



# Children's & Youth Ministry Policies



Dear Children's and/or Youth Volunteer,

Welcome to Becker Baptist Church!

At Becker Baptist Church, we take our responsibility to care for children and youth very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of Becker Baptist Church. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

***Amy Drehmel, Children's & Family Ministries Director***  
***Pastor Kevin Drehmel, Youth Pastor***

# Becker Baptist Church Policies & Procedures for Children's & Youth Ministry

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## **Overview of Becker Baptist Church Safety System**

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, Becker Baptist Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

### **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

Becker Baptist Church policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or Senior Pastor of Becker Baptist Church. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Becker Baptist Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training video is available online on our church website.

### **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children and youth are required to complete Becker Baptist Church's Screening Process, which includes:

- an Employment Application (employees only);
- a Safety Application (employees and volunteers);
- a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers); and
- references to be checked (employees and volunteers).

\*A volunteer must attend Becker Baptist Church for three months before being eligible to serve in positions providing ministry services to children or students.

### **STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures**

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, completed the online training and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

### **STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check**

Becker Baptist Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or youth activities undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

## **Child Safety Policy**

### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

Becker Baptist Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Becker Baptist Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

Becker Baptist Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services, or another appropriate agency.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

Becker Baptist Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children's Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and the Deacons.

## **Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse**

### **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Children's and/or Youth Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or youth at Becker Baptist Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Becker Baptist Church.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or youth at Becker Baptist Church.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

Staff members and volunteers at Becker Baptist Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

A *professional* who has cause to believe that a child has been *or may be* abused or neglected must make a report no later than 48 hours after the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected, and may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

The person making a report must identify, if known:

- \*The name and address of the child,
- \*The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, and
- \*Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged abuse or neglect.

A staff member or volunteer *may* report to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor, and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies. In no way is any provision in this policy meant to discourage any staff member or volunteer from *personally* reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Children's and/or Youth Ministry, the Children's Director, Youth Pastor, or the Senior Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Senior Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, the Children's Director, Youth Pastor, or the Senior Pastor will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

### **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

Becker Baptist Church Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

## **Becker Baptist Church Safety Committee**

### **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Becker Baptist Church will maintain a Safety Committee which will meet annually.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable Becker Baptist Church Children's and Youth Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

### **COMPOSITION**

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. Senior Pastor
2. Children's Director,
3. Youth Pastor, and
4. Christian Education Committee Chair.

### **MEETINGS**

The Safety Committee will meet annually to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Becker Baptist Church policies and procedures related to children's and youth safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's & Youth Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Becker Baptist Church deacons regarding safety issues.

## **Children's & Youth Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan**

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include periodic (announced and unannounced) visits by Children's Director or Youth Pastor in classrooms to observe volunteer's interaction with children.

1. The Senior Pastor will conduct written performance evaluations every year for individuals in paid staff positions.
2. The Senior Pastor meets with the Children's Director and Youth Pastor regularly to discuss Children's and Youth Ministry, including safety training and procedures.



## **BUILDING SAFETY**

The Children's Director and Youth Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that the Children's areas are monitored during both Wednesday and Sunday programs. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the Children's or Youth areas or on the children's playground during children's/youth ministry programming or classes. Children's and Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

After every programming event, Children's and Youth Ministry staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the children's playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers 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, biting 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.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Children's Director/Youth Pastor.

## **BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE**

### ***Nursery children***

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

#### **Diapering**

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers, when possible.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the Nursery Care cards. (Ex: "Seth Adams has medicine in the bag for a rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

### **Toilet training**

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers 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) Parents should consult nursery workers on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the Nursery Care card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be verbally assisted, when possible. If physical assistance is necessary, another staff member or volunteer should be present, when possible.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra diapers are available in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished them.

### ***School age children***

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Staff members and volunteers should never take a child to the restroom alone.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer, when possible.

### **Special needs**

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 5, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

### **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children or youth, or while working with or supervising children and youth during any Becker Baptist Church program or activity.

### **MEDICATION**

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in Children's or Youth Ministry.

## **NUDITY**

Staff members and volunteers serving in Children's and Youth Ministry should never be nude in the presence of children or youth in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Children's Director or Youth Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

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

1. Children/Youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child/youth in transport, when possible.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children/youth while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Church vans, or vehicles owned or rented by Becker Baptist Church, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents who leave a child in the care of Becker Baptist Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child/youth becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's and/or Youth Ministry programs.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process, including a background check.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Becker Baptist Church is committed to protecting children and youth in its care. To this end, Becker Baptist Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and youth. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Children's and Youth Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children/youth are important for children's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child/youth, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children/youth or Children's/Youth Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's and Youth Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child/teen. A child's/teen's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children/teens under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to the Children's Director, Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children/teens and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child/teen in the program.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child/teen) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children/teens in their care.

### **TOBACCO USE**

Becker Baptist Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children/teens or their parents, or during Becker Baptist Church activities or programs. Becker Baptist Church is a tobacco-free facility.

### **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children/teens should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children and youth.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children/teens in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children/youth.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

At any time that a child/teen has been entrusted to Children's/Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and welfare of the child/teen. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children and youth in their charge.

Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child has authority to pick up that child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact the Children's Director or Youth Pastor before releasing the child.

Children from birth to 5<sup>th</sup> grade must be picked up with a matching tag from our Check-In System.

## **SUPERVISION**

Staff members and volunteers in Children's and Youth Ministry are expected to provide adequate supervision for children and youth in their care while working in church programs.

## Policies and Procedures

### Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Becker Baptist Church's Children's and Youth Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Becker Baptist Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Becker Baptist Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Becker Baptist Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of Becker Baptist Church policies and procedures manual.

I have watched the online sexual abuse awareness training video on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[This page is to remain attached to Becker Baptist Church Children's and Youth Ministry Policies for your records.]

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to Children's Director/Youth Pastor.]