



# Family Ministry Handbook

---

Abner Creek Baptist Church

*Updated 2.2021*

# Table of Contents

Kid’s Ministry Introduction .....	2
Kid’s Ministry Mission .....	2
Kid’s Ministry Strategy .....	3
Kid’s Ministry Volunteer Expectations .....	3
Student Ministry Mission .....	5
Student Ministry Strategy .....	6
Student Ministry Volunteer Expectations .....	6
Volunteer Application Process and Background Screening .....	8
Minor Protection Policy .....	10
Healthy Child Policy .....	15
Emergency Evacuation Procedure .....	17
Reporting Procedures for Abuse or Suspected Abuse .....	18
Abuse Reporting Form .....	20

# Kids Ministry

## Introduction

At Abner Creek Baptist Church, we want to welcome and value children as Jesus did (Mark 10:13-16). This ministry has been given to us by the mercy of God (2 Cor. 4:1), and we are accountable to God for how protect and disciple the next generation.

## Mission

We exist to glorify God by proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus Christ to kids, by partnering with parents in order to make disciples of all nations. With this mission in mind, we strive to provide a fun environment for kids that protects, partners, and proclaims.

- 1. Protect:** Maintain a safe and secure environment for children to learn about Jesus through a safe check-in system, volunteer screening, and a thorough minor protection policy.
- 2. Partner:** Partner with parents in the discipleship of their children. Parents are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truth to their children, so we want to support them in this endeavor by providing the necessary resources for family discipleship and supplementing what is being taught at home with thriving discipleship programs. A spiritually mature parent disciplines their child daily in an organized and/or organic fashion (prayer, family worship, gospel conversations, etc.)
- 3. Proclaim:** Faithfully proclaim the whole counsel of God to children with special attention on the gospel, the storyline of Scripture, and basic biblical theology. Our prayer is that children would come to faith in Jesus and grow in their faith to be mature disciples of Jesus under our care. This teaching will primarily take place through our weekly programs and annual VBS.

## **Biblical Support**

- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, ESV)
- “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14-15, ESV)
- “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4, ESV).

## Strategy

1. Pray for the children and their families
2. Implement thorough minor protection policies and procedures
3. Equip parents to practice family discipleship in the home (seminars, resources, etc.)
4. Raise up godly children's ministry volunteers
5. Provide gospel centered child-care during the service hour
6. Provide gospel centered teaching and activities during the core class hour
7. Provide outreach events and VBS for the purpose of reaching families in the community with the gospel.
8. Provide a monthly Creek Kids newsletter
9. Encourage involvement in weekly corporate worship for children of age

## Volunteer Expectations

### Definitions

Adults: Individuals 18 years and older.

Minors: Individuals under the age of 18.

Staff: Employees paid by the church.

Ministry Leader: the individual who directs a particular ministry.

Volunteer: Qualified adults who work with children and are not paid employees of the church.

Helper: Minors that are at-least one year older than the grade being served.

Children: Individuals age 0-12 or grades 6 and below.

Students: Individual age 12-18 or grades 7-12.

### Expectations

At Abner Creek Baptist Church we care about our children's ministry volunteers and thank God for them. In addition to partnering with parents, we want to partner with volunteers so they can thrive in the ministry God has entrusted to them. To this end, we commit as a church to partner with leaders by providing regular encouragement, annual children's ministry training, protection from burnout, and spiritual care.

- 1. Encouragement:** We will strive as a ministry to encourage and affirm our volunteers as they serve.
- 2. Kid's Ministry Training:** We will strive as a ministry to host various forms of training at least once per year.
- 3. Protection from burnout:** We will strive as a ministry to set up our volunteers to thrive. Volunteers that serve on a weekly basis during the core class hour will make a one-year commitment to serve. Each year the volunteer will meet with the Associate Pastor and ministry leader to evaluate whether or not they will commit to serve another year. We will also commit to temporarily eliminate classes when necessary if we are not able to find the volunteers to meet our required child to volunteer ratios. Volunteers will also serve no more than once per month during the service hour. The protection could also entail a rotation of

teachers. Two sets of teachers per class. This would allow volunteers to alternate between teaching children and attending core classes.

- 4. Spiritual Care:** While you are ministering to children, we want to make sure you are being ministered to. The ministry leader and elders want to encourage you as you follow Jesus and provide counseling and discipleship when needed.

As a part of this partnership, we would ask that our volunteers make the commitments below. All ministry staff and volunteers will commit to:

1. Praying for the children on a regular basis.
2. Practicing spiritual disciplines daily in pursuit of personal holiness.
3. Loving the children as Christ loves them.
4. Arriving in a punctual manner fifteen minutes prior to the program start time.
5. Staying for the duration of the program until every child is picked up.
6. Interacting with the children upon arrival.
7. Using the approved curriculum provided.
8. Serving no more than once a month during the service hour unless an urgent need arises.
9. Notifying the ministry leader of absence at least one week in advance unless unavoidable.
10. Checking the name tag code for ALL children being picked up.
11. Attending volunteer training when offered.
12. Following the child protection policies and procedures in place.
13. Following the necessary screening process every three years.
14. Fulfilling the duty of a mandatory reporter if necessary.

# Student Ministry

## Introduction

At Abner Creek Baptist Church, we want to equip parents to practice family discipleship, while simultaneously providing a robust student ministry. This ministry has been given to us by the mercy of God (2 Cor. 4:1), and we are accountable to God for how we protect and disciple the next generation.

## Mission

We exist to glorify God by proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus Christ to students, by partnering with parents in order to make disciples of all nations. With this mission in mind, we strive to provide a fun environment for students that protects, partners, and proclaims.

- 1. Protect:** Maintain a safe and secure environment for students to learn about Jesus by volunteer screening and a thorough minor protection policy.
- 2. Partner:** Partner with parents in the discipleship of their adolescents. Parents are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truth to their children, so we want to support them in this endeavor by providing the necessary resources for family discipleship and supplementing what is being taught at home with thriving discipleship programs for students. A spiritually mature parent disciplines their student daily in an organized and/or organic fashion (prayer, family worship, gospel conversations, etc.)
- 3. Proclaim:** Faithfully proclaim the whole counsel of God to students with special attention on the gospel, the storyline of Scripture, biblical theology, spiritual disciplines, and apologetics. Our aim is that students would come to faith in Jesus and grow in their faith to be mature disciples of Jesus Christ. This entails introducing students to Jesus and following up with discipleship. As seen in the strategy below, the student ministry programs offered will focus on student discipleship and fellowship, while simultaneously being structured in a way that equips students to love the church and be faithful church members. Our prayer is that spiritually mature students would graduate from the student ministry at Abner Creek Baptist Church.

## **Biblical Support**

- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, ESV)
- “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred

writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14-15, ESV)

- “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4, ESV).

## **Strategy**

1. Pray for the students and their families
2. Implement thorough minor protection policies and procedures
3. Build relationships with parents organically
4. Equip parents to practice family discipleship in the home (seminars, resources, etc.)
5. Equip godly student ministry volunteers for ministry
6. Provide a weekly time of discipleship and fellowship
7. Provide a monthly time of fellowship and/or outreach
8. Provide an annual retreat
9. Participate in an annual camp
10. Provide a monthly student ministry newsletter
11. Encourage weekly corporate worship involvement
12. Encourage weekly core class involvement

## **Volunteer Expectations**

### **Definitions**

Adults: Individuals 18 years or older.

Minors: Individuals under the age of 18.

Staff: Employees paid by the church.

Volunteer: Qualified adults who work with minors and are not paid employees of the church.

Helper: A minor that is at-least one year older than the grade being served.

Children: individual age 0-12 or grade 6 and below.

Student: individual age 12-18 or grade 7-12.

### **Expectations**

At Abner Creek Baptist Church we care about our student ministry volunteers and thank God for them. In addition to partnering with parents, we want to partner with volunteers so they can thrive in the ministry God has entrusted to them. To this end, we commit as a church to partner with leaders by providing encouragement, student ministry training, protection from burnout, and spiritual care.

1. **Encouragement:** We will strive as a ministry to encourage and affirm our volunteers as they serve.

2. **Student Ministry Training:** We will strive as a ministry to host various forms of training at least once per year.
3. **Protection from burnout:** We will strive as a ministry to set up our volunteers to thrive. Those that serve on a weekly basis during the mid-week gathering will make a one-year commitment to serve. Each year the volunteer will meet with the Associate Pastor to evaluate whether or not they will commit to serve another year. We will also commit to temporarily eliminate programs when necessary if we are not able to find the volunteers to meet the required student to volunteer ratios. A team of volunteers may also rotate so that they don't have to serve every Wednesday of the month.
4. **Spiritual Care:** While you are ministering to students, we want to make sure you are being ministered to. The ministry leader and elders want to encourage you as you follow Jesus and provide counseling and discipleship when needed.

As a part of this partnership, we would ask that our volunteers make the commitments below. All student ministry staff and volunteers will commit to:

1. Praying for the students on a regular basis.
2. Practicing spiritual disciplines daily in pursuit of personal holiness.
3. Loving the students as Christ loves me.
4. Serving the weekly Wednesday night gathering from 6:00-7:30 pm.
5. Leading small group discussions following the lesson on Wednesday nights.
6. Serving the monthly student event on the last Sunday of the month.
7. Arriving in a punctual manner fifteen minutes prior to the program start time.
8. Staying for the duration of the program until every student is picked up.
9. Interacting with the students upon arrival.
10. Using the approved curriculum given.
11. Letting the ministry leader know of absence at least one week in advance unless unavoidable.
12. Attending volunteer training offered.
13. Following the minor protection policies and procedures in place.
14. Following the necessary screening process every three years.
15. Fulfilling the duty of a mandatory reporter if necessary.

# **Volunteer Application Process and Background Screening**

It is the policy of Abner Creek Baptist Church to conduct background screening on all individuals serving with minors. This includes the weekly programs of the church as well as anyone volunteering at any event that involves interaction with minors.

The following procedures will be followed for all individuals who volunteer with minors.

1. Any individual wanting to volunteer with minors must first meet with the ministry leader of the ministry in which they desire to serve.
2. At this meeting the individual will have a brief interview about their desire to serve and will receive the ministry handbook.
3. Once the handbook is signed and returned to the ministry leader, the individual will receive instructions for the online volunteer application.
4. Once the online application is complete, the church Ministry Assistant will notify the Associate Pastor who will then review with the elders the applicant's attendance history and give an opinion as to his/her suitability for the position. Communication should be conducted via email whenever possible in order to properly document a paper trail on the application process.
5. Once approved by the elders, the ministry leader will call the references provided by the applicant to discuss their suitability for the position.
6. Once an applicant has cleared the review process, they will receive an email from the church Ministry Assistant with a link to complete the online video training. At no time should the applicant disclose any personal information (such as social security number, etc.) to anyone other than directly through the online application for background screening. If the applicant does not use a computer or have an email, they may stop by the church office and the Ministry Assistant will gladly walk them through the online application process on the office computer.
7. Once the individual has completed the online application and video training process (including acceptance of this policy), a background check will be ordered by the church Ministry Assistant. Once the background report is received, the church Ministry Assistant will review it. If no complicating issues are found, the application will be approved and the ministry leader will receive an email confirmation stating the applicant is approved for service. **AT NO TIME MAY AN APPLICANT BEGIN SERVICE OR BE PLACED ON A SCHEDULE TO SERVE BEFORE THE BACKGROUND CHECK HAS BEEN APPROVED.** If any history of criminal charges are found on the report or during the application process, it will be reviewed by the Lead Pastor and elders for further determination. If an individual is not approved for service, they will be notified and the ministry leader will only be told that "the applicant cannot serve in that ministry". At no time will details of an applicant's background be shared with anyone other than the necessary leadership of the church. (i.e. Lead Pastor, elders, and deacons if necessary). Since the church Ministry Assistant processes the information, he/she will also have knowledge of this information.
8. Upon approval, the individual will be notified by the ministry leader that they have been approved to volunteer.

9. It is the discretion of the elders at Abner Creek Baptist Church to determine who will be allowed to serve with minors. Completing the application process and even passing a background check is NOT a guarantee of approval. No applicant who has ever been convicted of a sexual related crime, physical abuse, or has a history of unacceptable conduct is eligible to serve with minors. Though the requirement is that an applicant must have been a faithful church member for at least three months, discretion will be given to the elders to decide if the applicant should be a member for longer than three months.
10. Helpers may serve those at least one grade younger than them, but they must meet a minimum 6 month regular attendance requirement and complete all application procedures (with exception of the actual criminal records check.) They are not to be left alone with another minor and do not qualify as an official volunteer, but only as an extra helper.
11. Background screenings will be renewed every three years.
12. Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood abuse and/or neglect will receive the love, acceptance and support of our church family. If you are a survivor, we strongly encourage you to notify the Lead Pastor prior to continuing the application process. A confidential interview with the Lead Pastor and/or an elder before further consideration is strongly encouraged. All communication will be confidential between the elders and the applicant, and is meant only to further counsel and to disciple the individual to ensure they are both emotionally and spiritually cared for and ready to serve.



## **Minor Protection Policy**

Abner Creek Baptist Church is committed to honoring Jesus by maintaining an environment in which minors are safe from any form of abuse. Our policies apply to all persons, whether compensated staff, elders, deacons, volunteers, church members, attenders, or visitors. It is the responsibility of the ACBC ministry leader to ensure all guidelines and policies are followed and appropriate practices are implemented to reduce the risk of abuse and ensure the protection of minors as well as reducing the risk of false accusations.

- 1. Kids Ministry Parent Authentication:** Upon arrival, each child must be checked in at the front desk by a parent or legal guardian. The child will receive a sticker with their name and identification code, while the parent/guardian will also receive a sticker with their child's identification code. At the end of the session when the parent/guardian comes to check out the child, the children's ministry volunteer will bring the child to the door and check the parent's identification code before releasing the child to the parent. If a parent does not have their identification code, they will be sent to the check in desk to verify their identity in the system with their driver's license. Only after the parent has verified their identity can their child be checked out. A parent may make prior arrangements with the ministry leader to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a program. In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of an elder, deacon, or staff member of ACBC. The parent authentication process applies to all minors birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 2. Student Ministry Arrival and Departure:** Specific guidelines will be followed as it concerns arrival and departure times to and from ACBC student programs. Student volunteers should be ready to welcome students 10 minutes prior to the start of any program. Parents are encouraged to pick up their student immediately after the conclusion of the program. In the event that a student is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the program, student ministry volunteers will attempt to contact and locate the student's parents. At least two student ministry volunteers will remain at the facility together until the last student is picked up, at least one of which should be of the same gender as the student remaining. In the unlikely event that a parent doesn't come within an hour of the concluded program, the student ministry volunteer will consult with the Associate Pastor or an elder to assess best next steps.
- 3. Two Volunteer Rule:** The Two Volunteer Rule is expected to be observed at all times. All programs for minors at ACBC must have at least two qualified, unrelated volunteers, at all times. Helpers are always in addition to the rule and should never be left alone with minors without the supervision of the two adults. A rare and temporary exception to the Two Volunteer Rule if absolutely necessary may include one adult being present, with the adult being highly visible to other adults at all times. In this situation, the doors must be open, and a hall monitor must be present to temporarily substitute until a replacement volunteer is found. Two male volunteers may not serve together in the same room without a female present with them. The only temporary exception is that a male hall

monitor temporarily substitutes for a female volunteer who is taking children to the restroom. Staff or volunteers should not have a private one-on-one meeting with a minor. When a meeting on church premises is necessary it should adhere to the Two Volunteer Rule. At a minimum this meeting should take place with the consent of the parents, with the parents ideally being involved in the meeting.

4. **Child to Volunteer/Helper Ratio:** In addition to the Two Volunteer Rule, the following ratios are maintained during the children's programs of the church.

- Children 0-11 months: One volunteer for every three children
- Children ages 1-2: One volunteer for every four children
- Children ages 3-5: One volunteer for every eight children
- Children ages 6-12: One volunteer for every twelve children

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted in the classroom until another volunteer is added. Whenever age groups are combined, the ratio is determined by the age of the youngest child.

5. **Student to Volunteer Ratio:** In addition to the Two Volunteer Rule, the following ratios are maintained during the student programs of the church.

- Students: One volunteer for every twelve students

Once a ratio is met, another volunteer must be added immediately.

6. **Restroom and Diaper Change Procedures:** Parents are encouraged to change diapers or take their child to the restroom prior to check in. Female volunteers may accompany small children to the restroom and stand outside while the child uses the restroom. If a child requires assistance or supervision while in the restroom, the Two Volunteer Rule must be followed. No one is ever to be alone with a minor in the restroom or any other closed area. All diaper changes and toilet assistance **MUST** be done in the presence of at least two volunteers. All volunteers must thoroughly wash their hands after changing a diaper or assisting with toileting needs. Disposable latex-free gloves are provided for dealing with bodily fluids such as diapers, toileting, and blood.

7. **Discipline:** All volunteers are responsible for providing a loving and orderly environment to learn about Jesus. This may include encouraging good positive behavior and when necessary, correcting inappropriate behavior. Acceptable means of correcting would be loving verbal correction and withholding certain privileges for a short time. During correction, a minor should never be removed from the room. Correction should be discrete, in the classroom, and never outside of the Two Volunteer Rule parameters. Volunteers and staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to minors. If the minor does not respond to the loving correction and redirection and the behavior becomes uncontrollable, the parents must be immediately

notified to remove the minor. Staff and volunteers are only able to physically restrain a minor if they are putting others in harms way. All instances must be immediately reported to the ministry leader and/or an elder. The minor may be reinstated upon the approval of the elders.

8. **Room Occupancy:** For the safety of small children, only the children assigned to that classroom are allowed in the rooms. Volunteers should make other arrangements for their older children. Only approved volunteers should be in the room. Visitors of volunteers are encouraged to attend the worship service and may not stay in the rooms with the volunteer since they have not completed a background check through our church. If someone observes an unauthorized person in the room, they should report it to the ministry leader immediately. Church staff, elders, or the ministry leader should make periodic unannounced visits to classrooms and group settings. Parents are welcome to observe any activity involving their minor temporarily but must not stay in the classroom for a prolonged period of time. If a minor is anxious and unable to stay in class without their parent's presence, they will be released into their parents or legal guardian's care. Parents or legal guardians should be accompanied by the ministry leader if they need to check on their minor.
9. **On Campus Supervision:** Parents or legal guardians are responsible for ensuring their minor is not left alone before the teacher arrives. At no time should a minor be left unattended while in the care of ACBC. Volunteers should refrain from socializing and give their undivided attention to the minors in their care. Cell-phone use while caring for minors is prohibited. Children are only to be released to a parent or legal guardian who presents the appropriate identification code.
10. **Off Campus Supervision:** Any activity away from church property will require a signed permission slip from the parent or legal guardian of the minors participating. All qualified adult volunteers attending an overnight trip with minors in the care of ACBC must be approved in advance by the elders even if the person has already been approved to work with minors. In these contexts, all aspects of the protection policies will be followed. This includes camps, retreats, mission trips, etc. The Two Volunteer Rule is to be upheld inside vehicles, sleeping quarters, dining halls, classrooms, etc. At no time during church programs or on church trips should children and/or students be alone with one another or alone with one volunteer.
11. **PDA Policy:** Volunteers who are in a dating relationship are asked to refrain from public display of affection while serving with minors. Students who are in a dating relationship will be asked to refrain from a public display of affection during student discipleship, events, trips, etc. This includes hand holding, hugging, kissing, cuddling, sitting in one another's laps, etc. At no time should two students be alone under the care of ACBC. We ask that students treat one another as brothers and sisters in all purity (1 Timothy 5:1-2).
12. **Hall Monitoring:** Hall monitors are qualified volunteers whose responsibilities are not limited to one particular classroom. These individuals move about the church facilities with particular focus on the children's hallway during scheduled children's programs. The hall monitor may also provide temporary assistance when needed to fulfil the Two

Volunteer Rule requirements. At least one hall monitor will be on duty when children's ministry programs take place.

13. **Building Design:** The children's wing is designed to safely contain children in one hallway. Windows are present on the classroom doors to ensure visibility for parents and hall monitors. When possible, the teachers are encouraged to leave the classroom doors open. Children should be picked up in the same room in which they are dropped off in. The check in desk is the only entry to the hallway, as all the outside doors will be locked. With adequate child to volunteer ratios, classes may use the exit in their room to access the secured fenced in playground. Windows are present on the doors of the student ministry space on the second floor of the family life center.
14. **Physical Touch:** Two types of relationships must be considered. Volunteer to minor and minor to minor. Volunteer to minor: Touching should only be permitted in safe areas and for a brief time. Safe areas consist of hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, and gentle pats on the top of the head. A minor must never be touched in a private or personal area unless it is in the context of a diaper change or bathroom visit if absolutely necessary, and the Two Volunteer Rule is in place. Physical discipline is not permitted as an appropriate means for correcting or redirecting someone else's minor. Volunteers are prohibited from rough housing, wrestling, piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any other activity that might make a child feel unsafe. Sitting on a volunteer's lap is only permitted for ages 0-5. Men should limit physical contact with children more than women, especially when working with older children. Any form of physical touch permitted above must always happen in the context of the Two Volunteer Rule. Minor to Minor: No male or female under the age of eighteen should be alone together without two adults present. No inappropriate touching as defined above will be permitted between minors. Any who participate in violent or inappropriate actions will be placed in their parents care immediately. They will only be permitted to participate again upon the approval of the elders.
15. **Food:** A snack may be served to children 2.5 years and older. Snacks will consist of water or juice, and crackers, goldfish, cheerios, puffs, etc. Only the snacks provided or approved by the ministry leader are to be given to children. Infants should only be served formula, milk, juice or water when provided by their parents with written instructions. Students will often be provided with a meal during the weekly discipleship program and snacks will often be provided at events. Parents are encouraged to make the ministry leader and volunteers aware of any allergies or concerns that the ministry should be made aware of. Volunteers should be conscious of any food allergies for the minors in their care.
16. **Technology:** Volunteers and helpers must refrain from using their personal technology devices while serving with minors. ACBC will provide the technology needed to use technological teaching resources. At no time should a minor have access to a volunteer's technological device. Volunteers are prohibited from taking photos of children for social media without parental consent.

17. **Response to Child Pornography:** If any elder, staff member, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any other member of ACBC is suspected of or admits to viewing, producing, or distributing child pornography, they will be immediately removed from serving with minors, the allegations or self-admission will immediately be reported to an elder, and an appropriate response will be outlined by the elders at ACBC.
18. **Response to Child Abuse and Neglect:** All volunteers and employees are considered mandatory reporters and required to immediately report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to an elder at ACBC. These cases include allegations and eye-witness accounts alike. See the reporting procedures below for details.

## **Healthy Minor Policy**

The following procedures will be followed in order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among children and volunteers.

### **General Guidelines and Precautions:**

- Volunteers and children with infectious disease symptoms should stay home until they are no longer contagious.
- Volunteers and children should make hand washing and hand sanitation a regular habit.
- Volunteers should use latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills.
- Toys and equipment should be washed and/or disinfected after every use.
- ACBC is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. The ministry leader has the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the *Sickness Guidelines*.

### **Disinfecting Procedure:**

- The volunteers are responsible for disinfecting the room in which they have served following every child being picked up.
- Disinfect all knobs and surfaces with disinfecting spray provided.
- Set out all toys and apply disinfecting spray to each toy.
- Set the toys up for the following week.

**Sickness Guidelines:** A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist.

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the check-in desk with a volunteer while the Hall Monitor locates the parents.

Please inform the ministry leader if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending an ACBC event so that other parents may be notified if necessary. If a child contracts an illness and has been in contact with other children while at ACBC, it is the responsibility of parents to notify the ministry leader. Neither volunteers nor staff may give any medication to any child.

## **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

1. Know classroom designated emergency exit.
2. Remain calm. Children will look to you for direction and reassurance.
3. Gather children and exit building safely and quickly.
4. Follow evacuation route to the Family Life Center.
5. Hall Monitor will check each room, turn off lights, shut doors, and before exiting the building.
6. Hall Monitor will proceed to the Family Life Center.
7. Count of all children and volunteers will be taken and matched against check in.
8. Children are NOT to be released to parents or leave the Family Life Center until the all clear has been given.
9. Parents can stay with their children at the Family Life Center until that time.
10. In the event of an emergency evacuation for the students at the Family Life Center, the students and volunteers will evacuate as a group to the church building. The group will remain together until the all clear is given and parents arrive.

## **Reporting Procedures for Child Abuse or Suspected Abuse**

The law requires a person to immediately report suspected and/or reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as Abner Creek Baptist Church to the appropriate individuals in charge. It is important to understand that there are criminal penalties for failing to report. Therefore, all employees and volunteers of Abner Creek Baptist Church must adhere to the following procedures:

**In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse and neglect, the employee or volunteer should immediately notify the Associate Pastor, or in the absence of the Associate Pastor one of the elders.** The Associate Pastor or Elder will immediately notify local law enforcement or the local child protection agency. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, the volunteer is also encouraged to immediately make a report to law enforcement or local child protection agency themselves.

**Reports of suspected child abuse are to be documented in writing.** A reporting form is provided in the ministry handbook. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness. All church employees and volunteers working with minors should receive training annually regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse. In addition to following their own reporting procedures, any outside organization that uses the ACBC facilities should notify ACBC as soon as possible regarding any incident of child abuse/neglect or sexual misconduct believed to have occurred on church property. Any individual affiliated with that organization who has been convicted of child abuse/neglect or sexual misconduct (or has pending accusations of such) is not allowed on church property. The elders will meet to formulate a plan in a situation such as this.

**You should call DSS South Carolina in any of the following cases:**

- The child is related to the abuser or lives with the abuser;
- The child is being abused by a non-relative at home;
- The child's safety is at risk and the parents are not protecting the child.

Department of Social Services South Carolina  
1-888-CARE4US (227-3487)

**You should call the local police department in any of the following cases:**

- The child does not know the abuser;
- The child is not related to the abuser and does not live with the abuser;
- The child may have contact with a nonrelative abuser without protection;
- The child is under the authority of a nonrelative abuser at a location other than home.

Spartanburg County Sherriff's Department  
864-596-222

**The official spokesperson for Abner Creek Baptist Church is the Lead Pastor, or in the absence of the Lead Pastor, one of the elders.** All inquiries or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other party shall be referred to the official spokesperson. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson. The Pastor may designate another elder or church member to serve as the spokesperson for a particular case.

**The official spokesperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate law enforcement, local child protection agency of the county, and to our insurance carrier.** The leader of the ministry involved shall also be notified of any allegation and be cautioned of the importance of confidentiality. Abner Creek Baptist Church will not make a determination as to whether the allegations are true but will treat all allegations seriously and refer them for investigation to local law enforcement or the local child protection agency as necessary.

**The care and safety of the victim is our first priority.** The individual(s) accused of the abuse WILL NOT be notified or confronted without the approval of the local Child Protection Agency or local law enforcement and should not be contacted until the safety of the victim is ensured. We will not prejudice any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating any allegation of child abuse.

**We will treat the accused with the love of Christ while also taking the disciplinary steps needed.** If the accused is a church employee or volunteer, that person shall be immediately relieved of his or her duties (temporarily) until the investigation is completed and the person is cleared by authorities or until criminal charges are filed. If the accused is a paid employee of the church, his or her income will continue until the allegations are cleared by the authorities or until criminal charges are filed. At that time, the elders will make the determination as to when and if it is appropriate for the individual to return to service.

**All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and the public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of ALL PARTIES involved whenever possible.** All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Lead Pastor or, in the absence of the Lead Pastor, an elder and maintained in a secure and documented file at the church office.

Legal counsel may be consulted by ACBC at any time to obtain guidance or advice on a situation.

It is the responsibility of the ACBC ministry leader to ensure all guidelines and policies are followed and appropriate practices are implemented to reduce the risk of abuse and ensure the protection of the minors at ACBC.

# Abuse Reporting Form

*Instructions: If a volunteer, staff, deacon or elder suspect, hear about or observe signs or symptoms of abuse, please: (1) Talk immediately with the Associate Pastor or any Elder and (2) document any relevant information on this form.*

*This report should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of what the child said, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not go back and interview the child. Fill this form out based on whatever information has already been obtained.*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Elder Notified: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs or Symptoms of Abuse Observed:

Bruises or Injuries that are Visible:

Emotions expressed by the Child:

Summary of the Conversation with the Child:

Anything Else that is Relevant: