

Child Safety Policy

The Springfield Baptist Church

Adopted by the Christian Education Board 5th May 2008

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14

The material in this policy is developed exclusively for the Springfield Baptist Church children's ministries. We post this policy for information purposes only. These policies and procedures are for the restricted use of the Springfield Baptist Church. The congregation of the Springfield Baptist Church, its Christian Education Board, Sunday School, and all student ministries of the church do not make any recommendations to other churches or organizations based on this material.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We desire that our programs and facilities be safe, nurturing places for all children. We also desire that God grant us the wisdom and foresight to protect children from those who would harm them. Therefore, Springfield Baptist Church, with the aid of this Policy, will be a safe place for children.
- B. Scripture uses the word *sanctuary* to describe the House of the Lord. This word carries the idea of “safety” and “protection.” The church should be a place where we can let our guard down and trust others. This is true not only in a spiritual sense, but also should be true in a physical and emotional sense. The Christian Education Board has been entrusted with the teaching of our children in an environment of safety and protection.
- C. We live in a world where there is an increasing risk of our children being exposed to abuse and exploitation. Our church is accountable for the actions of people we allow to work with children. It is for this reason the Springfield Baptist Church has instituted specific policies and procedures to provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual protection of our children.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. First and foremost, it is our desire that no harm ever come to any child entrusted to our care. Springfield Baptist Church will actively provide for the safety of our children; we will not adopt an “it cannot happen here” attitude. Although nothing we do guarantees that no abuse could occur, SBC has taken reasonable steps to assure that the exploitation for children will not occur at SBC, and to detect and deal with it quickly if it ever does.
- B. It is our desire to reduce or eliminate the risk of false accusations against our workers by providing clear guidelines, procedures, and training. Our church can be prepared to defend those who are falsely accused.
- C. Even if we do everything within our power to prevent situations of physical or sexual abuse, it is still possible that an incident of abuse might take place. SBC must setup a procedure to enable us to act swiftly and properly to minimize the church’s exposure to lawsuits and findings of negligence.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. CHILDREN

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| 1. Nursery | Minors birth through five years of age. |
| 2. Primary | Minors Kindergarten through second grade. |
| 3. Intermediate | Minors third grade through fifth grade. |
| 4. Middle School | Minors sixth grade through eighth grade. |
| 5. High School | Minors ninth grade through twelfth grade. |

B. ACTIVITIES

1. Program – A regularly scheduled (usually weekly) program sponsored by SBC.
2. Event – A program for children and youth sponsored by SBC, which occurs no more than quarterly. (i.e. - Youth Retreats, VBS, etc.)

C. WORKERS

1. Paid Staff – All employees of the church, excluding cleaners, lawn maintenance, and snow removal staff.
2. Program Leader – A non-paid teacher or leader in a program with teaching (support) or administrative responsibilities.
3. Regular Program Assistant – A non-paid helper in a program working to support a teacher or administrator.
4. Occasional Program Assistant – A non-paid helper in children ministries, whose involvement does not exceed twelve times annually.
5. Event Leader – A non-paid teacher or leader in an event with teaching or administrative responsibilities.
6. Event Assistant – A non-paid helper in an event that involves children.
 - a. Parental Chaperones – Parents or Legal Guardians of children or youth participating in an event or program in a supervisory role.
 - b. Authorized Drivers – Specifically approved adults who are insured by the church to drive the church van for activities involving minors. Must be at least twenty-one years of age.
 - c. Family Fun Night Helpers.
 - d. VBS crew leaders or site assistants.

- D. TRANSFERENCE RELATIONSHIPS** – A relationship where the person counseled desires an inappropriate emotional attachment or relationship to the counselor.

IV. Requirements for Programs Involving Minors

A. GENERAL

1. All workers must hold the following qualifications:
 - a. Must be a born again Christian.
 - b. Must fully agree with the church's doctrinal statement.
 - c. Must meet age requirements;
 - i. 12 years of age to work in Nursery.
 - ii. 14 years of age to work in Lower Elementary programs.
 - iii. 15 years of age to work in Upper Elementary programs.
 - iv. 18 years of age to work with youth.
2. All workers are expected to,
 - a. Be living a Christian life that, while not perfect, is growing in grace and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. Be member or regular attendee of SBC for a minimum of six months before being invited to minister to minors.
3. Screening – All workers who participate in regularly scheduled, year-long children and youth ministries will undergo a criminal and child abuse records check, which will be conducted, paid for, and kept confidential by SBC.

4. Approval – The CE Board must approve all workers before they are allowed to work with children or youth. All those working with minors may continue working only as long as the CE Board for that particular ministry approves them.
 - a. Underage workers can learn their Christian responsibility to contribute and mentor others in faith by serving in a supervised context.
 - b. In order to accomplish this, these students should have demonstrated responsibility and maturity in their demeanor as determined by the observation of paid staff and/or workers in leadership positions.
5. Oversight – Delivering ministry to children and youth at SBC is a privilege and is subject to the loving scrutiny, guidance, and oversight of the Christian Education Board and SBC pastoral staff.
6. Training – All workers involved in long-term children and/or youth ministries must be trained annually in the SBC Child Safety Policy and in the prevention of harm to children and youth while at SBC.
7. Reporting – It is always appropriate and required at SBC to immediately report instances of child abuse – whether emotional, physical, sexual, or spiritual – to the SBC ministry leader or SBC pastor at the scene. The ministry leader must immediately report the instance of Legal Child Abuse both to the Pastor and the local police. We make no judgments on guilt or innocence, but rather defer that determination to the proper legal authorities.
 - a. Springfield Police Department – (610) 544-1100
 - b. 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline – (800) 932-0313

B. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN THE NURSERY

1. Workers will be given a copy of these policy expectations and verbally briefed by the Nursery Program Leader before serving as a Nursery Worker.
2. The church nursery is to be staffed at a minimum level of two adults or one adult with and teenage worker. (See age requirements Section IV. A. 1.)
3. First Time Parents must fill out an information card before leaving children in the church nursery.
4. The form will be filed in the nursery where it will be available to workers who need access to food requirements and medical issues.
5. The nursery is only open for children during Sunday School, regularly scheduled worship, and special events for which Nursery Workers are scheduled.
6. Parents may not leave children unattended in the nursery at any time.
7. In the absence of a Nursery Worker, a parent or family member may sit with their children during a church service or event if they notify the ushers of their intent. However, only approved Nursery Workers may attend other people's children.
8. SBC will maintain a volunteer screening form for each Nursery Worker.
9. The ratio in the nursery shall not exceed four children for every one adult.

C. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

1. All workers must never be in a one-on-one situation with a child. Care must be taken to work as a team where workers can easily be observed by others.
2. Ministry to children at SBC is to be staffed at a minimum level of two adults or one adult with a teenage worker. (Section IV. A. 1.)
3. Parental chaperones may be a part of the special event leadership team.
4. When taking children to the rest room, care should be taken to give them as much privacy as possible. Unless unavoidable, only escort children of the same gender, and then the rest room should be entered only if absolutely necessary. Workers are to direct the child to the nearest restroom, and be in the immediate vicinity so that the child does not have the opportunity to wander through the building.
5. The adult to child ratio for children programs shall not exceed eight children to every one adult.

D. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

1. All workers must never be in a one-on-one situation with youth. Care must be taken to work as a team where others can see the workers.
2. Ministry to youth at SBC requires a minimum of two adults, one of whom must be Paid Staff or approved Program Leader.
3. Parental chaperones may be a part of an Event Leadership Team.
4. All verbal and written communications, to include email, blogs, instant messages, and other means of developing technological interaction must always reflect the highest of Christian respect and standards.
5. When involved in counseling youth, workers must do so at appropriate times and places, in circumstances where another adult can easily observe them. (i.e. – an office with windows).
6. Workers must be careful to avoid Transference Relationships when counseling youth.
7. The event leader will have a copy of a signed SBC Health Form and Permission Slip in his/her possession for each attending youth.
8. The ratio of youth to adults shall not exceed ten youth for every one adult.

E. GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORIZED DRIVERS TRANSPORTING MINORS

1. Transportation is to be provided only by authorized drivers of the church van or parents of youth attending that event in their personal vehicles.
2. Workers may not be alone in a vehicle with only one minor.
3. All traffic laws and safety measure must be obeyed. (i.e. – speed limits, wearing of seat belts, etc.)

V. BASIC RULES AND PROCEDURES

- A. **SIX MONTH RULE.** SBC requires that workers at all levels have attended the church for a minimum of six months.
- B. **TWO LEADER RULE.** No workers may be alone with a child without some means of observation by another adult.

- C. **PHYSICAL CONTACT** – All workers with children are required to use appropriate physical contact at all times, including, but not limited to;
1. Touching a child’s hand.
 2. Side rather than frontal hugging.
 3. Avoid private body areas.
 4. Appropriate touching takes into account the situation and location. (For example, a hug may be appropriate in public, but not in a private location in the church.)
- D. **STAFFING.** Classrooms must be staffed appropriately. (See section IV. A. 1.)

VI. Guidelines for Specific Aspects of Programs

A. TRANSPORTATION

1. Transportation to church sponsored activities is to be provided only from the church to the activity and back.
2. Parents will be notified in advance if private vehicles will be used to provide transportation.
3. If church transportation is not used, the following rules will apply;
 - a. All the vehicles must caravan on trips longer than 10 miles.
 - b. They must take rest stops together.
 - c. Have a common starting point and destination.
 - d. Drivers may not make any side trips or unscheduled stops.
4. The event leader will arrange for a cell phone to be in each vehicle to be available for emergency purposes, and the phone number must be left with the Pastor/Church Office.
5. The event leader will have a copy of a signed SBC Health Form and/or Permission Slip in his/her possession for each attending youth.
6. Transportation between home and the church and back is the responsibility of the parents or legal guardians to arrange.

B. FACILITY

1. Classrooms must have windows that are not covered or obstructed.
 - a. They allow observation by the ministry leaders, parents, and other informal observers.
 - b. Traffic passing in the church building during activity times provides an informal accountability.
2. Classrooms may not be completely dark at any time while children and/or youth are present unless under supervision.
3. Children and youth may not be in any section of the church without supervision.

C. CONDUCTING PROGRAMS AT SBC

1. Events on the SBC campus must be approved for inclusion on the church calendar a minimum of two weeks in advance.

2. Full information must be given to parents as to purpose, dates, time, place, date, cost, and leadership.
3. Written parental approval is required for participation for all specific events at SBC. A blanket, yearly form covers all programs and events held on the church campus.

D. CONDUCT OF EVENTS OFF THE SBC CAMPUS

1. General
 - a. Events off the SBC campus must be approved for inclusion on the church calendar a minimum of two weeks in advance.
 - b. Full information must be given to parents as to purpose, time, place, date, cost, and leadership.
 - c. Off-campus events must have an event permission form signed by their parents. The event leader is to have a copy in his/her possession at all times. Original should remain in church office on file.
2. Retreats
 - a. SBC Student Conduct Rules will be followed in addition to those of the place or activity. The consequences of any violation of these rules deemed serious enough or frequent enough by the event leader, will necessitate parental notification and the child may be immediately sent home at the parent's expense.
 - b. Continual attention must be paid to the location of individual children/youth while away from the SBC campus.
 - c. Students may be allowed to participate without direct supervision (i.e. – at the mall or shore) in groups of three (buddy teams, not boyfriend and girlfriend) or more.
 - d. A name-by-name account will be conducted after every vehicle stop.

VII. TRAINING PROGRAM WORKERS

- A. **MANDATORY TRAINING.** Training is mandatory for all workers, based on their level of involvement.
- B. **PAID STAFF AND PROGRAM LEADERS WILL:**
 1. Receive a copy of this policy.
 2. Undergo a criminal and child abuse records check that will be conducted, paid for, and kept confidential by SBC.
 3. Sign a volunteer screening form and sign in agreement with the church's doctrinal statement.
 4. Attend an annual workshop sponsored by the Board of Christian Education that includes:
 - a. Review of any applicable updates to this policy.
 - b. Training in the prevention of emotional, physical, and sexual harm to children and identify common indicators that will help identify abusers or the abused.
 5. Undergo formal observations no less than once each year.

C. REGULAR PROGRAM ASSISTANTS WILL BE:

1. Given a copy of appropriate sections of this policy.
2. Required to complete a volunteer screening form and sign in agreement with the church's doctrinal statement.
3. Be given the option to attend the annual child abuse workshop or receive a verbal briefing regarding child safety by a pastor, deacon, or CE Board member.
4. Supervised by the leader under which they work.

D. EVENT LEADERS WILL BE:

1. Given a copy of the appropriate sections of this policy.
2. Required to complete a volunteer screening form and sign in agreement with the church's doctrinal statement.
3. Be given a briefing regarding child safety by a CE Board member.
4. Informally and randomly be observed by a CE Board member.

E. OCCASIONAL PROGRAM ASSISTANTS WILL BE:

1. Given a copy of appropriate sections of this policy.
2. Required to complete a volunteer screening form and sign in agreement with the church's doctrinal statement.
3. Be briefed and observed by Program Leader.

F. EVENT ASSISTANTS WILL BE:

1. Given a copy of appropriate sections of this policy.
2. Required to sign an Event Worker Form.

VIII. SBC CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT:

The Confidential Statement part of the Christian Education Worker's Application asks a series of questions in regard to the applicant's past history in areas relating to child abuse and other criminal activity. These questions are extremely personal, but important to providing a safe environment for our children and protecting the church from individuals with a history of the exploitation of children. The applicant is also requested to sign a release for a criminal records check. The confidential procedure is designed to minimize the number of people who have access to the information on this statement. The Confidential Statement must be signed in the presence of a witness. The witness must be a Christian Education Board member or pastor. The current Christian Education Board Chairperson and the Pastor(s) only review the Confidential Statement. It is a permanent record of the church. All information on the Confidential Statement is revealed only as required by law or by direction of the Administrative Board, and otherwise will be held in strict confidence.

IX. ACTION PLAN

The approach that we have taken is very similar to the approach that most parents take to protect their child. We want to know about the people who are working with our children. We want to set down reasonable rules regarding how we expect them to act toward our children, and, at times, we want to verify what happens when our children are with them.

A. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

1. SBC has established guidelines, which create an environment that protects both our children and workers.
2. SBC uses an application to screen all workers who will be working regularly with children.
3. All workers must be trained according to their level of involvement before starting to work with minors.
4. The goal of this training is that each worker understands the risks of sexual abuse to our children, the responsibilities and goals of the church in this area, and SBC's policy for providing a safe environment for our children.
5. The Christian Education Board will be responsible for the method, scope, and schedule of this training.

B. PROCEDURES FOR MAINTAINING DOCUMENTS

1. The Church Office will maintain a file with all the information regarding Child Safety Policy.
2. Worker Forms
 - a. Forms will be available in a file in the secretary's office.
 - b. Anyone accepting a position to work at SBC, or work for a program or event that involves minors attending without their parent, must be given the appropriate form by the leaders/organizers of the event.
 - c. Worker forms must be turned into the secretary directly or by the leader/organizer to which they are handed. Papers requiring filing only must be filed in a secured file. The name of each person whose papers are in the file should be kept on a separate list available to leaders/organizers for review so that workers won't be asked to complete paperwork multiple times unnecessarily.
 - d. Forms requesting background checks should have a copy filed.
 - e. A note to trustees from the Board of Christian Ed's Leader Training account.
 - f. When check is received it must be sent with originals to: PA Child Abuse History Clearance: (717) 783-6211
 - g. Results, when received, should be placed in the secured file and have limited access by the CE board and pastoral staff.
3. Medical Forms
 - a. All minors attending any supplemental activity (other than on Sunday Morning) should have medical information on file.
 - b. Forms are available in the secretary's office.
 - c. Completed forms should have an original filed in the church office.

- d. A copy should be kept securely by the activity leader and taken along on any event not occurring on church property.
 - e. Forms are valid for no more than one year but should be updated by parents when information changes.
4. Event Permission Forms
- a. Must be completed for every event that is not held on church property.
 - b. Parent must sign permission in front of an activity leader if their signature is not on file.
 - c. Completed forms should have an original filed in the church office.
 - d. The activity leader should keep a copy securely for the duration of the activity.
5. Nursery Forms
- a. Must be completed by a parent before leaving children in the Nursery.
 - b. Must be filed in the Nursery for the benefit of the working staff.
 - c. Are valid for no more than one year but should be updated by parents when information changes.
6. Accountability/Assurances
- a. Keep Parents/Public Informed
 - i. Parents will receive a letter that provides a brief overview of how we proactively protect children in our care.
 - ii. It will provide information on how a full copy of this policy can be obtained.
 - iii. A current copy of this policy will be included in each Church Board handbook. The four ruling Boards of SBC, Deacons, Trustees, Missions, and Christian Education as well as all Officers of the Church will all receive a copy of this policy and be invited to participate in the training.
 - iv. Each Church Leader will receive a copy of this policy and be encouraged to suggest improvements at any time.
 - v. A copy will be on the church website.
 - b. Formal Observations
 - i. SBC holds all our workers accountable through formal, informal, and random observations of workers as they work with children.
 - ii. Each worker is periodically observed while working with children.
 - iii. The Christian Education Board will determine the method, scope, and schedule of this observation.
 - iv. The formal observations are recorded on the Worker Observation Worksheet and kept on file at the church; the formal observer is required to note what the class was doing during the observation time.
 - c. Informal Observations
 - i. Listed on Observations Log.
 - ii. Different persons will be asked to observe the classes from month to month.
 - iii. The door of each classroom used in children's activities has a window used to observe the actions of children's volunteers during class time.
 - iv. Classroom windows must not be covered or blocked so that observation of room activity is hindered.

- v. The windows are used in two ways:
 - 1. They allow observation by the ministry leaders, parents, and other informal observers.
 - 2. Traffic passing in the church building during activity times provides an informal accountability.
- d. Periodic Review
 - i. The content of Child Safety Policy is set by the CE Board and to be review annually.
 - ii. SBC Board of Christian Education requests suggestions for improvement of policy.
 - iii. The Christian education Board must approve all changes to the Child Safety Policy.
 - iv. The Christian Education Board in consultation with the Pastor shall resolve any questions about the interpretation of this policy.
- e. Violations
 - i. Any observed violation of the Child Safety Policy or other serious concerns they might have observed should be immediately reported to the SBC Ministry Leader and SBC Pastors.
 - ii. SBC will have a statement encouraging any child or parent with concerns about any of our volunteers to come report to the leadership of the church. The statement will be followed by an explanation of the chain of command and the procedure.