

Life Point Baptist Church Child and Teen Protection Policies

Vision, Mission, and Values

1. **Vision:** Young people who follow Jesus for life.
2. **Mission:** The children and teens ministries of Life Point Baptist Church exist to help young people belong, grow, and serve as followers of Jesus at home, in the church, and in the community.
 - a. **Belong:** we want all young people to know God's love and that their greatest need is to belong to God's family.
 - b. **Grow:** we want to instruct young people in God's truth and call them to follow Jesus with their life.
 - c. **Serve:** we want to prepare young people to serve God and others, not be consumed with themselves.
 - d. **Followers of Jesus:** the Great Commission task of calling young people to follow Jesus as his disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).
 - e. **At home:** in their role as son/daughter, brother/sister, grandchild, etc.
 - f. **In the church:** in the assembly of believers in the church.
 - g. **In the community:** as wise and godly citizens in the community, including school, sports teams, hobbies, work, etc.
3. **Objectives:**
 - a. We will **engage** non-followers of Jesus so we can show Christ's love and share the gospel with them (Rom. 10:14-15) (Belong)
 - b. We will **evangelize** non-followers of Jesus so they can believe and become followers of Jesus (Rom. 10:14-15) (Belong)
 - c. We will **establish** followers of Jesus in the truth and the power of the Spirit (1 John 8:31) (Grow)
 - d. We will **equip** followers of Jesus to mature and serve (Matt. 28:19-20) (Grow & Serve)
4. **Values:**
 - a. **Gospel-centered:** "The way in (to eternal life) is the way forward (to growth and maturity)." The gospel of Jesus is our only hope in life and death and must be at the center

of what we teach and how we impact young people. Therefore, we must emphasize gospel truths and invite children to follow Jesus for life.

- b. **Spirit-dependent:** Since only God can save and change people, we must faithfully pray for the children we serve and their families (Eph. 6:18; James 5:16).
- c. **Scripture-driven:** Through age-appropriate teaching and activities we aim to teach young people the “whole counsel of God,” including basic Bible content and doctrine (Acts 20:27).
- d. **Parent-allied:** God’s Word is clear that the primary responsibility for discipling children lies with their parents (Deut. 6:6-7, 20-25; Eph. 6:4). Therefore, we aim to partner with parents in raising their children to know and love God (Psalm 78:3-7) and to step in as “spiritual family” for those who do not have godly influence at home (Ps. 68:5; Is. 1:17; James 1:27).
- e. **Heart-focused:** Because the heart determines behavior (Prov. 4:23; Mark 7:21; Luke 6:45), we must seek to shepherd their hearts (Matt. 22:37-38), not simply call them to keep a set of rules (Matt.23:27-28).
- f. **Obedience-oriented:** We must call young people to obey God (John 14:15) and their parents (Eph. 6:1-3) and to develop Christ-like character (John 13:13-15). Modeling Christian character is a vital aspect of discipleship (2 Tim. 1:5). Children need not only to hear us say the right things, but also to see genuine godliness in our lives.
- g. **Joyful Care:** Young people need to know that we care for them as individuals made in God’s image (Gen. 1:27; Ps. 146:9). As leaders, we are accountable before God to show love and proper care for them (Matt. 18:6). This includes enforcing policies for their safety and well-being. Further, we ought to serve them with joy (Phil. 3:1; 4:4), viewing ministry to young people as a privilege and high calling by God (Mark 9:35; Eph. 2:10; 1 John 4:19).

Other Introductory Items

1. **Parameters for These Policies:** These Child and Teen Protection Policies apply to the ministries of Life Point Baptist Church to children (from birth to grade 6) and teens (from grade 7 to grade 12 or age 18) and to formal childcare that is offered by the church. At times,

a parent or group of parents will arrange childcare outside of these contexts (i.e. during choir practice or a small group Bible study). Those types of arrangements are not governed by these policies.

2. **Personnel Summary:**

- a. *Leader* – Any individual 18 years of age or older who has completed the Leader application process and been assigned a particular ministry responsibility. Leaders include nursery Workers, Sunday school teachers, children’s church Workers, AWANA Leaders, and youth leaders.
- b. *Helper* – Any teen (at least 12 years old and in the seventh grade or higher) who has completed the Helper application process and been assigned a particular ministry responsibility. Helpers will be supervised by the Leaders who are present.
- c. *Worker* – Any Leader or Helper.
- d. *Ministry Director* – The Leader in charge of a particular branch of children’s or youth ministry. Ministry Directors include the Nursery Director, Children’s Church Director, AWANA Director, and Youth Director.

3. **General Expectations for All Workers:**

- a. Love the children and teens like Christ does, putting their needs before your own.
- b. Protect the children and teens in your care.
- c. Follow all policies and procedures.
- d. Be on time for events and be prepared for ministry obligations.
- e. Support the leadership and ministries of Life Point.
- f. Communicate pertinent information with parents in a timely manner.
- g. Use wise judgment and biblical discernment.
- h. Maintain a godly testimony.

Protecting Children and Teens before They Arrive

To ensure safe and quality care, Life Point Baptist Church has established the following screening and training procedures.

1. **Six-Month Rule:** All Workers must have attended LPBC for at least 6 months prior to serving with children or teens.
 - a. The six-month rule does not apply to pastors, paid staff members, or their wives.
 - b. The six-month rule does not apply to Ironwood summer staff and ministry crew.
2. **Membership Rule:** All Workers must be members in good standing at LPBC.
 - a. Exceptions to the membership rule may be made for Ironwood summer staff and ministry crew members, provided that they are members in good standing at their home churches.
3. **Age Requirements:** All Workers must meet the minimum age requirements. Leaders must be at least eighteen years old, and Helpers must be at least twelve years old.
4. **Application Process (Leaders Only):** All Leaders must complete the LPBC Children's and Youth Ministry Application, in which they will be asked to provide personal identifying information, list previous children's ministry experience, provide two character references, consent to a background check, and answer several confidential questions.
5. **Youth Director Recommendation (Helpers Only):** All Helpers must receive a recommendation from the Youth Director and must fill out an abbreviated worker application ("Youth Helper Application").
6. **Background Check (Leaders Only):** A background check will be completed. In addition, updated background checks may be completed periodically for all leaders.
 - a. Ironwood summer staff may not be required to complete a background check.
7. **Pastoral Approval:** All Workers must be approved by the Pastors.
8. **Annual Training Meeting:** All Workers must attend the annual childcare training meeting. Those who are not able to attend must view the recording and complete any additional assignments given.
 - a. Ironwood summer staff are not required to view the annual childcare training meeting.
9. **Child and Teen Protection Policies:** Once a year, all Workers must agree to abide by LPBC's updated Child and Teen Protection Policies.

Non-church, Itinerant Workers: Non-church, itinerant Workers (e.g. an evangelistic team, a college ministry team, or missionaries) who are invited in by the church are exempt from these requirements (except for the age restrictions).

Protecting Children and Teens as They Arrive and Depart

1. **Arrival and Departure Times:** Leaders ought to be in position 10 minutes prior to the start of any service or activity. In the event that children are not picked up in a timely manner, a Leaders may take the children to the main congregating area in order to locate their parents.
2. **Transfer of Responsibility:** It is important to recognize the points at which responsibility for the care of a child or teen is transferred between parents and the church. Transfer of responsibility to the church takes place once a child or teen is dropped off or checked in or when the service or activity begins. Responsibility is transferred back to the parents once a child or teen is checked out, picked up (younger grade school children), or allowed to leave at the conclusion of the event or program (older grade school children and teens).
3. **Parental Authentication (Children Only):**
 - a. Parents of nursery-aged (infant – 3s) or preprimary (4s and 5s) children will be given numbered cards or pagers at check-in. Parents must present the appropriate card or pager in order to pick up their children. If a parent would like another individual to pick up his or her child, he or she should notify the Worker ahead of time that someone else will be picking up the child and also give the corresponding card or pager to that individual.
 - b. If a parent with joint custody of a grade school child fears that the other parent may try to pick up the child, it is important for the parent to communicate his or her concern to the Ministry Director so that the Leaders can be notified. If the other parent or anyone else unexpectedly attempts to check out the child, the Ministry Director should be contacted immediately.
 - c. In case of an emergency involving a child’s parents, the child may be released to the care of the Ministry Director or a Pastor.

Protecting Children and Teens While They Are in Our Care

1. **Two-Adult Rule:** In general, there should always be two Leaders present in each classroom during all children's and teen classes and programs.
 - a. Helpers are always in addition to and supervised by the two Leaders.
 - b. If two related Leaders are serving together, then a nonrelated Leader or Helper should also be present.
 - c. Under certain circumstances, it may be acceptable for one Leader to teach a group of older children or teens in a classroom adjacent to a busy hallway, as long as the door is propped open.
 - d. If a Leader is going to counsel a child or teen one-on-one, the meeting must always take place in a visible, well-lit area.
2. **Adult-to-Child and Adult-to-Teen Ratios:** In addition to the "two-adult rule," LPBC will seek to maintain the following ratios in all of its classes and programs.
 - a. *Nursery:* One Worker per 5 children
 - b. *Pre-primaries:* One Worker per 8 children
 - c. *1st – 6th Graders:* One Worker per 14 children
 - d. *Youth Group:* One Worker per 14 teens
3. **Visibility:** When children's or youth classes or programs are in session, the interior doors and windows should allow for unobstructed views of all rooms being used.
4. **Discipline:**
 - a. All children's and youth Workers are responsible for providing a caring, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.
 - b. Acceptable means of **redirecting** inappropriate behavior may include:

Verbal Redirection: verbally requesting a behavior change. Start by pointing out that their actions are wrong; then tell them an acceptable alternative. *E.g. if a child is standing on a chair: "Please don't stand on the chair; you need to sit on the seat.*

Chairs are for sitting, not standing. I don't want you to get hurt or hurt someone else."

Physical Redirection: Reinforcing the verbal redirection with gentle, appropriate touch to redirect them away from the inappropriate behavior. *E.g. while saying the above statement, gently place your hand on the child's back and help him/her sit down in the chair.*

Withholding a certain privilege or activity for a time: When appropriate, consider taking away a privilege/activity to help the child see why their actions are inappropriate. This is especially helpful for little children. *E.g. "Johnny, until you are willing to say 'sorry' for taking that toy, you will sit in this chair over here while the other children play at the table."*

Separating the child/teen from the situation for a time: At times, it is in the best interest of the misbehaving child/teen and those around them to separate him/her from the situation altogether. The goal should always be to point out the wrong behavior and restore him/her to the class/program. (Correction should be discrete and never outside of the sight of others.

- c. Acceptable means of **correction** might include (depending on the age of the child or teen):

Removing the child or teen from the situation (see above).

Pointing out the problematic behavior: the older the child/teen, the more you can ask questions that help him/her see why their actions are wrong.

Showing his/her sin and need for Christ: when appropriate, use the situation to point out what sin is and their need for a Savior. Note: this doesn't mean you "preach" at them or try to humiliate them; just a gentle reminder that we are *all* sinners (including parents/leaders) in need of a loving Savior.

Praying for the child/teen: After discussing their behavior, sin, and need for a Savior, it is appropriate to briefly pray with him/her, asking God to help them. For an older child/teen, you may even ask them to pray and ask for God's forgiveness and help.

Helping the child/teen to reconcile with the person they have wronged: view their

offense as an opportunity to teach them what Scripture says about true repentance, asking forgiveness, and reconciling to those that we harm.

Reinforcing good behavior: leave them with a positive example or “next steps” to do better next time. Encourage them that, by God’s grace, they can make better choices. And let them know that you care for them and want to help them.

- d. Children/youth ministry Workers are strictly prohibited from using *any* form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They may never, under any circumstances, speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.
- e. If a child or teen’s behavior is uncontrollable or if the child or teen does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, a Leader or Helper should contact the Ministry Director and/or the parent/guardian. This step is especially important if the child or teen’s misconduct includes the assault, harassment, or bullying of other children. Leaders are permitted to physically restrain a child or teen if that child or teen is physically endangering himself or others. Leaders are required to document any significant injuries or unusual incidents using the Injury or Unusual Incident Report form.
- f. If a child or teen has a pattern of misbehavior or misbehaves in a particularly serious manner, the Ministry Director and Pastors may choose to withhold from that child or teen the privilege of participating in a class, activity, or program.

5. **Physical Touch:**

- a. *Worker-to-Child:* While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or showing godly love and care, it can also be misinterpreted. We want to be blameless and above reproach. The following will help Workers avoid compromise or concerns.

1) *General Principles:*

- A. Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security and maturity in their interactions with adults.
- B. Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of children, not of adults.

- C. Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. For instance, what is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.
- D. Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploit the child's lack of knowledge, satisfy adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violate laws against sexual or physical contact between adult and child, or attempts to modify child behavior with physical force.
- E. In general, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- F. Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief time. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of the head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is private or personal, except when necessary while assisting in a diaper change or restroom visit.
- G. Never touch a child out of frustration or anger.
- H. Workers should refrain from any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

2) *Examples of Inappropriate Touch:*

- A. Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reason
- B. Squeezing of arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body
- C. Tickling
- D. Children sitting on laps of adults is inappropriate for ages 6 and older.
- E. Touching a child in the genital areas except for young or developmentally delayed children requiring a diaper change or assistance with bathroom procedures. Otherwise, touch in the genital area is permitted only by medical personnel in case of injury or suspected injury.
- F. Kissing on the lips, cheek, or anywhere else. Workers should never kiss a child, and children should never be encouraged to kiss a Worker. Children are not

allowed to kiss one another.

G. Slapping a child on the behind, even when playing.

3) *Examples of Appropriate Touch:*

A. A comforting pat on the shoulder and back, or allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder is appropriate.

B. High-Fives, handshakes, or the touching of two fists are appropriate and recommended touch, especially when interacting with older children and teens.

C. "Side hugs"

D. Holding a child firmly with your hands to restrain him/her is appropriate when it is used to prevent a child from an accident, injury, hurting self, others, or you.

b. *Leader-to-Teen:*

1) In general, physical touch between Leaders and teens of the opposite gender should be limited to high fives, fist pumps, etc.

2) "Side hugs" should be used instead of traditional hugs. Extended embraces are never acceptable.

3) Leaders must be careful to avoid any form of physical contact that could possibly be interpreted as flirtatious or suggestive.

4) No inappropriate touching (as defined above) will be accepted.

c. *Child-to-Child or Teen-to-Teen:*

1) Physical touch between teens of the opposite gender should generally be limited to high fives, fist pumps, etc.

2) Any form of physical contact which makes the one being touched feel uncomfortable will not be allowed.

3) No inappropriate touching (as defined above) will be accepted.

6. **Food and Drinks:** Snacks will be provided for the children on a regular basis (e.g. animal crackers and goldfish in the nursery). If a children's Worker wishes to distribute a snack that is out of the ordinary, he or she should first check with the Ministry Director. Special care will

be taken in children's ministries to avoid common allergens. When possible, parents should be asked if their children have any allergies. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parents to communicate this information.

7. Restroom Procedures:

- a. While helping children use the nursery restroom, Workers must leave the restroom door ajar.
- b. Children up through Kindergarten may use the nursery restroom with the help of a nursery Worker.
- c. A Leader should accompany the child/children to the hallway restroom and wait either outside the door or at the seating area near the sinks (for younger children). Do not be alone in the restroom with a child unless there is an emergency.

8. Transportation Guidelines:

- a. Each person designated to provide transportation to or from an activity must be a Leader who possesses a valid driver's license. A Ministry Director or pastor must provide approval for a non-Leader to drive children/teens to an activity/program. If it is known that a Leader has received a serious moving violation (i.e. DUI, reckless endangerment, etc.) within the past five years, he/she will not be approved to drive children/teens.
- b. All safety regulations, including but not limited to seat belt, car seat, and cell phone regulations must always be observed. A Leader must never be alone in a vehicle with child/teen of the opposite gender.

9. Off-Site, Late Night, and/or Overnight Events and Activities: The following precautions will be observed during off-site, late night, and/or overnight events and activities.

- a. Off-site, late night, and/or overnight events and activities should be carefully planned.
- b. Parents may be required to sign a Consent/Medical Release Form. This form is to be kept with a Leader at all times during the activity.
- c. Additional care should be taken to ensure adequate supervision, especially in mixed-gender groups.
- d. Children and/or teens may not leave the event or activity early without written or verbal permission from their parents.

- e. Sleeping quarters will always be gender-specific.
- f. It is never appropriate for a Leader to share a bed with a child or teen or for two children or teens to share a bed.
- g. If a child or teen does not abide by the rules, his parents may be asked to pick him up.
- h. Any off-site, late night, and/or overnight activities must be approved by the Pastors.

10. Security and Emergency Response:

a. *Injuries*

- 1) First aid kits will be made accessible.
- 2) In case of a major injury, a Leader should call for additional on-sight help as soon as possible. In case of emergency, another Leader should also call 911 as soon as possible.
- 3) Any significant injuries must be documented on the day they take place using the Injury or Unusual Incident Report Form. Forms are available in the nursery, as well as Classrooms 1 and 2 (boxes on the wall).

b. *Incidents*

1) *Fire*

- A. In the event of a fire, Leaders will assist all children in immediately evacuating the building.
- B. If necessary, other church Leaders may assist the Leaders in order to ensure swift evacuation.
- C. To avoid chaos, parents should refrain from entering the classroom wing of the auditorium and meet their children outside instead.

c. *Live Threat/Active Shooter Situation*

- A. *Step 1: Evacuate.* Help the children evacuate immediately, if it is safe to do so.
- B. *Step 2: Communicate.* Call 911 and call for additional on-sight help, if it is safe to do so.
- C. *Step 3: Hide.* If evacuation is not a safe option, Leaders should gather the children into the safest hiding place available. Close the door, including the top portion of the door where applicable, and pull the latch down. Barricade the doors with

heavy furniture, if possible. Close and lock windows and close blinds. Turn off the lights. Silence all electronic devices. Maintain silence. Have children lie or sit on the floor away from the door. If possible, stay out of sight of any interior windows.

- D. *Step 4: Leaders Fight.* If neither running or hiding is a safe option, as a last resort, Leaders should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as a fire extinguisher or chairs. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to confront the potential danger.
- d. *Missing Child:* Leaders will first do a thorough check of the classroom wing. If the child is not found, a Leader will call for the help of other church Leaders, who will notify the child's parents, scan the auditorium, and do a thorough search of the property. If the child still cannot be located, a church Leader will notify the police.
- e. *Earthquake:* Leaders and children should drop to the ground in the center of the room and cover their heads and shoulders. Leaders should look out for glass or heavy objects which might fall on the children. Evacuate the building once it is safe to do so to avoid hazards associated with aftershocks.

Interaction with Children and Teens Outside of Normal Service or Activity Times

1. **Communication:** This section includes communication with children and teens through phone calls, letters, email, texting, social media, etc.
 - a. Communication with children should be routed through their parents.
 - b. Parents should be made aware of which Leaders they can expect to contact their teens.
 - c. Workers must practice discernment regarding what they communicate, and they must never discourage a teen from being open with his or her parents regarding this communication.
 - d. Flirtatious or suggestive communication is strictly prohibited.
2. **Meetings:** Workers must never meet with a child or teen outside of normal service or activity times without the permission of the child or teen's parents.

3. **Relationships:** A youth Leader may never at any time date or enter into a romantic relationship with a teen.

Reporting and Response Plan for Child Neglect and Abuse

1. Definitions

- a. *Child neglect* is the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare. The term includes both acts and omissions on the part of the responsible person (for instance, failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision).
- b. *Child abuse* includes the willful harming or injuring of a child, the endangering of the person or health of a child, or the inflicting of any cruel or inhuman corporal punishment resulting in a traumatic condition.
- c. *Child sexual abuse* is any form of sexual contact with or sexual exploitation of a minor.
 - 1) *Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult* is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between an adult and a minor. This includes activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or minor. *Sexual behavior between an adult and a minor is always considered to be forced, whether or not the minor consents.*
 - 2) *Sexual abuse perpetrated by a child* is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between minors, with or without the consent of either one, when one minor has power or perceived authority over the other. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the minors.
 - 3) *Sexual exploitation* includes coercing or permitting a minor to engage in prostitution or obscene conduct, knowingly aiding those who do, depicting a child in an act of obscene conduct, or knowingly accessing such a depiction.

2. **Commitment of Life Point Baptist Church to Prevent Abuse and Neglect:** Life Point Baptist Church will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. In an effort to prevent abuse and neglect, we...
 - a. Educate and equip all children's and youth Workers about neglect and abuse.
 - b. Adhere to the procedures and guidelines as set out in this policy manual (including, but not limited to the two-adult rule, visibility guidelines, bathroom policies, and physical

touch policies).

- c. Train and screen volunteers before assigning them to work with children. Screening procedures include requiring a completed application with references, conducting a criminal background check, and completing a personal interview.
- d. Require children's and youth Workers to attend the church for at least six months prior to serving in children's or youth ministry.

3. Reporting Abuse and Neglect

- a. *Importance of Reporting:* God has obligated human government to defend the weak (Ps. 82:3-4). This obligation includes dealing with the mistreatment of children, which is abhorrent to God (Matt. 18:5-6). As a result, it is imperative that we cooperate with the authorities as they deal with these types of offenses (Ps. 127:3-5; Rom. 13:1-7). When those with knowledge of abuse refuse to take action, the results are tragic (2 Sam. 13). Therefore, Life Point Baptist Church pledges to make a full and timely report of any suspected abuse or neglect to the proper government agencies. In addition, the church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect.
- b. *Reasonable Suspicion:* Mandated reporters are required to report "reasonable suspicion" of abuse or neglect. "Reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. "Reasonable suspicion" does not require certainty that abuse/neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse/neglect.
- c. *Mandated vs. Permissive Reporters:* It is important to distinguish between mandatory and permissive reporters.
 - 1) In the state of California, *Mandatory Reporters* include teachers and other school employees, employees at childcare institutions, social workers, physicians and other health care workers, paid firefighters and law enforcement officers, licensed

counselors, and clergy. Such individuals are only considered Mandated Reporters when acting within their professional capacity or scope of employment.

- 2) In the state of California, *Permissive Reporters* include anyone who is not a Mandatory Reporter. According to the California Penal Code, volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children are not Mandated Reporters but are encouraged to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect and are further encouraged to report known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect.

d. *Specific Guidelines for Reporting:* Life Point Baptist Church has adopted the following guidelines for reporting.

1) *Before Reporting*

- a) Each allegation or instance of suspected abuse/neglect will be taken seriously. *Unless there is clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, it will be assumed that allegations of abuse/neglect are made in good faith.*
- b) A Worker who observes abuse taking place must intervene to secure the immediate safety of the child.
- c) A Worker who observes signs of suspected abuse/neglect or receives an allegation of abuse/neglect must immediately notify the Pastor who oversees children's ministry.
 - A. If that Pastor is unavailable, the Worker must notify another Pastor or a Ministry Director.
 - B. If the allegation or suspicion involves one of the Pastors, the Head Deacon should also be notified.
- d) After the Pastor or Ministry Director has been notified, the Worker must document the situation.
 - A. Note *what* the child said or what was observed, *who* the child was with when the situation occurred, *where* it occurred, *when* it occurred, and *what steps you took in response to the situation.*
 - B. Be as clear and detailed as possible, and be sure to date the document.

- C. Give this document to a Pastor or Ministry Director after making a copy for your own personal records.
- e) The Pastor or Ministry Director will immediately follow-up on the situation by asking the child how the injury occurred. If the child describes what might be abuse, the Pastor or Ministry Director's objective is to obtain very general information that may help substantiate or alleviate the suspicion by asking open-ended questions and getting the child to relay the event in his or her own words.
 - A. Be careful to not suggest answers to the child, and be sensitive to the fact that the child will be scared to tell the story, sometimes out of fear that it will upset adults or be dismissed as a lie.
 - B. Be careful not to pursue excessive detail, as it may upset the child by causing him to relive the abusive experience.
 - C. Do not ask the child to undress in order to show bruises or injuries that are not visible.
 - D. If the child needs immediate medical attention, call 911.
- f) After meeting with the child, the Pastor or Ministry Director must document the conversation.
 - A. Include the signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of the conversation with the child, a description of any emotions that he or she expressed, and a description of the steps taken in response to the situation.
 - B. After making a copy for your own personal records, file this document along with the document received from the Worker who originally observed the suspected abuse/neglect or received the allegation.
- g) After meeting with the child, the Pastor or Ministry Director should consult with the other Pastors and (when applicable) the Ministry Director who oversees the ministry going on when the signs of suspected abuse/neglect were observed or the allegation was received.

2) *Reporting*

- a) If there is reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, a Pastor or Ministry Director must notify CPS by phone at 909-384-9233 as soon as practically possible.
 - A. If possible, this phone call should be made in the presence of the Worker who notified the Pastor or Ministry Director of the situation.
 - B. The Pastor or Ministry Director must also submit a written report within 36 hours of receiving the information. The date and time of this report should be documented and added to the incident's file.
 - C. If the Pastor or Ministry Director is not sure if he or she has reasonable suspicion or grounds to report, he is to discuss the case anonymously with the Police or CPS and follow their recommendation. *Doubt as to whether or not to report should be settled in favor of reporting. Failure to report suspected abuse/neglect is a crime punishable by fines and imprisonment.*
- b) The Pastor or Ministry Director should follow-up with the Worker who originally observed the signs of suspected abuse/neglect or received the allegation and communicate the steps that were taken to resolve the issue.
- c) If a Leader who observes signs of suspected abuse/neglect or receives an allegation of abuse/neglect wishes to make a report himself, he may do so. *Life Point Baptist Church will never prohibit one of its Leaders from reporting suspected abuse/neglect.* However, because they are minors, Helpers are required to funnel their reports through a Pastor or Ministry Director.

3) *After Reporting*

- a) The parents of the alleged victim should be notified as soon as possible. However, do not confront the accused until the safety of the child or teen is secured.
- b) Full co-operation will be given to civil authorities.
- c) The primary pastoral objective will be to care for the alleged victim and his or her family.
- d) The church's insurance agent or attorney may be notified, if necessary.

- e) The accused will be treated with dignity and support. If the accused has assigned duties within the ministry, that person will be temporarily relieved of his duties, with or without pay, until the investigation is concluded.
 - f) Confidentiality will be observed for both the alleged victim and the accused. Notification should be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to it.
 - g) The Pastors should extend whatever care and resources are necessary. However, in providing care to the alleged victim, the accused, and their families, a Pastor or Worker should under no circumstances be drawn into a discussion of the truth or falsity of the allegation which could contaminate an official investigation.
 - h) If the media or other parties contact a ministry official about a pending allegation of child abuse/neglect, they should be referred to the Senior Pastor. *Only the Senior Pastor or his designee should make comments about the allegations.*
- 4) After the investigation is completed, the following procedures will be followed:
- a) If it is determined that the accused is guilty, the church will exercise appropriate discipline in accordance with the church discipline policies outlined in its constitution. If the accused is an employee of Life Point Baptist Church, his employment status will be thoroughly reviewed.
 - b) If it is determined that the accused is not guilty, he may be restored to his previous position of service at the discretion of the Pastors and Deacons.