

SOUTH WATERBORO BIBLE CHAPEL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

November 2015

Children's ministries are near to the heart of God. The Bible refers to children as a precious "*heritage from the LORD*" (Psalm 127:3) – literally an inheritance received directly from God into our care and protection. The entrustment of these treasures, with such eternal value and consequence, carries with it a responsibility for stewardship which also requires churches and ministry leaders to do everything they can to protect them. In short, the church must be a safe, secure and loving environment for children. Therefore, South Waterboro Bible Chapel will make every possible effort to prevent any child from being harmed (whether verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect) while in its care, to protect the church and its workers from false allegations, and to respond appropriately and legally to allegations of abuse of a child by any ministry worker, whether paid staff or volunteer. Therefore, the following measures are implemented which all ministry workers are required to abide by...

Definitions

- For purposes of this policy, a "child" legally refers to any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- For purposes of this policy, inappropriate touching is defined as any physical contact with private areas of the body which would normally be covered by clothing. Obviously assisting a young child in the bathroom or changing a diaper is a sensitive matter. Therefore it will be required that the child's parent or responsible adult be contacted. As needed, nursery and junior church leaders will contact the deacon designated to be "on call" for that date / event.

Selection of Workers

- No volunteer will be considered for any position involving regular ministry with children until he/she has been involved with South Waterboro Bible Chapel for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between the church leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.
- A person must be a member of South Waterboro Bible Chapel to be considered for the position of leader and/or teacher in any children's ministry of the church.
- Anyone seeking to work with children must attend a child protection policy meeting led by the leadership of South Waterboro Bible Chapel along with completing and signing this written application supplied by the church. The application form will be maintained in confidence in a secure church file, accessible only by the pastor.
- In compliance with law, policies and wisdom, a background check may be conducted.
- We recognize that there are times when it is necessary or desirable for ministry workers who are themselves under eighteen (18) years of age to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to younger ("underage" / "minor") workers:
 - They must be under the supervision of an adult member and never alone with children.
 - They must comply with all the conditions as specified above.

Guidelines

- A non-related individual child may not be in the private presence of an individual ministry worker at any time for any reason. If a ministry worker is alone in the presence of multiple children and

there is no window in a door, doors to rooms must remain at least partially open and there must be no fewer than two students with a children's worker. Areas of particular focus are the restroom, smaller or isolated classrooms and rooms, the nursery and a car / vehicle. Obviously large open and public spaces such as the sanctuary, fellowship hall or playground are not considered "private presence". However, caution and prudence is still advised even in these situations.

- Any form of physical contact with a child (other than an immediate family member) is a sensitive and potentially vulnerable area. While it must be acknowledged that gestures such as a pat on the shoulder or even hug are encouraging and may be supportive and helpful, caution and restraint must be exercised.
- At no time will any form of corporal punishment be administered, no matter how seemingly simple, innocent or necessary. This is a parental matter which must be deferred to the parent or responsible adult with whom the child came.
- Excessive verbal confrontation must be avoided. The Bible states: "*A soft answer turns away wrath...*" (Proverbs 15:1). Someone has wisely said, "Shouting to make your child obey is like using the horn to steer your car, and you get about the same results." If there is an issue, go to or call the child's parent or responsible adult.

Reporting Procedure

- Any suspicion or allegation of physical abuse or sexual abuse of a child by any ministry worker must be immediately reported to the pastor and elders. In addition, a written witness statement will be requested.
- An immediate, thorough investigation will be launched which may include and if evidence warrants will include timely reporting to law enforcement and other appropriate civil authorities as required by law.
- The child's parent(s) or legal guardian will be notified.
- The ministry worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be suspended from working with children and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. This suspension will become permanent for any person found guilty of the alleged abuse or misconduct.

Emergency Procedure

- Call 9-1-1 immediately in the event of any serious emergency.
- First aid kits are located and marked in the church office cabinet, nursery and kitchen.
- Please be very cautious regarding allergy concerns. Note that South Waterboro Bible Chapel is a NUT FREE facility.
- In the event of any emergency which requires evacuation of the church building, please immediately and calmly organize and guide children to the driveway of the church parsonage next door. At least one adult must remain with the children for supervision until their parent(s) can locate and take responsibility for their child(ren).

Please answer the following questions (use extra paper if needed) and return to the pastor:

Have you ever worked with children? _____ Yes _____ No; If "yes", please name all:

Church _____

Day Care _____

Other _____
As a... Teacher? _____ Helper/Assistant? _____ Other Position? _____

Have you ever been arrested for or formally accused of a criminal offense? _____; If “yes”, please explain: _____

Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense? _____; If “yes”, please explain: _____

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or anything in your background that would call into question you being entrusted with the supervision of children? _____; If “yes”, please explain: _____

Acknowledgements

- By signing below, I am stating that I have heard, read, understand and agree with these precautions and requirements.
- By signing below, I am stating that I have answered the above questions truthfully and completely.
- By signing below, I understand that children’s ministry workers will be screened and a future background check may be conducted to which I give consent.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____