



Kids Crossing Children's Ministry Operating Guidelines

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Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church
Operating Policies for All Children's Ministry

Welcome....

Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church is committed to introducing people to Christ and making devoted followers of Him. This mission reaches into every aspect of the ministry regardless to age. This commitment is a priority for our children's ministry, know as Kids Crossing.

It is our desire to ensure as we carry out this task that we maintain a safe environment for every child and adult. The operating guidelines serve as a consistent guide for those who have contact with our children.

The Kids Crossing Leadership Team and the Board of Elders acknowledge a requirement to ensure that children are protected and that the reputation of Kids Crossing is above reproach. We have prepared these operating guidelines with this in mind. We are convinced that in today's climate, it is right and proper that the leaders of ministry activities in the church, the children, and young people, and our church are protected in the best way possible.

Kids Crossing Leadership &
The Elder Board

Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church
Operating Policies for All Children's Ministry

Kids Crossing Ministry Statement

Ebenezer's ministry to children is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children in the church and community will be taught the truths of God's Word so that they may BELIEVE and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They can BELONG to a variety of relevant and fun programs geared to today's child where they will learn to BECOME committed to Jesus through their actions, words, and deeds.

Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church Operating Guidelines for Kids Crossing

1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1. As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital. This policy is intended to ensure that church activities involving children (birth to 5th grade) are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children.
- 1.2. The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of children by providing clear instructions for the operation of children's ministries at **EBENEZER BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH (EBFC)**. The Elders of **EBFC** sincerely request and require the cooperation of the adults in our church who must abide by the stringent guidelines of this policy.

2. Child and Youth Safety Takes Priority

- 2.1. The greatest priority of **EBFC** children's programs is to help kids through the Gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this priority and the values of **EBFC**. This type of action cannot and will not be tolerated by the EBFC.
- 2.2. Workers and supervisors who oversee children must keep this priority in mind: adults do not have a *right* to serve as workers. Adults merely have an *opportunity* to serve when selected by the church. This means that workers should err on the side of caution as they make subjective decisions involving the well-being of children. Furthermore, workers and supervisors serve at the request of the church and may be removed for any purpose at the sole discretion of the church.

3. A Higher Standard

- 3.1. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every worker at **EBFC** must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior (I Thessalonians 5:22). All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

4. Before You Begin in Kids Crossing

Note: We live in an age where sexual misconduct and child abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. EBFC has implemented policies to help safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working in the Kids Crossing program. We pray for God's blessing for our children, workers, and church.

4.1 Kids Crossing Teachers and Assistants

4.1.1. Application Process

Membership Rule -- All teachers must be members of EBFC before teaching in Kids Crossing (six month from membership date). All assistants are encouraged to be members of EBFC before teaching/aiding in Kids Crossing (service may began six months after attending EBFC).

Completion of Application -- All Kids Crossing workers must complete the Personal Resource Form and are encouraged to go through Networking.

References – Applicants must complete and sign the Reference Form in order for church leaders to contact references. Persons asked for references may be suggested by applicants or selected by church leaders. The church may contact employers, former ministers, and persons who have supervised applicants in church work previously.

Interview -- All Kids Crossing workers must be interviewed by the ministry department head and/or Pastor of Discipleship to determine their suitability for teaching. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons.

Completion of Authorization for Criminal/Court Records -- After gaining the applicant's permission, a criminal background check and a registry check for applicants will be conducted. This is mandatory for primary positions and strongly suggested for secondary positions.

Signed Acknowledgment Form -- All Kids' Crossing teachers must sign the Acknowledgment Form in the Kids' Crossing Operating Guidelines to show their commitment to observe these policies. This information will be kept confidential.

Training -- Applicants will observe children's classes and obtain on-the-job training while working with current Kids Crossing teachers.

4.1.2. Recruitment Procedures

Follower of Christ -- The person being considered needs to be a follower of Christ and not a novice. The applicant must have experience in being a committed follower and is now ready to move to the second phase of discipleship through reproducing oneself through teaching.

By Invitation -- Teachers are to be selected by the Kids Crossing Leadership Team. The focus is for them “to come and be with.” If someone approaches and expresses a desire to teach, we will welcome those who are entering in to the teaching staff as a beginner or from another church. We want to encourage what the Spirit has done in working through the heart of a person. Primary entry to the team is through selection, but we are open to review. We may determine that teaching may not be the best use of ones gifts and encourage another ministry focus instead of the teaching team.

Networking -- Networking provides information on our philosophy of ministry and reaffirms the giftedness, passion, and personality of the potential teacher. This assessment is helpful in placing applicants within a ministry that reflects their heart.

Recommendations – Ministry leaders will contact any people who have seen the applicant teach a class and assess the experience and teaching process.

Membership – Membership within the local church is evidence of one’s commitment to the purposes and vision of the church. All teachers must be members of EBFC for at least six months before ministering.

Interview – Teachers will be interviewed by the ministry department head and/or Pastor of Discipleship. The purpose of the interview is to find out why the applicant would like to teach, previous experience, communicate teaching commitment, and implement training.

Apprenticeship -- Applicants must work as an apprentice before taking on a full-time teaching role. If a person comes with prior teaching experience the apprentice time may be reduced. The following time line may be applied:
No experience –

First Semester with Lead Teacher.

1. Three months of observation with lead teacher. Time should be allowed to debrief each lesson.
2. During the lesson time, the apprentice covers a particular portion of the lesson. Debriefing continues.
3. Complete reading and worksheets from TTS. Learning Styles and Lesson Plans. Interact with lead teacher.

Second Semester with Lead Teacher.

1. The purpose during this phase is to have the apprentice develop and teach a full lesson.
2. Half of the classes need to be taught by the apprentice.
3. Lesson aims and plans are to be presented to the lead teacher before the lesson for review.
4. Debrief each lesson.

Experienced - The following steps may be completed within one semester class. Observation and debriefing will still take place.

Promotion to Teacher Status – Once the supervising teacher, applicant, and ministry leader assess the applicant’s experience and whether

this is a good ministry placement, the applicant will be able to teach.

Ongoing Enrichment – Teachers will receive training designed to continue growth and nourishment of the spiritual and teaching skills of the teacher.

Commitment: Workers are expected to keep their commitment for one year. If they are not able to maintain this commitment, they must give at least one month's notice and explain their reason for breaking this commitment.

5. Policy Standards and General Christian Moral Standards

Workers in Kids' Crossing are expected to observe these policies and guidelines as well as the other Christian standards of moral behavior.

5.1. *Supervision of Kids' Crossing Workers-* Church staff and volunteers who supervise children are charged with the diligent enforcement of these policies. Violation of these policies is grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or re-assignment from children's work for both volunteers and staff at the discretion of the church. Supervisors and all Kids' Crossing workers who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activities must discuss their suspicions promptly with the Pastor of Discipleship or if unable, notification with another member of the Pastoral Staff.

5.2. *Touching Policy*

5.2.1. We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church should deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children in our care. **EBFC** has implemented a touching policy that will safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children.

5.2.2. Hugging, kisses, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our church setting.

5.2.3. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or youth. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a four-year-old to sit in a nursery worker's lap and give a kiss on the cheek, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and children's worker to behave this way.)

5.2.4. Physical affection should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need.

- 5.2.5. Touching and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children's ministry workers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers are present and the touching is open to observation. This rule is especially important when diapering a baby or helping a young child change clothes or use the restroom.
- 5.2.6. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should be above reproach.
- 5.2.7. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child.
- 5.2.8. Church workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
- 5.2.9. Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their ministry leader or Pastor of Discipleship. Specifically, church workers must first inform their ministry leader. If, for whatever reason, they feel uncomfortable discussing this behavior with that person, then they must inform Pastor of Discipleship.

5.3. *Background Check*

- 5.3.1. **Required** for primary worker positions. **Optional** for secondary worker applicants at the option of the leader of the program in which they will work.
 - 5.3.1.1. In order to screen workers appropriately to their responsibilities, **EBFC** will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. Please note that the terms primary and secondary do not refer to the ages of children served, but rather to relative levels of responsibility and risk.
 - 5.3.1.1.1. **Primary workers** -- All paid staff and those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk shall be classified as primary workers and shall meet the primary screening standards. Primary workers have greater interaction with and access to children, and more opportunity to harm children, so churches must take extra care in their screening.
 - 5.3.1.1.2. **Secondary workers** -- Secondary workers are people who occasionally interact with minors and/or do so in less risky circumstances. For example, a volunteer who sees children only in a group setting, on church premises, and with a ministry leader present may be classified as a secondary worker (VBS worker, Candy Carnival worker, etc.) This category may include parents of participants who supervise activities.

5.3.2. **Type of Report** - The background check for volunteers includes a SSN Verification & Address History Trace, National Criminal Database Search (with re-verification of positive records), National Sex Offender Registry Search, and a Statewide Court Search. Completion of *Authorization for Criminal/Court Records Check* must be completed first before Background Check is processed.

5.3.3. **Report Must Be Current** – A current report must be made every **3 years**.

5.3.4. **Criminal Report**

5.3.4.1. Applicants who have received clearance will be permitted to work and minister with children at EBFC.

5.3.4.2. Clearance. A clearance will be issued if criminal report filed returns with no allegations, charges, nor convictions of child abuse.

5.3.4.3. Existing Record. If a person does not receive a clearance due to an existing child abuse record, he or she will not be permitted to work and minister with the children of EBFC. They will be referred to a licensed counselor to ensure proper treatment and handling of existing record. Following the formal release of the counselor, he or she may work and minister in non-children programs of EBFC. Periodic follow-up will be conducted by the counselor and person with a record. Non compliance to this process may result in the denial of worship at EBFC. Due to the seriousness of the issue, all information will be handled with confidentiality and strict professionalism (Section 5.3.6).

5.3.4.4. Non-Child Abuse Record. In the event that allegations, charges, or convictions not relating to child abuse are reported, a person may be kept from ministering to children at EBFC at the sole discretion of the EBFC. The higher standard for teachers leading by example must be maintained and encouraged; therefore one may be withheld from serving in Kids' Crossing. They will be encouraged to meet with a licensed counselor to ensure proper treatment and handling of existing record.

5.3.5. **References for New Workers**

5.3.5.1. Church leaders will check **at least** two references for each worker. The references will be done by phone, mail, or in person. Whenever possible, the three references should include one person who has known the applicant well for an extended period of time, a former supervisor, and a member of the applicant's immediate family. For applicants for compensated positions, additional former supervisors may be checked.

5.3.5.2. The "Worker Reference" form may be filled out over the phone by the person conducting the phone reference check.

5.3.6. Confidentiality of Information

5.3.6.1. The church will keep confidential all information received in the applicant selection process.

5.3.6.2. All files will be kept on the church property in a locked file cabinet in the church office.

5.3.7. **Cost** – The fee for the Background check will be covered by the church.

5.4. *Two-Person Rule* -- Two adults must be present in each Kids' Crossing room at all times (one adult and one child will not be permitted). This rule accomplishes two important objectives. First, it reduces the risk of child abuse. Secondly, it reduces the risk of unfounded claims of abuse.

5.5. *Corporal punishment* (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in **EBFC** activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested or given permission for corporal punishment. Teachers must consult their supervisors or a pastor if they need help with misbehaving children or discipline techniques.

In case of discipline problems, no spanking (or any form of corporal punishment), swearing, or embarrassing may be used. When behavior is not acceptable, an **in-room** time-out period should be used (starting with a few minutes). If the behavioral problem persists, parents will be contacted.

5.6. *Teachers must report suspected or observed child abuse* to the Kids' Crossing ministry leader or Pastor of Discipleship immediately. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by other workers must be reported in the same manner.

5.7. *Workers must avoid even the appearance of misconduct.* This is needed in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

5.8. *Workers who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved* from Kids' Crossing at the discretion of church leaders. (**ELDERS, PASTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP, KIDS CROSSING LEADERSHIP TEAM**)

6. Kids Crossing Procedures

6.1 General Conduct Expected of Workers

6.1.1. When possible, children's ministry/workers should not transport a child alone. At least two adults or at least two children should be present.

6.1.2 At least two workers must be present in children's ministry classrooms.

- 6.1.3. Workers should not leave students alone at the church waiting for transportation. If only one child remains, two leaders should remain when possible.
- 6.1.4. Workers must not interact with a student in any sexual manner (e.g. physical, verbal, visual), or engage in a romantic relationship with any child or young person who is four or more years younger than the worker.
- 6.1.5. Workers should avoid one-on-one meetings in private places with children (same or opposite sex). If this is unavoidable, the Ministry Leader should be made aware when these meetings take place.
- 6.1.6. When a worker has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child, they must first:
 - 6.1.6.1. Obtain the consent of the student's parent or guardian before going out alone with or spending time with the student in an unsupervised situation.
 - 6.1.8.2. Notify the ministry leader of such meetings in advance.
- 6.1.7. Any **non-scheduled** meetings (one-on-one, etc.) should have an adult chaperone of the same sex as student participants.
- 6.1.8. Children's ministry leaders/workers should have parental permission for each child's involvement in church sponsored programs or activities. For students who come on a regular basis, this can be done yearly. If this is not received from a first-time child, they should bring a permission slip with them the next time they come. For overnight or out of town activities, separate permission should be obtained.
- 6.1.9. Adult chaperones need to go through the primary worker screening process before working at overnight activities that involve youth.
- 6.1.10. All Kids Crossing staff, teachers, and workers must wear a picture ID badge with lanyard whenever they are at a Kids Crossing event or program.
 - 6.1.11. This badge is given only to those who have read the Operating Guidelines and successfully completed a background check.
 - 6.1.12. Once these ID badges are issued, workers will **not** be able to participate in Kids Crossing programs or events if the badge is not worn.
 - 6.1.12.1. Missing Badges: If a worker temporary misplaces his/her badge, a temporary one will be issued.

6.1.12.2. Lost Badges: If a worker loses the badge and is not able to find it after two weeks, a \$10 fee must be paid promptly in order to issue another.

6.1.13. Teachers and workers must consult the Kids Crossing Registration form for child information such as parent contact information, food allergies, dismissal, etc. Make sure records are accurate and current.

6.2 Dismissal

6.2.1. Workers should give Kids Crossing Registration Forms to all visitors, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren).

6.2.2. Workers will stay with their class until the next teacher arrives or until parents come. At no time will children be allowed to stay in a room without adult supervision.

6.3 Bathroom Guidelines:

6.3.1. Parents should take their children to the bathroom before class time so that the child won't have to leave the supervised room.

6.3.2. Nursery: Diaper changes must be done **in** the nursery room according to the posted guidelines, unless by parent(s) or guardian(s).

6.3.3. Toilet Training Ages (2-3 years old): The worker will ask the child if they need help toileting. The worker who helps the child should give help/privacy to the toileting child appropriate for their age. This includes trying to teach the children how to help themselves as much as possible and using the hand-over-hand method. This technique enables you to place your hands over the child's hands in helping with fastening clothes, wiping skin, and the like. Spend as little time in the bathroom as possible.

6.3.4. If a child needs to be escorted to the bathroom and possibly helped, the classroom will be supervised by a worker (at the discretion of the Primary Children's Ministry Worker) so the other children can be attended to. The door to the room will remain open if only one worker remains with the class.

6.3.5. For Self-sufficient Ages: One of the Workers should make sure that the child/student returns to their class in a timely manner (and does not wander).

6.4 Overnight Activities

6.4.1. Adult chaperones will have gone through the primary screening and background check process.

- 6.4.2. Workers are to act together as a team and not be isolated with a child.
- 6.4.3. The child-to-worker ratio should preferably be no higher than 7 to 1.
- 6.4.4. Children will not be permitted to be alone together for long periods of time.
- 6.4.5. Sleeping arrangements will be separate by gender.
- 6.4.5. Children will not be released from an overnight activity during the night unless there is notification of or permission by the parent/guardian.
- 6.4.6. Parents must complete the Parental Consent & Liability Release Form for each off-site event, as well as the Yellow Form each year

6.5 Church Drivers

For the protection of our children and our drivers, the following guidelines should be observed.

- 6.5.1. When possible, children's ministry workers will not transport a child alone. At least two adults or at least two children will be present.
- 6.5.2. If not already a Kids Crossing Worker, then church drivers are required to fill out an Secondary Worker Application, as well as an Application for Church Drivers.
- 6.5.3. If inappropriate behavior is observed in the vehicle (e.g. sexual harassment, bullying, demeaning, or other discipline problems), the driver should reprimand the children and report the behavior to the Kids Crossing Ministry Leader or Pastor of Discipleship.

6.6. Emergency Procedures

6.6.1. Evacuation

- 6.6.1.1. In case of an emergency requiring an evacuation (such as a fire), follow the emergency evacuation plan posted in the classroom and use the appropriate exit.
- 6.6.1.2. All teachers and workers must make sure all children are present and accounted for with proper supervision. Encourage children to remain calm and quiet.
- 6.6.1.3. Upon evacuation, classroom windows should be closed, doors shut, and lights turned off. Take all attendance and registration records with you.
- 6.6.1.4. Once outside, children should line up by class along the far parking lot (perimeter) along white lines with younger children on the left & older children on the right.

6.6.1.5 Children should stay with their class until dismissed; parents may not pick children up until they are told to do so.

6.6.1.6. It is recommended for teachers to prepare children beforehand should such an event take place so they can be informed of proper procedures.

6.6.2. Intruders

6.6.2.1. Should you ever see an intruder or suspicious person on the premises, please consult a ministry leader, Pastor of Discipleship or Kids Crossing Ministry Leader as soon as possible.

6.6.2.2. Do not allow said person to gain access to children. If you feel comfortable doing so, ask them if you can help them or find out why they are here.

6.6.2.3. To prevent confusion regarding current ministry workers with cleared background checks, please remember to wear your picture ID badge with lanyard at all Kids Crossing events and programs.

6.7. Health & Sickness Policies

6.7.1. Sick Child Policy

6.7.1.1. If a child is sick *before* entering class, we ask that the parents keep the child with them instead of allowing the child to enter the classroom. This will prevent sickness from spreading among children and help us to maintain a safe, healthy environment.

6.7.1.2. If a child becomes sick *during* class, parents will be contacted as soon as possible. Depending on the child's condition, isolation may be needed to help prevent the sickness from spreading. The child will be kept as comfortable as possible until the parents arrive.

6.7.2. Medical Emergency

6.7.2.1. If a child suffers from a medical emergency (due to allergies or health related issues), parents will be contacted immediately.

6.7.2.2. If necessary, the lead teacher will call 911 for help. Consult the Child Registration Form for specific instructions.

6.7.3. Head Lice

When lice has been reported the following steps are to be taken:

6.7.3.1. Room Sanitation

- 6.7.3.1.1 Wash all stuff toys, blankets, sheet, or bedding material in hot water and dry in hot dryer if material will tolerate heat. If not, secure in trash bag for two weeks.
- 6.7.3.1.2 Carpet must be vacuumed.
- 6.7.3.1.3 Upholstery must be vacuumed and ironed/dry cleaned.
- 6.7.3.1.4 Thorough hand washing must occur after cleaning.

6.7.3.2. Parent Notification

- 6.7.3.2.1. Teachers must notify all teachers and parents promptly.
- 6.7.3.2.2. Letters will be sent home to parents.

6.7.3.3. Infected Student

- 6.7.3.3.1. Parents should have their child see their doctor and implement necessary treatment immediately.
- 6.7.3.3.2. The child will be permitted back in the classroom following a check with the church nurse or a doctor's note.

6.8 Discipline and Classroom Management

- 6.8.1. Gently correct the child for their misbehavior.
- 6.8.2. Talk to the child separately
- 6.8.3. Time out for the child (away from other children)
- 6.8.4. Talk to the child outside the classroom
- 6.8.5. Contact parents to remove child from classroom

* For steps 3-5, parents should be notified of their child's misbehavior.

7. Child Abuse Prevention & Guidelines

7.1 Introduction

Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church (EBFC) is committed to introducing people to Christ and making devoted followers of Him. This mission reaches into every aspect of the ministry regardless of age. This commitment is a priority for our children's Ministry. These need to be consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children.

Child sexual abuse is a subject not many want to talk about, dwell on, or believe can happen to them or their church. However, child abuse does occur and is happening in ever increasing numbers in homes and churches across the United States. Statistics show that one in every four girls and one in every six boys will be sexually abused before they reach the age of eighteen.

Because of the seriousness of this subject, EBFC desires to make its places of ministry safe for all children church workers. By being proactive, taking precautionary measures that screen and train workers with children, and providing guidelines and procedures that offer

assistance to parents and church workers, EBFC can hopefully prevent such atrocities from ever occurring in our church community. These guidelines are to be strictly followed by anyone working in the children's ministry program. Adults do not have a *right* to serve as workers, rather they have an opportunity when selected by the church. When working for the church, adults place themselves under the authority and discretion of the ministry leaders under which they serve.

7.2 Definitions of Child Sexual Abuse

The precise legal definition of child sexual abuse or molestation varies from state to state, but in general includes any form of sexual conduct or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. In a more common sense, child sexual abuse is:

“Any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, in a church, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim” (National Resource Center on Sexual Abuse, 1992).

Child sexual abuse is a criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. It includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include: fondling, oral, genital, and anal penetration, intercourse and forcible rape. Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include: sexual verbal comments, pornographic videos or pictures, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, and allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Child sexual abuse occurs in all demographic, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups. Strangers account for less than 20 percent of the abusers. Estimates indicate that when a known assailant commits the abuse, 50% of the time it is a father or stepfather, and the rest of the time it is a trusted adult who misuses his or her authority over children.

7.3 Possible Indicators of Child Abuse

Most cases of child sexual abuse go undetected. There may be no apparent physical signs, or there may be physical signs that are detected only through a medical examination. There are, however, some signals that a worker may observe that will indicate whether sexual abuse is occurring.

High indicators of abuse which may warrant a report are:

1. A child reports being abused.
2. A child has unusual and repeated bruises, welts, or burns. A child gives varied or different reasons for the same injury.
3. A child has explicit sexual knowledge above age expectations. This includes extensive knowledge of sexual acts, slang/technical terms and/or demonstrated sexual behavior in conversation or play.

The following should raise your concern for the possibility of abuse and could suggest the need to explore further. **The presence of several of these could warrant your making a report.**

Child's Appearance	Child's Behavior	Caretaker's Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing • Pain, bleeding or swollen genitalia • Semen around mouth, genitalia, or on clothing • Venereal disease, especially in preteens. • Pregnancy • Lacerations around mouth • Warts around genital area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suddenly withdrawn • Engages in fantasy or infantile behavior • Poor peer relationships • Unwilling to participate in physical activities • Engages in delinquent acts or runs away • States he/she has been sexually assaulted by parent/caregiver • Fear of rest rooms, a particular place, or being left alone • Unusual sexual knowledge • Does not want to go home from church • Becomes self-abusive: pulling hair out, banging head, cutting themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely protective or jealous of child • Experiencing marital difficulties • Misuses alcohol/drugs • Frequently absent from home • Experienced sexual abuse as a child

7.4 Response Plan to Suspected Child Abuse

7.4.1. Introduction

There are many situations that could lead to an *allegation* of child sexual abuse. Please take time to study the definitions and indicators of child sexual abuse earlier in this operating guidelines packet.

EBFC recognizes that there are “gray areas” that may lead to allegations. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every worker at EBFC must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior (I Thess. 5:22). Workers with children may not realize when their actions could be interpreted as inappropriate (e.g. excessive tickling or hugging, jokes with possible double meanings or sexual innuendo). Mutual supervision is important to this process, even if no actual misconduct takes place. That is why each worker or volunteer is encouraged to carefully, but clearly, bring this to the attention of the person who is acting inappropriately. If possible, document all occurrences of suspected abuse. If questionable behavior continues to occur after confrontation, or if overt sexual abuse occurs, you must report it to the Pastor of Discipleship or Senior Pastor as detailed below. If this is implemented with care and

sensitivity, actual instances of abuse or molestation, or even false allegations, can be avoided.

7.4.2 Steps to Take if Child Abuse is Suspected

The primary reason to report suspected abuse is to ensure the safety of the child while attending EBFC or church sponsored activities. Discrete and confidential reporting of suspected sexual abuse is critical to abuse prevention. Please understand that reporting abuse reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty. If you witness or hear about an abusive situation and do not report it, the safety of all the children here at EBFC may be compromised.

Anyone may report child abuse. As long as the report is based on a good suspicion that abuse is occurring, the reporter will be immune from any civil and criminal proceedings that could result. Paid church workers are considered legally mandated to report such abuse. Volunteers are encouraged to report, but would not be held legally responsible if they do not. Mandated reporters (professional teachers & healthcare workers), however, are legally required to report child abuse. When the person hearing the allegation or witnessing abuse tells the Pastor of Discipleship or Ministry Leader of the abuse, they (the paid church worker) will be legally mandated to report this information if the witness does not. The paid church worker must make this report immediately by phone and in writing within forty-eight hours. It is considered an obligation of our all of EBFC workers (paid or unpaid) to follow these guidelines.

The following steps should be taken upon receiving allegations or observing sexual abuse:

Abuse Within the Church:

Anyone who becomes aware of suspected sexual abuse by a church worker or volunteer is to report it directly to the Ministry Leader or Pastor of Discipleship, and communicate their willingness to file a report. This is so the suspected perpetrator of abuse can be removed from their proximity to children at EBFC during their investigation.

The Ministry Leader or Pastor of Discipleship will not in any way hinder the filing of the report. For the protection of all involved, it is strongly recommended that the notification to authorities be made in the presence of the leader or pastor. As mandated reporters, the paid church worker can learn the final legal status of the report and what services have been or will be provided to the child and family as a result of the initial report. The unpaid church worker will not be able to receive such information. The reporting party can remain anonymous to the authorities.

Abuse Within the Home:

If the Worker suspects abuse or hears an allegation of abuse *occurring in the home of one of the children*, the worker is encouraged to file a report as detailed below. In this, case, no one in the church needs to be notified, unless the alleged perpetrator is a children's ministry worker at EBFC. It is all right to make a report on a reasonable suspicion. You do not need actual evidence to call. Give the information you have, and the authorities will determine if the suspicion warrants an investigation. You may call ChildLine to ask if the information you have warrants a report.

The report is to be filed as soon as possible with ChildLine (1-800-932-0313). This toll-free number is staffed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week by Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare. This is the number to call for child abuse in the state of Pennsylvania, regardless of the county the child lives. If the alleged perpetrator is not related to the victim, ChildLine will direct the reporting party to call the police department where the alleged crime took place.

Be prepared to answer as many of the following types of questions as possible:

*Why do you suspect abuse has occurred?

*Name of child.

*Address, phone, school – as much information as you have so that the child can be reached in the next 24 hours.

Who is the alleged perpetrator of abuse?

How did you find out?

Who else knows about the abuse?

Parents names and address(es), any siblings in the home

What was happening directly before any type of allegation was made?

* Most important information. The rest is helpful but not necessary to make a report.

You can choose to remain anonymous when calling ChildLine or the police.

ChildLine will then do a perpetrator search to find out if they have previous information of this child being abused or the perpetrator being accused. ChildLine will then contact the County Department of Children and Youth for the county that child lives and the police if necessary.

If you choose to identify yourself, this gives a County Department of Children and Youth Investigator and/or police the option to call you to clarify any information you give. They will keep your name and information confidential from the child, their family, and the alleged perpetrator. The investigator is obligated to see the child within 24 hours of receiving the report.

7.4.3 Intervention Plan

If charges of child sexual abuse by a church worker or volunteer are reported to EBFC ,the following actions will be taken:

The pastor will call ChildLine and police if the children's ministry worker has not already done so. The pastor will convene a Crisis Task Force which may consist of the Senior Pastor, Pastor of Discipleship, Church Attorney, and Ministry Leader. This task force will outline the necessary steps in response to the filed report. It will not attempt an in-depth investigation; that will be left to the appropriate government authorities.

Although situations might vary, it is recommended that this task force:

1. Document all efforts at handling the incident (e.g. who was contacted and when, using specific times and dates) while maintaining strict confidentiality.
2. Notify EBFC's liability insurance carrier.

3. Take the advice of the police or ChildLine (for the specific situation) as to whether to notify the parents or guardians.
4. Confront the accused after the safety of the child or youth member is secured.
5. Designate a specific spokesperson for the church if media becomes involved.
6. Discretely remove the alleged offender from their EBFC position(s) while the investigation is being conducted.

7.4.4. Response to Allegations

If the allegations become legally **unsubstantiated**:

1. The accused person will need to provide official evidence, if they can obtain this, that they were innocent. This information would be placed in the accused's file along with their application. Once the investigation is begun by civil authorities, the details and information is kept confidential from the public, including EBFC (the mandated reporter may find out limited information). In the majority of cases, the allegations become unsubstantiated from a legal standpoint. If this occurs, **but** the accuser remains steadfast in their allegation, or the "red flags" remain or are unexplained, the worker will be prohibited from working with children at EBFC.
2. If the accuser firmly and consistently recants the allegation, or it is proven that the accused could not have perpetrated a crime, then every effort will be made to exonerate, reconcile, and restore the accused person. A public statement by the Crisis Task Force will be made if the accused person desires.
3. The task force will respond with concern, care, and love for the complainant(s), for the congregation, and for the accused and their family.
4. The accused will be notified in writing that a copy of the filed report and investigation's findings will be retained for legal purposes by the church. The report will be confidential and only appropriate church staff will have access to the file.

If the allegations and investigations **substantiate** abuse:

1. The offender will be permanently removed from susceptible environments and offices in the EBFC ministry.
2. The victim(s) and their family/families will be given utmost consideration and pastoral care, including access to counseling.
3. Continued pastoral care and counseling can be extended to the offender and family during rehabilitation.
4. The elders will weigh the risks and make a determination regarding church membership status of the offender.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, the undersigned, hereby agree, and acknowledge as follows:

- 1) I have read the Kids' Crossing Operating Policies;
- 2) I have received a copy of the Kids' Crossing Guidelines for my records;
- 3) Any questions I have regarding the Kids' Crossing Operating Guidelines have been answered to my satisfaction;
- 4) I agree to comply with the terms of the Kids' Crossing Operating Guidelines;
- 5) I understand that the church will be conducting a background check, contacting references, and taking other actions as set forth in the Kids' Crossing Operating Guidelines, and I agree and provide permission for the church to do so;
- 6) I understand that I serve at the sole discretion of the church and my position and duties may be changed without notice at the sole discretion of the church.

Date: _____

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Ministry Position: _____

Cross Time Sunday School, Children's Church, Nursery, Early Childhood Department (Toddlers),
FaithWeaver Friends, Vacation Bible School, Camp Volunteer

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____



REFERENCE FORM

I, the undersigned, hereby agree, and acknowledge that the following references are credible and may be contacted at any time.

Applicant's Signature: _____

Reference:

Name: _____

Address (home or business): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Years you have known Applicant: _____

Reference:

Name: _____

Address (home or business): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Years you have known Applicant: _____

Reference:

Name: _____

Address (home or business): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Years you have known Applicant: _____