



POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR

CHILD PROTECTION

Sojourn J-Town - January 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Vision	4
Purpose	4
Background Screening	4
Background Checks	4
Disqualifications	5
Child Safety Training	5
Outside Rule	6
Counseling and Meeting with Minors	6
Childcare for Community Groups or Other Small Group Settings	6
Childcare or Children's Ministry Activities for Sojourn Missions Trips	7
Abuse Reporting	7
Defining Abuse	7
Mandatory Reporting	8
When and How to Report	9
Practices for Children's Ministry Check-in and Check-out	9
Check-In	9
Check-Out	10
First-Time Visitors	10
Children's Ministry Classroom Safety and Security	11
General	11
Aggressive or Inappropriate Behavior	12
Food Policies	12
Sickness Policy	13

Restroom and Diaper Policy	13
Sanitation and Hygiene	14
Student Ministry Safety and Security Policies	15
Drug and Alcohol Usage	15
Transportation and Vehicle Safety	15
Off-Site Activities	16
Student to Staff/Volunteer Communication	16
Overnight Policies	17
Emergency Response Plan	18
Policy and Protection Committee	18
Registered Sex Offender (RSO) Policy	18
When a Registered Sex Offender Comes to Church	19
Timeline for Committee Review	19
RSO Code of Conduct	21
Risk Assessment Tool	22
Child Safety Team	23
Policy Violations and Exceptions	23
Appendix 1: Sojourn Students Consent and Release Form	25
Appendix 2: Incident Report	28
Appendix 3: Emergency Response Plan	31

Introduction

Vision

Sojourn Church J-Town wants to offer a safe and secure environment for children, youth, and families who participate in our Sunday gatherings and ministry activities. Our goal in laying out these policies and practices is to protect the children, youth, and families of our church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Purpose

This Policies and Practices for Child Protection document defines rules and guidelines for the safety of our children and youth when and where the church maintains a responsibility to ensure their well-being. Through heightened awareness, proper education, and training, the congregation, staff, and volunteers can work together to make our church a safer environment.

The following are Sojourn Church J-Town's screening and abuse prevention practices for all staff and volunteers interacting with minors:

Background Screening

Background Checks

Any non-staff volunteer interacting with minors will be required to undergo a background check before interacting with minors. All staff and elders will undergo a background check (Level 7) regardless of their role. Background checks will be renewed every five years per Ky state law 160.151.

Volunteers required to undergo background checks include but are not limited to:

- Non-Staff Elders and spouses if applicable (Level 3)
- Children's Ministry Volunteers (Level 3)
- Student Ministry Volunteers (Level 3)
- SERT Team Members (Level 3)

Level 7 Background Check includes:

- Identity Research
- Multi-Jurisdictional Database
- National Sex Offender Registry
- State Records Search regardless of their role. Background checks will be renewed every five years per Ky state law 160.151.
- Motor Vehicle Records
- County Records Search
- Federal Court Search

Level 3 Background Check includes:

- Identity Research
- Multi-Jurisdictional Database
- National Sex Offender Registry
- County of Residence Report

Disqualifications

Circumstances that disqualify an individual from serving with one of our children's or student ministry teams include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Currently under investigation by Child Protection Services (CPS), the Department of Social Services (DOSS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for criminal sexual misconduct, neglect, endangerment of a minor, or physical abuse
- Prior incidents of sexual misconduct or other forms of abuse
- Felony/misdemeanor convictions that involve crimes resulting in harm to another person
- Felony/misdemeanor convictions related to the sale of drugs within the past ten years.
- Felony/misdemeanor convictions related to illegal use, sale, or possession of firearms in the past ten years.

Child Safety Training

Upon completion of a background check, all staff members, elders, all interns, and all volunteers interacting with minors will be required to receive online child safety training provided through our background check provider, Ministry Safe. The child safety training covers the following topics regarding sexual abuse prevention.

- Lesson 1: Introduction
- Lesson 2: Definition of Child Sexual Abuse
- Lesson 3: Victim Behavioral Characteristics

- Lesson 4: Effects of Child Sexual Abuse
- Lesson 5: Characteristics of Child Molesters
- Lesson 6: Recognizing Behaviors
- Lesson 7: Prevention
- Lesson 8: Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

Links and instructions on completing this training will be sent to staff from the Kids Director during their on-boarding process and to volunteers by their ministry leader. After completing the video training, individuals will take a quiz to ensure that they understand the content they just reviewed. A score of 90 is required to receive a certification to work on staff or with minors at Sojourn J-town.

Outside Rule

This Policies and Practices for Child Protection document applies to children (from birth to 12th grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific children's and student ministry-related church-sponsored activities. The following policies apply to other interactions with minors on church property and during church-sponsored events such as community group meetings.

Counseling and Meeting with Minors

Pastors or staff who provide impromptu meetings or counseling (outside of Wednesday evening or Sunday morning gatherings) should receive verbal permission from a parent or guardian beforehand. Any routine or ongoing counseling should receive a written and signed parental consent form. The counselor will not counsel alone in the church building or at home alone with the child, but can only counsel when at least one other person is around (for example, a public environment) or with a parent waiting directly outside of the office or in the general vicinity.

Childcare for Community Groups or Other Small Group Settings

Sojourn Church J-Town will not be held liable for any childcare offered in home Community Group settings. Community groups and Community Group leaders will decide on hiring childcare and will be responsible individually for those specific situations. If a Community Group meets on site at

Sojourn Church J-Town, those leading childcare will be required to go through the same training as Sojourn Kids workers.

Any witnessed or suspected child abuse or neglect occurring during a Community Group meeting time must be reported by community group leaders, and the designated group leader is considered a mandatory reporter. He or she must then also report internally to the Family Pastor, Kids Director, or Student Director after reporting externally to Child Protection Services (see below).

Sojourn Church J-Town reserves the right not admit child abusers or persons listed on sex-offender registries into community groups or other small group settings. Former child abusers and or persons listed on sex-offender registries are not permitted to have direct contact with children except their own.

Childcare or Children's Ministry Activities for Sojourn Missions Trips

Anyone who is working with children on a Sojourn missions trip should have:

- Completed a Sojourn Kids children's ministry volunteer application.
- Criminal records and other appropriate screening and reference checks will be completed, subject to the discretion of the pastors overseeing children's ministry and missions for the congregation.

Abuse Reporting

Sojourn Church J-Town takes all indicators and suspicions of child maltreatment seriously. We are aware of research that indicates that children who are maltreated in one way are at a significant increase in risk of being maltreated in multiple ways. Therefore, as our church becomes aware of an indicator or report of a child being maltreated, we will take steps to protect the child from both known and potential risks and be extra attentive and supportive of the child.

Defining Abuse

As our churches' front-line for children's and student programming and pastoral counseling, church staff and volunteers have regular opportunities to observe children's behavior, family dynamics, and

caregiving styles. They are often privy to the intimate details of congregants' lives. Unlike formal educators, our staff has ongoing contact with the entire family unit and its acquaintances, and as such may be in a unique position to detect child abuse and other forms of maltreatment. For this reason, it's important to have a clear definition of abuse. Sojourn Church J-Town operates with the following definitions:

Child Abuse or Neglect—Any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk or serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.

Sexual Abuse—Employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing visual depiction of such conduct. Sexual abuse also includes rape, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, incest with children, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children. The age of consent in Kentucky (KRS 510.020 and 510.040 through 510.140) is sixteen years of age.

Mandatory Reporting

The abuse of children is not only a sin, but it is a serious crime. When adults report suspected child abuse to the legal authorities, their report could save a child's life. In contrast, silence about suspected abuse brings incredible harm to victims and emboldens offenders. Sojourn Church J-Town encourages its members, both mandated reporters and not, to contact the authorities immediately when a child discloses abuse, when they witness child abuse, or when they observe signs of abuse.

According to Kentucky (KRS 620.030) statute, any person who knows or who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is neglected or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made.

- This includes physical, sexual, mental abuse, neglect, or human trafficking.
- This includes but is not limited to teachers, school personnel, or child-caring personnel. This makes anyone working with minors at Sojourn Church J-Town a mandatory reporter.

- The clergy-penitent privilege will NOT be exercised when it comes to reporting cases of suspected child neglect or abuse.

When and How to Report

If you suspect that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused you should notify the Family Pastor, Kids Director, or Student Director and initiate a report to Child Protective Services (CPS). The number in Kentucky is 502-595-4550.

- It is not the responsibility of the person reporting or the staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions. Our role is to comply with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA, Federal Public Law 93-247) as well as State statutes and cooperate fully with CPS and local law enforcement as they do their work.
- It is paramount in such situations that confidentiality be maintained. Under no circumstances should confidential information about a child be shared with other parents or volunteers.
- If a child indicates that a parent or another adult is causing harm, DO NOT talk with that parent/adult about the allegation. Talking to that parent/adult could result in additional abuse. People who sexually abuse children utilize authority, trust or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetuate the abuse.

Practices for Children's Ministry Check-in and Check-out

Sojourn Church J-town employs Planning Center for our children's ministry check-in. If a family is new or doesn't yet have a Planning Center profile, please see the First-time Visitor section below for instructions.

Check-In

Parents or guardians will approach one of our self-check-in kiosks, enter their name or phone number, select their family, and then select the children they'll be checking for the gathering.

- The computer system will print a name tag for each child that should be affixed to their back as well as a pick-up tag that the parent/guardian should keep for check-out.

- The alphanumeric codes on these tags will match to ensure that at check-out, the parent is picking up only the children that belong to them.
- When dropped off at their classroom, a children's ministry volunteer will record the alphanumeric code from the child's tag to ensure that they've been properly checked in.
- Parents should remain on the church premises while their child is checked into Sojourn Kids Sunday gatherings.

Check-Out

At the conclusion of services, parents or guardians should return to the classroom area to pick up their children.

- At the classroom door, a parent, guardian, or family member should present the appropriate pick-up tag to the Sojourn Kids volunteer and tell them the name of the child they will be picking up.
- The Sojourn Kids volunteer will compare the child's name tag to the pick-up tag to ensure they match. If they do, the child's name tag should be removed as the child exits the classroom back into their parent or guardian's care.
- If someone aside from the parent or guardian is picking up a child, they must have the pick-up tag and have been identified by the parent or guardian as an authorized pick-up person.
- If a parent or guardian loses their pick-up tag, a Sojourn Kids pastor, director, or coordinator may serve to verify the parent or guardian's identity so they can retrieve their child. This may involve showing a picture ID or being asked to go retrieve a pick-up tag where they left it. Our primary concern is the safety of the children in our care, even if it requires extra time or frustration.

First-Time Visitors

New families will fill out a Sojourn Kids connect card with demographic information (name, age, contact info, allergies, etc.) for parents/guardians and any children being checked into the children's ministry.

- The parent or guardian will also fill out a two- or three-part Sojourn Kids sticker tag for each child they're checking in. Upon completion, the name tag portion should be placed on the

child's back. The parent or guardian will keep the pick-up tag that includes an alphanumeric code that matches the child's name tag.

- When necessary, an allergy notification can be added to a child's name tag.
- The information from the Sojourn Kids connect card will be entered into the Planning Center database so the family will be able to use our self-serve check-in kiosks when they return.
- In some instances, when time allows, families may enter information directly into the computer system.

Children's Ministry Classroom Safety and Security

General

- All Sojourn Kids classrooms will be staffed by a team of two volunteers. Under no circumstances is a child to be left in a classroom or anywhere unattended. Students aged 16+ with a valid driver's license can count toward the classroom ratio (excluding babies, walkers, and Sojourn 45 classes) if they have completed the formal MinistrySafe training and have a letter of recommendation from a trusted teacher or non-familial mentor. Any students under 16 wanting to serve must be considered a third volunteer in a classroom. These students will always be paired with an adult, and at no time will two students be alone to serve in a classroom.
- One SERT team member will be walking up and down the SojournKids hallway monitoring for safety and security. In addition, no classroom doors should ever be closed to ensure transparency and the safety of our kids and volunteers.
- Sojourn Church J-Town classroom ratios will be as follows, with the maximum capacity listed per KY Law:
 - 2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 10 babies
 - 2 Sojourn Kids volunteers to 14 Walkers
 - 2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 15 2's
 - 2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 15 3's
 - 2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 18 Pre-K
 - 2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 25 K/1

2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 30 2nd/3rd

2 Sojourn Kids Volunteers to 30 4th/5th

- A parent must remain with their child until two Sojourn Kids volunteers are present. The responsibility for asking a parent to stay lies with the classroom volunteer and Sojourn Kids leadership.
- Classrooms will have an appropriate ratio of adults to children, depending on the age/grade of children under care.
- Class rosters, including names, allergies, and name tag codes, should be with the class at all times.
- Head counts of all children will be made before and after the class (or a portion of the class) leaves the room (ie, bathroom trips, assembly gatherings, etc.) to ensure everyone is present.
- Sojourn Kids volunteers should NEVER take photos of children unless the photography has been cleared with the Kids Director
- No cell phones will be allowed in the SojournKids area restrooms to avoid the potential of inappropriate photos being taken. In addition, all SojournKids volunteers revoke the right to individual privacy if an individual's cell phone use is in question.

Aggressive or Inappropriate Behavior

- In the event a child exhibits aggressive or violent behavior, classroom teachers and volunteers should contact the service coordinator, Kids Director, or Student Director to resolve the situation. The coordinator/director can and will reach out to parents following any situation of dangerous behavior. At no time will spitting, harming, hurting or overtly aggressive behavior be tolerated.

Food Policies

- Snacks are provided for most Sojourn Kids gatherings.
- We will provide appropriate snacks in our Infants and Walkers rooms. Parents may leave another snack or bottle for their own child along with instructions for the Sojourn Kids volunteer to follow.
- We will also provide appropriate snacks as well as gluten-free alternatives for children ages two and up.

- Before handing out snacks, SojournKids servants will check the class roster and children's name tags to identify any children who may have food allergies.
- If a particular lesson plan calls for a different snack or food tasting, the classroom teacher and Sojourn Kids Director will post an allergy alert on the classroom door to notify parents. Classroom volunteers are not allowed to bring additional foodstuffs without permission from the Kids Director.
- If a child has a particular food allergy, the parent or guardian will let the teacher know when they drop their child off (so it can be noted on the class roster) and also ensure that the allergy information is entered into the Planning Center management system and printed on the child's tag.
- At no time will peanuts or any peanut product be served in a Sojourn Kids classroom.

Sickness Policy

Parents will not bring their child to a SojournKids gathering if one of the following conditions exists:

- Temperature of 100 degrees without meds (in last 24 hours)
- Vomiting (in last 24 hours)
- Diarrhea (in last 24 hours)
- Severe coughing (in last 24 hours)
- Colored nasal drainage
- Pink eye
- Head lice
- Undiagnosed rash
- Open skin lesions
- Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease (in last 14 days)
- Any infectious disease

If a child shows signs of sickness, including but not limited to the conditions listed above, the Sojourn Kids Director or a Sojourn Kids leader will contact the parent or guardian to check out their child and leave the Sojourn Kids area.

Health awareness signage, including the sickness policy, will be posted outside each classroom.

Restroom and Diaper Policy

Restrooms: During any Sojourn Kids events, the restrooms in our children's ministry areas will be used exclusively by children with the assistance and supervision of Sojourn Kids volunteers.

- To ensure the protection of children and adults, men will not offer toilet assistance for children in restroom stalls though they may serve in a supervisory role—entering the restroom with groups only to manage behavior.
- When restrooms are located within classrooms, individual children ages 5+ may enter the restroom on their own without supervision. A female volunteer may enter the restroom to assist children age 4 and younger, but a second adult volunteer should be nearby in the classroom at all times, and the door must be left open or cracked so that the second volunteer is within sight line.

Diaper Changing: Diapers will only be changed in specified changing areas in classrooms (changing pads or changing stations) and only by adult volunteers.

- Disposable gloves will be available for the use of Sojourn Kids volunteers while changing diapers.
- The child's bottom and buttocks will be cleansed with moist disposable baby wipes provided in classrooms. Parents may provide their own wipes as well.
- The child will be wiped from front to back to help avoid urinary tract infections.
- A new clean diaper will be placed on the child and the dirty diaper will be thrown away. Parents may provide their preferred disposable diaper..
- At completion of the diaper change, the changing surface will be cleaned with disinfectant cleaner.
- Sojourn Kids volunteers will not change the diaper of a child over the age of 4 years old. In this instance, a parent will be paged to address the diaper change.
- To ensure the protection of children and adults, male volunteers will not change diapers.

Sanitation and Hygiene

- All volunteers will wash their hands with soap and warm water for 60 seconds after using the restroom, offering restroom or diaper assistance for a child, and after handling cleaners.
- Volunteers will use disposable gloves when contact with bodily fluids (blood, stool, urine, nasal drainage, eye secretions, or vomit) is anticipated. Gloves will be discarded after a single use with a single child

- Volunteers will use a disinfectant spray to sanitize areas that are routinely in contact with children, such as diaper changing stations, toys, cribs, mattresses, tables, swings/bouncers, doorknobs, etc. These items should be disinfected after each service, or if necessary after use by an individual child (toy in the mouth, child sneezes on a toy, etc.)
- Volunteers will distribute hand sanitizer to children in their care before snack time. Children from Kindergarten and younger will be assisted by the teacher to ensure proper use.
- Volunteers will use hand sanitizer before distributing snacks/water, helping wipe noses, etc.

Student Ministry Safety and Security Policies

Drug and Alcohol Usage

The use of drugs (both recreational and illegal), alcohol, and vaping will not be permitted by staff, volunteers, or students during any student ministry functions—whether on church property or off-site. Staff, volunteers, or students will be removed and, in the case of students, parents or guardians will be involved immediately. Staff, volunteers, or students may be required to attend substance abuse counseling before returning to student ministry gatherings.

Transportation and Vehicle Safety

There may be times when a Sojourn Students staff member, volunteer, or associated adult will be tasked to provide transportation for a student or group of students.

For an adult to be able to provide such transportation, the following requirements must be met:

- They must have a current background check
- They must be at least 21 years of age.
- They must have a valid driver's license as well as proof of insurance.
- They must submit a copy of their license and proof of insurance to the local church and agree to the church running a driver history check.
- They must have no more than three moving violations in the past three years.
- That must not have had any DUI's or DWI's within the last 10 years.
- They must exhibit responsible driving habits.

In the event students are driving themselves and/or other students to an event, written consent from parents will be collected.

When a student ministry leader provides transportation for a student or group of students, it is understood that the student is entering the car willingly and with permission of their parent or guardian. The volunteer will drive with care, upholding the laws of the state. The driver as well as Sojourn Church J-Town will be indemnified of all claims in the event of an accident.

Sojourn Church J-Town is not responsible for students before they arrive at student ministry gatherings or after they have departed.

Off-Site Activities

All employees and volunteers must comply with the Protection Policy even when a church-sponsored event occurs off campus. Since each off-site facility will be different, it will be the responsibility of the ministry leaders to determine how best to use the facility in order to comply with the Protection Policy. Whenever children or students are off campus and outside the direct supervision of their parent or guardian, a Student Ministries Consent and Release Form (appendix 2) must be completed and on file with the ministry. The ministry leaders of those off-site activities must have at all times a list of names, emergency contacts, medical conditions, and an agreement allowing permission to treat a child or student if they are injured or become sick during the off-site event. Outings present unique risks for the safety of minors. All off-site activities must meet the following guidelines:

- Clear communication has been provided for both parents and students regarding both details of the event and any guidelines.
- A Student Ministries Consent and Release Form has been obtained from a parent or guardian.
- An adult/student ratio is established. At least two supervising adults must be in attendance.
- Minors must be monitored at all times.
- It is preferable for meetings with small groups of students to take place at a public locations with high visibility rather than in homes.

Student to Staff/Volunteer Communication

- While we recognize that students will have access to communicate with Sojourn Staff and volunteers via texting, social media, and other electronic and online engagement, staff and volunteers must exercise extreme caution and wisdom in this area. In light of this, Sojourn Church J-Town has adopted the following guidelines:
 - If/When a student reaches out to an adult via text or direct message, the adult is able to respond, but should always ask to speak about the matter in person instead of via texting or direct messaging.
 - While it is permissible for students and staff/volunteers to follow one another on social media, staff/volunteers must avoid any extended communication via electronic communication and all conversation should be directed to in person conversation.
 - At no point should any staff member or adult volunteer interact with a student on Snapchat or any other social media platform that erases communication history.
- In light of Senate Bill 181, any staff member or volunteer who serves in a staff or volunteer capacity in a Kentucky Public School is unable to communicate with students who attend a school within that same district. Staff or volunteers must only communicate through district appointed means or obtain a written consent from the parent/guardian which is to be turned into the appropriate school. For more information on Senate Bill 181 see [HERE](#).

Overnight Policies

Some student ministry events involve overnight sleeping arrangements (summer camp, camping trips, retreats, etc.). When these events occur, S2 leaders will be responsible for ensuring the following guidelines are followed.

- A clean, safe environment will be provided for sleeping, showering, and dressing for all students who are involved.
- Males and females will have separate sleeping areas and restrooms.
- At least two leaders will be present with students of the same gender.
- No male participant will be allowed to enter the sleeping area or restroom of the female participants, and vice versa.
- Student ministry staff, leaders, and volunteers will not sleep in the same bed as a student.
- A minimum of 10-1 student-to-adult ratio will be maintained.

- Curfew times will be clearly stated and adhered to.
- All participants (leaders and students) should wear appropriate sleeping attire.
- Student ministry staff, leaders, and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of students

Emergency Response Plan

While we pray that emergencies do not occur during ministry gatherings, we want to be prepared for any situation that may present itself during our gatherings and events. This part of our policy can be found inside the door of every children's classroom and student ministry meeting area in our building so that leaders are ready to execute the emergency plan as necessary. See Appendix 5 for the full Emergency Response Plan.

Policy and Protection Committee

Sojourn Church J-Town has appointed a committee of pastors and ministry leaders to the Child Safety Team, which consists of three church members, the Director of Kids, the Director of Students and Families, and at least one Elder. This committee will serve to address the safety and protection of the children and students in their care.

The CST is charged to complete an annual review of the local church's Policies and Practices and the Child Protection document to ensure that the local church's ministries comply with these policies, and review any registered sex offender (RSO) cases that arise at the local church level (see the policy below). The CST may seek the guidance of legal counsel or others to serve as consultants in the work of the committee.

If a report of misconduct and/or abuse is made, the Kids Director or Director of Students and Families will notify the CST and seek guidance and direction from the CST in addressing the allegations. The committee will appoint a point of contact for the CST to the staff, elder team, congregation, and media.

Registered Sex Offender (RSO) Policy

At Sojourn Church J-Town our desire is to welcome men and women who turn away from their sin and turn toward Jesus. This includes registered sex offenders. That said, we want to have policies in place to restrain evil and temptation as well as provide opportunity for sin to be exposed. An individual's willingness to submit to such a policy indicates whether or not their heart is repentant and teachable. It is our hope that submission to this policy can prepare the way for life-giving gospel care.

When a Registered Sex Offender Comes to Church

What do I do if I discover that a known Registered Sex Offender is attending services at Sojourn Church J-Town? When a staff person, pastor, volunteer, member, or visitor at Sojourn Church J-Town is informed that a Registered Sex Offender (RSO, or "sex offender") is attending any service or event, there are steps that staff members should take immediately to manage risk and ensure the safety of the children and families attending the service or event.

Remember to G-U-A-R-D:

- **Go and inform.** First, go and inform the Kids Director or a staff pastor immediately. Second, if you are comfortable with doing so, go to the individual and introduce yourself. Registered Sex Offenders should not be on church property unaccompanied.
- **Understand.** A pastor or staff member should meet with the individual before they leave the facility. Offer them water or coffee, listen to their story, and take notes.
- **Ask** for the name and number of the individual's parole officer and any court documents the individual can provide that are pertinent to their situation. Ask the individual to complete a background check consent form (appendix 4). Use this information to provide a written report for the Policy Protection Committee.
- **Review** a copy of Sojourn's RSO policy and our code of conduct for Registered Sex Offenders (below). Go over the timeline within which their situation will be reviewed. Inform the individual that they must strictly abide by the code of conduct until a shepherding plan is developed, and they will not be allowed to return to services/events until a mentor is identified.
- **Depend upon God.** In all matters of discernment, we need God's help. Be sure to pray with and for the individual and then escort them as they leave the facility.

Timeline for Committee Review

The Child Safety Team (CST) is responsible for reviewing the situation of each registered sex offender who desires to attend Sojourn gatherings.

- Step 1 (within two weeks): The CST will review notes from the initial interaction with the registered sex offender and run a background check. With the provided information from the staff member's report, the church will obtain a record of the RSO's prior criminal convictions via a national criminal records check. Copies of these records are kept on file and provided to Lead Pastors, Associate Pastors, Kids Directors, and the PPC.
- Step 2 (within two weeks): Contact the RSO's probation officer to determine what conditions have been imposed (often, RSO's are not permitted to attend church). Probation officers are busy and typically overworked. It's important to be persistent when pursuing a probation officer. Obtain this information in writing if possible, but keep a detailed written report of the officer's response on file.
- Step 3 (within one month): The CST will develop a shepherding plan and/or limited access agreement for the care and protection of both the individual and our local churches. The PPC will use the Risk Level Assessment tool outlined at the end of this section to develop this plan.

This shepherding plan will include what participation at Sojourn Church J-Town, if any, may occur—Sunday services, Bible study groups, or other activities. Under no circumstances will the plan permit the RSO to work with minors (children or youth) in any capacity or be in areas where minors are gathered unless it involves their own children and only then in the presence of a mentor or pastoral leader.

The CST will communicate findings and decisions to Lead Pastors, Associate Pastors, Family Pastors, Kids Directors, Students Directors, and other staff and volunteers as necessary.

- Step 4 (within a week of step 3 being completed): A pastor and representative from the CST will meet with the RSO to walk through the shepherding plan and limited access agreement, have them sign off on it, and initiate the plan. Any violation of this plan/agreement may result in an immediate termination of the RSO's privilege to attend a Sojourn church in any capacity. The CST should be notified immediately when any such violation occurs.
- Step 5: Step 5 (annually): The CST will review all RSO situations annually and check in with each RSO and their assigned mentor to ensure that the plan/agreement is being maintained. They will also review all RSO policies to ensure they are being followed across all ministries at their location.

If an individual does not disclose that they are an RSO and we identify them, they will be asked to leave immediately. The Child Safety Team will then conduct an investigation and follow up with the individual regarding next steps.

In some cases, even if an individual discloses that they're an RSO, exclusion of the offender from Sojourn may be the only viable option. This option is advisable if (1) for any reason the shepherding plan/limited access agreement option is not feasible or enforceable; or (2) the RSO's crimes are so frequent or heinous that exclusion is the only appropriate option; or (3) one or more of RSO's victims attend Sojourn Church J-Town. This will be a decision that's prayerfully considered and enacted by the Policy Protection Committee.

RSO Code of Conduct

We have established the following code of conduct. These are guidelines and starting points for the policy protection committee when working with RSO's who wish to attend Sojourn Church J-Town:

- The RSO will not be allowed to attend any community group where children are present.
- The RSO will not be allowed to work with minors (children or youth) in any capacity in the church, or be allowed to enter or walk through a children's area.
- The RSO must be present with their assigned mentor or church representative and never alone on church property. This includes worship services, classes, activities, events, and trips to the restroom.

- If the RSO is not riding to church with his mentor, the mentor will meet the RSO at the entrance of the church and accompany them on church premises until returned to his/her vehicle.
- A single violation of this code of conduct may result in an immediate termination of the RSO's privilege to attend a Sojourn Church J-Town.
- Sojourn Church J-Town reserves the right to exclude any registered sex offender from attending.

Risk Assessment Tool

As there are legal levels of offense regarding sex offenders, it can be helpful to differentiate between the offenses and circumstances of a particular RSO. This risk assessment tool can be used by the Policy Protection Committee to help determine whether an RSO should be able to participate in life at a Sojourn Collective church.

- **Risk Level 1:** Level 1 RSO's present the lowest risk for re-offense to the community at large. Some sample characteristics:
 - These individuals normally have not exhibited predatory-type characteristics.
 - Many are first-time offenders.
 - Most have successfully participated or are participating in approved sex offender treatment programs.
 - These individuals may not be required to be on the registry for their lifetime.
- In most cases, Level 1 RSO's can worship and become members of a Sojourn Church J-Town provided that they follow their assigned shepherding plan/limited access agreement, do not serve in an area involving children or youth, and do not attend a community group that includes children or youth.
- The RSO's parole officer will be notified and asked for a recommendation regarding each specific RSO.
- **Risk Level 2:** Level 2 RSO's present a moderate risk to re-offend within the community at large. Some sample characteristics:

- These individuals may be considered at a higher risk because of the nature of their previous crime(s). These individuals often have more than one victim and/or took advantage of a position of trust and authority, such as a parent, teacher, coach, clergy, or babysitter.
- For some level 2 sex offenders, lifestyle (drugs and alcohol use, or other criminal activity) may influence their potential to re-offend.
- In most cases, Level 2 RSO's are not permitted to attend Sojourn Church J-Town or any church-sponsored activity due to inherent risk.
- **Risk Level 3:** Level 3 RSO's present a high risk to re-offend within the community at large. Some sample characteristics:
 - Many have prior sex crime convictions as well as other criminal convictions.
 - Some have predatory characteristics and may seek out victims unknown to the offender.
 - These individuals may have used violence in their crime.
 - These individuals may have refused or failed to complete approved sex offender treatment programs.
- Level 3 RSO's are not permitted to attend Sojourn Church J-Town or any church-sponsored activity due to inherent risk.

Child Safety Team Members

The current Child Safety team consists of one elder, two staff personnel, and three church members.

Policy Violations and Exceptions

Sojourn Church J-Town takes policy violations seriously. Any staff, volunteer, parent, or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way. Our church expects all adults to practice bystander intervention when they see a policy violation and report policy violations to the Child Safety Team

Policy exceptions should be rare, pre-approved for emergencies, and documented.

What happens if a child touches me inappropriately?

First, think about how you would respond before this occurs.

Then, if it does occur, proceed as follows:

- Remain calm. Ask yourself if this was accidental or on purpose.
- Redirect appropriately (e.g. "Sarah, please keep your hands to yourself.")
- Take the child aside and explain good touch and bad touch if given the opportunity (*We do not touch areas covered by a swimming suit.*). Take into account the age of the child with whom you are working. You should be able to talk about inappropriate touching with children ages 3 and older.
- For abused children, inappropriate touching may seem "normal." Or the child's inappropriate behavior may be to gain attention or see how the adult will respond.
- Notify appropriate church staff members or leaders immediately.

How can I guard myself from accusation? *While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, it can also be easily misinterpreted. Here are a few simple rules to abide by to help protect yourself from accusation- whether you are serving in children's ministry or just interacting with kids in community:*

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting in laps, diapering, assisting in the potty, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.
- Follow diapering and toileting guidelines outlined in the general policies and procedures checklist.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for ages zero through pre-Kindergarten; it is not appropriate for older children. It is not appropriate for a man to pick up or hold a child who is older than pre-K.
- In some situations, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- Only touch children in safe areas and for brief times, with no rubbing or massaging. Safe areas include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of a child's head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is considered private or personal (any part of the body that a swimsuit covers) unless changing diapers or assisting nursery children with the potty.

Adapted from *On Guard: Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse at Church* © 2014 by Deepak Reju. Used by permission of New Growth Press. Excerpt may not be reproduced without the express written permission of New Growth Press.

- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.

What do I do if I suspect that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused?

- Report immediately. Give all the information you have to the authorities. In the case of suspected abuse, staff and volunteers will immediately make a report to Child Protective Services (in Louisville, this number is 502-595-4550) and report concerns to the Kids Director or to one of Sojourn's pastors.
- Do not attempt to substantiate any allegations or suspicions. Let the authorities do this.
- Do not discuss the situation with anyone other than the proper authorities and, when appropriate, staff or church leaders.
- Do not discuss the situation with the alleged or suspected abuser. This could compromise any investigation and could result in additional abuse, shame, etc. for the child. Again, let the authorities take care of this.

Who is considered a "mandatory reporter" of child abuse and neglect?

- In hearing of, witnessing, or suspecting abuse, a mandatory reporter is someone who by law must report it to police or CPS.
- For Kentucky, any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is neglected or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made (KRS 620.030, section 1-3)
- These persons should contact the local CPS office or law enforcement agency where the incident reportedly occurred.
- Non-mandatory reporters should contact appropriate staff or church leaders before making any reports. They will give guidance about reporting.

How do I know if something is reportable or not?

A report must be made when the reporter suspects or has reasons to believe that a child has been abused or neglected. Another standard frequently used is that one should report when her or she knows of or observes a child being subjected to conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child. For more information, contact the appropriate church leader or staff member.

Appendix 1: Sojourn Students Consent & Release Form

Name _____ Grade _____ Gender M/F Birthdate _____

Address _____

Parent's Email _____ Parent's Phone _____

School _____ Student's Phone _____

Emergency Contact #1	Emergency Contact #2
Name: _____	Name: _____

Email: _____	Email: _____
--------------	--------------

Phone: _____	Phone: _____
--------------	--------------

List any current allergies, illnesses, physical conditions, or medications: _____

Name of Insurance: _____	Policy Number: _____
--------------------------	----------------------

Primary Insured: _____	Group Number: _____
------------------------	---------------------

Participation Consent and Authorization. I consent to and authorize my child to participate in ALL ministry events, activities, trips, excursions, and programs conducted by Sojourn Church J-Town ("Church"). I encourage my child to attend and stay for the duration of the activity/event and assume full responsibility if he/she does not attend or leaves early. I agree to provide transportation to and from church sponsored events. I recognize the church responsibility starts at the beginning

and ends at the conclusion of the event. I further agree to pick up my minor child no later than twenty (20) minutes after the church activity/event.

Transportation Consent and Authorization. I consent to and authorize my child to be transported to and from church sponsored activities in a church, rental, or private vehicle.

Communication Consent and Authorization. I agree to monitor my child's communication and outside interactions with adult ministry leaders and/or volunteers, including electronic communication. I agree to contact the church if I do not consent to the communication and/or outside interactions.

Photo Release Consent and Authorization. I understand that my child may be photographed and/or videotaped during his/her participation in events, activities, trips, excursions, and programs conducted by the Church for ministry-related presentations, publications, and/or websites. I understand that my child's name will not be used and/or published in any way, and that no compensation will be given for the use of such photographs and/or videos.

Medical/Dental Treatment Consent and Authorization. I consent to any representative of the Church to authorize medical or dental treatment, including surgery or hospitalization, for my child for any injury or illness of an emergency nature, including necessary transportation to receive such treatment. Authorization is given in advance of any such medical or dental treatment as deemed advisable. A photocopy of this document shall have the same force and effect as the original. I hereby agree to pay any and all reasonable charges incurred as a result of any medical or dental treatment and to hold the Church and its representatives and officials harmless therefrom.

Code of Conduct Consent and Authorization. I agree to instruct my child to abide by all statements in the Code of Conduct. I agree that if my child fails to abide by the Code of Conduct, that my child may be dismissed from the activity/event and sent home at my expense for transportation or other fees with no right of reimbursement or refund for any amount. I further understand that my child will not be readmitted into future gatherings until parent(s)/guardian(s), ministry leader(s), and the student meet to discuss future participation in Sojourn's student ministries.

Release of Liability and Agreement to Binding Arbitration. I acknowledge that participation in student ministries events, activities, trips, excursions, and programs of the Church involves risk to my child, and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), and may result in various types of injury including, but not limited to the following: sickness, bodily injury, death, emotional injury, personal injury, property damage, and financial damage. In consideration for the opportunity to participate in the ministry, I acknowledge and accept the risks of injury associated with participation in student ministries. I release and indemnify the church of all liability arising for injury arising out of participation in the events. I accept personal financial responsibility for any injury sustained during participation. If a dispute over this agreement or any claim for damages arises, I agree to resolve the matter through binding arbitration with the American Arbitration Association. I represent and warrant that I am the parent/legal guardian of the minor student named above and maintain the authority to sign this document.

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____ Date:_____

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____ Date:_____

Involved (Continued)										
Person D		Victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Name							Phone	()		
Address					Date of Birth		Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description/ Notes										
Person E		Victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Name							Phone	()		
Address					Date of Birth		Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description/ Notes										
Person F		Victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Name							Phone	()		
Address					Date of Birth		Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description/ Notes										

Statements						
Person	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F
Statement 1						
Person	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F
Statement 2						

Medical

Medical Team Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	Time Arrived	
-----------------------	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------	--

Notified by: _____

Medical Team Involved: _____

Others Involved: _____

Illness/Injury/Accident Description

Medical History/Medications/Allergies

Treatment/Supplies Used

Victim Transported ☐ Yes ☐ No Destination: _____

Parent/Gardian Notified ☐ Yes ☐ No Date/Time: _____

Security

Security Team Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	Time Arrived	
------------------------	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------	--

Security Members Involved: _____

Others Involved: _____

Safety

Who was notified: _____

Date/Time: _____

Appendix 2: Incident Report Form

<h1 style="margin: 0;">SERT</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Sojourn Emergency Response Team</h2>											
Incident Report											
Date:				Time:				Submitted by:			
Location (include room/door number):											
Ministry:	SERT	<input type="checkbox"/>	Connect Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sojourn Kids	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Incident type:	Medical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>		
911 Response:	EMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Time Notified:			Time Arrived:			Notified by:					
Involved											
Person A		Victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Name							Phone	()			
Address					DOB			Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description/Notes											
Person B		Victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Name							Phone	()			
Address					DOB			Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description/Notes											
Person C		Victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Name							Phone	()			
Address					DOB			Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description/Notes											

Appendix 3: Emergency Response Plan

Medical Emergency

The medical team (SERT - Sojourn Emergency Response Team) provides immediate response to help stabilize an individual until the arrival of Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

- When a volunteer or leader encounters a medical situation, this leader should assess the scene to determine if this is an emergency risk situation. If you and/or the individual are at risk, immediately move to a safe location.
- Attempt to notify a SERT team member via a radio (channel 4). Assess the situation, and call 911 if necessary.
- Escort the individual to the SERT room to provide a quiet environment and privacy for the individual. DO NOT move the individual if movement could result in further injury.
- If the medical need involves a child in the care of Sojourn Kids, a Sojourn Kids volunteer should direct the SERT representative to the child. The child's parent/guardian should be paged or called and brought to the child's location.
- After the individual is stable, SERT will fill out an incident report (appendix 3) with the help of the other responsible party. Medical incidents must be reported to the SERT leadership and the Associate Pastor at each congregation.

Building Evacuation (Fire Plan)

In the event of a fire or other emergency that requires evacuation, take immediate action that includes accounting for everyone who was in the building.

- Instruct those around to stay calm, remain silent, and walk while evacuating. Follow provided instructions from SERT, the Connect team, or other leaders. All radios should use a designated channel for communication during an evacuation.
- Evacuate the building using the location's pre-planned evacuation route. ProPresenter teams have slides available to communicate the fire plan to the adult congregation. Fire plans are also available inside the door of each children's ministry classroom and student ministry meeting area.
- If you are able to assist mobility-impaired individuals, do so. If not, immediately call 911.
- If the cause of the evacuation is a fire, do not attempt to extinguish the fire yourself.

- Once out of the building, as directed by SERT and the Connect team, proceed to and gather at the designated meeting location.
- Parents of children in the nursery or other Sojourn Kids classrooms should not pick-up their children; instead, proceed directly to the designated meeting location. Children are escorted by Sojourn Kids teams first to a staging area and then if necessary to the designated meeting location.
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason.
- While at a staging area or the designated meeting area, do not attempt to leave the area. This may hinder the arrival of emergency personnel.
- SERT and Connect team leaders are responsible for directing emergency personnel.
- When the emergency is cleared you will be given the all-clear from the on-site emergency coordinator.

Tornado Warning

Tornado warnings require you to stay inside the building to protect others and yourself.

- Instruct others to remain calm and stay in the building due to the emergency. Going outside poses a risk of injury or death.
- Move to the lowest floor of the building. Select an interior room or hallway without windows and avoid rooms with mechanical equipment, such as kitchen hoods or other ventilation equipment.
- Listen to a weather radio or television for further information. Stay in your safe location until given the all clear by the on-site SERT Coordinator.

Lost Child

In the event a child is believed lost, take immediate action.

- If there is any reason to believe an abduction has occurred, call 911 immediately.
- When a lost child is reported within Sojourn Kids, the Sojourn Kids service leader will determine to what extent the child is missing and if SERT will be notified.
- Notify SERT of the missing child along with the child's name, physical description, classroom, where they were last seen, and the time they were deemed missing.

- A Sojourn Kids service leader should page or locate the child's parent/guardian and bring them to the Sojourn Kids check-in area.
- SERT / Connect will post members at each building exit and, with the assistance of Sojourn Kids, conduct a search of the church building and property until the child is found.

Active Shooter/Intruder

If you hear gunfire, see a person with a gun or other weapon, or become aware of any other physically dangerous situation, take immediate steps to protect others and yourself. Remember to Run! Hide! Fight!

Run!

- If you are near an exterior exit, try to escape from the building and proceed to the designated meeting location. If a phone is available, call 911 immediately.

Hide!

- If it is not safe to run, move to an office or classroom, close the door and lock it if possible, leaving main entrances unlocked for police entry. Use desks and chairs to block the doorway if possible.
- Stay away from windows and out of view. Turn off the lights. Hide behind heavy furniture or anything that will hide your location and protect you from gunfire.
- If a phone is available, call 911 immediately. Silence all cell phones. And pray.
- Remain hidden until emergency professionals give the all clear.

Fight!

- If the gunman approaches you, your actions will depend solely on your judgment and capabilities. No strategy is 100% effective. However, taking decisive action often results in preserving the lives of others.

After the event, locate the RED or GREEN cards in the door window or under the door to indicate the medical status of your room. RED indicates that an individual(s) require medical attention. GREEN indicates that an individual(s) are present but stable.

Natural Gas Leak

Natural gas leaks can be divided into two types, large and small.

A large gas leak will be obvious with the release of gas in large quantities, usually producing noise from the leak location and extremely strong odors. In most cases the origin of the release will be obvious (ex. a malfunctioning valve). This type of release would be uncontrolled at the leak location.

A small gas leak can be identified as a gas odor, may be momentary, and is smelled by building occupants. Typically, this type of leak is from an unknown origin, and is detected only by the smell of the gas.

- If you become aware of a SMALL natural gas leak, identified by a rotten egg smell, vacate the affected area immediately.
- For a LARGE natural gas leak, evacuate the building by activating the fire alarm. Building occupants should close all doors as they leave and follow the building evacuation plan.
- If necessary, immediately call 911.
- Notify Sojourn Facilities of the natural gas leak to request an HVAC shut down to prevent the spread of natural gas throughout the system.
- Do not re-enter the area until cleared by the energy company.