

PRINCE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL / CHILDREN / YOUTH VOLUNTEER POLICY

Purpose: It is the purpose and intent of Prince Avenue Baptist Church to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for children and youth free from physical and mental harm.

Goal: To provide a safe, secure environment for children and youth which protects against acts of child sexual abuse or child molestation by workers or volunteers in this church and protects workers and volunteers from false accusations.

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse: “Any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.” (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992)

The policy and procedures set forth below will apply to all people who work with children and students (birth - 18 years of age) whether paid or volunteer.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING

1. **Application and Screening:** For purposes of the policy, workers, forms and action are defined in the following manner:
 - A. **Paid -** Anyone who is paid by the church on a full or part-time basis whether or not they work directly with children and youth.

These paid workers will be required to complete an online employment application and screening form, be interviewed by appropriate staff and/or committees, have references checked and verified, have a criminal records check performed, and review this policy.
 - B. **Volunteer -** Any teacher, worker, or other person who serves in the children or youth division including activities such as choirs, AWANA, childcare, athletic activities, Sunday School, retreats, camps, etc.
 - (1) Volunteer workers who are members of Prince Avenue Baptist Church will be asked to complete an online application and screening form, review the policy, undergo a criminal records check, and may be interviewed by the age-group minister.

- (2) Volunteer workers who are not members of Prince Avenue Baptist Church will complete an application and screening form, be interviewed by the age-group minister, have references checked and verified, have a criminal records check performed, and sign a statement of agreement with the statement of faith of Prince Avenue Baptist Church and shall be interviewed by the age-group minister.
- (3) Upon completion of the procedures noted in B. (1) or B. (2) above, and the approval of the volunteer for service by the appropriate age-group minister and other ministerial staff, there may be a 6-month waiting period from the date the screening procedures are completed before the volunteer can begin serving, unless the 6-month waiting period is waived by the age-group minister and the church administrator.

C. Forms and actions referenced above are as follows:

- (1) An application and screening form for all paid and volunteer workers.

All workers must complete these forms before beginning service. Failure or refusal to sign the application and screening form for children or youth work forfeits the opportunity to serve in these areas.

- (2) A policy review - all paid and volunteer workers.

This review will be conducted by the age-group minister or division director of the area in which the worker will work. The worker will review this policy and will be asked to document that it is understood.

- (3) A reference check - each reference shall be checked and responses recorded for all paid and volunteer workers. Should a reference refuse to give answers, the records should reflect who was asked the question. Additional references should be sought for each applicant.

- (4) An online application and criminal background check - this form is to be completed online. It will include a national database for Sexual Offenders. This will be done by all paid workers and by all volunteer workers.

2. Secondary Screening: A personal interview may be required by appropriate staff and/or committee for each applicant.

SUPERVISION

1.
 - A. At all times there shall be a minimum of two adults working together with children or youth. In a Sunday School or similar teaching environment for youth, it is acceptable to have individual classes/groups with one adult teacher/leader provided the department group leaders are present in the general area and more than one child is present. This protects students and adults, as well as providing a safer situation in the event of an accident or emergency.
 - B. For overnight activities away from church, such as retreats, trips or camps, church members shall be used as chaperones. There should always be at least two adults accompanying each event and two adults per activity. When guest leaders are used they must be screened and approved by the appropriate age-group minister and shall work with the children or youth only when accompanied by a paid or volunteer worker.
 - C. A church-sponsored activity or function shall be defined as any activity, on or off campus, planned or approved by the appropriate staff person.
 - D. In the event that adults find themselves alone with a minor, they must be sure that the counseling or teaching is done in an open area so that the minor and adult will be visible to other adults.
2. Worker Visibility
 - A. Windows will be in all classroom and office doors in view of other adults in area.
 - B. In small restrooms in classrooms, doors must be open any time a worker is assisting a child inside a restroom.
 - C. When children use common restrooms, adults must stand in doorway, not entering the restroom.
 - D. It is prohibited for one minor and one adult to go to the restroom alone, on or off church premises.
 - E. Diaper changing areas must be in an open area visible from a doorway.
3. Parental Permission - Church staff or volunteer workers shall obtain written consent of the minor's parent or guardian before going off church premises or

spending time alone on or off church premises with a minor in an unsupervised situation. One-on-one situations shall be limited to exceptional circumstances.

4. Other Situations - For infrequent church activities that are not easily classified elsewhere in the Student Worker Policy, the standards and spirit of this policy shall remain in force

TRAINING

All compensated and volunteer workers will be required to attend all training sessions regarding child abuse and church policies within one year of being placed in supervision of minors. This training will include:

1. The definition of child abuse
2. Sexual and physical abuse symptoms
3. What constitutes inappropriate conduct
4. Church policies that govern working with youth and/or children
5. How to work with handicapped youth and/or children
6. The civil and criminal consequences of inappropriate conduct
7. The rationale behind the screening process

Training will be offered on a timely basis by the appropriate age group leader or staff member.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE

1. Alleged or suspected sexual or physical abuse of children, youth, or adults (except allegations of harassment of a paid church employee in a work context) shall be reported immediately to a staff representative or adult supervisor in charge of the church division or church activity. That person shall in turn report the same immediately to the church administrator. All allegations or instances of abuse shall be reported immediately, without exception.
2. The church administrator shall have the duty of gathering information and responding to any such reports. The church administrator shall immediately report any incident or alleged incident to the appropriate state agency if so

required by state law. The church administrator shall also report any incident that might result in liability to the church's insurance carrier or carriers. The church administrator shall also report any abuse complaints to the police if he determines that a police investigation is required by law, in view of the facts, the nature of the complaint, and based upon the information from the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.

3. All reports shall remain confidential to the extent possible. No information will be given out concerning any allegation or incident reported except as required by law, and in the reports to the insurance company, the police and other authorities.
4. The church administrator shall have the responsibility of responding to and assisting any alleged or actual victim of abuse.
5. The Personnel Ministry Team shall have the responsibility of regularly reviewing the policies of the church and laws concerning abuse prevention and reduction, and making appropriate recommendations for any changes in the policies to the staff and to the congregation. The Personnel Ministry Team shall also have the responsibility of making sure that existing church policies are carried out and enforced, and are being implemented in accordance with the policies and procedures approved by the church.

Prince Avenue Baptist Church Statement of Faith - Summary

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired, infallible word of God and the basis of our beliefs. We commit ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind and to minister to all. The ordinances of the Church are believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We subscribe to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963, as amended. A summary of this doctrinal statement follows:

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. There is one and only one living and true God.

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God.

Salvation involves the Redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. Regeneration, or the new birth, is the work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Jesus Christ. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes. Glorification is the ultimatum of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end by the visible bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations.

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society.

CHILD ABUSE SUSPICION/ACCUSATION

Most states require reporting of suspected cases of child abuse. Suspected child abuse MUST be handled with confidentiality and prudence and be regarded as possibly life-threatening to the child. Some ways leaders can protect themselves from being falsely accused of child abuse are listed below:

Ways to Protect Yourself from False Accusation

- Acknowledge any obvious injuries in the presence of the parent and another witness when the child is dropped off.
- Acknowledge any injuries discovered during the session to another adult.
- Make written notations of accidents.
- Never take children to the restroom without another adult witness present.
- Never turn your back to the room when changing diapers.

Physical Symptoms of Sexual Child Abuse

- redness or swelling in the anal area
- vaginal or rectal bleeding, pain, itching or swollen genitals
- pain in urinating or defecating
- vaginal infections, discharge or venereal disease
- pregnancy in a child
- torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- unexplained persistent sore throat or gagging
- difficulty in walking or sitting
- unexplained bruises, burn, fractures, or abrasions (often in various stages of healing)

Behavioral Symptoms and Signs of Neglect

- extreme changes in behavior such as sudden loss/increase in appetite
- a sudden refusal to do something previously enjoyed or to be with someone previously liked
- recurrent nightmares or disturbed sleep patterns and fear of the dark
- regression to more infantile behavior such as bed-wetting,
- soiling underclothing, thumb-sucking or excessive crying

- unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters, expressing affection in ways inappropriate for a child of that age, or acting in an unusually seductive way with peers or adults
- unusual sexual themes expressed through the child's
- schoolwork, art, poems and stories
- fear of a person or an intense dislike at being left somewhere or with someone
- aggressive, disruptive or self-abusive behavior
- withdrawal, running away or failure in school
- an unwillingness to undress or to participate in physical education classes
- expression by the child that he/she has been involved sexually with an older person
- consistent lack of supervision
- consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, or
- unattended medical needs
- wears inappropriate clothing for the weather in order to cover body

PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. It is an essential part of the nurturing process that should be characteristic of our ministry with students. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the special and differing needs and preferences of each individual child. Physical comfort should be age- and developmentally-appropriate.

1. **Appropriate Touch**

The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love:

- (a) Meet the child at eye level by bending down or sitting.
- (b) Listen to him/her with your eyes as well as your ears.
- (c) Hold the child's hand while listening or speaking to him or when walking to an activity.
- (d) Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
- (e) Pat a child's head, hand, shoulder or back when encouraging.
- (f) Gently hold the shoulders or child of a child when redirecting the child's behavior. This helps the child focus on what you are saying and is helpful with Attention Deficit Disorder children.
- (g) Hold a preschool child who is crying.

2. **Inappropriate Touch**

The following types of touch must be avoided:

- (a) Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
- (b) Extended hugging and tickling.
- (c) Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (exception: properly assisting a child in the restroom).
- (d) Carrying an older child or sitting him or her on your lap.
- (e) Being alone with a child.
- (f) Giving a full contact, body-to-body hug.