



Hopewell Baptist Church - New Kent, Virginia

Youth Protection Policy

Adopted: 7/16/2025

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Youth Protection Policy is to facilitate the creation of an environment where children can learn of and grow in the Gospel of Jesus Christ at Hopewell Baptist Church. The policy is used to promote children's safety, prevent and mitigate risks of harm and abuse, and also to protect adult leaders and ministry volunteers of youth from false allegations. We seek to provide a safe and secure environment that nurtures in God's love for youth participating in activities at Hopewell Baptist Church.

SECTION I - DEFINITIONS

Abuse: as defined by the Code of Virginia and in accordance with the Holy Bible.

Church Leadership: Church leadership includes the Senior Pastor and active Deacon Board.

KidWell Ministry and Children's Sunday School: Children of Elementary School age, Kindergarten through 5th grades.

Nursery Ministry: Children from birth through Preschool.

Well-Student Ministry: Youth in Middle and High School, 6th through 12th grades.

SECTION II - LEADER QUALIFICATIONS

Adult Volunteer of Children's Ministries Qualifications:

- Be an adult, 18 years of age or older, who identifies with his or her gender as assigned at birth by God
- Be a member and/or a regular attendee of at least six months
- Submits to and passes an annual background check
 - If a background check discloses prior convictions of offenses against children, violence, sexual misconduct, and domestic abuse; the individual will be disqualified from volunteering in youth ministries. Other offenses will be reviewed confidentially with church leadership and a determination made.
- Completes trainings, if assigned

Youth Volunteer of Children's Ministries Qualifications:

- Be between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age, who identifies with his or her gender as assigned at birth by God
- Be a regular Youth attendee of at least 6 months
- Volunteers alongside Adult Volunteers of Children's Ministries
- Completes trainings, if assigned

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SECTION III – CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS

Two-Deep Leadership: Whenever possible, two-deep leadership will be utilized consisting of two Adult Volunteers on church grounds or during a church-sanctioned event.

- A single Adult Volunteer plus a Youth Volunteer is acceptable, if two-adult volunteers are unavailable.
- If the scenario is unable to accommodate two-deep leadership, then doors to classrooms must be left open or have windows.
- For nursery, there shall be at least one female Adult Volunteer present.

Restroom Procedures:

- Bathroom/toileting assistance for children requiring such assistance can be provided by one Adult Volunteer in the “family bathroom” with the door left ajar to protect the privacy of the child while also allowing monitoring of the adult assisting the child.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Touch: Physical touch and showing affection are important to a child’s development and a demonstration of God’s love. There is danger when physical touch is inappropriate, either intentionally or inadvertently. Physical touch should be brief and appropriate.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Discipline:

- Appropriate forms of discipline include but are not limited to redirecting, praising good behaviors, age-appropriate time-out, notifying the parent/guardian.
- Inappropriate forms of discipline include but are not limited to shaming, yelling, blaming, ignoring, using touch in any manner.
- Restraint may only be used when a child is a danger to self or others (hitting, kicking, etc.).

Check-In and Check-Out Procedures: Check-in and check-out procedures are in place for Nursery, Children’s Sunday School, and Kidwell ministries including:

- Photo identification name badges shall be worn while on duty by Adult and Youth Volunteers.
- Every child will have a completed Child Information Form placed in the appropriate ministry binder.
- Parents/guardians must sign in and sign out their child(ren).

Overnight - Multi-Day Activities (Well-Student Ministry):

- Signed Activity Permission & Medical Information and Consent by parent/guardian is required to participate. Medical information is kept confidential.
 - OTC medications and minor first-aid will be administered by Adult Volunteers in accordance with the permission given by the parent/guardian on the Medical Information and Consent form.

- Prescription medications will be administered or dispensed by Adult Volunteers in accordance with the permission given by the parent/guardian on the Medical Information and Consent form. These medications will be kept in a secure location by the Adult Volunteers.
- If both genders are participating in an overnight activity, there shall be at least one male and one female Adult Volunteer present.
- Females and Males shall have separation between sleeping accommodations.
- One Adult Volunteer and one youth cannot share the same sleeping accommodation. There must be a third person present, either another Adult Volunteer or youth, except when parents share sleeping accommodations with their own child.
- When possible, the youth's sleeping accommodations will be grouped based on age in addition to gender. For example, middle school girls in a room and high school girls in another room.

Electronic Communication:

- Private electronic communications between Adult Volunteers and youth shall also include at least one other Adult Volunteer or the youth's parent.
- At their discretion, Adult Volunteers at youth ministry events may restrict use of electronic devices.

Weapons:

- Firearms and weapons are prohibited during youth ministry events.
 - Firearm exception: If an Adult Volunteer is also a member of the Church Security Team, which has current concealed carry permits on file with the church, and this Adult Volunteer/leader chooses to carry a firearm while on Hopewell Baptist Church's premises, it must be concealed and never left unattended by them.

SECTION IV - POLICY COMPLIANCE AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Policy Compliance: Every volunteer/staff of Hopewell Baptist Church is essential to maintain a safe environment for youth by following the child protection standards of this policy, and every volunteer/staff has a responsibility to report questions or concerns of abuse, witnessed abuse, and abuse reported by a youth.

Incident Reporting: When a child reports an incident of abuse (whether on church grounds or elsewhere) or when an adult witnesses an incident of abuse:

- Provide for the youth's immediate safety and emotional needs.
- All incidents must be reported immediately to the pastor and/or ministry leader.
- Notify the youth's parents/guardians immediately, unless the parents/guardians are the accused.
- An incident report must be completed immediately by the adult to which the abuse was reported or the adult who reports witnessing the incident. Blank Incident Reports will be available in the church offices located in both church buildings.

- The pastor and/or ministry leader will notify the New Kent Department of Social Services (Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm) and the New Kent Sheriff's Office immediately of the incident. Reports can also be made to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 1-800-552-7096 seven days per week, 24 hours per day when reporting needs to occur outside of the Department of Social Services' regular office hours.
- The incident should be kept confidential including only the individuals who need to know, such as the ministry leader and pastor and Chairman of the Deacon Board. Others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Deacon Board.
- The accused will be removed from service until the situation is resolved.

SECTION V - RESOURCES AND FORMS

Resources:

- New Kent Department of Social Services 804-966-1853
- New Kent Sheriff's Office 804-966-9500
- Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-552-7096
- Virginia Code: C22VAC40-705-30. Types of abuse and neglect
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title22/agency40/chapter705/section30/>
- Virginia Code: 63.2-100. Definitions of Abused or neglected child
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/63.2-100/>
- A Guide For Mandated Reporters In Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cwse5691/story_content/external_files/Mandated%20Reporter%20Guide.pdf