

Sexual Abuse Policy Guide

A RESOURCE FOR SCBO CHURCHES & MINISTRIES



Sexual Abuse Policy Guide: Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of the Sexual Abuse Policy Guide (SAPG) is to fulfill the assignment charged to the SCBO Sexual Abuse Task Force by the Mission Council of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio on November 9, 2021:

“...for the purpose of reviewing all policies and procedures of the SCBO and recommending best practices to strengthen and support the prevention, awareness, and reporting of sexual abuse.”

This SAPG has two main objectives it endeavors to fulfill:

First, the SAPG serves as a policy by which all SCBO staff and volunteers are engaged and held accountable.

Second, the SAPG serves as a resource for churches in actions such as: engaging workers, safety practices, reporting abuse, caring for victims, and training staff.

This SAPG has been reviewed by legal counsel and was written with considerations from GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment) and *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*.

Inviting Churches to Rediscover Gospel Multiplication

Sexual Abuse Policy Guide

As recommended by
the Sexual Abuse Task Force of the
State Convention of Baptists in Ohio
November 2022

This policy was created using the instruction of *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries* by Basyle Tchividjian and Shira M. Berkovits.

Warning: This document contains graphic descriptions to allow for no ambiguity as to what constitutes sexual abuse.

Where To Report Known or Suspected Abuse:

IF A CHILD IS IN IMMINENT DANGER CALL 911

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: 855-OH-CHILD (855-642-4453).

Local Children's Services Agency :

Local County Sheriff:

Local City Police:

Reports of abuse must either be made in the county where the victim resides or the county where the abuse occurred.

While Ohio outlines specific requirements as to what people qualify as mandatory reporters it is best practice for anyone who witnesses or suspects abuse to responsibly report directly to the correct governing authorities. Christians are morally and ethically obligated before God to report the abuse of children who cannot report for themselves.

Once an incident has been reported to the governing authorities a report must also be made to [church/convention] leadership so follow up actions can be initiated.

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Introduction

Unless we understand the *biblical mandate* for enacting a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual abuse and implementing best-practices for the establishment of a healthy culture of transparency, security, and accountability in our churches, we will fail to find a proper and lasting motivation to do the necessary hard work with due diligence.

This handbook contains guidelines and policy recommendations for the prevention and reporting of sexual abuse within the churches of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO). These recommendations pertain to all entities, programs, and events associated with the state convention. While the guidelines and policies in this handbook are simply recommendations, the Sexual Abuse Task Force (SATF) and the SCBO strongly urge all associations, churches and church leaders to adopt or adapt these policies to safeguard the most vulnerable members of our communities, especially children.

The guidelines and policies in the following chapters do an important job of answering the *what* and the *how* of prevention and reporting of sexual abuse. But crucial to our understanding of the *what* and the *how* is the framing of them in the context of the *why*. That is the purpose of this introduction.

This introduction will lay out the biblical mandate to combat sexual abuse by addressing four key questions: What does the Bible say about sexual abuse? Why is combating sexual abuse a gospel issue? What ought the churches and convention do about sexual abuse? What are the consequences of failing to deal with sexual abuse properly?

What does the Bible say about sexual abuse?

Because the term *sexual abuse* is a modern legal or psychological concept, the term does not appear in the Bible. Scripture does, however, deal clearly and decisively with the essential components that make up sexual abuse.

The sexual ethic developed in the New Testament is clear that all sexual activity, and even thoughts of a sexual nature, outside of the boundaries of marriage is sin. The word *porneia*, which appears 25 times in the New Testament, is a catch-all term, usually translated as “sexual immorality,” which includes all sin of a sexual nature. The word is broad enough to encompass sexual thoughts toward children or adults who are not one’s spouse, and actions such as making sexually inappropriate comments or physical contact.

Sexual abuse, in particular, is not only a sexual sin, but a sin of dehumanization and exploitation for a person’s selfish gratification driven by covetousness and lust. The tenth commandment forbids the coveting of a neighbor’s wife (Ex. 20:17), and Jesus teaches that even looking at a person lustfully counts as sin (Matt. 5:28), let alone acting on inner lustful impulses in a physical way.

Of course, sexual abuse is more than just sexual immorality; it is also a sin of violence and violation. It is an instance (or pattern of instances) of a person oppressing or taking advantage of someone who is vulnerable. Such abuses are condemned throughout Scripture (Ex. 21:20; Lev. 6:1-5; Deut. 22:25; 2 Sam. 13:12-14; Ps. 62:10; Prov. 14:31; Amos 5:12; Matt. 18:28; 20:25; James 2:6).

Above all, sexual abuse is a gross manifestation of pride and arrogance. Like the fool who says, "There is no God" and has no fear of God in his heart (Ps. 14:1; Prov. 1:7), sexual abusers do as they please, believing they will get away with their corrupt deeds and escape God's notice, thus mocking God (Gal. 6:7).

When the sins of lust, sexual immorality, covetousness, violating and taking advantage of others, and arrogance are combined, the resulting thoughts and behaviors often fall within the legal and psychological definitions of sexual abuse.

Why is combating sexual abuse a gospel issue?

The problem of sexual abuse is a gospel issue because, first and foremost, it drives people—victims, perpetrators, and non-Christians—away from Christ. This is particularly true when the abuse is perpetrated by a church/convention employee or volunteer. If the mission of the church is to bring people to Christ, then anything that works against that mission becomes a gospel concern.

Victims of sexual abuse, particularly those who have seen and experienced the failures of the church first-hand, are often driven away from Christ. If they feel that the church failed to protect them, believe them, value them, or support them, it is understandable that they might also feel that the church has become a stumbling block for them, a wedge driving them from God. It is possible for a root of bitterness to take hold in a person's heart when the church falls short of the grace of God on behalf of that individual (Heb. 12:14-15).

Sexual abusers, themselves, if they are truly born-again, can fall away from the faith because of their sin. If they are not confronted and restored by spiritual leaders, they are in grave danger of falling ever deeper into sin (Matt. 7:13) and departing from the faith with a seared conscience (1 Tim. 4:1-2). That said, many abusers profess to be Christians, but are, in truth, wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). For such abusers, the goal is not to restore them, but to expose them and protect the flock from them.

In addition, non-Christians and those outside of the Body of Christ can be driven farther from Christ due to negative reports (e.g. 1 Cor. 6:6-7) related to sexual abuse in the church. Churches cannot be too careful in maintaining an effective witness to the world, part of which entails purging the evil of sexual abuse from their midst.

What ought the church do about sexual abuse?

Part of the biblical mandate to combat sexual abuse involves exposing and confronting sin in all its forms. Churches are not to turn a blind eye to sin, consciously or unconsciously. Romans 7:13 teaches that God gave us His law in order that sin might be recognized as *sin and become utterly sinful*, and Ephesians 5:13 says that everything exposed by the light is made visible. Therefore, all instances of sexual abuse in the church ought to be exposed and brought into the light so that it can be dealt with in a godly manner.

Churches also have a biblical mandate to protect and honor women, children, and the vulnerable. In Mark 10:14, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me. Do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Romans 12:10 tells us to love one another with brotherly affection and to outdo one another in showing honor. First Timothy 5:2 admonishes us to treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters. And James 1:27 says religion that is pure and pleasing to God is to take care of widows and orphans. Therefore, churches must do all they can to protect the vulnerable from sexual abuse.

Moreover, the church is called to promote and demonstrate God's justice and righteousness to the world. Jesus commands us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Jesus's own mission was to proclaim liberty to the captives and the oppressed (Luke 4:18). We are again told to shine like lights in the world amidst a crooked and twisted generation (Phil. 2:15). Therefore, the church must have the highest ethical standards and outdo the world in terms of its policies for preventing and protecting against sexual abuse.

Finally, there is no greater mandate than to obey and fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Christ commands us to love one another as He has loved us (Matt. 22:39; 1 John 4:19-21) and to be His witnesses, making disciples everywhere we go (Matt. 28:19-20). We cannot do either of these things effectively if our testimony is ruined by a halfhearted response to such an ugly sin as sexual abuse.

What are the consequences of failing to deal with sexual abuse properly?

If the churches or convention do not deal with sexual abuse in an effective and sufficient way, then a number of negative consequences follow. The first consequence is the church/convention becomes a *de facto* partner of evil who condones sexual abuse. Tolerating or covering up sexual abuse amounts to participation with demons.

The second consequence is the multiplication and proliferation of pain and on-going injury or trauma. Failure to protect people from sexual abuse creates a cycle of pain. Trauma from sexual abuse can lead to many other emotional, psychological, physical and relational problems later on in life, especially for child victims.

A third consequence is the loss of the church/convention's ability to witness effectively to the world. It is difficult to preach and teach a message of love, truth, and integrity when those very values are compromised in the community to whom the church is preaching and teaching.

Finally, and perhaps most lamentably, if the church/convention does not deal with sexual abuse effectively and sufficiently, it brings reproach upon the name of Christ. The church exists to worship and exalt the name of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth. To do the opposite and bring reproach upon Christ is to go against the purpose of our being and to live a self-defeating existence.

Definitions

Abuse - Takes place when there is an imbalance of “power” between people created by differences such as: age, strength, wealth, authority, etc. The individual with power exploits the trust attained by virtue of his or her position to harm a person who is vulnerable. This can happen in a of a variety forms such as sexual, physical, emotional, spiritual, or financial etc.

Child - A person who is under eighteen years of age, except when the juvenile court acquires jurisdiction over a child, or the person is mentally or physically handicapped, then he or she is deemed a child until the age of twenty-one.¹

In the church setting, youth programs are likely to include students who are eighteen and still under the care of the youth ministry. These students must still be considered vulnerable participants in the church who need protection.

Sexual Abuse - Unlawful sexual activity.² Physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body, or other forms of sexual activity, conducted without consent, or engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse.³

Child Sexual Abuse can be further grouped into two categories: contact behavior and non-contact behavior.

Contact behavior includes:

- Touching, with any part of one's body, another's genitalia, buttocks, breasts, or surrounding areas (e.g. thighs, stomach, lower back), except as necessary for caregiving (such as changing an infant's diaper) or medical purposes (such as administering an EpiPen to a child's buttocks)
- Using one's own genitalia, buttocks, breasts, or surrounding areas to touch another's body (e.g. rubbing one's penis against a child's back)
- Kissing, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal, anal, or other orifice penetration by a penis, finger or other object.
- Exploiting a child by engaging the child in prostitution or the production of pornography.

Non-contact behavior includes:

¹Ohio Revised Code, Section 2151.011, B.2. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.011>

²Ohio Revised Code, Section 2907, A-C, <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2907.01>

³Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 18.

- Sexual communication (whether verbal or written, including by telephone, text message, email, or social media), voyeurism (spying on private or intimate behaviors, such as those involving undressing, nudity, or sexual activity)
- Exposure to pornography or other sexually explicit material, or exhibitionism (exposure of part or all of an adult's naked body).
- Exposure of part or all of a child's naked body (except as necessary for caregiving or medical purposes).
- Any activity intended to abuse, degrade, arouse, or gratify sexual desires.
- Instruction from an adult for a child to engage in sexual activity alone or with a third party.

Child Neglect - Denial to a child of proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care, supervision, or other care necessary for a child's health.⁴

Child Physical Abuse - any physical injury inflicted, other than by accidental means; or an injury which contradicts the reasons given for it; that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare. Physical discipline is not considered abuse so long as it is reasonable and does not lead to injury.⁵

Emotional Abuse - acts toward a child which cause, or are likely to cause, harm to his or her physical, social, spiritual, or moral development. This is known as "Mental injury" in Ohio Law. Emotional Abuse might include, but is not limited to, patterns of:⁶

- restricting a child's movement
- discrimination (e.g. serving snack to all the children in a youth group except for one child or one group of children).
- blaming, shaming, insulting
- belittling, denigrating, ridiculing, or humiliating
- threatening, intimidating, or scaring
- unrealistic expectations and demands
- other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying

Spiritual Abuse - Patterns of domineering or manipulative behaviors that occur under the guise of religion. Examples include:

⁴Ohio Revised Code, Section 2151.011, B30. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.011>

⁵ Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 20.

⁶Ohio Revised Code, Section 2151.011, B.24. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.011>

- Use of religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm.
- Compelling a child to engage in religious acts against his or her will.
- Abuse that occurs in a religious context (e.g., church).
- Abuse perpetuated by a religious leader (e.g., pastor).
- Invocation of divine authority to manipulate a child into meeting the needs of the abuser.
- Using spirituality or spiritual authority to dismiss a child's perspective, agency, or value.
- Attempts to use the divine or sacred texts, sacred tradition, theology, or spirituality to put their leadership or decisions beyond questioning or accountability.
- Attempts to spiritualize or justify harm using the divine, sacred texts, sacred tradition, theology, or spirituality.

Poly-Victimization - Children who are maltreated⁷ in one way are at a higher risk of being maltreated in multiple ways.

The [Church/Convention] takes all indicators and suspicions of child maltreatment seriously. Therefore, as our [church/convention] becomes aware of an indicator or report of a child being maltreated in one way we will be alert to the possibility that this child might also be maltreated in another way, and we will take steps to protect the child from known risks and be extra attentive to and offer support for the child.

⁷ The term maltreatment is used to encompass all forms of neglect and abuse.

Indicators of Child Abuse and Maltreatment

[Church/Convention] employees and volunteers are in a position of care over children, as such it is probable for these workers to encounter children who display various signs of abuse and maltreatment. While some injuries and behaviors are indicative of normal childhood behavior, there are certain signs that should raise questions of the possibility of abuse such as the following:

- Underwear that is bloody or torn.
- When sitting, using the bathroom, or walking the child struggles, has pain, or blood in the genital area.
- Evidence of injury to private areas such as: bruises, swelling, bleeding, or tearing.
- Urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases, yeast infections, or pregnancy.

It is possible for there to be non-abusive reasons for all of the indicators in the prior list, however, the following list outlines abnormal behaviors in children that must not be ignored:

- Placing mouth on sex part.
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts.
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse.
- Undressing others, especially if done so forcefully.
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls.
- Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain.
- Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets.
- Making sexual sounds.
- Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing.⁸

Injuries are not the only signs to watch for as there are emotional and behavioral indicators of abuse as well such as:

- Withdrawal from loved ones and depression
- Behavioral changes and behavior extremes that go beyond age appropriate levels of responsibility, overachieving, being overly passive or demanding

⁸ Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 38.

- Destruction to either property or self, rebellion, running away or suicide attempts
- Clear delays in academic, physical, emotional abilities not related to a diagnosis such as autism
- Parenting others as an adult would, or regression to previously outgrown behaviors like bedwetting
- High anxiety that presents with physical pain like head or stomach aches
- School absences which are unexplained

It is important to take note of the following signs as they could be indicators of physical abuse:

- Injuries like bruises, burns, fractures and cuts which appear frequently and do not have a sensible explanation
- Any injury which has a pattern that reveals an instrument was used such as teeth, hands, cigarettes or other devices
- Symmetrical injuries to both sides of the body (accidents are not usually symmetrical)

The following list shows indications of child neglect:

- Malnourishment, food theft or hoarding, regularly expressing hunger
- Frequently dirty with intense body odor, and lack of weather appropriate clothing
- Injuries, illnesses and other physical or educational needs go untreated (such as broken glasses or unfilled cavities)
- Stays at school for extended hours and/or is often absent
- Lack of needed supervision
- Use of drugs or alcohol

Types of Abusers and Their Tactics

There is no specific “profile” of individuals who perpetuate sexual abuse. They can be male or female of all ages and backgrounds. There are three main categories of sexual abusers: stranger, acquaintance, and intra-familial. Children are most likely to be abused by a family member and secondly an acquaintance. The risk of a child being abused by a stranger is fairly low.

To gain the opportunity to abuse, typical acquaintance or intra-familial perpetrators will primarily use tactics of gaining trust and asserting authority, but will occasionally resort to employing physical force or threats; whereas the stranger will more likely use force and threats. Those who abuse seek out places with children, as such [Church/Convention] leadership and staff must be vigilant in screening staff, volunteers, and anyone with access to children.

Hiring New Staff and Volunteers

[Church/Convention] must assess potential staff and volunteers before allowing them to work with children. It is best practice for a volunteer to be a member of his or her church for a year prior to serving with minors. However, both new and long term members must be vetted. Screenings are important as they can potentially identify offenders, serve as a deterrent to keep offenders from applying, or even help to educate applicants, who are less vigilant of safety, on the importance of adhering to all components of the policy. Additionally, it proves the [church/convention] is committed to child safety. While screenings may not necessarily identify someone as a child abuser, it can provide needed information about a potential employee. The following are all extremely valuable aspects of screening to be as thorough as possible to protect the vulnerable.

Screening tools for an applicant must include:

- Written Applications
- Comprehensive Background Checks
- Social Media Reviews
- Internet Searches
- Multiple Reference Checks
- Multiple Personal Interviews
 - Directly ask if the applicant has ever abused or been accused of abuse of a child or adult

Red-flags - It is important to take note of any red-flags that arise. Unwise behavior can be an indication of willingness to cross a line with a minor.

- Be alert for inappropriate social media posts, or a friend list with a disproportionate number of minors.
- Reference interviews should include all previous employers even if the applicant did not list them as references, as they may be more likely to be candid in their answers.
- Present the abuse policy to an applicant prior to a personal interview, and ask if he or she agrees with it. This offers a strong indication of willingness or lack thereof to uphold the policy.
- Any search that reveals a conviction of sexual abuse or a violent crime must disqualify an applicant from ever working with children. Other crimes must be evaluated as well to assess the potential danger it poses to children.

Options for background checks may include:

- Confirmation of education
- Local criminal record check
- State criminal record check
- FBI criminal record check
- State central child/dependent abuse registry check
- State sex offender registry
- Motor vehicle record check
- Professional disciplinary board background check⁹

Resources for Screening:

- Lifeway recommends: backgroundchecks.com
- The Ohio Attorney General offers [Webcheck®](#) Locations for background checks for each Ohio county.¹⁰
- The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's *Caring Well Hiring Guide* is a great resource for churches and the convention to consider when looking to fill staff and volunteer positions.¹¹

Who must be screened?

- ***Church/Convention Employees*** - pastors, staff, state catalysts, endorsed pulpit supply ministers, counselors, safety ministry, nursery workers, etc.
- ***Volunteers*** - Children and youth programs. Those who work directly with children and youth must receive the highest level of screening.
- ***Members*** - Anyone spending time with children at an institution sponsored event or who has keys to the building. Members can participate in basic screening steps by agreeing to the church policy, attending training events, and submitting to periodic checks on the state sex offender registry.
- ***General employees*** - Contractors on site when children are present.

⁹ Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 85.

¹⁰<https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Business/Services-for-Business/WebCheck/Webcheck-Community-Listing>

¹¹<https://www.caringwell.com/hiring/>

Appropriate Interactions with Minors

[Church/convention] staff, volunteers, and church attenders must interact with children and youth in a safe manner at all times.

During a [church/convention] children or youth event, whether on or off site, it is best to have two non-related/married adults to act as supervision for the event. If the adults are related/married then a third adult must be included so as to provide the best level of accountability.

[Church/Convention] must identify these events to properly staff them to ensure the safety of the minors who are present. These events can include, but are not limited to:

- Child care, Sunday school, or youth group meetings
- Small groups, or other off-campus events
- Transportation to and from events
- Camps, conferences, or service opportunities
- Mentoring/discipleship

When it is not possible to have two adults for an event, the parents/guardians of the minor(s) and the supervisor of the worker must know about the meeting so there can be unexpected visits during the event to provide accountability. The event must also be easily observable and happen in a public place or for Sunday school the class door left open. This practice can hinder any privacy or secrecy which could hide abuse. All secret events must be prohibited.

The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO) must never sponsor an event which has an individual adult assuming responsibility over minors.

It is important that [church/convention] staff and volunteers are aware of appropriate touch and inappropriate touch and must comply to these standards at all times.

“Safe touch” includes the following:

- Hugs from the side
- High fives, fist bumps, handshakes
- Shoulder pats
- All must be observable by other adults
- All must be done respectful of the child’s personal boundaries

The following list outlines touch which must always be prohibited:

- Sexually or physically abusive touch

- Touching a child's thighs, stomach or back
- Corporal punishment
- Any touch that is unwanted by a child
- Any touch that is secret
- Touch that sexually gratifies the adult in any way
- Lap sitting
- Tickling
- Playing with hair
- Full frontal hugs
- Tapping a child's clothed bottom¹²

So as to not leave other children out and to prevent secrecy, special gifts or attention must not be given to an individual child by a staff member or volunteer.

If there is a need for extra attention there must be an agreed upon [church/convention] sponsorship of a gift/event to meet the child's need (e.g., a child is grieving the loss of a parent with care provided from a community of people not an individual, through a formal plan by leadership).

Under no circumstances will talk containing sexual joking, innuendos, or sexual experiences be permitted. Any events which promote movies or videos games containing sexual content or pornography are also unacceptable.

Social media or texting interactions between [church/convention] staff or volunteers and a child must follow the same guidelines of safety and observability by other adults, like the child's parents/guardians. Any photos of children must not be shared on social media without parent/guardian permission.

Overnight events sponsored by the [church/convention] must provide sleeping and bathroom arrangements where the children/students are separate from the adults. However, the adults must be close by to be able to oversee the safety of the children.

¹² Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 97.

Safety Practices

Any program or event which places the [church/convention] as a responsible party for the care of children needs to have a registration process. Children must only be picked up by parent/guardian approved individuals and the names must be on file, then verified at pick up with Photo ID. Special attention should be given to situations with custody disputes or intimate partner violence to ensure children are safe and only released to the approved guardian. The registration, drop off, and pick up of children must be a clear process that is easy for parents/guardians to follow.

Registration must include needed information for each child such as:

- Who can pick the child from the event
- Allergies
- Medical needs
- Photography permission
- Emergency contact information
- Any special instructions

Registration must be done for all minors, however those over elementary age can be released together to return to their families on their own at the end of the event.

Facilities used for [church/convention] programs and events must be evaluated to ensure there are no places where abuse can be easily perpetrated.

- Check to make sure all rooms for children are properly lit.
- Classrooms must have windows so parents and supervisors can easily check in.
- Consider the use of security cameras.
- Unused or unsupervised rooms and closets must be locked.
- Any dark hallways or hideaways must be brightly lit for full visibility.
- Consider having a staff member or volunteer to walk the building and check in on both occupied classrooms and unused spaces to ensure the policies are being followed and children are safe.

Convicted and Confessed Offenders

[Church/Convention] will not allow non-repentant, convicted, or confessed sexual offenders to participate in any gatherings of the [Church/Convention], as they pose a serious risk to those who are vulnerable. Sexual Offenders who are repentant are welcome to attend provided they first agree to comply with a high level of accountability and follow the safety measures as offered by [Church/Convention] leadership. Prior to attending the [Church/Convention], offenders must agree to undergo an evaluation process to assess his or her individual circumstances, repentance, and needed safeguards, before taking part in any meetings. However, an offender will not be considered for admittance if his or her victim(s) attend the [Church/Convention].

It is important for [Church/Convention] leadership, or the Safeguarding team, to contact experts for every sexual offender case, whether the individual is convicted or credibly accused, to ensure best practices are followed in each situation.

The leaders or the safeguarding team will do the following:

- Interview the known offender
- Interview other relevant parties (i.e. family, treatment provider, counselor, parole officer, etc.)
- Acquire records relating to the offender
- Assess repentance in consultation with experts
- [If applicable]: Set level of participation, accountability, and safeguarding requirements both on and off property (including listening to any known survivors about the impact in their life, and accountability on and off church/convention property).

Under no circumstances will convicted or confessed offenders volunteer/work with vulnerable children or adults, neither will they be given any leadership roles or positions of trust (even if not connected to those at risk). If offenders reveal a lack of repentance (evidences deception, minimization, victim blaming, etc.) or fails to follow the safety plan, then they will be removed from all association with the [church/convention] both on and off ministry property.

The offender must agree to have his or her name known by the [Church/Convention]. If it is known or believed that the offender is attracted to or fantasies about children he or she must not be allowed attendance to any gatherings with children.

The safeguards must include continual accountability by communicating with individuals such as the offender's employer, counselor, probation/parole officer, family, and friends concerning the offender's compliance to the safety plan both on an off ministry property. There must be reviews yearly (or more often if needed) to assess if any changes are needed.

Those who have the role of ministering to offenders must receive training to best care for the offender and protect the vulnerable.

Violations of Abuse Policy

When a staff member, volunteer, or other [church/convention] member breaks any part of the institution's child safety policy, the action cannot be ignored as it will tell potential abusers that they can get away with more grave violations. Any abuse or suspected abuse of a child must be immediately reported to the proper government authorities, however, policy violations can have varying responses. The only toleration for policy violations are for emergencies or pre-approved situations by [church/convention] leadership, and documented with the reasons they were necessary.

Staff/Volunteer

Staff and volunteers must read and abide by the policy at all times. Even minor repeat violations cannot be tolerated; they must be removed from their positions. Any single violation warrants further safety education and ensured future compliance to the policy. Every time a policy is broken, by a staff member or volunteer, there must be documentation of the action in the individual's file.

Church/Convention Members

Members of the [church/convention] who are not staff or official volunteers might, out of ignorance, violate the safety policy. Abuse or suspected abuse must be reported to the proper government authorities, but in instances of a non-abusive breaking of policy, whether it was intentional or accidental, there must be a response from [church/convention] leadership. When any part of the policy is not upheld, the individual must be told exactly what he or she did that broke policy, what the policy states concerning the issue, and what the appropriate action should have been. In non-abusive situations, if the individual complies with the policy no further action is necessary. A lack of compliance, however, warrants a meeting with leadership for education on the policy. Documenting the action(s) in the individual's file is helpful so potential behavior patterns can be detected. If there is further refusal to comply then the establishment of a Limited Access Agreement is warranted.

Limited Access Agreements

Violations of the policy, no matter how minor, by a non-staff church member, after informing him or her as stated above, may need to be resolved through a *Limited Access Agreement*, where the individual signs a statement agreeing to not have access to minors or else they must leave the church. The Limited Access Agreement must be specific to what behaviors are being prohibited. It is beneficial to have a member responsible for overseeing the individual to ensure the agreement is being followed. Overseer participation in meetings with leadership is helpful to address any follow up concerns.

These agreements are not for staff, volunteers, or convicted offenders. Any staff or volunteers who break the policy in minor and non-abusive ways must be formally warned and re-trained. However, staff or volunteers who have significant or repeat offenses must be removed from their position, and reported if there are concerns about potential abuse. No one with an abuse conviction can serve with children in any manner.

How to Report Abuse

The following guidelines must be referred to in cases/allegations of sexual abuse within a local church or the State Convention. While adhering to Scripture as the highest authority on how all matters in the life of the church ought to be addressed, these guidelines also incorporate principles and best practices developed by experts, government, and law enforcement.

To report suspected abuse, contact the public children's services agency or law enforcement in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred.¹³

IF THE CHILD IS IN IMMINENT DANGER CALL 911

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: 855-OH-CHILD (855-642-4453).

Local Children's Services Agency :

Local County Sheriff:

Local City Police:

What needs to be reported?

Any report of suspected abuse, threat, or neglect must be made *immediately*, either by telephone or in person (not online), and must be followed by a written report, if requested by the receiving agency or officer. The written report must contain:¹⁴

- Names and addresses of the child and guardians
- The child's age
- The nature and extent of his or her injuries, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, as applicable, to have occurred
- The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the child and the address if available
- The threat of injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed to exist, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse, or neglect
- Any other relevant information including, but not limited to results and reports of any medical examinations that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse, or neglect

¹³Ohio Revised Code 2151.421. (A)(1)(a). <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.421>

¹⁴Ohio Revised Code, 2151.421. (C-D) <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.421>

- You have the option of giving your name or reporting anonymously. Giving your name can help the investigator clarify information. The agency will not give your name to the person suspected of abusing the child.

Who should report?

Anyone, regardless of age, who suspects a child is being harmed or neglected is encouraged to immediately report it to the authorities. This is not an easy thing to do, especially if the person is a spiritual leader, colleague, friend, or a family member. Regardless, it ought to be done to ensure the safety of the person under potential threat.¹⁵

Mandatory Reporters, however, are legally *required* to report suspicions of child abuse. These individuals *must not fail* to immediately report the suspected abuse to the authorities.¹⁶

In addition, these Mandatory Reporters are also required to immediately report to the authorities if he or she suspects an adult is actively being harmed or is in a condition where he or she might be abused, neglected, or exploited.¹⁷

In the context of the local church, these Mandatory Reporters include, but are not limited to:¹⁸

- Pastors, elders, and deacons
- Counselors
- Administrators, employees and teachers of:
 - Child care/services agencies or day-care centers
 - Schools (both public and private)
 - Camps
- Anyone who has been designated by the church, who is acting in an official capacity

The [Church/Convention] will continually identify and document Mandatory Reporters by name or position as staff/volunteers rotate, the institution restructures, Ohio law changes, or as needed. The [church/convention] must ensure these individuals are aware of their status as mandatory reporters as well as how to report to the proper government authorities.

¹⁵ Caring well, 157.

¹⁶Ohio Revised Code, 2151.421. (A)(1). <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.421>

¹⁷Ohio Revised Code, 5101.63. (A). <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-5101.63>

¹⁸Ohio Revised Code 2151.421. (A)(1)(b). <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-2151.421>

Once a report is filed with the authorities:

- The Leadership of [Church/Convention] must be informed
- The [Church/Convention] will offer the authorities its complete cooperation
- The [Church/Convention], in as far as it is able, will keep the identity of anyone who reports confidential
- See section: Supporting Victims After Abuse Pg 25
- The [Church/Convention] will immediately reassess the policy and how it is being implemented to evaluate if changes are needed to ensure safety

[Church/Convention] will not investigate allegations of sexual abuse. Such cases must be turned over to professional investigators immediately.

[Church/Convention] will comply with the investigation by ensuring all relevant information is carefully collected and turned over in the initial hours or days after the allegation is made.

Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

The act of disclosing abuse is extremely difficult for both children and adult survivors. As such, they are often reluctant to reveal such hurts. [Church/Convention] recognizes, upon receiving such a disclosure, it is imperative for [Church/Convention] to offer caring support both during and after the disclosure.

Children often accidentally or apprehensively reveal abuse, and it is common for them to deny the abuse when questioned. It is normal for the disclosure of a child, to be hesitant, disjointed, or veiled in figurative language. They may test the response of an individual by saying the abuse happened to a friend. To help a child feel safe when attempting to disclose abuse, it is important to respond in the following manner:

- Stay calm.
- Show love and respect for the child.
- Thank the child for telling you and praise his/her courage.
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting in trouble, reassure him/her that no matter what happened he or she is not to blame.
- If the child expresses concerns about not being believed, reassure the child that you believe him/her.
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat words, or probe for details. Use open-ended questions such as “What happened next?” Or “Tell me more.”
- Do not offer false assurances such as promising to keep the child’s disclosure a secret.
- Let the child know what to expect next and incorporate his/her input where possible.
- Protect the child immediately from the suspected offender.
- Report the abuse to the authorities and your supervisors/church leaders.
- Document the disclosure and your report.
- Protect the child’s right to privacy and avoid the urge to turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice. Instead, turn to professionals experienced in handling cases of child sexual abuse and to carefully selected individuals who can provide assistance and support to the child and you.¹⁹

It is common for an individual to disclose abuse decades after it took place. When an adult survivor discloses childhood abuse, the timing must not be questioned. Abuse

¹⁹ Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 181-2.

disclosures should be viewed as a sign of trust. It is important to be sensitive to the needs expressed by the survivor. Good responses to an adult survivor include:

- Allowing the survivor to speak, uninterrupted.
- Thanking the individual for telling his/her story.
- Expressing regret and asking how to help.
- Affirmation of the support of the church/convention.

However, do not ask questions which place blame on the survivor for perceived poor choices, do not push for more information, and do not offer false hope or make false promises. The survivor's story must never be shared without his or her permission.

Supporting Victims After Abuse

This policy aims to prevent the abuse of children, unfortunately, no policy will deter the sin in a human heart and abuse will occur in spite of individuals' and institutions' efforts to follow best practices. Upon the discovery or suspicion of abuse, the [church/convention] will enact the following procedures to show support for victims of abuse and their families:

Terminate/Suspend

Upon receiving an allegation of abuse against an employee or volunteer, he or she will be immediately terminated or suspended from all roles, and further action will be decided pending the results of an outside investigation. A person will be tasked as a liaison to the perpetrator in order to communicate appropriate information.

Support Person

Within twenty-four hours of the abuse report, the child and his or her family will be contacted by one of the [church/convention] leaders to express total support. This individual, if so desired by the family, will also be their assigned *Support Person*. The convention is only responsible for cases involving convention staff and volunteers, whereas the local church is responsible for its own staff and volunteers and must provide a local support person for local cases.

- A *Support Person* is not a legal or therapeutic expert, but is present to facilitate care to the family on a pastoral level. This person is to aid the family in spiritual and theological needs.
- The *Support Person* is to provide ongoing care not limited to: being present, listening, providing affirmation, aiding in filing a police report, attending meetings/interviews, informing the individual/family of the church's/convention's actions, and attending to requests of support from the family.
- To prevent increased trauma, a *Support Person* must never disbelieve or blame the victim or family, push for details of abuse, silence the victim, advise against what is stated by law, encourage forgiveness of the perpetrator, or express support of the perpetrator.

Mental Health Treatment

If the family of the victim desires, [Church/Convention] will provide options to help find a qualified trauma therapist experienced in treating victims of abuse. If needed, [Church/Convention] will aid in the payment of treatment, or help find resources to assist with the expenses.

“In the event that the child is found to have been abused by a church employee, volunteer, or other individual serving in an official capacity, or that the church was negligent or otherwise complicit in allowing the abuse to happen, the church will reimburse the entire cost of treatment for the child and the child’s family.”²⁰

Public Support

[Church/Convention] will protect the privacy of survivors. However, if in the public discourse, the survivor is being maligned or mistreated, with his or her permission, leadership will release a public statement of support. This is to call on the community to cease the ill treatment and to instead support the victim. Additionally, the leadership will confront any private conflict directly addressing the individuals involved.

Creating A Culture of Ongoing Support for Survivors

It is the goal of [Church/Convention] to be a place where survivors are cared for and safe. As such leaders will:

- Provide lists of resources to aid in both abuse prevention and care for survivors.
- Prominently advertise how to report abuse.
- Make the policy public to show abuse is taken seriously.
- Regularly denounce abuse at public engagements.
- Supply a trained individual as a contact for further questions on abuse.

²⁰ Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC: 2017. 194.

Training Staff and Volunteers

[Church/Convention] requires all staff and volunteers with any access to children to be trained by qualified individuals on an annual basis; along side maintaining annual background checks.²¹ New staff and volunteers must undergo screening and training prior to assuming their roles.

Children and youth can be taught classroom/event rules to help them know what is safe behavior.

The focus of training for adults must include how to respond to any allegations of child abuse, how to maintain safety, any new information regarding best practice and/or changes in Ohio law, and adherence to the Abuse Policy. Staff and volunteers must have these trainings recorded in their files.

Levels of training:

- Instruction on classroom/event rules — for children and youth participating in the event.
- Policy training — for members/volunteers, parents or those who have occasional contact with children
- Policy and trauma training for Staff – those in administrative positions in the [church/convention]
- Comprehensive training from professionals for leaders and teachers – those with direct responsibility/care of children and youth

Ensuring all adults and children are informed of the expectations within the Abuse Policy will enable healthy safety awareness within the [church/convention] which in turn will help protect those who are vulnerable. The policy must be easily accessible for quick reference as needed.

See Appendix 2 for suggestions on how to encourage policy implementation.

²¹ <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Business/Services-for-Business/WebCheck/Webcheck-Community-Listing>

Policy Updates

In order to take a proactive stance in protecting children and survivors, [church/convention] leaders will review and recommend policy changes on an annual basis (or more frequently if needed). Policy reviews must be documented and a report of changes made to the members/messengers. This review must include:

- Feedback from leaders, parents, and children
- Reviews of incident reports and limited access agreements
- Instruction from professionals on any updates to best practice standards

Appendix 1: Biblical argument for reporting abuse and caring for victims

Guiding Principles

There are three guiding principles which govern how churches ought to handle cases of sexual abuse within their ranks:

Security — Ensuring and maintaining the physical and emotional safety of victims and all members of the church in general. Just as Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:11), so too must church leaders, as shepherds of God’s people, do everything in their power to protect the well-being of their flock.

Transparency — The church is committed to the truth above protecting people’s reputations and images. Jesus came to us full of grace and truth (John 1:14), and even called Himself, “the Truth” (John 14:6). Therefore, if we are committed to Jesus, we must be committed to the truth.

Accountability — The church is committed to justice, fairness, and upholding the integrity of the gospel and the honor of Christ. Scripture teaches us to win over a brother or sister who sins (Matt. 18:15), to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), to correct and rebuke through the word (2 Tim. 3:16), and to keep watch over one another’s souls (Heb. 13:17).

Allegations of Sexual Abuse

All allegations of sexual abuse must be taken seriously by [church/convention] leadership, regardless of who makes the allegations or who the allegations are directed toward. No allegation, however improbable it may sound, can be ignored. Allegations that are clearly frivolous, if taken seriously, will be shown to be false in quick order and promptly resolved. Allegations that are substantial and credible, if taken seriously, will lead to a swift and decisive application of justice pleasing to God, who loves justice (Luke 18:7-8; Heb. 1:8-9).

Misapplication of Key Passages of Scripture

Three passages in Scripture are commonly misinterpreted, and therefore, misapplied to cases of sexual abuse in the church. These passages are Matt. 18:15-20, 1 Cor. 6:1-6, and 1 Tim. 5:19. Each passage has been used to justify not reporting cases of sexual abuse in the church to law enforcement and to keep them “in house” to prevent those outside the church from learning about them.

This practice goes against the principles of security, transparency, and accountability outlined in this guideline. It degrades security because it leaves victims vulnerable. It chooses secrecy over transparency, keeping sin hidden in the darkness. Then, because the cases are often dismissed rather than dealt with, it violates

accountability, and perpetrators are often given a slap on the wrist in the name of “grace” or “church unity.”

Matthew 18:15-20

Matt. 18:15-20 outlines Jesus’s teaching on how persistent, unrepentant sin ought to be dealt with in the church. He teaches us to address the sin in stages of increasing authority and intentionality. While cases of sexual abuse may fit the category of persistent sin and be dealt with in accordance to these steps, in no way does this passage discourage the reporting of crimes to law enforcement.

It should also be noted that this passage mostly applies to conflicts between people of equal power or standing in the church. In the case of a wolf (i.e. someone with power and authority) abusing a lamb (i.e. a younger or weaker individual), Jesus does not recommend sending the lamb back to the wolf for a one-on-one confrontation.

The purpose of Matt. 18:15-20 is to determine the spiritual state and membership status of the sinner. If the sinner repents, he or she is restored to full membership of the church and is recognized as a fellow believer. If he or she does not repent, membership is revoked because they are regarded as an unbeliever (i.e. Gentile or tax collector). This process is separate from and can run parallel to the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed within the church. In most cases, both processes are needed. As Jesus says in Matt. 22:21, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

1 Corinthians 6:1-6

This passage deals with the issue of lawsuits within the church, particularly lawsuits filed by one believer against another believer within the same local body. Paul admonishes the Corinthians for turning to secular judges to adjudicate the matter and failing to deal with it themselves. The reason for the admonishment is two-fold: 1) the Corinthian believers fail to exercise the wisdom and discernment they have been given by the Spirit to judge such matters for themselves, and 2) they bring shame and reproach upon the name of Christ by presenting a bad or harmful witness to the world.

While we can only speculate as to the scope of issues Paul had in mind when he wrote this passage, a strong argument can be made that he was addressing moral, ethical, and spiritual sins in the church that do not rise to the level of criminal offenses. If this were not the case, Paul would not have written in Romans 13:1-7 of the need for Christians to submit to government authorities and to those who “wield the sword” to warn against bad conduct.

Since both 1 Cor. 6:1-6 and Rom. 13:1-7 are the inerrant Word of God, it stands to reason that they are both true and they cover different issues. The first passage, then, deals with issues of sin which are not seen as criminal offenses in the eyes of the state, and the second deals with sins that are considered criminal by the state (and by God). In criminal cases, God gives the state the jurisdiction and authority to deal with the criminal matter according to its laws. Therefore, churches ought to report crimes, including crimes of sexual abuse, to the state.

1 Timothy 5:19

First Timothy 5:19 teaches no charge or accusation against an elder should be allowed unless it is supported by the testimony of at least two witnesses. The purpose behind this teaching is to protect church leaders from frequent, frivolous charges, and to recognize the weight of the act of accusing church leaders of grievous sin. On account of the honor of the office of elder, charges of sinful misconduct toward elders and pastors should not be made lightly.

Unfortunately, this verse has been used as a weapon to silence actual victims of sexual abuse who were abused by church leaders. Since sexual abuse often happens in the shadows, in one-to-one settings where there are no other witnesses, victims have often been discouraged, by this verse (and other factors), from coming forward.

The rationale behind the verse (and others like it, such as similar laws in Deut. 17 and 19) is only charges with sufficient evidence should be considered. In ancient times, witness testimony was often the only form of evidence available, hence the requirement for at least two witnesses.

If the spirit of the law—that is, the principle of sufficient evidence—is taken into account, then in today’s context, it would be acceptable to use other forms of evidence (e.g. video, audio, digital, DNA) as another “witness.” Thus, even if the victim is the only human witness to the charge, if there is other corroborating evidence, such evidence must be accepted as another witness and the biblical standard of two witnesses should be considered met.

As a result, no church leader ought to be able to hide behind 1 Tim. 5:19 as a protection against charges of sexual abuse if sufficient evidence exists to support the charge, even if the victim is the only human witness of the events.

Care for Victims

In their zeal for justice, churches sometimes focus too much on disciplining offenders at the expense of caring for victims. Caution must be taken to devote enough time

and attention to both sides of the matter. Victims must not be kept in the dark about any disciplinary or criminal process that is taking place.

Extra care should be given regarding how much information about the situation is shared with the public. The church/convention may need to know some information (e.g., the identity of the perpetrator) in order to protect others from being harmed, however, details of a victim's story must never be shared without permission. Victims are often re-traumatized after learning that certain information about them or their situation was shared with the public without their knowledge or consent. While victims cannot unilaterally dictate the course of disciplinary or investigative processes, sensitivity must be exercised for the victim's recovery and healing. As Isa. 42:3 declares, "A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice."

Appendix 2: How to Encourage Policy Implementation

- Require all employees, volunteers, and individuals with access to children to read the policy each year of service and sign to indicate his or her compliance. This should be documented in the individual's file.
- At staff meetings highlight different portions of the policy to ensure everyone understands the purpose of the section and encourage staff to maintain vigilance in upholding the specifics of the highlighted policy.
- Prior to the start of an event, cover all relevant policy information with staff and volunteers.
- Make the policy easily available on the [church/convention] website.
- Have paper copies of the policy displayed for quick access.
- Include a physical copy of the policy in new member packets and each year email the policy to all members highlighting any updates or changes.
- Create posters for children and youth areas that teach the major tenets of the policy.
- Teach children and youth classroom safety rules.
- Regularly teach from the Bible concerning the sinfulness of abuse and highlight how the policy aids in maintaining safety for others from such sin.
- In the [church/convention] newsletter offer summaries of portions of the policy.
- Encourage all church members and convention messengers to report known or suspected abuse to the proper government authorities.

Appendix 3: GRACE's Recommendations For Church Cooperation:

At all times our community upholds the following standards of respect and safety.

Show respect in physical touch, space, and visibility:

- Appropriate touch, whether an adult or child, is always welcomed by the person and accountable to others (If you are not sure, just ask - e.g. "Can I give you a hug?")
- Children who need assistance in the restroom outside of the children's ministry must be helped by their own parent or guardian. Within the children's ministry, all diapering or assistance must be observable by two screened adults.
- Be considerate of others and give them appropriate space: Notice the body language of others and be aware of your impact on others
- Stay in visible and accountable spaces: No one should be alone with a child who is not their own child (including giving rides)

Show respect in your words:

- Determine to use words that convey the respect always due to others.
- Avoid any language that belittles or objectifies (e.g. commenting on a person's body or sexual attractiveness)
- Avoid sexualized comments including inappropriate jokes or stories (or sharing media)

Show respect in agency and personal boundaries:

- Healthy people do not seek to control others, but rather encourage and empower others to take healthy agency in their own life (e.g. making decisions for someone or taking control of an aspect of their life such as directing their finances or career or social life).
- Avoid volunteering inappropriately intimate information or asking someone to reveal intimate details or personal information when the person is not ready or comfortable doing so.
- Give agency to others (e.g. "Where would you be comfortable meeting up?")
- Always respect the "no" of others in setting personal boundaries.

It is always the responsibility of the person in the position of greater power to maintain appropriate boundaries with others. The following behaviors are unacceptable by any

pastors, elders, deacons, or staff at [Church/Convention]: Any abuse of power as defined by this policy.

- Sexual harassment of any kind, including unwanted sexual attention, comments, or unwanted physical touch
- Behavior or words that discriminate against anyone based on age, race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status.
- Any words that belittle or threaten

Appendix 4: GRACE's Policy Recommendation for a Safeguarding Team:

The Safeguarding Team is responsible for equipping the [Church/Convention] for effective prevention and response. Currently, our Safeguarding Team is comprised of a group of 4-6 members and includes women and men.

Duties of the Safeguarding Team:

- Implement and oversee compliance with the [Church/Convention] Sexual Abuse Policy
- Maintain rigorous familiarity with the [Church/Convention] Sexual Abuse Policy
- Brief all staff, volunteers, and members on the application of the policy on a regular basis
- Receive, Document, and Respond to any policy violations or concerning behavior
- Lead in responding to any allegations of abuse
- Conduct or coordinate screening of pastors, officers, staff, and volunteers.
- Complete continuing education from a qualified organization on an annual basis and help leaders with an ongoing education plan for the whole church

Appendix 5: Resources

Books

Brown, Christa. *This Little Light: Beyond a Baptist Preacher Predator and His Gang*

DeMuth, Mary. *Not Marked: Finding Hope and Healing After Sexual Abuse*

Demuth, Mary. *We Too: How the Church can Respond Redemptively to the Sexual Abuse Crisis*

Holcomb, Justin and Lindsey. *Rid of my Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault*

Langberg, Diane. *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse*

Langberg, Diane. *On the Threshold of Hope* (book and workbook)

Langberg, Diane. *Redeeming Power: Understanding Power and Authority in the Church*

Langberg, Diane. *The Spiritual Impact of Sexual Abuse*

Langberg, Diane. *Suffering and the Heart of God*

McKnight, Scot and Laura Barringer. *A Church called Tov: Forming a Goodness Culture that Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing*

Mullen, Wade. *Something's Not Right: Decoding the Hidden Tactics of Abuse and Freeing yourself from its Power*

Pierre, Jeremy and Greg Wilson *When Home Hurts: A Guide For Responding To Domestic Abuse In Your Church*

Rachael Denhollander. *What's a Girl Worth: My Story of Breaking the Silence and Exposing the Truth about Larry Nassar*

Rachael Denhollander. *How Much is a Little Girl Worth?*

Salter, Anna. *Predators, Pedophiles, Rapists, and other Sex Offenders: Who they are, how they operate, and how we can protect ourselves and our children*

Schmutzer, Andrew, ed. *The Long Journey Home: Understanding & Ministering to the Sexually Abused: A Collaborative Address from Psychology, Theology, and Pastoral Care*

Tchividjian, Basyle. *Protecting Children from Abuse in the Church*

Tchividjian, Basyle and Justin S. Holcomb. *Caring for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*

Tchividjian, Basyle and Shira M. Berkovits. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*

Tracy, Steve. *Mending the Soul: Understanding and Healing Abuse* (book and workbook)

Van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*

Vieth, Victor. *On This Rock: A Call to Center the Christian Response to Child Abuse on the Life and Words of Jesus*

Vieth, Victor. *What the Bible Says to Abuse Survivors and Those Who Hurt Them*

Websites

GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment)²²

Langberg, Diane. Redeeming Power: A Five Part Master Class²³

Rachael Denhollander website²⁴

Every Church Empowered Keynote Address²⁵

²²www.netgrace.org

²³www.dianelangberg.com/videos/

²⁴www.rachaeldenhollander.com

²⁵www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU0GoYrWZzE