

# Safe @ Church Policies

Revised 1/29/2015

## Strategy

- A. Strive to provide a safe and secure environment for all children (ages birth to grade 12).
- B. Strive to protect children from the possibility of physical or sexual abuse.
- C. Reduce the possibility of false accusations against volunteers.
- D. Educate and train our volunteers to identify and guard against child abuse.

## The Safe @ Church Board

The *Safe @ Church* Board shall consist of the Department Ministers of the Children's, Student, and Sports Outreach areas. Also included will be the Executive Pastor as well as an attorney appointed by the Executive Pastor. The Board will meet as needed for any of the following purposes as deemed necessary:

- A. Monitor compliance with the *Safe @ Church* Program.
- B. Periodically review and recommend changes in the *Safe @ Church* program of the Church.
- C. Review and determine the eligibility of those individuals who did not meet all of the volunteer requirements.

## Policies:

- A. Be a regularly attending member of Park Cities Baptist Church or a member of a Connect Group or Small Group of the church. (Non-members must also successfully complete a background check and training to work with minors in Connect Groups or any church function.)
- B. Complete a Volunteer Application and criminal background check online through our secure website.
- C. Communicate with a Minister, Associate or Ministry Representative over the area of service.
- D. Personal references will be required on the Volunteer Application. These are checked as needed.

## **Special Event Volunteers:**

Special Event Volunteers are those persons who on certain occasions assist cleared volunteer workers in an event. All special event volunteers must also complete a Volunteer Application and criminal background check using our online secure website.

## **Frequency of Criminal Background Check:**

Follow-up criminal background checks will be conducted every 2 years. It will not be necessary to fill out a new form. At the discretion of the *Safe @ Church* Board, the Executive Pastor or Division Minister, rechecks can be made at any time requested. If we conduct a recheck through our discretion, the person will be notified with the reason for the recheck.

## **Two Cleared Person Rule:**

It is the position of Park Cities Baptist Church that at all regularly scheduled events, a reasonable effort will be made to provide a minimum of two cleared adults at the activities of minor children. At the discretion of the Division Minister, or their designee, non-cleared persons may assist the two cleared persons, on a one-time only basis. ***Only a Cleared Person may supervise children at the restroom.***

## **Observation of Children:**

Church activities for children and students should be scheduled in areas visible to someone outside the room. On all doorways, the glass panel should be clear of any covering to allow observation into the room. There are no exceptions to this rule.

## **Parental Permission:**

Parental Permission is required for all children and students to attend church sponsored off-campus events and other events as designated by the Pastor, Executive Pastor, Divisional minister or ministry representative.

## **Auto Safety:**

Persons who will drive church vans, buses or private vehicles must have a DMV background check before transporting passengers. They must maintain a valid driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the Church and comply with all Church transportation policies.

## **Training and Education:**

The Children and Student Divisions shall be responsible for overseeing the training of all church volunteers in recognizing and preventing child abuse. This training will be overseen by the *Safe @ Church* Board. Training may include classes, individual counseling, video and on-line training. Additional training should be provided for special event ministries (Upward Basketball, DNow, Summer Camps, special classes, etc.) The classes may utilize one or more of the above mediums for training. It is the duty of the Division Ministers and the *Safe @ Church* Board to follow-up to ensure that training has been accomplished.

## **The Screening Process:**

### **Who is screened?**

Since all Ministers and Church Staff currently undergo a similar criminal background and reference check, this screening requirement applies to all those who come in contact with minor children (those under the age of 18) and are not currently subject to the employment screening process.

All volunteers must be at least 16 years of age or approved by both the Student and Children's Division Ministries. Service is an important part of the Student Ministry process and we want to use students when appropriate and available. Student Ministry helpers do not satisfy the Two Cleared Person rule. Student Ministry workers never supervise children alone. All volunteers regardless of age must complete a full background check when involved with minors in an overnight setting.

ALL INFORMATION ACQUIRED DURING THE SCREENING PROCESS WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED TO OTHERS OUTSIDE THE *Safe @ Church* BOARD OR THE APPROPRIATE MINISTRY LEADER IN THE AREA TO WHICH THEY HAVE APPLIED.

## **The Appeals Process:**

Any person who applies and is not cleared, or any volunteer who is suspended for any reason, has the right to appeal as set forth in the Appeal Process. Please check for the information through the appropriate Division Minister who will forward a request to the *Safe @ Church* Board.

## **Suspension of Church Related Duties:**

Upon notification, Park Cities Baptist Church shall suspend any person accused of child abuse or neglect from all Church related duties involving children until such time as the accusation(s) or abuse or neglect are resolved. This determination will be at the sole discretion of the *Safe @ Church* Board.

## **Reporting an Observed or Suspected Incident of Abuse or Neglect:**

A volunteer who is engaged in any activity conducted on the Church premises or under the supervision of the Church and has cause to believe that a child or student's physical or mental health has been or may be adversely affected by child abuse or neglect must report this to their Division Director or Minister.

Further, under Texas state law you must report any abuse, suspected or witnessed by contacting Child Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400.