

# **Child Protection Policy for SEA SDB Church**

## **General Purpose Statement**

Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

## **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term "worker" includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. The term "volunteer" means anyone involved in a day care or school, in overnight activities involving minors, in counseling of minors, or in one-on-one mentoring of minors.

## **Selection of Workers**

We seek to encourage all who engage with our children to model Christian characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

**a) Six Month Rule**

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

**b) Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous **church** affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the **church**.

**c) Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

**d) Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature to include officers of our Seventh Day Baptist churches as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at **church**.

#### e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and “volunteers” as defined above, at their own expense.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the **Education Committee Chairperson and a Junior Leader** in a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Where the Chairperson and the Junior Leader are unable to agree, the issue will be referred to the **Education Committee**. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Should the conviction pose a seeming danger to the congregation, the issue will be referred to the **Pastor**. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the **church**.

## **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and **there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.**

## **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, or between 2 children where there is no mutual consent including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Education Committee Chairperson for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position of working with children or youth.

## **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

## **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at **least age 14**.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

## **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child

similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the “child check” in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the “child check,” **the JUNIOR LEADER** will be contacted. The **Junior Leader** will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

## **Sick Child Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- Green or yellow runny nose;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

## **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with **the Junior LEADERs** to develop a plan of action.

## **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with **Junior LEADERs** if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## **Social Media and Technology**

No child’s image or information will be posted on our church’s social media without parent’s approval. All our church social media will be maintained by individuals who have been authorized by the Session.

## Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom stall and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker will call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the volunteer will notify the available Junior Leader who will then provide the necessary assistance.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. **Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.**

## Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

## Training

Southeast Atlanta Seventh Day Baptist Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are required to attend these training events.

**Youth and Children's Staff/Volunteer Worker Application Form**

Position being applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any other names you have had: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been at this address? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in this state? \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M F Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this church? \_\_\_\_\_ Since when (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

If not, where are you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list residences and churches attended for the last 10 years:

Address City State Church Attended

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Please list any work done in a church, volunteer work, or any work involving minors.

Include type of work, supervisor's name and contact number.

Dates Organization Type of Work Supervisor's Name Phone

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Any other employers in last five years:

Dates Organization Type of Work Supervisor's Name Phone

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Is there any reason you should not work with or around minors? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime involving minors? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes to any, please explain here: \_\_\_\_\_

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Education:

Name Graduate? Year Degree or course of study

High School \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (list): \_\_\_\_\_

References:

(please list three references with at least one being an organizational or professional reference)

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

As part of the church's procedure for verifying the information provided by me on this form or evaluating me for employment purposes, I understand the church may contact persons, employers and/or organizations named by me in this form; conduct a national criminal background check; conduct a sex offender registry check; a social security trace or other appropriate background investigative report which may include information gathered through person interviews with third parties, family members, and persons, with whom I am acquainted. I consent to the church making such checks and understand that this may include information regarding my character, general reputation, and personal characteristics. I further agree to sign any and all documents, consents and/or agreements which may be necessary for the church and its authorized representatives and/or designees to complete the above.

By signing this form, I authorize the church to request and obtain the information described above. Further, I release the church and its denominational agency, affiliates, related entities, agents, employees, and officers (collectively "church") and all references from any claim or liability whatsoever arising out of such request or any information disclosed in response thereto,

and I agree to hold the church and all references harmless and will not to bring any action or assert any claim against the church or any reference on account thereof.

I have read and understand the above and affirm that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct.

Applicant's printed name      Applicant's signature      Date signed

## **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE AND CONSENT TO TREAT FORM – MINOR**

Planned Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Group/Activity leader name: \_\_\_\_\_

Other adults accompanying group:

#### **Details of activity:**

### Method of Transportation:

Cost: **Payment deadline:**

What to bring:

Detach lower portion and return

Name of Child:

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) (printed):

Child's Date of Birth:    /    /       Child's Social Security Number:    -    -

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

My child, \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in  
(Oct. 2016)

(activity) \_\_\_\_\_

List any activities the child is not permitted to engage in): \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT TO TREAT:**

While my child is attending this function, I hereby authorize the adult(s) in charge, or in his/her absence or disability, any adult accompanying or assisting him/her, to consent to the following medical treatment for said minor:

(i) provide for, approve and authorize any health care at any hospital, emergency room, doctor's office or other institution; (ii) employ any physicians, dentists, nurses or other person whose services may be needed for such health care; (iii) review and, if necessary, disclose the contents of any confidential medical records; and, (iv) execute consent forms required by medical, dental or other health authorities incident to the provision of medical, surgical or dental care to the child.

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(signature of parent or legal guardian) (date)

**HEALTH HISTORY INFORMATION AND**

**EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM**

(The following information is confidential and will be used only in case of emergency)

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Child's Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Is your child prone to (check those that apply):

cold  sore throat  fainting spells  bronchitis

cramps  convulsions  allergies (list below)

Does your child have or has ever had (check those that apply):

asthma  heart trouble  lung trouble  sinus trouble

hernia  appendicitis  appendix removed

Is your child currently under any type of medical treatment?  yes  no

Is there any history of behavioral disorders or emotional disturbances?  yes  no

Has your child been under the treatment of a psychiatrist in the past three years?  yes  no

Date of last tetanus shot: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Please list any prescriptions or over-the-counter medications currently being taken:

Name of medication Dosage Times to be taken

What medications may we administer?

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Please list any drug interactions, food or other allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Does your child have any physical disabilities or disorders that may affect their participation in activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any special instructions or comments relating to the questions above or to your child's health and their participation in any activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Numbers:

Contact  
order

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mother name: \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_ relation: \_\_\_\_\_ phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## THINGS LIKED FROM OTHER POLICIES

Following para taken from [newtonpresbytery.org/](http://newtonpresbytery.org/)

### **Selection of Workers**

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### **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two adults (preferably unrelated) will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless parents give written consent (this includes in vehicles).

### **Social Media and Technology**

No child's image or information will be posted on our church's social media without parent's approval. All our church social media will be maintained by individuals who have been authorized by the Session.

### **Training**

All adults responsible for supervising children will receive a copy of our child protection policy, signify they agree to abide by these policies, and will be required to participate in a church sponsored training or when that is not feasible an on-line training course addressing child abuse prevention at <http://www.insuranceboard.org>.

## **Reporting Abuse Reporting** **[www.preventchildabusenj.org](http://www.preventchildabusenj.org)**

### *Who is responsible for reporting suspected child abuse in GA*

ANY person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected has a legal responsibility to report any suspected abuse to the local DFCS office.

### *How does a person make a report of suspected child abuse?*

When a report is required, a mandated reporter "shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made." An oral report must be made immediately by telephone or otherwise, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. If requested by the authorities, this report must be followed by a written report. A report of suspected child abuse should be made to the child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). That is generally the local DFCS office. Reports can also be made by calling the DFCS Child Protective Center hotline at 1-855-GACHILD (1-855-422-4453),

where reports are taken 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the event a person is unable to contact the local DFCS office or the DFCS hotline, the report can be made to the appropriate police authority or district attorney.

#### **What information should be in a report of suspected child abuse?**

The report should contain the name and address of the child and the child's parents or caretakers, if known, along with the child's age and the nature and extent of the child's injuries. The report should also include any evidence of previous injuries and any other information that the reporting person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the person responsible for the injuries. Photographs of a child's injuries which document or support allegations of child abuse may be taken without the permission of the child's parents or guardian. The photographs must be made available to the authorities to whom the report is made.

#### ***How do I report child abuse in Georgia?***

Call the Child Protective Center Hotline at 1-855-GACHILD (1-855-422-44530). They are available and will respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **If a child is in immediate danger, you should call 911.**

#### ***Do callers have immunity from civil or criminal liability?***

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of child abuse or neglect or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action. Calls can be placed to the hotline anonymously.

#### ***What happens when I call the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline?***

The hotline is answered by trained caseworkers who know how to respond to reports of child abuse/neglect. This caseworker may ask you about:

Who: The child and parent/caregiver's name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person's relationship to the child.

What: Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.

When: When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.

Where: Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.

How: How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child.

#### ***What happens after I make the call?***

When a report indicates that a child may be at risk, the Division of Youth and Family Services will promptly investigate the allegations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report.

## Reporting in Georgia

How does a person make a report of suspected child abuse?

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## CHANGE IN CURRENT PRACTICES

### Helpers

- Register new children on CCB. Need to have phone or tablet when assisting.
- Have the numbers of both Junior Leaders.
- Take their telephones for restroom aid in case they need the Junior Leader’s assistance.
- Call the Junior Leader not teaching that week, in cases where child aged 5 and under needs assistance in the restroom.

### Bathroom Break

- Use first 5 mins of class to have all the children go to the restroom in groups.

### Junior Leaders

- Provide tele numbers to youth volunteers.
- Be available for restroom emergencies or have an available replacement.
- Will provide the Head Usher, currently Deaconess Kathlene, with the number of children in attendance each week.

**Questions for Insurance Company**

1. Is a criminal check required even of underage volunteers?
2. Is the 2 adult rule met if there is 1 adult and a youth volunteer?
3. Small church where there is sometimes only 1 student? What is the requirement? Can we have a class in an open area with 2 unrelated teachers?

**ANSWERS**

1. A background check is recommended for any employee or volunteer especially if they are working with children.
2. That would depend on the age of the youth volunteer. We would prefer 2 adults when working with children. The youth volunteer should have a background check done as indicated in question 1 if they are going that route.
3. Yes this will be fine.