
Protection Policy for Children, Students, Special Needs

At Aversboro Road Baptist Church, we take our responsibility to care for children, students, and special needs participants very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment where they can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

These pages provide a general overview of the policies, procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members providing ministry to children, students, and special needs participants at our church. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for all participants, staff, and volunteers involved in the ministries of Aversboro Road Baptist Church.

I. Background Statement

We live in an age where the abuse of children and other vulnerable members of our society is a reality. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect our children, teenagers (students) and individuals with special needs (vulnerable adults). Aversboro Road Baptist Church has implemented this Protection Policy to safeguard participants while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. We pray for God's blessings and protection for these persons, parents and for those who work to minister to them through the ministries of our church.

Protecting our Children, Students, Special Needs

The greatest priority of Aversboro Road Baptist Church children's, students and special needs programs is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to experience the Gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this priority and the values of Aversboro Road Baptist Church. For this reason, every worker (including volunteers) at Aversboro Road Baptist Church must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place. Staff, leaders, parents, volunteers and workers in children, student and special needs ministries are expected to observe these policies and guidelines, as well as other Christian standards of moral behavior found in the Scriptures and adopted by the church membership.

Document History

This policy was developed using sample policies from The Good Shepherd Program by Nexus Solutions and Ministry Safe Abuse Prevention Systems. During the process, feedback was solicited and incorporated into the present document from our Student Leadership Team, Parents of Students, Children's Ministry Council, Parents of Children, Minister to Children, Minister to Students, Special Needs Ministry, Policy, Procedure and Bylaws Committee and others.

II. Purpose and Policy Statement

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;[b] not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)

Purpose

As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children and other vulnerable members is vital. This policy is intended to ensure that church activities involving children, students and special needs are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable persons. The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety by providing clear standards to guide our ministries.

Policy Statement

It is the goal of Aversboro Road Baptist Church to provide for the spiritual growth of our members, visitors and guests in a manner that will foster an atmosphere which proactively addresses personal safety issues related to preschool, children, student, and special needs ministries. Therefore, we establish these policies and guidelines to guide our efforts to recognize and prevent predatory practices and conditions within our ministries. If while screening an applicant, information gives evidence that an individual has mistreated children/students/vulnerable adults, been convicted of a criminal offense, or otherwise indicates a risk to the welfare of children or the ministry of the church, that individual will not be authorized to serve in our ministries to preschoolers, children, students, or special needs.

Activities Covered by This Policy

The scope of this policy shall apply to all current as well as future ministry programs and activities that involve preschoolers, children, students, and special needs participants as sponsored by Aversboro Road Baptist Church. This shall include Preschool Ministry, The Growing Place, Children's Ministry, Student Ministry, Music Ministry, Sunday School, Special Needs Ministry, and any other ministries of Aversboro Road Baptist Church involving persons under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults. Those who serve as deacons and members of the safety team also have responsibilities for families, children, special needs have ministry responsibilities that fall under this scope of this policy.

III. A Glossary of Frequently Used Terms

Abused or neglected child - a child whose mental or physical health is endangered or threatened by the actions or failure to act by people responsible for the child's care.

Boundaries -Property boundaries are the limits or dividing lines between pieces of real estate. Likewise, people have boundaries that guide our physical and emotional relations. Personal boundaries are like fences, separating appropriate behavior from inappropriate behavior. The lines change according to the child's age and the relationship between the child and the adult. In a physical sense, boundaries govern appropriate behavior. For example, it is acceptable for a four-year-old to sit on the lap of her Sunday School teacher, but not for her 14-year-old sister to sit on the lap of her student ministry sponsor. Any child with weak boundaries is more vulnerable to sexual molestation. Healthy boundaries enable a child to recognize and reject inappropriate behavior.

Child molester - a person who has sexually violated children.

Child sexual abuse - includes but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether consent is given by the child or student or whether initiated by the child or student.

Children and/or student - generally anyone less than 18 years of age. This category may also include persons over 18 years of age who are not able to fully protect themselves from exploitation or give consent for sexual activity (due to age, intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities – considered Vulnerable Adults).

Further interpretation of these policies is guided by these specific definitions:

Preschool/Preschooler/Preschool Ministry - newborn through age five (kindergarten)

Children/Children's Ministry – Children in Grades 1-5

Student/Student Ministry –A student in Grades 6-12

Special Needs Ministry– regardless of gender, or age- these vulnerable individuals have been identified as having a special need and as such may not be able to fully protect themselves from exploitation or give consent for sexual activity (due to age, intellectual or physical impairments, or other incapacities.)

Staff Minister (Pastoral Staff)– Minister for these policies will refer to any full-time, part-time, or ministry intern position (paid or volunteer) who has ministry responsibilities as defined by the Personnel Policies, Constitution and By-laws.

Ministry Leader – Ministry Leader for these policies will refer to any volunteer leadership position as defined by the Constitution and By-laws.

Minor – anyone under the age of 18, whether member or visitor

Experienced Worker – A worker over the age of 18 with not less than one year of experience working in the respective ministry.

Workers by classification-

Primary workers - All paid staff and those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility and contact hours or risk shall be classified as primary workers and shall meet the primary screening standards. (examples include Sunday School Teacher, Children's, Student Worker, Special Needs Worker)

Secondary workers - Secondary workers are people who occasionally interact with minors and do so in less risky circumstances. For example, a volunteer who sees children only in a ministry setting, on church premises, and with a ministry leader present may be classified as a secondary worker. This category includes parents of participants who supervise activities while under the supervision of Primary Workers. (Examples Include: Children's Ministry Assistants, VBS Worker, Deacons, Safety Team)

Parents have an open invitation to observe all activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous contact with their Childs program will be required to complete the application process.

IV. Program Administration and Procedures

To ensure effective administration of this policy the following practices and procedures are included herein.

Responsible Parties for Implementation, Administration and Supervision

Under the supervision of the Lead Pastor, the Minister to Children and Minister to Students shall be responsible for the implementation, administration and supervision of the Protection Policy for Children, Students, and Special Needs.

Records Checks for Staff Ministers

The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for all steps in the hiring process of staff ministers including the completing criminal records checks prior to their selection and recommendation to the church.

Annual Review of Protection Policy for Children, Students, Special Needs

On an annual basis, the staff minister shall review their area of responsibility for compliance with these policies and assess for any potential risks and provide a brief written report of their assessment to the Lead Pastor and the Deacons by December 31.

The compliance review will include:

- A review of any newly proposed programs or program changes and the additional risks these changes may incur.
- A summary of policy violations (real and alleged) and the program leader's response to these violations while maintaining confidentiality.

Modification of the Policy

Changes in this policy should be evaluated and recommended by the Children's Ministry Council and/or Student Leadership Team, and/or the Special Needs Ministry and will follow the process for policy review and acceptance as noted in the church Policies and Procedures Manual. This policy shall be reviewed and updated as needed, with a full review every three years.

Safety System

STEP ONE: SCREENING PROCESS

Staff members and volunteers serving with children, students and/or special needs participants are required to complete the Aversboro Road Baptist Church Screening Process, which includes:

- Employment Application (All Employees, Interns).
- Volunteer Application (Volunteers Only)
- Face-to-Face Interview with one of the staff ministers
- Reference Check of three references as defined herein.

A volunteer must be a member at Aversboro Road Baptist Church for at least six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing ministry services to persons under the age of 18, or vulnerable adults.

STEP TWO: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

All applicants, paid and volunteer, must read and review these policies, sign and print their full name on the last page indicating that they have read and understood the entirety of this material, and agree to comply with our policy requirements.

STEP THREE: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

All staff members and volunteers working with persons under the age of 18, or vulnerable adults must undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required. Individuals who have committed any

form of crimes/abuse against children, including but not limited to neglect, abuse, sexually oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to minors and/or vulnerable adults under any circumstances. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors, at the discretion of the minister to children and minister to students. The background check must be renewed every three years.

STEP FOUR: SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

All staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in “grooming” a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser selects a child, wins the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or ‘gatekeeper’), manipulates the child into sexual activity (or other inappropriate activity) and keeps the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip you with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behaviors, Aversboro Road Baptist Church requires all staff members and child-serving/vulnerable adult-serving volunteers to complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training must be successfully completed live or online and must be renewed every three years. Our current training is provided by Ministry Safe. Additional training may be required when groups attend camps, conference centers, and work with missions’ partners.

CHILD PROTECTION

Aversboro Road Baptist Church supports and maintains a zero-tolerance policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of North Carolina State law for any volunteer or staff member to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in Aversboro Road Baptist Church programs.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Aversboro Road Baptist Church maintains the highest standards to protect both the volunteers, children, students, and vulnerable adults in our ministry. Anyone working with children, students and/or vulnerable adults at Aversboro Road Baptist Church is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff and must follow these guidelines. Staff members and volunteers in supervisory positions must diligently enforce all policies and report any alleged misconduct immediately to their supervisor, and Minister to Children, Minister to Students, or the Lead Pastor.

Aversboro Road Baptist Church staff reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who fail to follow the policies and guidelines.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing any act considered by the church to be harmful to an individual will be immediately suspended from participation in ministry to children, students, or vulnerable adults. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Child Protective agencies, and the Church.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving minors at Aversboro Road Baptist Church.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation in all activities and programming involving minors. If the person is an employee, such conduct may result in termination of employment.

Staff members and volunteer leaders should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and will seek counsel from the church leadership and attorney, if needed.

V. Policies on Leadership Selection, Screening, and Supervision

General Qualifications

Every volunteer and staff person who works with preschoolers, children, students, and special needs shall:

1. Confess Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord
2. Affirm the Articles of Faith of our Church
3. Be a church member in good standing **for at least six months**
4. Be approved in accordance with these policies
5. Evidence the skills, attitude, and Christian maturity appropriate to the ministry with preschoolers, children, students, special needs, or vulnerable adults.
6. Agree to adhere to the church's ministry philosophies, policies, and guidelines.
7. Have no history of being an abuser or have a criminal record inconsistent with the ministry vision and responsibilities.

Minimum Age

All primary workers must be 18 years of age or older.

Secondary workers in the preschool, children and special needs area must be at least 13 years of age. Secondary workers ages 13 to 17 must have successfully completed an approved babysitting/child-care training. (Currently Approved: Safe Sitter, American Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council). A secondary worker, ages 13-17, must be active in our ministry to student and have approval from both the Minister to Children and Minister to Students.

Application Requirements

Applicants must complete and sign an application with the related forms granting permission to check references and background information, including, but not limited to a Criminal Record Check and a Motor Vehicle Records Check Failure to sign all forms will automatically disqualify an applicant. All applicable workers will provide a valid form of ID. (i.e., drivers license, passport, social security card.)

Church Membership/Attendance Requirement

All primary workers must be an Aversboro Church member in good standing for at least six months prior to applying for a volunteer position. This time of interaction between ministry leaders and the applicant allows leaders to better evaluate the suitability of an applicant. If the six-month membership rule is waived, it must be approved by at least two the following: Minister to Students, Minister to Children, Lead Pastor. The reasons for the exception must be documented explaining why and filed with the application. All other steps in the screening process must be followed.

Specific procedures may be waived for special circumstances, such as the six-month rule for summer/semester interns, college students assisting in leading a weekend retreat, or other special events. These short-term volunteers must be under the supervision of an approved adult at all times. These short-term waivers will be of a limited nature and must be authorized in advance by the supervising minister, or Lead Pastor.

Interviews

All applicants must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to perform. Interviews will be conducted by the staff minister, or designee, of the program in which the applicant will work. Church policy and guidelines shall be shared with applicants during the interview.

Reference Checks

An application form, complete with references, must be submitted by all individuals who wish to work with preschoolers/children/students/or in our special need's ministry – both volunteer and paid. The respective ministerial staff or designated ministry leader will check at least two references for each worker. Reference checks may be completed by phone, mail, or in person. References should include: one person who has known the applicant well for a minimum of one year, a current or former supervisor or teacher, or a family member (other than a spouse).

Criminal Record Check

A Criminal Record Check is required for all applicants. The Criminal Record Check will cover a minimum of the preceding five (5) years of the applicant's residence. An online check of the State Sex Offender Registry for the applicant's state of residency for the ten years prior to hiring shall be accessed and searched. In addition, all volunteers and staff are subject to random Criminal Records Checks to ensure the safety of our children, students, special needs.

Applicants discovered to have had documented or known incidents of sexual misconduct, or who have a criminal background which may have a negative impact on our ministry, may not be a Ministry Leader (volunteer or employee) or serve in any capacity of the Preschool/Children/Student/Special Needs Ministry at Aversboro Road Baptist Church.

Confidentiality of Information

The Lead Pastor and Staff ministers shall keep confidential all information received in the applicant selection process. Application information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to the Staff Ministers. The details discovered during the screening process will remain confidential; only an approval will be communicated to ministry leaders. Information that is a matter of public record is not considered confidential under these guidelines.

Note: An outside contractor may be used to assist in the screening process.

Delay in Receiving Information

The application, screening, background check, and awareness training must be completed for each volunteer or employee before they begin to serve in our ministries. Every effort will be made to complete the process in a timely manner.

Survivors of Child Abuse

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs the love and acceptance of the Aversboro Road Baptist Church family. A person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as ministry workers. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should discuss this in confidence with the Staff Minister who conducts the confidential interview. When evaluating candidates, the following factors will be considered if an applicant is a survivor of child abuse:

- the extent of professional counseling the applicant has received.
- the opinion of references, especially professional counselors who have served the applicant.
- the opinion of leaders in other churches or student organizations in which the applicant has been involved.
- the extent to which the church can supervise and monitor the position.

Approval Authority

The Minister to Students and/or Minister to Children shall verify that all screening procedures have been completed and shall communicate an applicant's formal approval to the appropriate program leaders. Should approval be denied, both the Minister to Students and Minister to Children should concur. If they do not concur, further discussion with the Lead Pastor should be completed, and at least two should concur.

VI. General Guidelines for our Ministries

These guidelines are provided to reduce the risk of child abuse, to assure the parents of children and students of a safe environment, and to protect workers from false allegations or unwarranted suspicions.

Supervision

Church staff members, children's workers and volunteers who supervise students and/or children and/or special needs are charged with the diligent enforcement of these policies. Program leaders and all student/children's/special needs workers who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activity should promptly discuss their suspicion with the appropriate staff minister and/or the Lead Pastor. Violation of these policies is considered grounds for immediate dismissal from work with the children and/or student and/or special needs ministries.

This practice is not intended to inhibit any staff member or volunteer from reporting to law enforcement or Child Protective Services directly in accordance with state law. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children, and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

Transportation

All Ministry Leaders who will be driving children, students and/or vulnerable adults, whether using a church vehicle or their person vehicle, must be an approved driver as outlined in the church Transportation and Vehicle Policy as well as an approved worker. See The Transportation and Vehicle Policy in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Overnight Activities

At least two adults who have been approved under this policy shall be present to always supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperones must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event shall be postponed. It is never appropriate for an adult chaperone to share a bed with a student. (Exception: Family members of the same gender may share a bed in situations where there is a need to do so due to a lack of space.) Males and females attending events should not share the same sleeping quarters and shall have separate restroom facilities. In the absence of separate facilities, restrooms shall not be accessed by members of the opposite sex at the same time (i.e., male individuals shall not access the restrooms while in use of female individuals and vice versa). Adult workers with at least one year of experience should be included with adults who are newcomers to ministry when planning overnight activities.

Discipline

No physical discipline may be used for behavior management of any participant, including hitting, slapping, pinching, spanking, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate behaviors. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested or given permission for some type of physical discipline. Workers must consult a program leader or other church leader or staff if they need help with discipline techniques.

In the event of a fight or other physical altercation, leaders are to verbally direct those involved and avoid physical contact unless necessary for the safety of others. In these instances, leaders

are allowed to restrain the child, student and/or vulnerable adult with appropriate physical force, as needed. Uncontrolled and unusual behavior is to be reported immediately to ministry leaders, church staff and the parent and/or guardian and/or caretaker of the child, student, and/or vulnerable adult involved.

If any participant is unruly and fails to comply with verbal instructions and warnings, that participant's parent/guardian/caretaker is to be contacted to pick up the participant as soon as possible.

BULLYING

Verbal, physical, or emotional bullying is not acceptable in Aversboro Road Baptist Church ministry programs.

Any staff member or volunteer shall, at the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform his or her ministry supervisor. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. First Offense: Issue a warning to the child/student/vulnerable adult and/or volunteers and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is inappropriate. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. Second Offense: Pull the offending child/student/vulnerable adult and/or volunteer from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child/student/vulnerable adult know that the next step is communication with a pastor and the child/student/vulnerable adult's parent/guardian/caretaker. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.
Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a child/student/vulnerable adult who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable.
DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD/STUDENT/VULNERABLE ADULT OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP: be discreet.
3. Third Offense: Send the child/student/vulnerable adult to a pastor for a phone call to his or her parent/guardian/caretaker and possible removal from the trip, camp, or event as deemed appropriate.

Informal Contact (Independent of Church Activities)

Informal contact refers to phone calls, text message, email, social media, letters, or intentional face-to-face contact between an adult worker and a child/student/special needs participant that is not connected to official church activities. The church recognizes that informal contact between workers and children/students/special needs participants will frequently occur. For example, workers may hire teens as babysitters for their own children, or workers may see children/students/special needs during social events with the child/student's/special needs family. This interaction is certainly legitimate and beneficial. Workers should seek permission or inform the parent(s)/guardians/caretakers before having informal contact with their child/student/special needs. The worker should clearly let the parent/guardian/caretaker know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of church activity. Parents are encouraged to monitor informal contacts of their children with adults.

Transportation To and From Meetings

Transportation to and from meetings is not a normal part of Children or Student Ministry activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. Parents are discouraged from asking leaders to transport children. However, if a leader does transport a child at the parent's request, this is recognized as informal contact (not a part of church activities), and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see paragraph above). Note: This practice is discouraged because it frequently leads to problems.

Touching Guidelines

This policy includes guidelines on physical contact that will safeguard our children/students/special needs while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children, students, special needs. Physical contact shall be limited to pats on the back or shoulder; side hugs; fist bumps, high fives; shaking hands; put an arm around a shoulder briefly. All staff members and volunteers shall adhere to the following protocols:

1. It is vital that leaders do not blur or cross the lines. Physical contact in any form must be above reproach and always for the benefit of the child/student/vulnerable adult. Under no circumstances shall any physical contact be based on the adult's emotional needs.
2. The behavior of leaders must always foster appropriate trust and be an encouragement to the health, safety, and well-being of others.
3. Side Hugs in public view and kept brief are appropriate for members of the opposite sex.
4. Physical contact shall be appropriate to the age of the child or student or special needs. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a four-year-old to sit in a preschool worker's lap, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and student leader to behave this way.)
5. A person's preference not to be touched shall always be respected.
6. All workers are responsible for protecting those under their supervision from inappropriate physical contact by others.
7. All workers shall promptly report and discuss inappropriate physical contact or other questionable behavior by other workers with ministry leaders.

Specific Guidelines for our Ministries to Preschoolers and Children

(These guidelines refer to ministries with newborns through fifth grade)

Two Adult Rule

Two approved workers/volunteers shall be present in all programs and activities involving preschoolers and children – it is preferable that the two workers/volunteers are not a part of the same immediate family. This shall apply to classes, transportation, and other activities. In the absence of two workers, the classes shall be combined appropriately based on the age of the preschoolers and children involved, or meet in a common larger room, or cancelled.

Kids Check-in/Checkout

Parents and leaders are to ensure that all participants in our preschool and children's ministry follow the guidelines established for approved process. Volunteers shall ensure that all participants and/or parents/guardians/caretakers check in the child at a kiosk and obtain a printed name tag and attach the name tag to the child. A second tag shall be given to the parent/guardian/caretaker.

Checkout. The second copy of the name tag shall be matched to the name tag on the child before they are released to the parent/guardian/caretaker. If the parent/guardian/caretaker has lost or misplaced the second tag, the volunteer shall send the parent to one of the Minister to Children or Minister to Students where the appropriate identification shall be shown prior to the child being released. In their absence, this responsibility can be delegated to an approved Ministry Leader.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to Aversboro staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

If staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact the Minister to Children before releasing the child, or in their absence, the Minister to Students.

Specific Guidelines for Student Ministry Leader's

(These guidelines refer to ministries with Students in Grades 6-12)

Team Leadership

As a rule, most student events will be under care of two approved workers. This team leadership portion of the policy has three purposes: it provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision, it protects adults from unfounded allegations, and it lessens the possibility of emotional codependency between an adult leader and student.

Student Ministry Rule of Three

Student leaders s always know the whereabouts of students in their care utilizing face head counts, attendance, roster lists and the "rule of three." The "rule of three" specifies that there should always be at least three people present – i.e., one adult and two or more students, or two adults and one or more students.

Student Events/Camps/Retreat

The nature of student ministry will have students involved in a variety of situations that can put them at risk at camps, retreats, and events. Supervision of students at these events requires careful planning for ministry leaders. While participating and moving from one event to another, Students should be in groups of at least three or more and volunteers shall diligently strive to ensure the student groups are age appropriate.

Individual Counseling

Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling sessions are not feasible, the volunteers shall notify another adult (parent, staff, or volunteer) of the location and with whom he or she is meeting. Counseling should be done in a public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. Volunteers shall guard carefully to avoid seclusion with a student. When possible, volunteers shall have a female counsel a female student and a male counsel a male student. A male/female team is generally appropriate for counseling either gender. Any exception must have prior approval of the Minister to Students and

the Minister of Students shall be provided prior notice in writing of the date, time, and location of the scheduled meeting with the student.

High Adventure Activities

Special precautions must be taken on high adventure activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, camping, rafting trips, snow skiing, swimming, water sports, water skiing, boating, or the like. Both physical safety and safety from abuse are at risk in high adventure situations. A ratio of one adult to five students is required (1:5 for males and 1:5 for females). Guides for high adventure activities should be licensed by a nationally recognized or state certified sport's governing body or government entity. High adventure camping often raises unique circumstances involving individual privacy, sleeping arrangements, restroom facilities, and so on. Student Ministry Leaders must be vigilant to avoid suspicious or misinterpreted behavior in these circumstances.

Confidentiality

Student Ministry Leaders must report to the Minister to Students and/or the Lead Pastor any time a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused. There are limits to confidentiality when working with students. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality should be discussed promptly with the Minister to Students and/or the Lead Pastor. Any serious issues discussed in confidence shall be reviewed with one of the ministers, who will also protect the confidential nature of the discussion to the best of their ability. Conferring with a minister, medical or mental health professional on sensitive issues is not considered breaking a confidence.

Dating or Sexual Involvement

No adult Student Ministry Leader (volunteer or employee) is to date a student or be otherwise romantically or sexually involved with any student. There are no exceptions to this policy.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Leaders and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any student in the program.

However, it is expected that from time-to-time student ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the students the church's views on these topics.

Students may have questions/struggles in this area and desire to confide in a trusted adult leader for guidance. The volunteer shall proceed with great caution, teach with sensitivity and from a biblical perspective. Volunteers and employees shall also:

- Avoid discussing anything of a sexual nature with students of the opposite sex.
- If a student's questions or comments on a sexual matter become too detailed or explicit in a group setting, the leader should use discretion and set up another time to meet with this student (again, adhering to the policies herein related to sex and "rule of three"). For any follow up meeting: volunteers shall inform a student ministry staff member first, comply with the Two Adult Rule and meet in a public, easily observed location.
- When in doubt as to whether a conversation could be interpreted as a "sexually oriented conversation," treat the conversation as such and follow this policy. When possible, clarify the question/topic with the Minister to Students or Lead Pastor.

Sexually oriented materials (images or videos) are prohibited on church property or in the presence of students participating in any ministry program.

VII. Health and Safety

First Aid/CPR Training

Church Staff who supervise young people and/or vulnerable adults should maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or their equivalent if offered in the church's locality). Cost for this training will be paid by the church or The Growing Place if written proof of attendance and payment is submitted to the church of The Growing Place within a reasonable timeframe. New Staff must get this certification within 90 days of the start of their employment. Preschool workers and others serving young children will also need training in infant and toddler CPR. Other workers/volunteers are encouraged, to get training if they frequently accompany children or students on adventure activities, such as water sports, camping, home-building mission trips, etc. At least one person trained in CPR & First Aid shall accompany our students on adventure activities. Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) training will be provided on the use of AEDs located in the church building. This training may be part of a CPR class or through a staff member trained on the use of the specific AED.

VIII. Training and Reporting Strategies for Prevention of Abuse

Aversboro Road Baptist Church will provide resources for age-appropriate training to staff members and volunteers for children, students, vulnerable adults, and their parents/guardians/caretakers for the purpose of prevention of abuse. The objectives of training are to enable children, students, and parents to:

- recognize abuse,
- resist abuse,
- report abuse or attempted abuse, and
- reduce any shame, stigma, and confusion with open discussion, clear information, and unconditional support for children.

Training for Children's, Student, and Special Needs Ministry Workers

Aversboro Road Baptist Church requires that all paid staff and volunteer workers successfully complete sexual awareness training.

The church requires training be completed with Ministry Safe prior to contact with anyone under the age of 18 or special needs adults. The cost for the training shall be paid by the church upon written proof of payment and/or attendance. The Minister to Children or Minister to Students are responsible for assigning the appropriate training and verification of successful completion of assigned training.

The church will practice the following steps toward preventing sexual abuse:

1. Selection and screening

- Church membership requirement for six months or more
- Completing the interview, screening, and background check process as further detailed herein.

2. Supervision

- New volunteers are paired with experienced volunteers and/or a staff member for 30 days of orientation.
- Ministry Leaders will provide ongoing supervision of all workers.

3. Specific reporting process

Basic steps to be followed in possible abuse cases:

- All efforts to handle the incident will be well documented immediately.
- The incident will immediately be reported to ministry supervisors. The Lead Pastor, Minister to Children and/or Minister to Students will determine when the incident should be reported to an attorney on behalf of the church.
- The church will contact the proper authorities—the proper authorities, not our ministry, will handle the investigation.
- The church will notify the parents/guardian/caretaker or other appropriate entity.
- The church will take allegations seriously; reach out to the victim and his or her family in an appropriate manner as welcomed by the victim and his or her family; and respect and 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.
- The Lead Pastor and/or Chair of The Deacons, utilizing the services of the Community Relations Committee, will use the text of a prepared public statement to answer the press and convey news to the congregation. Safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be our priority, while also ensuring that no further risk of harm exists to the remainder of the congregation.

4. The following are reporting procedures for volunteer staff:

- If a child, student, and/or special needs person is observed to have signs of physical abuse (bruises caused by hitting, unexplainable injuries, etc.) or other forms of abuse, volunteer staff should call these things to the attention of the Minister to Children, Minister to Students and/or Lead Pastor immediately. State law requires individuals to make a report to the proper authorities. (Report pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-301(a) that reads as follows:

“Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, as defined by G.S. 7B-101, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. The report may be made orally, by telephone, or in writing. The report shall include information as is known to the person making it including the name and address of the juvenile; the name and address of the juvenile's parent, guardian, or caretaker; the age of the juvenile; the names and ages of other juveniles in the home; the present whereabouts of the juvenile if not at the home address; the nature and extent of any injury or condition resulting from abuse, neglect, or dependency; and any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the need for protective services or court intervention. If the report is made orally or by telephone, the person making the report shall give the person's name, address, and telephone number. Refusal of the person making the report to give a name shall not preclude the department's assessment of the alleged abuse, neglect, dependency, or death because of maltreatment.”

- If a child, student, and/or special needs verbally accuses a family member or other person of abusing them in some way, the volunteer staff member should call these things to the attention of the Minister to Children, Minister to Students and/or Lead Pastor immediately. State law requires individuals to make a report to the proper authorities pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-301(a) as identified above.
- Whether clearly true or questionable in the estimation of the volunteer staff member, the allegations or observations should put in writing on the day of the incident, including a verbatim/exact account of the observation and/or accusation. Every detail of the events—including date, time of day, names of persons involved, etc.—should be included in this report. The person making the report should keep one copy, and one copy should be given to the Staff Minister who oversees that area of ministry, and a copy given to the Lead Pastor. These reports

must be kept safe and confidential. The Staff Minister, along with the Lead Pastor, will be responsible for following church policy.

5. Defining Sexual Abuse

A. Inappropriate Touching

1. Fondling—touching the body on private parts
2. Inappropriate kissing
3. Intercourse (consensual or non-consensual)
4. Oral or anal intercourse

B. Non-touching

1. Sexual remarks and/or innuendos
2. Showing pornography and/or other graphic content or discussing such content
3. Watching any sexual activity
4. Exhibitionism

6. Detecting sexual abuse

- Most cases of sexual abuse go undetected. In addition, there may be no apparent physical signs.
- The cases that are reported are generally reported by abused children to their parents, siblings, or other caretakers—often in the form of casual remarks that lead the listener to query further.
- Most children say nothing. They may not realize that what was done to them was wrong, or they may be too embarrassed or frightened to speak up. They may not want to get the offender in trouble—especially if a friendship has developed between offender and victim.
- In some cases, telltale physical or emotional signs may arouse your suspicion. In its publication *The Educator's Role in the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect*, the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect outlines certain indicators of sexual abuse.

Physical indicators

Difficulty in walking or sitting.
Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
Pain or itching in the genital area.
Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area
Venereal disease, especially in preteens
Pregnancy

Behavioral indicators

Unwilling to change for gym or participate in physical education class.
Withdrawal, fantasy, or infantile behavior
Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge
Poor peer relationships
Delinquency or running away.
Reports sexual assault by caretaker.

These signs can be indicative of other problems and are not exclusively tied to sexual abuse. But the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the presence of several indicators, warrants further investigation.

Response Procedures for Allegations of Abuse

A Team of the Church Leadership will be convened by the Lead Pastor to respond to alleged abuse. The team is to determine the appropriate action and guide the church in responding appropriately. Team shall consist of: The Lead Pastor, Minister to Children, Minister to Students, Chair of Deacons, the Chair of the Personnel Committee, and a licensed attorney (whom either is a member of the church or is a hired consultant to advise the team). In addition, the team may include any other person/s that the team feels are needed to help them respond quickly and appropriately.

Duties of the team shall include.

1. Clarify and evaluate the report with the person(s) who heard the initial report and with the victim as appropriate.
2. Ensure that reports to the appropriate authorities are made in accordance with state law.
3. Consult with an attorney as necessary.
4. Report the allegation to the church's insurance carrier.
5. Minister to the needs of both the accused and the accuser.
6. Take appropriate actions on behalf of the church to protect the accused, the accuser, and the church and its ministries, as deemed appropriate. Nothing about this provision shall be interpreted to require or allow the Team to prevent, frustrate or hinder law enforcement or other state entity from conducting their investigation under the guise of "protecting" anyone involved.
7. The Lead Pastor and/or Chair of Deacons shall serve as the spokesperson/s.

General Principles

When responding to allegations of abuse, the church and its representatives will keep several key principles in mind:

1. All reports shall be taken seriously.
2. Allegations should be handled with sensitivity for people's privacy and confidentiality to the extent appropriate.
3. During a criminal investigation, the church shall cooperate with law enforcement and social services as directed by its legal counsel. (An attorney will be retained to guide the church in this area.)
4. The alleged victim will not be blamed. Support and care shall be provided for any person who feels they have been treated inappropriately. The church should seek to provide support as appropriate for alleged victims and his or her family during this period of great stress, appropriate and welcomed by the victim and families. The church should seek to provide appropriate support for the alleged offender and his or her family as well.
5. The alleged accused will be provided with the presumption of innocence, pending a full investigation. In the interest of the protection of the ministry, anyone accused of inappropriate conduct will be required to step away from the ministry during an investigation.
6. The church's insurance carrier shall be contacted as soon as possible for direction an assistance in caring for the victim

Reports of questionable behavior must be taken seriously.

Reports shall not be ignored or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the accused, and the church.

Allegations may occur in a variety of ways.

Since the church cannot control how a report will surface, it is important that officers, Staff, and volunteers follow the steps described herein. These steps are designed to ensure that the allegation is channeled to the appropriate person and that the problem is not compounded by an improper or unnecessarily delayed response.

Non-church related allegations must be taken seriously.

Young people frequently choose to confide in both children and student workers about abuse happening outside of the church. It is important that reports of this type are also handled sensitively and appropriately. The church's policies also apply to reported allegations not related to church activities or workers. These policies are appropriate for allegations involving church activities and non-church related reports of abuse.

When Someone Reports Abuse

State law requires individuals to make a report to the proper authorities.

(Report pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-301 as outlined above.). The church should also: Listen supportively.

- Let the individual talk openly-- do not minimize or discount the allegation.
- Do not judge the allegation negatively or positively.
- Ask basic questions to clarify facts if needed, but do not try to investigate or verify the allegations of the report.
- Note the pertinent details in writing as soon as possible after hearing the details provided by the individual(s). Taking notes while interviewing is acceptable.
- Contact the Minister to Children, Minister to Students, and the Lead Pastor immediately. They will help decide on the next step, consult with legal counsel, and make the report to law enforcement if necessary.
- If the Lead Pastor is being accused, the person receiving the initial report shall contact the Chair of Deacons.
- If a staff member is being accused, the person receiving the initial report should contact the Lead Pastor.
- Do not discuss the allegation with anyone except those who have a need to know and are helping to respond.
- If the safety of the child/student and/or vulnerable adult is an issue, the worker must use his or her own judgment to decide the best way to proceed. Volunteers may contact law enforcement directly if timing is critical and church leaders are unavailable for consultation.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES IN WAKE COUNTY – 919-212-7000
AFTER BUSINESS HOURS 919-829-1911
POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - CALL 911

Effective Date of this Policy

Effective: January 1, 2010

Reviewed: November 5, 2023

S/ Brad Alford
Chair of Policy, Procedure and Bylaws Committee

S/ Hunter Pearce
Minister to Children

S/ Joe Sinclair
Minister to Students

S/ Dr. Jeffrey Sholar
Lead Pastor

Protection Policy for Children, Students, Special Needs

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the Ministry Supervisor.

Staff members and volunteer leaders are required to read and understand this student safety policy. Additionally, each staff member and volunteer leader must execute an acknowledgment form that this policy has been read, understood, and will be followed. Staff members and volunteer leaders who fail to adhere to this policy may be asked to step down from their role.

I have received and read a copy of Aversboro Road Baptist Church's **Protection Policy for Children, Students, Special Needs** on the date listed below, and I understand the importance of the matters set forth herein. I understand and agree to abide by these policies during my service at Aversboro Road Baptist Church.

I understand that these policies may be modified at any time by Aversboro Road Baptist Church.

While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Aversboro Road Baptist Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed.

Staff member or volunteer's full legal name (please print)

Staff member or volunteer's signature

Date