

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH

CHILD YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

General Purpose Statement

Temple Baptist Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of Temple Baptist Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection of Workers

All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

- a. **Six Month Rule**

No individual will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until s/he has been actively involved with Temple Baptist Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.
- b. **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file in the church office.
- c. **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.
- d. **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, references will be checked to the extent possible. These references should be from an organization where possible in addition to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file in the church office.
- e. **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

 - Those who coordinate overnight activities with minors;
 - Those designated to counsel or mentor minors one-on-one; and
 - Other individuals designated as having one-on-one contact with minors (that is, church-sponsored athletic team coaches and vehicle drivers).

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Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the **Pastor and/or Youth/Children's Ministry Designee** on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file in the church office.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than two students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Temple Baptist Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Pastor and/or Chairman of Deacons for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this Temple Baptist Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.