

# Child Safety and Protection Guidelines

## Wheelersburg Baptist Church [\[1\]](#)

Approved by Combined Church Board on August 5, 2007

Wheelersburg Baptist Church exists to bring glory to God by fulfilling the mission Jesus gave to His church, to make obedient disciples of Christ (Matt. 28:19). In so doing, the church submits to the authority of God's Word for all its beliefs and practices (Joshua 1:8; Matt. 28:20). The Scriptures make it clear that church members are to exhibit highest standards of sexual purity (1 Thes. 4:3 "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality"). The Scriptures also make it clear that no follower of Christ should ever take advantage of another person sexually (1 Thes. 4:6 "And that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins..."). With this rationale in mind, the following policy is being adopted:

1. All adults and youth, both employed and volunteer, who work with minors must be screened by the appropriate ministry team leader or church leader and the adults must undergo a criminal background check prior to beginning work. The steps and checklist to be used in the Screening Process are labeled "Appendix A".
2. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "two-person rule" or the "open door policy" at ALL times. The "two-person rule" requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth without a partner. The "open door policy" requires the door be open at all times. The "TWO-PERSON RULE" will be MANDATORY for all employees and volunteers with our NURSERY.
4. All employees and volunteers working with children and youth are required to be members of Wheelersburg Baptist Church for a minimum of six months before they begin their work.
5. Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate, are labeled "Appendix B". Our guidelines and procedures for responding to reported incidents of abuse are labeled "Appendix C".

### IMPLEMENTATION:

These guidelines and procedures will be implemented September 1, 2007.

The Church Board will have the responsibility to implement and enforce these guidelines and procedures, including the oversight of the training of employees and volunteers, maintaining confidential records, and implementing the screening process. The Church Board will also be authorized to grant exceptions to the six month rule in: the employment of new staff, the use of short term volunteers (e.g. Nike Night helpers, Scioto Hills Camp staff and watch-care members).

Grace Provision: The Church Board may grant exceptions to this policy when deemed appropriate and necessary, such as when clear evidence of the grace of Christ has been demonstrated in the life of an individual to warrant approval for service (2 Cor. 2:5-11).

## **Appendix A**

### **Wheelersburg Baptist Church**

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### **Checklist for Screening of Employees and Volunteers**

- Been an active member of our church for at least six (6) months.
- 
- Stressed importance of having a witness present when dealing with children one-on-one (alternative: use open areas, leave door open)
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- Given copy of instructions for handling child abuse cases.
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- Completed application for ministry.
  
- Checked references and conducted a personal interview (keep written documentation).
  
- Completed an appropriate criminal background check.

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(Name of Applicant)

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(Checked by)

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(Date)

Note: This form to be posted in each worker's file. No worker is to be assigned until completion of the checklist.

## **Appendix B**

### **Wheelersburg Baptist Church**

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## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

The law requires a person to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as Wheelersburg Baptist Church to the appropriate individual in charge. A person who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees and volunteers at Wheelersburg Baptist Church must adhere to the following procedures:

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the child Protection Guidelines of Wheelersburg Baptist Church, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the pastor or, in the absence of the pastor, a person designated by the pastor and approved by the deacons. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, an employee or volunteer will also immediately make a report to the local Children's Service(456-4164) or law enforcement agency (Scioto County Sheriff's Office 354-7566). The church office telephone number is 574-5116.

\* Physical signs of molestation may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease

\* Behavioral signs of molestation may include:

- nightmares
- anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

\* Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:

- “I don’t like \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “\_\_\_\_\_ does things to me when we’re alone.”
- “I don’t like to be alone with \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “\_\_\_\_\_ fooled around with me.”

\* Adapted from *Child Abuse: Governing Law and Legislation* by I. Sloan (1983)

2. Reports shall be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the report. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness.
3. All church employees and volunteers working with minor children will receive training at the beginning of each church administrative year regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

## Appendix C

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### RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. The official spokesperson for Wheelersburg Baptist Church shall be the Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the previously designated spokesperson. All inquires or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the official spokesperson. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson.
2. The official spokesperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate local Child Protection Services agency of the county, and our insurance carrier.
3. The honor and reputation of Jesus Christ is our first priority (2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:31). The care and safety of the victim is our next priority.
4. We will not prejudge any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.
5. We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. If the accused is a church worker, that person shall be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished and the person cleared by the authorities. If the accused is a paid employee of our church, his or her income will be maintained, until allegations are cleared by authorities or until criminal charges are filed.
6. All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
7. All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Pastor or, in the absence of the Pastor, by the previously designated spokesperson, and maintained in a secure and confidential file.