for 30 days from date of signature

I, _____, give consent to the above- named entity to perform periodic criminal history background checks for the duration of my employment.

Signature

Date

OFFICE PERSONNEL ONLY

Purpose Code Used (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	E - Employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	M- Working with Mentally Disabled
<input type="checkbox"/>	N- Working with Elderly
<input type="checkbox"/>	W- Working with Children

MUST ATTACH A COPY OF VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE OR STATE ISSUED PHOTO I.D.