

# Child Protection Policy

## **Purpose of Policy:**

Our purpose for establishing this Child Protection Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth.

## **Statement of Covenant:**

We pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of the workers. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods and we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Note: A child is any person 17 years of age and under. All children's workers (staff and volunteer) are required to comply with the following policies to ensure a safe and secure environment for children:

## **Guidelines:**

1. Whenever feasible, each group of children should have at least two workers present at all times with at least one worker being an adult.
  - No adult will minister to children without another adult in the general vicinity and should never be behind a closed door alone. This includes bathroom visits, classes, etc.
  - Counseling of any kind should only be done in an easily accessible area, observable through a window or opened door, with other adults in the general vicinity.
2. Children are never to be left unattended by themselves in the building or even outside waiting for parents without adult supervision.
  - Children 4th grade and younger will be released at the conclusion of their program or class only to a relative or another adult approved by the parent or guardian. Parents/guardians must check in and check out using the new system. To check out, parents need to show their 4 digit code to a leader (either the tag they received at check-in or written down elsewhere).

- A “buddy system” should be used when sending children 4th grade or younger to the restroom or on an errand.

3. Any person 17 years of age and younger must be accompanied by an adult to volunteer with children or youth.

4. Transportation of children:

- Workers will not transport any child (other than their own) alone. Workers will not transport any child while accompanied by other children without the permission of the child’s parent or guardian.
- Field trips or group activities must include at least two adult chaperones.

5. Any staff member or volunteer who is accused of child abuse will be suspended immediately from contact with children until the matter is fully investigated. Additionally, any suspicion of child abuse should be taken very seriously. See “Reporting Obligation and Procedure” on following page for procedures for reporting.

6. Medication should not be dispensed to children without written directions given directly from the child’s parent / guardian to a children’s ministry volunteer or staff.

7. Corporal punishment is not allowed for maintaining discipline. Workers may use force for self-protection or to protect others who are in clear danger.

8. It is expressly understood that all worker requirements and procedures apply to responsibilities carried out while on church property, as well as when involved in an off-site church-related activity.

9. Whenever an emergency arises, parents should be contacted. If time is of the essence or parents are not available and a situation warrants immediate action, 911 should be called immediately. Emergency personnel will then assume responsibility for determining the appropriate course of action.

10.. This policy will be reviewed annually by children’s workers during a leader training time.

11. All volunteers must have the participation covenant and authorization for criminal records check submitted **before** serving in children or youth ministries. All forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in the church office, accessible only to necessary church leadership.

**Conclusion:** In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child will be “...surrounded by steadfast love, ... established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.”

## **REPORTING OBLIGATION AND PROCEDURE**

“Child abuse” means any of the following:

(1) A child is physically injured by other than accidental means, (2) A child is subjected to willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment, (3) A child is abused or exploited sexually, or (4) A child is neglected by a parent or caretaker who fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision. It is never permissible or acceptable.

### **When should child abuse be reported?**

Whenever someone knows, observes or reasonably suspects that child abuse has occurred, it needs to be reported. Child abuse continues when it goes unnoticed or unreported.

### **Who should report child abuse?**

All paid people, both clergy and lay, working with youth or children would be defined as mandatory reporters. All volunteers with a responsibility for supervising a youth program are mandatory reporters. Church children’s workers should also report any abuses.

The pastor should be notified immediately of the need to file a report unless the incident involves the pastor. In that case, the elder board should be notified. The identity of all personnel who report child abuse shall be confidential.

### **How to report child abuse:**

The Michigan Child Protection Law, 1975 PA 238, MCL 722.621 et. seq., requires the reporting of child abuse and neglect by certain persons (called mandated reporters) and permits the reporting of child abuse and neglect by all persons. For copies of the Child Protection Law, contact the local Department of Human Services (DHS) office or go to <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>.

Mandated reporters are required to make an immediate verbal report to CPS and a written report within 72 hours when they suspect child abuse or neglect. Mandated reporters must also notify the head of their organization of the report. Reporting the suspected allegations of child abuse and/or neglect to the head of the organization does not fulfill the requirement to report directly to DHS. The verbal report can be completed by calling **855-444-3911**.

## Participation Covenant Statement

As a children's ministry worker I state that...

1. I have never abused a child (sexually, physically, emotionally, or mentally).
2. I will report any child abuse or suspected child abuse to my ministry overseer. If the abuse and abuser is not dealt with as soon as possible I will continue to communicating up the chain of command even to the extent of reporting it to law enforcement.
3. If I am an adult survivor of child abuse, I acknowledge I need the love and support of the body of Christ. I will discuss my situation and abuse with the pastor overseeing children's ministries.
4. I agree to attend children's ministries training events provided by Pine Ridge.
5. I have read and familiarized myself with Pine Ridge's children's ministry policies.
6. I agree to abide by Pine Ridge's children's ministry policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Name

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please return completed form to:

Pine Ridge Bible Church, c/o Church Office, 280 S. Ray Quincy Rd., Quincy, MI. 49082  
For questions or to contact one of the pastors, call the church office at: 517-639-8118

## Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize Pine Ridge Bible Church to request the release of information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in its files, or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether said file is a local, state, or national file, and including but not limited to accusations and convictions for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law. I do release said Pine Ridge Bible Church from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_  
Date

Print Applicant's Full Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Print all other names that have been used by applicant (if any, nickname, maiden name, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number:

\_\_\_\_\_

State issuing license: \_\_\_\_\_ License expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

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