



**Bedford Road**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# **FAMILY MINISTRY SAFETY PROCEDURES**

*2023 Revision*

# Family Ministry Safety Procedures

---

## Section 1: General Guidelines

### 1.1 Introduction

Our congregation takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our ministries. Every volunteer plays a role in fostering the spiritual development of individuals and families in our church community.

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. There is also a need to protect innocent volunteers from false allegations of abuse. The following policy and procedures reflect the commitment of **Bedford Road Baptist Church** (henceforth “the Church”) to provide a safe environment for all children, youth, individuals with special needs, paid staff and volunteers who participate in the ministries of our congregation.

### 1.2 Definitions

For the sake of clarity and direction, we provide the following definitions that will be used throughout this procedure.

**1.2.1 Covenant Member:** A covenant member of the Church is defined in the Church's constitution and by-laws. Only covenant members may serve as team leaders in the Family Ministries.

**1.2.2 Elders and Pastors:** The Church's constitution and by-laws narrowly define elders in the Church. Elders serve as the leaders of the Church and oversee all affairs related to the spiritual well-being of the Church. A pastor is also defined in the constitution and by-laws as a vocational elder.

**1.2.3 Paid Staff:** Any person who receives compensation from the church for service rendered within the ministries of the church.

**1.2.4 Volunteer:** A volunteer is defined by both governmental and local congregational standards.

**1.2.4.1** According to the Department of Labor, a volunteer is anyone who meets *all* of the following standards:

**1.2.4.1.1** Performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered; although a volunteer can be paid expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee to perform such services.

**1.2.4.1.2** Offers services freely and without pressure or coercion.

**1.2.4.1.3** Is not otherwise employed by the same public agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer.

**1.2.4.2** Additionally, the church requires that a volunteer be an actively participating member of the congregation and at least thirteen (13) years of age. Volunteers are

required to comply with these policies as well as the Defining Documents of the congregation.

- 1.2.5 **Child:** Anyone under the age of majority (18 years of age); **Youth** is a subset of this group, generally used to refer to children between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age.
- 1.2.6 **Individuals with Special Needs:** anyone who, because of his or her unique medical or developmental difficulties, has needs in addition to those of his or her peers.
- 1.2.7 **Abuse:** The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines abuse and neglect as follows: Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm. CAPTA further differentiates abuse into the following categories:
  - 1.2.7.1 *Physical Abuse:* Any non-accidental physical injury to a child.
  - 1.2.7.2 *Neglect:* the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision such that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm.
  - 1.2.7.3 *Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:* engaging a child under the age of consent in any sexual activities, whether the child is a willing participant or not.
  - 1.2.7.4 *Emotional Abuse:* Injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by an observable or substantial change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition.
  - 1.2.7.5 *Abandonment:* Any situation in which the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left by the parent in circumstances in which the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.
- 1.2.8 **Gender:** While the Church is aware of the controversy surrounding the meaning of the term "gender," we have affirmed a "Statement on the Sanctity of Marriage and Biblical Sexuality." We affirm two genders: male and female. Our children's ministry is conducted in alignment with this biblical affirmation.

### 1.3 General Guidelines for Ministry

- 1.3.1 **Remaining Above Reproach:** Every paid staff and volunteer should exercise discernment and discretion in working with children, youth, and individuals with special needs. It is ultimately our individual responsibility to remain above approach and avoid abuse and/or accusations of abuse.
- 1.3.2 **Open Communication:** The church will seek to provide open lines of communication with parents and an open-door policy allowing parents access to ministry space at any time. Parents should be provided a directory of the Safety Coordinator and other ministry leaders.

## 1.4 Requirements for Paid Staff and Volunteers

- 1.4.1 **Background Checks and Safety Workshop:** To prepare for creating an environment of safety, the church will conduct a thorough criminal background check for all paid staff and volunteers and all paid staff and volunteers will be required to participate in our standardized Safety Workshop.
- 1.4.2 **Employment:** All paid staff of the church will participate in the criminal background check and safety training as part a requirement for employment.
- 1.4.3 **Disqualification:** Conviction of or pleading guilty to any abusive behavior shall disqualify an individual from participation in this church's ministry to children.
- 1.4.4 **Compliance:** All volunteer and paid employees will agree to follow the Church's Safety Policies and Procedures. All volunteers and paid employees are expected to be aware of methods to preventing, recognizing, and reporting abuse. Any paid staff or volunteers who do not strictly adhere to these policies will not be allowed to work with children or youth.
- 1.4.5 **Abuse by Members:** In case of proven abuse by a volunteer or employee, the elders shall immediately act to remove them from ministry with children, youth and individuals with special needs – with the goal of restoration and personal healing. However, this person will be barred from all future involvement with the children, youth and adults with special needs at Bedford Road Baptist Church.

## 1.5 Position Descriptions

- 1.5.1 **Oversight Positions:** The family ministries are overseen by the elders, who appoint ministry team leaders as needed.
  - 1.5.1.1 **Safety Coordinator:** The elders shall appoint one of their number or a qualified representative to oversee the implementation of this procedure. This individual will conduct child safety training and handle incident reporting.
  - 1.5.1.2 **Family Ministry Lead/Coordinator:** This is a deacon-level leadership role for an individual to work with the three team leaders (youth, children, nursery) to ensure staffing and resources for the ministry.
    - 1.5.1.2.1 *Requirements:* It requires good communication skills and the ability to juggle multiple responsibilities.
    - 1.5.1.2.2 *Responsibilities:* Work with a team of family ministry leads - nursery lead, God's Backyard lead - to share resources and staff to provide effective ministry for the younger members of our congregation. Be actively involved in all of the Family Ministries on a regular, both administratively and hands-on.
    - 1.5.1.2.3 *Commitment:* This is an intensively committed position, requiring the coordinator to miss the majority of the main worship gatherings. The time commitment is six (6) months to begin and annually thereafter.

**1.5.2 Youth Ministry Positions (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)**

**1.5.2.1 Youth Ministry Description:** This is an intentional program for middle school and high school students. Activities a weekly Bible study, off-site events, and service projects. The purpose is to engage these students in the ministries and life of the church, helping them mature as Christian men and women. Youth team members must be adults.

**1.5.2.2 Youth Team Leader:** This individual is responsible for coordinating the youth group programs.

**1.5.2.2.1** All team leaders must be covenant members of the Church. The Youth Team Leader is expected to fulfill a “lay pastor” role for the children in the youth ministry, so it is expected that he/she meets the qualifications of a deacon.

**1.5.2.2.2** The team leader is expected to teach regularly, handle scheduling teachers and volunteers for the weekly gatherings, and connect with parents and volunteers to engage them in the process of the ministry.

**1.5.2.3 Youth Team Teacher:** A volunteer who leads the Bible study and discussion on a rotating schedule with other teachers. It is recommended that teachers be covenant members, but regular attendees may teach as part of the team, at the Youth Team Leader’s discretion. Curriculum is provided and teachers are expected to partner with other volunteers during the activities.

**1.5.2.4 Youth Team Volunteer:** Volunteers are scheduled to help the teacher with directing the youth ministry events, assisting as needed. They may also coordinate off-site events and act as chaperones.

**1.5.3 Upper Elementary Coordinator (4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grades):** This person will coordinate occasional events to connect the upper elementary students. Events should be held 2-4 times a year and include fellowship and a time of biblical engagement. Events can be on-site or off-site.

**1.5.4 Children’s Ministry Positions (K4-3<sup>rd</sup> grade)**

**1.5.4.1 Children’s Ministry Description:** The children’s ministry is focused on providing an alternative teaching time during the Sunday worship gathering which will prepare the children for participation in the worship gathering.

**1.5.4.2 Children’s Ministry Team Leader:** This individual is responsible for coordinating the children’s ministry. This includes scheduling teachers and volunteers for the weekly teaching time as well as connecting with parents to ensure the children are engaged and growing in their faith.

**1.5.4.3 Children’s Ministry Teacher:** A volunteer who leads the Bible study and discussion on a rotating schedule with other teachers. Curriculum is provided, and they partner with other volunteers during the activities.

- 1.5.4.4 **Children's Ministry Volunteer:** Volunteers help the teacher with directing children, leading activities, and assisting in other ways, as needed. Older children (4<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade) may serve as volunteers.

1.5.5 **Nursery Positions (Ages 0–3)**

- 1.5.5.1 **Nursery Coordinator:** The nursery lead needs to be a person committed to providing excellent care for our youngest participants. She must be able to coordinate multiple volunteers, maintain a sanitary and organized nursery.

1.5.5.1.1 **Responsibilities:** Work with the family ministry lead and other team leaders to share resources and staff to provide effective ministry for the youngest members of our congregation. Maintain a schedule of the nursery volunteers and coordinate the schedules and resources.

1.5.5.1.2 **Commitment:** The nursery lead should commit to at least a couple of hours per week to coordinating volunteers. She must also be willing and able to serve in the nursery as a primary or alternate volunteer. The nursery lead needs to be able to commit to meet regularly with other family ministry leaders.

- 1.5.5.2 **Nursery Volunteer:** Serve in the nursery on a rotating schedule, providing support and basic instruction for children ages 0–3.

1.6 **Reporting Policies**

- 1.6.1 **General Reporting Policy:** Any paid staff, volunteer or parent who has concerns about the safety, welfare, or health of the children being cared for at church should immediately notify the ministry leader and complete an *Incident Form*.

1.6.1.1 All reports will be acted upon by the Safety Coordinator and the elders. They will make any appropriate calls to the authorities and maintain communication with parties involved. Persons who report in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability.

1.6.1.2 *Any questionable behavior will be discussed immediately with the employee/volunteer, following the principles of the Scriptures (Matthew 5, Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5-7).*

- 1.6.2 **Reporting Guidelines:** Workers should report any suspected abuse as detailed below:

1.6.2.1 **Church:** First, contact the Safety Coordinator, who will inform the elders immediately.

1.6.2.2 **Authorities:** The Safety Coordinator will make the call to contact the Merrimack Police Department at 603-424-2222 or 911.

1.6.2.3 **Legal Counsel:** The elders will contact legal counsel and the insurance carrier, as necessary.

1.6.2.4 **Media:** The elders will designate a spokesperson for the church. Only this designated spokesperson should speak to the news media (printed or TV) using the text of a

prepared public statement approved by elders. All volunteers and members are asked to refer all questions to the designated spokesperson. Do not reveal any names.

## Section 2: Teaching Policies

### 2.1 Ministry Spaces

**2.1.1 General Guidelines:** Ministry with children shall be conducted in spaces designated for such ministry and set up to accommodate the children in a safe environment.

2.1.1.1 Ministry space must be *securable* to protect the children. Doors to the outside of the building shall be secured from the outside when children are present, either by a staff member or volunteer stationed at the entrance or physically locked.

2.1.1.2 All rooms used by minors shall have a window in the door and/or the door shall remain open.

2.1.1.3 Minors should *not be permitted* into ministry spaces until they have been properly checked in and the space secured.

2.1.1.4 A staff member or volunteer must visually inspect *every space* prior to use for safety and security.

#### 2.1.2 Staffing

2.1.2.1 The family ministries lead will work with the team leaders to maintain a schedule of staff and volunteers which provides adequate supervision for all ministry with minors.

2.1.2.2 Staff and volunteers are *not to be alone* at any time with a minor of the opposite gender except their own children.

2.1.2.3 Active ministry spaces require a minimum of two (2) properly screened and trained adult staff and/or volunteers.

2.1.2.4 It is strongly recommended that there be staff or volunteers of *both* genders present at all activities involving minors.

2.1.2.5 Nursery and Children's Ministry teams must have at least one (1) female staff or volunteer present at all times.

#### 2.1.3 Interaction and Consultation

2.1.3.1 **Individual Meetings:** Individual consultations between adults and minors must be done within the two-adult framework. In situations that require personal conferences, mentoring, or counseling between pastoral staff and minors, this should be conducted in the church offices with at least one of the minor's parent/guardian nearby or another approved adult staff/volunteer present, with the consent of the minor's parent/guardian.

2.1.3.2 **Romantic Relationships:** It is inappropriate for adult staff/volunteers to date or be romantically involved with any children or youth, regardless of age.

2.1.3.3 **Parent in the Classroom:** Parents are welcome to observe in all family ministry programs and/or serve the children in a volunteer capacity as they are gifted and able.

## 2.2 Rosters and Information

2.2.1 **Roster:** A roster of minors participating in a ministry must be maintained. This can be done through any means that provides reliable tracking.

2.2.2 **Policy:** When a child joins the ministry for the first time, parents should receive a copy of this policy for their information.

2.2.3 **Child Information:** Staff and volunteers should maintain an up-to-date record for all children in the ministry. Information should include the students' name and vital data, as well as their parent/guardian information and the means to contact them.

2.2.4 **Safety/Medical Form:** Every child should have a *Safety Check Form* on file.

2.2.5 **Sign-in/Sign-out:** Children in nursery should be signed in and out by their parents/guardians before and after the ministry time.

2.2.5.1 **Nursery:** Volunteers will be available at fifteen (15) minutes before the beginning of a worship gathering for children to be dropped off. Parents should pick their child up within fifteen (15) minutes after the close of the worship gathering.

2.2.5.2 **Elementary:** Children are dismissed during the worship gathering. The staff/volunteers will make the roster at this time and parents may pick the children up after the worship gathering.

## 2.3 Activities During Ministry Times

2.3.1 **Curriculum:** The content of all family ministries is designed to present the Scriptures as the Word of God.

2.3.1.1 Selection is made by the family ministry lead and respective ministry team leaders, with the approval of the elders.

2.3.1.2 All staff and volunteers will adhere to the curriculum scope and sequence during classes.

### 2.3.2 Communication of Expectations

2.3.2.1 Every family ministry program will have clearly stated expectations for the minor participants. These expectations include appropriate dress and deportment while participating in the ministry.

2.3.2.2 Expectations will be communicated to the child and their parent/guardian.



- 2.3.3 Disciplining Children:** Workers will attempt to maintain a safe, controlled environment during programmed activities. Workers will make *corrective instruction* when children misbehave or become disruptive, but if a child continues to disrupt the program, the parent or caregiver will be notified to handle the situation.
- 2.3.3.1 *Definition:* Corrective instruction is a clear, direct statement of the expectations for a child in the teaching environment. It *is not* physical discipline.
- 2.3.3.2 *Method:* A disruptive child should be taken aside, while visible to the other adult volunteer in the room. The volunteer states the behavior that is not acceptable, then states the correct behavior. They may also ask the child to repeat back to them what the correct behavior is.
- 2.3.3.3 *Extent:* A child should not need to be corrected any more than twice during a teaching session. If a child does not respond to correction, the parent should be notified to deal with the situation. *Volunteers will notify the parents and request that they correct the situation.*
- 2.3.4 Bathroom Policy:** Independent children should be escorted to the restroom. There should be set bathroom times during the programmed activities. During these times, children should be taken to the restrooms as a group.
- 2.3.4.1 *Assisting Children:* It is preferable that the parents or caregivers be notified to assist their own child. However, if a child needs immediate assistance, two women who are certified workers must accompany the child. One worker may assist the child, but the other worker must step far enough into the bathroom to ensure a clear view of the volunteer. Workers should never be out of sight of at least one other adult when assisting a child.
- 2.3.4.2 *Changing Clothes in the Bathroom:* Changing of children's clothing is prohibited in all restrooms. If there is a need for a child to change his/her clothing, notify the parents or caregiver contacted to give assistance.
- 2.3.4.3 *Changing Diapers (Nursery):* Parents or caregivers must provide explicit permission for nursery workers to change their child's diaper. Otherwise, the parent or caregiver will be notified.
- 2.3.4.4 *Nursing Mothers (Nursery):* Nursing mothers are welcome to come to the nursery to nurse their child. Workers should discuss this with nursing mothers. *It is not recommended that nursing mothers take their children out of the nursery to nurse them.*
- 2.3.5 Sanitation and Cleaning**
- 2.3.5.1 General cleanliness is expected of all family ministry spaces. Resources should be organized and neat.
- 2.3.5.2 Nursery sanitation guidelines
- 2.3.5.2.1 Nursery staff/volunteers should wash their hands immediately upon arrival

with waterless cleaner (rub into all hand surfaces for about a minute) or use hot, soapy water. Repeat this after any activity that involves contact with noses, drool, diapering, toileting, etc.

2.3.5.2.2 Discourage children from putting toys and other objects in their mouths. Any toys or objects handled by a child must be cleaned at the end of the day. Do not allow children to share drinking cups or bottles.

2.3.5.2.3 Every staff member or volunteer should follow the Toy & Surface Cleaning Procedure posted in the nursery *before* leaving. This is important because it keeps our nursery sanitary and neat. Toys that have been in any child's mouth should be set aside for proper cleaning/disinfecting before they are used again in nursery.

**2.3.6 Incidents:** Although we strive to maintain a safe environment, incidents do happen.

2.3.6.1 Workers may provide basic first aid (band-aids, ice, etc.) but it must be done in appropriately open areas, not in the bathroom.

2.3.6.2 First aid kits are available in the family ministry spaces.

2.3.6.3 Any time a child is hurt, parents need to be notified. If it is a minor situation, volunteers can notify the parent at sign-out.

2.3.6.4 An *Incident Report* must be completed in *every* circumstance even if there is no outward indication of injury. One copy should be kept on file at the church office and another copy given to the parent or caregiver of the involved children.

## Section 3: Off-Site Events and Transportation

**3.1 Approval:** Off premises activities must be approved by the elder overseeing the ministry and the elders must be notified. Adequate supervision, as determined by the elders, is required for approval.

**3.2 Permission Forms:** A Transportation Permission Form must be filled out by the parent or caregiver prior to the child or youth being carpooled to an off-site event.

**3.3 Car-pooling:** Volunteer workers should not be alone with a child while car-pooling. At least two (2) adults shall supervise all groups of children and youth on off-site events, including in personal cars while transporting children to off-site church events.

**3.4 Overnight Activities:** A minimum of two (2) staff/volunteers should be present at any overnight activity. If participants are both male and female, there needs to be two male and two female adults present. If these conditions cannot be met, the event will be canceled. When private homes are used for overnight events, all adults involved as hosts, hostesses, and chaperones still need to comply to the requirements for volunteers.

## **Section 4: Safety Workshop**

### **4.1 Requirements**

- 4.1.1 All paid staff and volunteers must participate in the Safety Workshop. A record of their completion must be kept on file by the church office.
- 4.1.2 Initial participation must precede involvement in ministry to children, youth and individuals with special needs.
- 4.1.3 It is recommended that paid staff and volunteers participate in the Safety Workshop at least biannually.

### **4.2 Curriculum**

- 4.2.1 The elders shall establish and regularly review a standardized curriculum for the Safety Workshop that shall include instruction in all of the areas outlined by this policy.
- 4.2.2 The Safety Workshop shall be offered at least semi-annually, and more often as the need for volunteer training warrants.

# INCIDENT REPORT

*Family Ministries*

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

*At Bedford Road Baptist Church, we take every possible step to provide a safe, amenable environment for your child(ren) but incidents happen. We are providing this report of an incident involving your child so you can be aware of the situation and how we managed it. A copy of the report will be filed in the church offices as well.*

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child/Children's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident:    ☐ Classroom    ☐ Bathroom    ☐ Playground    ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

Steps taken/Treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

# TRANSPORTATION PERMISSION FORM

*Bedford Road Baptist Church*

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this an overnight event? ☐ No ☐ Yes

## Permissions:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give my child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

permission to participate in the above noted event on the above noted date(s). This participation includes:

- Reasonable supervision and guidance during the event, pursuant to safety and good conduct.
- Transportation to/from the event in personal vehicles driven by adult staff/volunteers.
- Provision of basic first aid and/or seeking medical attention, should the need arise.

## Medical Instruction(s):

- ☐ My child has a pre-existing medical condition (including allergies), I wish to make the leaders of the group aware of. I am listing conditions below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ My child may require the administration of certain medications, which I am listing below with instructions on administering them:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Liability Waiver:

*I agree to hold harmless Bedford Road Baptist Church, its representatives, sponsors, staff, affiliates, and successors from any and all actions, damages or liabilities arising out of the treatment for any sickness or illness incurred by my child(ren).*

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Volunteer Application

*The information contained in this application will be kept confidential and only disclosed to those who have a genuine need to know in order to carry out their responsibilities for/in Bedford Road Baptist Church, or as required by law.*

## Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name (if married): \_\_\_\_\_ School (if a student): \_\_\_\_\_

## Ministry Information

☐ Yes ☐ No I am a covenant member of Bedford Road Baptist Church.

☐ Yes ☐ No I regularly participate in the worship gatherings of Bedford Road Baptist Church.

☐ Yes ☐ No I am involved in a small group or prayer group at Bedford Road Baptist Church.

What other areas of ministry are you already involved in, if any? \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly share your journey with Christ to date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Share why you want to be involved in the Family Ministries: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*As part of our safety procedures, we require a Safety Training Workshop and conduct a full background check on all volunteers. By signing this application, you give the leadership of Bedford Road Baptist Church permission to conduct a background check – the results of which will be kept confidential. Your status as a volunteer is dependent upon your completion of the Safety Training Workshop and an evaluation of your background check.*

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Ministry Leader, add dates here:*

Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Training: \_\_\_\_\_ Background Check: \_\_\_\_\_

# Current Safety Information

## Church Officers

Senior Pastor:	Erik DiVietro
Elders:	Nate Delisi Ray Pouliot
Church Clerk:	Sue Spillane
Financial Secretary:	Robert Bragdon
Treasurer:	Janet Wittenberg

## Safety and Security Team

Safety Coordinator:	Robert Bragdon
Security Advisor:	James Volner
Media Representative:	Erik DiVietro
Insurance Provider:	Church Mutual Insurance

## Family Ministry Leaders

Family Ministries Lead:	Vacant
Youth Ministry Team Leader:	Shaun Mitchell
Upper Elementary Coordinator:	Vacant
Children's Ministry Team Leader:	Ryan Ouellette
Nursery Coordinator:	June Porbunderwala ( <i>currently on leave due to health</i> ) Carol Pouliot ( <i>interim coordinator</i> )