

ASHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH CHILDREN PROTECTION POLICY

(Revised 11/10/19)

Ashland Baptist Church (ABC) is committed to providing a church environment that is a safe place for children that will protect them from any abuse when they are involved in church sponsored activities. ABC adopts these policies and procedures not only to maximize safety and prevent abuse of children from occurring within its church community, but also for the protection of volunteers and employees from unwarranted allegations of abuse. This policy is for children under 6th grade.

Screening Policies

Staff: Background Requirements

Applicants for full-time or part-time paid employment at ABC will be required to provide, complete or undergo the following:

1. An Employment and Volunteer Ministry Application which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes (see Attachment 1);
2. A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for child abuse or sexual misconduct; and prior to hiring an applicant, ABC will obtain a criminal record report for that individual.
3. Any individual who has lived outside of Missouri in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court search.
4. Any candidate for employment who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect cannot be employed by ABC.

Volunteers: Background Requirements

Volunteers working with children of the church in any volunteer ministry, will be required to provide, complete or undergo the following:

1. An Employment and Volunteer Ministry Application (see Attachment 1) which will include information regarding past employment and prior convictions for crimes.
2. A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for child abuse or sexual misconduct; and prior to becoming a volunteer, ABC will obtain a background check for that individual.
3. Any individual who has lived outside Missouri in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court searches.
4. No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with children until the candidate has been a member of ABC for six months or more. The six-month waiting period may be waived by the completion of a full background check and approval of the church body.
5. Applications and background checks with issues will be carefully reviewed by the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons, and the Child Safety Committee to make certain that employees and volunteers are cleared to work with children at ABC. If necessary, these issues will be taken to a church business meeting for resolution.

6. Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding related to an allegation of child abuse or neglect MAY NOT work with children at ABC.

Annual Employee/Volunteer Review & Follow-up Checks

1. All employees and volunteers shall review the current policy and procedures annually.
2. Follow-up background checks may be conducted by the church annually.
3. Any follow-up background checks with issues will be carefully reviewed by the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons, and the Child Safety Committee to make certain that employees and volunteers are cleared to work with children at ABC. If necessary, these issues will be taken to a church business meeting for resolution.
4. Should the follow-up background check show that any employee or volunteer has become unsuitable for working with children, they will be immediately removed from their current position and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children.

Supervising Children

1. At least two volunteer leaders (if possible) should be supervising at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area with children present. If possible, the two volunteer leaders should be unrelated. It is mandatory that one of the leaders must be a minimum of 21 years of age.
2. A volunteer leader may supervise children alone in a room joining a second room by a half-door when the upper half of the door is open and there is another volunteer leader in the second room.
3. The minimum age of volunteer leaders who may supervise children shall be 18 or a trained babysitting or child care worker. (e.g. Red Cross, Safe Sitter trained.) Note: see item #1, one volunteer must be 21 years of age.
4. Once the requirements for item #'s 1 & 3 have been met, additional volunteers may be used at the leader's discretion.
5. Employees or volunteers should arrive at least ten (10) minutes before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over children in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person.
6. Children shall be released only to authorized persons.
7. Children shall not be sent out to find their authorized persons.
8. No child shall be released to await transportation.

Work Restrictions

1. When taking children over the age of five to the restroom, the volunteer should check to make sure the restroom is safe and then wait outside until the children come out.
2. Children five years of age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female volunteer.
3. Nursery volunteers should never touch a child's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing diapers.
4. Volunteers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.

5. Volunteers should release children only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the children.

Discipline

1. Volunteers should never spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline children they are supervising.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the appropriate coordinator or supervisor and to the child's parent or guardian.

Injuries or Illness

1. Persons who are ill with a fever or a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or touch will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable substitute who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the screening process must be used to take the place of any volunteer who is ill.
3. Children should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as any illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the child who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until they can be returned to their parent or guardian.
4. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact with body fluids of any kind.
5. Any coordinator or supervisor who becomes aware of any injury to a child will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
6. Children who have received an injury which is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of the injury. The child's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury by the use of a written Notice of Incident report (See Attachment #2) as soon as possible.
7. Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured child should be immediately notified, along with the volunteer's coordinator or supervisor. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

Parental/Guardian Consent

Children must obtain parental or guardian permission for involvement in church activities (See Attachment #3.)

Allegations of Abuse or Molestation

1. Employees or Volunteers who become aware of allegations of abuse or molestation of a child shall immediately inform the Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons and complete a Notice of Incident report (See Attachment #2).

2. The Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons shall inform the participant's parent or guardian.
3. If the incident is categorized as child abuse or molestation, the Pastor and the Chairman of Deacons will immediately report it to the law enforcement authorities and ABC's insurance carrier and may contact legal counsel, if necessary.
4. Any Employee of ABC who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated.)
5. Any Volunteer who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
6. Any Employee or Volunteer who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children or youth at ABC.

Dealing with Law Enforcement and the Media

1. All Employees and Volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of ABC.
2. The Pastor or a person designated by the Deacon body will be designated to convey information concerning the situation and will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Employees and Volunteers must promptly notify the Pastor or the appropriate Director (Sunday School, Youth, Children, or Nursery) of any activity that violates this policy or procedures.
2. Any Coordinator or Director who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures shall take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all employees and volunteers and shall remove workers from their positions if such removal is warranted or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

Record Keeping

Names of participants in ABC classes and activities shall be kept in the church computer along with addresses, phone numbers, and names of parents or guardians. Lists shall be printed for the nursery, other classes and activities as necessary.

An attendance list should be kept for all ministry functions involving children. The date of the function along with the names of all participants and coordinators or supervisors should be recorded. The attendance lists will be given to the church secretary to file.

Criminal history record information received as a result of background check requirements of this policy should be used for the purposes for which it was intended and must be maintained in a secure and confidential manner.

The church secretary will process the background checks and file the results for legal purposes. If there are issues showing a history of violence or child-related offenses, the information will only be given to the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons and the Child Safety Committee.

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons, and the Child Safety Committee. Proposed modifications will be presented to the Church Council and then to the Church body in a business meeting for approval.