



Rutherford Baptist Church

Birth - 12th Grade Policies and Procedures

General Purpose Statement

Rutherford Baptist Church seeks to provide 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 Rutherford Baptist Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) 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 “worker” includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. The term “volunteer” means anyone involved in a day care or school, in overnight activities involving minors, in counseling of minors, or in one-on-one mentoring of minors.

Ratio

Rutherford adheres to a ratio of 1:5. One worker is required for every five students. The number of workers may increase on an outing or overnight trip. If an overnight trip is taken then we must have a least two chaperones of each gender.

Selection of Workers

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

a) **Six Month Rule**

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with Rutherford Baptist Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children. Special allowance may be given by Ministry Director/Pastor on a case-to-case basis.

b) **Personal Interview**

A personal interview will be conducted with Senior Pastor and the Ministry Director/Pastor. An application will be filled out at this time. Please be prepared to share your salvation testimony.

c) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and “volunteers” as defined above.

Additional References and application may be required on a case to case basis.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Ministry Director/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 the church.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. 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. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

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 workers 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 this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Ministry Director/Pastor 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 this 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 worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. 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 should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

Children from Birth to 5th grade are required to be checked in by parents. Parents will sign in child and provided a contact number, any allergies, and any additional information, such as, restrictions, alternate pick up, etc. Any person not listed as an alternate pick up will be denied pick-up for the safety of all children. When checking out an adult will sign their name and write down the time of pick-up. Between Sunday School and Church teachers may take children to the Sanctuary and have them sit on the front pew until an authorized person picks them up.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Rutherwood 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; and/or
- 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 Rutherwood 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, type 1 diabetes or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Ministry Director/Pastor to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Rutherwood Baptist church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the Ministry Director/Pastor if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Diapers must be changed in view of other works. No one above 4 years of age should have their diaper changed by a worker; instead a parent should be called to do the changing.

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should call another worker to assist. If another worker is not available, the worker is to prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

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, workers 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. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. 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.

Physical Contact

Rutherwood Baptist Church is committed to the safety and comfort of our children. Our Physical Contact Policy is in place to ensure that Rutherwood is a safe, loving environment. The following guidelines are to be followed by anyone working with children under 18 years of age.

1. Handshakes, High-fives, pats on the upper back, and brief side hugs are all appropriate displays of contact. Long hugs, holding hands, kissing, or touching of any other kind is inappropriate.
2. All Hugs should be initiated by the child. Do not force a child to hug you. If a child is uncomfortable with a form of appropriate physical contact, please do not force them.
3. An appropriate hug is 5 seconds in length.
4. All Physical Contact should happen in the presence of witnesses. This is for the protection of the child, as well as, the adult.
5. Some children may attempt other kinds of Physical contact, such as a long hug, handholding, etc. As the adult, you are to, kindly and lovingly divert the attention and remove yourself from the situation.

Social Media

All workers must adhere to Rutherwood Baptist Church's social media policy.

When at a church event:

Not posting, tagging or checking-in on any social media about an event while a Children's or Youth Event is on-going.

Posting of Children's photos is prohibited, unless prior written parental permission is granted.

If permission to post is granted, do not tag or include child's name in post.

Personal:

An adult's personal social media pages should reflect that of a believer in Christ. All posts and pictures should be appropriate and should not include:

Inappropriate language

Inappropriate pictures

Offensive or obscene posts

Rude or mean comments, demeaning someone's character

Cyberbullying of any kind

If a post violates these rules, the Ministry Director/Pastor has the right to ask for the post to be taken down. If the worker does not comply, they may be asked to meet with the Ministry Director, Pastor and Deacons to discuss further action.

Remember children are watching, and they learn by example. In James 3:1, leaders are called to a higher standard.

Cell Phones

Cell Phones should not be constantly out when in a class with children. Occasionally checking your phone is acceptable, but a worker's focus should be on the children.

Workers may not take pictures or selfies of or with individual children.

Photos of children should not be stored on a workers phone unless they are related to the child. Any photos taken of the children can be emailed to rutherwood@bellsouth.net, and then should be immediately deleted. This photo can also be sent to the child's parent, but no one else.

Long Text conversations between workers and children are prohibited unless another adult is included in the conversation; or if we have received written consent from a parent.

Training

Rutherwood Baptist Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

All workers are required to sign this document of the next page, confirming their agreement to abide by the policies.

Updated and Revised 10/2/2018

Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Rutherwood's Children and Youth Ministry Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Rutherwood.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Rutherwood.

I have reviewed the things expected of me as a worker at Rutherwood. I understand that I may choose to end my voluntary service at any time. (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice.)

I understand my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of Rutherwood's Policies and Procedures Manual

Worker's Name (Please Print)

Worker's signature

Date