

**CHILD
PROTECTION POLICY
FOR
GOLDEN ACRES BAPTIST CHURCH**

January 29, 2020

To help protect children, youth and the leaders who serve them, **Golden Acres Baptist Church** has adopted the following Children's Ministry Protection Program. It is important that all **GABC** paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent physical, emotional or sexual abuse against children, as well as false and slanderous accusations against adult workers. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children.

Parameters for the Child Protection Policy

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This child protection policy applies to children (from birth to 6th grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific children's ministry-related church-sponsored activities (parenting and marriage seminars, bible studies held at the church with accompanying childcare, Vacation Bible School, Kids Camp).

All members, visitors, and guests at GABC should follow this policy. We ask anyone using the building, including community groups and others not directly affiliated with the church, to acknowledge and comply with this Child Protection Policy. The full-time staff, part time employees, and trained volunteers, shall assume responsibility for overseeing the Child Protection Policy. Such responsibility includes supervision and implementation of the policy as well as providing opportunities for education and training about the policy. The intention of the Child Protection Policy is to protect. The Policy is not intended to substantially interfere with the nurturing, teaching, and supervising of children.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Those who accept the responsibility of working with children at GABC agree to:

- treat children with respect and dignity;
- do their best to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children participating in activities;
- not engage in or condone acts of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse;
- comply with Golden Acre's Child Protection Policy; and
- report any abuse, inappropriate behaviors, or possible policy violations.

Definitions

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

Paid Staff: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric, or employee who is paid.

Children/Youth/Minor: Any person who has not reached his/her 19th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.

Adult: Any person who has reached his/her 19th birthday or as defined by state law.

Volunteer: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.

Child Sexual Abuse: any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. It includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Types of child sexual abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling,
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration,
- Intercourse,
- Forcible rape.

Types of child sexual abuse that do not involve touching include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal comments,
- Risqué or sexual jokes,
- Pornographic videos and photography,
- Obscene phone calls,
- Exhibitionism,
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and an adult. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or child. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered to be forced whether or not the child consents to it.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by a child is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between children when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child has power over the other child. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children.

Child Emotional Abuse: any language directed toward a child by an adult that is intended to cause emotional anxiety, pain, or other severe emotional disturbance. It is mental or

emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Child Physical Abuse: nonaccidental bodily injury of a child through physical contact or mistreatment.

Neglect: the failure to provide for a child's basic needs or the failure to protect a child from harm.

Protecting the Children Before They Arrive

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday or Wednesday services. Every applicant who wishes to serve in children's ministry is required to go through a screening process and attend childcare training.

Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, GABC has established a screening procedure to approve all volunteers to work with our children:

- All volunteers must complete and pass a background check provide by GABC.
- All volunteers must be members of GABC and in good standing and have completed the New Members and Next Step courses offered.
- All volunteers must be nineteen years of age or older.
- Children or youth who are at least one grade older than the children they are assisting are welcome to help (subject to the approval and direction of the Children's Ministry Administrator), but they are always in addition to the adult volunteers. Children cannot help in the nursery until they are 16 years of age and then must be accompanied by a parent.
- All volunteers must have completed GABC's childcare training.
- All volunteers must have completed the volunteer application and been recommended by or in consultation with the pastor responsible for children's ministry.
- At least one reference check must be satisfactorily completed prior to beginning of service.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.
- Volunteers are to be approved by the Children's Pastor.
- All volunteers must repeat the screening procedures and criminal background checks every two years.

GABC reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer's ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children.

Any volunteer, helper, deacon, staff or elder (or any GABC member) who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to the Children's Pastor. He or she

also must be personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose such information to the authorities.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors, this includes but not limited to:

Any offense against minors as defined by state law.

A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, or family violence.

A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

(Clause to give some wiggle worm – if something not major comes up we can sit and talk about it)

Sexual Offender at GABC:

GABC may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation but they must adhere to specific guidelines. However, first check with the offender's probation/parole officer for any restrictions regarding attending services or other functions where children are present. Ask the probation/parole officer to put any restrictions in writing. If restrictions don't prohibit participation, implement the following four guidelines.

A known sexual offender cannot participate as a director, teacher, counselor or ministry leader in any of the child programs in any way;

A known sexual offender *may be* required to report in and be assigned to an escort who will accompany him or her at all times while on the campus at GABC.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible. These materials will be archived.

Training

All children's ministry staff and volunteers must attend GABC's childcare training before they are allowed to work with the children. Full-time staff who do not have direct contact with children will receive training on child protection policies.

Supervision Guidelines

Unless an extenuating situation exists:

Two Adult Guidelines

Generally, two unrelated (e.g., not spouse, sibling, parent or child) adults should be present at all activities involving children. When two related adults are leading or chaperoning activities with children outside of Sunday School, at least one additional adult must be present.

- A. Open Spaces. When many people are in the building (e.g., Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights) and contact with a child is incidental to what the adult is doing, it is sufficient that the single adult is in an open space (fellowship hall, kitchen, lounge, sanctuary) and anyone can look in on them.
- B. Teens. Teenagers (13-18) are allowed to help in the classrooms, but do not count toward the two adult guideline. Teenagers are required to meet all expectations that an adult volunteer is expected to meet. Teenagers will not be required to do a background check.
- C. Ratios. Activity leaders should use good judgment in requiring that an appropriate number of adults participate and in considering the level of qualification for each adult.
 - Children 0-11 months: One adult for every three children
 - Children 12 – 35 months: One adult for every four children
 - Children ages 3-5: One adult for every eight children
 - Children ages 6-12: One adult for every twelve children
- D. Working Alone. If absolutely necessary, an adult may work alone with children if there is visual access to the room on the main floor of the building, e.g., open door or room with a window in the door. Prior to working alone with children, the adult should make a reasonable effort to ensure that a second adult is present or that another adult may check in without advance notice. The adult in charge will typically inform the parents that there is not a second adult present. If only one adult is present or available, that adult can cancel the event and inform parents that there was not adequate supervision available to have the event.
- E. In the event of an overnight trip – no adults are students who are chaperons are allowed to stay in the same room as a child. As long as the ratio permits we will have an adult room next to a child's room and they will be assigned the supervision of the rooms next to them.
- F. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.

Diaper Changing and Rest Room Procedure

0 Months through 2 Years Old

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children prior to signing them into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once or as need during service. Only women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers must be changed in the presence of another volunteer.

Pre-K3 through Kindergarten

Parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class. At check-in and drop-off, parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty-training. A child must be potty-trained to promote to the Pre-K rooms. If there is circumstances that are prevent a child from being potty-trained the parent is responsible to talk with the Children's Pastor to see what exceptions, if any, can be made. In the event that a child needs to use the rest room, the volunteers will send the child to the restroom with an adult or teenage volunteer. The person at the check-in desk will assist in watching the children while in and out of the bathroom. All volunteers are to wait outside the door of the restroom, while the restroom door is open. The volunteer should wait outside the restroom door unless the child requires assistance. If the child needs assistance the room volunteer will step to the stall and the check-in volunteer will then stand at the restroom door. The volunteers are to help the child in the view of each other. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer) before returning to the classroom.

1st to 6th Grade

For all other classes, any child needing to use the rest room shall go with another child of the same age and sex. The children are to go with a buddy and travel to and from the restroom together. The children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return with the volunteer to their classroom. The teacher should check on the students from time to time and if needed go and check in on them.

Discipline

All adults leading programs involving contact with children will be guided by the following constructive discipline guidelines in order to maintain order:

1. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the adult will tell the child specifically what he or she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., "We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building." If this is not effective, the child should be guided to another activity.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be placed in an area of the room where he or she will work alone, away from the other students for a brief period of time, the number of minutes not to exceed the age of the child.
3. If the child's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the teacher is to walk the child to the Children's Pastor or send for the Children's Pastor to come and get the

child. The Children's Pastor will then decide if the child needs to be held out for a period of time or if the parents need to be brought out of service. If a child must be removed from a classroom or other activity, the situation will be discussed with his or her parents.

4. If misbehavior occurs at an offsite location, the parent may be called to pick up the child.

5. In no case is an adult permitted to physically or verbally abuse a child who is misbehaving.

There will be no use of corporal punishment.

Healthy Child Policy

Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, several guidelines are in place concerning disease.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.

2. Volunteers will use disposable latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills.

3. Hand washing or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and volunteers.

4. Toys and equipment should be washed and disinfected regularly.

5. GABC is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. The Children's Pastor and lead volunteers have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the Healthy Child Policy guidelines.

A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the sign-in desk with a volunteer while the parents are located.

Neither volunteers nor church staff may give any medication to any child.

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Children's Pastor before signing the child into class. This allows the staff to assess the needs of the child and assist parents in transitioning their child into a classroom setting.

Reporting and Responding

In maintaining our protection of children, adults are required to report abuse, suspected abuse, or neglect. A person may suspect abuse by noting signs of abuse, being told of abuse, or witnessing conduct that is of concern. Do not hesitate to report abuse. When you report what you have seen or heard, you may help a child to stay safe. If you have noticed the warning signs of abuse and neglect, please call. If you do not report your suspicions, the abuse of a child might continue. You should have a reasonable suspicion of the abuse, but you do not have to "prove" the abuse or be positive that it occurred. If you report in good faith, you are immune from civil or criminal liability.

Reporting and Documentation

- A. If the child is in immediate danger or there is an emergency situation, call 911
- B. If you suspect that a child is physically, sexually, or emotionally abused or neglected, call the Russell County Sheriff's Department, 334-298-6535, as soon as possible.
- C. All knowledge about abuse or suspected abuse should also be shared, as soon as possible, with the Children' Pastor. If the Children's Pastor cannot be located tell another member of the staff.
- D. If inappropriate behavior or policy violations are observed that warrant concern but do not involve abuse, as soon as possible notify the Children' Pastor. If the Children's Pastor cannot be located tell another member of the staff.
- E. Please document what you have seen and to whom you have reported it and give a copy of any documentation to the Children' Pastor. If the Children's Pastor cannot be located tell another member of the staff.
- F. Any concerned person can report suspicions of child abuse and neglect. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons who report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. "In good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.

Child Protection Program Acknowledgment:

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. **GABC** reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the **GABC** or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the **GABC's** Child Protection Policy. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the **GABC**.

Print Name

Signature

Date