



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

We understand life in the church is to be lived according to the rule of love. "Jesus said, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment and most important command. The second is you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt 22:37-39). As a body of believers, Long Hollow Baptist Church (referred to as LHBC), we are called to create a loving community of faith that seeks to secure welfare of its members and guests. Therefore, we are committed to the protection of all children and other persons participating in the activities and programs of LHBC. Abuse, exploitation or harassment in any form (physical, mental, emotional or sexual) will not be tolerated. A well-implemented child protection policy not only protects the minors, but also the adults who minister to them. This Child Protection Policy covers any person employed by or volunteering at LHBC in any capacity involving minors and all outside organizations using LHBC facilities for minor programs.

DEFINITIONS

- Minor, child or youth
 - Anyone under the age of 18 years. In this document, these terms are used interchangeably.
- Child Sexual abuse
 - Child sexual abuse is abuse that includes any type of sexual activity with a minor. A minor cannot consent to sexual behavior with an adult, or between two minors, when one exerts power over the other.
 - Child sexual abuse is not limited to physical contact. Abusive acts may include sexual penetration, touching, exposure or voyeurism, taking photos, exposure to pornography or digital interaction (which includes texting and social media).
 - Sex trafficking

RELATIONSHIPS

Category A – Volunteers in situations where there will be at least two or more leaders in the presence of minors (Next Generation). Activities include, but are not limited to the following; Newborn to 12th Grade Life Groups, VBS, Camps and/or group activities.

1. Basic Screening Criteria for under 16 years:
 - LH Kids Leader in Training Application (Attachment 1)
 - Requires parental permission
2. Basic Screening Criteria for 16 years and up:
 - Volunteer Application (Attachment 2)
 - 3 References
 - Membership for at least 3 months
 - Interview with approving manager, pastor or department director
 - Leadership Covenant
 - Update F1 Photo
 - Approved Background Screening
 - A parent signature must be included on the minors consent to background check
 - Receipt of Policy and Procedures (Form A)
 - Child Protection Policy
 - Code of Conduct
 - LH Kids Procedures (Attachment 3)
 - LH Students Procedures (Attachment 4)

3. Basic screening will be renewed every two years.
 - Volunteer Renewal Application (Attachment 5)
 - Approved Background Screening
 - Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
 - Receipt of Policy and Procedures (Form A)
4. Training and education as arranged by the church and outlined in Part V.

Category B – All paid employees of LHBC, including interns and Treasure Creek. Oversight for hiring and firing of personnel is handled by Human Resources in compliance with the LHBC employee handbook.

1. Basic Screening Criteria (to be renewed every 2 years)
2. Approved Background Screening
3. Child Protection Policy
4. Code of Conduct
5. Staff Commitment
6. Staff Covenant
7. Ongoing training as arranged by LHBC and outlined in Part V.

Category C – Child Protection Team (CPT) – selected staff positions with the task of go to individuals for guidance on the policy. Provide support to the reporter, maintain incident reporting logs (Form B), incorporate additional persons as necessary (Part IV), adhere to “red alert” guidelines (Part IV) and follow up. Provide accountability to staff and volunteers.

1. All basic screening as mentioned in category B.
2. Comprised of both male and female employees.

Category D – Other church leadership positions that require background screenings (to be renewed every 2 years).

1. Connections
2. Contract workers in Next Gen Ministry such as video, tech, worship leaders, etc.
3. Deacons (and spouse)
4. Life Group leaders (and spouse)
5. Mission participants to orphanages or if IMB requires

PART I - GENERAL GUIDELINES

- At no time shall one employee or volunteer be alone with a child. The only exception to this would be in a medical emergency.
- Staff and volunteers must read and comply with the Child Protection Policy. Staff receipt of policy and procedure forms will be filed their personnel file; volunteer forms will be attached to volunteer application and saved on their people record in FellowshipOne.
- If an applicant (either paid or volunteer) is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited a minor, the applicant will not be hired and/or will not serve as a volunteer in any church sponsored activity or program that involves minors. Any conviction of a crime against a minor will disqualify the applicant. In the unfortunate situation where it has been determined that an individual should not work with minors, LHBC will make every effort to handle such a decision in a confidential manner.
- In accordance with Part II and III of this policy, employees and volunteers are required to report immediately any suspicious or inappropriate behavior that suggest (1) sexual abuse or exploitation, (2) neglect, (3) physical abuse or (4) emotional abuse.
- Diaper changing – See LH Kids Procedures
- Restroom use – See LH Kids Procedures, LH Students Procedures and Individuals with Special Needs Procedures
- Overnight: Segregated sleeping areas – minimum of 2 adults – with same sex.
- Off sight: Facility and event must comply with LHBC Policy.
- No outside group will be allowed to provide their own childcare services.
- If an event meets on LHBC premises, they must comply with General Guidelines/Procedures for child protection

PART II - REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITY

It is the goal of LHBC to respond quickly and appropriately to (1) inappropriate or harmful behavior, (2) infractions of child sexual abuse prevention polices, and (3) evidence or allegations of child sexual abuse. LHBC will comply with all state laws and shall not further investigate the reported incident to avoid compromising, interfering with or delaying a legal investigation.

1. LHBC staff and volunteers shall report immediately as required (mandated) by Tennessee State Law, all known or reasonably indicated incidents (on the basis of available information) of abuse, brutality, sexual abuse, and/or neglect of children and vulnerable adults immediately.
 - If emergency, then call 9-1-1.
 - If non-emergency, then contact Child Protective Services (CPS) within the Department of Children's Services (DCS) for minors:
 - By telephone - Tennessee Hotline: 877-237-0004
 - Online: <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>
 - If vulnerable adult, then contact the Department of Human Services (DHS).
 - For all situations, it is also required to complete a Report of Abuse (Form B) and turn into a LHBC Child Protection Team Member, Pastor or Minsiter.
 - Inform the parent/caregiver of the obligation to make such a report, unless to do so would endanger the child, or is otherwise clinically contraindicated (such as when the alleged perpetrator is in the household or otherwise would have access to the information).
 - In no case shall any preference on the part of LHBC to first notify the parent/caregiver whenever safely possible interfere with reporting mandate requirements.
 - For the purpose of this section, child/minor are defined as any persons under eighteen (18) years of age, or reasonably presumed to be (Title 37-1-401). Vulnerable adults are defined as persons eighteen (18) years of age or older who are unable to manage their resources, carry out their activities of daily living or provide themselves with basic protection from others without assistance, because of mental or physical dysfunction or the effects of advanced age (sixty (60) years of age or older). (Title 71-5-102).
2. The report shall include (if available), to the extent known by the reporter: the name, address, and age of the child or vulnerable adult; the name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child or vulnerable adult; the date of birth or age of the child or vulnerable adult; the nature and extent of the reasonable indicated abuse, brutality, sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation; the identity of the alleged perpetrator, if known; the identity and contact information of the reporter; any other pertinent information believed to be essential and helpful in establishing the cause of abuse, neglect or exploitation. (Title 37-1-403(b); 71-6-103(c))
3. The state of Tennessee provides civil and criminal immunity under the law of reporting of reasonably indicated abuse, brutality, sexual abuse and/or neglect of children and vulnerable adults made in good faith. (Title 37-1-410, 613; 71-6-105).
4. Any person who violates this mandate to report, by knowingly failing to do so as required or by willfully preventing another person from doing so – has committed a Class A misdemeanor under the law. (Title 37-1-412, 615; 71-6-110).
5. All allegations will be regarded as serious, and due consideration will be given to the rights and privacy of both the alleged victim and the accused.
6. The accused individual, whether employee or volunteer, will be required to refrain from participating in all minor activities until it is determined if further actions will be taken. Care will be taken to respond to all allegations in a professional manner.
7. If a reported incident does not provide reasonable suspicion of abuse, the Child Protection Team has the option to recommend appropriate action, which could include removal from responsibilities, a review of the processes and/or further action.

PART III - DUTY TO WARN

Tennessee state law requires (mandates) that LHBC staff have a “duty to predict, warn or take precautions to provide protection” in certain, specifically defined, and limited situations. LHBC acknowledges that there is also a spiritual duty that goes beyond what the law requires.

If and only if

- It has directly been communicated to the staff that an actual threat of bodily harm against oneself or another is clearly identified.
- A situation exists that affects the safety of the congregation.
- Church liability is being compromised.
- Knowledge of public record.

PART IV - STAFF RESPONSE

The following steps shall be taken:

- Reports will immediately be made as described in Part II.
- All allegations will be taken seriously and will be responded to in a professional manner.
- If necessary, the Child Protection Team will incorporate additional persons to assist in the care of the victim, perpetrator and/or the reporter. Those individuals may include; 1) Additional Staff/Pastors, 2) legal counsel, 3) representatives from local advocacy agencies, 4) others deemed appropriate by the Pastoral staff. (i.e. Counseling, Life Group Leaders, Deacons, D-Group support, etc.).
- Maintain internal records
 - Records of incident reports
 - Resolutions of reports
 - All documents will be kept in secure storage; maintaining our confidentiality policy.
- Red Alert – internal flagging of concerns for an individual
 - All levels of access to Fellowship One will see “01” which will alert to a possible concern.
 - Only Child Protection Team Members will have access to “02” which will communicate facts about accusations and/or convictions.

PART V - TRAINING AND EDUCATION OBJECTIVES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

It is the goal of LHBC to give employees and volunteers information and skills to help them prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. This includes awareness training, statistics, strategies for protecting the minors and guidance for all parties involved.

- Child Protection Policy, including the Code of Conduct, will be reviewed and ensured that all employees and volunteers understand and are in compliance with the policy.
 - This policy will immediately become a part of the new hire process and volunteer application process.
 - For employees – The Code of Conduct will be filed in their personnel file.
 - For volunteers – The Code of Conduct and the Receipt of Policy & Procedures will be saved on their people record in F1.
 - Copies of the policy will be posted in volunteer rooms and/or on the website.
- Darkness to Light – *Stewards of Children Training*
 - Mandatory for all Staff, including CPT Members and Long Hollow Weekday Preschool
 - Mandatory for all Next Gen volunteers 18 years and older
 - Highly recommended for all volunteers 18 years and older
- Training will be ongoing and not just a one-time event.
 - Training will be a part of VBS and camp summer activities.
 - Procedures for handling disclosures, communicating and record keeping will be discussed.
 - Question and answer time for clarification, resources, helps or concerns.
 - When appropriate, the use of outside professionals and/or agencies will be incorporated in the training.



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Code of Conduct

LHBC believes that our minors are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer or staff member, I agree to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct while participating in church activities or church events.

I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison.
- Follow the two adult rule in the presence of minors.
- Follow the two adult rule while using social media and/or texting.
- Agree to abstain from drinking alcohol while an active volunteer or staff person.
- Avoid touching children or making gestures which may be misinterpreted by them or third parties.
- Allow children to do for themselves as much as they can, such as getting dressed, toileting, etc.
- Portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and maturity towards others and the environment/setting.
- Act and react with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
- Immediately report suspected or disclosed abuse.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation as a result of reporting, if needed.
- Comply with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

I will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products while in the presence of minors.
- Use and/or possess illegal or illicit drugs at any time.
- Exercise any kind of physical violence against a minor such as strike, spank, shake, or slap a child/minor or threaten to do so.
- Use profanity in the presence of a minor.
- Make any insinuation of a sexual nature or subject children to any type of real or simulated sexual abuse. This includes sexually abusing or raping children, forcing children to touch you, exposing children to pornographic acts, images or literature, making inappropriate insinuations, etc. Engage in sexual activity of any kind with a minor.
- Inflict any kind of psychological abuse or engage in behavior which is intended to demean or degrade children such as insulting, shouting, humiliating, ridiculing in front of others, intimidating, threatening, frightening or scaring with gestures or movements, pursuing, bribing or any other type of situation or action which may cause moral damage.
- Behave in a way or use language which is offensive or discriminatory based on race (ethnic group), nationality, culture, age, sex, disability, religion, sexual preference, political beliefs, opinion, language or any other factor which could be subject to discrimination.
- Neglect or fail to provide adequate supervision.
- Meet with someone of the opposite sex alone.
- Meet with a minor alone.
- "Friend", "like" or personal message, direct message or engage with a minor of the opposite sex on social media.
- Provide transportation for a minor alone.

I understand that any violation of this code may be grounds for removal as a staff member or volunteer with minors.

Printed Name

Signature

Date