

(rev. 5/21/2021)

## **Child Protection Policy Randolph Street Baptist Church**

The purpose of this policy is to implement a prevention strategy which is designated to safeguard children while under the care of Randolph Street Baptist Church. This policy applies to any ministry to children from birth through 5<sup>th</sup> grade..

This policy will address the following three areas:

- I. Worker selection
- II. Worker supervision
- III. Response to allegations

### I. Worker Selection

The following procedures will be used, after October 1, 2007, when selecting new children's ministry workers:

#### A. Application and screening form.

1. All males interested in ministering to children must be at least 21 years old
2. All females interested in ministering to children must be at least 13 years old
3. Each person interested in ministering to children must complete an application which will gather information including:
  - i. applicant's name and address
  - ii. full explanation of any prior criminal convictions for sexual abuse, molestation, or related crimes
  - iii. ministry area in which the applicant is interested
  - iv. names, addresses, and contact information for two character references

B. Authorization to conduct a criminal records check. By applying for consideration as a children's ministry worker, the applicant authorizes Randolph Street Baptist Church to conduct a criminal records check. Minimally, each applicant will be checked against the sexual offenders file of the West Virginia State Police.

C. Church membership requirement. An applicant must be a member of the church and have attended the church regularly for a minimum of six months prior to being considered for a children's ministry position.

D. Disqualification. Any applicant who has a criminal conviction for sexual abuse or has pleaded guilty to sexual or child abuse is disqualified for service.

E. Agreement to follow policies. Before an applicant can begin ministry, he/she must attend training, provided by the church, regarding the child protection policy and sign a statement indicating they will follow all components of the policy. If they fail to follow this requirement, they will not be eligible to serve as a children's ministry worker.

F. Reference checks. Before an applicant can begin ministry, he/she must provide the names of two character references. Should either of these references have doubts about the suitability of the applicant, the applicant will not be eligible to serve as a children's ministry worker. These references must respond to the following questionnaire prior to the applicant being allowed to serve in children's ministry:

### **Nursery Reference Check Questionnaire**

1. Please describe the environment you observed this person in.
2. Can you comment on the applicant's communication skills, level of maturity and common sense?
3. Can you comment on the applicant's honesty, reliability and punctuality?
4. Would you have any concerns about this person caring for young children?
5. Do you have any awareness of any sexual misconduct carried out by this person towards minors?
6. Would you recommend this person for a volunteer position working with children?

## II. Worker Supervision

The following procedures will be followed by those working with children in the church:

- A. Two-adult rule. Two adult supervisors are required to be present during any church activity for children. Adult workers should not be one-on-one with a child. If this situation is unavoidable, permission from parents must be received prior to the event.
- B. Persons authorized to be in nursery. The ONLY persons authorized to be in the nursery are the assigned adult workers or others, who previously have been approved to work with children after completing the background check and training process described in this document.
- C. Reveal suspicious behavior immediately. Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between an adult volunteer and a child will be reported immediately to the elders and nursery coordinator.
- D. Providing adequate personnel. Church sponsored programs that involve children should always include adequate supervisory personnel. Supervision must be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents, legal guardians or parent authorized caregivers.
- E. Nursery identification procedure. A procedure will be established so the child and the child's parent, legal guardian or parent authorized caregivers are clearly identified. Children

should only be released to a properly identified parent, legal guardian or parent authorized caregiver.

### III. Response to allegations

If a children's ministry worker has reasonable cause to suspect a child has suffered sexual abuse, or if a parent or legal guardian accuses a children's ministry worker of sexual abuse:

1. The elders will be notified immediately.
2. The appropriate law enforcement agencies will be notified.
3. Video footage from the nursery cameras will be viewed with appropriate law enforcement agencies present.
4. If the alleged offender is in a ministry position in the church, he/she will be removed from that position pending the outcome of any investigation.

During the course of any investigation, the pastor and elders will serve as the liaison between all parties involved, including the congregation and the media. During this time, the church will provide pastoral care to both the victim and the accused.

If the investigation results in the conviction of a children's ministry worker, a thorough review will be conducted in order to determine how the abuse occurred and if this policy needs to be amended to prevent future instances of abuse.