

Zion Baptist Church Protection Policy

Why has Zion Baptist Church (ZBC) adopted this policy?

- ★ To help ensure the safety of our children
- ★ To help protect our children's workers from false accusations

This policy will address three main areas of concern

1. Child abuse;
2. Child abduction, and;
3. General church safety.



Child Abuse

- I. In the event a Children's Ministry worker suspects a child has been, or is being abused by another church worker, paid or volunteer, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - a. Child ministry worker should notify their ministry leader or deacon, who will then notify the Pastor in the church.
 - b. The suspected worker will be immediately and discreetly removed from children's ministry until such time as the matter has been fully investigated and resolved;
 - c. The Pastor will immediately investigate and take the necessary steps to report to the appropriate authorities (when warranted) and resolve the situation.
 - d. All cases of child abuse must be reported to state authorities within 24 hours of it being discovered.
- II. A Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) shall be appointed by the church to oversee the implementation of this policy. This person must be a member in good standing of ZBC, trustworthy with confidential information, able to instruct others the child protection course and store sensitive documents in a secure location. This person will work in cooperation with the pastor in the event of any violations of ZBC's Child Protect Policy.
- III. In order to help protect our children from potential exposure to abusive situations within the church, the following steps shall be taken by all child ministry workers:
 - A. Child Protection Training by the CPC for every worker in children's ministry.
 - A child protection course will be offered at the church and be required for all people working directly with children.
 - The course will be developed by the Pastor and children ministry leaders. This course will include identifying what abuse is, procedures children's workers must

follow at ZBC as outlined in this policy and how to be a safe adult worker with children at ZBC.

- B. Screening by the CPC and/or pastor of every worker:
- Every worker shall complete A Personal Screening Form which includes consent to screening and background checks.
 - Exceptions:
 - People that are employed in a public school and have already had a thorough background check because of their employment.
 - Life-long residents of Accomack County and long term members of ZBC who are over 70 years of age.
 - A State background check is required for people who can verify life-long residency in Virginia.
 - Federal background checks are required for all other workers.
 - The CPC or Pastor will conduct a face-to-face interview with each worker and will check the personal references from the Personal Screening Form.
- C. Nursery and Preschool - Safety in numbers:
- In classes where the children need assistance with personal care, two person teams are required.
 - Take bathroom break in groups.
 - A preschool child should never be alone with an adult.
- D. Visibility:
- Children's classes shall be conducted in rooms with windowed doors, or in the alternative, with the doors remaining open or ajar, so that activities are visible at all times.
- E. Use of "appropriate touch" to show love:
- While we encourage showing Christ's love to children, workers must be aware of how their actions may appear, and to use "appropriate touch" when expressing love. Appropriate touches include side hugs, pat on the back, high five / fist pump or a head tussle.
- F. Actions when taking children to the restroom:
- If a child is at an age where they need assistance in the restrooms, workers should seek to leave the door ajar, and to keep a running conversation going with the child.
 - Only women volunteers may assist children in the bathroom and may change diapers.

Child Abduction

The Risk –Churches are public buildings, located in public areas, and as such, there may be some risk of outsiders approaching or entering the church, and abducting a child.

Actions to help protect against abduction:

- A. Nursery tag system to check children in/out:
- a. Upon arrival in the nursery, each child will receive a tag or label (which will be attached to their back) with their name age and parent that will pick them up on it;
 - b. A similar tag / label will be clipped to their belongings;

- c. The parent(s) will also be given a corresponding tag /label. Anyone wishing to retrieve a child must first present the parent tag/ label, showing they are the parent.
 - d. Children will not be released from the nursery unless a parent tag/label is presented.
 - e. In the event that a parent tag/label is lost, the pastor, or a ministry overseer will be called to assist with the situation.
- B. Children 5th grade and under will not be allowed outside the church building after service without a parent.
- C. Due to the layout of the church building, ushers will monitor the stairways / hallways during the morning service.
- D. Children will not be dismissed from the Preschool-Kindergarten Sunday School or from Preschool Junior Church unless picked up by a parent.

General Church Safety

In order to help protect our children from injury, and to protect others from being injured by children, the following procedures are established:

- No running inside the church building unless during a game time;
- All church families will be asked to monitor their own children after classes, while still on church property to prevent running and climbing.
- Children will be instructed and reminded about rules during Sunday School and Junior Church.
- Children should not be running around in classrooms unattended.
- Children are NOT allowed in the resource rooms.
- Children are not allowed to eat food left in the church (food is purchased for Sunday School and Junior Church);

Questions and/or concerns regarding this Child Protection Policy should be brought to the attention of the Youth Ministry Deacon or the Pastor.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the church - April 2014
Written by Rev. Andrew Matthews

