

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

I. PURPOSE.

- A. The members of New Zion Baptist Church (“NZBC”) are committed to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of this church. This policy is intended to protect both the children and volunteer workers and is intended to be a helpful resource in addressing the issues of child safety.
- B. Throughout this policy, the terms “child,” “children,” and “youth” refer to all persons under eighteen (18) years of age. Children’s programs at NZBC include infant - 6th grade, and youth programs and activities involve grades 7-12. The standards implemented in this Child Protection Policy seek to uphold our commitment to the safety of the children and youth of NZBC, whether members or guests.
- C. This policy governs all volunteers enlisted to work with children and youth including positions filled by the General Nominating Committee.

II. QUALIFICATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

- A. Every volunteer working with children in the 12th grade and under must be a church and Sunday School member of NZBC for at least six months prior to beginning service (unless approved by church).
- B. Volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older unless working under the supervision of an adult who has met the qualifications in this policy.
- C. All teachers of children and youth and volunteers for children and youth activities or programs of NZBC, including those under the age of 18, will be required to complete a Volunteer Profile (sample form attached) providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform a security background check on each individual. All personal information disclosed and the results of the background check will be maintained in the strictest confidence. The refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will also be held in strictest confidence.

III. SCREENING OF VOLUNTEERS Security background checks for persons 18 years and older, including a search for criminal history, will be conducted through an agency authorized to perform a security background check. The results of the security background checks will be reviewed by the church staff member designated by the church to oversee background checks (the “Designated Staff Member”). If the result of the security background check is questionable, the information will be reviewed with the applicant by the Designated Staff Member.

IV. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

- A. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the result of the security background check, or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be considered confidential. The written results of the security background check initially will be reviewed by the Designated Staff Member. After this initial review, if the Designated Staff Member determines that further review should be made, the Designated Staff Member may consult with the church staff member who will be supervising the volunteer (the “Supervisory Staff Member”) or conduct further inquiries, as necessary, after obtaining written permission from the volunteer.

- B. Without the written permission of the volunteer, the information contained in the confidential portion of the Volunteer Profile and the results of the security background check will be disclosed only to the Designated Staff Member.

V. SECURITY The Designated Staff Member will maintain a secure storage facility in the church office for all Volunteer Profiles and results of all security background checks. The results of the security background checks will be destroyed in a timely manner. Volunteer Profiles and background checks may be required to be updated.

VI. DISQUALIFICATION OF APPLICANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

- A. Whether disclosed voluntarily or by the result of the security background check, crimes against children or persons (as defined in the Texas Penal Code) will disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership or sponsorship of any activity or program involving children or youth.
- B. All convictions, charges, or indictments for crimes will be reviewed by the Designated Staff Member.
- C. If an applicant disputes information that appears on his/her criminal history record, he or she may appeal through the Texas Department of Public Safety. The DPS's determination of the accuracy of the record will be considered final and conclusive.

VII. REPORTING VIOLATIONS Individual Responsibility. In order to maintain a safe environment for all children and youth, all persons must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation which endangers or threatens children. All questions or concerns of suspected activity of abuse or harassment by a volunteer shall be reported to the Supervisory Staff Member. Should the activity of concern involve a paid church employee, the matter shall be reported to the appropriate Supervisory Staff Member or to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee. Pending the outcome of an investigation, all information pertaining to the alleged incident should be kept confidential. A mere allegation of improper behavior by a volunteer will not be treated as an actual occurrence pending the completion of the investigation, and the church will take steps necessary to protect the integrity of the volunteer involved.

VIII. INCIDENT REPORT

- A. In the event anyone personally witnesses an occurrence in violation of this policy, that person will be asked to complete an Incident Report (form attached). Anyone witnessing such an occurrence should consider the following recommendations as to how such a situation should be handled to insure the security of the child and to protect against physical, emotional, or psychological injury to all persons involved:
 - 1 All incidents shall be reported **immediately** to the Supervisory Staff Member, if available, or to the adult leader in charge of the event or activity.
 - 2 Personally secure the safety of child, children, or youth. Do **not** leave the child while reporting the incident.
 - 3 Do not personally confront the alleged or accused violator of the policy unless imminent injury or damage is present.
 - 4 The Supervisory Staff Member and/or the Designated Staff Member will report the incident to the parents or guardians of the victim(s).
 - 5 A duly authorized representative of NZBC will be responsible for all communication on behalf of the church.

- B. In the event a child or youth reports alleged abusive conduct, regardless of where the conduct occurred, the person initially contacted by the child must complete a written Incident Report which should include, as much as possible, the precise wording of the child or youth. In the event of an incident on a church sponsored activity occurring away from the church facility, the same procedure listed in Section 8(a) will be followed.
- C. In the event a child makes an accusation of abuse or neglect occurring in the child's home, the person initially contacted will report to the Supervisory Staff Member for disposition of the matter.

IX. GENERAL PROVISIONS All NZBC activities and programs involving children and youth, regardless of location, will be subject to the following policy:

- A. As often as practical two adults, who are not married to one another, will be assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving children and youth.
- B. All youth-aged workers in the children and youth programs and activities will be supervised by an adult in the classroom.
- C. At least two adult leaders will be required for all trips and outings.
- D. One-on-one discussions between adults and children and youth in secluded areas are discouraged. In those situations where a one-on-one discussion is necessary to maintain the spiritual, mental, or physical well-being of the child or youth, adults are strongly encouraged to take precautions to protect themselves and the child or youth from compromising situations.
- E. Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes or taking showers on church trips and retreats. Adults should intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults should also protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- F. On trips and outings, adults are not permitted to sleep in the same bed with youth, other than their own child.
- G. Discipline used in church activities should be constructive and reflect Christian values. Corporal punishment, physical hazing, and initiations are prohibited.
- H. Written parental or guardian permission is required for all overnight outings and trips out of town.
- I. It is understood that circumstances may arise that necessitate the need for deviating from this policy. For such infrequent and unusual situations that are not easily classified elsewhere in this policy, the standards and spirit of this policy shall be recognized as being in force.
- J. All children and youth workers shall take the NZBC Child Abuse Prevention Training and pass a written test with a score of at least 90 percent.

X. PROHIBITED ACTS AND BEHAVIOR

A. The following acts or omissions (“Prohibited Acts”) will not be tolerated or accepted during any NZBC activity and/or program and shall be reported to the Supervisory Staff Member immediately after the safety of the child, children or youth involved has been assured:

- 1 Direct observation or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a child or youth.
- 2 Display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a child or youth.
- 3 Sexual advances or sexual activity between a person and a child or youth.
- 4 Sexual advances or sexual activity between a youth and a child.
- 5 Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or youth.
- 6 Emotional or psychological mistreatment of a child, children, or youth, including verbal abuse.
- 7 The possession of obscene or pornographic materials.
- 8 The presence, possession, consumption of or being under the influence of any illegal drugs or alcohol.

B. Consequences of Violation

- 1 Any volunteer accused of committing a Prohibited Act will immediately be notified and suspended from participation in all children and youth activities and programs of NZBC. Such suspension shall continue during any investigation by the church under the leadership of the Designated Staff Member, law enforcement, or child protection agencies.
- 2 After the investigation by the Designated Staff Member or a committee selected by the Designated Staff Member, any person found to have committed a Prohibited Act shall be prohibited from future participation in all children and youth activities and programs of NZBC.
- 3 As required by Texas law, all reports of abuse will be timely forwarded to the appropriate child protection and law enforcement authorities. Such reporting must be accomplished in addition to complying with this Child Protection Policy.
- 4 Failure by any person to timely report a Prohibited Act to the designated person shall be considered a procedural violation of this Child Protection Policy and shall be grounds for dismissal from participation in all children and youth activities and programs of NZBC.

CHILDREN/YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Information on this page is not confidential and will be given to the Supervisory Staff Member.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name _____ Date _____

Last First Middle

Address _____

Street City State Zip Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Best time to call _____ Marital Status _____ Spouse's

Name _____ Occupation _____

How long have you lived at your present address? _____ If less than 5 years, please give us your previous address and number of years at that address:

Are you a member of New Zion Baptist Church? Church _____ Sunday School _____ How long? _____

List (name and address) other churches you have attended regularly or been a member of during the past five years: _____

List all previous church work involving children and/or youth (list each church's name and address, type of work performed): _____

List all previous non-church work involving children and/or youth (list each organization's name and address, type of work performed): _____

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for children and/or youth work: _____

SALVATION EXPERIENCE

Please write a short paragraph on the back of this sheet describing the circumstances surrounding your acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior.

MINISTRY INTERESTS

What area of ministry do you desire to be involved in? _____

Which age level do you prefer? (circle one or more) Babies-3yr 4yr-5yr Grades1-3 Grades 4-6 Grades 7-9 Grades 10-12 Which teaching hour do you prefer? _____ Available start date. _____

What is the minimum length of commitment you can make? _____

Please list any other NZBC ministries in which you are already involved. _____

CHILDREN/YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROFILE

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

This form is to be completed for any volunteer position involving the teaching, supervision or care of minors at New Zion Baptist Church, Bonham, Texas. The purpose of this form is to ensure a safe and secure environment for the children and youth entrusted by God to the ministries of NZBC. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of an individual, the protection of our children and youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent in such a process. All personal information disclosed and the results of the security background checks will be maintained in the strictest confidence.

Print
Name _____
Last First Middle Maiden

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth _____ Driver License # _____ State _____

Have you ever been arrested for, charged with, under probation for, or convicted of either sexual or physical abuse?
_No _Yes If "yes" please describe on the back of this sheet.

Were you a victim of sexual or physical abuse or molestation while a minor? _No _Yes
(If you prefer, you may refuse to answer this question or you may discuss your answer in confidence with a staff minister. Answering "yes" or leaving this question unanswered will NOT automatically disqualify an applicant)

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe all church guidelines regarding working with children or youth? _No _Yes

If you were personally a victim of child abuse, we strongly encourage that you make this information known to the minister under whose leadership you will serve or another member of the ministerial staff. Your voluntary cooperation and confidence will be respected and appreciated. Would you like to meet with the pastor or staff minister regarding any of the above circumstances?
_No _Yes

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT and CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize New Zion Baptist Church, Bonham, Texas to obtain a criminal history records check.

The criminal history records as received from the reporting agency may include arrest and conviction data. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to help determine my eligibility for a volunteer position involving the supervision and care of minors. I also understand that as long as I remain a volunteer here, the criminal history records check may be repeated at any time. I also acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Child Protection Policy and am aware of its contents.

The information contained in this profile is correct to the best of my knowledge. I further state that **I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT.** This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Incident Report – New Zion Baptist Church of Bonham, Texas

Person Completing Incident Report

Last Name	First Name	MI
Street Address		Apt. No.
City	State	Zip
Volunteer Position/Staff Position		
Sex	Age	Texas I.D./D.L. Number
Business Phone () -		Home Phone () -
Other Phone () -		

Incident Description (Including names of all parties involved and witnesses, if any)

Accused Person(s)

Last name	First Name	MI
Street Address		Apt. No.
City	State	Zip
Volunteer Position		
Race	Sex	Age Texas I.D./D.L. Number
Business Phone () -		Home Phone () -
Other Phone () -		

*If additional space is needed for additional information or suspects, please use the back of this sheet.