

2023



CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES
of
CHESTNUT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Protection Policy and Procedures *of* CHESTNUT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Revised/Reviewed June 13, 2019

Chestnut Street Baptist Church desires to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend any activity. Our goal is to protect our children from harm and our adults from wrongful accusations. Abuse is rampant in our society. Approximately 3.3 million incidences of child abuse are reported each year with 10 percent of those being sexual abuse. Child advocates commonly claim that one in four women and one in seven boys are sexually molested before their eighteenth birthday and the most common abusers of children are acquaintances of their victims. The church is not immune to such abuse, either by its members or by those in leadership positions. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across racial, social, economic and religious boundaries.

Although no organization or individual can assure complete protection, this Church Protection Policy reflects Chestnut Street Baptist Church's commitment to help protect children from harm. Your cooperation in this commitment not only reflects your concern about children's safety in this society, but also your willingness to take steps toward halting child abuse and its detrimental effects. For the safety and protection of our children and workers, all people who participate in church-sponsored activities with children are required to comply with the guidelines provided in this policy.

I. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Adult: any person age 18 or older
- B. Youth: any person 13 and older and under the age of 18
- C. Child: any person age 12 or younger
- D. Vulnerable adult: any person age 18 or older whose mental, physical, and/or emotional condition makes them at risk for abuse.

II. SELECTION AND SCREENING OF CHURCH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- A. The following people will attend a training to become oriented to the policies and procedures at CSBC concerning Church Protection Policies (CPP) and undergo appropriate screening: Church Staff, Elders and Deacons, Children's and Youth Ministry Volunteers, Nursery workers, Sunday school teachers and assistants, Ushers, and any additional roles deemed necessary by the Elders and Deacon of Spiritual Growth.
 - 1. Training. Regularly provided by CSBC.
 - 2. Reaffirmation. CPP trained volunteers will be annually required to read, review, and sign CSBC's Child Protection Policy.
 - 3. Screening Procedure
 - a. Children's & Youth Ministry Application
 - b. Checking of References, specifically institutional references where the individual has worked with children
 - c. Criminal Background Check - for all applicants
 - 1. National registry of sex offenders (www.nsopw.gov)
 - 2. VolunteerScan (www.volunteerscan.com)
- B. No adult or youth who has been previously convicted of child abuse will work with children or youth at CSBC. Those who have been convicted of a sexual offense will be asked to meet with the Board of Elders and sign a Safe Sanctuary Covenant.

1. The name of any Known Sex Offender (henceforth: KSO) regularly worshipping with us will be disclosed to an individual by an Elder, or representative acting on behalf of the Elders:
 - a. during CPP trainings;
 - b. during membership interviews; and
 - c. before an individual begins participation in a ministry that would put him or her in close or regular contact with the KSO.
 2. At the discretion of the Board of Elders, a KSO who has signed a Safe Sanctuary Covenant may be allowed to serve in a ministry providing:
 - a. the opportunity does not put the KSO in ministry to children, youth, or other vulnerable populations;
 - b. the opportunity does not put the KSO in a position of public trust without commensurate transparency; and
 - c. there is appropriate transparency with those alongside whom the KSO serves.
 3. Recognizing the ever-changing nature of our congregation and of the KSO, the Board of Elders is responsible to regularly review and evaluate the appropriateness of the KSO's continued ministry.
- C. All adult and youth volunteers working with youth or children, whether members or not, are required to have been actively participating in the life of Chestnut Street Baptist Church for a minimum of six months and to have received the approval of the Deacon of Spiritual Growth.
- D. If a teen or adult desires to participate in any childcare events but has been in attendance at CSBC for less than six months, they must follow the application process as well as present a letter of recommendation from the pastor or ministry leader of a church in which they are a member or regular attendee and is subject to the approval of the Elders and Deacon of Spiritual Growth.

- E. If a youth who is a regular attender of CSBC desires to serve as a classroom or nursery assistant, they will be required to attend a youth CPP training and fill out the appropriate application as well as provide references from a setting in which they have worked with children and have written permission from their parent or guardian. A youth may serve as an assistant in a class or childcare setting where two or more adults are present. A youth may serve as the primary caregiver for off-campus events where the assumption of parental supervision exists.

- F. The Deacon of Spiritual Growth will be responsible for church compliance to these Policies and Procedures.

- G. All confidential information obtained during the screening of church staff and Children's and Youth Ministry volunteers or in the process of making an incident report, will be seen only by the Senior Pastor, The Deacon of Spiritual Growth, and the Church Administrator, and be kept in a locked file cabinet separate from other church business. Confidentiality will be excluded in the event of a court order. Otherwise, written authorization of the subject in question will be needed to release this information.

- H. Copies of the Church Protection Policies and Procedures of Chestnut Street Baptist Church will be kept in the church office, each classroom, and nursery. Each Sunday school teacher and assistant as well as the Elders, Deacons, nursery workers, and ushers will be given a policy to read, sign and date at the beginning of each new school year.

- I. Any changes to these Policies and Procedures will need to be approved by the Deacon of Spiritual Growth.

III. SUPERVISION OF WORKERS

- A. At least TWO adults over the age of 18 will supervise activities in which children or youth are involved.
1. The doors to rooms in which children's or youth ministry is occurring will be left open if the doors do not have a window. All activities will happen in open view.
 2. No adult will spend unsupervised time alone with any child or youth without the awareness and consent of that individual's parents or guardians. It is recognized that certain counseling and ministerial situations may preclude the presence of two adults and that the general guidelines for supervision of workers should not restrict situations where individual counsel and guidance is necessary. However, such counseling should only take place in a room where windows allow a clear view of the activities in the room.
 3. If a teacher's aide is not able to assist on a given Sunday, a pre-screened volunteer will be asked to fill in.
 4. The Deacon of Spiritual Growth will ensure unscheduled checks of Sunday school classes in progress routinely occur and are scheduled.
 5. The Deacon of Spiritual Growth will appoint a CPP trained adult to act as a Floater during the Sunday school hour with the express purpose of assisting teachers in obtaining supplies, assisting with toileting, ushering disruptive students to their parent, etc.
 6. The Ushers will make unscheduled checks of the nursery and the other rooms of the church while church services are in progress.
 7. Volunteers will be at least 3 years older than the children or youth being served.

8. Occasionally church staff or Children's and Youth Ministry volunteers are in a position where they have one last child to drop off at home. In this case, the driver will make note of the time the child is dropped off at home and confirm this with the child's parent or guardian. Then as soon as the driver arrives home, the driver will call the Senior Pastor or the Deacon of Spiritual Growth to confirm the times of drop-off and arrival.
9. The Senior Pastor or Deacon of Spiritual Growth must be informed in advance of all activities held on or off the church campus. Parental permission will be secured for off-site activities and there will be a minimum of two CPP trained adults present.
10. Overnight events that are attended by students of both genders must also be chaperoned by adults of both genders. At least two adults will be present in each sleeping area.

B. BATHROOM SAFEGUARDS

(APPLICABLE FOR ALL CHILDREN Birth-5TH GRADE)

1. Children will be encouraged to go to the bathroom under their parent's supervision before Sunday school begins as well as being discouraged from leaving once the class has begun to avoid group disruption. If toileting is unavoidable, the teacher's aid will stand at the classroom door and watch the child go to the bathroom, waiting until their return with the ability to see both the classroom activities as well as the restroom door. If the child appears to be taking longer than expected, the assistant will knock on the bathroom to inquire if assistance is needed.
2. If the child requires assistance, (buttoning, snapping, etc.) the supervising adult will ask the child to come to the doorway.

If possible, teachers and assistants will avoid directly assisting an older-aged child who has wet or soiled his/her clothes instead instructing him/her how to clean himself/herself without direct assistance. If further help is needed with the toileting process, the floater will retrieve the child's parent.

3. Church nursery workers must adhere to the following procedures when changing diapers:
 - a. NEVER hesitate to ask/contact the child's parent/guardian for assistance.
 - b. ALWAYS use protective gloves when applying lotion or powder.
 - c. ALWAYS have a cloth or wipe between you and the child.
 - d. Adult workers are responsible for all diaper changes. Teen helpers will not assist with this task.

C. REGISTRATION FORMS

1. On a yearly basis, Registration Forms will be signed by the child's legal parent or guardian and kept on file for each child attending Sunday school, youth group, or other church activities.

D. RESTRICTIONS AROUND PEOPLE ADMITTED TO CSBC CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS (e.g.: Sunday School, Children's Church, Nursery, etc.)

1. Only Parents of the child in attendance and screened Staff are to be allowed into places where children's programs are currently taking place. These workers will be identified by a badge.
2. If the nursery worker has a child older than 5 but younger than 13, they may also be in the nursery under the direct supervision of the parent or guardian and will not be left alone with younger children, assist with toileting or diaper changes, etc.

3. Only parents/guardians or an adult or a sibling 13 years or older previously authorized by a parent/guardian are permitted to retrieve children from their programs.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

A. Those with a history of committing child abuse will be monitored closely so that they will not have any interaction with children. Before attending services and events at CSBC any sexual offender will meet with the Elders and sign a safe sanctuary covenant (see example).

B. Do Express Love & Caring in Appropriate Ways

1. Bending down to the child's level and speaking kindly and listening to the child carefully.
2. Taking a child's hand and leading him to an activity.
3. Putting an arm around the shoulders of a child who needs comforting or quieting.
4. Taking both child's hands as you say, "*You did such a good job.*" "*I'm so glad to see you!*" etc.
5. Patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm the child.
6. Holding a child by the shoulders or hands to keep his attention while you redirect the child's behavior.
7. Gently holding a child's chin to help him focus on what you are telling the child.
8. Holding a preschool child who is crying.

C. AVOID:

1. Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
2. Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit. (Except - assisting a child with toileting)
3. Carrying older children or having them in your lap.

D. ABSOLUTELY NO:

1. Physical contact that can cause harm.
2. Speech that is foul, harassing, abusive, or sexual.
3. Sexual contact with children or youth.

E. Technology and Social Media

1. Adults should keep an electronic record of all communications with children.
2. Parent/guardian will be copied on emails and kept apprised of ongoing texting or phone conversations.
3. Photos of children or youth will not be shared on personal social media platforms without permission from a parent/guardian.

V. IF AN ALLEGATION OCCURS – In the State of Maine, clergy (with some exceptions) are mandated reporters. The welfare of any child involved in a church activity becomes the responsibility of CSBC and allegations heard by any church member need to be handled appropriately. Expend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the FIRST priority.

A. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION FROM YOUNG ADULT OR ADULT

1. When receiving an allegation of abuse, follow the Reporting Procedure (VI.A.) DO NOT TAKE SIDES OR STATE YOUR OPINION. Stay calm and have compassion for the person reporting. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt. Assure them the proper steps will be taken and what they are.

B. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION FROM A CHILD

1. If the child discloses the abuse of neglect.
 - DO treat it seriously. Children seldom lie about abuse.
 - DO affirm your concern and care for the child.
 - DO assure the child of privacy, but not confidentiality.

- DO follow the Reporting Procedure
 - DO be actively attending to the child's non-verbal cues.
 - DO ask the child where they want to go at that point.
 - DO try to clearly understand what the child is trying to communicate.
 - DO NOT dwell on or ask for details.
 - DO NOT smother
 - DO NOT keep secrets
 - DO NOT prevent the child from returning home (except in an emergency)
 - DO NOT make promises you can't keep or about things of which you don't know.
2. IF YOU SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE, BUT IT IS NOT DISCLOSED OR CONFIRMED BY THE CHILD:
- a. Ask the child “non-leading” questions about the suspicion
 - b. REPORT IMMEDIATELY to the Senior Pastor, the Deacon of Spiritual Growth, or the CSBC Church Administrator.
 - c. You must report when there is reasonable cause for suspicion.
 - d. Fill out Child Abuse/Neglect Report Form (located in the nursery forms and church office)
 - e. Be supportive and loving
 - f. Watch for further signs of abuse.

C. RESPONSE TO THE ACCUSED

1. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a church worker, that person will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed. If the person is a paid employee, his or her income will be maintained but any responsibilities regarding children or youth are to be suspended until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

VI. REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

A. In the State of Maine, clergy (with some exceptions) are mandated reporters. Though any person may make a report if that person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, it is the policy of CSBC that the report be made by the Senior Pastor or the Deacon of Spiritual Growth. The welfare of any child involved in a church activity becomes the responsibility of CSBC and allegations heard by any church member need to be handled appropriately.

1. In the case of an allegation being made against a staff member or volunteer of CSBC: the person who takes the report will fill out the report form being as specific as possible. If a child is reporting, follow Response to Allegation from Child (V.B.) if a young adult or adult is reporting, follow Response to Allegation from Young Adult or Adult (V.A.) then tells them that steps 3 & 4 will take place.
2. In the case of an allegation being made against a parent or caregiver: the person who has knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected will fill out the report from being as specific as possible. If a child is reporting, follow Response to Allegation from Child (V.B.) if a young adult or adult is reporting, follow Response to Allegation from Young Adult or Adult (V.A.) Then tells the young adult or adult that steps 3 & 4 will take place. Do not notify the parents or caregiver, as this is the domain of the Dept. of Human Services.
3. The person who fills out the report form will immediately notify the Senior Pastor, Deacon of Spiritual Growth or Church Administrator.
4. The Senior Pastor or Deacon of Spiritual Growth will contact either the Department of Health and Human Services or the District Attorney's office, and the church's Insurance Company as soon as possible.

DHS CHILD PROTECTIVE INTAKE - 1-800-452-1999

KNOX COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY - 207-594-0424

B. PROCEDURE FOR REPORT BY SENIOR PASTOR OR DEACON OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

1. "Reports regarding abuse or neglect shall be made immediately by telephone to the Department of Health and Human Services...when the person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected...and shall be followed by a written report within 48 hours *if requested by the department.*" (When making a report, ask if a written report is desired. If not, note this in your records.)

2. Report Determined by Definition of Abuse or Neglect
 - a. 'Child' means any person who is less than 18 years of age.
 - b. 'Abuse or neglect' means a threat to a child's health or welfare by physical, mental, or emotional injury of impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these, by a person responsible for the child.
 - c. 'Person responsible for the child' means a person with responsibility for a child's health or welfare, whether in the child's home or another home or a facility which, as part of its function, provides for care of the child. It includes the child's custodian.

C. PROCEDURE FOR REPORT BY SENIOR PASTOR, DEACON OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH OR CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

1. "When, while acting in a professional capacity, any person required to report under this section knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected by a person not responsible for the child, the person immediately shall report or cause a report to be made to the appropriate district attorney's office."

D. THERE IS IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY WHEN REPORTS ARE MADE IN GOOD FAITH.

1. “Reporting and proceedings. A person, including an agent of the department, participating in good faith in reporting under this subchapter or participating in a related child protection investigation or proceeding, including, but not limited to, a multidisciplinary team, out-of-home abuse investigation team or other investigation or treatment team, is immune from any criminal or civil liability for the act of reporting or participating in the investigation or proceeding. *Good faith does not include instances when a false report is made, and the person knows the report is false.* Nothing in this section may be construed to bar criminal or civil action regarding perjury or regarding the abuse or neglect which led to a report, investigation or proceeding.”