

Child Protection Policy for Volunteers/Staff



This policy was adopted September 1999 and revised November 19, 2009.

INTRODUCTION

Bethany Church student and children's ministries exist to impact kids with the message of Christ's love. The Bible teaches us that God loves and values children. Kids matter to God. When his disciples tried to send the children away, Jesus welcomed them, and loved them.

In Mark 10:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and *do not hinder them*, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth; anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

It is our desire to bring children to Jesus. It is our prayer that they would not be hindered in any way. We desire to do all that we can to create and maintain a safe and welcoming atmosphere where we can teach our children of God's love and care for them. Our goal is to model Christ-likeness to our children.

Because we recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care, we take seriously our responsibility to them. These guidelines are set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring our children to the Savior.

We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide the highest quality care and instruction in our children and student ministries. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth for each child and adult involved.

Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children on the premises or facilities of Bethany Church, or in the ministries or activities of Bethany Church, must follow these policies and procedures. This Child Protection Policy represents minimum requirements applicable to all ministries or activities of Bethany Church. Individual programs or activities may impose additional requirements as appropriate to their ministry setting.

DEFINITIONS

- Child: A person under the age of 18
- Child Abuse: As defined by Wisconsin State Law (See Appendix A)
- Approved Volunteer: An individual who has completed the volunteer application process and has therefore been issued an approved volunteer badge

Volunteers shall not abuse children including but not limited to:

- 1.! Physical abuse – e.g. strike, spank, shake, slap**
- 2.! Verbal/Mental abuse – e.g. humiliate, degrade, threaten**
- 3.! Sexual abuse of any kind, including inappropriate touching and exposure**

Any volunteer that suspects that a child has been abused shall report it to the Bethany Staff member responsible for that ministry and cooperate with civil authorities and mandatory reporting requirements.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CHILD SECURITY

Registration /Drop off Policy

- All children must be registered. The parent or guardian will complete registration forms at the Children's Ministry Information Center.
- After registering in the Children's Ministry Information Center, a parent must use the current Bethany EFC "check-in, check-out" system.

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT

Any physical contact between a volunteer and a child in a non-public venue is discouraged. Limited physical contact such as a pat on the back, or on the head, or a handshake is permissible. Hugs are permissible within sight of others. The volunteer must avoid any prolonged hugs and must stop a hug immediately upon request by the child.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

Two Adult Rule

Whenever possible at least two approved volunteers must be in the room when children are present. If a volunteer is alone in a room with children he/she must be in full view (by way of window or door being left open)

VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION

Any volunteer who will volunteer with anyone less than 18 years of age at Bethany Church, as a part of a church-sponsored program, must be screened under this policy.

- Screening includes but is not limited to:
 - ! Volunteer application
 - ! Interview
 - ! Reference call(s)
 - ! Background check
- All approved volunteers are required to wear identification tags (*approved volunteer badge*), which clearly identify them as an approved volunteer.
- Other than the children in the room, only individuals wearing an approved volunteer badge will be allowed into the classroom without specific permission of the Pastor, Director, or supervisor.
- It is the responsibility of all pastors, directors, and leaders to be sure this screening process is completely adhered to.

TEMPORARY/SPECIAL EVENTS VOLUNTEERS

Those who volunteer for special events or temporary service will be required to sign the *Approval for Temporary Service Form* and will receive a temporary volunteer badge. Temporary volunteers will always volunteer under the direct supervision of approved volunteers and should not be alone with a child.

STUDENT HELPERS (grade 6 – 12)

Student Helpers will complete a student volunteer application and will receive training and approval from the ministry or department they will be volunteering in before serving in the church or church sponsored programs. Student helpers will always volunteer under the direct supervision of approved volunteers and should not be alone with a child.

FACILITY PRECAUTIONS

Classrooms

- The church has installed windows in the doors or walls of all classrooms in the church. These windows are to remain unobstructed at all times.
- The door to any classroom or other room that does not have an unobstructed window in place must remain fully open at all times that children are present in the room.
- No volunteer may be alone in a classroom (with a child or student) without a window.

Restrooms

- (Children should have as much privacy as possible, while guaranteeing their safety)
- Volunteers may never take a child, alone, into the restroom with the door closed; another adult or child must accompany them.
- Children in grades 4-5 may be sent in pairs to the restroom without supervision of an adult. Leaders should monitor this situation closely.
- Enter a bathroom stall only when absolutely necessary to assist a child, keeping the door open.

Diaper Changing

- Diapers are only to be changed by approved volunteers in the nursery and in the presence of other workers.
- Parents who wish to change their child's diaper should be directed to the changing areas located in the public restrooms.

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY DISCIPLINE

We are committed to working with children and parents to find what they need in order to fully participate, but not to the detriment of the other children in the class.

- No form of punishment that involves pain or physical discomfort may be used.
- Children may be restrained if they are in danger of hurting themselves or others.
- Disruptive children may be removed from the group to another part of the room. Children who are disruptive should be taken to another side of the room, or if necessary into the hallway (leaving the door fully open and within sight of other people). The volunteer should explain to the child that a particular behavior is unacceptable. The volunteer may then pray with the child asking that the Lord help the child to control him/herself. This is the first and only warning.
- If the disruptive behavior persists, the child will be removed from the classroom and placed in the care of the supervisor for this ministry. The supervisor or Pastor will contact the parents and determine the next steps with the child.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

One-on-one meetings with children must be in public settings.

OFF-SITE/OVERNIGHT POLICY FOR BETHANY SPONSORED EVENTS

A "Bethany sponsored" event is an event that has been approved by the Pastor or Director of the sponsoring ministry. All off-site/overnight Bethany sponsored events must satisfy all of the following requirements:

- It will require the presence of at least two approved volunteers who are not related to each other.
- Written parental permission and a medical release must be obtained for each participant for overnight events.
- Parents will be given the agenda of the event, the address and telephone number of the place to which they will be going, and the anticipated departure and return times.

DRIVING

Only Approved Bethany Drivers may provide transportation to children for a Bethany sponsored event.

When an Approved Bethany Driver volunteer is driving with children, he/she should avoid being alone with one child with them without the parent's/guardians knowledge. Whenever there is a possibility that a volunteer Approved Bethany Driver will be transporting a lone child without a second child or adult present at all times, Approved Bethany Driver volunteer must call the child's parent to obtain their permission and to make specific arrangements for the transportation. The Approved Bethany Driver volunteer must let the parents know:

- when he/ she and the child will be leaving
- how they will be traveling
- when they expect to arrive at their destination
- when they will return

DATING

At no time shall an adult volunteering with children pursue a dating relationship with a child

Appendix A

Definitions of Child Abuse

Physical abuse, as defined by Wisconsin statutes 48.02, means any of the following:

- (a) Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means.
- (am) When used in referring to an unborn child, serious physical harm inflicted on the unborn child, and the risk of serious physical harm to the child when born, caused by the habitual lack of self-control of the expectant mother of the unborn child in the use of alcohol beverages, controlled substances or controlled substance analogs, exhibited to a severe degree.
- (g) Manufacturing methamphetamine in violation of s. 961.41 (1) (e) under any of the following circumstances:
 - 1. With a child physically present during the manufacture.
 - 2. In a child's home, on the premises of a child's home, or in a motor vehicle located on the premises of a child's home.
 - 3. Under any circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that the manufacture would be seen, smelled, or heard by a child.
- (14g) "Physical injury" includes but is not limited to lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising or great bodily harm, as defined in s. 939.22 (14)

Sexual abuse, as defined by Wisconsin statutes 48.02, means any of the following:

- (b) Sexual intercourse or sexual contact under s. 940.225, 948.02, 948.025, or 948.085.
- (c) A violation of s. 948.05 [the statute regarding the sexual exploitation of a child].
- (d) Permitting, allowing or encouraging a child to violate s. 944.30 [the statute regarding prostitution].
- (e) A violation of s.948.055 [the statute regarding causing a child to view or listen to sexual activity].
- (f) A violation a s. 948.10 [the statute regarding exposing genital or pubic area].

Emotional abuse, as defined by Wisconsin statutes 48.02, means any of the following:

- (gm) Emotional damage for which the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian has neglected, refused to be unable for reasons other than poverty to obtain the necessary treatment or to take steps to ameliorate the symptoms.
- (5j) "Emotional damage" means harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning. "Emotional damage" shall be evidences by one of more of the following characteristics exhibited to a severe degree: anxiety; depression; withdrawal; outward aggressive behavior; or a substantial and observable change in behavior, emotional response or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development.

Wisconsin State Statutes are available to view at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html>