Volunteer Application Process and Background Screening:
It is the policy of Abner Creek Baptist Church to conduct background screening on all individuals serving in the following ministries:

Safety-First Response Team
Children’s Department
Student Ministry

(Good News Club volunteers must contact the ACBC GNC Coordinator to make arrangements for a background screening through Child Evangelism Fellowship. This screening process is separate from any check ACBC may have completed and is required in order to volunteer in the church sponsored bible club through Child Evangelism Fellowship. If the individual seeks to volunteer in other ministries listed above, he/she will also need to complete the ACBC background screening process as well.)

It is the policy of Abner Creek Baptist Church to also conduct background screening on any individual who works in close contact with minors at any given time. This includes anyone volunteering at an event that focuses on minors such as: Vacation Bible School, Student or Kids Camps and retreats, basketball coaches and assistants, etc. where the individual may be in close contact with a minor. ACBC may also require a background check on individuals who represent our church through volunteering in community ministries such as Meals on Wheels, etc. where they have close access to the disabled or elderly. This policy is for the safety and security of those most vulnerable to abuse and/or neglect in our church and in the community that we serve.
The following procedures will be followed for all individuals who feel led to volunteer in the ministries listed above.

1. Any individual wanting to volunteer in the above areas will submit their phone number and email address to the leader of the ministry of interest.
2. The ministry leader will then forward the individual’s contact information to the church Ministry Assistant via email.
3. The church Ministry Assistant will then notify the Pastor who will then review the applicant’s attendance history and give an opinion as to his/her suitability for the position. (Communication should be conducted via email whenever possible in order to properly document a paper trail on the application process.)
4. Although membership is strongly encouraged, the applicant MUST have at least been an ACTIVE attendee for the most recent 6 months and be a born again Christian exhibiting Christ-like character in order to be considered further. However, anyone applying for a leadership position (Bible Study Teacher, etc) must also have been an active member for at least 1 year and completed the Membership Class before application. High school students 16 years of age and older may serve as helpers, but they must meet the minimum 6 months’ regular attendance requirement and complete all application procedures (with exception of the actual criminal records check.) They are not to be left alone with a minor.
5. Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood abuse and/or molestation will receive the love, acceptance and support of our church family. If you are a survivor, we strongly encourage you to notify the Lead Pastor prior to continuing the application process. A confidential interview with the pastor before further consideration is strongly encouraged. All communication will be confidential between the Pastor and the applicant and is meant only to further counsel and disciple the individual to ensure they are both emotionally and spiritually ready for service in the ministry.
6. No applicant who has ever been convicted of a sexual related crime, physical abuse or has a history of unacceptable conduct is eligible to serve in any of the ministries listed above.
7. Once an applicant has cleared the review process they will receive an email from the church Ministry Assistant with a link to complete the online background screening application. At no time should the applicant disclose any personal information (such as social security number, etc.) to anyone other than directly through the online application for background screening. If the applicant does not use computers or have email, they may stop by the church office and the Ministry Assistant will gladly walk them through the online application process on the office computer.
8. Once the applicant has completed the online application process (including acceptance of this policy), a background check will be ordered by the church Ministry Assistant. Once the background report is received, the church Ministry Assistant will review it. If no complicating issues are found, the application will be approved and the ministry leader will receive an email confirmation stating the applicant is approved for service. AT NO TIME MAY AN APPLICANT BEGIN SERVICE OR BE PLACED ON A SCHEDULE TO SERVE BEFORE THE BACKGROUND CHECK HAS BEEN APPROVED. If any questionable history or criminal charges are found on the report or during the application process, it will be reviewed by the Pastor and/or Personnel Committee and/or Deacon Board for further
determination. If an individual is not approved for service, they will be notified and the director of the ministry will only be told that “the applicant cannot serve in that ministry”. At no time will details of an applicant’s background be shared with anyone other than the necessary leadership of the church. (i.e. the Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, etc. depending upon the individual situation.) Since the church Ministry Assistant processes the information he/she will have knowledge of this information as well. *(Typical background checks come back clean and are cleared and approved by the Ministry Assistant within 3 days of submission. With the cooperation of all parties, the entire volunteer application process should not take longer than a week or so.)*

9. Background screenings shall be renewed at the discretion of Abner Creek Baptist Church.

10. It is the sole discretion of the leadership of Abner Creek Baptist Church to determine who will be allowed to serve with minors. Completing the application process and even passing a background check is NOT a guarantee of approval.

**Volunteer Code of Ethics**

All volunteers of Abner Creek Baptist Church are expected to conduct themselves in a way that avoids situations which raise questions about the church’s credibility or integrity. We expect all volunteers to conduct themselves with the spirit of Philippians 2. *(...do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...Philippians 2:14-15 ESV)*

**Rules of Conduct**

Rules for the acceptable conduct of volunteers are necessary for the orderly operation of any organization and for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of everyone involved. The rules are established to promote understanding of what is considered appropriate behavior.

**Punctuality:**

Repeated tardiness or absenteeism will create hardships on your fellow volunteers and prevent smooth and efficient operation of church functions. We ask that you please arrive at the time you are asked by your ministry leader or earlier.

**Rules – Proper Cause for Disciplinary Procedures, including suspension from service, includes but is not limited to the following offenses:**

1. Consistent refusal or failure to carry out reasonable instructions of a ministry leader.
2. Deliberate violations of an established safety, fire protection, health or security rule.
3. Threatened or actual aggressive physical violence or behavior toward an attendee or member of the church.
4. Dishonesty: This includes lying, stealing, as well as falsification of records.
5. Destroying or defacing church property.
6. Abuse of alcohol, illegal drug use, or misuse of prescription drugs.
7. Failure to maintain harmonious, cooperative relationships with other volunteers and church members.
8. Repeated failure to attend training sessions offered for volunteers in your ministry.

We believe that most matters will be resolved between you and your ministry leader. If for any reason the matter is not resolved, or is of a nature that you would prefer not to discuss with your ministry leader, you are encouraged to contact the Lead Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, or the Personnel Committee. We promise to listen and give the best possible response we can. There will be no discrimination, recrimination, or criticisms against any volunteer because he/she presents a complaint or problem. Any complaints of sexual harassment or abuse by a church member or non-member against another church member, non-member, or employee shall be reported and investigated in the same manner as stated in the sexual harassment section of the church’s Personnel Policy. The Pastor, Deacon Board and/or Personnel Committee shall handle any complaints of sexual harassment. **Reports of child sex abuse should be immediately reported to the Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons.** Complaints against the Pastor should be reported directly to the Deacon Board who will notify the Personnel Committee as deemed necessary.

**Meals on Wheels:**
Abner Creek Baptist Church currently provides drivers for a Greer Community Ministries Meals on Wheels route. We expect our drivers to abide by the code of conduct listed above for church volunteers. Please remember you are representing our church in the community. If you suspect elder abuse or have a concern about the general well-being or health of someone you deliver meals to, please notify the appropriate ministry leader at Greer Community Ministries (877-1937) who will take appropriate action to investigate the issue and work to resolve it. Any other concerns or questions can be directed to the church Ministry Assistant or directly to GCM.

**Safety-First Response Team:**
We seek to provide a safe and secure environment for our guests and members during all activities on church property. Volunteers serving on the Safety-First Response team are expected to remain diligent and alert while serving. Please refrain from socializing during this time and remain focused on the safety and well-being of those in attendance. The following recommendations should be followed to help maintain a safe environment for our congregation:

1. As guests arrive for the service or event please be alert for potential threats to safety. If you notice a suspicious individual(s) or a possible situation, please report it to another team member. If a team member is not readily accessible, obtain help from a greeter or another member of the church to further monitor the situation or to contact the police if deemed necessary.

   **Signs of a potentially unstable person:**
   a. **Facial** color or expression: tightened lips over teeth, pale face, prolonged staring, glancing at an intended target, head down but looking around, raised or angered voice, etc.
b. **Body** Language and appearance: kicking the ground, abrupt/nervous behavior, disheveled clothing, clenching and unclenching of fists

2. Efforts should be quickly made to calmly resolve any potential domestic disputes before they escalate. Individuals involved in a domestic dispute that cannot be quickly resolved will be asked to leave the premises. Law enforcement is to be called immediately if you perceive a threat to someone’s safety.

3. In cases of civil disturbances (protestors): be sure to have as many team members on duty as possible to monitor the situation. Law enforcement should be notified if the situation warrants. Do not get into an argument or be confrontational with protestors.

4. Once the service has begun, all exterior doors (except the front main entrance should be locked to limit access to the building.) The adult wing entrance should be locked once Bible Study has begun.

5. Team members should remain alert at all times and walk the halls during services and events to make their presence known. Special attention should be given to the Children’s Check-in Desk during times of drop off and pick up.

6. If a family with preschool aged children comes into the service late, please assist them in checking their children into worship childcare and/or children’s church. If you do not know how to operate the check-in system, please locate the Children’s Director for assistance. *(Go to the sound booth if you are unable to locate someone to assist you.)*

7. The last person to exit the building should be sure all exterior doors are locked and the alarm system has been set.

**Medical Emergencies:**

Always call 911 immediately if you perceive a medical emergency. Keep a calm voice and demeanor as to not draw a crowd or disrupt the service. The following guidelines are provided as a reference only:

- **Heart Attack:** If having chest pains or pressure on the chest keep them sitting up or slightly reclined, loosen ties or tight fitting collars, cover with a blanket. Perform chest compressions if the person is not breathing or try and locate someone who is trained in administering CPR.
- **Fainting:** Pale, very weak pulse, may be going into shock. Lay flat with feet raised and cover with a blanket.
- **Falls:** If the fall has injured the back or neck area **DO NOT MOVE** the individual. Keep the patient quiet and still and obtain help before trying to move someone with a lessor injury. Whenever possible, pictures of the area, the person and their shoes should be taken to properly document the incident. A written report should be filed with the church office within 48 hours by all witnesses to the incident.
- **Bleeding:** Always wear protective gear, gloves, goggles etc. Apply pressure to the wound with a cloth or gauze to slow the bleeding. When possible, elevate the wound above the persons’ heart to slow the blood flow until paramedics arrive.
Fire:
If you discover a small fire, notify another team member to call 911 and grab the closest fire extinguisher and extinguish it quickly yourself. Fires can quickly spread or may even reignite after you think it has been extinguished so be sure to call the fire department immediately! NEVER put yourself between the fire and an escape route. NEVER open a hot door. If the room is filled with smoke, crawl toward the exit. Smoke rises so the air quality will be better near the floor. Close the door behind you. If the fire cannot be quickly extinguished, close all doors to the area (seal the opening under the door if possible) and assist in quickly evacuating everyone from the building. ALWAYS remain calm and do not panic.

Extreme Weather Conditions:
During periods of active extreme weather threats, team members should closely monitor local radar as well as being visually alert for signs of tornado, etc. If an immediate threat is perceived, everyone should be moved indoors and into an interior area of the building without windows and exterior walls. Doors should be closed behind you.

Daniel’s Law: The Safe Haven for Abandoned Babies Act
Daniel’s Law is a law designed to provide a safe haven for abandoned babies. A person who abandons a newborn cannot be prosecuted for abandonment if he or she takes the unharmed baby to staff or an employee of a safe haven. If the baby has been harmed in some way, the immunity from prosecution may not apply. Safe havens are defined as a hospital or hospital outpatient facility, law enforcement agencies, fire stations, emergency medical services (EMS) stations or a house of worship during the time the church or synagogue is staffed. According to this definition, Abner Creek Baptist Church is considered a safe haven. Important things you should know:

1. The law applies to infants up to 30 days old.
2. The person leaving the child does not have to reveal his or her identity.
3. ACBC Safety-First Response Team members should accept temporary custody of the child and ask the person leaving the child for the following information: medical information about the baby’s parents, and if possible, the name of the baby’s parents - This will help medical personnel treat the baby for any health problems.
4. Once the individual has left the building, a safety team member should call 911 and notify them that our church has received a baby under Safe Haven. Law enforcement and/or EMS should be dispatched to pick up the child and take it to the hospital for evaluation. (Please relay any information regarding the child and the person leaving it to law enforcement personnel.)
5. The hospital will provide medical care and contact South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS will have legal custody of the child and will place the child in a foster home.
6. DSS will immediately pursue family court action to free the child for adoption.
**Protection of Minors Policy:**

Abner Creek Baptist Church is committed to maintaining an environment in which minors are safe from physical and sexual abuse. Our policies apply to all persons, whether compensated staff, volunteers, teachers, church members, visitors or guests. It is the responsibility of the ACBC ministry leader to ensure all guidelines and policies are followed and appropriate practices are implemented to reduce the risk of abuse and ensure the protection of minors as well as reducing the risk of false accusations.

1. **Two Adults Present:** All volunteers and employees who work with minors are expected to observe the “Two-Adult Rule” at all times. At no time should an adult be in a high isolation setting alone with a minor (closed door in a room with no viewing panes or windows). An adult should never deal with a minor one on one without a witness present. A witness or other party to the “Two-Adult Rule” may include a student who is older than 12 years of age. Exceptions may be made to the “Two-Adult Rule” when necessary as long as the supervision occurs in a public area and is not considered a high isolation setting (Public areas include an open hallway, open door with other adults nearby, etc.)

2. **Restroom Procedures:** Adult volunteers may accompany small children to the restroom and stand outside while the child uses the bathroom. If a preschool child requires assistance or supervision while in the restroom, more than one adult must always be present. No one is to ever be alone with a child in the restroom or any other closed area. All diaper changes and toilet assistance MUST be done in the presence of at least two adults. Whenever possible, it is recommended that only female volunteers provide restroom assistance to preschoolers. All volunteers must thoroughly wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after changing a diaper or assisting with toileting needs. Disposable latex-free gloves are provided for dealing with bodily fluids such as diapers, toileting and blood.

3. **Discipline:** Disruptive or unruly minors are to be verbally warned in Christian love. If the verbal warning does not work, the minor may be placed in time out (Example: asked to sit in a chair for a period of time instead of participating with his peers). If the minor continues to be disruptive, the parent is to be contacted to remove the minor from the classroom or event. Teachers, workers and parents shall work together to resolve any significant discipline problems in a Christ-like manner. At no time is any form of corporal punishment, physical abuse (except for self-defense), emotional abuse or public shaming to be used to deal with any minor in the care of Abner Creek Baptist Church. No minor will be subject to physical restraint (unless restraint is necessary to protect the minor or others from physical harm).

4. **Room Occupancy:** For the safety of small children, only the children assigned to that classroom are allowed in the rooms. Volunteers should make other arrangements for their older children. Only approved volunteers should be in the room. Visitors of volunteers are encouraged to attend the worship service and may not stay in the rooms with the volunteer since they have not completed a background check through our church. If someone observes an unauthorized person in the room, they should report it to the ministry leader immediately. Compensated church staff members, or the person in charge of the ministry, should make periodic unannounced visits to classrooms and group settings. Parents are welcome to observe any activity involving their child but we ask that...
they not stay in the classrooms for a prolonged period of time as this may distract the teachers and children. Parents should see the ministry leader if they need to check on their child during an event to avoid any disruption.

5. **Adequate Supervision:** Parents or legal guardians are responsible for ensuring their minor is not left alone before the teacher arrives. At no time should a minor under the age of 16 be left unattended while in the care of ACBC. Cellphone use while caring for minors is prohibited. Volunteers should refrain from socializing and give their undivided attention to the minors in their care. Children under the age of 12 are only to be released to parents or siblings 16 years or older who present the appropriate claim tag. Any activity away from church property will require a signed permission slip from the parent or legal guardian of the minors participating. All adults attending an overnight trip with minors in the care of ACBC must be approved in advance by Pastoral Staff even if the person has already been approved to work with minors.

6. **Sickness and Cleanliness:** If a minor appears to be sick (fever, vomiting, severe coughing, pink eye, head lice, undiagnosed rash, diarrhea, etc.), please isolate them from others and contact the parent to remove the minor from the classroom or event to prevent spread of infection. (Do not leave the child alone.) Be sure to disinfect anything the child has come into contact with during his time in the room. Linens are not to be re-used or shared among minors during any session. Toys, mattresses and furniture are to be wiped clean with disinfectant after each session.

7. **Food:** A snack of water or juice and crackers (Cheerios, Goldfish, etc.) may be served to children 2.5 years and older. Only the snacks provided or approved by the ministry leader are to be given to minors. Infants should only be served formula, milk, juice or water when provided by their parents with written instructions. Volunteers should be conscious of any food allergies for the children in their care and post an “Allergy Alert” poster on the classroom door and at the check-in desk before minors arrive if a special snack will be offered that day.

8. **Child Abuse:** All volunteers and employees are required to immediately report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons. If a volunteer observes what they feel is “questionable” behavior toward a minor, they should notify the ministry leader or a Safety-First Response Team member immediately. A volunteer should not hesitate to caution others if a behavior or activity they observe seems odd or questionable. An act that may seem as odd or questionable could be a pre-cursor to abuse. Reporting may help prevent the possible abuse of a minor.

**Reporting Procedures for Child Abuse or Suspected Abuse:**
The law requires a person to immediately report suspected and/or reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as Abner Creek Baptist Church to the appropriate individuals in charge. A person who fails to do so can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees and volunteers of Abner Creek Baptist Church must adhere to the following procedures:
In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or a violation of the Protection of Minors Policy listed above, the employee or volunteer should immediately notify the Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons. The Pastor and/or Chairman of the Deacons will immediately notify local law enforcement or the local Child Protection Agency. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, the reporting employee or volunteer is also encouraged to immediately make a report to the local child protection service or law enforcement agency themselves.

Physical Signs of abuse or molestation may include:
- lacerations and bruises
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothes
- venereal disease

Behavioral Signs of abuse or molestation may include:
- nightmares
- anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery (other than normal separation anxiety)
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal Signs of abuse or molestation may include statements such as:
- “I don’t like __________.”
- “__________ does things to me when we are alone.”
- “I don’t like to be alone with __________.”

Reports of suspected child abuse are to be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, a brief synopsis of the report, and the church’s response to the report. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness.

All church employees and volunteers working with minors should receive training annually regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

In addition to following their own reporting procedures, any outside organization that uses the ACBC facilities should notify the Pastor as soon as possible regarding any incident of child abuse/neglect or sexual misconduct believed to have occurred on church property. Any individual affiliated with that organization who has been convicted of child abuse/neglect or sexual misconduct (or has pending accusations of such) is not allowed on church property.
Response Procedures for Child Abuse or Suspected Abuse:
The official spokesperson for Abner Creek Baptist Church is the Lead Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons. All inquiries or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other party shall be referred to the official spokesperson. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson. The Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons may designate another individual to serve as the spokesperson for a particular case.

The official spokesperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate local Child Protection Agency of the county or local law enforcement and to our insurance carrier. The leader of the ministry involved shall also be notified of any allegation and be cautioned of the importance of confidentiality. Abner Creek Baptist Church will not make a determination as to whether the allegations are true, but will treat all allegations seriously and refer them for investigation to local law enforcement or the local child protection agency as necessary.

The care and safety of the victim is our first priority. The individual(s) accused of the abuse WILL NOT be notified or confronted without the approval of the local Child Protection Agency or local law enforcement and should not be contacted until the safety of the victim is ensured.

We will not prejudge any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim’s family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating any allegation of child abuse.

We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. If the accused is a church employee or volunteer, that person shall be immediately relieved of his or her duties (temporarily) until the investigation is completed and the person is cleared by authorities or until criminal charges are filed. If the accused is a paid employee of the church, his or her income will continue until the allegations are cleared by the authorities or until criminal charges are filed. At that time, the Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons and the Personnel Committee will make the determination as to when and if it is appropriate for the individual to return to service.

All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and the public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of ALL PARTIES involved whenever possible.

All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Pastor or, in the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons and maintained in a secure and documented file at the church office.

Legal counsel may be consulted by ACBC at any time to obtain guidance or advice on a situation.

It is the responsibility of the ACBC leader of each ministry to ensure all guidelines and policies are followed and appropriate practices are implemented to reduce the risk of abuse and ensure the protection of minors.

Acknowledgement:
I am applying to volunteer with a ministry of Abner Creek Baptist Church and acknowledge that I have read and fully agree to abide by the Policies and Guidelines for Volunteers listed herein.