

SOUTH SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

Abbeville, South Carolina

CHILD & DISABLED ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

South Side Baptist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for those participating in our ministry activities, especially children, youth, and disabled adults. We also seek to minimize any vulnerability to unwarranted accusations of improper behavior that our organization, volunteers, and employees may experience as they fulfill their ministerial duties. To fulfill these commitments as fully as possible, South Side Baptist Church has adopted the following procedures to be used, without exception, when selecting ministry volunteers and new employees. Throughout this policy, unless otherwise specified, the word “adult” is used to refer to individuals eighteen years old and older.

Plan Administration

1. Confidentiality is of utmost importance in the application process. South Side Baptist Church will always be diligent in not compromising the confidential nature of the application and screening process.
2. The deacons will appoint one person as the Policy Administrator to review and maintain the application and background check process. The qualifications of this person are:
 - a. Will meet the requirements of this policy.
 - b. Be a member of South Side Baptist Church for at least 3 years.
 - c. Be an active member of South Side Baptist Church.
 - d. Shown the capacity to be organized, manage policies and processes, and propensity to keep information confidential.
3. The church body will provide final approval of the Policy Administrator selection by vote in regular church conference. A simple majority will be required for approval.

Volunteer Screening Procedures

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates considered for a volunteer position that involves working with children, youth, or disabled adults will complete and return an initial ministry application. (*See attached ministry application.*)
2. The policy administrator will carefully review the application and determine if the information submitted meets the requirements of this policy. Once the applicant's information is determined to be acceptable, the Policy Administrator will proceed with background checks.
3. While the background check is being performed, the Policy Administrator will check at least two references to confirm the information that the candidate provided on the ministry application.
4. When indicated by our reference and/or background checks, volunteer candidates who pose a threat to others, or have a prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against

another person, will be removed immediately from consideration for ministry positions associated with children, youth, and disabled adults.

5. The Policy Administrator will store all application materials – the application form, background check responses, reference check, notes from interviews, etc. – in a locked file cabinet or other secure location.

Employee Screening Procedures

1. The same procedures required for volunteer workers also apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered.
2. When indicated by our reference and/or background checks, employment candidates who pose a threat to others, or have a prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person, will be removed immediately from consideration for employment anywhere within our organization.

Background Checks

1. South Side Baptist Church will secure the services from a background check company that will adjudicate the results. The Policy Administrator will compare the results of the background check with the disqualifiers listed in this policy.
2. Disqualifiers: If any of the following convictions are disclosed voluntarily or by result of a background check, the applicant will be disqualified from leadership, sponsorship, or supervision of any activities with children or disabled adults:
 - a. Criminal Homicide
 - b. Aggravated Assault within the past 10 years from the date of the application.
 - c. Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances and alcohol within the past 10 years from the date of the application.
 - d. Sexual Abuse
 - e. Sexual Assault
 - f. Aggravated Sexual Assault
 - g. Injury to a child
 - h. Incest
 - i. Indecency with a child
 - j. Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child
 - k. The sale, distribution, possession or display of material harmful to a child
 - l. Abandonment or endangerment of a child
 - m. Kidnapping or unlawful restraint
 - n. Public lewdness or indecent exposure

Note: These violations are intended to be generic descriptions and the actual legal name given for each of these violations could vary between jurisdictions.

Waiting Period

All volunteer candidates must be a church member regularly involved in our organization for six months or more before they will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children, youth, or disabled adults.

Supervision

1. At least two adults meeting the requirements of this policy must be present at every function or program involving children, youth, or disabled adults. This includes each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area. One or more of these adults must be 21 years of age or older. For large groups, the number of adult supervisors must be increased in accordance with South Carolina student/teacher ratio requirements.
2. Two or more adults meeting the requirements of this policy must be assigned to monitor children's, youth, and disabled adult activities in areas outside the location of a ministry service or event that is in progress. The adults assigned must have been previously approved through our ministry screening process.
3. Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity. They must remain at their assigned post until all people in their care have been picked up by an authorized person. No children should be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation.

Counseling

1. When workers meet with a minor for spiritual/emotional counseling without a parent or guardian present, we encourage team counseling by two screened adults. If only one screened individual conducts the counseling session, it should be conducted in view of another screened worker through a window or an open door.
2. Written permission from a parent or guardian must be secured prior to counseling.

Work Restrictions

1. For children age 6 or older, at least one adult female should take girls to the restroom, and one adult male should take boys to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe and then wait outside the restroom for the children.
2. Children age 5 or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
3. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
4. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety – such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing, or embracing others, etc.

5. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child.

Discipline

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming himself or another individual.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to a deacon, pastor, ministry activity coordinator or supervisor, or to a parent or guardian.

Injuries or Illness

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or a communicable disease that can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable worker – one who has been previously approved through our ministry screening process – must be used to take the place of a worker who is ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If immediate return is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that allows an adult worker to monitor the participant until he/she can be returned to a parent or guardian.
4. Take reasonable steps to avoid contact with blood, saliva, or other bodily fluids.
5. Ministry workers who become aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure that proper medical attention is given to the injured person and provide for continued monitoring of the remaining activity participants.
6. Persons who have received an injury that is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The individual's parents or guardians should be notified of the injury when they pick up the injured person.
7. Any injury that may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parents or guardians of the injured person should be notified immediately, along with the ministry worker's coordinator or supervisor. If warranted by the injury, emergency medical personnel should be called.

Recordkeeping

1. All ministry functions involving children, youth, and disabled adults should maintain an attendance list for every function. Record the date of the function, along with the names of all participants and ministry workers.
2. Ministry workers should prepare a written Notice of Injury report whenever an injury occurs during a ministry function. (*See attached Notice of Injury Report form.*) Promptly

forward the incident report to the ministry coordinator or supervisor. The ministry coordinator or supervisor should give the report to the Deacon Chairman, who will review and then forward to the Policy Administrator for filing purposes.

Notice of Injury, Abuse, or Molestation

1. South Side Baptist Church requires compliance to South Carolina State Law Section 63-7-310, that clergy members are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities including Department of Social Services or law enforcement.
2. Volunteer or paid ministry workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation occurring within any ministry activity must immediately inform their activity ministry coordinator. (If an injury, the ministry worker should follow the process referenced in *Recordkeeping, paragraph 2*).
3. The ministry coordinator should review the occurrence with the Deacon Chairman. After review, the Deacon Chairman will remit all forms and documentation to the Policy Administrator for filing purposes.
4. If the incident involves abuse or molestation, the Deacon Chairman will ensure that appropriate authorities are contacted immediately.
5. If the incident involves abuse or molestation, the Deacon Chairman will also ensure that South Side Baptist Church's insurance carrier is contacted promptly.
6. Ministry leaders who become aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant must ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The Deacon Chairman, accompanied by another Deacon and the Pastor, if available, will make this notification.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator or supervisor when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. Ministry workers who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.

Internal Investigation

1. South Side Baptist Church considers any allegation of abuse or molestation a serious matter. Each situation will be fully investigated by ministry leaders, always with the assistance of legal counsel and civil authorities.

2. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to the abuse or molestation will be terminated consistent with the established employment practices of this ministry.
3. Volunteer subjects of any investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
4. South Side Baptist Church will permanently remove any employees or volunteers from their ministerial duties within the organization if they are found guilty of abuse or molestation. Whenever termination of employment is a factor, we also will consult with legal counsel.

Dealing with Law Enforcement, News Media

1. All ministry workers, employees, and volunteers of this ministry will cooperate fully with law enforcement or governmental agencies investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation.
2. The Deacons will seek legal counsel as soon as possible after we receive notice of abuse or molestation within the organization. Advice from legal counsel will be the basis for our response to the allegations.
3. Either the Deacon Chairman or our attorney, and no one else, will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. Our spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, doing so in a prudent manner to avoid compromising an ongoing investigation and to maintain the privacy of the individuals involved.

Annual Review

1. The Deacons will be responsible for ensuring that a review meeting takes place each year. At that time, the procedures mandated by this policy will be reviewed with all volunteers, employees, ministry coordinators and supervisors, and the leadership of the organization.
2. Paid ministry employees and all volunteers working in any capacity with children, youth, or disabled adults will complete a brief renewal application annually. (*See attached renewal application form*).
3. Should the renewal application indicate that any employees or volunteers have become unsuitable for working with children, youth, or disabled adults, they will be removed immediately from their current position. They will not be considered for positions involving work with other similar groups.

Revision of Policy and Procedures

1. The Deacons, with assistance of legal counsel if needed, will regularly review this policy and the procedures established within it. If necessary, the policies and procedures will be modified in accordance with the bylaws of the organization. When changes are made, ministry leaders will communicate them to all employees and volunteers affected by the policy changes.