SUMMIT WOODS
BAPTIST CHURCH

CHILD & WORKER PROTECTION POLICY

Summit Woods Baptist Church
Lee's Summit, MO

Revised September 2026

Table of Contents

MISSION STATEMENT **2**

Parameters for the Child and Worker Protection Policy *2*

PROTECTION OVERVIEW STATEMENT **3**

DEFINITIONS **4**

SCREENING FOR WORKERS **6**

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN MINISTRY WORKERS **7**

Open Door Policy *7*

Child-to-Volunteer Ratios *7*

Check-in/Check-out Procedure *8*

Parents in the Classroom *8*

Sick Child Policy *8*

Medications Policy *9*

Food and Drink Policy *9*

Discipline Policy and Guidelines *10*

Physical Touch Policy and Guidelines *11*

Diaper Changing and Restroom Policy and Guidelines *12*

Accidental Injuries to Children *13*

Security and Emergency Response *13*

Technology Use *15*

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT **16**

RESPONSE TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND SEXUAL OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH **19**

APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTANT INFORMATION **22**

APPENDIX B: CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLET TRAINING CHECKLIST **23**

APPENDIX C: INAPPROPRIATE AND APPROPRIATE TOUCH **27**

MISSION STATEMENT

Summit Woods Baptist Church (SWBC) desires to be a safe place for all children and adults who attend any activity. Each year across our country, children are victimized by individuals they know and trust. The church is not immune to the potential for such abuse or neglect of children, either by its members or by those in leadership positions. Incidents of child abuse or neglect cut across every racial, social, economic, and religious boundary. This *Child & Worker Protection Policy* reflects SWBC's commitment to protect children from harm. The policy applies to all volunteer and compensated workers in Summit Woods Children's Ministry (SWCM).

SWBC will not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Cooperation in this policy not only reflects concern about children's safety in this society, but also willingness to take steps toward halting child abuse and its detrimental effects.

For the safety and protection of children and workers, all people who participate in church-sponsored activities with children will be required to comply with this policy.

Parameters for the Child and Worker Protection Policy

This protection policy applies to children (from birth to 17 years old) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific SWCM-related church-sponsored activities. Any form of abuse, harm, neglect or other problems related to children at home, school, or in any Bible-study, activity, or venue not directly related to Children's Ministry at SWBC is not covered by this policy.

PROTECTION OVERVIEW STATEMENT

One of SWCM's core convictions is our commitment to safety. One of our greatest concerns is that children be safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen, perform, and keep up-to-date background checks on all SWCM volunteers.
- Perform background checks on all full-time church staff, regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.
- Require training for all SWCM staff and volunteers.
- Use a parent authentication identification system.
- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety.
- Employ check-in desk volunteers to act as hall monitors to promote and maintain safety in the building.
- Equip children's classrooms with security cameras.
- Keep a first aid kit at the nursery welcome desk at all times.
- Equip each room with a radio to contact the safety team.
- Educate our staff and volunteers to recognize suspected child abuse and to require them to understand and follow any applicable reporting laws and to encourage them to report suspected abuse to church staff.
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to SWCM.
- Adhere to a two-leader room policy whenever possible.
- Equip our children's workers to know how to evacuate children safely in case of an emergency.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy the following definitions will apply:

A. **Child:** Any person under the age of 18. A minor.

B. **Special Needs Person:** Any adult or child requiring direct adult supervision as a result of mental or physical limitations.

C. **Adult:** Any person age 18 and over.

D. **Child Abuse and Neglect:** Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by an adult or adolescent caregiver responsible for the child's welfare.

E. **Physical Abuse:** Maltreatment which results in physical injury, including but not limited to bruises, cuts, welts, fractures, and internal injuries. This definition does not imply that all events resulting in physical injury are physical abuse. Summit Woods affirms the biblical and appropriate use of spanking/corporeal discipline by parents and when applied in biblical and appropriate ways it is not considered physical abuse.

F. **Emotional Abuse:** Maltreatment which results in impaired emotional expression and development, including, but not limited to, incessant belittling, rejection, constant unequal treatment, verbal assaults, excessive demands on child's performance, and isolation from normal social activities.

G. **Sexual Abuse:** Maltreatment which consists of sexual contact or interactions with a child, including but not limited to, physical contact (fondling, genital/oral stimulation, sexual intercourse) and non-physical contact (exhibitionism, child prostitution, pornography, and voyeurism).

H. **Neglect:** Failure or inattention on the part of the caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and supervision. This is not a strict standard but one of a reasonable person under the circumstances.

I. **Compensated Workers:** Hourly, salaried, part-time, or full-time employees who work with children at any church-sponsored activity.

J. **Volunteer Workers:** Any non-compensated individual who works with children at any church-sponsored activity.

K. **Helpers:** Minors who are at least 12 years old and are assisting in some area of SWCM alongside an adult. These helpers fall into two categories:

    a. **Auxiliary Helpers** (ages 12-13) – Helpers who are coming with their parent to serve alongside of them. These helpers do not count towards the adult-to-child ratios. Helpers must be children of members. They will not go through childcare training but will be vetted by the SWCM staff. Helpers will be supervised by the adult volunteers in the same room.

b. **Qualified Helpers** (ages 14-18) – Helpers who have been trained by the staff to serve in SWCM. These helpers may count towards the adult-to-child ratios if designated by the staff. Helpers must be children of members or members themselves. They will go through childcare training and will be vetted by the SWCM staff. Helpers will be supervised by the adult volunteers in the same room. Qualified helpers can serve without their parents present.

L. **Caregiver:** Any compensated, volunteer, or temporary worker, 12 years old or older.

M. **Mandated Reporter:** Any person with responsibility for the care of children is a mandated reporter. Missouri law states that if a caregiver has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Division of Family Services (800-392-3738).

N. **Temporary Workers:** Any worker enlisted on a temporary basis to assist any compensated or voluntary worker in discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

O. **Check-in Desk Volunteer:** A qualified male or female volunteer whose duties are not limited to any one classroom. These volunteers help families get checked in, generally move about the children's hallway during scheduled session times to observe any unusual activity, and be of service to volunteers (e.g., locating parents or substituting temporarily for another volunteer.) A check-in volunteer is on duty during Sunday mornings.

SCREENING FOR WORKERS

The following procedures reflect our commitment to provide protective care for all children and caregivers who participate in church-sponsored activities.

1. Volunteer workers must be members of SWBC for at least six months.

2. All volunteer and compensated workers must complete the following procedures before participating in any church-sponsored children's or special needs activity.

    A. All volunteer and compensated workers must complete an application and background check form. References, if asked for, will be checked.

    B. Applicants must complete child safety training by Summit Woods staff.

    C. Applicants must sign a written acknowledgement stating they have received and reviewed a copy of the *SWBC Child & Worker Protection Policy.*

3. Any adult member of the congregation, volunteer, or compensated worker who has been convicted of a misdemeanor or higher crime against a child or a misdemeanor or higher crime against another adult, shall not provide service in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or special needs persons.

    *Those who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse can be forgiven for and cleansed of their sin. However, sin does have consequences and while such persons may serve in certain other areas of ministry at SWBC, they will be prohibited from serving in the children's and special needs ministries.

4. All volunteer and compensated workers shall be screened by a background check for the purpose of obtaining information regarding criminal history or abuse findings.

5. This application and the results of any screening shall be kept confidential by authorized church staff (unless biblically appropriate to discuss with the elders in regard to the biblical process of church discipline, i.e., Matthew 18:15-20).

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN MINISTRY WORKERS[1]

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door, a side window beside it, or there are cameras in the room. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Child-to-Volunteer Ratios

Two Adult Policy
It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some children's worship hour and student ministry classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open (if there are no windows) and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a closely supervised counseling situation.

Auxiliary helpers are always in addition to and supervised by the two adults. Auxiliary helpers are never to be left alone at any time with children without the presence of the two adult volunteers.

Two male volunteers may not serve together in the same room with children under 5 years old without a female volunteer also being present. The only exception to this rule is when a male check-in volunteer temporarily substitutes for a female volunteer who is taking children to the restroom.

In addition to always having at least two volunteers present, the following ratios are maintained during regularly scheduled weekly meetings of the church:

- Children 0-11 months: One adult for every three children
- Children 12-35 months: One adult for every four children
- Children aged 3-5: One adult for every eight children
- Children aged 6-12: One adult for every twelve children

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom if doing so would exceed the ratio unless and until additional volunteers are added. If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, the check-in volunteer should be notified and asked for more

[1] Adapted from SafeChurch Child Protection Policy for Churches and from Capitol Hill Baptist Church Child Protection Policy, https://s3.amazonaws.com/account-media/13123/uploaded/c/0e4671492_1676558220_childprotectionpolicy.pdf

volunteers to maintain these ratios. Whenever age-groups are combined, the ratio is determined by the age of the youngest child.[2]

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child like a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the "child check" to sign out the child from our care. If a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," the SWCM staff will be contacted and will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

The SWCM staff and church staff have the right to refuse any child at check-in. Some reasons might include potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the room being closed because the adult-child ratio is at maximum capacity, or anything else that might impair our ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

Parents in the Classroom

If a child would feel more at ease with a parent in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are having a hard time being separated from their parent. If this goes beyond a few minutes and the child cannot remain without the parents, the parents should remove the child from the classroom. While accompanying their children, a parent should be kindly but firmly dismissed if the parent is causing difficulty, presenting concerns for the welfare of the class, or remaining longer than a few minutes.[3]

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all the children at SWBC. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold where symptoms are extreme

[2] Only children within the appropriate and designated age range may be present in the classroom, including children of those who may be serving (unless prior approval has been granted by SWCM staff or the child is 12 or older and is assisting as an approved auxiliary helper).
[3] Nursing mothers in the Bed Babies room are an exception to this rule.

- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of SWCM not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications or any kind of medical treatment to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the SWCM staff to develop a plan of action.

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the SWCM staff before signing the child into class. This allows the staff to assess the needs of the child and assist parents in transitioning their child into a classroom setting.

Food and Drink Policy[4]

Volunteers may not bring food with them when they serve. Personal drinks such as water, coffee, or tea are permissible but cannot be shared with or brought for any child. In most classrooms, allergen free cereal, veggie straws, and water are supplied for snack time. Volunteers will not provide any other food to children EVEN with parental consent. No food except for the church-supplied allergen free cereal, veggie straws, and water will be permitted to be eaten anywhere in the classrooms.

Why Do We Do This?
The nature of childcare is very hectic and dynamic so we cannot guarantee that:

- A child's bag will be properly marked at all times
- The childcare volunteer will reach into the correct bag
- Another child won't grab food/drink and eat it
- A child won't share his food/drink with other children

[4] Exceptions to this policy are allowed for special events where parental consent is sought for all participants

Also, some children will struggle with allergies or react adversely even to mere exposure to certain foods (like peanuts). So, we need to limit the types of foods and drinks used in the children's ministry wing.

Why Don't We Allow Children to Bring Their Own Food with Them and Feed Themselves?
For the same reasons: we can't guarantee that volunteers will find/give the right food to the right child or that a child won't grab and eat another child's food or that a child won't share his food with other children.

So What Do We Do?
If a parent wants to feed their child something other than an allergen free cereal, veggie straws, or water, that parent may check out their child, feed him outside the room, then return him to the childcare room. This is the policy throughout the building.

Care for Children with Allergies
Parents of children with allergies should notify the check-in desk volunteer on duty or the classroom teacher, and they should talk with the SWCM staff about how to handle any allergic reactions. Upon parental request, allergy information about children of members may be posted in the child's classroom.

Discipline Policy and Guidelines

It is the policy of SWCM not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children by volunteers. Workers should consult with the parents and if needed the SWCM staff if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Appropriate Discipline
All SWCM volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, 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. Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior may include correcting the child verbally (telling them "no", "stop", giving positive instruction, "sit down", "quiet", etc.), withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time (particularly if their behavior is endangering or upsetting other children). During correction, a child should never be removed from the classroom. Correction should be discrete; in the classroom (not in the hallway); and never outside of the sight of others.
Steps of correction might include (depending on the age of the child):

- Removing the child from the situation or problem;
- Pointing out the problematic behavior;
- Talking to the child about his/her sin and need for Christ;
- Praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity;
- Helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate.

Volunteers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce children to the Gospel. If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, volunteers or staff should ask the check-in volunteer to call the parents. If the child assaults, harasses or bullies other children or volunteers, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, the parents should be immediately called so the child can be removed.

Volunteers are allowed to physically restrain a child if he/she is physically endangering other children. Please report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to the SWCM staff. Once a child is removed from SWCM, reinstatement is possible at the determination of the SWCM staff. A child may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced. For further information regarding discipline, please speak with the SWCM staff.

Physical Touch Policy and Guidelines

Two types of relationships are important to consider: volunteer-to-child and child/teen-to-child.

Volunteer-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. Particularly in our interaction with children, we want to be blameless and above reproach. The following will help workers to avoid any compromise or concerns in this area:

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security and maturity in their interactions with adults.
- Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of children and not the adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) may not be appropriate for grade school children.
- Inappropriate touch involves but is not limited to coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploits the child's lack of knowledge, satisfies adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violates laws against sexual or physical contact between adult and child, and any attempt to modify child behavior with physical force.
- For ages 2 through 5, only women can take children to the restroom.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 to 5.
- In general, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- Volunteers should refrain from rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Only touch children in "safe" areas and for a 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, unless when necessary while assisting in a diaper change or restroom visit.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.

Child/Teen-to-Child
- No boy or girl under thirteen should ever be alone with younger children while in SWCM. A volunteer older than thirteen should be present.
- No inappropriate touching (as defined above and in Appendix C) of any kind will be accepted.
- Fighting will not be tolerated and any child participating in violent action will be dismissed from a class/program and placed into his or her parent's care.

Further guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate touch can be found in Appendix C.

Diaper Changing and Restroom Policy and Guidelines[5]

0 Months through 2 Years Old (in diapers)
Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children prior to signing them into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once or as needed a during service. Only women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers must be changed in the presence of another volunteer.

2 Years Old (potty training) through Pre-K
Parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class.
At check-in and drop-off, parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty training. Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. If needed, the volunteers will call the check-in desk volunteer to step into the classroom to maintain appropriate child-to-volunteer ratios. A female volunteer will take the child and at least one other child to the restroom (but no more than the volunteer-child ratio allows). They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The volunteer should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty and then allow the children inside. The volunteer should wait outside the propped-open restroom door unless the child requires assistance. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the worker should leave the stall door open as they assist the child. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer) before returning to the classroom.

[5] Adapted from Safe Church and Capitol Hill Baptist guidelines

K to 4th Grade
For all other classes up to 4th grade, any child needing to use the restroom shall go with another child of the same age and sex. At least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. They will accompany the pair to the restroom, check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and wait outside the propped open bathroom door until the children are finished. The children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return with the volunteer to their classroom. The check-in desk volunteer will be available to take children to the restroom or to step into a classroom, temporarily if necessary, to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios.

5th Grade and Above
For 5th grade and above, any child needing to use the restroom may go on his or her own. Children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return immediately to their classroom.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First-Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.

2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First-Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor (e.g., SWCM staff, nursery coordinator, etc.). If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Security and Emergency Response

Emergency Situations
In emergency situations, if appropriate, 911 will be called to secure help. After that, the safety team should be alerted for appropriate response.

Evacuation Procedures
In the event of a fire call 911. A safety team member should then be alerted and also assist all children in immediately evacuating the building. Staff and key responders will help keep parents away from the children's hallway. Parents should not report to the children's hallway because they risk creating chaos and blocking the exits for children. Instead,

parents will meet their children in the designated area outside of the church building in the field on the northwest side of the building.

A Live Threat
A live threat includes a shooting or some other type of security hazard.

Step 1: Volunteers and Staff Evacuate Children

- As soon as staff, elder, deacon, safety team member or volunteer is confronted with a real threat, they respond immediately.
- If it is safe to do so, the first course of action should be to shelter in place and be prepared to evacuate once that determination is made.

Step 2: Volunteers and Staff Communicate the Danger

- When it is safe to do so, whoever sees or hears the live threat should notify a safety team member first or a deacon, SWCM staff, elder, or church staff if unable to reach the safety team. The staff, safety team member, SWCM staff, elder, or deacon will then notify the remaining volunteers about the live threat.
- Staff, elder, safety team member, deacon, or volunteer should call 911. Give the following information:
    - Church address and the nature of the threat.
    - If shots have been fired tell police we have an "active shooter."

Step 3: Hide

- If running or evacuation is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible.
    - Close and barricade the doors.
    - 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.

Step 4: Staff or Volunteers Fight the Live Threat

- If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, as a last resort, when confronted by a shooter or some other danger, adults in immediate danger 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.

After the area has been made safe and secure by police, the SWCM staff or church staff will communicate an "all clear" sign to anyone who is in lock-down mode.

Missing Child or Kidnapping
In the case of a missing child, the SWCM staff will first do a thorough check of the children's wing to make sure the child is not in another part of the building. If the child is not found after a thorough check of the children's ministry wing, then summon the church's safety team, each of whom will then block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or the SWCM staff. The check-in desk volunteer and other volunteers will continue

to search for the child until they are found. If the child is not found, the staff or elders will call the police to secure further help.

In the case of a kidnapping, the SWCM staff, church staff, or deacons should call 911 to secure help from the police and summon the church's safety team, each of whom will then block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or an elder.

Parent Involvement in Emergency Procedures
The SWCM staff will decide how and when to notify parents about security or emergency situations. Involving parents too early might cause unnecessary fears or panic. If an emergency does happen, parents will need guidance, pastoral care and counseling, so we rely on an elder or staff to walk with parents through difficult situations.

Technology Use

Volunteers and helpers will only use technology that has been previously approved by the SWCM staff. Out of respect for parents and their personal decisions related to technology, volunteers and helpers will refrain from any use of unauthorized technology in the classroom. Volunteers are prohibited from photographing children while serving in SWCM.[6] This is for the protection of children and privacy of families.

[6] Exceptions to this policy are allowed for specific events where parental consent is sought for all participants.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

SWBC has determined that it is the responsibility of the ministry staff to report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper legal authorities within 24 hours of it being discovered. When it becomes necessary to report suspected child abuse or neglect, the protection of children must be the most important concern.

As a caregiver, YOU are a mandated reporter of child abuse or neglect. It is the legal responsibility of a mandated reporter to report all cases of child abuse or neglect they observe, and further, to report visible signs of alleged abuse or neglect. Failure to report could lead to liability on the part of the church, the observer, or both. The confidentiality of the minister/member relationship is very important. Reporting probable cause of child abuse or neglect has the potential for helping individuals receive help for a previous problem and may prevent further harm to self and others.

What is probable cause?
Probable cause means that the available facts when viewed in the light of the surrounding circumstances would cause a reasonable person to believe a child was abused or neglected. A report based on probable cause does not require proof that abuse or neglect has actually occurred; rather, it is a request for an assessment of the condition of a child.

Because of our great care for children, SWBC has adopted the following guidelines for reporting suspected abuse. Upon observing or suspecting abuse, the caregiver shall immediately do the following:

1. Make sure the child's safety and comfort are secured.
2. Make sure the suspected abuser is safely away from the child/children
3. Report the abuse or neglect promptly to an elder or pastoral assistant.

To preserve confidentiality, it is important to discuss the incident only with a pastor/elder or ministry staff.

Response of Summit Woods Baptist Church

SWBC's primary function in responding to allegations of sexual abuse or neglect is to attempt to provide pastoral care to all who are affected, to attempt to ensure the safety and protection of persons who have been or may be harmed, to seek healing by providing pastoral care and other needed assistance to all who are affected, and, to the extent possible, to respect the privacy and rights of the parties involved and the confidentiality of communications.

If SWBC receives an allegation of child abuse or neglect, the staff will respond with the utmost concern to the victim, parent, or other party making such an allegation. The accused will be treated with dignity and support. Without clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, SWBC will assume that such complaints are made in good faith. Persons making

such complaints should have no doubt that SWBC takes them seriously and will take appropriate action.

If an alleged abuser contacts the church officials about a complaint, SWBC personnel may confirm that they have received such a complaint only if they are certain the alleged abuser already knows this. They should avoid discussing the allegations or making any further comments until the proper authorities have an opportunity to conduct their investigation. They should not identify the alleged victim or compliant during an investigation.

If the media or other parties contact a church official about a pending allegation of child abuse, they should be referred to the teaching pastor. Only the teaching pastor or his designee shall make comments about the allegation.

Policy Implementation

The Church Administrator or designated staff member shall be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy.

Responsibilities of Ministry Staff

In accordance with SWBC's position that child abuse and neglect shall not be tolerated, the ministry staff shall do the following:

1. Take all allegations of child abuse and/or neglect seriously.

2. Document all efforts at handling the incident.

3. Contact the Missouri Division of Family Service within 24 hours. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.

4. Report the incident immediately to the church insurance company and attorney. Do not try to handle this without professional outside assistance.

5. Notify the parents or guardians.

6. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child or special needs person is secured.

7. Do not prejudge the situation but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support will help to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority.

8. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a caregiver, that person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished.

9. Use the text of a prepared public statement to answer the press and to convey news to the congregation. Be careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

RESPONSE TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND SEXUAL OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH[7]

If an elder, staff member, deacon, volunteer, helper or any member of SWBC is suspected of or admits viewing, producing or distributing child pornography:

- He or she will be immediately removed from all SWCM related activities or programs.
- Allegations or self-admission will be immediately reported to the SWCM staff or any elder of SWBC.
- Appropriate response steps will be outlined and implemented by the elders.

When an alleged or convicted offender attends SWBC or a SWBC related activity

If SWBC's elders or SWCM staff learns in advance that an alleged or convicted sexual offender is wanting to attend an SWBC service:

- The elders must decide whether to admit him or her to church services or SWBC related activities. Admission of the offender will be based on factors such as extent of prior convictions, and his or her willingness to follow guidelines set out by this policy. This is not a comprehensive list of admission criteria.
- A designated member of SWBC will contact the offender letting him or her know that he or she must be accompanied at all times while on SWBC's property.

If an alleged or convicted sexual offender participates in any SWBC related activity or public service that has the possibility of children being present:

- The SWCM staff and check-in desk volunteer should be notified.
- The elders will designate SWBC members or staff who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on SWBC's property or anywhere in SWBC's buildings.
- He or she must stay away from the wing of the church where the nursery and children's classes meet.
- The elders will work with members to come up with guidelines for SWBC-related activities that are not on church property, but elsewhere.

When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends Regularly

If he/she chooses to attend regularly:

- The elders will be notified.
- The congregation may be notified in a public service of the church, most likely the members' meeting. SWBC reserves the right to forbid someone from coming to the

[7] Adapted from Capitol Hill Baptist Church Child Protection Policy, https://s3.amazonaws.com/account-media/13123/uploaded/c/0e4671492_1676558220_childprotectionpolicy.pdf

church for worship services, programs or activities. When participating in church activities outside of the church building, the same guidelines apply.

- The sexual offender should provide the SWCM staff with the name of his/her probation officer. A designated member of SWBC will contact the probation officer and find out 1) more about the underlying offense – offenders may tend to minimize their offenses, and 2) the specific terms of the probation in order to make sure the offender stays in compliance while at the church.

When A Sexual Offender Seeks Membership at SWBC

If the offender seeks membership at SWBC, the elders retain a right to refuse membership.

If the elders recommend membership for the offender, it will be conditional on his or her agreement to:

- Verify the history of offenses, convictions, and adjudication of sexual offenses and disclose them to the SWBC elders.
- A designated member contacting his/her probation officer to find out the underlying offense and the specific terms of probation.
- The SWCM staff conducting a thorough criminal background check. If the information provided by the offender differs from the information given by the probation officer or gathered by the SWCM staff, that will be grounds for denying membership.
- Disclosure of information to parents and the congregation. The information released to the church is at the discretion of the elders. A letter detailing this information will be sent directly to all member parents.
- Refrain from any form of communication (including phone, texting, email, social media or any type of technology), social fellowship, physical contact, mentoring, babysitting, or coaching with children or youth or participate in any activities or programs related to children or youth both inside and outside of the church.
- The SWCM staff will designate SWBC members or staff who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on SWBC's property or in attendance at any church related services, activities or gatherings that has the possibility of children being present.
- Any restrictions that elders determine.
- Permission to notify the leadership, congregation, and parents of anything that the elders deem significant for these groups to know.
- A warning that the church will report any suspected activity to civil authorities.
- A warning that any violation of the code of conduct (including allegations or suspicion of abusive behavior) can result in discipline and banning from the church facilities or any church related programs and activities.
- Sign a written document that details all of these items, plus anything else that the elders deem important to include.

Other Guidelines About Sexual Offenders

If a convicted sexual offender applies for a volunteer or staff position, he or she will be denied by the church. Exceptions may only be made upon the approval of the elders, full disclosure to the congregation, and a congregational vote.

If a sexual offender does not disclose a former allegation, conviction or adjudication, and it is revealed later, the offender will be removed from any paid or volunteer position immediately and may be removed from membership as well.

If a sexual offender is a minor, the church reserves the right to bar that minor from any children or youth activities and will follow the guidelines set out above for any sexual offender who seeks participation in church-related public services, programs or activities.

If a sexual offender leaves SWBC (as a member or regular attender) and begins attending another church, the elders will disclose allegations or self-admission or criminal conviction of neglect or abuse to the leadership at the next church.

APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTANT INFORMATION[8]

To Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse

Police Emergency Phone Number: **911**

Police Non-Emergency 24-Hour Phone Number (Lee's Summit): **816-969-7390**

Missouri Hot Line to Report Child Abuse: **1-800-392-3738**
(https://dss.mo.gov/cd/keeping-kids-safe/can.htm)

Jackson County Children's Services: **816-889-2037**

To Contact Church Staff or Officers

SWBC Office: **816-525-8215**

Bret Capranica, Teaching Pastor: **816-392-4694**

Philip Fulmer, Pastoral Assistant of Children's Ministry: **501-505-6596**

Ben Gardner, Elder Chairman: **816-572-7143**

ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline

The ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline **1-800-4-A-CHILD** (**1-800-422-4453**) is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. Serving the United States, its territories, and Canada, the Hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis counselors who, through interpreters, can provide assistance in 170 languages. The Hotline offers crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. **All calls are anonymous and confidential.**

Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website

www.nsopr.gov.

Includes a national sex offender search feature.

[8] Adapted from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Child Protection Policy, https://c52d388b85e6c47bef5d-9ff91644b80b1213b3e9d43ad0f0e963.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/g/0e4058922_1425054470_gslc-child-protection-policy.pdf

APPENDIX B: CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLET TRAINING CHECKLIST[9]

What do I do if I suspect that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused? *Report Immediately!*

- In the case of suspected parental abuse, immediately report concerns to the church staff or to one of Summit Woods' elders.
- It is not the responsibility of the reporting person or the staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions. Rather, we are responsible as a church community to comply with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and cooperate fully with Child Protection Services and the law enforcement officials in our community. At all times in such a process confidentiality will be upheld. DO NOT DISCUSS WITH OTHER PARENTS OR CHILDCARE WORKERS.
- If a child is disclosing that a parent or another adult is causing harm, DO NOT talk with the parent or that adult about this. This is where much discernment about the situation is needed. Talking to the parent could result in additional abuse, shame, etc. Contact the SWCM staff or one of Summit Woods' pastors immediately.

Who is considered a "mandatory reporter" of child abuse and neglect?

- For Missouri, any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is neglected or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made.
- This includes but is not limited to teachers, school personnel, or child-caring personnel. This makes anyone working with children at Summit Woods a mandatory reporter.

How do I know if something is reportable or not? CAPTA (The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act) mandates "minimum definitions" for child abuse and sexual abuse:

- **Child abuse or neglect** is any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk or serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a child (usually a person under the age of 18, but a younger age may be specified by CPS in cases not involving sexual abuse) by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.
- **Sexual abuse** is defined as:
    - Employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing visual depiction of such conduct; or
    - Rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

[9] Adapted from Sojourn Church Kids, https://c52d388b85e6c47bef5d-9ff91644b80b1213b3e9d43ad0f0e963.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/s/0e4058920_1425054469_scc-training-checklist.pdf

There are many signs of child abuse. Any one sign may not mean anything, but if there are a number of signs, or if they occur frequently, you may suspect maltreatment. Some signs are…

- **Physical**
  - Unusual bruises, welts, burns, fractures, or bite marks
  - Frequent injuries, always explained as accidental
  - Wears concealing clothing to hide injuries
  - Child seems frightened
  - Child seeks affection from any adult
  - Unpleasant, hard to get along with, demanding, often does not obey.

- **Emotional**
  - Apathetic, depressed, withdrawn, passive
  - Seems overly anxious when faced with new situations, people.
  - Disorganized, distrustful, or rigidly compulsive.
  - Takes on adult or parent roles and responsibilities.
  - Throws tantrums, seems impulsive, defiant, antisocial, aggressive, self-destructive
  - Fearful, hyper-alert, lack of creativity and exploration.

- **Sexual**
  - Has torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
  - Experiences pain or itching in genital areas
  - Has an STD or venereal disease
  - Appears withdrawn or engages in fantasy or baby-like behavior.
  - Has a poor relationship with other children.
  - Is unwilling to participate with other children.
  - States that he or she has been sexually assaulted
  - Acts like an adult, not a child.

Wouldn't I know a predator if I saw one?

- **False Assumptions that We Make:**
  - We assume it will happen to someone else.
  - We assume we are safe.
  - We assume we can recognize them (i.e., they will be "monsters" and not like us).
  - We assume they exist only in certain social and economic demographics.
- **Profile of a Predator:**
  - Over 80% of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim. Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship. They live a double-life, and they groom the child for abuse before acting. They seek opportunities to have easy access to children (for example, targeting single mothers). Some predators deliberately target churches. These predators count on their victims giving no disclosure.
  - The usual offender is between the ages of 20-30 years. 20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18. Most are men, but there are some

women. Predators are often married and have children. They come from every economic and social demographic.

What happens if a child touches me inappropriately?
First, think about how you would respond before this occurs.

- Remain calm. Ask yourself if this was accidental or on purpose.
- Redirect appropriately (e.g., "Sarah, please keep your hands to yourself")
- Take the child aside and explain good touch / bad touch if given the opportunity ("We do not touch areas covered by a swimsuit."). Take into account the age of the child you are working with. You should be able to talk about inappropriate touching with children ages 3 and older.
- For abused children, inappropriate touching may seem "normal." Or, the behavior may be to gain attention or see how the adult will respond.
- Notify the SWCM staff or a pastor immediately about purposeful and inappropriate touching.

How can I best minister to a child that has been abused or neglected?
You are an important part of the healing / redemptive process for a child who may have been abused or neglected. It is important that you…

- Pray for the children you are working with that they will be safe, secure, and loved.
- Speak to children with integrity. Children will often feel safe in a church setting, and they may open up to you because they think that you are someone they can trust. If a child says that they want to tell you something only if you promise not to tell anyone else, you should respond, "I want to hear what you have to say, but I can't promise that I can keep a secret." This way, if they disclose any abuse or neglect, you can report without betraying their trust.
- Remember that children don't always tell the truth, but it is our responsibility to listen and report what was stated. You may end up saving the life of a child!
- If any child has been abused, and we DO know about it and action IS being taken, there are a few things to remember when working with this child: Have lots of patience and understanding; Report to the parents/guardians each time the child brings up the assault; Show lots of love and care for the child.

What additional care is required for a child that is in foster care?

- When a child is in foster care, their legal guardian is the CHFS (Cabinet for Health and Family Services) so often the biological family or the foster family does not have custody and cannot pick up a child. Be aware of these circumstances.
- When a child is in foster care, there is also a need for added privacy. No photos should be taken of these children. Names of these kids should not be talked about outside of church. Moreover, workers should not solicit information about whether foster parents plan to adopt, why the children are in care, or where their birth parents live.

How can I guard myself from accusation?

While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or of showing godly love and care, it can also be easily misinterpreted. Here are a few simple rules to abide by related to physical touch to help protect yourself from accusation—whether you are serving in SWCM, an event, or are just interacting with kids in community:

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting in laps, diapering, assisting in the potty, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.
- At Summit Woods, our policy is that only females may change diapers. Only females will take children to the bathroom and/or assist in the bathroom for children PreK and under. We do not change the diapers of children age 5+.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages 0 through PreK, but it is not appropriate for older children. It is not appropriate for a man to pick up or hold a child who is older than PreK.
- In some situations, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- All caregivers should refrain from the following activities: roughhousing, wrestling, or giving shoulder or piggyback rides to children. Physical contact in group activities such as ultimate Frisbee, freeze tag, touch football, etc., is reasonable and understandable, but be above reproach in all relationships. Generally speaking, these types of activities should be avoided in a community group setting as well—particularly if a child's parents are not present or within sight range.
- Use care and discernment when hugging a child. Brief side-hugs when greeting or comforting a child are generally appropriate. Prolonged, frequent, or frontal hugs are not appropriate. In older classes, servants should not initiate hugs, particularly towards children of the opposite sex. If an older child initiates a hug, redirect them to more appropriate contact such as a side hug or gentle "high-five."
- Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief times, with no rubbing or massaging. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of a child's head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is considered private or personal (on any part of their body that a swimsuit covers) unless changing diapers or assisting nursery children in the potty.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.

APPENDIX C: INAPPROPRIATE AND APPROPRIATE TOUCH[10]

"Good touch" is important to each of us. Children do not grow and thrive without the good touch of others. Touch was important to Jesus as he healed people and comforted them. Our Christian tradition shares love with each other through hugs, placing an arm around another's shoulder or squeezing a hand to say, "You are loved."

It is imperative that the Christian community not lose the importance of "good touch." We need to continue to express Christian love in appropriate ways with children. To a child who is upset, a warm hug and kind word can be most comforting. In the midst of our caution, let us not forget that good touch is just that – *good*!

With this in mind, what follows are some examples of appropriate touch that should be encouraged and examples of inappropriate touch that should be avoided when serving in SWCM.

Appropriate Touching

- A comforting pat on the shoulder and back, or allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder is appropriate.
- Back rub to help comfort, or put an irritable child to sleep is appropriate.
- High-Fives, handshakes, or the touching of two fists are appropriate and recommended touch, especially when interacting with older children.
- Holding hands is permitted with children 10 years and under when initiated by the child, or when helping a child to walk, climb stairs, etc.
- 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.

Inappropriate Touching

- Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reasons.
- Squeezing of arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body.
- Tickling children ages 6 and older.
- Children sitting on laps of adults is inappropriate for ages 6 and older.
- Holding or restraining children on the lap. However, holding a child 5 years and younger is appropriate for short time spans when comfort is needed by the child or the child's behavior is out-of-control or endangering other children.
- Touching a child in the genital areas except for younger and developmentally delayed children requiring a diaper change, bathing/washing and assistance with toileting procedures. Otherwise, touch in the genital area is only permitted by medical personnel in case of injury or suspected injury.

[10] Adapted from Capitol Hill Baptist Church Child Protection Policy, https://s3.amazonaws.com/account-media/13123/uploaded/c/0e4671492_1676558220_childprotectionpolicy.pdf

- Kissing a child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. A child should never be allowed to kiss a staff member, volunteer, or another child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. Children are also not allowed to kiss one another.
- Slapping a child on the bottom, even when playing.
- Fondling children, even in non-private areas.
- Carrying a child on the back unless the child is unable to walk.