

New Covenant Baptist Church

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



July 12, 2020

Version 1.3

# Table of Contents

- VISION: .....3
- MISSION:.....3
- CODE OF CONDUCT: .....3
- STAFF AND VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS: .....4
- PARAMETERS FOR THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:.....4
- CHILDREN’S SAFETY: .....4
- PERSONNEL SUMMARY: .....5
- DIGITAL PRIVACY: .....5
- ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES .....6
- SIGNING A CHILD IN TO CHILDREN’S MINISTRY .....6
- PARENTAL AUTHENTICATION IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM .....6
- SUPERVISION GUIDELINES: .....7
- CHILD TO ADULT RATIOS: .....8
- PERSONAL CONTACT:.....8
- OPEN DOOR POLICY:.....8
- PARENTS IN THE CLASSROOM.....9
- DIAPER CHANGE AND BATHROOM POLICY:.....9
- DISCIPLINE:.....10
- SICKNESS AND WELLNESS POLICY: .....10
- APPLICATION, TRAINING & SCREENING PROCESS:.....12
- REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE: .....13
- CHILD ABUSE DEFINITIONS: .....13
- APPENDIX A: INAPPROPRIATE AND APPROPRIATE TOUCH .....19
- APPENDIX B: CHILD ABUSE REPORTING FORM.....19
- APPENDIX C: CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING GUIDELINES IN MD .....20

## **Vision:**

New Covenant Baptist Church's Children's Ministry exists to provide a safe environment for children. Our caregivers seek to make the most of every opportunity to show the children the love of Christ and point them to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

## **Mission:**

New Covenant Baptist Church's Children's Ministry aims to glorify God by:

- 1) Providing and maintaining a safe environment for our children
- 2) Supporting and encouraging parents, who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Eph. 6:4), in order for them to attend service.
- 3) Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deut. 6:6-9; Rom. 1:16-17)
- 4) Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:4-10)
- 5) Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 11:1)
- 6) Encouraging children to learn to serve and to not just be served (Mark 10:43-45).
- 7) Maintaining the highest ethical standards such that volunteers and teachers always live and serve above reproach, protecting the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ
- 8) Preparing children to one day walk with God as adults, which means getting them ready to be a part of the public services and Lord willing, one day, a fully participating adult member

## **Code of Conduct:**

Those who accept the responsibility of working with children at New Covenant Baptist Church agree to:

- Treat children with respect and dignity;
- Do everything possible to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children;
- Not engage in or condone acts of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse;
- Comply with New Covenant Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy; and
- Report any abuse, inappropriate behaviors, or possible policy violations.

All members, visitors, and guests at New Covenant Baptist Church should follow this policy. We ask anyone using the physical space of New Covenant Baptist Church, including community groups and any New Covenant Baptist Church affiliated groups that may meet in the physical space, to acknowledge and comply with this Child Protection Policy. The volunteers shall comply with the Child Protection Policy, and leadership (Elders and Deacon(ess)) shall assume responsibility for overseeing the

Child Protection Policy. Such responsibility includes supervision and implementation of the policy as well as providing opportunities for education and training about the policy. The intention of the Child Protection Policy is to protect.

## **Staff and Volunteer Expectations:**

All children's ministry staff and volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Ministering to the children
- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children

## **Parameters for the Child Protection Policy:**

This child protection policy applies to children (from birth to 6th grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific children's ministry-related church-sponsored activities (adult seminars, Sunday school, and bible studies held at the church's physical space with accompanying childcare, Vacation Bible School). Any form of abuse, harm, neglect or other problems related to children at home, school, or in any bible-study, activity, or venue not directly related to children's ministry at NCBC is not covered by this policy.

## **Children's Safety:**

Our first concern is that children be safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Require training for all children's ministry staff and volunteers
- Use parent authentication identification system
- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Employ hall monitors to promote and maintain safety in the building
- Equip each room with a first aid kit
- Educate our staff and volunteers to recognize suspected child abuse and require them to understand and follow any applicable reporting laws and to have them to report suspected abuse to church officials (See page 10 for process of reporting)
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to children's ministry
- Adhere to a two-volunteer PER room policy whenever possible
- Equip our volunteers to know how to evacuate children safely in case of an emergency

## Personnel Summary:

- **Adults** are individuals eighteen years or older.
- **Minors** are individuals under eighteen years of age (under MD law and for most state laws).
- **Volunteers** are adults who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. All volunteers who serve in children's ministry are required to go through *both* the children's ministry training and screening procedures before they serve.
  - Volunteers include childcare workers, team leaders, hall monitors, teachers, and anyone else who serves the children. The term 'volunteer' will be used throughout this policy manual as an all-encompassing term for anyone who serves the children and is not church staff.
- **Helpers** are minors who are at least one grade older than the children they are assisting and are assisting in some area of children's ministry alongside an adult.
- **Deacons/Deaconess** refer to the church's Deacons of children's ministry and childcare. They are elected officers of the church who serve the church by assisting in childcare and children's ministry. Just like the volunteers, all Deacons are required to go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures.
- **Pastors/Elders** are elected officers of the church who serve the church by providing teaching and leadership to the congregational as a whole. They must go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures if they are to serve in children's ministry, just like any other volunteer.

## Digital Privacy:

A key component of a safe and healthy experience is the respect for privacy. Advances in technology have enabled forms of social interaction that can extend beyond the appropriate use of cameras, recording devices, and handheld electronics.

- To ensure full participation and the opportunity for a positive experience, children may be prohibited from bringing handheld electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, iPods, tablets, etc.) to children events or other church sponsored functions. If children do bring these items to a church event, the adults in charge of the event can require that the items be placed in a box or other location away from the children for the duration of the event and then returned to the children at the conclusion of the event.
- Children and adults shall not send sexually explicit or suggestive texts, images, videos, or other inappropriate content electronically. Children and adults shall not post sexually explicit materials on websites or social media sites.
- Children and adults can opt out of having their photos appear on the New Covenant Baptist Church website, social media, or other publications.

## **Arrival and Departure Times**

Volunteers should be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of any session, so that parents have enough time to transition their children before the session begins.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the session. In the event that a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session, volunteers will ask the Hall Monitor or Deacon(ess) of Childcare to locate the parents.

## **Signing a Child in to Children's Ministry**

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a children's ministry program will sign the child in to the appropriate classroom, nursery, or activity when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that NCBC event or program. The parent should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have.

Deacon(ess)s, team leaders, and staff have the right to refuse any child at check-in. Some reasons might include potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the room being closed because the adult child ratio, or anything else that might impair our ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

A parent or designated guardian must be in the church building at all times while their children are checked in.

## **Parental Authentication Identification System**

In order to protect the children in our care, each child must be signed into his/her class by a parent or guardian.

Parent/guardian will receive a parent ID card with a family-specific identification code. Visitors will receive this at their first visitor check-in. Members will receive a specific number that matches with the child's ID and we will have in our system.

Upon signing the child in, the child will receive a label with the family-specific identification code. The intent is for the family number to be used to match the parent with child.

At the end of the session when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

1. The children's ministry volunteer will bring the child to the door and remove the child's label before releasing the child to the parent.

- For children of visitors, volunteers must check the visitor ID number and the child's label to ensure that the numbers match. If a visitor does not have their ID number, send them to the team leader to go through secondary means (i.e., name, contact information, and etc). Only after the visitor parent has obtained an approval from team leader, can their child be checked out.
  - For member parents, if the child or parent is unknown to the volunteer, the volunteer will match the number on the member parent ID number and the child's label. If the parent does not have their ID number, the volunteer will use the parent ID booklet in the classroom to make the match between parent and child.
2. Volunteers will REMOVE & DESTROY child labels before children leave their room. This will prevent strangers from referring to the child by name and potentially luring them away from their parents.

Only the parent/guardian who signed the child into the class is authorized to pick up the child. The exceptions to this are:

- In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of an elder, or deacon(ess) of NCBC.
- A member can send their spouse to pick up their children.
- A member parent may make prior arrangements with the Children's Ministry team leader (or any deacon/deaconess) to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a session.

## Supervision Guidelines:

- **Two-Adult Guidelines** – Generally, two adults should be present at all activities involving children.
- **Open Spaces** – When only a single adult is present to be able to take care of a child, they must be in an open space, and anyone can look in on them (e.g., fellowship hall, kitchen, lounge, sanctuary).
- **Qualifications by Activity** – For any church activities, one or more of the adults should be a trained adult.
- **Ratios** – Team leaders should use good judgment in requiring that an appropriate number of adults participate to meet the child to adult ratio.
- **Working Alone** – If absolutely necessary, an adult may work alone with children if there is visual access to the room on the main floor of the building, e.g., open door or room with a window in the door. Prior to working alone with children, the adult should make a reasonable effort to ensure that a second adult is present or that another adult may check in without advance notice. The adult in charge will typically inform the parents that there is not a second adult present.

## Child to Adult Ratios:

In addition to always having at least two volunteers present, the following ratios are maintained during the three regularly scheduled weekly meetings of the church:

- Children 0 – 11 months: One adult for every three children
- Children 12 – 35 months: One adult for every four children
- Children ages 3 – 5: One adult for every eight children
- Children ages 6 – 12: One adult for every twelve children

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom if doing so would exceed the ratio unless and until additional volunteers are added. If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, deacon(s)/deaconess(es) of Childcare, the team leader, or the Hall Monitor should be notified and asked for more volunteers in order to maintain these ratios. Whenever age-groups are combined, the ratio is determined by the age of the youngest child.

## Personal Contact:

- Common expressions of affection (e.g., hugs), affirmation (e.g., pats on the back, high fives), blessings (e.g., making the sign of the cross on the forehead, laying on of hands), support or physical caretaking (e.g., diaper changing), when done without sexual connotations, are appropriate in this community of caring Christians. Expressions of affection shall not be excessive or imposed upon others. No child should be made to feel guilty if they do not wish to participate in these expressions of affection. Children will be made aware that they are free to participate or not, as they feel comfortable.
- Adults shall not touch or interact with children in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating. Any activity of this type is illegal, as well as a violation of trust.
- Adults shall not engage in inappropriate behavior with children. Examples include but are not limited to: seeking private time with children, taking children on outings or overnight trips without other adults, swearing in front of children, or making suggestive comments to children.
- Corporal punishment or verbal abuse is never permitted.

## Open Door Policy:

All spaces where activities with children are taking place, including but not limited to classrooms, rehearsal spaces, and childcare rooms, shall be **open** to visits of authorized staff/volunteers or parent(s) at any time without prior notice. These visits should be made in a manner that is not disruptive to the activity. When possible, the door to spaces where activities with children are taking place should remain open. If an

activity is taking place in multiple locations within the building, the leader of the activity, if possible, should circulate among the locations.

## **Parents in the Classroom**

If a child would feel more at ease with a parent in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are going through separation anxiety. If this goes beyond a few minutes and the child cannot remain without the parents, the parents should remove the child from the classroom and are encouraged to take the child with them to the main service room. While accompanying their children, a parent should be kindly but firmly dismissed if the parent is causing difficulty or presenting concerns for the welfare of the class.

## **Diaper Change and Bathroom Policy:**

### **0 Months through 2 Years Old**

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children prior to signing them into the classroom. Parents must supply diapers for volunteers to change at least once or as need during service. Both men and women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.

### **2 Years Old through Pre-K**

Parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class. At check-in and drop-off, parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty training. In the event that a child needs to use the rest room, the volunteers will call the Hall Monitors. One hall monitor will step into the classroom (to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios). The other hall monitor accompanies a female volunteer and waits outside the door. The female volunteer takes the child and at least one other child to the rest room (but no more than the adult child ratio allows). The volunteer should wait outside the closed restroom stall door unless the child requires assistance. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer) before returning to the classroom.

### **K to 4th Grade**

For all other classes up to 4th grade, any child needing to use the rest room shall go with another child of the same age and sex. The children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return with the other child/group to their classroom. The Hall Monitor will be available to step into a classroom temporarily if necessary to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios.

## 5th to 6th Grade

For 5th to 6th grade, any child needing to use the rest room may go on his or her own. Children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return immediately to their classroom.

## Discipline:

All adults leading programs involving contact with children will be guided by the following constructive discipline guidelines in order to maintain order:

1. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the adult will tell the child specifically what he or she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., "We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building." If this is not effective, the child should be guided to another activity.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be placed in an area of the room where he or she will work alone, away from the other students for a brief period of time, the number of minutes not to exceed the age of the child.
3. If the child's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child may be taken to the parent, Children's Ministry Deacon, or other responsible adults. If a child must be removed from a classroom or other activity, the situation will be discussed with his or her parents.
4. In no case is an adult permitted to physically or verbally abuse a child who is misbehaving. There will be no use of corporal punishment.

## Sickness and Wellness Policy:

### Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, several guidelines are in place concerning disease.

- Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
- Volunteers will use disposable latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills.
- Hand washing or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and Volunteers.
- Toys and equipment should be washed and disinfected regularly.
- New Covenant Baptist Church is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. Team Leaders and the Deacon(ess) have the right to refuse

a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the *Sickness and Wellness* guidelines.

A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the sign-in desk with a volunteer while the Hall Monitor locates the parents.

Please inform the Children's Ministry personnel at the sign-in desk, or the deacon(ess) if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending a NCBC event so that other parents may be notified if necessary. If a child contracts an illness and has been in contact with other children while at NCBC, it is the responsibility of parents to notify the Children Ministry deacon(ess).

Neither volunteers nor church staff may give any medication to any child. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Children's Ministry deacon(ness) *before* signing the child into class. This allows the staff to assess the needs of the child and assist parents in transitioning their child into a classroom setting.

## **Universal Precautions**

Universal precautions are very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers from illness. These methods are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in any setting and should always be used.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.

- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- In spaces with children ages 23 months and below, remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Set them in the container by the door to be sanitized.
- At the end of the session, disinfect the room with Lysol disinfectant spray.

## **Application, Training & Screening Process:**

### **Application Process**

All adults who seek to work with children at New Covenant Baptist Church should attend a Child Protection Policy training session, complete an application to work with children, and sign the Child Protection Policy acceptance statement. Those adults who would like to work with children on a regular basis or plan and lead events will need to complete an Application to Work with Children and submit to a background check.

The application requests information about the applicant's suitability to work with children and asks for references that can verify the applicant's experience with children.

### **Screening Process:**

1. Applications are reviewed, and an interview may be required with one or more members of the Children's Ministry Leadership, which may include elder(s), deacon(ess)s, and team leaders. Applicants may also be asked to participate in a personal interview to determine suitability for work with children. Applications and related papers are confidential and maintained in locked files with access limited to the Children's Ministry Staff and Deacons.
2. New Covenant Baptist Church will use its discretion in reviewing and investigating the history of each applicant and in determining the activities for which a criminal background check is required. In general, any adults, both staff and volunteer, who will regularly have significant contact with children, be with children in the nursery, or serve in the children's ministry in any capacity may be asked to submit to a criminal background check.
3. There will be a procedure for reviewing background checks and other sensitive information from references, face-to-face interview, the application, etc.
  - a. Types of information that may merit additional consideration include but are not limited to criminal acts, and criminal behavior, sex crimes, financial crimes, and drug crimes.
  - b. When the background check (or other information) is received, two members of the Children's Ministry Staff, Deacon, or Elder will review it. Each background check is considered individually, and all decisions are made on a case by case basis. Those reviewing the application will be reminded of the sensitive and confidential nature of the information they

- possess and asked that any discussions about the information be limited to the confidential group meetings.
- c. If no information of concern is contained in the report, the applicant will be able to work with children.
  - d. If there are any concerns, a meeting is called with the Elder overseeing the Children's Ministry to discuss the report and work through the concern with the individual.
  - e. If an individual will not be allowed to work with children, the Pastor or the Pastor's designee will arrange a personal meeting with the individual to deliver the news.
  - f. If an individual is allowed to work with children, the Elder will deliver the news.
4. Applicants deemed by New Covenant Baptist Church to pose a threat (i.e., anyone with a background of being a sex offender, or any past records that show criminal records that may endanger the safety of the children) to children will not be permitted to participate in New Covenant Baptist Church's activities for children and may be required to be with an assigned chaperone when participating in general church activities where children may be present.

## **Training**

We encourage all adults of the congregation to attend a Child Protection Policy training to better understand the goals of the policy and help to safeguard our children and the adults working with children. All adults seeking to work regularly with children must be trained on the requirements of New Covenant Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy. A signed Child Protection Policy Acceptance Statement will be evidence of completion of training. Adults working with children may be asked to retake the training periodically.

## **Reporting and Responding to Abuse:**

In maintaining our protection of children, adults are encouraged to report abuse, suspected abuse, or neglect. A person may suspect abuse by noting signs of abuse, being told of abuse, or witnessing conduct that is of concern. Do not hesitate to report abuse. When you report what you have seen or heard, you may help a child to stay safe. If you have noticed the warning signs of abuse and neglect, please call and notify the Child Protection Services and one of the deacon(ess)s, elders so that they are made aware of the situation. If you do not report your suspicions, the abuse of a child might continue. You should have a reasonable suspicion of the abuse, but you do not have to "prove" the abuse or be positive that it occurred. If you report in good faith, you are immune from civil or criminal liability.

### **Child Abuse Definitions:**

- **Child Abuse:** injury of a child by an adult or older child that is not accidental. It may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse.
- **Child Physical Abuse:** nonaccidental bodily injury of a child through physical contact or mistreatment.
- **Child Sexual Abuse:** any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a child is being used for a sexual purpose (*Please see [Appendix A](#) for a more detailed definition*).
- **Neglect:** the failure to provide for a child's basic needs or the failure to protect a child from harm.
- **Economic Exploitation:** the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child's belongings or money.

## Reporting and Documenting Process:

- If the child is in immediate danger or there is an emergency situation, call 911.
- If you suspect that a child is physically, sexually, or emotionally abused or neglected, please notify one of the Deacons/Deaconesses or Elder so they can report to Children Protective Services.
- All knowledge about abuse or suspected abuse should also be shared, as soon as possible, with an Elder or Deacon/deaconess of children's ministry
- If inappropriate behavior or policy violations are observed that warrant concern but do not involve abuse, as soon as possible notify an Elder or Deacon/Deaconess.
- Please document what you have seen and to whom you have reported it. The Reporting and Responding Documentation Form may be used to document details of abuse, suspected abuse, inappropriate behavior, or non-abuse policy violations. As soon as possible give a copy of any documentation to the Deacon/Deaconess, if team lead is not available give it to the Elder overseeing the children's ministry.
- It is New Covenant Baptist Church's policy to report child abuse to the appropriate governmental authority, as required by state law and church regulations. New Covenant Baptist Church will cooperate fully with government authorities in the investigations of allegations of child abuse.
- Any concerned person should report suspicions of child abuse and neglect. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every State provides immunity from civil liability for persons who report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. "In good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.

## Responding Process:

All persons involved in reporting or documenting any alleged incident of abuse should hold information in confidence, subject only to such disclosures as are required under

church procedures and state laws to facilitate investigation of allegations of abuse and resolution of the situation.

- The Church leadership, which may include elder(s), deacon(ess)s, and team leaders, will maintain a confidential written record of each report of abuse received.
- The Church leadership will determine a response which will include the alleged perpetrator being:
  - Removed from any position involving contact with children at New Covenant Baptist Church until the allegation is resolved.
  - Asked to refrain from activities involving contact with children for a specified period of time or indefinitely, depending on the nature of the behavior.
  - Reported to Child Protective Services and/or the police.
  - Required to have an assigned escort (designated member of the congregation) any time he or she is at New Covenant Baptist Church.

The Elder or Elder's designee will be in contact with parents or guardians of alleged victims and those accused of allegations, as necessary, and will make proper reports to government and law enforcement authorities. If the Elder is the perpetrator, the other Elders or church leadership will assume those responsibilities.

If abuse occurs, a designated spokesperson for New Covenant Baptist Church, generally the Pastor, Elder's designee, will inform the congregation about the situation when appropriate to do so (i.e., disclosure of the situation will not jeopardize the investigation or cause undue hardship to the victim and accused), protecting the identities of those involved as needed, to avoid rumors and the spread of false information.

## **A Duty to Warn Policy:**

If any Children's Ministry affiliated member (volunteer, team leader, deacon(ess), parent, or guardian) has been found to be guilty and/or convicted (past and present) of any of the offenses as mentioned in this policy, NCBC will report this to any organization that is affiliated with the accused. This may include any of the following: Schools, organization, and/or churches that are affiliated with the church and/or the offender.

If the offender member leaves the church to join another church, NCBC will report and warn the church that the member is trying to join to its best capability.

## **Dealing with Sexual Offenders:**

If a sexual offender seeks membership at New Covenant Baptist Church, the elder(s) retain a right to refuse membership. If the elders offer membership to an offender, it will be conditional on his or her agreement to:

- Verify the history of offenses, convictions, and adjudication of sexual offenses and disclose them to the New Covenant Baptist Church elders and the members of the Children’s Ministry leadership (deacon(ess), team leaders, and anyone else that the elder(s) approve of).
- One of the following people as mentioned above contacting his/her probation officer to find out the underlying offense and the specific terms of probation.
- The Children’s Ministry deacon(ess) and/or team leader doing a thorough criminal background check. If the information provided by the offender differs from the information given by the probation officer or gathered by the Children’s Ministry deacon(ess)/team leader that will be grounds for denying membership.
- Disclosure of information to parents and the congregation. The information released to the church is at the discretion of the elders. A letter detailing this information will be sent directly to all member parents.
- Refrain from any form of communication (including phone, IM, texting, email, social media or any type of technology), social fellowship, physical contact, mentoring, baby- sitting, or coaching with children or youth or participate in any activities or programs related to children or youth both inside and outside of the church.
- The elder(s) will designate New Covenant Baptist Church members who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on New Covenant Baptist Church space or in attendance at any church related services, activities or gatherings that has the possibility of children being present.
- Any restrictions that elders determine.
- Permission to notify the leadership, congregation, and parents of anything that the elders deem significant for these groups to know.
- A warning that the church will report any suspected activity to civil authorities.
- A warning that any violation of the code of conduct (including allegations or suspicion of abusive behavior) can result in discipline and banning from the church facilities or any church related programs and activities.
- Sign a written document that details all of these items, plus anything else that the elders deem important to include.

## **Reporting Abuse Process:**

### **Reporting Abuse—Summary of Who to Contact and What to Do Immediate danger or Emergency situation**

1. Call 911 to notify police of situation and request help.
2. Do what you can to make sure the child is safe.
3. As soon as possible, contact one of the following – Pastor, Elder, or Deacon – to report what has occurred.
4. Document what was observed and reported. You can use the Reporting and Responding Documentation Form.

5. Give the documentation to one of the following – Pastor, Elder, or Deacon – as soon as possible.

### **Suspected abuse or neglect**

1. As soon as possible, contact one of the following – Pastor, Elder, or Deacon – to report what has occurred.
2. Call Child Protective Services to make a report
3. Do what you can to make sure the child is safe.
4. Document what was observed and reported. You can use the Reporting and Responding Documentation Form.
5. Give the documentation to one of the following – Pastor, Elder, or Deacon – as soon as possible.

### **Observe inappropriate behavior or policy violations that warrant concern but are not abuse**

1. Call one of the following – Pastor, Elder, or Deacon – to share your concern.
2. Document what was observed. You can use the Reporting and Responding Documentation Form.
3. Give the documentation to one of the following – Pastor, Elder, or Deacon – as soon as possible.



## Appendix A: Inappropriate and Appropriate Touch

### Inappropriate Touching

- Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reasons.
- Squeezing of arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body.
- Tickling children over 5 years old. It is over stimulating and is considered by some professionals to be a deceptive device that could lead to inappropriate touching.
- Children sitting on laps of adults is inappropriate for ages 6 and older.
- Holding or restraining children on the lap. However, holding a child 5 years and younger is appropriate for short time spans when comfort is needed by the child or the child's behavior is out-of-control or endangering other children.
- Touching a child in the genital areas except for younger and developmentally delayed children requiring a diaper change, bathing/washing and assistance with toileting procedures. Otherwise, touch in the genital area is only permitted by medical personnel in case of injury or suspected injury.
- Kissing a child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. A child should never be allowed to kiss a staff member, Volunteer, Deacon or another child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. Children are also not allowed to kiss one another. (Note: A kiss is appropriate on the cheek when it is included in a greeting).
- Slapping a child on the behind, even when playing.
- Fondling children, even in non-private areas.
- Carrying a child on the back unless the child is unable to walk.

### Appropriate Touching

- A comforting pat on the shoulder and back or allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder is appropriate.
- Back rub to help comfort or put an irritable child to sleep is appropriate.
- High-Fives, handshakes, or the touching of two fists are appropriate and recommended touch, especially when interacting with older children.
- Holding hands is permitted with children 10 years and under when initiated by the child, or when helping a child to walk, climb stairs, etc.
- Holding a child firmly with your hands to restrain him/her is appropriate when it is used to prevent a child from an accident, injury, hurting self, others, or you.

## Appendix B: Child Abuse Reporting Form

*Instructions: If a Volunteer, Staff, Deacon or Elder suspect, hear about or observe signs or symptoms of abuse, please: (1) Talk immediately with the Children's Ministry Leadership or the Pastor who oversees children; and (2) document any relevant information on this form.*

*This report should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of what the child said, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not go back and interview the child. Fill this form out based on whatever information has already been obtained.*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signs or Symptoms of Abuse Observed:

Bruises or Injuries that are Visible:

Emotions expressed by the Child:

Summary of the Conversation with the Child:

Anything Else that is Relevant:

Check all that apply:

- Team Leader Notified
- Deacon(ess) Notified
- CMA Notified
- CM Elder Notified

## **Appendix C: Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in MD**

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children's Bureau*  
[http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/manda.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm)

### **Introduction**

The following guidelines are only intended to serve general educational purposes and is not intended as a substitute for competent legal advice from an attorney familiar with the laws and regulations regarding child abuse and neglect in Maryland. Each individual NCBC employee and volunteer is responsible for fulfilling his or her personal obligation to comply with the laws and regulations applicable to him or her with respect to

reporting child abuse and neglect, and may need to consult with a legal professional in order to understand and comply with applicable laws and regulations. However, in determining any legal obligations that NCBC may have with respect to reporting child abuse or neglect, it may need the assistance of a staff person or volunteer to determine relevant facts and circumstances.

## **Maryland**

### **Professionals Required to Report Fam. Law § 5-704**

Persons required to report include:

- Health practitioners
- Educators or human service workers
- Police officers

### **Reporting by Other Persons**

#### **Fam. Law § 5-705**

Any other person who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must report.

### **Standards for Making a Report**

#### **Fam. Law §§ 5-704; 5-705**

A report is required when, acting in a professional capacity, the person has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

### **Privileged Communications**

#### **Fam. Law § 5-705**

Only attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges are permitted.

### **Inclusion of Reporter's Name in Report**

The reporter is not specifically required by statute to provide his or her name in the report.

### **Disclosure of Reporter Identity**

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.