



SOUTH MAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Child Protection Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

REQUIREMENTS

GUIDELINES

CHILD SAFETY

VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS SAFETY OPERATIONS

RISK MITIGATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Child Abuse and Neglect

Appendix 2 - Forms and Reports

PREFACE

It is with most profound gratitude to the Child Protection Policy Task Force for their passion, expertise, wisdom, and Christ-like approach to developing an updated policy which outlines both steadfast requirements and best practice guidelines for use by employees and volunteers at South Main Baptist Church. Over the course of two months, the Task Force met to expand the scope of the document to more fully encompass safety and protection of the children entrusted to our care to include not only abuse and neglect but emergency operations, social media, and both on- and off-campus physical conditions.

Members of the 2018 Child Protection Policy Task Force:

Kelly Barsch – SMBC Childcare Coordinator & Playdays Parent Liaison and parent to school age and preschool age children

Nathan Benesh – Family Ministry youth volunteer and parent to school age and preschool age children

Claire Frazier – St. Luke's Day School Administrator and parent to adult children who grew up at SMBC

Tom Ehlers – Firefighter, licensed paramedic, and parent to school age and preschool age children

Nick Homan – Attorney, Member of Operations Committee, and parent of nursery and preschool-age children

Pam Humphries – Owner/Executive Director of three Creative Corner Child Development Centers and parent to adult children who grew up at SMBC

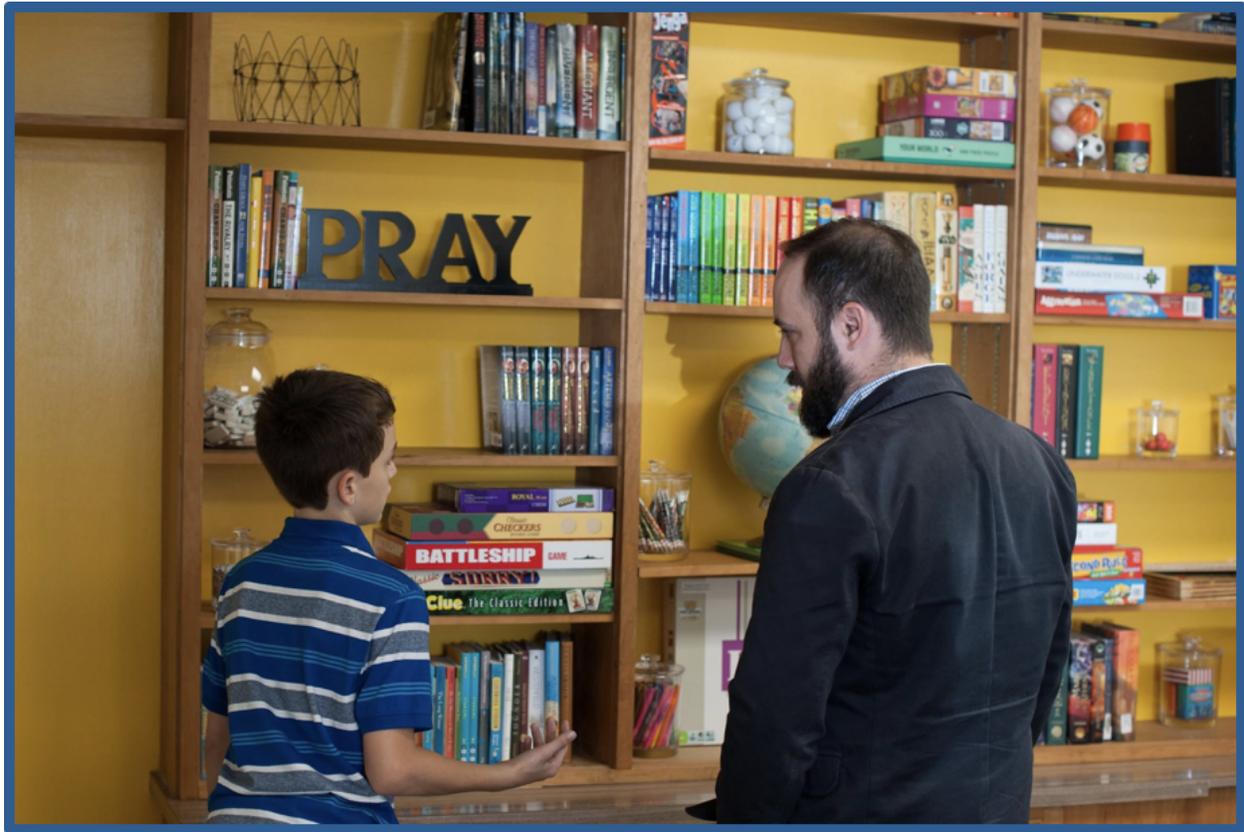
Brad Jernberg – Minister of Administration for Operations and parent of preschoolers

Barry McDonald – Retired Houston Police Department Officer and parent to adult daughter who grew up at SMBC

Dolores Rader – Minister to Families and parent of youth

Kendra Skipworth – Family Ministry youth volunteer and parent of nursery and preschool-age children

Todd Webb – Attorney, member of Operations Committee, and parent of toddler



INTRODUCTION

GOAL

A fundamental value of the family ministry of South Main Baptist Church is to provide a safe environment for all children participating in the ministries and programming of the church. To that end, the policies outlined in this document take a comprehensive approach to the care of the children by addressing and properly balancing the four following goals:

1. First and foremost, keep children safe and protected
2. Address the tenets of hospitality and grace of our church
3. Be practical and implementable
4. Minimize the possibility of damage, loss, or liability claim against the church

SCOPE

This policy applies to both on- and off-campus activities of South Main Baptist Church that involve children. For the purposes of this document, the term “child” or “children” shall include all persons from birth through high school students through the summer following their graduation. Other than the provisions relating to the duty to report

observed or suspected abuse or neglect of a child, this policy does not apply to activities of other organizations that use South Main Baptist Church facilities.

AUTHORIZATION

The content and subsequent revisions of this policy are under the purview of the Family Ministry and the Operations Committee. Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Family Ministry. The Operations Committee is charged with recommending to the church any actions that the committee believes might minimize the possibility of damage, loss, or liability claim against the church.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The policies in this document fall into two categories. The first is “requirements”. There are only eight requirement statements each worded as a “must” or “shall” which signify the importance and inflexibility of abiding by them. Employees, volunteers, parents/guardians and the church body are obligated to meet these requirements under all but the most extreme and unpredicted circumstances. The second category of policies has a less stringent adherence obligation. These policies are an accumulation of best practices associated with Family Ministry programming and events. Because we strive for excellence, the Family Ministry “will” and “should” adhere to these guidelines.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in church programs to promote the emotional and physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If any person witnesses an unsafe condition, such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children and/or to eliminate the unsafe condition. Nothing contained in any church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

REQUIREMENTS

Duty to Report Suspected Abuse: Any person with knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect must report it to a local or state law enforcement authority *immediately*. If a person suspects child abuse, that person may not rely on someone else to report to the proper authorities. See Appendix 1 for additional information.

The Minister of Families shall be notified within 24 hours if a report of abuse or neglect is made against an employee or volunteer of SMBC. The Minister of Families will then pass the information in confidence to the Pastor and/or the Minister of Administration.

Qualifications to Serve: Volunteers in Family Ministry programs must be members of the church for at least six months, must receive a personal recommendation from a longer tenured church or staff member, and must pass a national criminal background check and child abuse registry check.

No One-on-One Interactions: Volunteers and employees are never permitted to be in a one-on-one situation in a vehicle, closed-door room, or other secluded space with a child and shall make every reasonable effort to avoid such a situation.

* In order to provide effective and confidential pastoral care to our families and children, the Minister to Families is authorized to approve limited exceptions to this requirement with respect to certain contacts and communications between staff members/volunteers and particular children or youth on occasion. Such exceptions will be appropriately documented and include parental permission with regard to such exceptions.

Transporting Children: A volunteer or employee is not permitted to transport children for off-campus activities unless such volunteer or employee is at least twenty-one years old, maintains a current valid driver's license, provides proof of insurance, and passes a motor vehicle records check.

Emergency Procedures: Documented procedures, corresponding equipment and signage, and a training plan for emergency evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown operations shall be maintained and an off-site evacuation location identified.

CPR Certification: Employees who work with children must maintain current certification in basic first aid and CPR (or the equivalent) as required by applicable licensing standards and regulations. Volunteers are also urged to attend the training.

Training on Child Protection Policy: Prior to serving and then annually, volunteers and employees serving in Family Ministry shall receive training on all Child Protection Policy requirements and General Guidelines.

Annual Assessment: SMBC shall appoint and maintain a Children's Safety Council to provide an annual assessment on the overall safety of the children's facilities as well as adherence to Child Protection Policy requirements and General Guidelines. Following its annual assessments, it is anticipated that the Children's Safety Council will periodically recommend appropriate amendments or modifications of the Child Protection Policy to the Operations Committee.

GUIDELINES

CHILD SAFETY

Emergency Operations

Mock emergency drills will be run twice per year for each of the following areas:

- Nursery – kindergarten (Loessner 1st floor)
- 1st – 4th grade (Loessner 2nd floor)
- The 527 Tribe (Tribe space/gym)
- The Youth (Youth Center)

Each drill within the above stated areas should be executed during a different type of programming.

Within 24 hours of running each mock drill, a form will be completed stating names of staff participating, the amount of time the drill took, and notes for any suggestions for improving the drill. Forms will be reviewed by the Minister to Families and given to the Children's Safety Council at their annual meeting.

Child Identification and Tracking

SMBC assumes responsibility (*acts in loco parentis*) for a child from the time the child is dropped off at the designated location for programming or childcare until the time the child is picked up (grades 7 and younger) or released (grades 8-12). No child through 7th grade will be released to find their parents/guardians. No child will be left unattended to wait for parent pickup.

All guests leaving their children in the church's care will provide, at a minimum, the child's first and last name, date of birth, allergies/medical conditions, and parent/guardian name and contact information.

The church will have in place an identification system and check in system for children ages infants through 4th grade attending regular church programs and special activities. Children in this age range will not be received in a classroom or program without the proper check in identification nor will they be released to any person who is not authorized at check in to pick up the child. For this age group, the only non-adult who can be authorized to pick up a child is a sibling in 8th grade or older.

For older age groups, parents/guardians must provide written (via text or email) permission to Family Ministry leadership for anyone other than a family member to pick up their child from church events.

For all age groups, a hardcopy roster will be maintained in every children's room and area for employees and volunteers to denote current attendees. A visual roll check will be performed and check mark placed by each child's name when they arrive at the designated drop off location, when they line up to leave the destination and once they return to the destination. The hard copy roster must have several spaces available for staff to check roll as they move children from one area to another such as the playroom and playground.

Illness and Injury

Children who exhibit the following will not be permitted to participate in any church programming and must be symptom-free for 24 hours before participating:

- Fever (tympanic temperature of 100°F or higher)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Conjunctivitis/"Pink eye"
- Contagious rash, lice, or other skin conditions

When an illness is discovered, Family Ministry leadership should be notified immediately. They in turn will contact the child's parents and arrange for pickup. If immediate return is not possible, then the child who is ill should be isolated in a manner that allows an adult to monitor the participant until he/she can be returned to a parent/guardian. Parents should notify the church in the event a contagious illness is diagnosed so that other parents whose children have been exposed can be alerted.

Children who have received a minor injury should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. Any injury that may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parents or guardians of the injured person should be notified immediately, along with Family Ministry leadership. If warranted by the injury, emergency medical personnel should be called. Church personnel will follow 911 emergency recommendations for transport to the emergency room in the event of serious injury when a parent or guardian is not present or cannot be reached.

All injuries and illnesses will be documented in an Incident Report, a copy of which is provided to parents and to Family Ministry leadership.

Allergies and Medical Conditions

Parents/guardians of children with severe allergies or asthma should submit an *Chronic Illness Action Plan* with doctor's signature stating treatment plan and all medications to

be used in the event of a reaction. Medications (EPI pens, antihistamines, inhalers) must be in the original container labeled with the child's name and all prescribing information. Medications will be stored and administered by caregivers as directed by parents and physician. An additional *Medication Dosing Log/Permission Form* must be completed by parents for each medication, and each dose given documented by caregiver and witnessed by a second adult.

Medications necessary for children during an overnight or extended church event will be handled in the following manner:

- Prescription and over the counter medication must be brought in the original container labeled with the child's name and all prescribing information.
- Medications will be handled and stored by caregiver (church employee or volunteer) and should not be sent in child's backpack.
- Medications can only be given according to the labeled directions for the child's age.
- A *Medication Dosing Log/Permission Form* must be completed by parents for each medication.
- Each dose will be documented by caregiver and witnessed by a second adult.
- Children in grade 5 and above may carry their own asthma inhaler with written permission from parents.

Electronic Communication and Social Media

For grades 8–12, social media and electronic communication are used programmatically as direct communication with children. The church will not use electronic communication or social media as a means of direct communication with children in 7th grade and younger.

Electronic Communication: Parents of youth (grades 8–12) are encouraged to exchange contact information (cell phone and email) with Family Ministry leadership and Youth volunteers to facilitate communication. A *Contact Authorization Form* should be completed and signed by parents annually to authorize electronic communication between youth and Family Ministry leadership and Youth volunteers.

Social Media: Social Media includes websites and applications that enable users to create and share or to participate in social networking. A *Social Media Release Form* should be completed and signed by parents annually to authorize or prohibit the use of child's photo or name on social media.

GUIDELINES

VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Staffing

At least two adults unrelated to each other will be present for all activities, areas (including vehicles), and/or groups. At least one adult should be 21 years or older. However, regular programming in a classroom setting with school-aged children may be planned with just one adult over the age of 21 as long as all requirements and other guidelines in this policy are met.

The following child to adult ratios are the maximum number of children one caregiver may supervise:

0-11 Months – 4:1

12-17 Months – 5:1

18-23 Months – 9:1

Two Years – 11:1

Three Years – 15:1

Four Years – 18:1

Five Years – 22:1

6-13 Years – 26:1

For large groups, the number of adult supervisors will be increased in accordance with these ratios.

Supervising

While caring for children, employees and volunteers will:

- Avoid the appearance of impropriety at all times;
- Demonstrate competency, good judgment, and self-control in the presence of children and when performing assigned responsibilities;
- Relate to children with courtesy, respect, acceptance, and patience;
- Recognize and respect the uniqueness and potential of all children, their families, and their cultures; and
- Limit distractions including non-essential use of cell phones or other electronic devices.

Discipline

Employees and volunteers will handle all disciplinary problems professionally, respecting each child. Children should not be grabbed, shaken, physically reprimanded nor should other forms of negative discipline be used such as accusation, criticism, blame, shame, or sarcasm. Properly trained staff and volunteers will only physically restrain a child when there is no other reasonable means to prevent the child from harming her/himself or others. Positive disciplinary actions such as choices, redirection, diversion, a space to cool off or an opportunity to talk about the issue should be consistently used. A behavior report will be completed and provided to Family Ministry leadership. If disciplinary problems persist, staff will discuss with parents/guardians to identify solutions which are consistent with those being implemented at home and/or school.

Notice of Harm to Self or Others

Any volunteer or employee who has been told (in confidence or otherwise) by a child that he/she has in the past or have plans in the future to engage in behavior which is harmful to themselves or others, must report this information to the Minister to Families. If the level of harm to others meets the Texas State Family Code of abuse or neglect, a report must be made immediately in line with the Duty to Report requirement.

Transportation

- SMBC assumes responsibility (*acts in loco parentis*) for a child from the time the child is dropped off until the time the child is picked up (grades 7 and younger) or released (grades 8–12). During those times, children are not allowed to drive to and from a location or transport other children/youth without express permission from parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians assume responsibility for transporting children to and from the church. This includes allowing children/youth drivers to drive to church with or without passengers.
- 15 passenger vans will not be used for transporting children.
- A commercial bus will be rented for trips exceeding a six-hour drive.
- When driving multiple vehicles to an off-site location, the group should stay together on the roads and highways in order to allow multiple adults to help in the event of a problem.
- Drivers are not permitted to exceed the posted speed limit by more than 5 MPH on highways.
- Drivers are not permitted to use cell phones while transporting children. If navigation assistance needed, this is the responsibility of the person in the passenger seat.

- Parents/guardians will be responsible for transportation of children 2nd grade and younger to any off-campus event.
- When transporting children, 3rd grade and above, parents/guardians are responsible for providing a Child Safety Restraint System (suitable for the child's weight and age) that meets applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards as needed.
- There must be seatbelts provided for every adult and child in the vehicle and they are required to be worn at all times.
- Parents/guardians must sign a *Transportation Waiver* annually.
- Drivers must contact the Minister to Families (after any emergency calls are made) immediately regarding any kind of accident or other emergency while transporting children.

Restroom Usage

- Employees and volunteers should avoid even the appearance of impropriety.
- Employees and volunteers will never touch a child's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
- If a child requests assistance, employees and volunteers should assist the child while leaving the stall or bathroom door open as needed to avoid a one-on-one situation.
- Children should use a church classroom bathroom if one is available. If one is not available, children in 3rd grade and younger should be escorted to a bathroom as a group (avoid taking a single child). The chaperone ideally should be of the same sex as the children and should ensure the bathroom is empty before waiting outside the bathroom while the children use it. If the bathroom is not empty, the chaperone should wait inside the bathroom (if of the same sex).

Playground and Playroom Supervision

Supervising adults must provide constant supervision while on the playground and maintain appropriate surveillance positions. If certain areas are out of view, supervising adults must continually reposition themselves so as much of the playground is visible as possible.

In cases of distractions when attention is required elsewhere, supervising adults need to identify an alternative. For example, if a child is injured on the playground, supervising adults must communicate with each other to ensure that one is supervising the group while the other is addressing the hurt child.

Conversations between supervising adults should be kept to a minimum unless their positioning enables them to observe all children. Texting, talking, and browsing on a cell

phone while supervising children is prohibited unless to request assistance on the playground or to contact emergency personnel.

While on the playground, supervising adults will carry at least one first aid kit that includes the following items: Latex gloves, non-sterile gauze pads, assorted Band-Aids, facial tissues, roll of adhesive tape, pair of scissors [to cut tape if not in self-cutting tape dispenser] ice packs, and antiseptic towelettes.

Electronic Communications and Social Media

- Employees and volunteers will avoid even the appearance of impropriety at all times when using electronic communication and social media with children.
- Social Media “friendships” may not be initiated by employees or volunteers of SMBC but may be accepted if the child issues the invitation.
- To the extent reasonable, texting between adults and youth should be 1) limited to same gender communications, or 2) when mixed gender, be group texts including more than one adult and/or multiple youth.
- Inappropriate electronic communication or social media posts between children or between adults and children should be reported to the Minister to Families.

Off-Campus Lodging

- Taking into account the environment, all children should travel in groups of 2 or 3.
- To the maximum extent reasonable, two counselors should be in each room when children in 4th grade and younger are in a lodging room. Under NO circumstance should only one adult and only one child be in a room together.
- Boys and girls in 5th grade and older cannot be in a lodging room together at any time of day.

GUIDELINES

PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS SAFETY OPERATIONS

General On-Campus

The Family Ministry will designate a person in each primary children's area whose principal responsibility is to maintain overall awareness of the safety and security of the area during regular programming.

Family Ministry staff will do a monthly safety walk-through of all children's areas.

Playground

Playground maintenance checklists should be completed by members of the Family Ministry.

Playgrounds should be checked biannually to ensure appropriate, loose-fill surfacing materials have not displaced significantly, especially those areas most subject to displacements such as slide exits. Rake loose-fill material back into place as needed.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends, when using any loose-fill material, with the exception of shredded/recycled rubber, we should maintain a minimum of 9 inches of material since both of the playground structures at South Main have platforms higher than 5 feet tall.

Appropriate surfacing should be located directly underneath equipment and extend six feet in all directions as possible with the exception of slides and swings, which have a longer use zone.

Broken equipment needs to be reported immediately to the Facilities Manager. If a piece of equipment is broken, measures need to be taken to repair the piece. Children should be kept off the equipment until repairs are completed.

Missing parts also create a playground hazard and must be reported immediately to the Facilities Manager. Examples include missing bolts, screws, ladder rungs, etc.

Protruding bolts or fixtures can cause problems with children running into equipment or catching clothing. Therefore, they pose a potential safety hazard and must be reported immediately to the Facilities Manager.

Off-Campus Lodging

Before allowing children into lodging, leaders should do the following:

- Check hotel and condos for adjoining rooms
- Check mini-bar and scan room for items left behind by previous occupants
- Check TV accessibility
- Determine Wi-Fi capabilities

Before going to bed on the first night, leaders should establish a meeting point in the event a child is separated from the group as well as an emergency meeting point outside the venue in case the venue is evacuated. Leaders should physically show the group members the location of the meeting point so there is no misunderstanding.

RISK MITIGATION

Release of Claims Waivers

Parents/guardians must complete an activity participation/release of claims waiver before their children are allowed to participate in ministry programs outside of regular Sunday morning and Wednesday evening programming. Medical conditions or allergies will be identified in the waiver.

Violation of Requirements and Guidelines

Ministry workers must notify a Family Ministry leader or supervisor in writing within 24 hours when they or others violate the requirements mandated by this policy. The Minister to Families must make a brief report that, at a minimum, includes the following:

- Date, time, location of the policy requirement violation(s);
- A brief description of the policy violation(s); and
- The names of the complainant and the person writing the report.

Ministry leaders and supervisors who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove employees or volunteers from their positions.

Violations of guidelines warrant a review by ministry leaders to determine the best corrective, forward action. These steps could range from removing a volunteer or employee from his/her position to researching the latest recommendations and developing improved practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

Complete electronic version here - <https://waiver.smartwaiver.com/v/acknowledge/>

Alternatively, print, sign, and submit hardcopy to the Family Ministry Associate for Administration.

_____ (initial) I have been given a copy of both the Texas child protection definitions and laws and South Main Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy.

_____ (initial) I understand that my service as an employee or as a volunteer who works with children at South Main Baptist Church is dependent on my adherence to these requirements and guidelines.

_____ (initial) As an employee or volunteer, I agree to abide by the procedures in South Main Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy relating to texting and electronic communication in connection with the Family Ministry. In the event of an incident which requires investigation, and as part of that policy, I authorize South Main Baptist Church to obtain copies of telephone or Internet records related to my ministry activities, if the church requests these records to investigate or document an incident. I agree to make reasonable efforts to help South Main Baptist Church obtain such records upon request. I promise to release South Main Baptist Church, including its officers, employees, members, and agents, from any and all claims, liability, or causes of action for damages associated with the obtaining of such records. Damages may include, but are not limited to, such claims as breach of privacy, defamation, libel, slander, emotional distress, and/or negligence.

_____ (initial) I have read and fully understand the provisions of this document.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Child Abuse and Neglect

Texas Family Code

§ 261.001 of the Texas Family Code provides the following definitions of abuse and neglect (<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/pdf/FA.261.pdf>):

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

"Abuse" includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

1. Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
2. Causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
3. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
4. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child;
5. Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children under Section 21.02, Penal Code, indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code, or aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021, Penal Code; failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child; compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct as defined by Section 43.01, Penal Code; causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene as defined by Section 43.21, Penal Code, or pornographic;
6. Current use by a person of a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child; or
7. Causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code; or causing,

permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a child as defined by Section 43.25, Penal Code.

DEFINITION OF NEGLECT

"Neglect" includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

1. Leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator of the child.
2. Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;
3. Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child;
4. Failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused;
5. Placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the child;
6. Placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to acts or omissions that constitute abuse; or
7. Failure by the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child's home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having run away.

DUTY TO REPORT

Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person must **immediately** report that belief to a local or state law enforcement agency, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400), or the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurs.

In addition, a "professional" (meaning an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state, and whose duties include direct contact with children) must report suspected abuse or

neglect ***not later than the 48th hour*** after the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected, or that the child may be a victim of indecency with a child.

Culpability for Failure to Report or for False Reporting

Knowing failure to report abuse or neglect is a Class A Misdemeanor punishable by fines up to \$4,000 and/or confinement for up to one year. Additionally, a person who is the victim of child abuse and his or her family may bring a civil claim against the church and/or its agent (the person who failed to report the crime as required by law). A person commits an offense (a state jail felony) if, with the intent to deceive, the person knowingly makes a report of child abuse or neglect that is false.

Immunity and Confidentiality

A person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of alleged child abuse or neglect or who testifies or otherwise participates in a judicial proceeding arising from a report, petition, or investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect is confidential, and may be disclosed only to a law enforcement officer, or under a court order as provided by the Texas Family Code (with significant protections for the person making the report).

Clergy Privilege

The Texas Rules of Civil and Criminal Evidence provides that communications between clergy and an individual consulting with him or her for the purpose of seeking spiritual advice in the clergy's professional capacity is considered privileged. There is, however, an express exception which provides that the privilege disappears in the event the clergy member learns of child abuse or neglect, and that the clergy member is required to report the information to authorities under the child abuse reporting statute.

Appendix 2 – Forms and Reports

*Appendix 3 – Training Points for Older Children Serving With Younger Children
At a minimum, older children serving at camps or regular children's programming will receive training on the following sections of the Child Protection Policy.*

REQUIREMENTS

One-On-One Interactions

Emergency Procedures

GUIDELINES – VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervising

Discipline

Restroom Usage