

# Evergreen Baptist Church

## Child Protection Policy

(Revised: 05/02/08)

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#### 1. **Introduction**

Matthew 22:37-39 says, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all you heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” We truly want to glorify God in all that we do (I Cor. 10:31). First, in all we do, we want this child protection policy to show our love for God in our heart, soul, and mind. We also want to show our love for God by loving children, protecting them, and providing a safe environment in which to learn about God.

Jesus Christ had a true love for children. We see Jesus pray for children (Mat. 19:13), heal children (Mt. 17:18; Mk. 5:40-41; Jn. 4:49-50), relate our faith through children (Mat. 18:2-5), and love children through His actions (Mt. 21:15; Mk. 9:37; Lk. 13:34). Jesus Christ also warned that it would be better if a millstone were hung around a person’s neck than to cause a child to sin (Lk. 17:1, 2). Through Christ’s example Evergreen Baptist Church desires and hopes to love children by writing a Children’s Protection Policy that puts a priority on safe biblical education.

#### 2. **Purpose:**

The purpose for the following guidelines and procedures are set forth to:

- a. Provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring and grow our children and youth to the Savior.
- b. Ensure recruitment in checking the suitability of EBC Staff, Leaders, Teens and Helpers to work with children.
- c. Provide training that will help recognize abuse or neglect and provide standardized reporting procedures.

- d. Develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- e. Raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- f. Protecting all those involved in ministry from false accusations.

Everyone who cares for minors under the sponsorship of Evergreen Baptist Church must understand, follow and abide with the Child Protection Policy of Evergreen Baptist Church.

### 3. Definition of Terms

- a. **Adult:** A person at least 18 years of age.
- b. **Minor:** A person under 18 years of age.
- c. **Pastor:** Those designated by EBC as pastoral staff for oversight of the ministry of the church through instruction and application of the Word of God (1 Timothy 5:17). The role of Pastor is the overseer, elder, and shepherd (Acts 20:17, 28). The pastor's primary role is to prepare the church membership to do the work of the ministry and bring the church to maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- d. **Deacon:** A member who has been chosen to serve in all spiritual work of the church, seek out such members as need special help and encouragement, inquire in the fitness and qualifications of applicants for membership, visit the sick, distribute the Lord's Supper, advise and aid the Pastors in all matters pertaining to the spiritual interests of the church.
- e. **Staff Member:** Any person serving at Evergreen Baptist Church in an official paid capacity. This policy applies to any staff member ministering in the Nursery, Awana Clubs, Children's Church, Sunday School, Children's Music Programs, Youth Programs and any other ministry involving a person under age 18.
- f. **EBC Member is a person who has...**
  - i. Given a personal testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - ii. Given Scripture proof as a basis for salvation assurance.
  - iii. Been baptized by immersion after salvation.
  - iv. Agreement on all points of the Covenant, Articles of Faith, and policies of the church.
  - v. Been officially voted in as a member of the church.
- g. **Christian Education Committee:** Composed of the heads of ministries as determined by the EBC Constitution or appointed by the Pastors and Deacons.
- h. **EBC Leader:** Any Staff Member or adult, who is a member of Evergreen Baptist Church, completed the application process and been approved to work with minors.
- i. **EBC Helper:** Any person who is NOT a member of Evergreen Baptist Church who has NOT completed the application process or is waiting for approval but has been given the permission to help in some capacity.
- j. **EBC Teen Leader:** Any teen aged 13-17, who is a member of Evergreen Baptist Church, completed the application process and been approved to work with minors.
- k. **Application Coordinator:** A member of who has been approved by the Pastors and Deacons to review all EBC Leader Applications, EBC Teen Leader Applications, and background checks.
- l. **Mobile Ministry Director:** Coordinates the use and maintenance of all church vehicles.
- m. **Nursery Supervisor:** the overseer and director of workers within the nursery.
- n. **Serious Physical Injury:** Any injury that...
  - i. Causes the child severe pain; or
  - ii. Significantly impairs the child's physical functioning, either temporarily or permanently; or
  - iii. Results in death.
- o. **Serious Mental Injury:** A psychological condition, as diagnosed by a licensed physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment that:

- i. Renders the child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
  - ii. Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.
- p. **Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:** The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement of any child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction. Visual depiction includes pornography, videotaping, computer depicting or filming of any sexually explicit conduct or the rape, sexual assault, deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault or other form of sexual exploitation.

**4. Examples of Appropriate Touch and Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:**

**a. Examples of Appropriate Touch:**

- i. Holding a child's hand while listening to him or her or when walking to an activity.
- ii. Putting your arm around the shoulder when comforting.
- iii. Gently patting the head or shoulders, and holding a preschool child who is crying.
- iv. Appropriate touching must always be "above reproach" and has the child's best interest and welfare at heart, as well as the personal testimony of the staff person.

**b. Examples of Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:**

- i. Inappropriate touching such as fondling, oral, genital, or anal penetration, intercourse, forcible rape and the like.
- ii. Inappropriate non-touching verbal comments, pornographic pictures of any type, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, allowing children to witness sexual activity, and the like.

**5. Qualifications for Pastor, Deacons, EBC Staff, Leaders, Helpers and Teen Leaders**

**a. Qualifications of Pastor(s)**

- i. Please refer to the Evergreen Baptist Church Constitution *ARTICLE VII. Pastors* for all the qualifications of Pastoral Staff.

**b. Qualifications of Deacon(s)**

- i. Please refer to the Evergreen Baptist Church Constitution *ARTICLE IX. Deacons* for all the qualifications of Deacons.

**c. Qualifications of Staff Member(s) and EBC Leaders:**

- i. Be an EBC Member.
- ii. Attend Evergreen Baptist Church for a minimum of six months.
- iii. Be receptive to instruction from a Pastor or qualified teacher on the basis of Christian faith.
- iv. Desire to effectively teach people to observe God's commands through the knowledge of His Word.
- v. Complete the EBC Leader Application Process.
- vi. Attend a training seminar. The C.E. Committee will specify and arrange a training time.
- vii. Deacons may waive certain qualification for short term staff positions.

**d. Qualification of EBC Teen Leaders:**

- i. Be an EBC Member.
- ii. Aged 13-17.
- iii. Attend Evergreen Baptist Church for a minimum of six months.
- iv. Complete the EBC Teen Leader Application Process.
- v. Be accompanied by an EBC Leader while working in a ministry.
- vi. Be receptive to instruction from a Pastor or qualified teacher on the basis of Christian faith.
- vii. Desire to effectively teach people to observe God's commands through the knowledge of His Word.

- viii. Attend a training seminar. The C.E. Committee will specify and arrange a training time.
- e. Qualifications of EBC Helpers:**
  - i. EBC Helpers are non-members who may be able to help under special circumstances.
    - 1. Note: An EBC Helper is a temporary position and people who attend Evergreen should move toward membership.
  - ii. An EBC Helper may be able to help in things such as...
    - 1. Providing items for a class or event.
    - 2. Setting up for a class or event.
    - 3. Observing a class or event.
  - iii. EBC Helpers are NOT allowed to teach or disciple individuals or groups in any official capacity.
  - iv. The EBC leader who is over the ministry must approve EBC Helpers before events or meetings.

## **6. Application Guidelines and Procedures**

### **a. Staff and EBC Leader Application Guidelines**

- i. There are six steps to the Application Process:
  - 1. Each adult will complete an EBC Leader Application.
  - 2. Each adult will sign a Background Check Release Form.
  - 3. The Application Coordinator will have a background check done on all applicants.
  - 4. A person(s) on the C.E. Committee will contact the references provided by the Applicant.
  - 5. A person(s) of the C.E. Committee will set up an interview with the applicant by a Pastor, Deacon or C.E. Committee.
  - 6. The C.E. Committee, in accordance with the Pastor(s) and Deacons, recommend approval or disapproval of each applicant based on a review of the application.

### **b. Teen Leader Application Guidelines**

- i. There are three steps to the Application Process:
  - 1. Each teen will complete an EBC Teen Leader Application.
  - 2. A person(s) of the C.E. Committee will set up an interview with the applicant by a Pastor, Deacon or C.E. Committee.
  - 3. The C.E. Committee, in accordance with the Pastor(s) and Deacons, recommend approval or disapproval of each applicant based on a review of the application.

### **c. Maintaining Confidentiality**

- i. The completed EBC Leader Application, Teen Leader Application and Background Check will be held in the strictest confidence by Evergreen Baptist Church.
- ii. The applicant will...
  - 1. Complete the EBC Leader Application and seal it in the envelope that accompanies the application.
  - 2. Give or mail his application to the Application Coordinator.
- iii. The Application Coordinator will...
  - 1. Review the background check and file it in a manner secure from unauthorized access.
  - 2. Review the application before C.E. Committee reviews application.
    - a. Note: If an applicant has any evident finding(s) from the background check or application review the applicant will be asked permission to allow the C.E. Committee, Pastors or Deacons review the items in question.
- iv. Upon review of the application the C.E. Committee will...

1. Contact references on the leader application on a confidential basis.
2. Set up an interview with a Pastor, Deacon or personnel of C.E. Committee.
- v. Upon approval or denial of the applicant the Application Coordinator will...
  1. Keep all Leader Applications, Teen Leader Applications, and Background Checks in a lockable device.
  2. Keep a current list of all the screened adults in a file in the Church Office.

**d. Application Denial: Process of Appeal**

- i. If an individual is denied privilege of ministry based on confidential information, that person shall have the right of appeal. This appeal must be made in writing and fully release Evergreen Baptist Church of any responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of information. The letter of appeal will be assigned to an appeal committee made up of the Senior Pastor, Christian Education Committee and Three Deacons. The committee will hear the appeal and render a decision.

**e. Policy Regarding Ministry Application Denial**

- i. Any person whose application process is denied identifies him or her as having a “sign of or indicated” case of child abuse or neglect in his or her background will NOT be hired for a paid staff position or allowed to serve in any capacity with minors at Evergreen Baptist Church.
- ii. Any person whose application is denied should talk to a pastor of EBC for other ministry opportunities.
- iii. Evergreen Baptist Church recognizes that people have been affected in different capacities when it comes to child abuse. Please understand EBC wants to make sure that help is pursued no matter what the circumstance whether it be helping you through the church or using outside resources.

**7. Ministry Guidelines and Procedures**

**a. General Guidelines and Procedures**

- i. All adults involved in the teaching or discipling of minors at Evergreen Baptist Church must attend for a minimum of six months, be an EBC Member and complete the Application Process.
- ii. All EBC Staff members and Leaders are required to attend a risk reduction training meeting annually.
- iii. Each approved adult applicant will agree to attend a training seminar. The C.E. Committee will specify and arrange a training time.
- iv. At all meetings or events involving minors there is to be a minimum of two EBC Leaders or one EBC Leader and one EBC Helper on the premises.
- v. EBC Staff, Leaders and Helpers should not take a minor into a private place out of view of other adults.
- vi. Where possible, and practical, the 'two-adult' rule, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities where minors are involved and are present at all times, should be followed.
  1. However, it is acceptable for only one adult leader to be present during classroom situations of a larger ministry if the classroom door is kept open or a window is available for the activities to be occasionally monitored.
- vii. All individual visits with minors must be cleared with or/and approved by a parent/legal guardian.
- viii. All parents will be required to fill out an EBC Medical Release Form for all AWANA and Journey Ministries.
- ix. All minors’ ministries or events held off the property of Evergreen Baptist Church must be cleared through the Christian Education Committee by the use of on Ministry or Event Release Form.

- x. Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction is forbidden.
- xi. EBC Staff, Leaders and Helpers need to be aware that they may work with minors who, because of past circumstances and abuses they have experienced, may use a relationship to obtain “special attention”. The adult is always considered responsible for maintaining an appropriate relationship, even if a child behaves inappropriately. Adults should not place themselves in compromising or vulnerable positions.
- xii. Inappropriate behavior towards minors, including failure to follow policy and standards are grounds for discipline.
- xiii. A co-ed team of staff members or leaders is required for an overnight co-ed event.

**b. Restroom Guidelines for Children’s Ministries:**

- i. It is recommended that bathroom breaks be taken as a whole group.
- ii. If a single minor needs to be escorted to the bathroom...
  - 1. An EBC Leader should escort the minor to the restroom and wait outside the door.
  - 2. And absolutely needs help try to get another adult to be with you.
  - 3. And a leader must go into the restroom solo they must leave the main restroom entry door open and leave the stall door open to help the minor.

**c. Nursery Procedures and Guidelines:**

- i. Procedures for EBC Leaders and Helpers:
  - 1. One EBC Leader must be in the nursery at all times.
  - 2. An EBC leader’s first responsibility is to the children and the children need your full attention.
  - 3. Only assigned EBC Leaders, Helpers and nursing mothers are allowed in the nursery.
  - 4. The person in charge must be an adult EBC leader.
  - 5. Do not allow school-age children in the nursery. The safety of the babies is compromised when older children are in the nursery.
  - 6. Never use any type of corporal punishment. Use a firm “no” and physically remove the child from the problem area.
  - 7. Keep the nursery bathroom door shut at all times.
  - 8. Keep the bottom half of the door between the crib room and the nursery shut and latched.
  - 9. All nursery entry doors besides the main nursery entrance door must be locked during meetings and events.
  - 10. No nursery worker shall administer medication.
- ii. Corroboration with other churches.
  - 1. EBC may designate people from other churches to help in the nursery as long as the following procedures are followed.
    - a. List of workers are submitted to the Christian Education Committee before the event or ministry.
    - b. Churches are called and people are checked for...
      - i. Membership
      - ii. Character
      - iii. Briefed and commit to abide to the Child Protection Policy.

**d. Teen/Youth Guidelines and Procedures**

- i. EBC Staff and Adult Leaders are not allowed to date, court or go out with any junior or senior high student.
- ii. One-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place. When counseling a member of the other gender, a member of

the same gender as the counselee shall be present in the area during the counseling session.

- iii. Staff should form male/female ministry teams whenever possible.
- iv. Driving alone with a student of the other gender is strictly prohibited.
- v. No wrestling or physical horseplay should ever occur between members of the opposite sex.

**e. Van Drivers Guidelines for Minor's Ministries:**

- i. All drivers must fill out an EBC Driver Application, hand it to the Mobile Ministry Director and be approved by the Mobile Ministry Director.
- ii. Applicants must be at least 21, have a valid drivers license and legal permission by EBC Ministry Leader through a vehicle requisition form.
- iii. All drivers using personal vehicles for Minor's Ministries must meet the guidelines as stated above.

**8. Incident Reporting Process and Forms**

- a. Any adult EBC Staff, Leader or Helper who has reason to believe that a minor has been sexually, physically or mentally abused will immediately report it to a Pastor or Deacon of Evergreen Baptist Church.
- b. In the event that anyone personally witnesses an occurrence in violation of this policy; that person should stop the abuse and report it immediately to a Pastor or Deacon.
- c. In either case, the witness will be asked to complete an Incident Report. All parties involved will be treated with dignity and support and provided a safe environment. All efforts at handling the incident should be documented on the Incident Report.
- d. A Pastor or Deacon will promptly investigate the allegations by discussing the matter with the victim, the accused and any other witnesses to the incident.
- e. Any adult EBC Staff, Leader or Helper who has a supposed sexual, physical or mental allegation against them will be suspended from the ministry they were involved in until the allegation is resolved.
- f. The Pastor or Deacon in charge will notify the parents or guardians of the child. The Pastor(s) and/or Deacon(s) are responsible for reporting offenses to the appropriate authority.
- g. Actions taken by the Pastor or Deacon in charge in no way restrict the freedom or responsibility of any worker to report incidents to the appropriate authority.

**9. Suspected Physical, Mental, and Sexual Abuse Reporting Procedure**

- a. A report is called for if a child:
  - i. Verbally complains about or mentions in passing, specific acts of neglect or abuse or exposure to sexual activity, pornography or abuse of others.
  - ii. Verbally complains about or mentions in passing vague references to having to do bad things, having bad or secret things done to him or her.
  - iii. Alludes to abuse or neglect in writing, prayer requests or drawings; Has an injury that cannot be adequately explained or which the child attempts to hide or deny.
  - iv. Has an inordinate number of unexplained injuries.
  - v. Has an age inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual matters or acting out of sexual behavior.
  - vi. Is frequently dirty or smelly or inadequately dressed, have bad teeth or hair falling out, is undernourished, does not receive appropriate medical care for injuries.
  - vii. Reports or evidences difficulty urinating or discomfort when sitting.
  - viii. Reports or evidences an atypical fear or discomfort of being with particular people.
  - ix. All allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect shall be kept confidential and be discussed with the Pastor or Deacons.

- b. If and when a minor first speaks of abuse or neglect, be sure to:
  - i. Take his or her word seriously.
  - ii. Do not deny or minimize the problem.
  - iii. Stay calm and listen.
  - iv. Offer reassurance that it was right to tell you and that it is right to talk with you about what may be bothering him or her.
  - v. Do not promise you will not tell anyone. If the child asks, tell him with whom you will discuss the problem.
  - vi. Do not to interrogate the minor to find out all the facts. It is your responsibility to listen to what the child is saying and immediately report your conversation.
- c. An Incident Report should be made to a Pastor, Deacon, or Leader.
- d. Pastor(s) and Deacon(s) will decide whether CFS (Child and Family Services), local authorities, or any other agency needs to be contacted due to alleged abuse problems.

## **10. Protecting Staff, Leaders and EBC Helpers**

- a. Purpose
  - i. Evergreen Baptist Church desires to protect minors from abuse and provide a safe environment for minors to learn about God. We also desire to protect all involved in church ministries from abuse from/by minors and provide a safe environment to teach about God.
  - ii. The guidelines listed below will help our staff, leaders, helpers and minors see that proper steps will be taken against those minors who are abusive.
- b. Abusive Behavior Signs:
  - i. Verbal: Cursing or swearing, yelling, threatening, name-calling, or demoralizing of another person.
  - ii. Physical: Hitting, slapping, smacking, punching, pushing, kicking or holding of another person.
  - iii. Sexual: inappropriate touching, rubbing, pinching, poking, hugging and holding of another person.
- c. Guidelines and Procedures:
  - i. Any adult EBC Staff, Leader, Teen Leader or Helper who has reason to believe that a minor has abused someone will immediately report it to a Pastor or Deacon of Evergreen Baptist Church.
  - ii. In the event that anyone personally witnesses an occurrence in violation of this policy; that person should stop the abuse and report it immediately to a Pastor or Deacon.
  - iii. In either case, the witness will be asked to complete an Incident Report. All parties involved will be treated with dignity and support and provided a safe environment. All efforts at handling the incident should be documented.
  - iv. A Pastor or Deacon will promptly investigate the allegations by discussing the matter with the victim, the accused and any other witnesses to the incident.
  - v. Any minor who causes physical, sexual or mental abuse to an adult EBC Staff, Leader, or Helper will be suspended from the ministry they participated in until the allegation is resolved.
  - vi. The Pastor or Deacon in charge will notify the parents or guardians of the child.
  - vii. The Pastor and Deacons will work together with all parties to determine the proper response by EBC.