



Child Protection Policy

Statement of Purpose:

Our purpose for establishing this policy is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the protection and physical safety of all children, youth, and church workers.

Psalm 127

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.”

Matthew 18:1-6; 10

At that time the disciple came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea...see that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

Ephesians 5:11-13

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible.”

Four Areas of this Policy:

1. Worker Selection
2. Worker Supervision
3. Reporting Obligations
4. Response to Allegations

1. Worker Selection:

A) Explanation of Selection and Screening Process

The process of selection and screening workers for child/youth ministry serves a dual purpose:

- a. To protect children and youth who participate in the ministries and activities of Jesup Bible Fellowship from any potential harm.
- b. To provide current ministry workers with a means for accountability and the legal safe guards to protect themselves.

A foundation will be established for that protection, beginning with the screening process of ministry workers. Any candidate with a criminal record of child abuse will not be eligible to serve. Any candidate with a drug conviction in the last five years is not eligible to serve.

B) Background Checks (adults age 18 or older)

The volunteer must submit an online application through Jesup Bible Fellowship. You can either request it be emailed to you or you can complete it onsite at JBF. The form provides the Church with the ability to ascertain their proper identity, and perform any criminal background checks that the Church deems as necessary in the performance of the screening process. All information supplied by the applicant(s) will be limited to the Pastor and Elder Chairman or Designee, as well as the civil authority requesting the information with the proper legal documentation. When using the form, applicants are required to fill out the form completely and truthfully. Any failure to do so will result in the applicant being unable to participate in any ministry with Jesup Bible Fellowship Church until properly investigated by the church. This application enables the church to avail itself of the legal means to ensure all workers involved in or desiring to be involved in Jesup Bible Fellowship Church ministries have been screened as necessary and their fitness for child/youth ministry can be validated based upon multiple sources of information.

C. Approval of Workers by the Christian Education Committee:

This is the final stage in the selection process, in which the members of the CE committee take the opportunity to discuss the candidate and approve or disapprove the candidate. The decision is final.

D. Worker Training:

All ministry workers are required to attend *Child Protection Training* as provided by the Board of Elders of Jesup Bible Fellowship.

2. Worker Supervision

A. Two Adult Rule:

- a. A minimum of two adults are required in attendance during all activities, preferably one adult must be over 21.
- b. No private one-on-one contact between adults and children/youth will be allowed without the expressed consent of that child/youth's parent(s) or guardian. If one-on-one contact must be made, the Pastor or Elder Designee must be advised prior to the contact.

B. Appropriate Attire:

All child/youth ministry workers should be attired appropriately and with modesty, as is befitting a Christian in service to children and youth, exemplifying a high moral standard.

C. Constructive Discipline:

Discipline used during activities should be constructive and positive and reflect the values of Jesup Bible Fellowship. Corporal punishment is never permitted under any standards. Discipline must always be carried out in the presence of at least two adults, never one-on-one.

D. Social Media and Engaging with Young People:

These guidelines relate to internet, email, mobile phone and social networking. For many young people this is their preferred means of communication and it can be an extremely effective tool within youth work. However while it brings great opportunities there are also significant risks and it is important that guidelines are followed.

It is recommended that:

- If a worker expects to communicate with young people in the group via email, messenger, social networking sites (i.e. Facebook) or texting, they should do so within a group format that goes to parents and youth (use a group app like "Group Me")
- One-to-one communication between a worker and a young person should normally be avoided, all communication should be in a page or group context.
- If it is necessary for a worker to communicate with a young person individually, it should be through an approved 'work' account that the JBF office administrator and/or an elder or other approved third party can also access and review the conversations. Young people must

be made aware that any one-to-one communication will be shared in this way. (See 'Facebook' below).

- Communication should be from a specific account/address known to the young people, parents and supervisor.
- Clear and unambiguous language should be used in all communications. Avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
- Do not use any comment or picture of a young person without written parental permission.
- Texts that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to a JBF staff member and/or elder or approved third party within the organization. Conversations raising concerns should be discussed as soon as possible.
- Video or Voice messenger should be done in public so that other people are aware of what you are doing and to whom you are speaking.

Facebook & Social Networking Sites:

- The best advice is that it is not appropriate to use a personal Facebook account and profile for work with young people, so you should have a professional account created to manage your communications with young people. To create a professional or 'work' account and profile, contact the JBF office administrator
- Any communication or content that raises concerns should be saved or printed, shared and discussed with your JBF staff and/or elders.
- Workers should only accept friend requests for this profile from young people known to them, that they have met offline.
- Communication should normally be in the public domain wherever possible (by using group mailings or public wall posts)
- Where groups are set up, they should be closed, and not open to the general public. The worker will have administrative rights and moderate the group, with those rights being shared with the JBF office administrator and other trusted workers.
- Workers with personal social networking accounts should customize their privacy settings in order to maintain the boundaries between their personal life and volunteering as a JBF youth worker.

3. Reporting Obligations:

A. Explanation of Child Abuse as defined by Iowa Code.

1. Iowa Code 232.69-Mandatory & Permissive Reporters
2. Iowa Code 232.70-Reporting Procedure
3. Iowa Code 709.1
4. Iowa Code 728.12

5. Definition of Physical Abuse as per Iowa Department of Human Services "Physical abuse is defined as any non-accidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of it, suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child." Common indicators could include unusual or unexplained burns, bruises, or fractures. Health services personnel should be especially alert to cases of child abuse where inconsistent histories are presented. Inconsistent histories can take the form of an explanation that does not fit the degree or type of injury to the child, or where the story or explanation of the injury changes over time. Some indicators of child abuse are not visible on the child's body. Many times there are no physical indicators of abuse. A child's behavior can change as a result of abuse. Health services personnel need to be alert to possible behavioral indicators of abuse and if they believe those to be present, they are required to make a report. Behavioral indicators include behaviors such as:

Extreme aggression
Withdrawal
Seductive behaviors
Being uncomfortable with physical contact or closeness,

See also, Iowa Code 232.68 55.2

B. Church worker's Legal obligation in reporting abuse (Citing Iowa Code).

232.69552. Any other person who believes that a child has been abused may make a report as provided in section 232.70.

232.70ss7. "A report made by a permissive reporter, as defined in section 232.69, subsection 2, shall be regarded as a report pursuant to this chapter whether or not the report contains all of the information required by this section and may be made to the department of human services, county attorney, or law enforcement agency. If the report is made to any agency other than the department of human services, such agency shall promptly refer the report to the department of human services."

C. Timeframe for reporting abuse:

According to Iowa Code section 232.70, if you are a mandatory reporter of child abuse and you suspect a child has been abuse, you need t report it to the Department of Human Services. The law requires you to report suspected child abuse to DHS orally within 24 hours of becoming aware of the situation. You must also make a report in writing within 8 hours after your oral report.

The law requires the reporting of suspected child abuse. It is not the reporter's role to validate the abuse. The law does not require you to have proof that the abuse occurred before reporting. The law clearly specifies that reports of child abuse must be made when the person reporting "reasonably believes a child has suffered abuse."

Reports are made in terms of the child's possible condition, not in terms of an accusation against parents. A report of child abuse is not an accusation, but a request to determine whether child abuse exists and begin the helping process.

Making a report of child abuse may be difficult. You may have doubts about whether the circumstances merit a report, how the parents will react, what the outcome will be, and whether or not the report will put the child at greater risk. The best way to minimize the difficulty of reporting is to:

Be prepared for the experience, be knowledgeable about the reporting requirements, and be aware of the Department's intake criteria and the response that is initiated by making a report. Within 24 hours of receiving your report, you will be orally notified whether or not the report has been accepted or rejected. Within five working days, you will also be sent form 470-3789, Notice of Intake Decision, indicating whether the report of child abuse was accepted or rejected.

D. Nature of Content of the report (Citing Iowa Code).

232.70ss.1 Each report made by a mandatory reporter, as defined in section 232.69, subsection 1, shall be made both orally and in writing. Each report made by a permissive reporter, as defined in section 232.69, subsection 2, may be oral, written, or both.

232.70ss.2 The employer or supervisor of a person who is a mandatory or permissive reporter shall not apply a policy, work rule, or other requirement that interferes with the person making a report of child abuse.

232.70ss.3 The oral report shall be made by telephone or otherwise to the department of human services. If the person making the report has reason to believe

that immediate protection for the child is advisable, that person shall also make an oral report to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

232.70ss.6 The oral and written reports shall contain the following information, or as much thereof as the person making the report is able to furnish:

- a. The names and home address of the child and the child's parents or other persons believed to be responsible for the child's care;
- b. The child's present whereabouts if not the same as the parents or other person's home address;
- c. The child's age;
- d. The nature and extent of the child's injuries, including and evidence of previous injuries;
- e. The name, age and condition of other children in the same home;
- f. Any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury to the child, the identity of the person or persons responsible for the injury, or in providing assistance to the child; and
- g. The name and address of the person making the report.

4. Response to Allegations:

If an allegation of abuse is made the following steps should be taken. These steps are used to protect both the victim and the accused.

- A. Isolate the child/victim with two adult staff, preferable leadership.
- B. Isolate the accused with two adult staff, preferably leadership.
- C. Request ambulance as necessary.
- D. Contact Jesup Police Department.
- E. Contact Church's Legal Counsel.
- F. Contact Parent(s) or Guardian.
- G. Continue with activity if possible, if not possible, dismiss the activity. At all times and to the best of one's ability, maintaining the confidentiality of the situation and protecting any other children from harm.
- H. Comply with all requests made by church's legal counsel and civil authorities.
- I. **ABSOLUTELY NO RELEASE OF ANY INFORMATION TO ANYONE WITHOUT LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT AND ADVISED TO DO SO BY LEGAL COUNSEL.**
- J. **DOCUMENT EVERYTHING THAT IS SAID AND DONE BY BOTH PARTIES, CHURCH LEADERSHIP, AND CHURCH WORKERS.**

Any changes to this policy must be approved by the Church Board of Elders.

This policy was approved by the Elder Board May 5, 2008 and updated June 2019

I have read the above policy and accept the terms stated within:

Signature of volunteer: _____

Date: _____