

**KIOKEE BAPTIST CHURCH
SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY FOR MINORS**

PURPOSE: It is our purpose and intent at Kiokee Baptist Church to provide a safe, secure environment for the physical and emotional well being of all minors, including those with special needs participating in our church activities. It is further our intent to comply with applicable state and federal law governing the safety and protection of minors.

GOAL: Our Goal is to provide protection from mental, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of any type or inappropriate behavior by employees or volunteers in our church. This policy is also designed to protect employees and volunteers from false accusation.

DEFINITIONS

MINOR: In the State of Georgia, a minor is any individual under the age of 18 years old.

MINOR ABUSE is defined to include acts or omissions which cause or permit: mental or emotional injury, physical injury or threat of physical injury, failure to make reasonable efforts to prevent action by another person that results in physical injury, sexual contact, failure to make reasonable efforts to prevent sexual contact with or in the presence of a minor.

SEXUAL ABUSE is any tricked, forced, manipulated or coerced sexual activity for the pleasure of the abuser – it can be physical, verbal or visual.

MINOR NEGLECT includes: leaving a minor in a situation where the minor would be exposed to a substantial risk of harm, requiring the minor to use judgment or take actions beyond the minor's level of maturity, physical condition or mental abilities, failure to obtain medical care for a minor, or failure to provide a minor with food, clothing or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the minor.

ADMINISTRATION of the Safety and Protection Policy for Minors is handled through the office of the Administrator of Kiokee Baptist Church. The Administrator will be responsible for assuring that appropriate record-keeping, incident reporting and policy compliance occurs in a timely manner. All files produced will be confidential and kept in a secure location under dual control.

Selection and Screening Process

CLASSIFICATION OF LEADERS

In order to screen leaders appropriately for their responsibilities, the ministerial staff person responsible for each division (student ministry, children and pre-school) will categorize leaders into two categories: primary and secondary. These terms refer to the relative levels of responsibility and risk, not to the ages of the minors being served. The ministerial staff person in charge of each division (student, children and pre-school) is responsible for adequate, qualified staffing of leaders. This process will include the recruiting and training of leaders.

Primary leaders: Includes all paid staff members as well as those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk who work with minors on a regular basis. (*typically once a week*). All primary leaders are required to satisfy the following qualifications: (1) Age eighteen (18) or older; (2) Member of Kiokee Baptist Church (3) Have attended for a minimum of 6 months; (4) Completion of Minor Protection Training; (5) Completion of background check, and renewal every 3 years; (6) Completion of a confidential Application for Volunteer Leaders Who Will Work With Minors (includes references); (7) Completion of interview by ministerial staff person responsible for each division.

Secondary leaders: Persons who interact with minors less frequently (*such as once a month*) and/or do so in less risky circumstances, i.e., volunteers who see minors only in a large group setting, on church premises, or who interact with minors in the presence of an approved primary leader are classified as secondary leaders. This category may also include parents of participants who help supervise activities. Secondary leaders are required to satisfy the following qualifications: (1) Age eighteen (18) or older; (2) Regular attender of Kiokee Baptist Church for at least 6 months; (3) Completion of Minor Protection Training; (4) Completion of background check and renewal every 3 years.

Substitute leaders: Substitute leaders will serve in a standby capacity to assure coverage when regular primary and secondary leaders are absent. Substitute leaders must meet the appropriate qualification requirements as set forth above for each category of leader. When primary or secondary leaders are absent, every effort will be made to arrange for the services of a qualified substitute leader. In the event that one is not available due to short notice, a person who is 18 years of age or older, who has been at Kiokee for a minimum of 6 months and who is known well to the ministerial person responsible for the division in need may be called upon to serve.

Student leaders: Persons under the age of 18 who interact with minors less frequently (*such as once a month*) and/or do so in less risky circumstances, i.e., volunteers who see minors only in a large group setting, on church premises, or who interact with minors in the presence of an approved primary or secondary leader are classified as student leaders. Student leaders are to be supervised at all times by primary or secondary adult leaders. Student leaders are required to satisfy the following qualifications: (1) 4th grade or older; (2) Regular attender of Kiokee Baptist Church for at least 6 months; (3) Signed Student Leader Commitment Form (this form covers details such as appropriate/inappropriate touch, discipline procedures, bathroom procedures. etc.)

Parents: Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in any of their minor children's areas of ministry. Any parent who has not met the requirements to be a volunteer leader as indicated above will be asked to supervise and work with their minor child only.

Potential leaders: Persons who are interested in possibly serving in a ministry with minors may observe in classrooms or whole group ministry settings, but will not directly work with or supervise minors until they have met the requirements to be a leader as indicated above.

CONFIDENTIAL INTERVIEWS

All Primary Leaders applying for volunteer positions that involve working with minors must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. The ministerial staff member in charge of the division in which the applicant will work conducts the interviews. Church policy concerning prevention and response to minor abuse and neglect must be discussed during the interview.

TRAINING

All employees and volunteer leaders must attend an orientation session that covers age group and ministry guidelines, definition of minor abuse, identifying symptoms of minor abuse, and the church's policies on safety, security, discipline, and reporting. Annual training will be provided and required for employees and volunteer leaders. This annual training is crucial to providing updates and reinforcement of previously covered material to insure that the church's commitment to safety and security of minors is carried out.

It will be the goal of the church that most paid employees who work with minors will maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or the equivalent) as required by applicable licensing requirements or other local regulations. The church will pay the cost of this training. Employees will be paid for attending training. Volunteer leaders are encouraged, but not required to get training if they frequently accompany minors on activities such as recreational events, camps, retreats, mission trips or any other activity with an element of risk. The Administrator will authorize payment for needed volunteer training by the church.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHURCH POLICIES

All applicants must acknowledge in writing that they understand the church's policies pertaining to the protection of children and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign the *Acknowledgment of Receipt* form.

Supervisory Requirements

It is the policy of the church to provide adequate supervisory control of persons working with minors participating in all church programs, including daily or temporary childcare programs of the church. The following regulations shall be applicable to all primary and secondary leaders having contact with minors participating in all church programs:

SAFETY OF MINORS

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with minors 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 in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all minors. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with minors from this responsibility.

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

Birth – 3rd Grade

To reduce the possibility of child abduction, the church will have in place an identification system so that the adults who drop off a small child are the same adults who pick the child up. The ministry leader in charge shall maintain the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for children 3rd grade and younger leaving a church activity. The identification system will not be necessary for children above the 3rd grade unless a parent specifically requests it in writing. If a parent or guardian does not pick up a minor younger than the 4th grade on time, the child will be kept by a minimum of 2 adult leaders in the ministry area where safe supervision can be continued until the parent or guardian is located.

RELEASE OF MINORS FROM ACTIVITIES

Minors who are 4th grade or older are permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity without further supervision of the leaders unless otherwise instructed by the parent or guardian.

TWO ADULT RULE

A minimum of two leaders (primary or secondary) will be in attendance at all times when minors are being supervised during a church activity regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. If two leaders are not in attendance, the leader present should contact the ministry staff person in charge immediately.

OBSERVATION OF MINORS

The ministerial staff member responsible for each division shall coordinate with the respective ministry directors and coordinators to ensure ongoing supervision of all leaders. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and minors in all areas where minors are being ministered to.

Ministry activities for minors should be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. A clear glass window will be installed in the door of all rooms typically occupied by minors. Visibility will be maintained by leaving curtains and blinds open.

Staff members or volunteers who work with minors are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers who work with minors must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Staff members and volunteers working with minors are to circulate playgrounds or recreation areas occupied by minors, watching closely and giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures or buildings).

Any two minors together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

DISCIPLINE

It is our church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of minors. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by minors. Discipline procedures that are specific to children's ministry and student ministry will be covered at yearly leader trainings.

ACCIDENT REPORT FORMS

Any injury sustained by a minor while attending a ministry or activity of Kiokee Baptist should be recorded immediately following the incident on an *Accident Report Form*. These forms are available through the church office and are also located in all children and student ministry areas. The accident report forms are triplicate, designed for one copy to be given to the parent or legal guardian of the minor, one to the supervisor of the ministry area involved, and one to the church administrator. The administrator will review Accident Report Forms the next work day with the Senior Pastor. All Accident Report Forms will be reported to the Deacon Executive Team at the next monthly meeting.

RESPONSE TO ACCIDENTS INVOLVING MINORS

- All head injuries, serious injuries (such as bleeding or potential broken bones) or serious medical conditions are to be reported **immediately** to the **staff member** responsible for the ministry area. The head or serious injury should then be reported to a parent immediately.
- Non-serious injuries are reported to the ministry leader responsible for supervising the ministry area. That leader will communicate the details of the accident to the staff member responsible for the ministry area before leaving their area at the end of the ministry time.
- First – aid is administered as needed and is at the discretion of the ministry leader. If further assistance is needed with first-aid, the Administrator or a member of the Safety Team will assist.
- Accident reports are completed at the time of the accident by the ministry leader responsible for supervising the ministry area.
- Details of non-serious accidents are communicated to the parent or legal guardian and a copy of the accident report is issued prior to the injured minor leaving the ministry area where the accident occurred.

OFF CAMPUS – OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES

RELEASE OF CLAIMS

-Prior to any off campus or overnight activity, a signed *Release of Claims* form will need to be obtained from the minor's parent or legal guardian. A notarized form will be required for all overnight trips. Without the form signed and in the possession of the church, the minor will not be allowed to participate in the off campus activity.

- Supervision and safety should be a top priority when taking minors off campus. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

-A list of adult leaders for the off campus event or overnight trip must be submitted and approved by the staff member responsible for the ministry area. A minimum of 2 adults (18 yrs. or older) must accompany children for every trip. The adult to child ratio is determined by the age range of the minors attending and should be approved by the staff member responsible for the ministry area prior to the off campus or overnight event.

-For overnight trips, separate rooms must be utilized for minor boys and girls. Each room must be staffed by two adults who are staying in each room or suite with the minors. Leaders may not sleep in the same bed as a minor. A minor may room and sleep with his or her parent(s) alone, without a second adult present. Minors are permitted to stay in a room by themselves with a parent who is attending.

-Any accident or injury that occurs during an off campus event or overnight trip must be reported immediately. Please contact the Staff Member responsible for the ministry area and the minor's parent or legal guardian. An accident report will need to be completed at the time of the incident and a copy given to the parent or legal guardian and the church office upon return from the off campus or overnight event. Please obtain accident reports from the church office.

VEHICLE SAFETY

Persons who drive Kiokee owned, rented, or privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting minors must be 21 years of age, maintain a current valid Georgia drivers license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the church, and comply with all other church transportation policies. Persons driving commercial vans must be 25 years of age. 15 passenger commercial vans used for adults or youth are limited to a total of 12 passengers, and 12 passenger commercial vans used for adults and youth are limited to a total of 10 passengers. 15 and 12 passenger commercial vans used for children can be used to their stated capacity.

-Rented vans can only be driven by a person on your approved adult leader list who is at least 25 yrs. of age or older. The driver of the van must have a copy of an up-to-date, valid driver's license on file with the rental company.

-Individuals who are 21 yrs. of age or older who are on your approved adult leader list may transport children in their personal vehicles. They will need to submit a copy of their up-to-date valid driver's license and insurance card to the church office.

-When using personal vehicles, it is preferable to have at least 2 adults per vehicle. Adults are not allowed to transport a single minor in their personal vehicle unless it is their own child. Whenever there will be only one adult per personal vehicle, please plan to have at least 3-4 minors in the vehicle. Adult leaders should always ride in the front of the vehicle and minors should be seated in the rear of the vehicle.

-Restraint seats for minors will be used in accordance with state laws and mandates.

Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

REPORTING POLICY

All alleged or observed incidents of minor abuse are to be taken very seriously, and could carry very serious consequences. It is the policy of the church to report any incident of minor abuse or neglect toward any minor in the church. This would include participants in temporary childcare programs. Any observed or suspected abuse of a minor should be reported immediately to a supervisory ministerial staff person, and/or Pastor, Administrator, other ministerial staff person, or Deacon Chairman.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Georgia's reporting statute, O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 provides that anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a minor is being abused *may* report this information or cause it to be reported, but the statute specifically *requires* certain persons named in this statute to report or cause a report to be made. If you suspect a minor is in imminent danger, or that causes you concern for the safety of the minor, you should contact the ministerial staff person in charge immediately.

INCIDENT REPORT

The person making a report should identify in writing:

- a. The name of the minor and all involved in the suspected incident.
- b. A careful detailed description of the observed or suspected incident
- c. Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All reports of minor abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. Except as provided in the section above, no person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church may be cause for immediate dismissal. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation, may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other minors from harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS

No person shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation either through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable amount of information to have cause to believe a minor has been abused or neglected. Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the church in an official capacity. All employees and leaders of the church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

PRESERVATION OF RECORDS

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the pastor or his agent. They will review them to determine if the documents are complete in accordance with church policy. If any documents are missing, they shall make a written notation and transfer the documents to the church business administrator who shall retain them until advised that all criminal and civil investigations and actions have been completed.

MINISTERIAL CARE

The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the minor and the parents in securing appropriate counseling, care and support. In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the church, the staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counseling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest. All persons shall act towards the minor, the parents and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.

LIAISON WITH THE COMMUNITY

The pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media. No other staff members or church members should speak to the media regarding the matter. The church should emphasize to the public its position on minor abuse, its concern for the alleged victim and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all minors. The church staff should not confirm, deny, minimize, or blame any person alleged to be involved in the allegations.

**Acknowledgment of Receipt of
Safety and Protection Policy for Minors**

I have been given a written copy of the Kiokee Baptist Church Safety and Protection Policy for Minors. I have read and understand this document. I acknowledge that my services as an employee of Kiokee Baptist Church or as a volunteer who works with minors at Kiokee is dependent on my strict adherence to these policies.

NAME (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Date: _____