

Sexual Misconduct Policy

**Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church
316 West Main Street
Sanford, North Carolina 27332**

Personnel Committee

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Sexual Misconduct Policy

Purpose: The purpose of the sexual misconduct policy adopted by Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church is to provide a safe and secure environment for all preschoolers, children, and youth entrusted in the care of staff members and volunteers.

Scope: This policy will apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteers, who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of preschoolers, children, and youth.

Training: Training is a *mandatory* requirement for all staff persons and volunteers working with preschoolers, children, and youth. The minimum accepted training will be an annual orientation conducted by the minister-in-charge of their area that includes information about this policy, procedures for supervision, as well as information on how to identify and report any inappropriate behavior or sexual misconduct.

Definitions:

1. “Preschooler”, “child”, “children”, and “youth” will be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18).
2. “Adult” will be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. “Worker” will be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for preschoolers, children, and youth.
4. “Sexual misconduct” will be defined as any contact or interaction between a preschooler, child, or youth and another person or adult in which there is sexually oriented behavior, comments, advances, touching, requests or demands for sexual activity, any physical contact of a sexual nature and/or threats of a sexual nature.

Policy:

1. Each staff member and volunteer will receive a copy of this policy and will be asked to familiarize themselves with its contents. Each person will be required to fill out an “Acknowledgement of Receipt” form. In addition, each staff member and volunteer will be required to complete a Volunteer Screening form prior to participating in any preschool, children, and/or youth programs or activities. The screening forms will include personal history, prior children/youth work, and references. A “Request for Criminal Records Check and Authorization” form is also included to be used at the church’s discretion.
2. The Minister-in-charge or his designee is responsible for reviewing and following up on each person’s background if a background check is deemed necessary. These forms will be maintained in a locked file in the church office. The Volunteer Screening forms will be maintained by the staff person in charge of that ministry.

Threshold Requirements for Volunteer Service:

1. **Six Month Rule:** A person must attend and/or be involved in the Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church congregation for a minimum of six (6) months before he or she can volunteer to work with preschoolers, children, or youth. This rule provides time for the individual's motive and character to become better known and gives opportunity to evaluate their suitability for volunteer service.
2. **Membership or Equivalent:** Volunteers who work with preschoolers, children, or youth should be actively engaged in the life of Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church.
3. **Background Checks:** Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church reserves the option to either perform (if a background check was not previously performed) or repeat background checks of persons after five (5) or more years of service or a break of service of more than one (1) year.
4. **Denial of Volunteer Status:** Individuals who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse will not be allowed to volunteer for service in any church-sponsored activity or program for preschoolers, children, or youth.

Supervision of Workers: Minimum supervisory standards are as follows:

On-site:

1. Volunteers should observe the "two-person rule." This rule requires that volunteers are never alone or secluded with preschoolers, children, or youth. It also helps provide a safe, loving environment for the preschoolers, children, and youth and provides volunteers with more encouragement, creativity, and flexibility.
2. Any volunteer under the age of eighteen (18) must be at least three (3) years older than the group being supervised and must be approved by the minister-in-charge of the activity.
3. Doors: Each room used for preschoolers, children, and youth activities will remain open unless the door has a window with an unobstructed view or if there are at least two (2) volunteers present.
4. Supervision will be maintained before, throughout, and after all events until all of the preschoolers, children, and youth are in the custody of their parents/guardians or off of the premises.
5. Rest Room Policy: Preschool restroom doors should be partially open. Adults will assist with restroom and diaper changing duties.
6. Dismissal Policy: All children will only be released to properly identified and pre-authorized individuals.
7. Youth Policy: Adequate supervision provided by at least one (1) adult per six (6) youth. Individual counseling should only be conducted by paid staff with an open office door. If the office door has a window with an unobstructed view, the door may be closed.

Off-site:

1. A written parental permission form must be obtained in advance of all off-site events.
2. Transportation situations: Staff or other volunteers transporting children and/or youth for a church-sponsored event will not be alone with one child.
3. Adequate supervision will be a minimum of one (1) adult to six (6) children/youth. One on one situations with a child or youth are not permissible.

Response and Reporting Procedure:

Volunteers and staff working with preschoolers, children, and youth should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to the minister-in-charge of the activity and/or the Senior Pastor of Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church. Should an incident of misconduct occur or an allegation be made, it is crucial that it be dealt with speedily and confidentially.

A quick, compassionate, and unified response to an alleged incident is expected. All allegations of inappropriate behavior or sexual misconduct will be taken seriously. The entire staff of that activity will be at the service of all official investigating agencies upon request.

The following reporting procedure will be followed:

1. The person who observes the inappropriate behavior or sexual misconduct, or to whom such behavior is reported, will report the incident immediately to the minister-in-charge of the activity.
2. The minister-in-charge will report to the Senior Pastor.
3. The Senior Pastor will:
 - a. Obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his/her address and family information;
 - b. Inform the deacon chair; (this is to ensure that all policies are fulfilled.)
 - c. Contact the alleged victim's parents/guardians. The child/youth's parents or guardian will be contacted immediately, and an in-person meeting will be arranged as soon as practical (a 24-hour time frame is expected.);
 - d. If the situation is unclear, at the parent/guardian's discretion, interview the victim;
 - e. Contact the local authorities (e.g. law enforcement agency, Department of Social Services). (This is a **mandatory legal requirement** in the state of North Carolina for **anyone** who suspects abuse or neglect.)
 - f. Notify the appropriate staff members;
4. Persons who are the objects of the report will be suspended from all activities until the incident report is resolved. Ministers will take the responsibility for informing this person of the suspension and inform them of the steps to be taken in the investigation. Any suspension or removal will be handled with great care and should be handled in a discreet manner, recognizing that the investigation is still being conducted.
5. The Senior Pastor or his designee is the only person authorized to make statements to the media. All requests for statements should be directed to the Senior Pastor.
6. Pastoral support will be available to ALL persons involved with the incident.