



Working with Children & Students Policy and Procedures 2008

Updated 2/4/09

Reaching Children and Students to grow His Kingdom

Child Abuse Prevention



Welcome To Ridgedale Baptist Church Children's and Student Ministry

I want to take this opportunity to inform our church members, leaders, and volunteers how much Doug and I appreciate each and everyone of you. Without you Ridgedale would not be able to reach as many children and students as we have over the past several months and years. To recap what we have done in 2008:

- Fun With The Son (55 children)
- Growth in Mother's Day Out
- Family Activities (pumpkin patch, mother child banquet)
- Trunk-or-Treat (over 300 in attendance)
- Light The Night Easter Egg Hunt
- Conclave Youth Leadership Conference
- Middle School Girls Class
- Big Creek Missions
- Baptism (8 children 5 students and 3 adults)

And there are many other opportunities that have allowed us to grow Gods Kingdom.

Where are we going in 2009? In 2009 I want to take time to look at each program that has been implemented and check to ensure that is doing everything possible to disciple children and students. I want to ask questions, "Can we do this better," "What if we tried this?" I want your help as leaders and volunteers to help make changes to these programs. We can have the glitz and glimmer of an awesome ministry but it actually comes down to what we are doing to disciple these children and students. I am excited about 2009 as we have set high goals of attaining attendance of 60 AWANA children, 40 Kidz Quest attendance, and 40 Youth. And baptizing as many as God will allow us to.

I hope that you will join the Children's and Student Ministry leadership team and play an active role. There are plenty of jobs to be done in the Kingdom, and we need you! Will you join us?

His Servant,
Chris Cate & Doug Grim



Strategy and Philosophy

The Administrative/Family Pastor and Student Minister are responsible for setting the spiritual foundation for the children and students at Ridgedale Baptist Church and is a dynamic integral part of the total church program. Successful ministry is a cooperative effort between the church and family, utilizing the efforts of the ministry staff, volunteers, families, and the church body to effectively reach the children of our community with the message of the love of Jesus Christ.

The AIM of our ministry is Christ centered. We believe Christ has called children to follow Him, so our desire is to lead children into a personal dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ and to equip children to grow in that relationship and to serve Christ and others. We want the child to understand that Jesus Christ is the Lord of his/her life as he/she grows "in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and Man." Luke 2:52 (NIV)

The **PROGRAM** of our ministry is centered on the preschool child, elementary child and middle/high school student. Children deserve a safe, positive, nurturing, and age-appropriate learning environment that is free of fear and prejudice. Our ministry focuses on the spiritual, relational, physical, and mental needs of the child. All programming is designed to encourage growth in these four areas. Our focus is not on the program but on the child.

Our **METHODOLOGY** is experience based. Our ministry is active as children are involved in the creative and innovative learning process: questioning, discovering, and evaluating. We find we learn from children as we teach and discover with them.

Our **MATERIAL** is Bible based. We believe that the Word of God has the answers to the needs in our lives and is practical to today's child and adult. Our curriculum is designed to help the child discover what God's Word says and how to apply that truth to his/her life. We equip the child to put truth into action.

Our **FACILITIES** provide an environment that stimulates learning. Our classroom design, furnishings, and educational equipment keep in mind the appropriate age group characteristics for the children in that particular room.

Our **STAFF** is comprised of men and women who have trusted Christ as their personal Savior and desire to share the love of Jesus Christ with our children. Recognizing that the majority of our staff are parents and members of the church body, we provide the materials, curriculum, facilities, and proper training to equip them to successfully accomplish their goals and be positive role models to the children.

The Administrative/Family Pastor and Student Minister want:

- To provide a safe, secure, and loving environment for children to participate in and where parents feel comfortable leaving their child.
- To help children feel a warm sense of belonging to their church family and to ensure each child feels welcomed and wanted.
- For each child to know that God is real and that a personal relationship with Him gives meaning to life.
- To aid each child in accepting Jesus Christ and developing a dynamic relationship with Him.
- To help each child develop a lifestyle that is built on his/her relationship with Jesus Christ.



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- To help each child understand that God's Word (the Bible) is relevant and growth in Bible knowledge results in positive changes in attitudes, action, and lifestyle.
- To help the child grow in his/her relationships with other believers and with his/her non-churched friends.
- To provide children the opportunity and direction to participate in service and community outreach.
- To support the family in their responsibility for the spiritual nurture and growth of their child.
- To provide Godly men and women who are adequately trained to serve as positive role models while they minister with children.

The issue of child abuse is one that touches every aspect of our society and culture. It is tragic to consider, but not even churches have been without incident. We have adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse, in any of its hideous forms, in the church. We are called by God to provide a safe, nurturing and loving environment where children and adults may grow spiritually and physically strong.

Whereas, we are a Christian community of faith and a Baptist congregation, we pledge to conduct our ministries in manners that assure the safety, well-being and spiritual growth of our children and students, as well as all of our workers. To accomplish this pledge we, Ridgedale Baptist Church will:

Follow reasonable safety measures in selecting and recruiting workers/leaders/volunteers with children and students;

Implement prudent operational procedures for all programs and events;

Provide education for all workers/leaders/volunteers with children and students regarding church policy and procedures as well as the child abuse reporting requirements of the State of Tennessee;

Provide ministerial counseling to the victimized and abused;

Prepare a plan for communicating with those affected by abuse as well as the media.

The Children's and Student Ministries of Ridgedale Baptist Church will be responsible for the development of procedures to implement this policy, as well as for compliance monitoring.



Screening Process

It will be the responsibility of members of the Children's and/or Student Ministry teams to interview and screen each individual considered to work with children and students at Ridgedale Baptist Church. The following procedures will be followed to provide protective care for all participants, children, students and adults, in any church-sponsored activity.

- 1) All workers, whether they are compensated or volunteer, must complete the following forms:
 - a) Employment and Volunteer Application.
 - b) Provide (3) Personal References— (1) from a family member and (2) from non-family members. (References *may not* include pastors, ministers, employees, or paid personnel of the church.)
 - c) Permission to Obtain a Background Check (form) —all employees and/or volunteers will be screened using Lexius Nexius as a third party investigator.*

- 2) All volunteer workers should be a part of our congregation for at least six months prior to the time they begin serving with children or students. Exceptions to this could be the following two requirements.
 - a) The person asked to serve has been in ministry with children or students for at least six months in their prior church.
 - b) The person can provide a reference from a staff member with whom they worked at the prior church.

- 3) All workers are required to attend an orientation/training meeting.

- 4) In the event of an emergency fill-in = Each "temporary" or fill-in worker must be under the supervision of a fully trained Ridgedale Baptist Church adult worker. These temporary workers need to be aware of these procedures and agree to abide by them. This should only occur in the event no others are available to help fill a position. The Administrative/Family Pastor and/or Student Minister with the counsel of the Pastor and/or chairman of the board need to agree prior to allowing a fill-in or "temporary" volunteer.

- 5) Leaders or volunteers for Middle School and High School groups must be at least five years older than the Students they are supervising. Ex. Student is at age 15 the leader or volunteer would need to be age 20 to "supervise" them directly.

- 6) All other "Supervisory" leaders must be 18 years of age or older.

- 7) Except for the above (#5 & #6), volunteers must be at least 12 years of age unless they are accompanied by their parents.

- 8) Any person to our knowledge who has been convicted of abuse and wanting to work must meet with the Administrative/Family Pastor, Student Minister, and Pastor. No person convicted of child abuse will work with children or Students.

*All original documentation will be kept securely on file at Ridgedale Baptist Church. Applications and the results of all forms of screenings will be kept strictly confidential by authorized staff. Access to said documentation will be controlled by the Administrative/Family Pastor and Pastor. No information will be given about any person without the proper release form or legal documentation.



Guidelines for Volunteers and Leaders

The following basic procedures will be followed to provide for the best protective care for all children and students as well as adult workers in any church-sponsored activity.

- 1) A minimum of two adult workers should be present with each group of children or youth. An acceptance can be made with a sign posted on the door or by notifying parents verbally that only one worker is available today. At this time the door will be left open at all times. The general rule is that for every five children there should be one adult providing supervision.
- 2) It is recommended that Ministry Leaders, Team Leaders, and Supervisors should not be supervising children/students with immediate family members (husband and wife or mother and daughter). Family members are welcome to work together; however, they should have another leader present when supervising children/students.
- 3) All workers should attend initial training in "Working with Children & Students Policy and Procedures" before volunteering and complete reorientation/training every three (3) years.
- 4) All workers with children or students shall be five years older than those they are supervising. Exceptions are noted in the section on Screening Process (refer to numbers 5, 6, & 7).
- 5) No leaders under the age of 18. Exceptions for volunteers and workers are noted in the Screening Process (refer to numbers 5, 6, & 7).
- 6) Any room used for activities for children and students will have either a window or "half-door" so that activities may be observed. Should this not be available, the said door is to remain open and/or cracked at all times.
- 7) Counseling and/or discipline will take place in an open door setting. Should this not be possible, two adults must be present during the session.
- 8) Advance notice/permission must be obtained from parents for any off-site official church sponsored function/activity.
- 9) Educational resources will be provided for parents, family and church members. This will include, but not be limited to, manuals, teaching resources and annual orientation.
- 10) The church will provide adequate insurance coverage for the children, students and workers. Adequate insurance will be determined in consultation with the board of directors.

It should be noted that the safety and welfare of our young people is our utmost concern. The above are basic procedures, and it should be noted that it is our duty to protect the children and students. All of us should be prudent and use common sense in all church activities.



Reporting Suspected Child Abuse (Official and non-Official Church Event)

Should it become necessary to report suspected child abuse, the protection of our children and students must be the most immediate concern. It is the moral, ethical and legal obligation of any person with the responsibility of care taking of children and students to report any case or sign of abuse they may observed. Failure to report could lead to liability, both criminal and civil, on the part of the church, the observer or both. The phrase "*reasonable suspicion*" is very important in these proceedings. A report based on reasonable suspicion does not require proof that abuse has occurred, or was directly witnessed by the reporter. Reporting is not a determination that abuse has occurred; it is a *request for* an assessment of the condition of the child or student.

*Urgent sense of **Confidentiality** will be maintained at all times in the event of suspecting or observing abuse.

- 1) Upon observing or suspecting abuse, the worker will immediately make certain of the child or students safety.
- 2) The worker will notify the Tennessee State Hotline and request an assessment (1-877-237-0004).^^
- 3) The Worker will contact the Administrative and Family Pastor immediately after reporting to the Tennessee State Hotline.
- 4) Administrative and Family Pastor and leader/volunteer/worker will document the incident using the proper church documentation.
- 5) Administrative and Family Pastor will notify the pastor or chairman of the board of directors.
- 6) Pastor will notify board of directors.

In the event of media, follow these guidelines below:

The pastor and/or chairman of the board of directors will counsel with the victim, victims family, family of the accused and to the congregation. It is recommended that the pastor and/or chairman of the board of directors appoint one spokesperson to communicate with the congregation and the media. It is further recommended that only a prepared statement be given to the members of the media. Any questions, whether from inside the congregation or from without, be directed to the spokesperson. It is also recommended that the pastor and/or chairman of the board of directors contact an outside pastor for counseling to the accused.

^^The procedures listed above are taken from the TCA § 37-1-403.



Definitions

Child abuse and neglect occurs when a child is mistreated, resulting in injury or risk of harm. Abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual.

Physical Abuse is non-accidental physical trauma or injury inflicted by a parent or caretaker on a child. It also includes a parent's or a caretaker's failure to protect a child from another person who perpetrated physical abuse on a child. In its most severe form, physical abuse is likely to cause great bodily harm or death.

Physical Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's physical survival needs to the extent that there is harm or risk of harm to the child's health or safety. This may include, but is not limited to abandonment, lack of supervision, life endangering physical hygiene, lack of adequate nutrition that places the child below the normal growth curve, lack of shelter, lack of medical or dental that results in health threatening conditions, and the inability to meet basic clothing needs of a child. In its most severe form, physical neglect may result in great bodily harm or death.

Sexual Abuse includes penetration or external touching of a child's intimate parts, oral sex with a child, indecent exposure or any other sexual act performed in a child's presence for sexual gratification, sexual use of a child for prostitution, and the manufacturing of child pornography. Child sexual abuse is also the willful failure of the parent or the child's caretaker to make a reasonable effort to stop child sexual abuse by another person.

Emotional Abuse includes verbal assaults, ignoring and indifference or constant family conflict. If a child is degraded enough, the child will begin to live up to the image communicated by the abusing parent or caretaker.

Child abuse can happen anywhere -- in poor, middle-class or well-to-do homes, in rural or urban areas.

The above information was taken from TN DCS web-site.

Ritual abuse: is the infliction of any of the above in an intentional, regular and stylized way.

Worker/volunteer: is any person in a position of authority or leadership or a person who during the course of their duties comes into contact with the children, youth or other members of the church. Workers can be compensated or volunteer. Examples of compensated workers would be pastor or church secretary. Examples of volunteers would be Sunday School teacher, youth group leader or vacation bible school teacher.

Board of Directors: is the established leadership of the church.

Floater: is a worker who "visits" or "floats" from room to room during an event such as Sunday School, breakout groups, summer programming, or worship service.

Ministry Leader: is one who is responsible for a group of individuals in which the ministry leader will supervise.

Administrative and Family Pastor and Student Minister: are responsible for ensuring the safety of our children and students.