



Youth and Children's Ministry
Child Protection Policy

Purpose & Scope

Kossuth Street Baptist Church ("KSBC") desires to create a culture where children of all ages (the "Child") can flourish with healthy intergenerational relationships. This includes protecting them from maltreatment. The purpose of the KSBC Child Protection Policy (the "Policy") is to prevent and report all occurrences of child abuse that come to the attention of any KSBC volunteer or staff member (collectively referred to as the "Worker") while serving at KSBC in any ministry area. KSBC takes all indicators and suspicions of child maltreatment seriously and will document and report all suspicions by completing the Child Incident Form found at the back of this policy and submitting the form to the appropriate ministry director, staff member, or elder.

Definitions

Forms of Child Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body, or other forms of sexual activity, conducted without consent, or engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse.

Physical contact includes fondling or touching with intent to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires of either the child or the perpetrator, whether over or under clothing. Other forms of sexual activity include making or displaying any visual, descriptive, or auditory recording of sexual activity or the intimate parts of a person's body.

Lack of consent includes explicit lack of consent as well as force or intimidation, lack of knowledge of the activity's occurrence, lacking the physical or mental capacity to consent, or if one individual is an adult and one individual is a child, since children cannot legally consent to sexual activity with an adult.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental physical injury as a result of harm that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child. Physical discipline administered by parents, such as spanking, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is defined as acts toward a child that cause or have a substantial likelihood of causing harm to the child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development. Emotional abuse might include, but is not limited to, patterns of discrimination, blaming, belittling, threatening, or other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying.

Neglect

Neglect is defined as a child's physical or mental condition being seriously impaired or seriously endangered as a result of the parent, guardian, or custodian being unable, refusing, or neglecting to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision.

Indicators of Child Abuse

Research shows that the majority of children who are sexually abused provide indicators of abuse. As the church's front line for children's and youth programming and pastoral counseling, ministry staff and volunteers have regular opportunities to observe children's behavior and family dynamics and may therefore be in a unique position to detect child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment.

If a child acts in a manner that gives a Worker reason to believe the child may be a victim of abuse, the worker shall complete the Child Protection Report Form (included in this Policy) and personally give the Form to a KSBC staff member or elder, or the worker **MUST** report the suspected abuse directly to the authorities:

Under Indiana law, any individual who has reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect has the duty to make a report. Reports can be made to Child Protective Services by calling the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-800-5556) or to the police. The elders and church staff are available to assist in filing a report.

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Emotional or behavioral signs of child sexual abuse may include:

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
- Atypical sexual behaviors such as asking others to engage in sexual acts or imitating sexual positions with dolls or toys, or with other children or adults
- Depression, withdrawal, or self-loathing
- Lack of attachment to a caregiver; distrust or wariness of adults; fear of going home
- Sudden changes in behavior, or behavior that is aggressive, destructive, or disruptive
- Self-degradation or self-injury; wearing long sleeves on hot days (to hide injuries)
- Delays in emotional, cognitive, physical, or academic development
- High anxiety, including associated physical problems such as chronic stomach pain or headaches
- Frequent, unexplained absences at school
- Unhealthy attachment to an adult outside of the family

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse or Neglect

Signs of physical abuse or neglect may include:

- Frequent injuries, especially if the child is unable to provide adequate explanation of the cause
- Injuries on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side
- Begging, stealing, or hoarding food; frequent complaints of hunger

- Consistently dirty or has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Untreated illness, injuries, health, or serious educational needs
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs

Impact of Child Abuse

Though a child's injuries may be hidden from the untrained eye, child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment can result in immediate and/or lasting impact in all realms of the person's well-being, including emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Understanding how child sexual abuse can traumatize the child and have lasting impact in the life of a surviving adult is a critical first step in preventing abuse and responding compassionately. Not every child will display the impact of their maltreatment, and not every adult will experience the long-term consequences of their traumatic childhood experiences, but all are at increased risk.

Three Types of People Who Sexually Abuse Children

People who sexually abuse children utilize authority, trust, or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetrate abuse. The three primary categories of people who sexually abuse children are the stranger, the acquaintance, and the intra-familial offender.

Stranger

Stranger offenders are people that the child has never seen, or people with whom the child has had only minimal prior interactions. Stranger offenders are the smallest category of offenders.

Acquaintance

Acquaintance offenders are non-family members—such as a family friend, neighbor, clergy member, pediatrician, teacher, or church volunteer—who is acquainted with the child or the child's parents. Acquaintance offenders generally prefer to leverage trust to gain access and control. To secure this trust, the offender grooms child victims by providing a variety of services and gifts, such as attention, affection, kindness, privileges, recognition, alcohol or drugs, money, or pornography. The toxic trust that develops as a result of the grooming process will often reduce the child's inhibitions and create an environment for ongoing abuse while increasing the likelihood that the victim will remain silent.

Intra-familial

Intra-familial offenders are related to the victim and often live in the same house as the victim. The intra-familial offender is generally considered the largest of the three child molester categories. Because of greater accessibility, intra-familial victims tend to be overall younger than non-familial victims.

Protective Practices

Healthy adult-child relationships are critical to children's development. If an adult in their lives is abusing them, the abuse is a terrible detriment to their growth. Therefore, safety is a baseline of KSBC's ministry to children. The protective practices found in this Policy help each Worker to put in place a foundation

of safety and accountability that can then be built upon to help children grow in their spiritual life. At their heart, protective practices promote safe, life-giving interactions while prohibiting risky and abusive interactions.

Screening

Kossuth Street Baptist Church seeks to hire employees/staff and to recruit Workers for children's ministry who fit our Biblical vision, culture, and values. In keeping with our value of protecting children in our care, KSBC requires prior screening and formal approval before a Worker serves in any volunteer or paid employee/staff position involving children. Prior screening and formal approval includes, but is not limited to, written applications, background checks, reference checks, internet/social media searches, and/or interviews as appropriate for the position in question.

The following screening procedures are required for all **adults** who work with children:

- Active membership or regular involvement at KSBC for at least six months (one semester for college students)
- The completion of a written application
- At least two references, including previous church leaders or employers whenever possible
- A background check that includes criminal and sex offender registry searches
- An interview with the ministry staff member responsible for children's and/or youth ministry

The following screening procedures are required for all **youth** (under age 18) who work with children:

- Active membership or regular involvement at KSBC for at least six months
- Written approval from their parents or legal guardians
- The completion of a written application
- At least two references, including teachers, coaches, and/or employers whenever possible
- An interview with the staff member responsible for children's and/or youth ministry

With adult supervision, youth who are at least 12 years of age may assist in children's ministry and childcare settings for children who are at least one year old. Caregivers for infants must be at least 18 years of age.

If the screening process yields information that an individual abused a child in any way or has been convicted of a violent and/or sexual crime, that individual may not work with children in any capacity. If the screening process shows that a candidate has ever been accused, arrested, charged, cited or held for a violent and/or sexual crime, a crime involving moral turpitude, OR convicted, adjudged, pled no contest, to any other type of misdemeanor or felony crime (except for minor traffic violations), the elders of KSBC, in consultation with legal counsel, will assess the situation and determine, in their sole opinion, if the individual may work with children.

Safe Behaviors

Adult-Child Ratios

Research shows that most child abuse happens in isolated situations and that most adults seeking to harm a child prefer to do so in private. Therefore, KSBC requires at least two, unrelated adults to supervise all children's events. **No child is ever to be alone with one adult.** All interactions must be easily observable and interruptible by a caregiver or another Worker.

For interactions that require one adult to focus attention on one child, such as mentoring or counseling, the adult will inform both the child's caregiver and their supervisor of each meeting. The adult and child will meet at a time and place where the caregiver or supervisor can interrupt the time or observe the time from a distance. Furthermore, the meeting will take place at a public place with high visibility.

Potential One-on-One Adult-Child Interactions	Safety Suggestions
Mentoring sessions	Set a time or place when a parent or supervisor will be present
Personal counsel/prayer	Stay in an area where others are present; maintain line-of-sight with another leader
Only one leader is in the room when the first child arrives	Notify a hall monitor; ask the parent to stay until another leader arrives
A leader needs to leave the group room	Have a hall monitor or floating leader available to assist in the room
Transportation to youth events	Opt for group travel when possible; notify parents of travel arrangements
Childcare during ministry events	Recruit additional childcare Workers; ask approved parents to help

Toileting and Diapering

Parents shall take their children to the restroom prior to bringing them to class. Preschool-age children who need to use the restroom during class must be accompanied by two ministry Workers. If a child needs physical assistance in the restroom, it must be from a female Worker with a second Worker present for accountability. Diapers are to be changed only in designated areas and in the presence of other nursery Workers. Other guidelines to consider:

- If a restroom is not attached to the supervised program room, bring children to the restroom in groups instead of one at a time.
- Ensure the restroom is not occupied by an unknown individual before allowing children to use the facilities.
- Maintain line-of-sound instead of line-of-sight supervision while children are using the facilities.
- If Workers are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
- When taking preschool-age children to the restroom, instruct but do not touch.
- Diapers should be changed only by female Workers.

Safe Touch

Our church prohibits the following forms of touch by children's ministry Workers:

- Sexually or physically abusive touch
- Touch that is unwanted by the child (see below for corrective situations)
- Any touch that is secret
- Touching a child's thighs, stomach, or back (except when changing a diaper or properly assisting a child in the restroom as defined above)
- Corporal punishment
- Full frontal hugs
- Tapping or patting a child's clothed bottom

Our church discourages the following forms of touch as they may normalize unsafe practices:

- Lap sitting (age three and older)
- Asking a child for a hug or kiss
- Playing with a child's hair
- Tickling

Our church desires to show healthy affection to its children through the following:

- Displays of affection that are observable and interruptible
- Kind words
- High fives
- Pats on the shoulder
- Brief side or shoulder hugs
- Carrying a small child on the hip
- Holding or rocking infants and toddlers (age two and under)
- Holding a child who is sad or upset and needs to be comforted (younger than kindergarten)

Classroom Management and Discipline

All Workers 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, praising positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the group for a brief time. In some circumstances, firm but gentle touch (such as laying a hand on the child's shoulder) may also be appropriate. Workers should never address misbehavior with anger or yell, spank, or hit a child.

If a child continues to misbehave each week and does not respond to the discipline measures above, the Worker should complete the Child Incident Report form and notify the parents/guardians at pick-up. If a child's behavior becomes uncontrollable or is endangering or upsetting other children, the parents/guardians will be asked to remove the child for the remainder of that class period. Workers should

document such instances using the Child Incident Report form. As much as possible, however, Workers should seek to partner with parents/guardians in seeking effective ways to help children participate in the class.

Extra Attention

Workers are prohibited from displaying favoritism toward a child or group of children. Workers may not give gifts to individual children unless the gifts are able to be given to other children at other times for similar reasons and do not signify preferential treatment.

In cases where a Worker believes a child would benefit from extra attention, there must be a clear reason that focuses on the child's needs, not the Worker's needs. Workers providing extra attention must always abide by the Policy (e.g., meet in observable and interruptible spaces; practice safe touch).

Sexual Language

Our church acknowledges that sexual language is more than mere jokes but a serious boundary violation. As such, the following are prohibited at all KSBC functions:

- Sexually suggestive language, racy jokes, sexual innuendo, descriptions of sexual experiences
- Uploading, downloading, or viewing of pornography
- Music, video games, and movies with sexual themes

If Workers want to teach a lesson or organize a program to help youth understand age-appropriate questions about their body or sexuality, the event must be planned in advance and parents/guardians notified beforehand. When a Child raises questions about their body or sexuality, the Worker will answer the question in an age-appropriate way and complete the Child Incident Report form found at the back of this policy.

Routine Protective Measures

All rooms used for children's ministry will have doors with windows to enable caregivers and supervisory staff to easily see what is happening in the classroom at all times. In order for a room with no windows to be used, the door must be propped open while in use to ensure appropriate visibility.

Our church uses an electronic check-in system to record attendance and to provide Workers with emergency contact information, allergies, and any special concerns. All nursery, preschool, and elementary-age children are required to check in and receive a nametag and corresponding pick-up receipt.

For children in third grade and below, parents/guardians must pick up their children at the conclusion of the session or event. The parents/guardians may be required to show their pick-up receipt to ensure children are released to an approved person. Children in fourth grade and above may be allowed to leave their classroom independently. In the event of an emergency that results in the parents/guardians being unavailable, the child will be released to the care of a person approved by a ministry staff member or the director of that ministry area.

Responding to Policy Violations and Child Abuse

Policy Violations

Our church takes all Policy violations seriously. Any staff, volunteer, parent, or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way, including reporting the violation in writing to a ministry director or staff member. Our church expects all adults to practice bystander intervention when they see a Policy violation. Church leaders will respond according to the situation.

When in doubt, Workers should complete the Child Incident Report form found at the back of this policy and provide the form to the director of that area, a member of the KSBC Staff or an Elder.

Policy exceptions should be rare. KSBC allows Policy exceptions that are preapproved in writing or for emergencies. All exceptions should be communicated to a supervisor or ministry staff member verbally and in writing.

Limited Access Agreements

Child abuse experts warn that abuse thrives on secrecy. Transparency and accountability help to counteract secrecy, prevent abuse, and promote safety. Our church utilizes “Limited Access Agreements” to clarify safe behavior around children for those who have engaged in concerning or risky behavior or violated the Policy repeatedly.

A Limited Access Agreement is a written and agreed-upon boundary between an individual and KSBC Workers that outlines specific concerns about an individual’s behavior, details appropriate behavior toward children, and plans ongoing accountability for the individual. Limited Access Agreements apply to KSBC members or attendees. If a Worker violates the Policy, they will be formally warned and then removed from their role if the violation continues.

If a convicted offender wants to attend KSBC, the church will follow the Registered Sexual Offender Policy and may also consult with legal counsel. Similarly, if an individual has been credibly accused of child sexual abuse or any form of child maltreatment but was not or has not yet been convicted, the church will consult with legal counsel on how to best proceed.

Reporting

The abuse of children is not only a sin, but it is a serious crime. When an adult reports suspected child abuse to the legal authorities, the report could save a child’s life. In contrast, silence about suspected abuse brings incredible harm to victims and emboldens offenders. KSBC Workers shall contact the authorities immediately: (1) when a child discloses abuse; (2) when they witness abuse; (3) when they observe consistent indicators of abuse; or (4) when a perpetrator discloses abuse.

Under Indiana law, any individual who has reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect has the duty to make a report. Reports can be made to Child Protective Services by calling the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-800-5556) or to the police. The elders and church staff are available to assist in filing a report.

Supporting Survivors

Abuse Disclosures

Because children and adult survivors are often reluctant to disclose abuse, KSBC acknowledges that survivors who choose to do so need our community's utmost support.

Research indicates that when children disclose abuse, they almost always do so tentatively or by accident and may later recant even when there is proof that the abuse occurred. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. When children disclose intentionally, they may first test the adult's reaction by pretending the abuse happened to a friend or by supplying only a small bit of information (Tchividjian and Berkovits, 170). If a child discloses abuse to a KSBC Worker, the Worker **MUST** report the abuse disclosure by completing the Child Incident Report form found at the back of this policy and submitting the form to the appropriate ministry director, staff member, or elder.

Receiving an adult's abuse disclosure is an honor and a sign of trust. Victims often choose to disclose their abuse long after it occurred. KSBC encourages anyone receiving an adult's abuse disclosure to seek legal counsel on how to respond.

Survivor Support

If a Worker becomes aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been, abused, KSBC will seek legal counsel and may respond in all, none, or one or more of the following ways.

Terminate/Suspend

If the alleged perpetrator is part of the KSBC community, he or she will immediately be terminated or suspended from any church positions he or she may hold, pending the results of an investigation. A liaison will be assigned to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator.

Support Person

A KSBC member will be designated as a "Support Person" and will attempt to reach out to the child and the child's family within 24 hours of learning of the abuse. Understanding that abuse can have ongoing impact on a child and a child's family, the Support Person will seek permission from the child and the child's family to continue offering support on an ongoing basis.

Creating a Culture of Ongoing Support

Our church aims to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse—both those we know about and those we don't. To this end, the church will publicize the Policy, communicating that this institution takes child protection seriously and does not tolerate abuse. Other forms of support, such as support groups, training, referral lists, and ongoing dialogue, will also be encouraged.

Living the Policy

Training and Dissemination

This Policy shall be disseminated widely to the church community through publications, public discussion, educational opportunities, training programs, and other appropriate means of communication that will raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children. Specifically, the most current version of our Policy shall be:

- Posted on the church website
- Readily available in the church office, foyer, nursery, and children's ministry areas
- Included in new-member packets
- Given to all applicants who wish to serve in children's or youth ministry
- Copies of this Policy and the Child Incident Report form will be posted in each children's ministry classroom.

KSBC requires everyone who works with children or youth to sign an affirmation indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the terms of this Policy as a precondition to serving with children or youth. Affirmations will be stored in the church's office files and will be re-confirmed in writing on an annual basis.

Evaluating and Updating the Policy

This Child Protection Policy replaces the previous KSBC Safe Environment Policy (June 2009, September 2013) and has been adapted with permission from the guidelines presented in *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries* (Tchividjian and Berkovits, 2017).

The Policy will be reviewed annually by ministry staff and key volunteers and will be updated as necessary to ensure the Policy is up-to-date with the reality in our church as well as with emerging research and best practices in the field of child protection.



KSBC CHILD INCIDENT REPORT

*This form is to be used to report **any and all incidents or unusual events** that occur while you are caring for children. Any suspected or actual violation of the KSBC Child Protection Policy shall be immediately reported on this Child Incident Report Form. A copy of this form should be given to the child's parent/guardian at pick-up, and a signed copy should be hand-delivered to the director of your area, an elder, or a KSBC staff member.*

Under Indiana law, any individual who has reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect has the duty to make a report. Reports can be made to Child Protective Services by calling the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-800-5556) or to the police. The elders and church staff are available to assist in filing a report.

Date of Incident: _____ Class or Event: _____

Name of Worker: _____ Phone Number: _____

Children Involved: _____

Workers Present: _____

What Happened: _____

Action Taken: _____

Signature of Worker: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Director, Staff Member, or Elder: _____ Date: _____