



MAIN STREET
BAPTIST CHURCH

Oneonta, NY

CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Requirements and Guidelines

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Child/Youth Protection Policy

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to serve in a ministry devoted to presenting Christ to the next generation. Main St. Baptist Church is committed to making children and youth followers of Jesus in a safe and secure environment. This policy seeks to promote an environment in which every person can experience God's love through appropriate relationships.

1. Definitions

1.1. Child, Youth and Adult

1.1.1. A **child** is anyone in 6th grade or below (usually under the age of 12).

1.1.2. A **youth** is anyone not a "child" and under the age of 18 (usually ages 12-17).

1.1.3. An **adult** is anyone 18 years of age or older.

1.2. Paid Staff Person, Adult Volunteer, Screened Adult, Youth Volunteer and Paid Childcare Worker

1.2.1. A **paid staff person** is someone paid by the church, overseen by a Pastor and screened.

1.2.2. An **adult volunteer** is someone who has not been screened. They will go through the application and interview process. They can work in a room with a Screened Adult or paid staff person.

1.2.3. A **screened adult** is a volunteer who has gone through the screening process.

1.2.4. A **youth volunteer** is someone in grades 7-12 and is not yet 18 years old. They will not have been screened, yet they will go through the application and interview process. They can work in a room with a **screened adult** or paid staff person.

1.2.5. A **paid childcare worker** is a youth or adult who is paid directly by the church to care for children at a church event. Adults in this category will be screened. Youth will be required to go through the application and interview process.

1.3. Child/Youth Abuse

For purposes of this policy, **child/youth abuse** is defined as any of the following:

1.3.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any violent non-accidental contact resulting in injury. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries include bruises, fractures, cuts,

and burns. Note: Physical abuse does not always leave identifiable physical evidence, i.e.: there can be internal bleeding or internal bruising.

1.3.2. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes inappropriate touching (with or without clothing), demands for sexual performance, sexual threats, or coercion for sexual purposes. Any form of sexual activity with a child/youth can occur at the church, at home, or any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, a youth, or another child.

1.3.3. Emotional Abuse

A pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a child's/youth's spirit or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.

1.4. Two Person Rule

1.4.1. The two person rule: at least two volunteers or paid staff must be present in any class or event involving children or youth. At least one of these persons must be a screened adult or a paid staff person.¹

1.4.2. Children (infant – 6th grade): at least one screened adult or paid staff person plus a youth volunteer or an adult volunteer must be present.

1.4.3. Youth (7-12th grade): At least one screened adult or paid staff person and another adult volunteer must be present.

2. Screening and Selection of Church Staff and Volunteers

2.1. Adults who regularly work with children and youth through Main St. Baptist Church-sponsored activities and each paid staff person will be screened. Those who work regularly with children/youth will be oriented to this policy prior to beginning their regular involvement. Applicants for paid or volunteer positions will complete an application form (see Appendix I). **MSBC² reserves the option to request background checks of any persons involved in its ministries to children and youth at any time.** Failure to comply to a request for background checks will prevent any further participation by that individual in any MSBC ministry to children or youth.

2.2. Paid staff working with children and youth (full-time and part-time) will be required to have background check. All records related to this will be filed in the individual personnel file.

2.3. Each adult applying to work with children and/or youth will authorize the church to conduct a criminal background screening. The church will pay all costs³.

2.4. The church must obtain written authorization to run a background screening.

2.5. Before beginning work with either children or youth, each paid staff member and volunteer will sign a statement that they have read, understood and agree to abide by this Child and Youth Protection Policy.

¹ This may include the presence of a designated screened person who moves in and out of rooms.

² MSBC – Main Street Baptist Church

³ The cost of the background checks will be taken out of the .3015 Christian Education budget line.

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2.6. After the interview and background screening have been completed, the decision will be made by the ministry director/team to accept or reject the applicant as a paid staff member or volunteer who will work with youth and/or children.

2.7. Where it has been determined that an applicant will **not** work with children or youth, those persons involved with the decision will handle it in a sensitive manner. A Pastor or designated member will inform the applicant in person. The specific reasons for the decision will be given, whenever possible. A written notation will be placed with the completed application and these documents will be kept on file in the church office for a minimum of five years.

2.8. All records will be kept in a locked cabinet in the church office. Access to these records will be maintained and monitored by the Associate Pastor – Educational Ministries and he will be responsible for their use.

2.9. If an applicant has been convicted of a crime or has an arrest record, a pastor and respective program director will make a determination regarding the individual's request to work with children.

2.10. An applicant who has been convicted of child abuse of any kind will not be permitted to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.

2.11. Although not required to personally accomplish the above tasks, the Pastor or designated member⁴ will be responsible for ensuring compliance. Program Directors are responsible for enforcing this policy.

3. Ongoing Education of Persons Who Work With Children & Youth

3.1. The church will conduct regular (at least annually) training focused on current issues of child protection for those working with children and youth⁵.

3.2. The training may include:

3.2.1. The definition and recognition of child abuse.

3.2.2. The church's policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them.

3.2.3. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics.

3.2.4. The appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child/youth events⁶.

3.2.5. Abuse reporting responsibilities and procedures.

3.2.6. Explanation of appropriate interpersonal boundaries.

4. Supervision of Children and Youth

4.1. General Rules

4.1.1. All activities involving children and youth will be supervised by at least one screened adult.

⁴ A designated member will be appointed by a Pastor or the elder board.

⁵ Printed materials distributed at the training will be sent to absentees. Absent persons will read and return a sign statement saying that they have read the materials within three weeks following the training session.

⁶ This includes providing guidelines to chaperones on mission trips and other such events.

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4.1.2. Each room or space, where children are being cared for by an adult, will have visual access⁷ into the room. (Windows in doors tend to reduce the opportunities for secrecy and isolation, conditions every child abuser seeks).

4.2. Supervision of classroom Activities

The “**Two Person Rule**” is the expectation, as defined above. Where the “Two Person Rule” is not possible, the classroom doors will remain open. A designated **screened** person will periodically check all classrooms.

4.3. Open Door Policy

Parents, volunteers or staff of the church may visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time.

4.4. Sign-in & Registration

4.4.1. Parents will complete or update registration of their children in the fall of each year.

4.4.2. Children will be checked-in and dismissed according to the procedures devised by the education committee.

4.5. Supervision of Non-Classroom Activities

At least two screened adults will be present for all non-classrooms activities involving children and/or youth. Any meetings held in an individual’s home will be supervised by at least two adults/ at least one of whom is not a member of the same family. Meetings held in an individual’s home must be pre-approved by the child’s/youth’s parent or guardian and the church.

4.6. Counseling of Youth and Children

In instances of youth or child counseling where circumstances dictate that counseling would be most effective on a one-on-one basis, an appropriate church paid staff person may meet individually with a child/youth with the knowledge of at least one other paid staff person or screened adult. At any counseling session with children or youth, the door to the room used will remain open for the entire session, unless there is glass in the door or wall allowing a clear view into the room.

4.7. Time Following Group Events

Following child/youth group events, it is inevitable that occasionally a child’s/youth’s transportation will arrive after all other participants have departed. In those circumstances, a child/youth may unavoidably be supervised by one screened adult. Under these circumstances, it is still preferred that two persons (one screened) stay with the child/children or youth. However, the general rule requiring the presence of two screened adults may be suspended and one screened adult may exercise his/her best judgment for the participant’s well-being.

4.8. Childcare for Adult Home Groups

⁷ Visual access can be accomplished by a window in the door or interior wall, by the use of a half door, or simply by the door being left open.

The church does not provide childcare for adult home groups. Individual groups may make arrangements for childcare for children of group members.

5. Transportation

Transporting youth and children is an important concern. Their safety can be at risk in a variety of ways. Therefore, certain discretion must be used depending on the event attended, the locale of the event, and the age group participating. This policy includes both requirements and guidelines. When feasible, there will be adherence to the recommendations in the guidelines. It is expected that the requirements will always be followed.

5.1. Requirements

5.1.1. Drivers must be known to the designated adult leader of the event.

5.1.2. When a child/youth is transported in any church-owned or church rented vehicle, the driver must be either the child's/youth's parent/guardian, a screened adult, a paid staff person or an approved driver employed by the rental company who is at least 21 years old.

5.1.3. Drivers must have a driver's license for the vehicle being operated. For example, if driving a church bus, a commercial license is required.

5.1.4. Drivers must require that manufacturer installed seat belts be used at all times and the number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts. Guidelines for car seats must be adhered to.

5.1.5. Drivers will be advised of a designated route and will not deviate from it except in cases of emergency or road detours.

5.1.6. Persons who regularly drive church owned vehicles must be listed on an approved driver list maintained in the church office.

5.1.7. In order to be listed on the approved driver list of church-owned vehicles, a motor vehicle record search must be conducted and the appointed pastors or his designee must determine if the record is satisfactory.

5.2. Guidelines

5.2.1 Drivers of buses (14 passengers or more) will be accompanied by at least one other **screened** adult.

5.2.2. Under some circumstances youth will be allowed to provide their own transportation. Adult youth leaders may advise and assist but will not require any child/youth to ride with a youth driver to a church endorsed event.

6. Trip and Retreat Supervision

Trip and retreat settings can call for different child/youth protection requirements depending on the circumstances. What follows are requirements and guidelines of this policy. The requirements will always be implemented. Depending on the circumstances of the setting, who is in attendance, etc., some or all of the guidelines will be implemented. Those in charge of the trip or retreat will be mindful of both requirements and guidelines.

6.1. Requirements

6.1.1. There will be at least two screened adults present for all trips, retreats and other events where the children and/or youth gather at, or away from the church campus.

6.1.2. There will be at least one screened adult for each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, at least two adults present will be of the same gender as the participants.

6.1.3. The person in charge of youth/children for each overnight trip and/or retreat will carry parental permission slips including permission for emergency medical care.

6.2. Guidelines: In a hotel type-setting, rooms will be assigned as follows:

6.2.1. Separate rooms for adults and children/youth will be assigned with at least two children/youth per room.

6.2.2. Random hall monitoring and room checks will be performed at night by two adults of the same gender as those being checked.

6.2.3. Instances may arise where fewer rooms for adults are available. In this circumstance an adult will be placed in a room with the child/children in a separate bed.

7. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

7.1. Everyone in the church has a moral responsibility and a legal duty to report suspected abuse whenever it comes to their attention, regardless of where that abuse takes place. Reporting abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help. Therefore, the proper authorities must be notified as soon as possible (i.e., the local law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the child/youth resides or in which the suspected abuse occurred and/or that appropriate department of children's services). **THE NEW YORK ABUSE HOTLINE IS 1-800-342-3720.**

7.2. Immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children and/or youth. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the child or youth is secured, the pastor or other designated persons will inform the accused that abuse has been reported.

7.3. If abuse is observed by, disclosed to, or suspected by a volunteer and/or paid staff member of the church, the observer will report the incident immediately to a pastor or other designated person.

7.4. If the accused is a pastor or a member of his/her family, the allegations will be reported to a member of the Elder Board as soon as possible.

7.5. The parents of the victim will be notified as soon as possible. Whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and wellbeing of the child or youth until the parent(s) arrive will be taken.

NOTE: If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, follow the advice of the authorities concerning notification of others.

7.6. The care and safety of the victim is the first priority. All allegations will be taken seriously. The church will respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim's family.

7.7. The church will provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing can take place.

7.8. After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the appointed pastor or designated leader will report the incident immediately to the Elder Board.

7.9. A written report will be prepared by the Elder Board of the steps taken by the church in response to the reported abuse. All reports related to the incident will be kept in an incident file in a secure place.

7.10. Any contact with the media will be handled by the senior pastor or his appointed designee. **NOTE:** The church spokesperson will generally convey a spirit of concern for the spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being of all who are affected, and that the matter is being diligently and appropriately handled.

8. Accident/Injury Reporting

In the event of an incident or accident an accident/injury form will be filled out and submitted to the ministry team leader.

9. Implementation

Unless otherwise specifically stated, it will be the responsibility of the Elder Board to implement this policy, to design and conduct future training, and to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy.

10. Application

All of those who participate in the life of this congregation and use its facilities - individuals, organizations, and groups within and outside this congregation - are expected to respect, implement, and adhere to these provisions at a minimum.

11. Adoption of Child Protection Policy

This Child and Youth Protection Policy is adopted by action of Main Street Baptist Church.

Senior Pastor

Elder Board Chair

Elder Board Secretary

Appendix A

Main Street Baptist Church Volunteer Application and Background Check Authorization

CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE: All information gathered on this form will be kept in a secure location in the main office of the church and will be viewed by church leadership and staff to whom this information is pertinent.

Main Street Baptist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements and background check authorization reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through appropriate relationships with others.

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. It is being used to provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. Please use a pen to complete this application.

General Information:

Date _____

Name _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____

Date of Birth _____ Social Security Number _____

(Necessary for background check)

Do you regularly attend our worship services? _____ YES _____ NO

If yes, since when? (month/year) _____

Are you a member of Main Street Baptist Church? _____ YES _____ NO

If not, are you a member of another church? _____ YES _____ NO

Name of Church: _____

Are you currently involved with another area of ministry? _____ YES _____ NO

If so, please list: _____

Please list your experience working with children (i.e.: VBS, Sunday School, Parent, Babysitting, Teacher, Grandparent, etc.)

Which best describes you: Christ follower, new believer, seeker/curious (circle one)?

I am interested in working with children at this church because

References: List below two adults (who are not related to you) who have a definite knowledge of your character and ability to work with children.

1. Church staff member, leadership team member, small group or ministry leader:

Name _____ Nature of association _____

Occupation _____ Length of time known _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

2. Social friend, neighbor, or employer:

Name _____ Nature of association _____

Occupation _____ Length of time known _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Personal Situation:

Have you ever been arrested, convicted, or pleaded guilty to a crime? _____ YES _____ NO

If yes, explain _____

Have you ever been charged with neglecting, abusing, or molesting a child? _____ YES _____ NO

Have you ever been concerned that you may have an addiction to drugs, alcohol, pornography, or any other addiction which would negatively impact your working with children? _____ YES _____ NO

Applicant's Statement:

The information in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. I authorize the release of information (which will be shared only with an appropriate staff member) contained in this application to any ministry at Main Street Baptist Church in which I seek a position. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Main Street Baptist Church, I hereby waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

I agree to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement in which I have read and understood.

BACKGROUND CHECK AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize Main Street Baptist Church and its designated representatives to conduct a criminal background check whether said file is local, state or national. I further authorize the references listed on this application to give information regarding my character and fitness for ministry work with children.

Applicant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARTICIPATION COVENANT

- 1. An applicant who has been convicted of child abuse of any kind will not be permitted to work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.
- 2. Volunteers working with children and youth will observe the “Two Person Rule”.
- 3. Volunteers working with children and youth will annually review this policy and keep current with procedures and state laws regarding protecting against and reporting child abuse.
- 4. Volunteers will immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

- 1. As a volunteer, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? ____ Yes ____ No
- 2. As a volunteer, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignments? ____ Yes ____ No
- 3. As a volunteer, do you agree to observe the “Two Person Rule” as explained in the policy? ____ Yes ____ No
- 4. As a volunteer, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? ____ Yes ____ No

I have read this Participation Covenant, and agree to abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature **Date**

Print Full Name

Appendix B

Main Street Baptist Church

Medical Information and Release Form

Student's Name _____ Age _____ DOB _____

Address _____ City/St/Zip _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Phone _____

Family Physician _____ Phone _____

Family Insurance Provider _____ Policy # _____

Are immunizations current? (especially tetanus)

Past Medical History (check appropriate information):

_____ Asthma _____ Sinusitis _____ Bronchitis _____ Kidney Trouble _____ Heart Trouble

Diabetes _____ Dizziness _____ Stomach Upset _____ Hay Fever

----- Other (please explain)

Allergies: (please list specific allergy and treatment necessary).

Food _____

Penicillin or other drug (name) _____

Insect stings/bites _____

Other _____

Previous surgeries or serious illnesses: _____

Childhood diseases: _____ Chicken pox _____ Measles _____ Mumps

Other (please explain) _____

Special diet: _____

Any current medications student is taking (list) _____

My permission is granted for Main Street Staff and Parents-in-charge to obtain necessary medical attention in case of sickness or injury to my child. I, the undersigned, do hereby verify that the above information is correct and I do hereby release and forever discharge all Main Street Staff, employees, and parents from any and all claims, demands, actions, or cause of action, past, present, or future arising out of any damage or injury while participating in youth events. I assume full financial responsibility for and agree to pay all expenses relating to medical treatment.

Permission for pictures on church publicity materials:

Your children may be photographed and/or videotaped during a church sponsored program and placed in church publications, the newspaper or on the Main Street Baptist Church website.

Please indicate below indicating that you give/do not give permission for video clips and photos of your child in church publications, the newspaper, or on the Main Street Baptist Church website.

_____ I give permission for photographs and video clips of my child to be used for publicity purposes.

_____ I do not give permission for photographs and video clips of my child to be used for publicity purposes.

I further agree that if my son or daughter creates a disciplinary problem necessitating early return from an event, I will be responsible for all related costs.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C

Main Street Baptist Church Accident/Injury Report Form

Name: _____ Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____ SS # _____

Status: _____ Member _____ Staff _____ Guest _____ Other: (specify) _____

Date of This Report: _____ Date of Accident: _____

Time of Accident: _____ A.M./P.M. Place of Accident: _____

NATURE OF INJURY

Abrasion _____	Cut _____	Scalds _____
Asphyxiation _____	Dislocation _____	Scratches _____
Bite _____	Fracture _____	Shock (el.) _____
Bruise _____	Laceration _____	Sprain _____
Burn _____	Poisoning _____	
Concussion _____	Puncture _____	
Other (specify) _____		

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT/PART OF BODY INJURED

Abdomen _____	Ankle (R/ L) _____	Mouth _____	Hand (R/ L) _____
Back _____	Arm (R/ L) _____	Nose _____	Knee (R/ L) _____
Chest _____	Ear (R/ L) _____	Scalp _____	Leg (R/ L) _____
Face _____	Elbow (R/ L) _____	Tooth _____	Wrist (R/ L) _____
Finger _____	Eye (R/ L) _____	Other (specify) _____	
Head _____	Foot (R/ L) _____		

How did the accident happen? What was the person doing? Where was the person? List any specifically unsafe acts and unsafe conditions existing? Specify any tool, machine or equipment involved? Additional space available on back.

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN

First Aid Treatment Given: ___ YES ___ NO By Name: _____
Phone #: _____ Email: _____

First Aid Rendered: _____

Sent to Hospital? ___ YES ___ NO

Transported to health care facility for further examination/treatment? ___ YES ___ NO

___ Ambulance ___ Personal Vehicle ___ Friends Vehicle (name) _____

Form Submitted by: _____ Signature & Date: _____

Please attach additional comments/information on back of sheet.

**Appendix D
ALLEGATION OF ABUSE SHEET**

Date & Time Report Filed:

Person(s) making allegations:

Specific Allegations being made:

The alleged victim(s):

The alleged perpetrator(s):

The allegations were reported to:

Date & Time Report Filed to Governmental Authorities: Please include specific governmental agency, and person(s) that were consulted (The New York State Abuse Hotline is 1-800-342-3720):

Appendix E

Telephone Reference Checklist:

Applicant's Name: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Date: _____ Telephone: _____

This is _____ . I am with the _____ committee/team of Main Street
(committee member) (committee/team name)
Baptist Church of Oneonta, NY. _____ has made application as a
(applicant's name)
volunteer worker in our children's or youth ministry. We have been given authorization to contact
you. It will only take a few minutes. Could you please answer the following questions to the best of
your ability?

1. How long have you known the applicant?
2. In what capacity have you been associated with the applicant?
3. In your opinion, is the above worker candidate fully qualified to work with children and youth?
4. What concerns, if any, would you have in allowing this person to work with children or youth?
5. Would you entrust your child into this person's care?

6. How well does the applicant work with others?