



NORTHSIDE DRIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
CHILD and YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

**3100 Northside Drive
Atlanta, GA 30305**



Northside Drive Baptist Church Child and Youth Protection Policy

During each baby dedication and baptism of a child or youth, the members of Northside Drive Baptist Church (NDBC) pledge to uphold that person in Jesus Christ and to teach, strengthen, and support the individual's relationship with God. NDBC is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our children and takes these responsibilities seriously. We fail in our responsibilities if we neglect to take adequate precautions against abuse.

The purpose of this policy is to protect all the children that come to us, to protect both our paid and volunteer staff from potential false allegations of abuse and to limit the extent of legal liability of NDBC. The policy addresses the preventable risk of any form of abuse, neglect or harassment, whether physical, verbal, mental, or sexual, by any of the employees or volunteers of NDBC while on church property or while engaged in church activities or programs.

Presented herein is a comprehensive plan that will include all the areas of the issue:

- Volunteer Screening
- Supervision
- Training
- Reporting Procedures
- Response Plan

Please note these delineated actions are the minimum necessary precautions for protecting children.



Volunteer Screening

Requirements for service

- Volunteers for service in programs for children should be adults (persons at least 18 years old and 5 years older than the children being supervised) and should be committed to the spiritual development of our preschoolers, children and youth.
- Volunteers in all children's programs are required to be a member of NDBC for a minimum of six months prior to supervising children's programs.

Approval Process

- Prior to being considered, volunteers for service in programs for children are required to complete the forms listed below:
 - Authorization of Release of Information
 - Child/Youth Protection Information Form
 - Acknowledgement of receipt and reading of Child and Youth Protection Policy.
- These forms will be turned in to the NDBC Business Manager upon completion who may check references deemed necessary.
- All forms and reference reports shall be confidentially stored by the Business Manager.
- A national criminal background check will be completed on any person seeking to volunteer for service in programs for children and may be repeated periodically. Only the Business Manager will conduct the background check.
- Persons having a criminal history of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve in any ministry with children and youth:
 - Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual or neglectful
 - Violent offenses
 - Persons having a criminal history of DUI or DWI conviction within the five years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.
 - Persons having a criminal history of a drug related conviction within the five years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to volunteer.
- NDBC staff will make the decision to approve or disapprove the applicant as a volunteer.

Supervision

- A reasonable ratio of adult volunteers will be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of children, with a minimum of two unrelated adults present. Activities may be cancelled if two adults are not available.
- No person under the age of 18 shall be considered as one of the two adults.
- NDBC staff members or roaming volunteers will make visits to classes or other program sites from time to time.
- No child will be left unsupervised while attending a church children's activity.
- Prior to a minister or other adult meeting privately with a minor, the minister or other adult should obtain parental permission, use the two adult rule or be in an open area in the line of sight of another adult.



- Meeting rooms for children will either have windows in the doors or walls to aid in monitoring, or the doors will be kept open. Exceptions can be made when there are at least two adults and at least two children or youth in the room and there is excessive noise outside the room.
- Registration materials for activities in which children are outside direct supervision of their parents/guardians shall require signed written permission forms that include pertinent health information in order to participate.
- Emergency volunteers should never be left unsupervised and should always be supervised by a qualified staff member or volunteer. Emergency volunteers are adults who are needed when there are not enough available qualified volunteers and a staff member determines that an emergency exists and there is insufficient time to fully screen and train the emergency volunteers for the specific occasion they are needed. Otherwise, emergency volunteers are required to adhere to the provisions of this policy.
- The following acts are categorically prohibited by this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any NDBC activity or program. Any observations or personal knowledge of such violations must be immediately reported to the appropriate ministerial staff member after the safety of the child or youth involved has been assured.
 - Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor;
 - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a minor;
 - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between a minor and another minor (sexual advances or sexual activity includes any verbal or nonverbal graphic representations of sex or sexual activity, verbal, nonverbal, or oral requests for sexual activity, and/or any physical sexual acts);
 - Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
 - Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of NDBC;
 - Causing mental or emotional injury to a minor;
 - Possessing obscene or pornographic materials at any function of NDBC (Sex education materials are not obscene or pornographic materials);
 - Possessing or being under the influence of any illegal drugs;
 - Consuming, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors;
 - Possessing any gun, firearm, or other explosive device while leading or participating in a function for minors;
 - Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a minor

Training

- All NDBC staff members, paid child-care workers, and volunteers in programs involving children are required to study this policy. Particular attention should be paid to the definition of inappropriate behavior and the reporting requirements that apply when there is a suspicion of inappropriate behavior, child abuse or neglect.
- Staff members and the Children's Committee may periodically initiate programs for NDBC staff, paid child-care workers and volunteers in programs involving children. The programs should help workers identify child abuse and enhance their appreciation for the problem of child abuse.
- Every volunteer will live by the understanding that, as a person in authority, it is his/her responsibility to avoid sexual contact with minors in his/her care, even if such minors attempt to initiate the contact. Physical affection should be appropriate to the minor's age and should be intended for the child's affirmation only.



Reporting Procedures

Supervision of preschoolers, children and youth includes the responsibility to report inappropriate behavior to one of the ministerial staff members. Inappropriate behavior includes any sexual activity with a child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child provided the child is four years older than the victim. Types of abuse that involve touching include fondling, oral, genital and anal penetration, intercourse and forcible rape. Types of abuse that do not involve touching include verbal comments, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, emails or text messages, exhibitionism and allowing children to witness sexual activity.

The following process should be followed in reporting an alleged incident:

1. The staff person or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is required to report the incident immediately to the staff person in charge of the children's activity as well as the child's parents or legal guardians.
2. The staff person in charge of the children's activity in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information. The Abuse Incident Report Form should be utilized to document the incident.
3. The staff person should call the appropriate authorities (Division of Family and Children Services) within 24 hours.
4. The Staff person should document the report and then speak with the alleged victim, being careful to use open-ended questions and documenting the conversation in detail including:
 - a. The name of the leader observing or receiving the disclosure of abuse, including the date, time and place and any action taken by this person.
 - b. The alleged victim's name, age, and date of birth.
 - c. Any statement made by the alleged victim.
 - d. Name of the respondent, the date, time and place of any conversation or any statement made by the respondent.
 - e. Any action taken, i.e. suspension of the respondent.
 - f. Date and time of call to the appropriate agency, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation and case number assigned.
 - g. Date and time of call to law enforcement agency, name of officer spoken to and content of that conversation.
 - h. Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
5. If the abuse occurred on church property by church volunteers or staff, they shall immediately be removed from contact with children until the incident reported has been resolved. This should be handled in a discreet manner and they shall not be banned from other church ministries. Do not confront the alleged or accused violator.
6. If a minor observes, suspects, and reports abusive conduct, regardless of where or when the conduct is alleged to have occurred, the person (adult) initially contacted by the minor should contact a staff member and complete a report. The report should be prepared using the minor's own words as originally spoken by the minor without any editorial comments, inferences, implication, suppositions or conjectures by the adult. The minor's conduct and observed demeanor should also be included.
7. Any person who is the object of the report will be required to refrain from all children's activities until the incident report is resolved.



Response Plan

1. Upon the first suspicion that a child has been abused in connection with NDBC sponsored programs or activities, NDBC will conduct an immediate investigation.
2. All allegations will be taken seriously.
3. Reasonable efforts should be made to keep confidential the fact of the investigation, the identity of the alleged victim, and the identity of the accused.
4. Any person accused of abusing a child must be suspended from the performance of duties involving children until the investigation is completed.
5. If the allegation is against a staff person or pastor, the Church Moderator will be contacted immediately.
6. When child abuse by a staff member, paid child-care worker, or volunteer is confirmed, NDBC will immediately dismiss the person who abused the child from his or her position. The custodial parent will be notified immediately and a face-to-face meeting with the parent will be scheduled.
7. When the evidence is inconclusive, NDBC may nonetheless take whatever remedial measures NDBC deems appropriate. Depending on the strength of the evidence and other relevant considerations, these measures may include dismissing the accused from his or her position. Pastoral support will be available to all persons involved with the incident as indicated.

Acknowledgement of receipt and reading Child and Youth Protection Policy

I, _____, have received a copy of the Northside Drive Baptist Church Child and Youth Protection Policy and acknowledge that I have read and understand all the contents therein.

Signature

Date