



Youth Protection Policy

Capitol Hill Baptist Church

Revised March 2016

For the use of Capitol Hill Baptist Church Youth Ministry

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Welcome!

This document outlines the protection policy for the Youth Ministry at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (CHBC). It is our goal to work alongside parents for the spiritual good of their teenage Youth by teaching them God's Word, showing them how to apply it, and helping them to follow Christ during a key stage of their lives. We seek to do all of these things within a fun, safe, and God-honoring environment.

This handbook is designed to familiarize parents and Youth Workers with our Youth Protection Policy. The specifications contained in this handbook apply to our Youth Group Meetings, any Church-organized off-campus events, and all one-to-one Church-sanctioned Youth-related meetings.

**If you have any questions or comments, please call the Youth Ministry Administrator.
(202) 543-6111**

I. Definition of Terms

Personnel

- The Pastor Over Youth Ministry – The Capitol Hill Baptist Church Elder charged with responsibility to shepherd the Youth Ministry at Capitol Hill Baptist Church.
- Youth Ministry Administrator – The Capitol Hill Baptist Church Staff Member, deacon or volunteer who is charged with administrative duties for the Youth Ministry.
- Elder – A Church member appointed by the congregation of Capitol Hill Baptist Church to currently serve in the role of “Elder” according to the Church constitution.
- Elder Board – The body of Church members currently serving in the capacity of Elders at Capitol Hill Baptist Church.
- Staff Member – Anyone employed by Capitol Hill Baptist Church.
- Volunteer – A member of Capitol Hill Baptist Church who volunteers to work with the Youth at Youth Group Meetings.
- Mentor – A member of Capitol Hill Baptist Church who volunteers to spend regular time with Youth for their spiritual benefit and is under the authority, purview, and guidance of the Youth Ministry Administrator and Pastor Over Youth Ministry.
- Deacon/Deaconess of Youth Ministry – A deacon/deaconess of Capitol Hill Baptist Church charged with the responsibility of aiding the Youth Group Administrator and Pastor Over Youth Ministry in carrying out Youth Ministry activities.
- Youth Worker – Includes the Pastor Over Youth Ministry, Youth Ministry Administrator, Youth Ministry Volunteers, Mentors, Deacon or Deaconess of Youth Ministry.

Other

- CHBC or the Church – Capitol Hill Baptist Church, located at 525 A Street NE, Washington D.C. 20002.
- Youth – adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 who participate in any fashion in the Youth Ministry and/or engage in any Church-related activity with a Youth Worker.
- Youth Ministry – An age-specific ministry of Capitol Hill Baptist Church for Youth, ages 12 through 18, and organized by the Youth Ministry Administrator and the Pastor Over Youth Ministry. Youth Ministry includes Youth Group Meetings, any Church-organized off-campus events, and One-to-One Youth Mentorship Meetings.
- Youth Group Meetings – Organized meetings of Youth participating in the Youth Ministry as scheduled by the Youth Ministry Administrator or Pastor Over Youth Ministry. Such meetings include meetings or activities both on and off the premises of Capitol Hill Baptist Church and includes such things as retreats, camps, and organized games and events for Youth organized by the Youth Group Administrator and/or Pastor Over Youth Ministry .
- One-to-One Youth Mentorship Meetings – Meetings between a Mentor and a Youth as organized by, overseen by, or under the purview of the Youth Group Administrator and/or Pastor Over Youth Ministry .
- Youth Ministry Meetings – Includes both Youth Group Meetings and One-to-One Youth Mentorship Meetings.

II. Youth Protection Summary

Our first concern is that the Youth are safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all Youth Workers.
- Require Youth-specific training for all Youth Workers.
- Employ scheduling procedures and Youth Worker/Youth ratios that optimize safety.
- Educate our Youth Workers about recognizing Youth abuse and encourage them to report any known or suspected abuse to Church officials and/or to appropriate governmental authorities consistent with applicable laws.
- Educate our Youth Workers about bullying and encourage them to stop and report any incidents to any Youth Workers, the Pastor Over Youth Ministry and the parents of the Youth(s) involved.

III. Parameters for the Youth Protection Policy

This Youth Protection Policy applies to Youth who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the Church for the Youth Group Meetings and/or One-to-One Youth Mentorship Meetings.

Any form of abuse, harm, neglect or other problems related to Youth at home, school, or in any bible-study, activity, or venue outside of the Church building and not during an organized Youth Group Meeting or One-to-One Youth Mentorship Meeting is *not* covered by this policy and will be referred immediately to the Elders of Capitol Hill Baptist Church for further consideration and investigation.

IV. Screening & Training

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before the Youth Ministry Meetings. Every Youth Worker applicant who wishes to serve in Youth Ministry is required to go through a screening process and attend Youth Worker Training.

A. Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, CHBC has established several criteria that all Youth Workers must meet in order to work with our Youth:

- All Youth Workers must be members in good standing at CHBC for at least six months.
- All Youth Workers must be twenty-two years of age or older.
- All Youth Workers must have completed Youth Worker Training.
- All Youth Workers must have completed the Youth Worker application, have been interviewed by the Youth Ministry Administrator or Deacon of Youth Ministry, and have been approved for participation in the Youth Ministry by the Pastor Over Youth Ministry.
- All reference checks must be satisfactorily completed. Criminal record checks will be required of all Youth Workers. Other appropriate screening checks may be completed, subject to the discretion of the Pastor Over Youth Ministry.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.
- Youth Workers are to be approved by the Pastor Over Youth Ministry.
- Potential Youth Workers will provide references who can testify to their character.

- In addition to the screening procedures outlined above for all Youth Workers, all prospective Mentors will be required to undergo a fingerprint background check before participating in One-to-One Mentorship Meetings.

CHBC reserves the right to reject any applicant for any reason, including but not limited to: Refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant's ability to care for Youth; misdemeanor or felony or criminal convictions; and obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest the applicant is not suitable to help with Youth. Any CHBC member who learns of or has knowledge of prior acts of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to the Pastor Over Youth Ministry.

B. Youth Worker Training

All Youth Workers must attend Youth Worker Training before they are allowed to work with the Youth. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing Youth Workers to update them on policies and procedures. Parents with questions about Youth Worker Training are welcome to attend these sessions.

Youth Worker Training will include: a personal interview with the prospective Youth Worker; education about bullying, Youth abuse, Youth neglect, and Youth pornography; and a comprehensive review of the policies contained herein.

V. Arrival and Departure from Youth Group Meetings

Specific guidelines will be followed as it concerns arrival and departure times to and from the CHBC Youth Group Meetings.

A. Arrival Times

Youth Workers should try to be ready to accept Youth 10 minutes prior to the start of any Youth Group Meeting.

B. Departure Times

Parents are encouraged to pick up their Youth immediately after the conclusion of the Youth Group Meeting. In the event that a Youth is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the Youth Group Meeting, Youth Workers will attempt to contact and locate the Youth's parents. At least two Youth Workers will remain at the Church building until the last Youth is picked up, at least one of which should be of the same gender as the Youth remaining. In the unlikely event that a parent doesn't come within an hour of the end of the Youth Group, the Youth Worker will consult with the Pastor of Youth Ministry to figure out how best to handle the situation.

VI. Protecting the Youth While They Are In Our Care During On-Site Youth Group Meetings

A. Two Youth Worker Rule

- At least two qualified Youth Workers must be present at Youth Group Meetings at all times. One of the Youth Workers must be a man and the other must be a woman.
- Youth Workers should never leave a Youth isolated in a classroom by himself or herself.
- Youth Workers should not have private meetings with Youth during Youth Group Meetings.

B. Youth-to-Youth Worker Ratios

- In addition to always having two Youth Workers present during Youth Group Meetings, there should always be at least one (1) Youth Worker for every ten (10) Youth.
- The Pastor Over Youth Ministry should be notified if more Youth Workers are needed in order to maintain these ratios.

C. Restroom Guidelines

- Youth Workers should not be alone with a Youth in the restroom for any reason.
- Anatomic males may not use female restrooms. Anatomic females may not use male restrooms. This rule applies to both Youth Workers as well as Youth.

VII. Protecting the Youth While They Are In Our Care During Off-Site Youth Group Meetings

Youth will never be taken off-site without their parents'/guardians' clear consent. To this end, CHBC will require parents of any Youth wishing to participate in any Church-sponsored off-campus activity to sign a release and waiver of liability for each calendar year.

A. Rules Common to All Off-Site Youth Group Meetings

- Parents will be notified of pertinent information surrounding any trips, including transportation, addresses, contact numbers, any applicable accommodations, and specific activities.
- Parents should notify attending Youth Workers of any medication or special instructions involved in caring for their Youth.

- A single Youth may not be alone with a single Youth Worker in route to a meeting/activity location.
- If a Youth Group Meeting is held in a private residence:
 - It must be at the home of a CHBC member; and
 - The Pastor Over Youth Ministry and the Youth Ministry Administrator should have approved the event.
- At least one of the CHBC members who host the Youth in their private residence must be Youth Worker approved.
- When off-site events are held in private residences, at least two Youth Workers must be present, including at least one male and one female Youth Worker. An exception to this rule may be made if the event is a male-only event or female-only event. In such a case, two Youth Workers of the same sex must be present.
- For any off-site activity, a ratio of at least one (1) Youth Worker for every ten (10) Youth must be present.
- Youth Workers should not be alone with a Youth in the restroom for any reason.
- Anatomic males may not use female restrooms. Anatomic females may not use male restrooms. This rule applies to both Youth Workers as well as Youth.

B. Overnight Activities

- If Youth are sleeping in the same room as a Youth Worker, there must be at least two (2) other Youth Workers present in the room.
- A Youth Worker may not sleep in the same bed or sleeping bag as one of the Youth.
- Female sleeping quarters will only be supervised by female Youth Workers, and male sleeping quarters will only be supervised by male Youth Workers.
- If the activity is co-ed, male and female Youth will sleep in separate places. Youth Workers will ensure that male and female Youth remain separate throughout the night.
- If a Youth is anatomically male, he may not sleep in the female sleeping quarters. If a Youth is anatomically female, she may not sleep in the male sleeping quarters.
- Youth will not be left alone in a room without adult supervision.
- If restrooms or shower accommodations are far from the living quarters, Youth will be assigned partners of the same sex to walk with them to the restroom or shower location.

VIII. One-to-One Youth Mentorship

The Youth Ministry may coordinate, with the parent's permission, a mentoring relationship between a Youth and a Mentor. If so:

- Mentors will go through the screening and training process described above and common to all other Youth Workers.
- Parents must give verbal consent for the mentoring relationship to begin.
- Mentors must be of the same sex as the Youth.
- Mentors should always spend time with the Youth in public, not private settings.
- Youth may not sleep at a Mentor's home unless specifically permitted by the Youth's parent(s) via a signed waiver provided by the Church. The Mentor must be accompanied for the entirety of the night by at least one other Youth Worker.
- Mentors may not provide rides to a Youth unless specifically permitted by the Youth's parent(s) via a signed waiver provided by the Church.

IX. Youth Worker & Youth Conduct Policy

A. Youth Worker-to-Youth Interaction

We would love for our Youth Workers to build friendships with the Youth, but they must be within certain boundaries:

- No romantic involvement at all with no exceptions.
- Youth Workers may not verbally abuse Youth by speaking to them harshly or in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Youth Workers and Youth must abide by the Physical Touch Policy below.

B. Youth-to-Youth Interaction

- Youth may not separate themselves from any group during a Youth Group Meeting.
- Youth may not engage in any form of verbal, emotional, physical abuse of another.
- Youth must abide by the Physical Touch Policy below.

X. Physical Touch Policy

Two types of relationships are important to consider: Youth Worker-to-Youth and Youth-to-Youth.

A. Youth Worker-to-Youth

While appropriate physical contact with Youth can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, or showing godly love and care, it can also be easily misinterpreted. The following will help Youth Workers to avoid any compromise or concerns in this area and are, as such, requisites of this Youth Protection Policy:

- The following types of physical interaction between Youth Workers and Youth are prohibited: Rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing/massaging, sitting on laps, and any other physical activity that requires extended periods of physical contact.
- Youth Workers may only touch Youth in “safe” areas and for a brief time. “Safe” areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of the head. Never touch a Youth on or near any region that is private or personal.
- Youth Workers may never touch Youth out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else’s Youth.

B. Youth-to-Youth

- No male or female under eighteen should be alone together for any Youth Ministry activity.
- No inappropriate touching of any kind will be accepted. Inappropriate touching can include, but is not limited to: extended hugging, kissing, rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing/ massaging, sitting on laps, and any other physical activity that requires extended periods of physical contact.
- Fighting will not be tolerated. Any Youth participating in violent action will be dismissed from an activity and placed into their parent’s care.

XI. Appropriate Discipline

All Youth Workers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which Youth can learn, grow and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing Youth towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior include correcting the Youth verbally by withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a Youth from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other Youth). During correction, Youth should never be isolated with the adult or removed from the classroom or room in which an event is being held.

Steps of correction might include (1) removing the Youth from the situation or problem; (2) pointing out the problematic behavior; talking to the Youth about his sin and his need

for Christ; (3) praying for the Youth and redirecting; (4) helping the Youth to reconcile with another Youth when appropriate. Youth Workers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce Youth to the gospel.

Youth Workers should never use any form of corporal punishment, and should never slap, kick, punch, spank, or hit a Youth. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to Youth.

If a Youth's behavior is uncontrollable or the Youth does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, the parents should immediately be contacted. If the Youth assaults, harasses or bullies other Youth, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, he or she should be immediately removed and the parents should be called. Youth Workers are allowed to physically restrain a Youth if he/she is physically endangering other Youth. The Youth Worker should report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to the Pastor Over Youth Ministry. Reinstatement is optional and is determined by the Pastor Over Youth Ministry. A Youth may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced.

XII. Youth Abuse and Neglect

A. Youth Protection Committee

The Youth Protection Committee consists of the Pastor Over Youth Ministry, the Youth Ministry Administrator, and at least two (other) CHBC Elders to be determined by the chairman of the CHBC Elders. Each member of the Youth Protection Committee stands ready to receive information related to suspected Youth neglect, abuse, or molestation. They are committed to addressing all allegations in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18 and in harmony with the CHBC Church covenant and the laws of the District of Columbia. Any Youth Worker, who witnesses a violation of the Youth Protection Policy short of abuse, should first notify the person violating the policy and encourage compliance. If the person violating the policy refuses to comply, a member of the Youth Protection Committee should be notified immediately. Any Youth Worker who witnesses or suspects neglect, abuse, or molestation should report their concerns immediately to a member of the Youth Protection Committee.

B. Response to Abuse and Neglect

Anyone who suspects, witnesses, or has any reason to believe that a Youth has been or is likely to be harmed or threatened with abuse in any form or neglect should contact the Pastor Over Youth Ministry or any Elder of CHBC. This reporting includes questionable behavior (overly flirtatious behavior, shoulder massages or other intimate acts, etc.) and/or possible offenses (volunteers observing actual abuse or possible evidence of abuse, like abrasions, lacerations, etc.). Any elder who receives the allegations about abuse or neglect will report this to the Youth Protection Committee immediately.

When considering whether to report or not, it is important to consider if there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse. “Reasonable suspicion” implies that a reasonable person seeing a similar bruise or hearing a similar story would come to a similar understanding about the probable cause of the bruise or assault or abuse. Reasonable suspicion suggests that reasonable people have sufficient general knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate interactions to be suspicious about a particular incident.

In reporting of abuse, it is important to distinguish between permissive and mandatory reporters. Mandatory reporters may include social workers, teachers and other school personnel, physicians and other health care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement officers, and domestic violence workers. Permissive reporters include anyone who is not a mandatory reporter, which will be the majority of CHBC’s Youth Workers.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of abuse is a mandatory reporter, they must follow the guidelines and laws set out for mandatory reporters. They must fulfill their obligations to the law, including reporting to Child Protective Services or the police if warranted, and do so in consultation with the Pastor Over Youth Ministry and the Youth Protection Committee. At no time will the mandatory reporter be prohibited from reporting, even if the consult provides disagreement with a Staff Member or Elder in the Church. It is important for a mandatory reporter to know whether to report only in the context of professional duties or whether the obligation to report also applies when away from professional duties and functioning as a Youth Worker at the Church.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of abuse is a permissive reporter, they should contact the Pastor Over Youth Ministry and/or any CHBC Elder. Because permissive reporters do not have professional training or experience in recognizing abuse, and because many of CHBC’s Youth Workers are single adults with very little or no experience with Youth, they are encouraged to report first to the Pastor Over Youth Ministry and/or any CHBC Elder. If reporting to Child Protective Services or police is deemed as warranted by the Youth Protection Committee and/or the Elders of CHBC, then that person must report. At all times, this person will be encouraged to fulfill their obligations to the law.

State and federal laws protect reporters from a civil law suit following a report to a Child Protection Agency or the police. Civil officials, however, can penalize an individual for filing a frivolous or malicious report.

State and federal laws authorize civil or criminal penalties or civil liability for failing to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. In addition, obstructing or interfering with an investigation of child abuse can result in criminal charges.

The Church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has a reasonable suspicion of abuse.

When available, the following information will be documented and reported when helpful:

- The name, age and gender and address of the victim(s).
- The name, age, gender and address of the alleged perpetrator/offender(s).
- The nature, frequency, date(s) and location(s) of the abuse alleged to have occurred.
- The relationship between the victim and the alleged perpetrator/offender.
- Other evidence that supports the allegations (eyewitness, medical exams, confessions, etc.)

What should a Youth Worker do when they observe an incident that may be abusive? Immediately intervene to protect the Youth. The observer should also write out a report about the incident. If, after being contacted, authorities choose not to respond, keep on on-going log of the suspected person's behavior and anything else that is relevant on the person or the Youth or their relationship.

C. Reporting Abuse

CHBC will ensure that a caring response is always provided to any suspicion or witnessing of abuse. Every allegation will be taken seriously. CHBC will be especially proactive when dealing with any report of abuse. Proper guidelines for such complaints will be followed diligently and exhaustively. The victim(s) and victim's family will be cared for by the Church in whatever way is available. Situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for all parties' privacy and confidentiality.

The Church will seek professional assistance when deemed appropriate by the Youth Protection Committee and/or the Elder Board of CHBC. Notification will be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to abuse. The Church may:

- Report suspicions or firsthand accounts or any knowledge of abuse to civil authorities. Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of a Church attorney.
- Notify an insurance agent, denominational leaders, or any other outside officials.
- Notify and consult with a Church attorney.
- Notify Church Mentors, counselors or medical personnel in order to obtain ongoing care for the victim(s) and victim's families.

Credible Allegations of abuse, admission of child abuse by a Staff Member, Elder, Deacon, Youth Worker, or criminal conviction of abuse should:

- Immediately result in removal of the person(s) from any activity or program involving Youth; and
- Be reported to CHBC's Elder Board. This disclosure of abuse is to be done regardless of the source of the information.

The Youth Protection Committee and the Elders of CHBC will decide on other appropriate responses to allegations, self-admission of guilt, or criminal conviction, some of which may include:

- Contacting police or Child Protective Services.
- Notification of a Staff Member, a Deacon, and/or any Youth Worker.
- A report to the congregation about the allegations in any of CHBC's public services or the members' meeting.
- Barring from any activities or Church programs with Youth at the Church building.
- A CHBC member being with the alleged perpetrator at all times while he or she is on CHBC's property or anywhere in CHBC's building. The alleged perpetrator will be notified of this requirement immediately after allegations are made known to Youth Protection Committee or CHBC Elders.
- Disciplining (removal from membership) of the perpetrator in a members' meeting by the congregation.
- Suspension or termination of a paid Staff Member or Youth Worker position.
- Acknowledging to another organization about allegations against or termination of a Staff Member or a Youth Worker for misconduct or abuse against children.

If a Staff Member, the CHBC Elders, or a member of the Youth Protection Committee learns from CPS or police that allegations of abuse are being investigated or criminal charges have been filed, the CHBC Elders should:

- Try to acquire and review written documentation of allegations and information known at that point;
- Prevent contact between the accused and the accuser;
- Remove the accused from activities or programs involving Youth, pending the outcome of the investigation.

If an adult alleges an incident of abuse that happened when he was a Youth in a CHBC program, then:

- Members of the Youth Protection Committee should interview the accuser and assess the potential risk. If the accused is still a member of CHBC, then the Committee should follow the guidelines set out in the above paragraphs.
- If the accused is no longer a member of CHBC, then the Youth Protection Committee should consult with the Elders and legal counsel to determine the need to report to police or CPS and any other organization that the accused may be a part of since his departure from CHBC.
- Even if government officials are no longer bound to investigate due to a statute of limitations, CHBC should investigate *all* allegations.

The Youth Protection Committee and the CHBC Elder Board will respond to congregational concerns. The Church, as well as permissive or mandatory reporters, will work to maintain confidentiality as is appropriate.

If appropriate, the CHBC Elders will respond to the media. Normally, one Elder or member will be designated by the Elder Board to speak to the media on behalf of the Church. Great care should be taken to disclose only facts and not suspicion. Great care should also be taken to protect a victim's identity.

D. Child or Teen Pornography

If a Youth Worker is suspected of viewing, producing or distributing child or teen pornography:

- He or she will be immediately removed from all contact with Youth;
- Allegations will be immediately reported to the Pastor Over Youth Ministry or any Elder of CHBC;
- Appropriate response steps will be outlined and implemented by the Youth Protection Committee and the Elders at CHBC, including contacting law enforcement as is appropriate.

End of Policy