

**SAFE,
SEEN,
PROTECTED**

Child Safety & Abuse Prevention in the Local Church

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Core message

A safe church is built through clear policies, trained leaders, wise boundaries, and courageous reporting.

Why child safety matters

Children are precious

Jesus welcomed children and warned adults not to harm or dismiss them. Safety is part of how we love and disciple.

Parents trust us

Check-in, supervision, and communication show families that we take their trust seriously.

The witness matters

A church that protects children reflects integrity, humility, and care for the vulnerable.

Key phrase: Safety is not just a policy issue — it is a discipleship issue.

Understand the Risk

Abuse prevention begins when adults are willing to name risk without panic or denial.



Abuse is often hidden. Children may delay disclosure or speak indirectly.



Grooming often creates secrecy, dependency, favoritism, and access.



Healthy systems reduce opportunity: visibility, accountability, and clear boundaries.

Discussion prompt

Where could a child or student become isolated or unseen in our church environment?

Examples: bathrooms, empty classrooms, hallway conversations, transportation, overnight events, messaging.

Core Safety Standards

1. Screen workers

Application, references, background check, interview, waiting period, signed policy, and training before serving.

2. Avoid isolation

Use the two-adult rule whenever possible. Keep conversations visible and accountable.

3. Secure release

Use check-in tags. Release only to authorized adults. Pause when uncertain.

4. Bathroom care

Keep assistance observable, age-appropriate, and consistent with policy.

Visibility is not a lack of trust. Visibility is wisdom.

Healthy Boundaries

Physical affection

Public, age-appropriate, brief, and never forced. Prefer side hugs, high fives, fist bumps, and encouraging words.

Digital communication

No secret or ongoing private messaging. Use parent-visible or church-approved channels.

Transportation & meetings

Avoid private rides or secluded meetings. Use approved plans, parent awareness, and visible spaces.

A safe adult does not build private worlds with kids.

Use the Handouts Well

These tools fit the workshop because they turn values into consistent action.

Policy Manual

Our shared agreement: expectations, screening, supervision, boundaries, check-in, and reporting process.

Injury Report

Use when a child is physically hurt or receives care. Record facts: what, where, when, who saw, what care was given.

Behavior Report

Use for repeated disruption, aggression, bullying, unsafe language, elopement, or behavior requiring follow-up.

Document what happened. Communicate with the right people. Escalate when safety is at risk.

Important: forms do not replace abuse reporting. Suspected abuse, neglect, grooming, or disclosure must be escalated immediately.

Recognize, Respond, Report

Volunteers are not investigators. Volunteers are responders and reporters.

Recognize

Take warning signs seriously: fear of a person/place, sexualized behavior, withdrawal, aggression, injuries, neglect, or concerning statements.

Respond

Stay calm. Listen. Reassure. Do not interrogate. Do not promise secrecy. Write down the child's words.

Report

Notify ministry leadership immediately and follow the church reporting policy and state law. Call 911 for immediate danger.

Helpful words: "I'm really glad you told me. You did the right thing. I can't keep this secret because I want to help keep you safe."

Scenario Practice

Scenario 1: Private favorite

A volunteer regularly buys snacks for one student, texts them during the week, and says, "You're the only one who really understands me."

Ask: What concerns do you see?

Scenario 2: Bathroom concern

A child says, "I don't want Mr. ____ to take me to the bathroom anymore."

Ask: What should you do first?

Scenario 3: Pickup problem

A family friend says, "Their mom told me I could pick them up," but they do not have the security tag.

Ask: What does policy require?

Look for: boundary concern → document facts → communicate → escalate/report when required.

Our Commitment

We want every child to know: “I am safe here. I am seen here. I am protected here.”

- ✓ I will follow our church’s child safety policies.
- ✓ I will avoid private, isolated situations with minors.
- ✓ I will speak up when boundaries are crossed.
- ✓ I will report concerns immediately.
- ✓ I will help make our church a safe place for every child.