



Antioch Bible Baptist Church Child Protection Policy

General Purpose Statement

Antioch Bible Baptist Church continually seeks to live out our mission of leading generations to make disciples of Jesus Christ everywhere. This mission includes providing a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Antioch Bible Baptist Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (team members) from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “team member” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

Selection of Team Members

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) **Membership**

All Antioch Kids and Student Ministry Team Members must be active members of Antioch Bible Baptist Church. High School and Middle School students active in the Antioch Student Ministry can also serve in the Antioch Kids Ministry. All adults and students must complete all of the membership requirements before consideration of serving with minors.

b) **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence at Antioch Bible Baptist Church.

c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position. During this interview, expectations of serving in the Antioch Kids and Student Ministries will be discussed and the Child Protection Policy will be reviewed and signed by the applicant.

d) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Antioch Bible Baptist Church.

e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of team members:

- Those who will be involved in our children and student ministries;
- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children (Camps, Retreats, etc.);
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of children; and
- Those having occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as, church-sponsored team coaches and vehicle drivers).

Before a background check is run, prospective team members will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, that individual will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Family Pastor and/or Student Pastor on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background-check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at Antioch Bible Baptist Church. Background checks will be run every two years for team members.

Team Members To Child and Student Ratios

Antioch is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children and Student Ministry programs. Accordingly, the following team member to child and youth ratios will be observed:

Children's Ministry	Workers	Children
Birth – 1 years old	2	6
Preschool, 1 – 2 years old	2	8
Preschool, 2 - 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 - 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
Kids Camp	1	5
Student Ministry	Workers	
Less than 10 students	1	
11-29 students	2	
30+ students	3+	

If a team member is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Family Pastor, Student Pastor, or Early Education Director. The Family Pastor, Student Pastor, or Early Education Director will make diligent efforts to find substitute team members to immediately bring team member to children and youth ratios into compliance with Church policy.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare team members may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Antioch Bible Baptist Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the **Family Pastor, Student Pastor and/or Early Education Director** for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Antioch Bible Baptist Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The team member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Antioch Bible Baptist Church will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Antioch Bible Baptist Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. An Advocate will be appointed by the pastoral team and/or other church leaders in order to not lose sight of the victim’s needs. This advocate will be a member of Antioch who is willing to be on the front lines of caring for the victim. This person can help with resources of the church to show support throughout the process. He or she may serve as the liaison between the victim and the church’s leaders, advocating for the needs of the victim and keeping the leadership updated.

6. The members of Antioch Bible Baptist Church will be notified of any allegation of child abuse in one of the following ways. First, the leadership of the church can send a letter directly to active members of Antioch. The letter should fall under the parameters of qualified privilege, marked as confidential, and limited to explaining only the facts of the situation. Second, the leaders can discuss the matter in a members' only meeting with the leaders sharing only the facts of the situation, not speculation or personal opinion. If the information is shared with membership, the members should be warned about confidentiality and that everything should be handled with great care and consideration toward the victim, the accused, and their families. Any means employed by the church to communicate with its members will be reviewed beforehand by the church's legal counsel.
7. A member of the pastoral team will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
9. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors without windows or an adjacent side window should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

High School and Middle School Team Members

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for paid or volunteer childcare by team members who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to high school and middle school team members:

- Must be in 6th grade and above.
- Must complete Antioch Child Protection Policy Training.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and follow the two-team member rule.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children 5th grade and below, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. Each child will be electronically checked-in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "security label" to be attached to each child and a "security label" for each child to be held by the parent. The parent or guardian must present the "security label" to the Antioch Kids or Awana Team Member in order to check out each child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "security label," they must go to the "Family Registration Desk" and identify themselves by use of their driver's license in order to receive a new "security label."

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Antioch Bible Baptist Church. 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, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious 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 Antioch Bible Baptist Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications 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 child's teacher, leader and/or Family Pastor to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

DISCIPLINE RELATED TO CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

It is Antioch's policy that employees and team members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, Antioch employees and team members should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).

- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. (“Jamie, you’re doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.”)
- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is in being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Family Pastor or Early Education Director.

DISCIPLINE RELATED TO STUDENT MINISTRY

It is the policy of Antioch that employees and team members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by student. If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from Antioch employees or team members, that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student’s parent will be contacted to pick up the student. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, Antioch employees or team members will verbally redirect youths involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Student Pastor and parents.

Restroom Guidelines

Birth – Pre-K

Because early-education children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all Antioch employees and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female team members will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other team members.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 5) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female team members or the child’s parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Children will not be promoted up to 3 year old class until they are toilet trained, unless there is a physical or medical issue. The Family Pastor and/or Early Education Director will make this decision based on conversations with parents or legal guardians.
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.

- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from Antioch in a designated early-education classroom or storage area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

Children's Restrooms

Only children 5th grade and under are allowed to use the restrooms in the secure classroom area. All Antioch team members must use restrooms outside the secure classroom area.

School age children (Kindergarten through 5th Grade)

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Antioch employees and team members should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a child needs assistance and an Antioch employee or team member must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, they should seek out another team member to accompany them. If another team member is not available to accompany, they should go to the exterior bathroom entrance and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance when entering the restroom area, try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of an Antioch employee or another team member.

Only school age children are allowed to use the restrooms in the secure classroom area. All Antioch team members including teens must use restrooms outside the secure classroom area. If you observe any adult or teen using the children's restroom please graciously inform them to use restrooms outside the secure area going forward.

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, team members 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. An "Ouch Report" will be completed by the Team Member, which includes how the accident happened, the care given to the child, and parent or guardian contact information for follow-up.
3. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the Family, Student Pastor and/or Early Education Director. If warranted by circumstances, the Team Member will call 9-1-1.
4. 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.

Special Needs

Parents or legal guardians will be asked to change the diaper of their special needs child or give written permission for special needs team members to change their child's diaper.

Intoxicants

Antioch employees and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Antioch facility, while traveling with children or youth or while working with or supervising children or youth.

Tobacco Use

Antioch requires employees and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children, youth, or their parents, or during Antioch activities or programs. Antioch is a tobacco-free facility.

Nudity

Antioch employees and volunteers in Antioch Children and Youth Ministries should never be nude or expose their genitalia or private parts in the presence of children or youth in their care.

Two-Team-Member Rule with Children

Antioch employees and team members should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings with children while participating in Antioch Children's Ministry program. Another team member who has completed the Antioch application and screening process should always be present. In the event another Team Member is not available, the parent of the child needs to stay until another team member is present.

One-to-One Interactions with Youth

Antioch recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of youth may occasionally require Antioch employees and team members to minister to them on an individual basis. Antioch employees and team members should observe the following guidelines when interacting with youth.

Individual Meetings

Antioch employees and team members should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual youth with parental approval and at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.

In the event a closed-door meeting must occur, the Antioch employee or team member must inform another employee or team member and ensure the door remains unlocked.

Transportation

Antioch employees and team members may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children or youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when team members are involved in the transportation of children or youth:

1. Children and youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Antioch employees and team members should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child or youth in transport. If transporting any child or student, two adults are required to be in the vehicle.
2. Antioch employees and team members should avoid physical contact with children and youth while in vehicles.
3. No texting on cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Antioch vans, or vehicles owned or rented by Antioch.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive Antioch owned or rented vehicles.

Training

Antioch Bible Baptist Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new children and student team members and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All team members are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

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