



**REDEEMER**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

Des Moines, IA 50312

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# Children's Protection Policy

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHILDREN’S PROTECTION POLICY

Mission Statement .....	3
Needs Assessment .....	4
Parameter for the Child’s Protection Policy .....	4
Personnel Summary .....	4

## CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY AND PROCEDURE POLICY

<b>I. Protecting the Children Before They Arrive .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A.</b> Screening Procedure	5
<b>B.</b> Training	6
<b>C.</b> Healthy Child and Volunteer Communicable Disease Policy	6
<b>D.</b> Universal Precautions	7
<b>II. Protecting the Children As They Arrive and Depart .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A.</b> Arrival and Departure Times	8
<b>B.</b> Signing a Child in to the Children’s Ministry	8
<b>C.</b> Parental Authentication Identification System Sign In/Sign Out Procedure	9
<b>D.</b> Divorce, Separation or Custody Visitation	10
<b>E.</b> Emergency Guardian	10
<b>III. Protecting the Children While They Are In Our Care .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A.</b> Volunteer Rules	11
<b>B.</b> Visibility	11
<b>C.</b> Child-to-Volunteer Ratio	11
<b>D.</b> Rest Room and Diaper Changing Procedure	11
<b>E.</b> Appropriate Discipline	12
<b>F.</b> Parents in the Classroom	13
<b>G.</b> Food and Drink policy	13

<b>IV.</b>	<b>Security and Emergency Response .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>A.</b>	Accident, First Aid and Medical Emergencies	14
<b>B.</b>	Evacuation Procedures	14
<b>C.</b>	A Live Threat	14
<b>D.</b>	Missing Child or Kidnapping	15
<b>E.</b>	Parent Involvement in Emergency Procedures	15
<b>V.</b>	<b>Neglect and Abuse Prevention, Reporting and Response .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>A.</b>	Prevention	16
<b>B.</b>	Guidelines for Mandatory and Permissive Reporters	16
<b>C.</b>	More Guidelines on Reporting	17
<b>D.</b>	Response to Neglect and Abuse	17
<b>E.</b>	How Will RBC Respond to Allegations, Admission or Criminal Conviction?	17
<b>F.</b>	Confidentiality	18
<b>G.</b>	Response to Media	18
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Sexual Offenders in the Church .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>A.</b>	When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends RBC or a RBC Related Activity	19
<b>B.</b>	When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends Regularly	19
<b>C.</b>	Other Guidelines About Sexual Offenders	19

For the use of Redeemer Baptist Church Children's Ministry

## MISSION STATEMENT

It is in the best interest of our house of worship, our children, and our youth to adopt policies, procedures, and practices to assist our house of worship in protecting the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the children and youth who participate in Redeemer Baptist Church sponsored activities.

### Our Mission: To Glorify God

The children's ministry of Redeemer Baptist Church ("the church") exists to glorify God by:

- I. Maintaining a safe and secure environment for our children.
- II. Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- III. Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- IV. Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- V. Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- VI. Encouraging children to learn to serve and to not just be served (Mark 10:43-45).
- VII. Maintaining the highest ethical standards such that volunteers and teachers always live and serve above reproach, protecting the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- VIII. Preparing children to one day walk with God as adults, which means getting them ready to be a part of the public services and Lord willing, one day, a fully participating adult member.

It is with this mission in mind that Redeemer Baptist Church proposes the following policies, procedures, and practices.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Redeemer Baptist Church has explored the need for child and youth safety policies, procedures, and practices. It determined that, given the size of Redeemer Baptist Church and the overarching care and concern Redeemer Baptist Church has for its children and youth, a safety policy is indicated. The following Policy seeks to address that need.

## PARAMETER FOR THE CHILD'S PROTECTION POLICY

This child protection policy applies to children who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific children's ministry-related church-sponsored activities. Any form of abuse, harm, neglect or other problems related to children at home, school, or in any bible-study, activity, or venue not directly related to children's ministry at RBC is not covered by this policy,

## PERSONNEL SUMMARY

Adults are individuals eighteen years or older.

Minors are individuals under eighteen years of age. (Iowa Law)

Staff are the paid employees of the church. All full-time church staff are required to receive a background check regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.

Volunteers are adult RBC members who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. All volunteers who serve in children's ministry are required to go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures before they serve. Volunteers include childcare workers, team leaders, hall monitors, teachers, coaches, coordinators, and anyone else who serves the children. The term 'volunteer' will be used throughout this policy manual as an all-encompassing term for anyone who is a RBC member and serves the children and is not church staff.

Deacons/Deaconess refer to the church's deacons of children's ministry and childcare. They are elected officers of the church who serve the church by assisting in childcare and children's ministry. Just like the volunteers, all deacons are required to go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures.

Pastors/elders are elected officers of the church who serve the church by providing teaching and leadership to the congregation as a whole. They must go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures if they are to serve in children's ministry, just like any other volunteer.

Volunteers or staff with convictions of abuse crimes will not be permitted to work with children or youth. The kinds of convicted criminal behavior which disqualifies an applicant include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: 1) Child molestation, 2) Incest, 3) Rape, 4) Assaults involving minor children, 5) Abuse of a child, and 6) Child pornography.

# CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY AND PROCEDURE POLICY

[THIS POLICY SHALL BE ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATION FORM]

## I. Protecting the Children Before They Arrive

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday services. Every applicant who wishes to serve in children's ministry is required to go through a screening process, attend childcare training, and sign the acceptance agreement of the Children's Protection Policy.

### A. Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, RBC has established a screening procedure to approve all volunteers to work with our children:

Redeemer Baptist Church policies, practices, and procedures proceed from the following core decisions:

1. Adults convicted of abusing a child will not be accepted for volunteer or paid service in any house of worship sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. Adult survivors of childhood abuse need the love and acceptance of this house of worship family. Individuals who have such a history shall discuss their desire to work with children or youth with the elder prior to engaging in any volunteer or paid service.
3. A volunteer or paid staff member must have lived in this community for one (1) year and provide references indicating he or she is a person of good standing in this community. In the event the volunteer or paid staff member is a new member of the community, he or she must provide at least two (2) references, including his or her previous pastor, indicating the member's good community standing for at least one (1) year in the previous community.
4. Volunteers and paid staff members must submit a completed application form at the inception of their service and in January of every calendar year ending with "5" or "0" thereafter. In addition, each must agree to training in accordance with the procedures set forth by Redeemer Baptist Church before being authorized to work with children or youth in Redeemer Baptist Church sponsored activities.
5. At least three adults will be assigned to and be present at all house of worship sponsored activities involving children or youth.
6. All volunteers must be members of RBC and 18 years of age or older.
7. All volunteers must have completed RBC's childcare training and signed the Children's Protection Policy agreement form.
8. All volunteers must be recommended by or in consultation with a pastor/elder in agreement with the Deacon/Deaconess of Children's Ministry.

RBC reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer's ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children.

Any volunteer, deacon, staff or elder (or any RBC member) who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess and/or a RBC Elder. He or she also must be personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose such information to the authorities.

## **B. Training**

All children's ministry staff and volunteers must attend Redeemer Baptist Church's childcare training before they are allowed to work with the children. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing volunteers to update them on policies and procedures. Full-time staff who do not have direct contact with children will receive training on child protection policies. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

### Prohibited Behaviors for Volunteer and Staff

1. A volunteer and/or paid staff member shall not place himself or herself in a situation where he or she is alone with a child absent proper parental/guardian authority.
2. A volunteer and/or paid staff member shall not use profanity, vulgarities, or emotionally abusive language, drugs or alcohol.
3. A volunteer and/or paid staff member shall not strike, hit, spank, or otherwise physically abuse a child or youth.
4. A volunteer and/or paid staff member shall not touch, fondle, or kiss a child or youth or physically or verbally engage in any inappropriate or sexual manner with a child or youth.

## **C. Healthy Child and Volunteer- Communicable Disease Policy**

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, several guidelines are in place concerning disease.

Children or volunteers with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child or volunteer is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), persistent nasal discharge, or coughing the parent should keep the child home and the volunteer should confirm an approved volunteer to be assigned to their role.

1. Hand washing or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and volunteers.
2. Toys and equipment should be washed and disinfected regularly.
3. RBC is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. The Deacon/Deaconess, assigned volunteers, or an elder have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the Healthy Child Policy guidelines.

A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist. Please be prudent in considering communicable diseases siblings may be actively carrying as well:

- o Fever, vomiting or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24-48 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- o Any symptom of scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- o Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- o Sore throat
- o Croup
- o Lice
- o Any unexplained rash
- o Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- o Pink eye or other eye infection
- o Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- o Any other communicable disease

Volunteers will text the parent/guardian(s) of any child(ren) who appear ill during a class. The child(ren) will be kept at the children's ministry sign-in desk with an assigned volunteer where the parent(s) can sign the child out.

Please inform the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending a RBC event so that other parents may be notified if necessary. If a child contracts an illness and has been in contact with other children while at RBC, it is the responsibility of parents to notify the Children Ministry Deacon/Deaconess.

Neither volunteers nor church staff may give any medication to any child.

## **D. Universal Precautions**

Universal precautions are very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers from illness. These methods are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in any setting and should always be used.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

1. Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
2. Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
3. Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
4. Remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. An assigned volunteer will wash these each week.



## **II. Protecting the Children As They Arrive and Depart**

### **A. Arrival and Departure Times**

Volunteers are encouraged to arrive 15-20 minutes before the start of the service.

Parents are encouraged drop off their children 10 minutes before the start of service to allow for a smooth sign-in process and transition. Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the session.

In the event that a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of the session, volunteers will ask the Hall Monitor or Deaconess of Childcare to locate the parents.

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess before signing the child into class. This allows the staff to assess the needs of the child and assist parents in transitioning their child into a classroom setting. All children's ministry policies (including bathroom, snacks, and discipline) apply to all children in the classroom, including those with special needs. Additional training for volunteers at this time may not be available for special needs requiring different care.

### **B. Signing a Child in to Children's Ministry**

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a children's ministry program must sign the child in to the children's ministry class, granting permission for the child to participate in that Redeemer Baptist Church event or program.

For families who desire their children to be involved in the Children's Ministries, Redeemer Baptist Church will require a one-time registration form to be filled out with needed information including names of parents, phone numbers, siblings, allergies, special needs and emergency guardianship.

Deacons, team-leaders, and staff have the right to refuse any child at check-in. Some reasons might include potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the room being closed because the adult child ratio, or anything else that might impair our ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

A parent or designated guardian must be in the church building at all times while their children are checked-in.

## C. Parental Authentication Identification System

In order to protect the children in our care, each child must be signed into his/her class by a parent or guardian.

### SIGN-IN PROCEDURE:

1. Parents must remain outside of the children's classroom for the safety of the children. The doors to the class will remain unlocked but closed during class hours. If the parent is needed for reasons defined in the policy, they will be contacted by text.
2. Parents must sign the child(ren) in on the "Sign-In" sheet, confirming the correct phone number is listed if they should need to be reached by text.
3. Parent/guardian and child will both receive matching bracelets with a specific number. This bracelet needs to be placed where the child cannot remove it. (wrist, ankle, back belt loop, etc) and the Parent/Guardian needs to retain the matching bracelet.
4. The parent/guardian will need to fill out a white name label and place the label on the back of the child.

*At the end of the session when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:*

1. The children's ministry volunteer will bring the child to the door.
2. The assigned volunteer will confirm matching bracelets with the Parent/Guardian.
3. The Parent/Guardian will need to sign-out the child.
4. The assigned volunteer will remove the child's bracelet and label before releasing the child to the parent.

For children of visitors, volunteers must check the visitor bracelet and the child's label to ensure that the numbers match. If a visitor does not have the matching bracelet, the volunteer will need to inform them the bracelet is needed to release the child.

Only designated parents/guardians listed on the Children's Ministry Registration Form may sign-out their child(ren) from the children's ministry class.

Member's parents or other visiting family are not able to pick up signed-in children. (Please reference Section II. B. for some explanation to better understand why RBC has adopted this policy.)

Member's children are not able to pick up signed-in children.

A parent can send the other parent/guardian listed on the Children's Ministry Family Registration Form to pick up their children but the parent/guardian must have the Parent ID Bracelet to match with the child's.

#### **D. Divorce, Separation or Custody Visitation**

In a situation where the parents are divorced or separated, the volunteers should only release the child to the parent/guardian who brought the child to check-in or as listed on the Children's Ministry Family Registration Form. If the other parent or anyone else attempts to check-out the child, the volunteer or staff should immediately contact a church elder or the Children's Ministry deacon/deaconess. If a parent presents a court order for a child, the police must also be present and we are to release the child to police custody. In any of these circumstances, the volunteer or staff should immediately contact the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess and an elder.

#### **E. Emergency Guardian**

In the event of an emergency, where the primary parent/guardian listed on the Children's Ministry Family Registration Form is unable to sign-out their child(ren), the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess or assigned volunteers may release the child(ren) to the requested Emergency Guardian listed on the Children's Ministry Family Registration Form. If the Emergency Guardian is absent, the child(ren) may be released to an elder or deacon.

### III. Protecting the Children While They Are In Our Care

#### A. Volunteer Rules

For all children's classes and programs, at least three qualified adult volunteers must be present in each children's classroom at all times. Staff, deacons and volunteers must never leave a child alone in a classroom. Two male volunteers may not serve together in the same room without a female volunteer also being present. A staff member, deacon or volunteer may take children out of the nursery or classroom only for a compelling reason, such as an emergency or evacuation. Staff or volunteers should not have private one-on-one meetings with a children. When a meeting on the church premises is necessary, it should be done with at least one other adult present, and held with the knowledge and consent of the staff and the parents.

#### B. Visibility

The children's classrooms must have windows or other visibility into the room for the safety of children and so parents may observe if necessary. Only assigned volunteers are allowed to enter the room once the sign-in process for the class/service has begun and until the sign-out process for all children is complete following the class/service. (Reference Section III. F. and Section V. E. to better understand why RBC has adopted this policy.)

#### C. Child-to-Volunteer Ratios

In addition to always having a minimum of 3 volunteers in a children's class, the ratio is one volunteer for every 5 children. There will be a maximum limit of 15 children in the classroom unless other approved volunteers/staff are able to assist. Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom if doing so would exceed the ratio unless and until additional volunteers are added.

#### D. Rest Room and Diaper Changing Procedure

In the event a child needs to use the rest room, the volunteers will text the parent to come sign-out their child to use the restroom. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure they have their phone in view in the case the volunteers need their assistance with their child(ren). Volunteers will **not** be assisting children with the restroom. Further, children who are signed-in to the class in the care of the volunteers, will not be allowed to take themselves to the restroom. This policy applies to children of all ages. If the parent chooses to bring the child back to the children's class, the parent will need to sign-in their child again.

In the event a child needs to have a diaper changed, the volunteers will text the parents to come sign-out their child and change their diaper. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure they have their phone in view in the case the volunteers need their assistance with their child(ren). Volunteers will **not** be assisting children with diaper changes. If the parent/guardian chooses to bring the child back for care, the parent needs to sign-in their child again.

## **E. Appropriate Discipline**

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior may include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children). During correction, a child should never be removed from the classroom. Correction should be discrete; in the classroom (not in the hallway); and never outside of the sight of others.

Steps of correction might include (depending on the age of the child): (1) removing the child from the situation or problem; (2) pointing out the problematic behavior; talking to the child about his/her sin and need for Christ; (3) praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity; (4) helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate. Volunteers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce children to the gospel.

Children's ministry volunteers and staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, volunteer or staff should text the parents to come sign-out their child. If the child assaults, harasses or bullies other children, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, the parents should be immediately called so the child can be removed. Volunteers, staff or deacons are allowed to physically restrain a child if he/she is physically endangering other children. Please report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to a children's ministry deacon/deaconess.

Once a child is removed from children's ministry, reinstatement/re-admittance is possible at the determination of an elder or the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess. A child may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced.

For further information regarding discipline, please speak with the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess and/or an Elder.

## **F. Parents in the Classroom**

Parents are not allowed to enter the classroom if they are not assigned volunteers to assist in the class that service/activity. Only approved elders and/or assigned volunteers are allowed to be in the classroom.

This policy enables staff to do the following:

1. Keep track of children in attendance
2. Promote the ability for the class to run and the assigned volunteers to teach with less disruption and distraction
3. Encourage the child(ren) to respond well to the assigned volunteers who are maintaining classroom structure
4. Encourage all the child(ren) in the class to be equally involved in the activities and class routine which the assigned volunteers have organized for them
5. Allows the assigned volunteer's attention to not be divided between which children they are or are not overseeing at any given point during the class/service
6. Decreases potential risk to the children. The Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess along with the elders of Redeemer Baptist Church weekly approve assigned volunteers for the specific children's ministry class/service. In the case a background approved volunteer has had allegations made against him/her, admission of guilt, criminal conviction, or for any other reason would be disqualified to serve in the class/service, depending on the severity of the volunteer's actions, it may or may not be information the church body or other approved volunteers are immediately made aware of. Given this, only assigned volunteers who are currently approved on the schedule may enter the specific class/service which they are assigned to. (See Section II. D., Section IV. D. and Section V. E. to better understand why RBC has adopted this policy.)

## **G. Food and Drink Policy**

Children will not be served food or drink during children's ministry and food and/or drink will not be allowed to be given to children while in the volunteer's care. Further, children cannot bring food or drink with them to eat or drink on their own. Volunteers are also unable to bring in food or drink.

## IV. Security and Emergency Response

### Emergency Situations

In emergency situations, if appropriate, 911 will be called to secure help for the children's ministry room to assist with the emergency.

#### A. Accidents, First Aid and Medical Emergencies

All classrooms are equipped with basic first aid kits. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called and parents should be located and informed immediately. Volunteers should complete an Accident Report Form for all injuries, whether major or minor prior to leaving the premises on the day of the accident.

In the case of a medical emergency, the parent will be contacted via text. Depending the severity of the situation, a volunteer may also call 911.

#### B. Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire, a deacon/deaconess, staff, or volunteer should call 911 and also assist all children in immediately evacuating the building. Volunteers and parents should familiarize themselves with this the closest exits to evacuate the building.

#### C. A Live Threat

A live threat includes a shooting or some other type of security hazard.

1. Step 1: Volunteers and Staff Evacuate Children
  - a) As soon as staff, deacon/deaconess or a volunteer is confronted with a real threat, they respond immediately.
  - b) If it is safe to do so, the first course of action should be to evacuate the building.
2. Step 2: Volunteers and Staff Communicate the Danger
  - a) When it is safe to do so, whoever sees or hears the live threat should notify the deacon/deaconess, team leader, staff or parents about the problem.
  - b) When it is safe to do so, staff, deacon/deaconess or volunteer should call 911. Give the following information:
  - c) Location and the nature of the threat.
  - d) If shots have been fired tell police we have an "active shooter."
3. Step 3: Hide.
  - a) If running is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible.
  - b) Close the door.
  - c) Barricade the doors with heavy furniture.
  - d) Close and lock windows and close blinds.
  - e) Turn off the lights.
  - f) Silence all electronic devices.
  - g) Maintain silence.
  - h) Have children lie or sit on the floor away from the door. If possible, stay out of sight of any interior windows.
4. Step 4: Staff or Volunteers fight the Live Threat
  - a) If running or hiding is not a safe option, as a last resort, when confronted by a shooter or some other danger, adults in immediate danger should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as a fire extinguisher or chairs.

- b) Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to confront the potential danger.

After the area has been made safe and secure by police, the assigned volunteer, Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess and/or an elder will communicate an "all clear" sign to anyone who is in lock-down mode.

#### **D. Missing Child or Kidnapping**

In the case of a missing child, the staff will first do a thorough check of the children's ministry area to make sure the child is not in another part of the room. If the child is not found after a thorough check of the children's ministry room, the parent will be immediately notified via text and a volunteer is allowed to open the door in order to request help from those in the hall, including requesting the help of the school supervising staff. Other children in the class may not be left in this emergency situation with less than two volunteers for longer than 10 minutes. If the child is not found, the staff or elders will call police to secure further help.

In the case of a kidnapping, an elder, parent, staff, deacon/deaconess should call 911 to secure help.

#### **E. Parent Involvement in Emergency Procedures**

The elder, the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess, and/or an assigned volunteer will decide how and when to notify parents about security or emergency situations. If an emergency does happen, parents will need guidance, pastoral care and counseling, so we rely on an elder or staff to walk with parents through difficult situations.



## V. Neglect & Abuse Prevention, Reporting & Response

### A. Prevention

RBC takes protection against and reporting of neglect and abuse very seriously. In an effort to prevent abuse and neglect, we:

1. Educate and equip staff, deacons and volunteers about neglect and abuse
2. Adhere to the procedures and guidelines as set out in this policy manual. Many of the policies are written to protect children, including the three volunteer rule, visibility guidelines, and diaper and bathroom policy.
3. Train and screen volunteers prior to contact with any children. Screening includes filling out an application, getting feedback from references and requiring a criminal background check.
4. Require all full-time staff to submit to a criminal background check.
5. Repeat screening procedures and criminal background checks for full-time staff and volunteers every calendar year ending with "5" or "0" thereafter.
6. Require volunteers and staff to be members for at least six months prior to serving in children's ministry. **Effective May 2017**
7. Reporting Suspected or Observed Abuse/Neglect Point of Contact for Reporting

Anyone who suspects, witnesses, or has any reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be neglected and/or harmed or threatened with abuse in any form should contact the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess or any elder at RBC. This reporting includes questionable behavior (overly flirtatious behavior, shoulder massages or other intimate acts, etc.) and/or possible offenses (volunteers observing actual abuse or possible evidence of abuse, like abrasions, lacerations, etc.).

Any person who serves as the initial point of contact is required to report all allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess and the elders of the church.

### B. Guidelines for Mandatory and Permissive Reporters

In reporting of neglect or abuse to the authorities, it is important to distinguish between permissive and mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter may include social workers, teachers and other school personnel, physicians and other health care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement officers, and domestic violence workers. Permissive reporters include anyone who is not a mandatory reporter, which will be the majority of RBC's volunteers and staff.

If the person who suspects or has witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a mandatory reporter, he or she must follow the guidelines and laws set out for mandatory reporters. He or she must fulfill his/her obligations to the law, including reporting to Child Protective Services or the police. At no time will the mandatory reporter be prohibited from reporting, even if their consultation with staff or leadership in the church results in a disagreement. If you are a mandatory reporter, it is important that you know whether you must report only in the context of your professional duties or whether the obligation to report also applies when you're away from your professional duties or functioning as a volunteer at the church.

If the person who suspects or has witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a permissive reporter, they should contact the Children's Ministry Deacon/Deaconess and any RBC elder. If reporting to Child Protective Services or police is deemed as warranted then that person must report. At all times, this person will be required to fulfill their obligations to the law.

District and federal laws authorize civil or criminal penalties or civil liability for failing to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. In addition, obstructing or interfering with an investigation of

child abuse can result in criminal charges. The church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has a reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse.

### **C. More Guidelines on Reporting**

When available, the following information will be documented and reported when helpful:

- The name, age, gender and address of the victim(s).
- The name, age, gender and address of the alleged perpetrator/offender(s).
- The nature, frequency, date(s) and location(s) of the abuse alleged to have occurred.
- The relationship between the victim and the alleged perpetrator/offender.
- Other evidence that supports the allegations (eyewitness, medical exams, confessions, etc.)

### **D. Response to Neglect & Abuse**

#### **Who Should be Notified?**

Notification will be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to neglect or abuse. The church may, but is not limited to:

1. Report suspicions or firsthand accounts or any knowledge of abuse to civil authorities. Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities.
2. Notify church disciplers, counselors or medical personnel in order to obtain ongoing care for the victim(s) and victim's families.
3. Notify an insurance agent, denominational leaders, or any other outside officials.
4. Notify and consult with a church attorney.

### **E. How will RBC Respond to Allegations, Admission or Criminal Conviction?**

Allegations of neglect or abuse, admission of child abuse by staff, elder, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of RBC, or criminal conviction of abuse should:

- be reported to RBC's elder board. This disclosure of abuse is to be done regardless of the source of the information and should be conveyed to the elders board within 48 hours of the allegation being made or the admission of child abuse or criminal conviction.
- immediately result in removal of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any activity or program involving children;
- result in immediate ineligibility of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from being granted approval to participate in any activity or program involving children.

The elders of RBC will decide on other appropriate responses to allegations, self-admission of guilt, or criminal conviction, some of which may include:

- Contacting police.
- Notification of staff, deacons and any volunteers.
- Reporting allegations, self-admission or criminal conviction to the congregation during RBC public services or members' meeting.
- Barring from any activities or church programs with children.

- The RBC Elder(s) will designate RBC members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is attending an RBC service or class.
- Disciplining (removal from membership) of alleged perpetrator or criminal offender in a public members' meeting by the congregation.
- Barring alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any and all church property.
- Suspension or termination of a paid staff member or volunteer position.
- Acknowledging to another organization about allegations against or termination of staff, an elder, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of RBC for misconduct or abuse against children.

If staff or RBC elders learns from police that allegations of neglect or abuse are being investigated or criminal charges have been filed, the RBC elders should:

- Be careful to not interfere with the investigation by police;
- Remove the accused from activities or programs involving children, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Appoint the elder board to be a liaison with the police.

## **F. Confidentiality**

The church, as well as permissive or mandatory reporters, will maintain confidentiality to the extent that it deems appropriate for the care of its members and consistent with applicable law.

## **G. Response to Media**

If appropriate, the RBC elders will respond to the media.

## **VI. Sexual Offenders in the Church**

### **A. When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends RBC or a RBC Related Activity**

If RBC's elders or children's ministry staff learn in advance that an alleged or convicted sexual offender is wanting to attend a RBC service:

1. The elders must decide whether to admit him or her to church services or RBC related activities. Admission of the offender will be based on factors such as extent of prior convictions, and his or her willingness to follow guidelines set out by this policy. This is not a comprehensive list of admission criteria.

If an alleged or convicted sexual offender participates in any RBC related activity or public service that has the possibility of children being present:

- a) The elder(s), children's ministry deacon/deaconess, the assigned volunteers serving on that day, and hall monitor(s) should be notified.
- b) The elders will designate members or staff who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender while he or she is an RBC service or activity.
- c) He or she will not be allowed where any nursery and/or children's classes meet.

### **B. When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends Regularly**

If he/she chooses to attend regularly:

1. The elders will be notified.
2. The congregation will be notified in a public service of the church, most likely the members' meeting. RBC reserves the right to forbid someone from coming to the church for worship services, programs or activities. When participating in church activities outside of the church building, the same guidelines apply.
3. The sexual offender should provide an elder with the name of his/her probation officer. The elder will contact the probation officer and find out 1) more about the underlying offense and 2) the specific terms of the probation in order to make sure the offender stays in compliance while at the church.

### **C. Other Guidelines About Sexual Offenders**

If a convicted sexual offender applies for a volunteer or staff position, he or she will be denied by the church. Exceptions may only be made upon the 1) approval of the elders, 2) full-disclosure to the congregation and 3) a congregational vote.

If a sexual offender is a minor, the church reserves the right to bar that minor from any children or youth activities, and will follow the guidelines set out above for any sexual offender who seeks participation in church-related public services, programs or activities.