

Child Safety and Protection Guidelines

Wheelersburg Baptist Church

Approved 2/2023

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 employees and volunteers must attend church sponsored training regarding the church's policies and procedures regarding child safety and protection prior to the beginning of their employment or their service as a volunteer. (volunteers are defined as: board members, teachers, children's workers, safety and security team members, and ministry leaders)
2. All adults and youth, both employed and volunteer, must be screened by the appropriate ministry team leader or church leader, all employees and volunteers must undergo a criminal background check, and approved by the board prior to beginning their employment, if a church employee; or their service as a volunteer. The steps and checklist to be used in the Screening Process are labeled "Appendix A".
3. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct, as determined by the board, shall not be employed by Wheelersburg Baptist Church and shall not be permitted to volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program.
4. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "three-person rule" at ALL times. The "three-person rule" requires that employees, volunteers and their supervisors shall never be in situations where an employee, volunteer or their supervisor is alone with child without an approved third-party being present.
5. If at all possible, the door to the classroom/office must remain open at all times. If a door needs to be closed, there must be a window in the door and two approved adults are in the room.
6. In the nursery, there must be at least 2 approved workers present at all times.
7. All employees and volunteers working with children and youth are required to have faithfully attended Wheelersburg Baptist Church for at least 6 months and have become members of the church.
8. Members of the church must be 12 years of age in order to be an approved children's worker.
9. All church policies, rules and regulations must be adhered to at all times, regardless of the location of the church sponsored activity.
10. Guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior which the reporting party believes to be 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 were initially implemented September 1, 2007, and updated in March of 2022.

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. special events, Scioto Hills Camp staff and watch-care members).

Grace Provision: The Church Board may grant exceptions to this policy when deemed appropriate and necessary. In the rare situation and 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 Child Protection Guidelines

Checklist for Screening of Employees and Volunteers

- Been faithfully attending Wheelersburg Baptist Church for at least six (6) months.
- Become a member of Wheelersburg Baptist Church.
- Stressed importance of having a witness present when dealing with children one-on-one (alternative: use open areas, leave door open)
- Attended church sponsored training.
- Completed application for ministry.
- Complete the training and successfully pass a quiz.
- Checked references and conducted a personal interview (keep written documentation).
- Completed an appropriate criminal background check.

(Name of Applicant)

(Checked by)

(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 Child Protection Guidelines

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 may be subjected to criminal prosecution and/or may be subject to civil liability. 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 child protective services agency and law enforcement in the jurisdiction where the suspected incident of abuse occurs. For Scioto County: Child Protective Services (740-456-4164) and law enforcement agency (Scioto County Sheriff's Office 740-354-7566). The church office telephone number is 740-574-5116.

The following are examples of physical or behavioral evidence which may be indicative of abuse. Please note that the foregoing are examples and not intended to be an all inclusive list:

* 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."

2. All reports of suspected abuse shall be documented in writing, with the following information provided: the date of the report; the time of the report; the name of the agency to whom the report was made; the telephone number of the entity to which the report was made; the name of the recipient of the report; a brief synopsis of the report; name and contact information of the reporting party.

Appendix C

Wheelersburg Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. The official spokesperson for Wheelersburg Baptist Church shall be the Lead Pastor, or in the absence of the Lead Pastor, the previously designated spokesperson by the Lead Pastor. All inquiries 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 priority (2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:31), while we focus on the care and safety of the victim.
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. All accused church employee(s) and volunteer(s) shall be relieved of his or her duties until the investigation of the appropriate child protective service agency and/or law enforcement is complete. If the accused is an employee, his or her pay may be maintained. A determination regarding same will be made on a case by case basis by the board.
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.