

Jacksonville United Baptist Church's  
Child Protection Policy  
(August, 2016)

## Jacksonville United Baptist Church

### Child Protection Policy

#### **Preamble:**

It is the goal of the Jacksonville United Baptist Church (JUBC) to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well being of all children participating in church activities and to protect leaders and volunteers from false allegations and misunderstandings.

We, at JUBC, are committed to treating each child as a gift from God, respecting each child, honoring their personal, sexual, and emotional boundaries, and protecting the physical and personal well-being of each child. As God's words says:

1. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them." Mark 10:14
2. "Stumbling blocks are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come! It would be better if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble." Luke 17: 1-2
3. "Love... always protects." 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

We recognize that we must exercise caution and diligence in the selection and supervision of persons involved with children's and youth ministries within our church. This is necessary not only to protect the children and youth who have been entrusted to our care, but also to protect the witness and ministry of our church. We recognize that there are people who prey on children and that they do not look any different than anybody else. We also recognize there are people who simply are not suited for work with children or youth who may respond to everyday situations inappropriately. In both cases, we have a responsibility to protect the children and youth to whom we minister and to offer an environment that is consistent with the Word we are proclaiming.

## Definitions:

1. **Emotional abuse:** threats, critical words, demeaning terms or names, depriving a child of any sign of affection, or other similar spoken or unspoken emotional cruelty. It conveys a message that the child is worthless and undeserving of love and care.
2. **Sexual abuse:** sexual contact between a child and an adult (or older, more powerful youth).
3. **Physical abuse:** intentional, deliberate behavior that causes bodily harm to a child. It can take several forms, including assault, shaking, kicking, choking, bone fractures - non-accidental injuries, in general. Acceptable touch could include a pat on the back, a side-by-side hug, or a high-five. The level of acceptable physical touch changes depending on the age of the child.
4. **Acceptable discipline:** Removing the child from the activity; reasonable consequence for the conduct; suspended from the activity for a period of time.
5. **Unacceptable discipline:** corporal punishment or physical discipline of any sort, excessive physical restraint which could injure or cause pain to the child, humiliation, or repeated excessive discipline which could endanger the child's mental health or development
6. **Non-Adult volunteer:** a volunteer under the age of 18.
7. **Volunteer:** a person who provides services for the Church and receives no remuneration. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups. For the purposes of this policy, parents or legal guardians of a child participating are not considered volunteers if they are only providing transportation or participating only in their capacity as a parent.

## Child Protection Policy

### Selection and Screening Process:

#### Who:

- all staff including paid and unpaid ministers and lay pastor
- all volunteers (including youth) who are working with children and youth
- all deacons

#### What:

1. **Criminal background check** - A criminal background check will be required for all children's workers whether volunteer or paid. No one who has been convicted of a crime involving misconduct with children will be allowed to work with children. This will need to be completed every **three** years.
2. **Confidential Interviews** - All children or youth workers will be interviewed by a pastor/ ministry staff and at least one other individual holding a leadership position within the Church. During the interview it will be indicated that further instruction in Child Protection will be provided and required.
3. **Six-month rule** - No volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been an active and participating member of the church or a regular adherent for at least six months. This allows the church time to know the individual(s) and do further assessment. Exceptions should only be made in circumstances where the volunteer candidate has transferred from another church in which they have been long-time members and children's ministry workers in good standing (with background references from at least three individuals, including one from their previous minister or children's ministry director).
4. **The "Five-Years-Older" Rule** - Adults who are working directly with teens in a ministry setting must be **at least** five years older than the oldest teen or **must be under the direct supervision of an older adult**. This is for the protection of the youth and the worker.
5. **Non-Adult Volunteer** - must follow the same screening requirements as adult volunteers. They may supervise an activity provided there is also an adult supervising. While in some situations they may provide excellent help, people under the age of eighteen cannot be expected to have developed the maturity and judgment that is needed to be fully responsible for younger children. When teens are involved in children's or youth ministry, they will be supervised and will always meet with children in a classroom or area equipped with a window or open door.
6. **References** - All volunteers will provide at least three references, excluding relatives. One reference must be from an adult with no affiliation to JUBC (included in our Children's/Youth Worker Volunteer Application)

7. **Volunteer applications** - New volunteers will complete an application form (see Children's/ Youth Worker Volunteer Application). Updates will be made as needed and at the beginning of the ministry year.
8. **Acknowledgement of church policies** - All volunteers and employees involved in children's or youth ministry must acknowledge in writing that they understand the church's policies pertaining to the protection of children and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by signing the Acknowledgement of Training of the Jacksonville United Baptist Church Harm Reduction Policy
9. **Secondary screening measures for "last minute volunteers":**
  - a) During the membership class, members will be asked to complete a form with personal information, church background, and the names of three references.  
or
  - b) Provide a reference by the pastor or leader from a church that they have attended in the last five years.  
or
  - c) Work under the direct supervision of an established and trained leader within the ministry, with the approval of the ministry coordinator, on a temporary basis.  
or
  - d) For "last minute driving volunteers" - students in the car must have a parent/ guardian complete the Passenger Consent Form prior to leaving for the activity.

#### **Training:**

1. **Video** - All volunteers and employees must watch the appropriate sections of the video entitled "Reducing the Risk" or a similar video approved by a pastor. This is intended to help volunteers and employees understand the nature of child sexual abuse.
2. **Policy** - All volunteers will be trained on this policy and will sign a release form (see Acknowledgement of Training of the Jacksonville United Baptist Church Child Protection Policy) stating that they have been trained.
3. **First aid training** - It will be the goal of the church that most paid employees who work with children will maintain current certification in basic first and basic CPR as required by applicable licensing requirements or other local regulations. The church will pay for the cost of training. Employees will be paid for attending the training. Volunteer workers are encouraged but not required to receive training if they frequently accompany children on activities with an element of risk.
4. **Review** - During the month of August of each year this policy will be revisited and brought to the attention of the congregation from the pulpit as a way to remind the congregation of the dangers of child abuse, of the importance of strict adherence to this policy and to remind volunteers that they need to go through the training process.
5. **Follow-up** - Periodic refreshers will be offered with regards to updates on the policy.

## Supervisory Requirements:

1. **Two-Worker Rule** - It is the goal of JUBC that a minimum of two workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a church activity. At no time should an individual worker place themselves in a situation where they are alone with a child. When working with children under school age there **must** be two workers with the children at **all times**.
2. **Bathroom breaks** - In the case that there are only 2 workers with a group of children who are unable to care for themselves in the bathroom, all the children and workers will go together. Parents will be encouraged to take their children to the bathroom prior to dropping them off at class.
3. **Ratio of workers to children** - It is required that a reasonable ratio of adults to children is maintained at all times involving the supervision of children. The person in charge of the activity will take on the primary responsibility of setting the ratio giving due regard to all factors present, including the number and age of the participants, the nature of the activities and the location where the activities are taking place.

### **Suggested ratios:**

- 10 children to 1 adult is a good guideline for children age 4 and above,
  - 0 months to age 2 should be 3 to 1,
  - Ages 2+ - 4 should be 7 to 1
4. **Direct Supervision** - **Two** adult employees or leaders should arrive at a scheduled activity at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled start time and two adult employees or leaders must stay with children at the conclusion of an activity until the last child has been picked up. No child should be left unattended waiting for a ride. **Children 6 years of age and under need to be picked up from the activity by a parent or guardian.** Children over the age of 6 are only allowed to leave an activity unattended with the express consent of a parent/guardian.
  5. **Nursery** - Children will be signed in by parents and released only to the parents who signed them in. Name tags will be placed on the back of each child.
  6. **Sunday School**- Children attending Sunday School will be signed-in what this will look like is yet to be determined.

## **Vehicle Safety:**

1. **Driver Responsibilities:** Persons who drive privately-owned vehicles for transporting children for church related activities must maintain a current, valid New Brunswick driver's license and provide proof of insurance in the amount of \$2 million. If a volunteer does not have that much insurance on their vehicle a written permission form will have to be completed by the parents stating that the parents are aware that their child will be driving in a car with less insurance than is recommended by the church.
2. **Supervision:** A driver is **not to be alone** with a child in their vehicle who is not their sibling or their own child.

3. **Student Drivers (non-adult volunteer):** A student driver must have **written** permission from all of the parents of the children that will be in their vehicle. The parents must complete and sign the Passenger Consent Form and give that to the ministry leader prior to leaving for the activity.
4. **Parental Consent Forms:** Students who are bringing their parent's vehicle to transport other students to an event will have written permission from the parent to show that they are allowed to use the vehicle in that manner.

#### **General Protocol:**

1. **Registration form** - See Children's Ministry Registration/Emergency Information Form- Parents will complete a registration form the first time they bring a child to a ministry offered by JUBC.
2. **Parental consent forms** - See Parental Medical Consent for Field Trips, Special Events and Overnight Events - These will be used for all special events or activities, and for any activity that requires an overnight stay.
3. **Windows in doors** - All classrooms and other rooms where children/youth meet will have a window in the door.
4. **Confidentiality** - All application materials - the application forms, background checks, reference checks, notes from interviews, etc. - will be placed in a locked file cabinet or other secure location. Any allegations that may arise will not be discussed outside of the premises.
5. **Discipline:** Acceptable discipline procedures will be followed; see definitions of acceptable and unacceptable discipline. Disciplinary problems will be reported to the ministry activity leader and/or to a parent or guardian. Disciplinary procedures already established will be followed.

#### **Responsibilities of the leaders for Children/Youth ministries:**

1. **Notification of Policy:** The church will prepare a letter to inform parents of this policy. (**pastors will create this**). It will be the responsibility of each ministry leader to ensure that the parents receive the letter.
2. **Trained Volunteers:** Each ministry leader will ensure that those who are volunteering for them have completed the screening procedure prior to volunteering or have completed the Worker Renewal Application
3. **Reminders of Policy:** Each ministry leader will remind the individuals who are working under them of the importance of avoiding potentially compromising situations in which an allegation of abuse could be made. They will also ensure that at the time of the renewal of application the volunteers are reminded of the content of the policy.
4. **Registration Forms for Ministries:** Each ministry leader will ensure that parents complete the Children's Ministry Registration/Information Form or the Sunday School Registration Form
5. **Parental Responsibilities:** Each ministry leader will ensure that parents understand that they should not leave children **under the age of eight** in a classroom unless an adult employee or volunteer is present.

6. **Trained First-Aid volunteers:** It will be the goal of JUBC that a trained First Aider will be in attendance or on the premises of every event involving children. Every ministry leader will be supplied with a list of trained First-aiders.
7. **First-aid kit:** A permanent first-aid kit will be located in the kitchen in the church. A transportable first-aid kit will be stationed in the Youth Pastors office, on top of the filing cabinet. It will be the responsibility of the ministry leader to ensure that the transportable first aid kit is taken with the group when leaving the church premises.
8. **Injuries:** In case of an injury during a church sponsored activity it will be the responsibility of the ministry leader to complete the Notice of Injury form and file it in the appropriate location. (? Where will this be)
9. **Photos:** If pictures are being taken of a church sponsored activity, it will be the responsibility of the ministry leader to ensure that all those in the photo have completed the Photo Release Form.

#### **Responding to allegations or complaints of abuse:**

1. **Reporting abuse** - In the event that any allegation of abuse of a child or youth is made, it will be reported immediately to Social Development (888-992-2873) by the person who heard the report first hand and to the pastor. If the pastor is accused of abuse, the Executive Minister (Dr. Peter Reid) will be contacted and the guidelines contained in the Protocol for Cases of Alleged Professional Misconduct will be followed (a paper copy can be found in the General Office as well as on the Convention website at [www.baptist-atlantic.ca/documents/protocol-misconduct-sect5-8.pdf](http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/documents/protocol-misconduct-sect5-8.pdf)). In the case of a child self-reporting, the parents will be contacted (after Social Development) to inform them of the child's statements unless the child has reported an incident regarding their own parents or guardian, in that case the parents will not be contacted.
2. **Reporting forms:** The process will be carefully documented using the Suspected Child Abuse Report Form.
3. **Confidentiality:** All information regarding the allegations or complaints of abuse will be confidential.
4. **Investigation** - Any incident in which there is a concern for the safety or well being of a child under the care or supervision of our Church will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
5. **Lawyer:** A lawyer will be consulted for advice.
6. **Alleged perpetrator:** They will be immediately suspended from any ministry or leadership position within the church without presuming guilt.
7. **Insurance:** The insurance agent will be contacted regarding the incident.