

Sierra Bible Church

~ Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy

Revised October 12, 2017

This version supersedes and replaces any and all previous versions of this policy and is effective as of the date of approval.

Protecting Our Children

PURPOSE: It is the purpose and intent of Sierra Bible Church to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for the children and students of our church family and our community.

GOAL: Our goal is to provide a safe environment and to protect children from abuse, neglect or any type of inappropriate behavior by employees or volunteers who work with minors (hereinafter "Volunteer") in our church and to protect employees and Volunteers from false accusations.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT PER STATUTE NRS 432B.020:

1. "Abuse or neglect of a child" means, except as otherwise provided in subsection 2:
 - A. Physical or mental injury of a non-accidental nature;
 - B. Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation; or
 - C. Negligent treatment or maltreatment as set forth in NRS 432B.140, of a child caused or allowed by a person responsible for the welfare of the child under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm.
2. A child is not abused or neglected, nor is the health or welfare of the child harmed or threatened for the sole reason that:
 - A. The parent of the child delivers the child to a provider of emergency services pursuant to NRS 432B.630, if the parent complies with the requirements of paragraph (a) of subsection 3 of that section; or
 - B. The parent or guardian of the child, in good faith, selects and depends upon nonmedical remedial treatment for such child, if such treatment is recognized and permitted under the laws of this State in lieu of medical treatment. This paragraph does not limit the court in ensuring that a child receive a medical examination and treatment pursuant to NRS 62E.280.
3. As used in this section, "allow" means to do nothing to prevent or stop the abuse or neglect of a child in circumstances where the person knows or has reason to know that a child is abused or neglected.
(Added to NRS by 1985, 1368; A 2001, 1255; 2003, 1149)

DEFINITION OF A MINOR: A minor is any individual under the age of 18 years.

This policy and procedure as set forth will apply to all people, regardless of age, who give supervision or have custody of minors or who have opportunity to have contact with minors in church facilities or church-sponsored activities.

This policy will address five (5) areas that are critical for the protection of the children, our employees and our church: screening process, protection policy, reporting procedures, responses to allegations, and resolution of disputes.

1. SCREENING PROCESS

A. Employee – anyone who is paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis, whether or not they work directly with preschoolers, children, or students.

As it pertains to this policy, the screening steps potential employees will take to ensure child safety are:

Application Process

1. Employee Application
 - a. Includes at least 2 references that will be checked and verified. Responses will be written down and kept in the employee file.
 - b. Includes Permission to Obtain Information and Background Check. Background checks will be kept in the employee file and re-run every year. A new authorization form will need to be completed before each background check re-screening.
2. Interview
 - a. Conducted by appropriate staff member or their designate. Notes will be written down and kept in the employee file.

After hiring, the new employee will be required to complete the Child Safety Orientation:

- b. Receive Hazard Communication Policy*
- c. Receive Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan policy*
- d. Receive Emergency Action Plan policy*
- e. Receive Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy*
- f. Complete the Protect My Ministry Child Sexual Abuse Prevention online training course and exam*

*Attendance at an annual (usually in September) Child Safety Review of these items is required for all employees. Signatures each year by employees acknowledging completion of this Child Safety Review will be kept on file in the church office.

All forms and records will be kept in a locked file with all other employee (current and past) records.

B. Volunteer – anyone who is not paid by the church but serves on a full-time or part-time basis.

6-Month Rule

In order for someone to volunteer to serve in any position involving the supervision or custody of minors (e.g. nursery, childcare, preschool, grade school, middle school, high school, etc.), they must be a member of or have attended Sierra Bible Church for 6 consecutive months. If they have not attended Sierra Bible Church for 6 consecutive months but have been actively involved in another church for at least the past 6 months, they may still apply to be a Volunteer but must, as part of the application process, provide the contact information from

the previous church. Verification of their involvement at the other church will be obtained as part of the application process. †

† Parents of children attending His Kids Preschool or The King's Academy do not need to meet the 6-month rule to volunteer for a one-time, school-related event.

Application Process

3. Children's Ministry Volunteer Application
 - a. Includes at least 2 references that will be checked and verified. Responses will be written down and kept in the Volunteer file.
 - b. Includes Permission to Obtain Information and Background Check. Background checks will be kept in the Volunteer file and re-run every year. A new authorization form will need to be completed before each background check re-screening.
4. Interview
 - a. Conducted by appropriate staff member or their designate. Notes will be written down and kept in the Volunteer file.
5. Child Safety Orientation
 - a. Receive Hazard Communication Policy*
 - b. Receive Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan policy*
 - c. Receive Emergency Action Plan policy*
 - d. Receive Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy*
 - e. Complete the Protect My Ministry Child Sexual Abuse Prevention online training course and exam*

*Attendance at an annual (usually in September) Child Safety Review of these items is required to continue working with minors. Signatures each year by Volunteers acknowledging completion of this Child Safety Review will be kept on file in the church office.

All forms and records will be kept in a locked file with all other Volunteer (current and past) ministry records.

Once the applicant has successfully completed these steps, they will be informed that they are cleared to serve in any position involving the supervision or custody of minors.

C. Minor Volunteer – A minor who is an employee or Volunteer must fulfill the above requirements except for the background check. Instead, his or her parent/legal guardian must sign the application affirming the information provided in the application is true and correct.

D. Church Special Events Volunteer – A Church Special Events Volunteer is someone who is assisting with one-time events (e.g. VBS, etc.) where minors are present. Prior to serving at a special event, they must complete a Children's Ministry Volunteer Application (references are not required for a Church Special Events Volunteer) and give Permission to Obtain Information and Background Check. During the event, a Church Special Events Volunteer performs under the direction and supervision of a Volunteer described in B above.

E. School Helper – A School Helper is a parent or visitor of a child at His Kids Preschool or The King's Academy who is assisting with one-time events, observing, etc. where minors are present, but they will not have any supervisory responsibilities of those minors. The School Board of His Kids Preschool & The King's Academy determines the screening process for School Helpers.

F. Re-screening Process – If an employee or Volunteer is absent from service for an extended period of time and would like to serve again, he or she may be obligated to be rescreened in any or all of the above ways.

G. Statement of Restriction – Any person who may pose a threat to children or youth will be prohibited from working in any ministry involving children or youth.

2. PROTECTION POLICY

A. Supervision

- i. **Two-Adult Rule**—The preferred supervision situation is to have at least two screened adults present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving children or youth.
- ii. **Rule of Three**—For the times the Two-Adult Rule is not able to be met, there must be at least three individuals (at least one being an adult) present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving children or youth. When this is the case, there will be a Premise Monitor who will patrol hallways and common areas within the facility when children or youth activities are taking place. Monitor will observe classrooms and activity areas through windows or open doors on a roving basis.
- iii. **Limited One-on-One Exception**—For the limited exceptions to the Two-Adult Rule and the Rule of Three, (e.g. spiritual one-on-one counseling, tutoring, emergency situation, etc.), the employee or Volunteer will:
 1. Obtain prior written approval from the minor’s parent or guardian
 2. Provide advanced notification and obtain consent from the Volunteer’s or employee’s supervisor
 3. Limit the duration of the meeting (e.g. 30 minutes)
 4. Limit the frequency of the meetings (e.g. 3-4 sessions)
 5. Any one-on-one exceptions are required to take place in rooms with at least view windows.

B. View Windows/Open Doors – Every effort will be made to place preschoolers, children and students in rooms with view windows or open doors for all teaching/learning activities whether in church or school related activities.

C. Local, out of town and over-night activities – All employees and Volunteers will be required to comply with all of the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policies during Sierra Bible Church sponsored local, out of town or over-night activities. All participants should have written parental consent and an up-to-date medical release form. Medical release forms will be completed for each activity. Also, all activity specific consent forms will be filled out for each activity. All employees and Volunteers shall be required to comply with all of Sierra Bible Church’s policies including, but not limited to, those outlined in the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy during Sierra Bible Church sponsored local, out-of-town, and over-night activities.

3. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Observed or reported child abuse or neglect should be reported immediately to the appropriate Pastor, Ministry Head, the Director of His Kids Preschool, or the Principal of The King’s Academy. Reporting abuse can precipitate

severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk and for those who are mandated to report (criminal liability being guilty of a misdemeanor). Therefore, if any employee or Volunteer has reasonable cause to suspect abuse, they should talk with an appropriate person to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child and help the family.

A. Mandated Reporters – Any employee of Sierra Bible Church is a mandated reporter, even if they do not provide direct care of minors. This means they cannot conduct their own investigation and legally must report any suspected abuse to Child Protective Services or the police. According to NRS 432B.220(4)(f), Volunteers are not specifically identified as mandated reporters. However, because Volunteers are to report suspected abuse to their supervisor, as soon as the suspicion is communicated to someone who is employed by Sierra Bible Church, the issue must be reported to Child Protective Services or the police.

B. 24-Hour Time Window – If abuse is suspected, the mandated reporter must report this to Child Protective Services or the police as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 24 hours from the time of acquiring this knowledge. Exception: Employees of His Kids Preschool have 1 hour to report abuse or neglect per Washoe County regulations.

C. Written Timeline – As soon as the abuse is reported to the authorities, the mandated reporter will begin a written timeline to log what happened and what they did in response. This is a safeguard for the reporter and may be used by police or in court.

D. Suspected Abuse by Employee or Volunteer – If the person suspected of abuse is an employee or Volunteer of Sierra Bible Church, the mandated reporter must report this directly to the police, not Child Protective Services.

4. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS

A. All allegations will be taken seriously and church staff will take appropriate action in accordance with the laws of the State of Nevada, insurance policy requirements, and based upon advice of legal counsel.

B. The official spokesperson for the church in any of these matters will be the Church Pastor or his appointee. No other staff member or church members shall speak to the media in an official capacity.

C. The church staff involved will document (in writing, with date and signature) all efforts in the handling of any incident.

D. The church staff will not deny, minimize, or blame any individual involved in allegations. Sierra Bible Church staff will minister to all involved, as well as cooperate with authorities.

5. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Sierra Bible Church believes that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6: 1-8). Therefore, any civil claim or dispute arising from or related to allegations by or against workers, employees, Volunteers, church members or their families, should be submitted to the Pastoral team who will minister and counsel as needed.

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy ~ Acknowledgement and Acceptance Form

After you have read the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy, complete this page and return to Sierra Bible Church office.

I have read, understand, and hereby agree to abide by the terms and conditions as provided in the Sierra Bible Church Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policy. I understand that any violation of the aforesaid terms and conditions may result in my being removed from any leadership position and other privileges to serve may be revoked. I further agree to report any abuse, neglect, lack of compliance to this policy, or inappropriate behavior that has the effect of causing harm to a child to my immediate supervisor or ministry head.

Please print clearly!

Full Name _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Ministry of Sierra Bible Church that I am involved in: (check all that apply)

- Employee
- Nursery
- Sunday AM Children's Ministry
- Occasional Childcare (e.g. VBS)
- AWANA
- Student Ministry
- His Kids Preschool
- The King's Academy
- Parent volunteer
- Other, explain _____