



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Revision Approved 10/27/13

401 Matlage Way  
Sugar Land, TX 77479



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to protect the following:

The children and youth of Sugar Land Bible Church (SLBC) from abuse and neglect,

- The workers and staff from the risk of false accusations, and
- SLBC's image, integrity, and assets from any accusations and/or litigation.

The date of effect of this policy is December 1, 2003. Amendments may be made from time to time at the discretion and direction of the Elder Board.

### **Selection Procedures of Workers**

#### ***Submission of Application***

Any individual desiring a full or part time paid position shall be required to submit an Employment Application and a Criminal Records Check Authorization Form. Any volunteer desiring a worker position relating to any child 18 and under will be required to submit a Volunteer Application and a Criminal Records Check Authorization Form. Workers already in place at the date of effect of this policy may continue working for a maximum of six months before completing the Employment or Volunteer Application and the Criminal Records Check Authorization.

#### ***Screening and Qualifications***

1. All applicants, volunteer or paid, shall be subject to all or part of the following screening: reference checks, criminal records, motor vehicle records, social security number verification, and a personal interview. All screening will be documented and retained with the worker's application in a secure, confidential file.
2. Only applicants that have been members of or in regular attendance at SLBC for a period of six months or more shall be considered for a volunteer worker position that relates to any child 18 and under.
3. No worker under the age of 18 shall be placed in a position of responsibility or supervision over children/youth. Adult supervision will be required at all times for all such workers.
4. No person who has been convicted of, placed on regular or deferred adjudicated probation, received pre-trial diversion, pled guilty, or no contender to any offense involving sexual contact or physical abuse with a child/youth may work with any child/youth.

#### ***Materials Provided***

All workers will receive a copy of the following material and sign a form acknowledging such:

- a. The Child Protection Policy,
- b. A portion of the Texas Family Code relating to child abuse/neglect.

### ***Temporary Workers***

A child/youth worker may temporarily fill in on an occasional basis, not exceeding 5 times, without completing sections II. A, B, and C. The temporary worker must be qualified under sections II. 8.2, 3, and 4.

## **Policies**

### ***Two-Adult Rule***

Workers should observe the "two-adult" rule. Whenever practical, a minimum of two adult supervisors shall be present during any children's/youth activity. At least one of these adults shall be a "registered" worker, who has completed sections II. A, B, and C. In the event that the "two- adult" rule is not practical, an "open-door" policy will be observed instead.

### ***Parental Permission***

1. Workers are to obtain a signed parent permission form prior to spending time with a child/youth either alone or in an unsupervised situation. Such workers should also notify an Elder prior to such a situation.
2. Workers are to obtain a signed parent permission form prior to any overnight activity or any activity involving transportation provided by the church.

### ***Nursery, Toddler Room, and 3-4 Years***

1. The toddler room and the 3-4 years classrooms must always contain at least two workers. If the nursery only contains one worker, the door between the nursery and toddler room must be left open.
2. Parents dropping children off at the nursery or the toddler room must sign the child's name in on the sign-in sheet at the door.
3. Workers may only release children 4 years and under to their parents/custodians. A parent may sign a form naming other individuals who are allowed to receive the child from the worker.
4. In no event shall a male worker take a female child to the restroom.
5. Only adult workers may accompany a child to the restroom, and only after notifying another worker.

## ***Youth Activities***

The policies contained in this heading are normally associated with youth activities, but can be extended to any age group.

### **1. Overnight Activities Rules of Conduct**

- a. All persons are to abide by the Child Protection Policy, including the "two-adult" rule for supervision.
- b. None of the children/youth will be allowed away from the designated overnight area without prior permission of the group leader and the parents' signed permission.
- c. No child/youth is to be left alone in a room except the restroom.
- d. No couple of the opposite sex is to be left unsupervised.
- e. No members of the opposite sex will be allowed to sleep in the same room.

### **2. All vehicles used to transport children/youth shall:**

- a. Be in good running order,
- b. Possess a current Texas license plate, registration, inspection sticker and insurance coverage as required by Texas law,
- c. Possess safety restraints, and
- d. Be multi-passenger vehicles. No motorcycles, scooters, or mopeds will be allowed. No vehicle will be allowed to carry more than the passenger capacity as specified by the vehicle manufacturer.

### **3. Driver and Passenger Requirements**

- a. All drivers will have a current valid Texas driver's license with the classification for the vehicle driven. If the driver is not at least 25 years of age, prior explicit written and signed permission from the parents is required.
- b. All drivers will obey traffic laws.
- c. No driver is to transport any child/youth alone, except in the case where the driver is the parent of the child/youth or if prior written and signed permission from the parents is obtained. In the latter case an Elder must be informed of the arrangement beforehand. If possible, the "two-adult" rule is to be used. If that is not possible, more than one child/youth will be required in the vehicle.
- d. All drivers and passengers will wear safety restraints at all times.
- e. No passengers will be allowed to ride in the bed of a pickup truck.

### ***Classroom Doors***

Glass windows or half-doors shall be placed in all classroom doors. Windows do not constitute an "open-door" policy that may be used in place of the "two-adult" rule.

## **Reporting Suspected Abuse**

### ***Persons Required to Report; Time to Report***

According to the Texas Family Code, any person suspecting child abuse or neglect is required by law to report the matter. This requirement applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, such as a pastor or an attorney.

### ***Reporting Policy and Procedures***

1. A worker who suspects that child abuse or neglect or any inappropriate behavior with a child/youth has occurred will promptly report the incident in writing to the Senior Pastor and the Chairman of the Elder Board (Chairman). The Youth Pastor may also be notified.
2. The Senior Pastor and Chairman will jointly, with the person reporting, meet to review the suspect behavior.
3. If there is cause to believe that child abuse or neglect reasonably could have occurred, the Chairman will contact Child Protective Services or a local or state law enforcement agency in a timely and appropriate manner. The church should not attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.
4. If more consultation is necessary to determine if there is cause to believe that abuse or neglect reasonably could have occurred, the Chairman may consult with the other members of the Elder Board and/or other pastors. However, the time from when the worker learns of the possible child abuse or neglect to the time the Chairman contacts the authorities should not exceed 48 hours.
5. If the accused is a worker at SLBC, for the protection of all involved, including the accused, the worker shall immediately be removed from any position relating to children/youth of age 18 and under until the investigation is finished. Respect for the accused and care for the child's safety and dignity should be considered in the manner in which this is done.
6. After or prior to contacting the authorities, the Chairman should contact a lawyer to represent and advise the church. Also, the remaining members of the Elder Board, the Youth Pastor, the children's ministry leaders, and the church's insurance company should be notified of the allegation.
7. The Chairman or the Senior Pastor should contact the parents of the child/youth in person as soon as possible. All efforts to provide support, love, and care for the victim and the victim's family should be given, as well as any pastoral resources that are available.

8. All communications pertaining to an allegation should be documented and held confidential for the respect, protection, and privacy of all concerned. Access to these records should be limited to the Senior Pastor and the Chairman.
9. The name of the accuser shall be kept confidential to the Senior Pastor, the Chairman, the church's attorney, and to the authorities investigating the matter in accordance with the Texas Family Code. Any exceptions to these require the explicit written consent of the accuser.
10. The Elder Board should prepare a statement ahead of time for the media and the congregation should such an accusation occur at SLBC. All public communications concerning an allegation should use this prepared text. The only people who should communicate with the media are the Senior Pastor, the Chairman, or the church's attorney.