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Safety and Security Policies for Children, Youth, Volunteers and Staff

Park Road Baptist Church

Table of Contents

- I. Statement of Intent**
- II. Selection of Child and Youth Teachers**
- III. Education and Training**
- IV. Guidelines for Teachers (Compensated Staff and Volunteers)**
- V. Procedure for Reporting and Responding to Allegations**
- VI. Attachments**

NOTE: Individuals who are already working with children and youth at PRBC will be expected to complete the process in Section II.

Safety and Security Policies for Children, Youth, Volunteers and Staff Park Road Baptist Church

I. Statement of Intent

All children have the right to be safe. Adults have the responsibility to ensure that safety. Park Road Baptist Church (PRBC) is committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children and youth are protected from inappropriate treatment of any kind (physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect). The intent is to protect children and youth in all church programs, to educate all workers concerning pertinent issues, and to protect staff and volunteers, as well as the church, from potential allegations of abuse and neglect. It is the responsibility of the staff and committee(s) overseeing the church programming and activities to make certain that proper supervision is in place.

The following guidelines apply to all individuals (church members and visitors, compensated staff and volunteers) who teach and work with children or youth at PRBC, but not to the CDC, which has its own guidelines.

II. Selection of Child and Youth Volunteers & Staff

The appropriate ministerial staff member will review applications and approve applicants.

All volunteers & staff who are responsible for children and youth programs must be 19 years old or over and are required to go through an application process which includes:

- Completing the application form.
- Criminal records check.
- Reference checks.
- Attend training sessions as offered.

Youth under the age of 19 will be allowed to assist an approved adult in children's programming, at the discretion of the appropriate minister, but will not be required to complete the application process.

Individual records are considered highly confidential church property and will be handled appropriately.

III. Education and Training

Those approved to work with children and youth must participate in training sessions, as offered, to increase awareness of the problem of abuse and to help provide a safe environment.

Such training sessions might include the following:

- The need for the Child Protection Policy
- Definition of child abuse and neglect
- Identifying preconditions that could lead to child sexual abuse and neglect
- What constitutes inappropriate conduct
- Church policies governing working with children and youth
- Civil and criminal consequences of misconduct
- North Carolina statutes regarding Child Protective Services
- Two adult policy
- Open door policy

IV. Guidelines for Workers (Compensated Staff and Volunteers)

Adults are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse of children and youth and to avoid the appearance of the same. They should not hesitate to caution others if they observe activities or behaviors, which appear to be inappropriate.

- A. Volunteers and staff are expected to avoid, to the greatest extent possible, any situation in which they would be alone, out of sight of others, with a single child or youth. This is to protect children from situations in which abuse might occur as well as adults from false accusations of child abuse. In a situation where it is necessary for an adult to be alone with a child, the individual should notify another adult before and after the period during which he/she is alone with the child. Two adults need NOT be present for regular Sunday school or extended care during the worship service IF:
 1. Classroom doors are left open.
 2. Superintendent provides periodic observation.
- B. Two adults should be present during on-site children/youth activities. The recommended ratio is: Infants 1:3; Toddlers 1:4; 2 & 3 year olds 1:6 and 4 & 5 year olds and older 1:8.
- C. For overnight activities or trips, the recommended ratio is one adult for every six children or youth, with two adults of each gender.
- D. Volunteers and staff who observe questionable or inappropriate behavior of any kind affecting children/youth should report it to the Pastors.
- E. Under no circumstances should staff release preschool children to anyone other than the authorized parent or guardian unless the parent or guardian gives prior written authorization.
- F. Volunteers and staff may not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care (including denial of food).
- G. Volunteers and staff may not leave a child unsupervised while participating in a program.

- H. If a child is injured during a church activity, a Child and Youth Accident/Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the appropriate staff member. The incident should be reported to the parent.

V. Procedure for Reporting, Responding to, and Investigating Allegations

Reporting:

- Any adult who becomes aware of a situation of abuse or neglect is required by law to report the situation to Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services or local authorities for investigation.
- Any situation that presents any suspicion that child abuse or neglect may have occurred should be reported to the Pastors.
- Any report of child abuse or neglect made by a child about their care by a parent, guardian, youth or adult or PRBC staff or volunteer should be relayed immediately to the Pastors.

Responding:

In the event of an allegation of abuse, the following procedures are to be followed by all staff members of Park Road Baptist Church.

- A. Every allegation should be taken seriously. Adequate care, respect, and confidentiality must be offered to alleged victims and perpetrators until the allegation can be substantiated or cleared.
- B. The procedures listed in the previous section on Reporting should be observed.
- C. Written records relating to the matter in confidential files should be maintained.
- D. All efforts in handling the situation should be documented.
- E. The Pastors will notify the parent(s) or legal guardian of the alleged victim.

Investigating:

- A. The Pastors and/or Personnel Committee may complete an internal investigation in addition to that which will be carried out by the authorities following the required referrals. An individual accused of child abuse or neglect may be placed on leave (with or without pay at the discretion of the Pastors and/or Personnel Committee).
- B. The Pastors and/or Personnel Committee will make a determination as to whether the individual will be allowed to return to work as a volunteer or employee at the Church. They will consider the individual's likely effectiveness in working with children/youth following a false allegation and investigation of child abuse.
- C. If a decision has been made by a Pastor an affected employee or volunteer has the right to appeal to the Personnel Committee.
- D. PRBC employees and volunteers should cooperate fully with the investigation authorities, such as the Child Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services.
- E. All inquiries, incidents and allegations will be deemed confidential. Unless required by law, only the Pastors or their designees may release information regarding any incident governed by this policy.