

Child Protection Guidelines
Bonita Valley Baptist Church Policy
Version: October 27, 2014

Bonita Valley Baptist Church is committed to the health, safety, and well-being of the children in our care. We also strive to protect our volunteers from unnecessary accusations. Therefore, we take the following precautions:

1. All adults, both employed and volunteer, who work with minors must be screened and have undergone a criminal background check prior to beginning work. All persons who work with minors must undergo a Screening Process. All volunteers under 18, who work with minors, must be screened prior to beginning work. The checklist to be used is called the "Screening Process". See attached.
2. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children shall not be employed and shall not be permitted to volunteer in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need and will receive the love and acceptance of our church family.
4. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the “two-person rule” or the “open door policy” at ALL times. **The “two-person rule” requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth. The “open door policy” requires the door be open at all times so that a responsible adult can make unannounced visits. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher.** The “TWO-PERSON RULE” will be MANDATORY for all employees and volunteers with our NURSERY and KINDERGARTEN AGE CHILDREN.
5. All employees and volunteers working with children and youth are required to be members or active constituents of Bonita Valley Baptist Church for a minimum of six months before they begin their work. (AWANA workers may begin volunteering upon completion of BVBC-initiated background check and AWANA screening.)
6. Our guidelines and procedures for reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate, are labeled “Appendix A”. Our guidelines and procedures for responding to reported incidents of abuse are labeled “Appendix B”.

Screening Process

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Checklist for Employees and Volunteers

- Been an active member of our church for at least six (6) months.
(AWANA workers following BVBC-initiated guidelines)
- Stressed importance of having a witness present when dealing with children one-on-one (alternative: use open areas, leave door open, install windows in doors). Always within view of others.
- Given copy of Policies and Procedures, including handling of child abuse cases.
- Completed a criminal background check.
- References checked and had a personal interview.
- Completed online training, test, and signed Policies and Procedures.

(Checked by)

(Date)

Note: This form to be posted in each worker's file. No worker is to be assigned until completion of the checklist.

Appendix A

Bonita Valley Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines

REPORTING PROCEDURES

The law requires all mandated persons to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities. The California law under Section 11164-11174.3 encourages all volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. Therefore, all employees and volunteers at Bonita Valley Baptist Church must adhere to the following procedures:

1. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or violation of the child Protection Guidelines of Bonita Valley Baptist Church, the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the Pastor or, in the absence of the Pastor, a person designated by the Pastor and approved by the Bonita Valley Baptist Church Elder Board. In the event of suspected, reported or discovered child abuse or neglect, an employee or volunteer will also immediately make a written report to the Director of the group, and all reports will immediately be given to the Pastor or, in the absence of the Pastor, a person designated by the Pastor and approved by the Bonita Valley Baptist Church Elder Board.

* Physical signs of molestation may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease

* Behavioral signs of molestation may include:

nightmares
anxiety when approaching the church building or nursery or preschool area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
sexual self-consciousness or acting out of sexual behavior
withdrawal from church activities and friends

* Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:

- "I don't like _____."
- "_____ does things to me when we're alone."
- "I don't like to be alone with _____."
- "_____ fooled around with me."

* Adapted from Child Abuse: Governing Law and Legislation by I. Sloan (1983)

2. Reports to local authorities shall be documented in writing to include: name and telephone number of agency, date and time of report, name of agency person taking report, and a brief synopsis of the report.
3. All church employees and volunteers working with minor children will receive training at the beginning of each church administrative year regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

Appendix B

Bonita Valley Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. The official spokesperson for Bonita Valley Baptist Church shall be the Pastor, or in the absence of the Pastor, the previously designated spokesperson. All requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the official spokesperson. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson.
2. The official spokesperson shall immediately report any alleged incident of child abuse to the appropriate law enforcement agency and our insurance carrier.
3. The care and safety of the victim is our first priority.
4. We will not prejudge any person accused, but we will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.
5. We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. If the accused is a church worker, that person shall be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished and the person cleared by the authorities. If the accused is a paid employee of our church, his or her income will be maintained, until allegations are cleared by authorities or until criminal charges are filed.
6. All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
7. All efforts in responding to the alleged incident of child abuse shall be documented by the Pastor or, in the absence of the Pastor, by the previously designated spokesperson, and maintained in a secure and confidential file.

Signature _____ **Date** _____
(Actual signature will be through Protect My Ministry electronic signature process)