



Child Protection Policy

Purpose: To affirm our absolute and unwavering commitment to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ by providing a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all children who are impacted by our ministries for children so that they might be free to grow spiritually and develop a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Policy:

I. General Policies:

- A. Everyone who works with children in any capacity at any Fulton Church related ministries will follow these policies and procedures.
- B. No one who has a criminal history relating to child abuse or molestation will be approved to work with children in any capacity regardless of how far in the past the incidents occurred.
- C. We will use the following definitions:
 1. We will define *children* as anyone under the age of 18 years.
 2. We will define child abuse as it is defined in the Wisconsin State Statutes Section 48.981 [Abused or neglected children and abused unborn children].
 3. We will define approved worker as anyone who has been approved for service following the completion of the screening process as identified in this policy.
- D. Parents/guardians will be notified of any incident that may occur to their child in the course of any children's ministry activity.

II. Facility Policies:

- A. We will have a method for viewing all classrooms.
- B. Two adult rule: Whenever possible, two adults will be present when children are present for an activity or program. If two adults are not able to be present, room doors will be left open during programming if doing so does not interfere with the program.
- C. The diaper changing facility in the Nursery area will be in full view.
- D. Speaking with children one-on-one will be done in public places in view of other people.
- E. Monitors may visit children's activities on a random and unannounced basis.
- F. Parents/Guardians are responsible for their children when ministries have ended.

III. Child security policies:

- A. Registration policy:
 1. To assure appropriate placement and safety of children, all children who are given care in the Nursery or who attend Awana, Sunday School, VBS, Jr. Church will be registered.

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2. Registration information will consist at a minimum of the child's name and age and the parent/guardian's name, address and telephone number. Other information may include allergies or special medical concerns, permission to participate in activities, etc., as determined by the individual ministry.
3. Each responsible ministry will keep a copy of the registration information and a master copy will be on file in the church office for one year.

B. Pick-up/Drop-off policy:

1. Nursery (Age 0-5): Nursery will have a sign-in/out sheet to closely monitor the pick-up and drop-off process.
2. All Other Activities: All activities (on-site and off-site) require pick-up and drop-off at the designated area pre-determined for that activity. Children must remain in the designated area until his/her parent or guardian arrives at the area. Fulton Church will ensure that appropriate leadership/supervision is in the designated area during the pick-up/drop-off process for all children.
3. Exceptions to the Pick-up/Drop-off Policy: The church is not responsible for dependent children that drive to/from church sponsored activities. All other exceptions to the policy must be submitted *in writing* by a parent or guardian.

IV. Staffing Policies:

A. Adult Workers

1. All adults, volunteer or paid staff, who work with children in any capacity in any Fulton Church's children's ministry will be screened as outlined in this policy before being approved to work with children.
2. All potential children's ministry volunteer workers or permanent staff will complete and submit a *Children's Ministry Volunteer Application* and will give permission to obtain references and background checks from the appropriate State and/or Federal agencies.
3. Workers who will be transporting children will have proof of a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance; drivers will not be one-on-one with children, except in an emergency or unusual circumstance. In that event, the driver shall call the parent/guardian advising them of the circumstance.

B. Junior and College-age Workers

1. Junior helpers aged 11 – 18 may work, under direct supervision of approved workers. They must have completed child care/safety education as well as a modified screening process before being approved to work.
2. College-age individuals will work under the supervision of approved workers and will complete the full screening process.

C. Screening Process

1. Screening of applicants will be the responsibility of the Pastor and the Administrative Assistant.
2. It will be the responsibility of the screeners to:
 - a. Assure that a completed *Children's Ministry Volunteer Application* form is obtained from each applicant.

- b. Complete state and federal background checks as applicable for each applicant.
- c. Contact all listed references and document the information provided to them.
- d. Review all the information provided/obtained and note any irregularities that may be a concern regarding the applicant's appropriateness for working with children.
- e. Conduct an interview of the applicant if applicant is unknown to him/her or if clarification/additional information is needed.
- f. Determine whether to approve applicant to work with children.
- g. Inform applicant that he/she is approved to work with children, inform all persons responsible for applicable ministry areas and place approved worker's name on Master List of Approved Workers in church office.
- h. Assure completion and documentation of screening process and file documents in confidential church files.
- i. Implement 6 months waiting period before new volunteers can help.

D. Continuing Education and Updating of Files:

1. All approved workers will receive continuing education regarding child abuse (indicators, state laws, reporting procedures, etc.), Fulton Church's child protection policies and other topics related to working with children (e.g. how to relate to children, disciplining children, etc.)
2. All approved workers will complete an update of their application at the request of the Pastor or Administrative Assistant.
3. All workers will have records checked every 4 years.

V. Guidelines for Physical Contact and Discipline:

- A. Any physical contact between a child and a worker that is intended to provide sexual gratification is strictly prohibited.
- B. No approved children's worker will be allowed to pursue a dating relationship with a child.
- C. Limited physical contact such as a pat on the back or a handshake is permissible; hugs may be given as appropriate to the age of the child but should be short and in plain view of others.
- D. Any physical contact with a child must be discontinued immediately if the child requests so.
- E. Workers, paid or volunteer, may not interact with children in any of the following ways:
 1. Physically: strike, spank, shake, slap, etc.
 2. Verbally/mentally: belittle, degrade, threaten, humiliate
 3. Sexually in any way including inappropriate touching and/or exposure.
 4. Healthy discipline may be used as follows:
 - a. No form of punishment that inflicts physical pain or discomfort may be used.
 - b. Disruptive children or those in danger of hurting themselves or others may be removed from the group to another part of the room or, if necessary, into the hallway in full view of others. Workers are encouraged to explain to the child why their behavior is unacceptable and pray with the child.

- c. If a child's disruptive behavior continues, the parent/guardian will be asked to accompany the child during the ministry activity as long as is necessary until the child can behave appropriately.
- d. If a parent will not accompany the child or disruptive behavior continues, the child will not be able to attend any further activities.

VI. Off-sites/Overnight Policy:

- A. Off-site and/or overnight events will be planned and posted well in advance of the event date.
- B. Activities for children will follow the pick-up/drop-off policy as stated in Section III, B2. In addition, children will be counted/monitored during the activity.
- C. All activities will have approved adult workers who serve as chaperones for same sex children.
- D. Written parental/guardian consent and completion of a medical emergency/medical release will be obtained for each overnight and for each off-site event unless it has been previously obtained on the annual Registration Form.

VII. Plan for Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Abuse:

- A. Potential for Allegations of Child Abuse and/or Neglect:
 - 1. Failure to adhere to policies as outlined in the Child Protection Policy
 - 2. Allegations of child abuse brought against an individual Fulton Church children's ministry worker.
 - 3. Allegations of abuse brought by a child against an individual not associated with Fulton Church (a parent, relative, etc.)
- B. Reporting of Allegations of Abuse or Neglect:
 - 1. Fulton Church is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of children ministered to through Fulton Church's programs; any observed or reported incidents of child abuse or neglect will be taken seriously.
 - 2. All *violations of policy* and/or allegations of child abuse or neglect shall be reported immediately to the Pastor and/or the person overseeing that area of ministry.

Signatures:

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____