



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY POLICY

WEST HAVEN BAPTIST CHURCH

REVISED: APRIL 2022  
1000 West Street, Tonganoxie, KS 66086

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GENERAL PURPOSE STATEMENT**

West Haven Baptist Church's (West Haven) Children's Ministry is designed and equipped to minister to children from birth to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. It is our mission to glorify God by providing a safe and nurturing environment that demonstrates the love of Jesus to children and parents.

By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of West Haven from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

### **DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of sixteen (16) years. The term "worker" includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

## **SELECTION OF WORKERS**

### **THREE MONTH RULE**

No applicant will be considered for a position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with West Haven for a minimum of three (3) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

### **REFERENCE CHECKS**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, a nationwide criminal background check will be run. Copies will be kept on file at the church.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing West Haven to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he/she will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the pastor in conjunction with the associate pastor and the Director of Children's Ministry (if applicable) on a case-by-case basis. Convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

## TWO ADULT RULE

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. The top half of every half door in our childcare area will remain open at all times, except in the event of an emergency or in rooms where babies are sleeping. Minors are not to be alone without an adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in an extreme counseling situation.

## CHECK-IN SYSTEM

All children being kept in the Children's Ministry wing during both Sunday School and children's church should be entered into the applicable check-in and church administration systems. The parent or guardian will be responsible for listing the individual(s) authorized and not authorized to pick up their child. Paid (if applicable) and volunteer workers should only release a child to the authorized person(s) on the list. Authorized person(s) should be ages 14 and above.

## RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

**Physical abuse** - any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

**Emotional abuse** - emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.

**Sexual abuse** - any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

**Neglect** - depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

## REPORTING

Childcare workers may become aware of suspected abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved caring for children at West Haven becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the pastor or associate pastor (and the Director of Children's Ministry, if applicable) for further action. Such action would include reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law. In the absence of both the pastor and associate pastor, it should be reported to the chairman of deacons. It is also advisable that the reporter call the Kansas Protection Report Center at 1-800-922-5330. Document the date, time, and contents of your call.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at West Haven or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified if possible.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified. West Haven will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse the best we understand the law to be. West Haven will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurer will be notified. We will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. In the absence of the pastor, the associate pastor will serve as the spokesperson. In the absence of both, the chairman of deacons will be the spokesperson. We will also seek the advice of legal counsel. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.

6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

## TEENAGE WORKERS

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for children's ministry workers (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- a. Must be at least age 14
- b. Must be screened as specified above.
- c. Must be under the supervision of an adult and not be left alone with children.

## SICK CHILD POLICY

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at West Haven. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- a. Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- b. Green or yellow runny nose
- c. Eye or skin infections
- d. Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

## MEDICATIONS POLICY

It is the policy of West Haven not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with West Haven to develop a plan of action.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is the policy of West Haven not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the specific ministry leader or the Director of Children's Ministry (if applicable) if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues. When in doubt, summon the parent or guardian.

## **ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.
4. We encourage an incident report be completed for any apparent injuries to the head.