

Book: Poplar Springs Baptist Church Policy Manual

Section 5000 Youth and Children's Ministry

Title Child Abuse Prevention

Number 5100

Authority Article V Section 1 of the Church By-Laws

Adopted July 14, 2014. Amended September 9, 2018

Section 1 Purpose

The members and staff of Poplar Springs Baptist Church desire to provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth entrusted to our care. The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our children, youth, employees, volunteers, and the whole church body.

Section 2 Activation

This policy shall take effect six months after the adoption by the church.

Section 3 Church Staff and Adult Volunteers

1. For the purpose of this policy a minor is defined as a person who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday.
2. All adults, both church staff and volunteer, who work with minors must be screened and have a criminal background check prior to beginning work. This includes, but is not limited to, Sunday School teachers, Vacation Bible School workers, Children's Church, Nursery, RA's and GA's, all music programs that involve minors, and any other program or ministry of the church that includes minors. Guest speakers, guest performers, guest musicians, and other visiting program or lesson presenters are not subject to this policy provided they have no supervisory role over minors in the church.
3. Adults who have ever been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of minors or those who have a history of inappropriate contact with children will not be employed nor shall they be permitted to volunteer services in any church sponsored activity or program for minors.

4. Adults who have been convicted of either drug or alcohol offenses within the last ten years or those who have ever been convicted of a violent crimes will not be employed nor shall they be permitted to volunteer services in any church sponsored activity or program for minors. Allowable exceptions must be approved by a unanimous decision of the Children's Safety Committee. The Children's Safety Committee shall consist of the Pastor, the Minister of Music, the Minister of Youth and Children, and the Chairman of Deacons.
5. Employees and volunteers who work with minors shall observe the "two person rule" or the "open door" policy.
6. The "two person rule" requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with minors without a partner.
7. The "open door" policy requires the door to be open at all times when working with minors. For the purpose of this policy, a door with clear glass that is unobstructed by window treatment or any other object will be considered an open door.
8. The "two person rule" is always in effect for all overnight trips with minors.
9. The "two person rule" will be mandatory for all employees and volunteers who are working with children under the age of ten.
10. The church would prefer that all employees and volunteers working with minors to have been members of Poplar Springs Baptist Church for a minimum of six months. Allowable exceptions include temporary workers who have been approved by the Children's Safety Committee.
11. Adults who have been approved under this policy shall resubmit information for criminal background checks every four years.
12. From time to time Poplar Springs Baptist Church will have joint programs and activities with other churches. The Minister of Youth and Children may approve adults from other churches that have followed a similar background policy.
13. Approved employees and volunteers under this policy are expected to self-report any event or behavior that might be a violation of expectations and standards outlined in this policy. This reporting shall be to the Minister of Youth and Children.

Section 4 Teenage Workers

The church recognizes that there are times when it is necessary and desirable for volunteer workers who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs and activities. The following guidelines apply to such teenage workers.

1. Teenage workers must be at least 13 years old.
2. Teenage workers shall have been active in youth ministry and faithful to attend youth services and activities at Poplar Springs Baptist Church for a period of at least six months.
3. The Minister of Youth and Children, the Pastor, and the Chairman of Deacons must approve anyone under the age of 18.
4. Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an approved adult and must never be left alone with children. Teenage workers must be in close proximity of an adult who has been approved under this policy.
5. Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to prevent normal joint ministries and activities between older and younger minors.

Section 4 Enforcement

1. The Minister of Youth and Children shall be responsible for enforcement of this policy.
2. The Minister of Youth and Children shall annually recommend a vendor to process criminal background checks to the church for approval.
3. The Minister of Youth and Children shall be responsible for the security of personal information needed to process criminal background checks. The Minister of Youth and Children shall consider confidentiality and adherence to this policy as a vital and critical duty.
4. The Minister of Youth and Children shall receive the results of criminal background checks. The Minister of Youth and Children shall secure background reports that document no offenses.
5. The Minister of Youth and Children shall make the Nominating Committee and other groups responsible for volunteer recruitment aware of those individuals who have background checks with no offenses.

6. The Minister of Youth and Children shall confer with the Children's Safety Committee whenever the church receives a background report with offenses. In those cases the Children's Safety Committee shall:
 - a. confirm the accuracy of information with the person in question.
 - b. balance grace with the safety of minors in the church.
 - c. make the final decision to approve an adult who will work with minors. The decision to approve must be unanimous. The decision of the Children's Safety Committee is final and cannot be appealed.
7. In no case shall the Children's Safety Committee approve an adult who has ever been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of minors or anyone who has a history of inappropriate contact with children.
8. The Children's Safety Committee shall consider confidentiality and adherence to this policy as a vital and critical duty.
9. The Minister of Youth and Children shall be held harmless by church employees, volunteers, church members, and guests for any damages, liabilities, or losses which may be incurred by errors or inadvertent omissions in the execution of this policy.