

Wichita First Baptist Church Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Wichita First Baptist Church (the “Church”) defends the sanctity of human life at every stage of growth, and seeks to protect persons from injustice. The Church is firmly committed to the care of families and their children. We consider abuse or neglect of children as contrary to Christian morality and as an offense against the dignity of the human person.

When children are physically, mentally, emotionally, or sexually abused or neglected, the Church has the alleged victim’s safety and well-being as its primary concern. Pastoral care is available for the alleged victim, the family, and for the accused. The actions described below are meant to ensure the safety and protect the rights of all, including the good name of the accused.

Policy

Abusive or neglectful behavior in any form is outside the scope of employment for all persons at the Church, and is not acceptable behavior for any persons associated with the ministry of the Church. All employees and volunteers of the Church must comply with state and local laws, as well as with Church policy and guidelines about child protection.

This policy statement is meant to emphasize our deep pastoral concern for the victim and the family of the victim; to safeguard against fraudulent claims that may ruin the reputation of innocent persons; and to assist in the reconciliation of the offender and his or her family, as appropriate.

This policy and implementation guidelines are intended to thwart child abuse, mitigate harm to others, and provide guidance to Church personnel in responding to allegations.

Action Where Guilt is Determined

Any pastor, employee, or volunteer of the Church who admits to, does not contest, or is found guilty of an incident of abuse or neglect of a child shall be terminated.

Guidelines for Implementation

All Church workers must conduct themselves with discretion and virtue, aware of their responsibility before God as ministers and representatives of Christ, and aware of the sensitivity of our culture to these questions.

Definitions

For purposes of these Guidelines, the following definitions apply:

“Child” and “Children” means any person(s) under 18 years of age.

“Child abuse” means any unlawful sexual act to or with a Child, as defined by Kansas statutes *and case law*, and any other physical, mental, or emotional abuse to or neglect of a Child.

“Personnel” encompasses the First Baptist pastoral and support staffs, paid teachers, and lay volunteers who serve in an on-going ministry to Children.

Prevention

We aim to deter any child abuse from occurring by limiting opportunities. By limiting those opportunities, we not only protect potential victims, but also volunteers and staff from false accusations.

1. **Application.** All volunteers and staff working with Children on an on-going basis will complete an application appropriate to their area of ministry. All applications will include authorization for screening concerning prior criminal convictions. All applications, screening forms, and reporting documentation shall be kept confidential.
2. **Volunteer and Staff Assignments.** Any location of an activity involving Children must be available for viewing and accessible to parents, coordinators, staff, or other personnel at any time.

3. **Waiting Period.** All volunteers must be part of the Church body for at least ninety days before accepting a position to minister to Children.

4. **Orientation.** The Church will provide on at least an annual basis, an orientation about child abuse. The orientation will include an overview of the Child Protection Policy and guidelines; indications, signs, or symptoms of child abuse; and information of where to direct parents and Personnel who want more information.

Reporting and Response

1. **Confidentiality.** To protect the reputation and good name of both the accused and Children, those who know of an alleged incident of child abuse should disclose information only to those authorized to receive such information under Kansas law or these guidelines.

2. **Initial Reporting.** The observer of suspected child abuse shall report the incident to the Pastor to Youth or Children's Director within 24 hours. A written report shall follow as soon as possible. Those individuals required by statute to report suspected abuse shall promptly make a report to the Kansas Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services. [The SRS Hotline is 651-5601.]

3. **Response Team.** The individual receiving the report shall promptly (a) notify the Senior Pastor; and (b) convene a Response Team comprised of that Pastor, the Chair of the Christian Education Division, and at least one layperson knowing the affected individuals (victim and/or accused). The Response Team will develop an appropriate plan of action for working with the accused.

4. **Pastoral Care Team.** As appropriate, the Response team, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, may appoint and activate a Pastoral Care Team.

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