

# Nazarene Safe

## Bethany First Church of the Nazarene

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

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**POLICIES and  
PROCEDURES  
MANUAL**

Dear Children's Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Bethany First Church of the Nazarene!

At BFC, we take our responsibility to care for children 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 BFC volunteers and staff members who work with children. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of BFC. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

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

With grace and peace,

Pastor Chris Holcomb, Leader of Age-Group Ministries  
Dr. Rick Harvey, Senior Pastor

# Bethany First Church of the Nazarene

## Policies & Procedures for Children's Ministries

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# **Overview of the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Safety System**

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene requires all staff members and Level 1\* volunteers working with children or youth (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

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

BFC 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 a Ministry Director, Children's Pastor, Safe Kids Director or Executive Pastor. 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 BFC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene requires all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's activities or programming to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every two years.

## **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members and volunteers who work with minors are required to complete the BFC Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an application (employees and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

\*Candidates with a Nazarene District License or Ministerial License will be screened through the denominational data base.

\*\*It is the general policy of BFC that a volunteer attend BFC for a period of at least six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, youth, or vulnerable populations. There are, however, certain BFC ministries where a volunteer will be allowed to participate without satisfying this attendance requirement, provided other safeguards or supervision exists in the course of such ministry. The ministries subject to this exception, and the attendant safeguards, are described in an addendum to this Policies and Procedures Manual, which has been adopted and approved by the BFC Board of Trustees and Stewards. See Addendum, next page.

## **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 and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

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

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

\*Level 1 volunteers are those whose assignments are ongoing: Sunday school teachers, Caravan workers, Children's Church workers. Non-Level 1 volunteers have very short term assignments such as VBS workers or Harvest Celebration workers.

## **Addendum to 6-month Policy**

- Certain areas of our ministry programs require the use of volunteer workers who do not meet the 6 month BFC attendance policy requirement under Safe Kids Policy. Without these workers, BFC would be unable to continue these programs.
- The ministry departments below cannot adequately function under the 6 month policy without significantly limiting or reducing the size and participation in the program, due to the lack of sufficient number of BFC attenders who are willing or trained to serve as volunteers/workers.
- The main purpose of the 6 month policy is to screen for a person whose interest is seeking a position in one of BFC's programs for children or teens, without a commitment to regular attendance at BFC, is or may be considered suspect.
- Even with an exception to the 6 month policy, the Safe Kids screening process and other policy requirements still apply and are followed.
- Each of these programs, as exceptions to the 6 month policy, will continue with a trained individual assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these workers.
- **Recreation**
  - a. The general coaching rule reads that each team has two coaches; one coach must attend BFC, and the other coach can be from outside of the church. The department has worked to include some non-attenders as participants in programs while keeping in line with the policy and who otherwise pass the screening process. One of the purposes of the recreation department is to bring BFC and the community together.
  - b. In the matter of recreation, the Director of Recreation Ministries has been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility.
  - c. The Family Life Center has interns from Southern Nazarene University who do not attend BFC. They are gaining credit hours for schooling but also providing help for the Direction of Recreation Ministries in the care of the facility.
- **Kids Day Out and MyLambs Teachers and Subs**
  - a. Teachers and subs are always needed due to the number of families interested in the KDO and MyLambs program. There are workers who do not attend BFC but who otherwise passes the screening process and are needed because of the demand for more teachers as the program expands.
  - b. In the matter of KDO, the Pastor to Families with Young Children has been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these workers.
  - c. In the matter of MyLambs, the director/teacher has been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these workers.

- **Breakaway**
  - a. Some volunteers may not attend BFC but they have expertise in working with special needs children. A program director may seek out these workers for their experience in this area if they believe it is safer to have a person with special needs experience who otherwise passes the screening process.
  - b. In the matter of Breakaway, the directors of the program have been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these volunteers.
- **Afterschool**
  - a. The majority of interest for working/volunteering in this program comes from students from Southern Nazarene University and Southwestern Christian University. Most of the students interested from these two schools do not attend BFC, but possess ideas and skills that add to the program's success. And BFC would be providing ministering/service opportunities for these students.
  - b. Afterschool has a counseling program. There are interns conducting the group sessions from Renewed Counseling Center at SNU. They are working with Afterschool in order to gain experience and credit hours for their master's program. To make this part of the program a success, skilled counselors are needed who may not attend BFC.
  - c. In the matter of Afterschool, the directors of the program have been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these workers.
- **Interns**
  - a. Some departments take interns from the ministry program at Southern Nazarene University. In this example, BFC pastors/directors do their best to guard the assigning of interns but they do not fully have a choice in the selection, and some interns chosen do not attend BFC, but otherwise pass the screening process.
  - b. In the matter of interns, the pastors/directors have been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these volunteers.
- **The Landing**
  - a. The Landing has the majority of its volunteers coming from SNU; however most do not attend BFC, but a neighboring church, but otherwise pass the screening process.
  - b. In the matter of The Landing, the director of the program has been assigned and instructed as the supervised responsibility for these volunteers.

# Child Safety Policy

## **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

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

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse ( physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

BFC 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 will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Police Department, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a Ministry Director, Children's Pastor or Safe Kids Director. 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, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a Ministry Director, Children's Pastor or the Safe Kids Director.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

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

## **GENERAL BOARD**

In absence of a specific more restrictive policy or procedure, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene, adopts the policy and procedures of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene relating to the prevention of sexual abuse.

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

### **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Ministry Director, Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or Executive 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 Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, youth or vulnerable populations at BFC. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from BFC.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations at BFC.

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

Staff members and volunteers at BFC are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

Oklahoma law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director or the Executive Pastor and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

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

## **Investigation**

1. The Safe Kids Director will be responsible for interviewing all potential witnesses and gathering all available relevant information necessary to complete a thorough investigation of the incident. The investigation shall be documented.
2. The Safe Kids Director shall notify the parent(s) or guardian of any child who may have been a victim of the abuse.
3. The alleged abuser shall be temporarily removed from working with children or youth immediately.
4. If the investigation reveals that the incident of abuse occurred, the abuser shall be immediately and permanently removed from working with children.
5. The Safe Kids Director will inform the Senior Pastor of the incident and action taken as soon as possible. The Safe Kids Director will provide a written report of the incident to the Senior Pastor, Church Board, District Superintendent, General Board, and the Board of Superintendents.
6. The Safe Kids Director will provide a written report of the investigation and action taken as soon as possible to the Senior Pastor, Church Board, District Superintendent, General Board, and the Board of Superintendents.

If appropriate, the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services will be informed. The statewide child abuse hotline is 1-800-522-3511. The Oklahoma County child abuse hotline is 713-6800.

## **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

The Executive Pastor's Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

# **Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Safety Committee**

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable BFC Children's 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. Executive Pastor
2. Children's Pastor
3. Youth Pastor
4. Safe Kids Director
5. Director of Recreation Ministries

## **MEETINGS**

The Safe Kids Director will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis 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 BFC policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the BFC Church Board regarding safety issues.

## **Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan**

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide directors the opportunity to observe staff members and volunteer interactions with children.

1. **Each Ministry Director** conducts ongoing and unscheduled observations for programs that occur weekly.
2. **The Children's Pastor** conducts written performance evaluations every 12 months for individuals in paid staff positions.
3. **The Children's Pastor** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
4. **The Leader of Age Group Ministries** conducts an unscheduled observation of a Children's Ministry program at least once each quarter.
5. **The Leader of Age Group Ministries** meets with the Children's Pastor once monthly to discuss Children's Ministry.
6. **The Children's Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.

## **BUILDING SAFETY**

The Children's Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Children's Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. 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 Building or on the children's playground during children's ministry programming or classes. Children's Ministries 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. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children's Ministries 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 which are 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.

## **WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS**

BFC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child ratios will be observed:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Workers</b>	<b>Children</b>
Nursery: Crib	2	8
Nursery: Toddler	2	15
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	20
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	25
Elementary	2	20-40
Kids Camp	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Ministry Director or the Children's Pastor. Directors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children ratios into compliance with BFC policy.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's 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, 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. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group within the same room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, since being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes), with a maximum of 5 minutes.
- 6) Stay aware of the child through the entire time-out.
- 7) Praise children once they have completed the time-out and tell them that they are welcome to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Ministry Director and the Children's Pastor. They will decide if it's necessary to report to parents.

# **Restroom Supervision and Assistance Guideline**

## ***Nursery children***

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their restroom 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.
- 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 medication cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

### **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 restrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in restrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted 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 sign-in sheet ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Pull-ups are required in the nursery until the child has been accident free everywhere for a month.
- 7) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 8) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from BFC in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

## **Early childhood**

- 1) During toilet usage the window shade in the restroom will be in the "up" position when a child is in the bathroom.
- 2) No adult will ever be in the restroom with the child with the door closed.
- 3) Adults may assist early childhood children in the restroom with the door open when another adult is present within the classroom.

## **School age children**

Teachers are encouraged to take their classes to the restroom as a group. When this is not possible, school age children should be accompanied to the restroom at least two at a time for supervision and assistance when needed. Only one child will be allowed in a stall at a time.

The adult must remain outside of the restroom in the hallway. The outside restroom door must remain open at all times. If a child needs help, the adult must have another approved adult accompany them into the restroom to assist the child. Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance based on their individual capabilities and needs. At no time may one adult be alone with any number of children in the restroom.

Adults must not use the children's restrooms.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Trained, adult leaders are the only ones authorized to change diapers or assist with accidents for special needs children.

If a special needs child or youth needs assistance with going to the bathroom then two adults or one adult leader and the child's buddy go to the restroom together. The adult leader assists as needed to undo clothing and help the child to be seated in the stall. The staff person holds the stall door shut for privacy. Once the child is done, the adult leader makes sure the child is clean and then helps with clothing. The leader and child wash hands and leave the restroom with the child's buddy.

If a child or youth is able to go to the bathroom independently, he/she enters the restroom and the buddy stands outside in the hallway until the child is done. Bathroom doors are to always be propped open to provide assistance if necessary.

### **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Bethany First Church of the Nazarene facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

### **MEDICATION**

BFC staff and volunteers are not responsible for dispensing medication to any child. The only exceptions to this policy are:

- 1) Diaper rash ointment, Mylicon, Orajel, EpiPens, and inhalers.
- 2) With Special needs children, medication must be in original container. Instructions are given and signed by parent or guardian each time child is left.

### **NUDITY**

Staff members and volunteers in BFC's Children's Ministries should never be nude in the presence of children 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, camp, etc.), specific measures should be taken to adhere to policy.

### **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in BFC's Children's Ministry program. Another adult who has completed the BFC application and screening process or parent/legal guardian should always be present.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

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

1. Children 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 in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving BFC vans, or vehicles owned or rented by BFC, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive BFC owned or rented vehicles.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents who leave a child in the care of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at BFC. Elementary age parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at BFC will be required to complete the BFC volunteer application and screening process. Parents are welcome to observe Nursery and Early-childhood children from the hallway only.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

BFC is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, BFC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children 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 an Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child 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 or children's 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 Ministries 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. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Ministry Director, the Children's Pastor, the Safe Kids Director or the Executive Pastor.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

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

Purity programs may be available with approved curriculum and parental consent.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (including magazines, cards, images, videos, films, phones, electronics, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

The media used in children's ministries at BFC must come from the ministry library or approved by Ministry Director.

### **TOBACCO USE**

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

## **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. BFC 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.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any 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.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

At any time that a child has been entrusted to BFC staff members or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministries 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. They must show a matching security receipt. Staff or volunteers may ask for a valid driver's license or refer to a Ministry Director.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or youth has authority to pick up the child.

If a parent or legal guardian who has custody of a child has a court order for the non-custodial parent or anyone else to not have access to the child, a copy of the court order is requested. A court order gives the staff and volunteers at BFC the power to protect the child.

If the person picking up a child, whether it is parent, grandparents, friend, or legal guardian appears to be impaired either mentally and/or physically, the child will not be released. This will be a decision between the Ministry Director and/or Children's Pastor. Every effort will be made to contact the child's other parent, grandparent, or friend. If the child appears to be in danger and no contact can be made, the Department of Human Services will be called for assistance in the situation.

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

## **SUPERVISION**

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

## **Peer on Peer Policy**

Children and youth are prohibited from harassing, sexually harassing, sexually assaulting, hazing, threatening, intimidating, bullying, or verbally abusing another person, including gestures, written or verbal expressions, or physical acts that a reasonable person should know will harm another person, damage another's property, or insult or demean another. This includes, but is not limited to, threatening behavior, harassment, intimidation, and bullying by children and youth at church or church activities.

If any person is aware of, observes, or is a victim of harassing, assaulting, hazing, threatening, intimidating, bullying, or verbally abusing behavior or communications from a child or youth, such person must report the behavior or communication to the Ministry Director, Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor, Safe Kids Director, or the Leader of Age Group Ministries.

Once a report has been received information will be gathered by the Safe Kids Director to determine the severity of the incident. All information should be kept in complete confidence. In making this determination, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred shall be reviewed. The following steps may be taken:

- The parent/guardian of all parties will be notified of the incident.
- The Safe Kids Director will ask each person involved to write out what happened.
- Possible consequences *may* be:
  - ✓ Expulsion from an immediate event
  - ✓ Restriction from future ministry activities
  - ✓ Writing a letter of apology or verbal apology
  - ✓ Completion of some act of service
  - ✓ Banning the perpetrator from volunteering with children
  - ✓ Require parental supervision in order to be active in the program
  - ✓ In severe cases (such as rape or assault causing serious injury) reporting to law enforcement
  - ✓ Recommend mental health care for victim and/or perpetrator
- The Safe Kids Director will complete a report to give to the Executive Pastors and Safety Committee.
- The Safe Kids Director may also require that the minor and/or the minor's parent or guardian meet with a Pastor or other appropriate personnel before being allowed to return to church or church activities.

### **Reporting Incidents to Parent/Guardian**

When a parent/guardian needs to be informed of a situation regarding his/her child or youth at church or during a church activity the policy at Bethany First Nazarene Church is to inform one parent. When it is known that parents are together, the church assumes that by informing one parent, the other parent will be told. In the case where it is known that parents are divorced or separated; the church will make efforts to inform both parents.

## **Policies and Procedures** **Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's Children's Ministries 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 BFC.

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

I also acknowledge that I have agreed to fulfill the duties asked of me in my ministry position. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at BFC at any time (If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between me and BFC. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

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

I acknowledge receipt of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's policies and procedures manual.

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

**[This page is to be signed and remain attached to the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Policies and Procedures.]**

## Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

**[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to the BFC Administrator]**