



**glen ellyn**  
bible church

## ***CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY***

*(Please review and retain for your records)*

# ***CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY***

## **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

To protect our children from harmful individuals and situations, while creating a safe and secure environment where such risks are minimized. By taking some simple preventative steps, we can reduce harmful risks to our children and our ministry programs.

The procedures set forth below should not be interpreted as absolute imperatives for responding to any given situation, but rather approved and recommended guidelines of appropriate action. In addition, they are not intended to create contractual obligation on the part of GEBC and its staff and workers to respond precisely in the manner indicated, but rather act as operational methodologies to assist in conjunction with the implementation of the overall objectives of the *Child Protection and Safety Policy*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In a perfect world, a safety policy would not be necessary. However, even inside our church, we do not live in a perfect world. The plain fact is that within our church, and with adult workers we think we know and trust, there still remains the risk of potential abuse or neglect that could take place while our children are engaged in ministry programs, both on-site and off-site.

In an effort to reflect God's love to the children in our care, we take our responsibility for them seriously. The following guidelines are intended to allow GEBC access to more background information about our workers within those ministries; to encourage and facilitate prompt and appropriate responses to reports of abuse or neglect; and to foster an attitude of respect and confidentiality in the handling of these types of incidents.

### **1.0 SCOPE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

The GEBC staff, workers and anyone who teaches, supervises, assists or otherwise works with children or minors on behalf of GEBC on a regular basis, are expected to follow this policy and treat children with respect and dignity at all times. Some GEBC programs may have additional requirements specifically designed for the individual needs of children in that program or age group. Any concerns or questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Business Administrator.

GEBC staff and workers are encouraged to exercise discretion with respect to the implementation of these policies and procedures. These procedures are not intended to establish a different standard of care than as required by the laws of Illinois nor are they intended to establish a basis for liability on the part of GEBC, its staff and workers beyond that as prescribed by applicable law.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

**2.1 “Abuse” defined.** In general, “abuse” includes but is not limited to any form of physical, sexual or emotional injury that is not caused by accidental means.

**2.2 “Adult” defined.** “Adult” means any person age 18 or older.

**2.3 “Child” or “Children” defined.** “Child” or “Children” means any minor who is under the care, control and supervision of GEBC staff or laypersons who are acting in a capacity on behalf of the church.

**2.4 “Mandatory Reporter” defined.** “Mandatory Reporter” means any member of the clergy having reasonable cause to believe that a child known to that member of the clergy in his/her professional capacity may be an abused child.

**2.5 “Minor” defined.** “Minor” means any person under the age of 18.

**2.6 “Neglect” defined.** “Neglect” occurs when a person responsible for a child deprives or fails to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or necessary medical care or fails to provide adequate supervision for a child.

**2.7 “Sexual Abuse” defined.** In general, “Sexual Abuse” includes, but is not limited to any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for sexual gratification.

**2.8 “Staff” defined.** “Staff” means any person who is employed by GEBC and receives compensation for their services.

**2.9 “Worker” defined.** “Worker” defined includes both volunteers and compensated individuals who teach, supervise, assist or work with children on a regular basis in a position of authority or trust on behalf of GEBC.

## 3.0 WORKER SELECTION AND SCREENING

The first step in reducing risk to the children or minors in our ministry programs is to make the best effort to select appropriate workers for both volunteer and compensated ministry positions.

**3.1 Pre-Qualifications for Ministry with Children.** GEBC prefers that all workers involved in ministries involving children or minors, regularly attend Glen Ellyn Bible Church. For teaching positions, volunteers or workers are expected to have been attending GEBC for at least six months prior to teaching. Workers in ministries involving children or minors will be screened. Applications and authorizations for national background checks will be completed for adult workers who will be working with children or minors on behalf of GEBC. Workers will agree to follow the guidelines outlined in GEBC’s *Child Protection and Safety Policy*.

**3.2 Informal Interviews.** An informal interview may be conducted in advance with each worker by the staff person responsible for that area of ministry prior to their working directly with children.

**3.3 References.** The ministry supervisor at his/her discretion will check references provided on the screening form.

**3.4 Authorization for Background Check.** As a part of the screening process, workers will give GEBC a written consent form authorizing GEBC to obtain a national background check.

**3.5 Persons Excluded from Serving.** Anyone with a clear, known history, pattern or conviction of abuse or neglect of children, will be excluded from working in any ministry within GEBC that involves direct contact with children or minors, regardless of their rehabilitation.

#### **4.0 WORKER SUPERVISION**

**4.1 Discipline.** A child's dignity should be regarded at all times. Gentleness, respect and understanding will guide a worker's actions and words. Discipline should be carried out through instruction, training and correction.

**4.2 Inappropriate Touching.** Touching a child's genitalia areas or the clothing covering those areas and all other forms of Child Sexual Abuse as defined in Section 2.7 are strictly prohibited. The only exception is the necessary hygienic care for infants or toddlers who are not yet toilet trained. When a worker is caring for a child in the process of toilet training, the worker may accompany the child to the restroom to assist the child, provided the door to the restroom is left open.

**4.3 Two Worker Rule.** At least two workers (preferably unrelated) should be in the room when children are present. Speaking with children one-on-one should be done in public settings where a worker is in sight of other people. An adult childcare worker or staff member will visit the children's activities on a random and unannounced basis.

**4.4 Workers Alone with Children.** To the extent reasonably practical in any group ministry activities, no individual worker should be left alone in a closed room with an individual child or a group of children.

**4.5 Adult Supervision.** Adult supervision is required for all GEBC sponsored childcare activities or events to ensure the church safety policies relevant to the situation are followed and in compliance with GEBC's *Child Protection and Safety Policy*.

**4.6 Overnight Activities.** Overnight activities should be pre-approved by the ministry supervisor. A permission slip should be completed and signed by the minor's parent or guardian. Overnight activities should have a minimum of three children participating in the activity and a minimum of two unrelated adults supervising the activity.

**4.7 Off-Site Activities.** GEBC sponsored activities involving minors that are conducted at off-site locations, should be pre-approved by a ministry supervisor. If the church is providing transportation, the number of persons per vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts or the required vehicle maximum. Each passenger should wear a seat belt. Drivers should be at least 21 years of age and have a valid driver's license. Staff, workers and volunteers should not drive alone with a child or student.

## **5.0 REPORTING PROCEDURES**

**5.1 Mandatory Reporting Requirements.** The State of Illinois requires mandatory reporting for any known or reasonable suspicion of abuse (physical, sexual or emotional) or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). A "mandatory reporter" as the term pertains to Glen Ellyn Bible Church is defined in section 2.4.

**5.2 Reporting Requirements for Workers.** Anyone who teaches, supervises, assists or otherwise works with children or minors on a regular basis on behalf of GEBC but is not considered a mandatory reporter is expected to inform the ministry supervisor immediately when there is a suspicion or allegation of child abuse or neglect. The supervisor will notify the Senior Pastor who will evaluate the incident with the involved parties and notify the proper authorities, if necessary. Even if a child recants an allegation of abuse or neglect, the incident should be taken seriously and a report should be filed. **If a child or minor is in immediate danger or risk, the individual who witnessed or suspects the abuse should call the police immediately at 911.**

**5.3 Cooperation with Law Enforcement Authorities.** The staff and workers of GEBC will cooperate fully with law enforcement and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) during the investigative process. To the extent reasonably possible, no one should be interviewed before DCFS and law enforcement officials are contacted. Any internal investigation should yield to that of DCFS and/or law enforcement.

**5.4 Confidentiality Requirements.** If any form of abuse or neglect is suspected, every effort should be made to keep all information confidential except as necessary to comply with the reporting requirements under Illinois State Law and this policy. The confidential records of staff and workers are maintained by the Business Administrator in the church office and kept in a secure location. Access to such records is allowed only to supervisory church leadership and law enforcement when deemed necessary in order to create a safe and secure environment at GEBC.

**5.5 Public Statements.** All persons are encouraged to refrain from conversations about any alleged incidents or ongoing investigations. Communications about the incident should be limited to either GEBC authorized personnel, DCFS or to law enforcement authorities. All contacts by the media should be referred to the Senior Pastor. Only authorized personnel may speak on behalf of GEBC. Extraneous communications regarding sensitive matters may not only compromise an ongoing investigation but also have a serious impact upon the victim, as well any individuals who may be ultimately cleared of serious allegations.