

ARTICLE I – PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to help **Jackson Baptist Church** do the following:

1. Develop standards for the screening and supervision of all volunteer and paid staff working in any area of children’s ministry.
2. Develop procedures to follow in response to an allegation of child abuse or neglect.
3. Provide ongoing training for educational staff and instruction for the church at large in the area of child protection.
4. Defend the church against assaults on its reputation as a “safe haven”.

It is the intention of the church to protect the children in its care against abuse or neglect, to protect the staff against unfounded and disproved allegations of abuse, and to protect the church against attacks on its ministerial and fiscal integrity. It is our desire that parents who entrust their children to any branch of JBC’s educational ministries will be confident that they will be taught in a safe and secure environment.

ARTICLE II – DEFINITIONS

1. Child Abuse Reporting

When an incident of neglect or abuse is reported to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)

2. Church Staff

Compensated church employees or volunteer workers 18 years of age older who are involved in any educational ministries from Nursery to Senior High Youth Group.

3. D.Y.F.S.

New Jersey Department of Human Services, “Division of Youth and Family Services”.

4. J.B.C.

Jackson Baptist Church

5. Two Adult Rule

The procedure of having two adults physically present in a situation where those under 18 years of age are supervised in a church-related ministry.

ARTICLE III - SAFETY PROCEDURES

Section 1 - Full Screening Process

1. All paid employees of JBC who are in positions of authority and all volunteer workers who supervise children and youth on a regular basis, or who are in positions of authority will adhere to the full screening process. This is outlined as follows:

- a. Fill out a Volunteer Personnel Form.
- b. Submit to a personal interview conducted by the pastoral staff, the Elder Board or the Child Protection Policy Coordinator.
- c. Have their personal references checked.
- d. Submit a copy of a current New Jersey driver’s license (if ministry involves transporting of children)
- e. Submit a copy of a current proof of auto insurance (if ministry involves transporting of children)

Section 2 – Standards for Service

1. MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Any individual in a supervisory capacity should be a member in good standing. An exception to this may be made when a member is unavailable. In such case a non-member may serve in a supervisory capacity with the approval of the Elder Board provided he/she has attended JBC for 6 months or more and has followed the full-screening process.

2. EXCLUDED BY VIRTUE OF PRIOR CONVICTION

Any individual who has been convicted of, or pled guilty to, physical or sexual abuse, child neglect, sexual assault, or child pornography may be excluded from children’s ministries.

3. TEMPORARY RELEASE FROM RESPONSIBILITIES

Any individual currently under investigation for child abuse will be immediately relieved of responsibilities until the investigation is completed and the allegations proven to be without merit.

4. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Church staff members having reasonable cause (not mere speculation, but clear evidence) to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall promptly report to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). “Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected shall report it promptly to DYFS” (N.J.S.A. 9:6-8,10). The person reporting the alleged child abuse shall inform the pastoral staff of the report after the DYFS referral has been made.

5. CASE-BY-CASE EVALUATIONS

Individuals who have been charged with abuse but never convicted will not be permitted to work in child supervision until all of the following have been completed.

a. The Ocean County Prosecutors Office (or similar office in the town/city/county where the allegations were made) will be contacted by the pastoral staff or the elder board, and the merits of the case will be discussed.

b. The Elder Board must meet in special session to review the facts and unanimously release the individual to service in children's ministry.

c. The Elder Board reserves the right to refuse permission for service in a case where the evidence may not be sufficient to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, but is sufficient enough to take common-sense precautions.

6. CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Any paid or volunteer staff worker who, in their opinion, finds the behavior of another staff member to in any way jeopardize the welfare of the children in their care should bring their concern to the Director of Christian Education and/or the Child Protection Policy Coordinator, who will in turn decide if any action should be taken. Such concerns would include, but not be limited to: the display of suggestive behavior toward a child, the lack of mature judgment in certain situations or perceived error in Biblical teaching.

7. TWO-ADULT RULE

JBC encourages and recommends following the TWO-ADULT RULE.

8. CLASSROOM VISIBILITY

All classroom and office doors shall have transparent windows. Such windows are not to be covered partially or temporarily for any reason while children are present in the room.

9. STAFF TRAINING

Training shall be provided for all individuals involved in children's ministry. The training will cover, but is not limited to the following areas:

- a. *Adequate supervision*
- b. *Safety & injury procedures*
- c. *Traveling procedures*
- d. *View the video provided in "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse" resource kit.*
- e. *Read the handout- "Physical & Behavioral Indicators Of Child Abuse And Neglect"*
- f. *Reporting procedures*

SUMMARY

The church's credibility as a "safe haven" rests on the willingness of the entire church community to work together to provide a safe and secure environment for every child. Children should be able to trust and respect those in the church who have authority over them. Therefore, each of us who serve in these ministries should be aware of our responsibility to serve with excellence, good judgment and humility.

**Let the children come to me;
do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that
the kingdom of God belongs.**

Mark 10:14b



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

*A POLICY FOR
THE CHILDREN'S
MINISTRIES OF*

**JACKSON
BAPTIST
CHURCH**