

BWBC Child Protection Policy

Principles of Child Protection

- It is the policy of Big Woods Bible Church to protect the children and youth who are placed in our care, attend our services, and participate in our programs.
- We adopt this policy to honor the trust that parents place in us.
- We adopt this policy because it reflects the Lord Jesus' love for children and youth.
- We adopt this policy to protect the name of Jesus Christ and the witness of His church.

Implementation of Child Protection

- It is the policy of Big Woods Bible Church to screen every person who wishes to work with children and youth.
- It is the policy of Big Woods Bible Church to maintain appropriate worker to children ratios.
- It is the policy of Big Woods Bible Church to require that the minimum age of a volunteer be twelve (12) years of age.
- It is the policy of Big Woods Bible Church that any suspicion of abuse of a child or youth will be reported immediately to and investigated by the church leadership.
- It is the policy of Big Woods Bible Church to offer periodic training for volunteer workers with children and youth programs.

Procedures for Complying with the Child Protection Policy

1. This policy applies to all church programs involving children and youth from birth through high school.
2. Screening will be done on all workers prior to being approved to serve in children and youth programs. All workers will complete a Children's Ministry Volunteer Application. Applications will be reviewed by the elders. Background checks will be returned directly to the pastor. All documents related to the application process will be stored in a locked safe when the process is complete. No one will begin working with children until the background check is completed, which could take several weeks. (In rare and unforeseen circumstances a worker who has completed an application may be approved by the elders while background checks are completed). An individual with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children and youth in any capacity. Such a conviction does not necessarily disqualify the worker from serving in other areas.
3. Yearly, each worker will attend child protection training, and read and indicate in writing his or her agreement to comply with Big Woods Bible Church Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
4. No fewer than two adults are to be present at all times in a room during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children. At no time should one worker be with a single child or youth in a secluded area. A deacon, elder, or ministry leader should be notified immediately if a second adult is not available. The door is to be kept open whenever one of the adults leaves the room until he/she returns or another adult takes his/her place. The dutch door in the baby nursery is kept open at all times. If a married couple is working together, a third roaming adult should be used. Volunteers should be at least five years older than the children with which they are working. An adult should always be assigned as the leader and teenagers assigned as helpers. This procedure is not to prevent the developing of close relationships, but to avoid any appearance of evil. If a worker and a child or youth seek one-on-one time, written permission must be received from the parents. Such permission may cover a period of time such as one day or one school year. In the event an unplanned one-on-one event occurs without

prior written permission being obtained, the worker must report in writing to church leadership who was involved, at what time and the activity and circumstances. Special care shall be given to assure sufficient staffing for overnight functions. These events will include written parental permission and parent and youth understanding of acceptable behavior, rules and expectations.

5. Children and Youth activities and events will be randomly monitored (for any suspicious behavior or failure to follow protection policy) by the leadership of each program. Elders and pastors may attend any and all programs at any time.

6. Any time children or youth will be transported in a church vehicle or the vehicle of a worker, the parent must have signed a permission slip agreeing to the transportation.

7. To protect children at the conclusion of our programs each program for children up through fifth grade will develop procedures for assuring the children safely reunite with their families. Parents will be informed in writing of the procedure for each program. If any family chooses not to follow the procedure or allow children to walk home, written permission is required from the parents.

8. Any worker who suspects an incident of inappropriate behavior or abuse toward a child or youth has occurred is required to report immediately to the program leader, to the pastor, or to an elder. It is not the responsibility of the worker to investigate or corroborate the behavior, but only to report the concerns. A confidential written record of the report and investigation will be initiated. Church leaders will respond promptly as necessary for the protection of the child. Church leaders will comply with state law in regarding reporting of abuse. In the event of an allegation of an incident or abuse, the worker is to make no statements to the press, friends, church members, or others who are outside the situation.

9. Accident forms must be completed for any injury or incident requiring medical attention.

10. Parents of nursery and preschool children may choose to give permission for the supervising adults to accompany their child to the restroom or change diapers. If permission is not given, parents must be paged.