



Red Bank Fellowship Church

Ministry Safe Policy
for Children and Youth Ministry
Staff and Volunteers.

August 26th, 2025

Overview of the Red Bank Fellowship Church's (RBFC) Safety System

Because we love children and youth, and desire to protect them, RBFC requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or youth (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **THREE SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placement begins.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

RBFC Policy and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behaviors of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC).

Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or gatekeeper), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip RBFC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, RBFC requires all staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training online. This training link will be sent to all staff and volunteers from the Director. This training will be renewed every year.

STEP TWO: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP THREE: Background Check

RBFC requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children or youth activities or programming undergo a Background Check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of Background Check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually oriented or sex-related crimes or domestic violence crimes may not serve in ANY area providing services to children or youth. In addition, certain other past criminal acts may preclude an applicant from serving minors. Background checks will be run on a yearly basis.

*A volunteer must attend RBFC for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, youth and vulnerable populations.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

RBFC supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of South Carolina State Law for any staff member or volunteer to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in RBFC programs. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at RBFC to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observation to their supervisor, and/or the Children's Director, and/or the Youth Director, or in some instances the Pastor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

RBFC staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all RBFC policies. Anyone working with children or youth at RBFC is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff members and must follow these guidelines. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children or Youth Ministries-for both staff members and volunteers.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

RBFC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported; in accordance with this policy and state law, to local law enforcement (or Child Protective Services). A report will also be given by the Children/Youth Director to the Staff Parish Relations Committee for review.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor. Because sexual abusers groom children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report grooming behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor. Staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstances, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. Any questions or concerns related to the above-mentioned behavior need to be discussed with the supervisor and/or the children's director or youth director.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to local law enforcement and/or Lexington County Child Protective Services Emergency Response Hotline: 1-888-CARE4US or 1-888-227-3487. If the child is in that moment in an emergency or life-threatening situation call 911.

Because many adults are unfamiliar with South Carolina reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, RBFC utilizes a ‘tandem or dual report’ model, where permitted. A ‘dual report’ occurs when RBFC supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation together with the individual who saw, heard or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, CPS OR THE ABUSE HOTLINE DIRECTLY. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and youth, and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Children or Youth Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Child protective services, or RBFC.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be precluded from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, youth or vulnerable populations. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from RBFC. To be determined by SPRC.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participating in any activities involving children, youth or vulnerable populations.

Staff members and volunteers should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy.

Children's Ministries Staff Monitoring Plan

BUILDING SAFETY

Every ministry director is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children or youth. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children. No child will ever be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes or activities.

SUPERVISION

Only parents dropping off children, screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and children/youth are allowed in areas where ministry to children or youth is occurring. All other people should not be in these areas. In the event the ministry takes place in an area of the church or facility that caters to multiple ministries, it is the staff member or volunteers' responsibility to make sure children stay in the room or area they are supposed to be in, and they do not allow non-screened adults to linger in children/youth areas.

***Two trained, screened adults should supervise children at all times.**

RBFC practices the Two Adult Rule, which requires a reasonable number of adult leaders (with a minimum of two) to be maintained when supervising children. A married couple or two family members comprise one adult for purposes of compliance with the Two Adult Rule.

Avoid being alone with an individual child/youth in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children, another staff member or volunteer must be notified so that the Two Adult Rule can be followed.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child, take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

If you need to talk with a child alone, do it in the hallway or in a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

Avoid distractions that would impact your ability to effectively supervise children and maintain situational awareness (i.e., use of cell phones, wearing headphones, talking with other adults).

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving. It is important to maintain head count of the number of children in your class/group. Using sign-in and sign-out sheets can also help keep up with the number of children in your care.

On the playground, remember to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints (example: under slides, in corners, behind structures). Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Any time a child/youth has been entrusted to RBFC staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child/youth. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children/youth in their charge.

Children/Youth Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children/youth in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of ministry events.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child/youth has authority to pick up the child.

In the event staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Children/Youth Director before releasing the child.

Communicating with Families

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are invited to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child or youth during ministry events will be required to complete the volunteer and screening process.

Disciplinary Policies

DISCIPLINE

It is RBFC policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct their behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually, when possible, try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting.

*When working with younger children, some physical redirecting may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.

2. If the child repeats the action, guide him or her to a quiet place-separate from the other children-for a short but designated period. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.

3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. (Sam, you didn't stop hitting Cole when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group)

4. After a third time, refer them to the director. The director may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the ministry director immediately.

NEVER....

-Yell at a child.

-Grab a child.

-Threaten a child.

-Hit a child,

-Confront parents in front of others.

-Openly humiliate a child in front of others.

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable at RBFC in our ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry director.

1. First offense: Issue a warning to the child and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. Second offense: Pull the offending child(ren) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with the director and the child's parents.
 - a. Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that the child who was the target of bullying behavior is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP...be discreet.
3. Third offense: Send the child to the ministry director for communication with the child's parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

Restroom Policies

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a restroom in use by children. Adults should use a separate restroom apart from restrooms used by children during children's events, unless it is not possible given the building layout or location of the event. In the event one restroom is available for children and adults to use, an adult should use the restroom when children are not in there. The adults should notify other workers or volunteers that they are using the restroom so that children will not be sent to the restroom while they are using it.

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SIXTH GRADE

If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another volunteer to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior restroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the room. If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the restroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be provided in the presence of another volunteer or staff member.

-Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.

-Never wipe a potty-trained child, you may provide toilet paper and/or wipes, but the child needs to wipe themselves.

-In the event of a bathroom accident where a child has soiled their clothes, a second adult must be present when assisting the child in cleaning up and changing their clothes.

Verbal Interactions with Children/Youth

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children/youth should be positive and uplifting. RBFC staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of children and youth.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children and youth.

Physical Contact

RBFC is committed to protecting Children and Youth in its care. To this end, RBFC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our children and youth ministries. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working with Children and Youth:

- Physical contact in any form should be above reproach, for the benefit of the child, and never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.

- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff and volunteers in children and youth ministries must always foster trust.

- Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children/youth is important for a child's development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

AVOID the following interactions:

- Never touch a child in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even if a child has been injured in one of these areas. Never allow casual contact in these areas, under or over clothing.

- No sitting on laps.

- No handholding, unless part of worship/prayer service or a group game (or unless the child is a younger child being led by adults to their activity location).

- Never touch in anger or disgust.

- Never touch in a manner that may be construed as sexual.

- Never carry a child piggy-back, or on your shoulders.

- Never place hands beneath a child's clothing to play, rub or comfort.

- Never tickle, participate in 'horseplay' or wrestle with a child.

Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

Physical affection should occur only in observable locations or when in the presence of other staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children and youth under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others, including other children.

Inappropriate touch and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touch or display of affection should be immediately reported to a supervisor, or the Children/Youth director, or the Pastor.

Electronic Communications

All communication with children and youth must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with ministry leadership or a parent.

TEXTING

Texting between staff members or volunteers with children is not permissible.

Texting with youth is allowed if the content of the text messages stays in the context of a healthy boundary. IF the content of a text message with a youth turns into something outside of a healthy adult/youth conversation the text message needs to immediately stop and a supervisor needs to be notified immediately. Failure to stop inappropriate conversations with youth will result in the immediate dismissal of working with youth. Depending on the content of the text messages parents and/or police will be notified as well.

COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS

It is permissible for the ministry to use applications that have messaging features-using a children's ministry account. At least one other staff member must have credentials to access the application and regularly review the messaging, comments and postings.

It is not permissible for staff members to use ministry or personal accounts to direct message children.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff members and volunteers must maintain a high moral standard in social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension from participation in children or youth ministries at RBFC. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media. Please remember you reflect the ministries at RBFC in what you post.

Tobacco Use

RBFC requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during RBFC activities or programs, whether on campus or away. RBFC is a tobacco-free facility, this includes vapes.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any RBFC facility, while traveling with children/youth, or while working with or supervising children/youth during any RBFC program or activity.

Medications

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child/youth while serving in ministry programs, including over the counter drugs without parental consent. For certain trips or activities (i.e., missions' trips, camps, etc.), RBFC will require a parent to give written permission to dispense medications.

Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may, from time to time, be in a position to provide transportation for children or youth. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in transporting children.

- Children/Youth should be transported directly to their destination.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Transport only the amount of children/youth for whom you have seatbelts.
- Seatbelts should be always worn while in the vehicle.
- In addition to the standard background check, a background check that runs the staff member or volunteer's driving record must be completed. Only applicants with a 'good driving record' will be allowed to transport children/youth. A good driving record is defined as no recent tickets or accidents. This is to be determined by the Children/Youth director and SPRC.

Planning Group Events

When planning a group event outside of regular programming, staff and volunteer leaders should keep parents informed of details and abide by RBFC policies. Some events may require a release form.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Some youth ministries activities/events require overnight sleeping arrangements for youth, adult volunteers/staff (i.e., camp, mission trips, lock-ins, etc.). All programmed overnights must be approved by the Youth Director and receive permission from parents. No overnights are allowed on RBFC property unless part of a ministry sponsored event.

No overnight between any church staff/volunteers and an unrelated minor may occur in any context. If pre-existing family relationships exist wherein overnights may occur between 'family friends', these relationships must be communicated to a director. Always make sure parents have given permission for these relationships.

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of RBFC's Ministry Safe Policy for children and youth ministry staff and volunteers and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at RBFC.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated by RBFC.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at RBFC at any time (if possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply contractual employment relationship between RBFC and me. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the RBFC Ministry Safe Policy for children and youth ministry.

Staff member or Volunteer name (print)

Staff member or Volunteer signature

Date

*Failure to agree to the Ministry Safe policies and procedures will result in not being able to participate in Children/Youth Ministry.

*This page is to remain with the Children/Youth Ministry Director.

*The Ministry Safe policy will be reviewed by staff and volunteers on a yearly basis.