

**Riverview Baptist Church
Child and Youth Protection Policy
August, 2010**

Purpose Statement

Riverview Baptist Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. Our goal is to protect Riverview's children and youth from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Selection of Workers

• **Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until s/he has attended Riverview Baptist Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

• **Criminal Background Check**

A criminal background check is required for all adult volunteers who work with children and/or youth. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children. Prospective workers must also supply basic information, such as previous experience with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Riverview's pastoral staff. Generally, 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.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

Two Volunteer Rule

It is our goal that at least two volunteers (at least one of which is an adult) will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should either remain open or be equipped with a window.

Teenage and Preteen Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for teenagers who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage and preteen workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.
- There must be at least one adult present for every teenage or preteen worker.
- Only teenagers and preteens who have been scheduled and approved to work with children should be in areas where children's programs are conducted. All adult workers are encouraged to instruct unscheduled teens or preteens in the nursery wing to leave the area.

Child – to – Staff Supervision Ratios

Ideally, a minimum of two adults, or one adult and one teenage worker, should supervise children's activities. All teenage and preteen workers are to be under the direct supervision of an adult worker. The following guidelines for child-to-staff supervision ratios will be followed: for ages two weeks through two years, there must be at least one adult worker for every four children; for ages two and three, there must be at least one adult worker for every six children; for ages four through six, there must be at least one adult worker for every ten children; for ages seven through twelve there must be at least one adult worker for every fifteen children; for ages thirteen and above, there must be at least one adult worker for every twenty children.

Check-in / Check-out Procedures

For children below age five (5), a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a numbered "child check" for the child, similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the "child check" in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," the Pastor of Christian Life & Growth will be contacted. He will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Riverview Baptist Church. 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:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- Green or yellow runny nose.

- Eye or skin infections.
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed by our workers to be sick 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 Riverview Baptist Church 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 the Pastor of Christian Life & Growth to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

We believe that discipline should be primarily positive and so we encourage parents and those who work with children and youth to be quick to encourage and affirm positive behavior. We also encourage immediate and consistent response to negative behavior before it escalates into a serious problem. If the parents are present we will expect them to correct their children or youth when they misbehave. We will also encourage other adults not to ignore a behavior problem when they see it. If someone else speaks to your child or youth, please do not be offended or insulted.

If parents are not present, the person in charge may respond by first speaking to the child or youth and issuing a warning. If the child or youth persists in the behavior, he may be denied a privilege or isolated from the group. The last resource available to the worker is to take the child or youth to his parents.

Since it is our conviction that parents are the appropriate persons to employ corporal punishment when needed (and this is best carried out privately), any physical form of correction is considered unacceptable in the classroom or any other group setting. Those working with children and youth are permitted to gently restrain a child or youth to keep him from hurting himself or another.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should utilize the bathroom located in the nursery room. Children five years of age and younger should not use the main men's or women's bathrooms. Preschool volunteers must alert a nursery worker when a child is in need of the restroom, and the nursery worker is responsible for taking the child to the nursery bathroom. The nursery worker should remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. If a child

requires assistance, the worker should prop open the bathroom door as he/she assists the child. Workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps will 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. An entry in the incident log book must be made.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called. An entry in the incident log book must be made.
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.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) which 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 which 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 their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the pastoral staff for further action including reporting to authorities as mandated by state law.

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

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
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. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
3. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
4. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
5. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children or youth.
6. The Senior Pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
7. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

Training

All individuals who wish to volunteer in Riverview's children or youth ministries must receive training covering this policy before s/he becomes a volunteer at Riverview. Additionally, Riverview Baptist Church will provide training covering this policy on an annual basis for all current children's and youth ministry volunteers. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.