

Guidelines for Children's Ministry Workers

POLICY STATEMENT

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry's and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

Volunteer Workers

1. Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children will complete and return an initial "Ministry Application".
2. The "Ministry Application" will be carefully reviewed by a ministry leader or designee to make certain that the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based on the information provided.
3. If the person appears to be appropriate for the ministry work, then at least two of the references will be checked to confirm the information provided on the "Ministry Application."
4. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry position that involves direct contact with children.
5. A criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children. For candidates who have resided in Ohio for five or more years, a statewide check will be performed. For candidates residing in Ohio less than five years, a national FBI check will be performed.

Employee Workers

1. The same procedure set forth for volunteer workers will apply to all potential children's ministry employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered.
2. In addition, a national FBI criminal background check will be performed with respect to all candidates for employment.
3. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment in the children's ministry.

WAITING PERIOD

No volunteer worker candidate will be considered for any classroom position involving contact with children until the candidate has been regularly involved in Berean Baptist Church for six months or more. Candidates attending less than six months may still be eligible for positions not involving contact with children.

MINISTRY CONDUCT

1. At least two adults (both over 16, at least one over the age of 21) should be present at every function, and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area, during every children's ministry program. (For large groups of children, the number of adult supervisors will be increased in accordance with appropriate student/teacher ratios.)
2. During services/events, at least one adult (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) will be appointed to supervise activity on the premises outside of the room where the service/event is held.
3. Workers should arrive at least ten minutes before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person. Do not send children out to find their parents, and do not release any child or youth to await transportation. Written confirmation (signed by parent or guardian) must be on file if a parent wishes to supercede this policy. A laminated yellow card must be shown to the volunteer before a child is permitted to leave without an adult. This policy cannot be superceded for children under first grade.
4. No children's worker should take any child away from the designated activity place, except as specifically authorized by guidelines for emergencies.
5. For children over Kindergarten an adult should check to make sure the restroom is safe, and then wait outside the restroom until the children come out. If at any time the adult must enter the restroom when children are in it, the door must be propped open.
6. Children under first grade (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult

- female. If the adult must enter the restroom when children are in it, the door must be propped open.
7. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
 8. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.
 9. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person. Persons picking up children under first grade must present the matching number tag or pager.
 10. All volunteers must wear (or post up in the nursery) their photo ID badges when serving.

Discipline

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
2. Disciplinary problems should be handled according to the discipline policy.
3. Workers are to keep parents informed of their children's behavior.
4. At no time should workers insult, demean, label or tease a child. Care should be taken not to raise your voice.

INJURIES OR ILLNESS

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or having a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
3. Personal contact should be made to confirm the substitution process. Leaving a message does not guarantee the process.
4. Participants should be returned to the parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.
5. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids of any kind. A clean-up kit is available in the CE Office to clean up body fluids. Contact the children's pastor or the church custodian whenever body fluids have been cleaned up so the clean-up kit can be restocked.
6. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take

steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person. First Aid Kits are available in the preschool playroom, community kitchen, gym (west room of the stage area) CE office & Bunnies nursery.

7. Persons who have received an injury which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The person's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when they pick up the injured person.
8. Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention: the parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with the worker's coordinator/supervisor. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

RECORD KEEPING

1. An attendance list should be kept for all of the ministry's functions involving children. The date of the function, along with the names of all participants and coordinators/supervisors should be recorded.
2. A written incident/notice report should be prepared by workers whenever an injury requiring first-aid should occur during a ministry function. The incident report will be forwarded to the children's pastor promptly upon completion.
3. A policy and procedure violation report should be filled out and returned to the children's pastor as soon after any violation as possible. Report forms are in each room in 3-ring binders.

NOTICE OF INJURY, ABUSE OR MOLESTATION

1. Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity or suspected to have occurred outside of ministry activity will immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader of such injury, abuse or molestation. No other communication concerning the suspicion should be made.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any injury, abuse or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform a ministry leader of such injury, abuse or molestation who will complete a "Notice of Injury" form.
3. Any ministry leader who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant will report it to the appropriate children's services within 24 hours of becoming aware of the suspicion.
4. Upon notice of abuse or molestation, the ministry's insurance carrier must be promptly notified, as well as any organization entity (e.g. denominational office) to whom the organization has a duty to report such allegations.

Internal Investigation

1. Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously and will be investigated by ministry leaders.
2. Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with Berean's employment practices.)
3. Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
4. Any person who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children within Berean. The church will consult with legal counsel for advice of employment as indicated.

Dealing with Law Enforcement/Media

1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or government agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of the organization.
2. Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance as soon as possible after the organization receives notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection with organizational activities. Decisions concerning the ministry's response to the allegations will be made in accordance with such advice.
3. A single organizational leader will be designated as spokesperson following notice of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, and (to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation) will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances.

VIOLATION OF POLICY OR PROCEDURES

1. Workers must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others, which violates this policy or procedures.
2. Written records will be kept of policy and procedure violations.
3. Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

ANNUAL EMPLOYEE/WORKER REVIEW

1. These guidelines will be conveyed for review annually to all workers, employees, coordinators, supervisors, and leaders to whom it applies.
2. All ministry employees will complete a brief “Annual Review Application” once each year. A renewal application will also be completed annually by all volunteer workers who will be working in any capacity with children.
3. Should the renewal application show that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children, they will be immediately removed from their current position, and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children.

REVISION OF POLICY/PROCEDURES

These guidelines will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and can be modified. Any such modification will be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.

Communication with Ministry Leaders

1. Jenni Maples may be contacted at the church by e-mailing her at JMaples@BereanMansfield.com or calling (419) 756-3300 ext. 243. Items may be left in her mailboxes: {a} next to the copier room, {b} upstairs in the main office.
2. Pastor Nate may be contacted at the church by e-mailing him at PastorN8@BereanMansfield.com or calling (419) 756-3300 ext. 243. Items can be left in his mailboxes: {a} next to the copier room, {b} upstairs in the main office.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

2. The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection; and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

3. God the Father

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

4. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

6. Regeneration

We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

7. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins.

8. The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

9. Christian Conduct

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

10. The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church – baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

11. Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore, Church and State must be kept separated as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

12. Church Cooperation

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

13. The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal bliss of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

All uses of he, him, man and men when referring to creation refer to both male and female.

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith, we do now, and in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another, as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.

We promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to forsake the ways of sin and to walk together in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness. With this in view, we engage to strive together for both the peace and purity of this church; to sustain its worship and steadfastly to cherish and hold its ordinances, discipline and statement of faith; to contribute as faithful stewards, such time, talent and money in the measure that God prospers each of us, that the responsibility for the work of the local church and worldwide ministry of spreading the Gospel be faithfully and effectively discharged.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to teach the Bible to our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to be exemplary in our deportment; to avoid unkind words and unrighteous anger; to abstain from every form of evil; to combine zeal and knowledge in our efforts to advance the cause of our Savior; to make Christ first in all things both spiritual and temporal.

We further engage to love one another as Christ loves us; to give and receive admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other in prayer, and to aid each other in case of sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense,

but always ready for reconciliation, and, mindful of the Scriptures, to seek it without delay; to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return.

We moreover engage that when we move from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.