

Westside Bible Fellowship

Child Abuse Risk Reduction

CARR

Policy and Procedures

“And whoever receives one such child in My name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy milestone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Matthew 18:6

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Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed and/or revised every 2 years by the CARR Policy Director

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Chapter 1

Westside Bible Fellowship

Child Abuse Risk Reduction Policy Overview

Introduction:	Westside Bible Fellowship (Referred to as WBF throughout this publication) is committed to nurturing and strengthening the individuals and families who visit and who have made WBF their church home. Because of the widespread problem of child abuse in our society, the following policy has been established to reduce the risk of child abuse at WBF.
Purpose:	The purpose of this Child Abuse Risk Reduction (CARR) Policy is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide all children who attend WBF a safe and secure environment.• Develop a consciousness among all childcare workers so that the possibility of a child abuse incident is very unlikely.• Ensure that every one who makes WBF their church home and works with children at WBF will know how to reduce the risk of potential child abuse situations and report incidents should they occur.
Procedural Guidelines:	Guidelines regarding the implementation of this policy, appropriate childcare worker behaviors, supervision of workers and the reporting and documenting of child abuse incidents must be established and followed.
Training:	WBF will provide training on this policy and procedures for new childcare workers. Workers who have already been trained will take a written or online refresher examination every two years. Successful completion of the examination requires a 70% or better score. If a person has been CARR certified, but let's their certification expire for more than 5 years, a new background check will be required. The training is required for all workers who work with children in Life Groups or WBF ministries and events. Written information regarding child abuse and risk reduction will be available upon request for review by anyone working with children including parents and interested members of the congregation.
Approved Workers:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approved workers are those who have completed the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive training on the WBF CARR policy & procedures• Complete all application forms• Pass a Criminal Records background check (All workers 18 years & up)• Receive approval from the elders to be a childcare worker.<p>Note: Any reference in this policy regarding approved workers, childcare workers or workers shall meet this requirement.</p>2. All elders and deacons and leaders of ministries involving children must be approved workers.
Visitors:	Visitors who may work only one day are not required to complete CARR training prior to working with children or youth. However, they must be under the constant supervision of an adult (18 years or older) who is an approved worker, supervisor, or ministry leader and comply with the behavior guidelines of this policy and procedure.

Chapter 2

Training Childcare Workers

Introduction: WBF requires all individuals interested in working with children in any way at WBF to be trained on the Child Abuse Risk Reduction policy, procedures, forms and reporting requirements.

Training: WBF requires all workers to read this manual and take a test to ensure they understand the policies and procedures. Workers who have already been trained will take a refresher examination every two years. Successful completion of the examination requires a 70% or better score. The training is required for all workers who work with children in Life Groups or WBF ministries and events.

Written information regarding the WBF child abuse risk reduction program will be available upon request for review by anyone working with children including parents and interested members of the congregation.

Who should complete training: All the elders and deacons at WBF
Anyone who supervises a WBF ministry or event involving children or youth
Anyone working directly with children or youth in any WBF ministry or event

Training Content: Training shall include the following:

- Review the reasons why WBF is implementing the program
- Definition of child abuse
- Sexual and physical abuse symptoms
- What constitutes inappropriate conduct
- Church policies and procedures that govern working with children or youth
- Reporting procedures for observed or suspected misconduct
- Application to be a childcare worker and background check procedures

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Approved Workers

Approved Workers:

All those working with children in Life Groups only (age 12-15) or any ministry (age 13 and up) are required to:

- Have attended Westside 6 months or longer
- Receive training on the WBF CARR policy & procedures
- Complete all application forms and CARR test
- Pass a Criminal Records background check (Workers 18 years & older)
- Receive approval from the elders to be a childcare worker

Any reference in this procedure regarding approved workers, childcare workers or workers shall meet this requirement.

Childcare Workers Ages:

Age	Childcare Allowed	Training Required	Application Forms Required	Background Check Required
12 - 15	Life Groups	Yes	Yes	No
13 - 17	All Areas	Yes	Yes	No
18 & up	All Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes

Final Approval:

The elders review all completed childcare worker applications. They are the final authority on who is approved to work with children at WBF.

Applying to be a Childcare Worker

Introduction: Individuals who desire to work with children at WBF meetings, functions or events are required to complete the applications forms and training required by this procedure

Application Process:

1. Only individuals who have been attending WBF for 6 months or more can apply to be a childcare worker - unless waived by the Elders.
2. The following forms are required:
 - WBF Children and Youth Worker Application
 - Criminal Background Check
CARR Exam

Screening Process: Once the church office receives all the documents, the Elders will review the completed application. If everything is in order and approved, the applicant's name will be added to the CARR Approved list. The list will be placed on the hallway bulletin board.

The Elders at WBF make the final decision whether or not an applicant will be approved to work with children at WBF.

Chapter 3

Childcare Worker Behavior

Nursery Guidelines

Introduction: All those working with children at WBF are required to know and use appropriate behavior with children. Below are the guidelines for working with nursery age children at WBF meetings, functions or events. All workers are required to know and follow these guidelines.

Guidelines:

1. A method for positive identification of the parent or guardian of a child shall be in use for children left in the nursery.

Note:

If another adult or sibling over the age of 10 is authorized by a parent to retrieve the child, this information must be provided in writing in advance, and the proper identification procedure must be followed.

2. Scheduled nursery workers, nursing mothers, and other parents are allowed in the nursery only if approved by the Nursery Supervisor. Normally parents or others leaving children or picking them up must wait outside the nursery.
3. Any other access to the nursery is to be used only in the event of an emergency.
4. There will be a minimum of **two approved workers** (one adult and one 13 year old or older) in the nursery area at all times to ensure adequate supervision of the children.
5. Workers will not remove children from the nursery area except in case of emergency.
6. Absolutely no physical punishment shall be used by a church worker against any minor (unless appropriately given by a parent to his or her own child). Alternate means of discipline shall be used, such as time outs, denial of privileges and / or reporting to supervisors or parents.

Note: Workers shall be aware at all times of the possibility of an appearance of inappropriate physical contact between adults and minors, which could be construed as sexual in nature, and should take appropriate safeguards.

**Bathroom
Guidelines**

1. When assisting toddlers (2 and 3 yr. olds) with bathroom needs:
 - The door should be left open if practical.
 - Only assistance absolutely required should be provided.
 - If a child is able to take care of his or her own needs, this should be encouraged.
 - Bathroom assistance, when required, should be provided only by adult workers.
2. When accompanying older preschoolers or kindergartners to the bathroom:
 - The worker should first check the bathroom for other occupants, and then stand outside the outer bathroom door while the child uses the facility.
 - If the child requires assistance with any outer clothing, this may be provided at the bathroom doorway.

**Personal use of
Nursery**

Anyone choosing to use the nursery during a time other than a sanctioned WBF ministry event or activity is responsible and accountable for supervising their own children.

Preschool & Kindergarten Safety Guidelines

Introduction: All those working with children at WBF are required to know and use appropriate behavior with children. Below are the guidelines for working with Preschool and Kindergarten age children at WBF meetings, functions or events. All workers are required to know and follow these guidelines.

- Guidelines:**
1. A minimum of **two approved workers** (one adult and one 13 year old or older) will be present at all times with any group of Preschool or Kindergarten children. If a teacher needs to step out briefly, the classroom door should be left open, so frequent classroom checks may occur by a Sunday School committee member or designee.
 2. If requested and approved by a leadership team member, a parent is allowed in the classroom to stay with their child if they are new or visiting. Normally parents or others leaving children or picking them up must do so at the Sunday School check in area.
 3. When assisting toddlers (2 and 3 yr. olds) with bathroom needs:
 - The door should be left open if practical.
 - Only assistance absolutely required should be provided.
 - If a child is able to take care of his or her own needs, this should be encouraged.
 - Bathroom assistance, when required, should be provided only by adult workers.
 4. When accompanying older preschoolers or kindergartners to the bathroom:
 - The worker should first check the bathroom for other occupants, and then stand outside the outer bathroom door while the child uses the facility.
 - If the child requires assistance with any outer clothing, this may be provided at the bathroom doorway.
 5. Preschoolers and kindergartners will only be released after class to a parent or legal guardian, or older sibling with specific advance authorization by the parent.
 6. Any activities, which are scheduled to take place away from the church, must have parental permission.

Note: Permission slips will be available from designated supervisors or ministry leaders.
 7. Absolutely no physical punishment shall be used by a church worker against any minor (unless appropriately given by a parent to his or her own child). Alternate means of discipline shall be used, such as time outs, denial of privileges and / or reporting to supervisors or parents.

Note: Workers shall be aware at all times of the possibility of an appearance of inappropriate physical contact between adults and minors, which could be construed as sexual in nature, and should take appropriate safeguards.
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Youth Guidelines (1st Grade and up)

Introduction:

All those working with School age children and youth at WBF meetings, functions or events are required to know and follow these guidelines.

Guidelines:

1. One certified CARR adult may teach 1st grade and older classes as long as two or more children are present in the class. This will be accompanied by frequent classroom checks by a Sunday School committee member or designee. Workers must avoid situations where one adult is alone with one child (out of eye and ear range of others).
 2. If requested and approved by a leadership team member, a parent is allowed in the classroom to stay with their child if they are new or visiting. Normally parents or others leaving children or picking them up must do so at the Sunday School check in area.
 3. Absolutely no contact of a sexual or romantic nature between workers and children or youth shall be allowed. Workers are responsible to ensure, to the maximum possible extent, that no sexual activity between minors is allowed to take place.
 4. Workers are encouraged to work with and involve parents whenever appropriate, to avoid the appearance of secrecy or inappropriate relationships between workers and older children and youth.
 5. Situations may arise where parents should not be immediately informed if an abusive *home* situation is suspected.
 6. However, suspected abuse must be immediately reported to supervisors or ministry leaders and then by them to proper authorities.
 7. Additionally, serious emotional or mental trauma, or other concerns beyond the experience and ability of a worker to deal with must be reported to the appropriate supervisor or ministry leader.
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Transportation Guidelines

1. Any activities, which are scheduled to take place away from the church, must have parental permission.
Note: Permission slips will be available from designated supervisors or ministry leaders.
 2. Childcare workers who provide transportation for children must be Approved Workers and shall not drive with only one child alone (unless it is their own child).
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Life Group and Other Ministry Events

Introduction: Guidelines for providing childcare during Life Group or other ministry events in the home or a meeting place while parents or guardians are in the immediate vicinity or nearby.

Life Group Worker Guidelines:

1. Life Group workers must be 12 years or older and must meet the policy requirements for Approved Workers.
2. Life Group childcare workers must follow the procedures appropriate for the age group for which they are caring.
3. Since Life Group workers are exempt from the “two worker rule”, parents of children at Life Group meetings or other Life Group activities are responsible for periodically checking on their children to ensure proper supervision.

Visitors and Other Worker Guidelines

Introduction: All those working with children and youth at WBF meetings, functions or events are required to know and follow these guidelines.

Guidelines: Visitors or volunteers who may work only one day are not required have received training prior to working with children or youth provided that they:

1. Are under the supervision of an adult (18 years or older) childcare worker, ministry leader or supervisor who is an Approved Worker.
2. Comply with the behavioral guidelines of this policy and procedure.

Chapter 4

Childcare Worker Supervision

Childcare Worker Supervisor:

The supervisor or ministry leader responsible for any ministry area involving children shall supervise all childcare workers who are working with children whether in Sunday school, nursery or youth.

Remember: Childcare workers must be monitored regularly but randomly to ensure this policy and corresponding procedures are being followed.

Life Group parents are responsible for monitoring childcare workers during Life Group activities.

Definition:

A supervisor or ministry leader is anyone who has been given responsibility of a sanctioned WBF meeting, event or activity and must meet the following guidelines.

- The supervisor or ministry leader is responsible for childcare workers in his or her ministry activity.
- In the absence of the ministry leader, a responsible CARR approved worker from that ministry my designated to monitor that activity.

Responsibilities:

1. Ensure adequate staffing and training for workers in each area, as well as familiarity with procedures, forms and reporting requirements.
2. Give workers and parents an opportunity to critique and evaluate programs and events on an ongoing basis.
3. Regularly observe workers, and informally evaluate them on a periodic basis.

Note: Any workers whose ability to relate appropriately to the children, or whose fitness for a particular position is in question, should be offered training and advice as might be helpful, and if necessary, relieved of responsibility.

4. Supervisors or their responsible designees should be randomly present during church sponsored events throughout, church hallways, bathrooms, nursery and Sunday School or any other area where children are present during the activity or service.
5. Respond to and report instances of possible or suspected abuse.

Note: Allegations must be taken seriously and addressed quickly.

- Possible victims, other children, workers, parents, and any potential witnesses should be interviewed thoroughly and promptly (keeping in mind the importance of an unbiased report, which does not include statements or ideas, planted or suggested by interviewers).
 - Written reports and notes of any incident, even those deemed unfounded and not taken further, must be kept on file.
6. A report must be made to the police, sheriff or a Children's Services Division

representative in any instance where, in the opinion of the supervisor, upon review, there is a possibility that sexual or physical abuse has occurred, either at the church or elsewhere, by church workers or others.

7. Supervisors and elders at Westside Bible Fellowship are encouraged to seek the assistance of other professionals, such as attorneys, law enforcement personnel, and medical and psychological experts, both in regards to implementation of policies and information, as well as in the event of actual concerns, which may arise.

Chapter 5

Indicators of Child Abuse

It is important to be aware of these indicators, but we should, as well, be careful not to read too much into them.

Child Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is characterized by physical injury (for example, bruises and fractures) resulting from punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or otherwise harming a child. Although the injury is not an accident, the parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child. The injury may have resulted from over discipline or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or condition.

The injury may be the result of a single episode or of repeated episodes and can range in severity from minor bruising to death. Any injury resulting from physical punishment that requires medical treatment is considered outside the realm of normal disciplinary measures. A single bruise may be inflicted inadvertently; however, old and new bruises in combination, bruises on several areas of the face, or bruising in an infant suggest abuse. In addition, punishment that involves hitting with a closed fist, kicking, inflicting burns, or throwing the child is considered child abuse regardless of the severity of the injury sustained.

**Physical Abuse
Visual Indicators:**

1. Bruises or welts on the face, torso, back or thighs, in various stages of healing.
2. Bruises or welts reflecting the use of any article such as a belt, belt buckle or coat hanger.
3. Burns from cigarettes or cigars, especially on the soles of the feet, palms of the hands, and back.
4. Immersion burns in hot water or oil (these burns are usually shaped like a sock or a glove).

**Physical Abuse
Behavioral
Indicators:**

1. Wariness of adult contact.
2. Apprehension when other children cry
3. Extreme aggression or withdrawal.
4. Fear of parent or guardian.

Child and Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse includes any sexual activity with a child; by an adult, an older child, or in some cases another child of the same general age, including: fondling (touching); oral, genital or anal penetration or contact, either with a body part or another object; intercourse (consensual or rape); verbal comments of a sexual nature; pornographic displays; exhibitionism; and allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Remember: It is important to be aware of the following indicators, but we should, as well, be careful not to read too much into them.

- Sexual Abuse Visual Indicators:**
1. Difficulty in walking or sitting
 2. Torn, stained or bloody undergarments
 3. Pain or itching in genital area
 4. Bruises, bleeding or infection in external genital areas
 5. Venereal disease
 6. Pregnancy
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- Sexual Abuse Behavioral Indicators:**
1. Unwilling to change clothes
 2. Unwilling to participate in physical activities
 3. Withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior
 4. Poor peer relationships
 5. Delinquent or runaway pattern behaviors
 6. Fear of a specific person
 7. Unusual interest in, or knowledge of, sexual matters
 8. Expressing affection in inappropriate ways for age
 9. Promiscuous or suggestive behavior
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Chapter 6

Reporting Abuse Incidents

Introduction:

Those who work with children in most instances have a legal obligation to report any suspicion that arises that physical or sexual abuse may have occurred to the child at the church or elsewhere.

Reporting Incidents:

Deciding whether or not to report suspected child abuse can be a difficult and confusing process, yet it is the important first step toward protecting a child who might be in danger. Professionals who work with children are required by law to report suspected neglect or abuse. About 20 states require that every citizen who suspects a child is being abused or neglected must report.

However, regardless of whether or not you are among those who are mandated to report, accurate reporting of the suspected maltreatment of any child is a moral obligation. "Reasonable suspicion" based on objective evidence is all that is needed to report. That evidence might be your firsthand observation or statements made by a parent or a child.

Immunity of Person Making Report in Good Faith

Per Oregon Revised Statutes 419B.025: "Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for the making thereof shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to the making or content of such report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report." {1993 c.546 s.17}

Childcare Workers Reporting Incidents

Introduction: Any WBF approved childcare worker who observes physical or other indications that lead the worker to suspect possible physical or sexual abuse or who observes inappropriate activity on the part of another worker is to report any such concerns to a supervisor or ministry leader immediately.

Reasonable Suspicion: Reasonable suspicions of child abuse (physical and/or sexual) may result from:

1. A parent or child reporting information indicative of abuse.
2. An approved childcare worker observing.
 - a. Physical and/or other indications on a child that leads them to suspect possible abuse.
 - b. A situation between an adult and a child that leads them to suspect inappropriate activity or abuse on the part of the adult.

How to Report an Incident:

1. Make every effort to ensure confidentiality, i.e., do not question the child in front of other children, or allow the child to detail allegations in front of other children.

Note: Confidentiality is essential for the protection of the child, the church and others involved.
2. Do not question the child in a manner that could be construed as leading or putting words in his or her mouth. The child must volunteer the information without coaching from the worker.
3. Immediately report the suspicions or allegations to the designated supervisor or ministry leader in your area.

Childcare Supervisors / Ministry Leaders Documenting and Reporting Incidents

Introduction: All WBF supervisors and ministry leaders are required to document and report to the elders all incidents in which child abuse has been reported.

How to Document an Incident: Upon receiving the verbal report of a child abuse incident from an approved worker:

1. Help the worker complete Section A of the Child Abuse Incident Form.
2. Inform the worker that they will need to cooperate fully with any resulting investigation.
3. Complete Section B the Child Abuse Incident Form.

How to Report an Incident: Upon completion of the WBF Child Abuse Incident Form:

1. Report the incident to the WBF elders as soon as possible.
2. Cooperate fully with any resulting investigation.
3. The WBF elders will investigate, document and report all incidents.
4. All documents submitted by workers, supervisors, and elders in the course of an investigation of an alleged child abuse incident will be kept completely confidential, viewed only as needed by approved personnel.
