

Sexual Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy



Mount Pleasant
Baptist Church

Protecting Our Children

Sexual Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy

For

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church

PURPOSE: It is the purpose and intent of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (MPBC) to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for all who come to MPBC.

GOAL: Our goal is to protect all from sexual abuse, molestation or any type of inappropriate sexual or abusive behavior by employees or volunteers in our church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations.

DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse defines child sexual abuse as “any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a daycare institution, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in other setting, including on the street by a person known to the child.” The abuser may be any adult, an adolescent, or another child.

Child sexual abuse can be violent or non-violent. It is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of oral, genital, and anal areas; intercourse, and forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, any exposure to pornographic materials, inappropriate internet activity, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

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

The policy and procedures set forth will apply to all people 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 four (4) areas that are critical for the protection of the children, our employees, and the church: selection process, protection policy, reporting procedures, and responses to allegations.

1. SELECTION 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 children.

a. Current Employees

- i. Complete a confidential application form
- ii. Consent to release confidential information
- iii. Background check using the above record

b. New Employees

- i. Complete a confidential application form
- ii. Consent to release confidential information on form
- iii. Background check using the above record
- iv. Criminal records check
- v. Interview by appropriate pastoral staff member(s)
- vi. Reference checked and documented
- vii. Received appropriate clearances on all checks to work with minors

All records, forms, and reports will become part of the employee's confidential personnel file.

B. VOLUNTEER- anyone who is not paid by the church, and is serving in any position involving supervision or custody of minors. Examples: Nursery, childcare, preschool, grade school, middle school, high school, college workers, bus drivers, teachers, chaperones, and others designated by the pastoral staff.

a. Current Volunteer

- i. Complete a confidential application form
- ii. Consent to release confidential information on form
- iii. Background check using the above record (yearly)

b. New Volunteer

- i. Complete a confidential application form
- ii. Consent to release confidential information on form
- iii. Background check using the above record (yearly)
- iv. Meeting/Interview with appropriate pastoral staff
- v. Criminal Records Check

Background and criminal record checks for employees/volunteers will be limited to any criminal activity involving the following: (1) minor; (2) child molestation; (3) any type of

sexual offense; (4)any type of pornographic or obscene material; (5)any type of domestic abuse or violence; and (6)suspected child abuse.

In addition to the above requirements, a volunteer must be a member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, or regular attendee, for at least six (6) months. A volunteer who does not meet these membership requirements may serve only upon approval of the appropriate pastoral staff member under the same guidelines and restrictions as all other volunteers.

- C. **MINORS-** In addition to the above requirements a minor who is an employee or volunteer must also submit a separate certification from his or her parent or guardian that the parent or guardian “knows no reason why the minor should not be allowed to work directly or indirectly with other minors.”

2. PROTECTION POLICY

- A. **TWO ADULTS-** Age group ministers/directors, teachers, workers, and/or greeters will be present, or nearby, and available on each floor and in the hallways where minors are present. Reasonable efforts will be made to have two (2) adult workers present, or nearby, with preschoolers, children, and students during church activities. Reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that one adult is not left alone with one minor.
- B. **VIEW WINDOWS/OPEN DOORS-** Reasonable effort will be made to place preschoolers, children, and students in rooms with view windows or open doors for all teaching/learning activities.
- C. **OVER-NIGHT & IN- TOWN ACTIVITIES-** All employees and volunteers will be required to comply with all of the Sexual Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policies during MPBC sponsored over-night and in-town activities.
 - a. **Out of Town Activities-** All participants should have written parental consent and a notarized medical release form. Consent forms may be completed for a one-year period and should be renewed annually. All consent forms will be considered valid until renewed. All employees and volunteers shall be required to comply with all of MPBC’s policies including, but not limited to, those outlined in the Sexual Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy during MPBC sponsored out-of-town activities.
- D. **PRESCHOOL SECURITY POLICIES AND AGE-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES-** MPBC has a detailed, working security policy that should be conscientiously followed and all employees and volunteers

shall abide by security policy as well as any other applicable age-specific guidelines. Please contact the appropriate pastoral staff member or security team leader for relative questions about these policies.

3. **REPORTING PROCEDURES-** Observed or reported sexual abuse or child molestation should be reported immediately to the appropriate pastoral staff member or Administrative Pastor. 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 the child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, you should talk with an appropriate pastor to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child and help the family. Pastoral staff members will comply to mandate reporting.
4. **A RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS-** Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (MPBC) takes very serious the responsibility when allegations are made. Here are some of the actions that will be taken:
 - a. Church staff will take appropriate action in accordance with the laws of the state of Virginia, insurance policy requirement, with the help of legal counsel.
 - b. The official spokesperson for the church in any of these matters designates either a pastoral staff member or a legal representative. No other staff member or church member shall speak to the media in an official capacity.
 - c. The pastoral staff will document (in writing, with date and signatures) all efforts in the handling of any and all incidents.
 - d. The church staff will not deny, minimize, or blame any individuals involved in the allegations. MPBC staff will minister to all involved, as well as cooperate with authorities.
5. **RELOUTION OF DISPUTES-** Mount Pleasant Baptist Church believes that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other within the church (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8). Therefore, any civil claim or dispute arising from or related to allegations by or against employees, volunteers, church members or their families, will be submitted to the pastoral staff as needed. We also reserve the right to use Peacemaker Ministries as a 3rd party to resolve unity when needed.

This policy must be understood by each and every employee and volunteer. A letter signed by each will be kept on file in the church office as audit for this process.

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Acknowledgment and Acceptance Form

*After you have read the Sexual Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy, **complete** this page and return it to the MPBC office.*

Print your name clearly

_____ MI _____ Last Name _____ Date of Birth _____

I have read, understand and hereby agree to abide by the terms and conditions as provided in the Sexual Abuse and Molestation Policy by Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. 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, lack of compliance or suspicious behavior by others to a pastoral staff member. If I am a pastoral staff member, I am responsible for informing another pastoral staff member of allegations that need to be reported. Any violation of this policy, or any inappropriate behavior that is not included in this policy but has the effect of causing harm to another will be reported immediately.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

MPBC Affiliation: (Check all that apply)

- _____ Preschool Ministry Volunteer
- _____ Children's Ministry Volunteer
- _____ Student Ministry Volunteer
- _____ College Ministry Volunteer
- _____ Member of MPBC
- _____ Non-member of MPBC
- _____ Staff Member of MPBC
- _____ Other, explain _____

Signature of Guardian (if a minor) _____

