Park Cities
BAPTIST CHURCH

# SAFE @ CHURCH POLICIES

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## STRATEGY

A. Strive to provide a safe and secure environment at PCBC for all children (ages birth to grade 12).

B. Strive to protect children from the possibility of physical or sexual abuse while at PCBC facility or program.

C. Educate and train PCBC volunteers to identify and guard against child abuse.

D. Reduce the possibility of false accusations against PCBC volunteers.

## THE SAFE @ CHURCH BOARD

The Safe @ Church Board shall consist of the Division Minister: Next Gen Pastor, Department Ministers: Preschool Minister, Children Minister, Student Pastor, Preschool Operations Manager, and Childhood Education Committee Chairperson. Also included will be the Executive Pastor as well as an attorney appointed by the Executive Pastor. The Board will meet as needed for any of the following purposes as deemed necessary:

A. Monitor compliance with the Safe @ Church Program including background checks and training.

B. Annually review and recommend changes in the Safe @ Church program of the Church.

C. Review and determine the eligibility of those individuals who did not meet all the volunteer requirements when an appeal is made, or an allegation of abuse or neglect is made.

## POLICIES:

A. Be a regularly attending member of Park Cities Baptist Church or a member of a Connect Group or Small Group of the church. Non-members must successfully complete a background check and training to work with minors in Connect Groups or any church function.

B. Complete a Volunteer Application, a criminal background check, and awareness training using our online secure website.

C. Communicate with a Minister, Associate, or Ministry Representative over the area of service.

D. Personal references will be required on the Volunteer Application.

## SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS:

Special Event Volunteers are those persons who on certain occasions assist cleared volunteer workers in an event. All special event volunteers must also complete a criminal background check and awareness training using our secure website.

## FREQUENCY OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK:

Follow-up criminal background checks will be conducted annually. At the discretion of the Safe @ Church Board, the Executive Pastor or Division Minister, rechecks can be made at any time.

## TWO CLEARED PERSON RULE:

It is the position of Park Cities Baptist Church that at all regularly scheduled events, that a minimum of two cleared adults will be present at the activities of minor children. The two cleared person rule requires that the two people *not* be related by blood or marriage. At the discretion of the Division Minister, or their designee, non-cleared persons may observe the two cleared persons, on a one-time only basis but will be supervised in doing so.

**Only a cleared person may supervise children at the restroom or at an overnight or off-campus site.**

## OBSERVATION OF CHILDREN:

Church activities for children and students should be scheduled in areas visible to someone outside the room. On all doorways, the glass panel should be clear of any covering to allow observation into the room.

## PARENTAL PERMISSION:

Parental Permission is required in writing for all children and students to attend church sponsored

off-campus events and other events as designated by the Pastor, Executive Pastor, Divisional minister or ministry representative.

## AUTO SAFETY:

Persons who will drive church vans, buses, or private vehicles must have a DMV background check before transporting passengers. They must maintain a valid driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the Church, and comply with all Church Transportation policies.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

The Preschool, Children, and Student Departments shall be responsible for overseeing the training of all church volunteers in recognizing and preventing child abuse. This training will be overseen by the Safe @ Church Board. Training may include classes, individual counseling, video and online training. Additional training should be provided for special event ministries (Upward Basketball, GetAway, Summer Camps, special classes, etc.) The classes may utilize one or more of the above mediums for training. It is the duty of the Department Ministers and the Safe @ Church Board to follow-up to ensure that training has been accomplished and documented.

## THE SCREENING PROCESS:

All those who come in contact with minor children (those under the age of 18) and are not currently subject to the employment screening process will be screened as a volunteer.

All volunteers must be at least in 6th grade or older and approved by both the Student and Preschool or Children's Ministers. Service is an important part of the Student Ministry process, and we want to have students participate and lead when appropriate and available. Student helpers are not counted to help satisfy the Two Cleared Person Rule. Students never supervise children alone.

ALL INFORMATION ACQUIRED DURING THE SCREENING PROCESS WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL BE KEPT AS CONFIDENTIAL AS PRACTICAL.

## THE APPEALS PROCESS:

Any person who applies and is not cleared, or any volunteer who is suspended for any reason, has the right to appeal as set forth in the Appeal Process. Please check for the information through the appropriate Department Minister who will forward a request to the Safe @ Church Board.

### Suspension of Church Related Duties:

Upon notification, PCBC shall suspend any person accused of child abuse or neglect from all Church related duties involving children until such time as the accusation(s) or abuse or neglect are resolved to the satisfaction of the Safe @ Church Board. This determination will be at the sole discretion of the Safe @ Church Board.

## REPORTING AN OBSERVED OR SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT :

*Any staff or volunteer who reasonably believes that a child or student's physical or mental health has been or may be adversely affected by child abuse or neglect must report this to Child Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400* ***AND*** *to their Division or Department Minister.*

### Child Abuse and Neglect

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS) immediately. Reporting is required by anyone with such a belief, including any church employee, volunteer, agent, or contractor.

If a person with this suspicion is a professional, they must make the report within 24 hours. In this context, "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term expressly includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, employees of a clinic or healthcare facility that provides reproductive services, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers. Even when working in a volunteer capacity, those who fit this definition must report within 24 hours.

An employee or volunteer shall also make a report if the employee or volunteer has cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and the employee or volunteer determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child or an elderly or disabled person.

### Reports may be made to any of the following:

- A law enforcement agency;
- The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, at (800) 252-5400 or on the Web at www.txabusehotline.org;
- If applicable, the state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility in which the suspected abuse or neglect occurred; or
- The agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of children.

However, if the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, the report must be made to CPS, unless the report is to the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility where the suspected abuse or neglect took place; or the report is to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department as a report of suspected abuse or neglect in a juvenile justice program or facility.

Reporting your suspicion to a church minister, an administrator, or another church staff member does NOT fulfill your responsibilities under the law.