

Spring Mountain Bible Church Child Safety Policy

Updated April 2014

It is the heart of the elders at Spring Mountain Bible Church (SMBC) to provide a safe place for minors to grow in Jesus Christ, and to understand His love and acceptance. To that end we make every effort to create as safe a place as is possible by properly equipping compassionate, responsible adults. This policy covers ministries in the church to minors defined for purposes of this document as children and youth under the age of eighteen.

To best ensure the safety of all minors, to protect our volunteers and paid staff from false accusation, and to safeguard the reputation of our church and the Christian community, the elders have instructed that this Child Safety Policy to be fully implemented by all persons who work with minors (whether paid or volunteer). The elders have established a Child Safety Committee (CSC) to help implement this policy in a responsible way.

Training procedures, screening forms, and concise definitions are developed for use in the four major areas covered by this policy. The CSC in cooperation with the elders is responsible for implementing and maintaining this policy as well as all of the specific procedures. The CSC will review the children and youth ministry at least once a year to make certain there is adequate screening, training, record keeping, and follow-up. Results are reported to and reviewed by the elder board. Required corrections are made immediately as directed and overseen by the elders.

The four areas covered by this policy include:

- 1. Worker Selection**
- 2. Worker Supervision**
- 3. Child Abuse Reporting Obligations**
- 4. Responding of Child Abuse Allegations**

Definitions:

Minor

Anyone under 18 years of age

Adult

Anyone 18 years of age or older

Worker

Any person, adult or minor who is authorized to be in a helper or supervisory capacity.

To qualify as a helper with children and youth, a worker must be at least 12-years-old and three years older than the minors they help oversee.

To qualify as a supervisor of children and youth, a worker must be an adult and at least 3 years older than the minors they supervise.

WORKER SELECTION

All elders, staff, and workers who have contact with minors as part of their ministry role; both paid and volunteer, full-time and part-time are required to submit an application.

APPLICATION FOR A VOLUNTEER OR PAID POSITION

1. You must apply in writing to work with minors. Forms are available through the church office or the staff person directly responsible for children's and youth ministries.
2. All applications must be signed by the youth or children's ministry leader, a member of the CSC and an elder before they may participate as a worker in any capacity at any function involving minors.
3. All applicants will need to provide two references preferably from employment or previous volunteer positions. An exception to this is made for young adults who have grown up and are actively involved in the Youth Ministry at SMBC. In this case only one reference from the Youth Director is necessary.
4. All volunteer applicants seeking to work with minors should have attended SMBC regularly for at least six months. Exception to the six-month rule is possible, but rare, with the following provision. The applicant will be required to have a personal group interview by the ministry leader and at least two other individuals from at least two of the following categories: CSC, elders, staff member or another ministry team leader and at least three references checked before they have contact with minors.

This may seem like an unnecessary encumbrance to our ministry, especially when experienced workers transfer to our church and could go through the application and screening process and begin immediately. However, experts say this may be one of the most effective ways of protecting our children. With this rule in place, predators simply won't wait around that long to gain access to minors.

5. All applicants will be interviewed by the Ministry Leader of the ministry they are applying to serve in.

6. All applications and any references are maintained in a confidential file at the church office for future reference. The application can be reviewed by the applicant, the interviewer, the CSC and by the elders.

7. All new workers will be given a copy of this policy, which they must read and sign. In addition, prior to their start date they must receive training (classroom and/or video) on this policy and sign that they have done so. A sign-in sheet will be available at all trainings, workers who watch the video on their own will be asked to sign that they have done that.

8. A national criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any candidate seeking to work with minors.

Note: If a person has been convicted of a sexual offense involving a minor, he/she would be disqualified from working with or supervising minors in the church. The elders may disqualify a person from working with minors based on other significant factors.

WORKER SUPERVISION

"TWO WORKER RULE"

It is our goal that one worker will never be alone with an individual minor. At least two workers should be present during any church activity that includes minors. This rule extends to transporting minors to and from church activities including those off the church premises.

Unplanned situations may arise where these standards cannot be met. In such cases the adult in charge will use best judgment in assigning appropriate supervision and classroom doors should be left open. Intermittent hall monitoring will occur by the Children's Ministry Director or a designated person. In this unplanned situation that violates the "Two Worker Rule" the worker must report this to their supervisor as soon as possible.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. Programs that involve minors must always include adequate supervisory personnel. The ideal staffing ratio is equal to the age of minors being supervised. For example, if two & three year-old children are being supervised then the ideal staff to child ratio is one worker to every three children.
2. Supervision is provided before (at least 10 minutes) and after an event until all minors are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians. One exception to this is that on Sunday mornings children in grades 3 through high school are dismissed from their classes without parental pick-up. Siblings under the age of 10 cannot pick up their brothers or sisters from Nursery or Pre-school classes, without previous written parental permission. Pre-K and Nursery children are not to be released to anyone other than the parent(s) or guardian as listed on the class sign-in register as authorized for pick-up.
3. All rooms or locations where children meet either have viewing windows or the doors are left open. Supervisors periodically, without being announced, are required to view what is happening in the rooms.
4. All nursery workers must be aware of and comply with general Nursery Guidelines and these guidelines may not be changed except by final approval of CSC.
5. Special attention is given to overnight activities or retreats. All adult chaperones and supervisors must be cleared in advance with the staff person in charge of Children's or Youth ministries. Two adults of the same gender should be assigned to every sleeping area.
6. Adults should not counsel individual minors in a secluded room. You may get out of "ear shot" for a personal discussion, but do not get out of sight of others. Stay in public areas.
7. Anyone who has an official role as volunteer staff in children's or youth ministries is considered "on duty" at any church event and should conduct themselves accordingly. Any contacts with children apart from church sponsored events or activities must be considered personal and the church, its elder board and employees will be released and held harmless from any responsibility, penalty or claims for and actions by such parties.

8. While we encourage parental involvement to help orient their child to a new environment only approved workers may be actively involved in children's or youth activities on a regular basis.
9. When Children and Youth Ministry Leaders are orienting their workers at the beginning of each year, they will include the Child Safety Policy as part of their annual orientation.

APPROPRIATE TOUCHING

Appropriate touching is important. Babies need to be held, youngsters need to be comforted, and teens need affirmation. Each age group needs to be nurtured through touch. However, what is appropriate for one age group is not always appropriate for another.

The number one guideline is that you are always careful to make sure your conduct is appropriate for the age group with which you are working.

Infants may need to be patted, held, hugged, or rocked. Those are appropriate and expected. Only the lead nursery worker is authorized to change diapers and it should be done in the nursery area where at least one other worker has visibility of changing area.

Toddlers and Pre-Schoolers also need to be hugged or held from time to time. However, care should be taken with this age group to avoid any contact that could be misinterpreted.

School-age children and teens haven't grown too old for a caring, and affirming touch from an adult. However, care should be taken with this age group to avoid any contact that could be misinterpreted.

Children of all ages do need to be touched. However, we must be careful not to present any situation that might allow, or appear to allow, any inappropriate actions.

WORKER RESTRICTIONS

1. Children Kindergarten age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted in restroom as needed by an adult. Any assistance to a child should be minimal and only as requested by the child. If the restroom is not an integral part of the classroom a worker must never

go alone with an individual child, children should always be escorted in groups of two or more.

2. For children over the age of four and up through 2nd grade, at least one adult female should escort girls to the restroom, and one adult male should escort boys to the restroom. Children should always be escorted in groups of two or more, never alone. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe, and then wait outside the restroom until the children come out.

3. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.

4. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the workers' supervisor, and to the parent or guardian.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

It is so obvious that it seems ludicrous to say it, and yet it is so important that it cannot go unsaid:

A worker must not intentionally do or say anything that causes physical or mental injury to a child. A worker must not, under any circumstances, at any time, make any comments of a sexual nature, inappropriately touch a minor, or make any other comments or take any other actions which could be interpreted as sexually arousing or satisfying to you, a child, or any other party present.

All adults who work with minors are notified that sexual relationships with minors can lead to a felony conviction and imprisonment. The church's insurance policy will not provide for the worker's legal defense in such cases.

ILLNESS OR INJURIES

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 involving minors.

2. A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.

3. Children or youth should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as an illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then person with illness should be isolated in a manner

that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.

4. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone's body fluids of any kind. For example, while changing diapers wear surgical gloves that are provided in changing area, and take care to frequently wash hands or use antibacterial sanitizer, especially after wiping runny noses and teary eyes.

5. Any worker who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is provided the injured person. The minor's parent or guardian should be notified of any injury when they pick up their child or at the time of the injury if necessary.

6. 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 supervisor(s).

7. A written incident report notice should be prepared by workers whenever an injury is inflicted by another child or requires first aid treatment during a ministry function. Blank incident report forms are available in the office, foyer cabinets or from the ministry supervisor. Return completed forms to the office.

MEDICATIONS

1. Volunteers are not to give or apply medications. If a child needs medication, the parent must give it.

2. No medication will be left in the classroom or nursery with a volunteer worker or with the child

3. In extreme cases (asthma), arrangements should be made with written instructions for administration of emergency medication

4. "Medications" also includes the application of special powders or ointments during diaper changing. These topical medications should not be used unless parents instruct to do so on the sign-in form and only topical medications supplied by the parent can be used.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

All persons who wish to participate with us at Spring Mountain Bible Church will be welcomed with love, acceptance, and forgiveness. We have, however, instituted universal precautions to minimize the risk and spread of communicable diseases.

Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: Chickenpox, Pink Eye, Hand/Foot/Mouth Disease, Fifth Disease, Influenza Type B, Hepatitis A/B, Impetigo, Infectious Diarrhea, Lice, Measles, Meningitis, Mononucleosis, Mumps, Whooping Cough, Pinworms, Polio, Rashes (unknown etiology), HIV, Ringworm, Rosella, Rotavirus, German measles, Salmonellosis, Scabies, Shingles, Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever and Tuberculosis. We encourage anyone who has tested positive for any of these ongoing infectious diseases to make a confidential disclosure to an elder or a member of our child safety committee.

Because of the easy transmission of communicable diseases, any person/child who shows any sign or symptoms of the above diseases should refrain from church participation. However, he may return while under a doctor's care, when controlled by medication or when symptoms are no longer present. Every effort will be pursued to include him in the life of Spring Mountain Bible Church while maintaining the precautions to limit the spread of disease.

Procedures to Prevent Infectious Disease

Anyone who comes into contact with any body fluid (blood, urine, stool, vomit, open sores) must wear gloves.

No staff/volunteers who have weeping skin sores shall handle any situation involving potential blood/body fluid contact.

Isolate the area where any blood or body fluid may have dropped on carpet, toys, chairs, tables and wash these areas with soap and water and disinfectant.

Keep other children from contact with the body fluid.

Place all soiled gauze, bandages, and wrappers into the zip-closure bag. Pull gloves off inside out and place in bag. Seal and dispose in a plastic lined trash container.

Wash your hand thoroughly with antibacterial soap following the cleanup.

Following a body fluid spill, a note should be left for the custodian in the church office regarding the incident so that extra cleaning may be done.

Breast milk cannot be given to babies by nursery staff or volunteers, but must only be given by a parent as this is considered a body fluid.

All wounds must be covered. This includes staff, volunteers, and children.

Nursery toys will be disinfected regularly upon usage.

Anyone changing diapers must wear gloves and use them for every diaper change.

The diaper changing table shall have disposable wax paper cover, which will be discarded after each diaper change with fresh paper applied. Disinfectant will be used liberally on changing table after each diaper change.

Wash your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap following each diaper change.

ALL WORKERS MUST SUPPORT THIS POLICY

Any accusations will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly, and will be reported to legal authorities as required. Should an employee or volunteer be accused of child abuse, they must comply with the investigation. Until an investigation is complete and the matter is resolved, the worker shall not be involved in any church ministry that includes contact with minors.

We ask that all paid and volunteer staff work together for the safety of our children and youth. All workers should be knowledgeable of possible symptoms of abuse and share concerns of any child's behavior with the children's or youth ministry leader and the CSC. If you observe any inappropriate conduct or relationships between minors or any worker and a minor, please notify the children's or youth director, a CSC member and an elder so an investigation can be carried out. Questionable or inappropriate behavior often precedes acts of child molestation.

In the event this policy is not followed, disciplinary action will be taken.

All workers should be aware of child safety issues at all times and assist in facilitating the child safety policy as appropriate whether serving in an official capacity or not.

These policies may seem extreme for a church. Unfortunately, many churches that relied solely on blind trust and relationships have suffered tremendous, lasting trauma to one or more of their children, or to adults when falsely accused. There is also the risk of public humiliation, media scrutiny or attack, and civil judgments of millions of dollars.

It is recommended that all workers make a written record of all actions taken and/or all conversations concerning issues that are addressed in this policy. This will provide a more accurate record than relying on memory in the event there is follow-up of any kind at some future date. The worker must keep this record confidential.

Our purpose is not to develop a cold, sterile environment, but to provide a safe environment where the ministry and activities of our children and youth can continue unimpeded and workers are protected from false accusations.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING OBLIGATIONS WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse refers to non-accidental physical or mental injury, negligent treatment or maltreatment, sexual abuse or exploitation, or threat of harm to an unmarried person, under the age of 18. Child abuse includes the following:

Physical abuse - any physical injury to a child that has been caused by other than accidental means. It may appear as bruises, burns, fractures, bites, cuts, sprains, internal injuries, and auditory, dental, ocular, or brain damage.

Visual Indicators of Physical Abuse:

- a. Bruises or welts on the face, torso, back or thighs, in various stages of healing.
- b. Bruises or welts reflecting the use of any article such as a coat hanger, belt or belt buckle.
- c. Burns from cigarettes or cigars, especially on the soles of the feet, palms of the hands, and back.
- d. Immersion burns in hot water or oil (these burns are usually shaped like a sock or a glove.)

Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse:

- a. Wariness of adult contact.

- b. Apprehension when other children cry.
- c. Extreme aggression or withdrawal.
- d. Fear of parent or guardian.

Note: It is important to be aware of these indicators, but additionally be careful not to read too much into them.

Emotional or mental abuse - any actions or statements, which form a pattern of destruction so that a child's ability to think, reason, or have feelings is harmed.

Neglect - negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, which causes actual harm or substantial risk of harm to a child's health, welfare, and safety.

Threat of Harm - all actions, statements, or written or non-verbal messages conveying threats of physical or mental injury, which are serious enough to unsettle the child's mind.

Sexual abuse - In general, sexual abuse includes any form of sexual contact or exploitation with a minor that is used for the sexual arousal or gratification of the offender, the minor, or a third party. Child sexual abuse can include touching or non-touching behaviors. It is a criminal behavior.

In a more common sense, child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. This could occur in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, in a foster/residential setting, in the church, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to a child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child.

Visual Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- a. Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- b. Torn, stained or bloody undergarments.
- c. Pain or itching in genital area.
- d. Bruises, bleeding or infection in external genital areas.
- e. Venereal disease.
- f. Pregnancy.

Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- a. Unwilling to change clothes.
- b. Unwilling to participate in physical activities.
- c. Withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior.
- d. Poor peer relationships.
- e. Delinquent or runaway pattern behaviors.
- f. Fear of a specific person.

g. Unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters. h. Expressing affection in inappropriate ways for age. i. Promiscuous or suggestive behavior.

Note: It is important to be aware of these indicators, but additionally be careful not to read too much into them.

(Some of the above information is taken from the booklet, Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect, Children's Services Division, Department of Human Resources, Salem, Oregon, Rev. April, 1995.)

WHO MUST REPORT STRONG SUSPICIONS OR ACCUSATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE?

If you as a worker receive a report of child abuse or have information that leads you to believe some abuse may have happened, report it at once to your supervisor, a CSC member and an elder.

Once the report is made, the church will follow ORS 419B.015 in making an oral and/or written report of the incident to Children, Adults and Families Division (CAF) or a law enforcement agency.

The reporter remains anonymous to the accused unless required to testify in court. By Oregon statute, the reporter making a good-faith report is immune from any liability, both civil and criminal, as long as there are reasonable grounds for making the report.

NOTE: Failure to report an incident may be punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

All those who work with minors will be offered training at least once a year on how to identify and report suspected child abuse.

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

SMBC's policy regarding child abuse adheres to five principles if an allegation is ever brought against the church, its workers, or clergy. The principles are as follows:

1. All allegations are taken seriously and should be handled as follows:

Do not, in any way, initially respond with disbelief or denial. Do not display an attitude that may be interpreted as a desire to minimize the allegation, keep it secret or cover it up. The child should not be questioned in a manner that could be construed as leading or putting words in his or her mouth. Do not make any other statements, show any actions, or express any attitudes that might make the alleged victim feel guilty or to blame.

Be supportive and reassuring to the alleged victim. Never discount an accusation because of who is accusing or being accused. Be sure you show the same concern for and attention to a report of misconduct several years old as you would for a recent event.

2. Situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality. Under no circumstances shall any incidence or suspicion of child abuse be discussed with anyone other than your supervisor, a CSC member, an elder, or Services to Children and Families Division (SCF) personnel. It is vitally important that child abuse is reported, and equally important that it only be reported to and discussed with appropriate authorities.

3. Full cooperation is given to civil authorities under the guidance of church legal counsel. Relay all pertinent information given you to the designated supervisor and a CSC member who must make an immediate phone call to SCF (971-673-7112), the church's legal counsel and the church's insurance representative. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. Do not press the child for details. Leave that to the professionals.

Information to relay to the authorities includes; the name, age, and address of the child and his/her parents or guardians, the nature of abuse, including any evidence of previous abuse and any explanations given for injuries.

4. Adequate care and sensitivity must be shown for the well being of victims and the accused.

5. Victims are not held responsible.

NOTE: Our greatest concern is the safety of our children and youth. It is also our purpose to protect the reputation and resources of the church and its workers.

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Church staff person handling report

Date of report

Person reporting suspected abuse _____

Child _____

Suspected Abuser _____

Date of incident _____

Brief description of incident _____

Continue

When were Church personnel notified? _____

Actions taken:

Reported to -

Children's Services Division

Police

Parent(s) notified

Suspect contacted

Counseling provided for victim & family

Date _____

By Whom?

INCIDENT REPORT

Organization

Name: _____

Address: _____

Time & Place of Incident

Date of Injury: _____ Time: _____ AM PM Where did injury occur? _____

Person Incident

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name of parents/guardians: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ Injuries sustained: _____ Where was injured taken? (hospital/doctor): _____ Relationship to organization: Member Visitor Student

If injury occurred on church premises, for what purpose was the injured on the premises? _____

Who was responsible for supervision at the time of the injury: _____

Does the injured party have personal medical insurance that could apply? Yes No

Name of medical insurance company: _____

Full Description of Incident

Witnesses

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date of report: _____