

Child Protection Policy and Procedures Overview

Calvary Presbyterian Church (Calvary) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children participating in our programs and activities. By implementing the practices below, our goal is **to prevent and protect the children** of Calvary, and children who visit, from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also **protecting our workers** from unwarranted accusations of improper behavior.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the below terms are defined as:

- **Minor, child, children** - any person between the ages of 0 and 18. A minor may include any 18-year-old still enrolled in high school.
- **Worker** - includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children.
- **Volunteer** - any person performing services or donating time or effort without compensation who is authorized to work with the children at Calvary.
- **Employee** - any paid staff member of Calvary.
- **Child abuse** - any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, physiological, or emotional health and development.
- **Physical abuse** - any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** - emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** - any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** - depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Worker Requirements

Calvary believes that appropriate relationships between employees/volunteers and the children of our church are vital to our church's existence and commitment **"to bring glory to God in this generation and the next."** Because we desire to safeguard children involved in our ministries, all persons seeking to work with children are required to complete the following steps before ministry work or volunteer placements begin:

- Be regularly involved in our church for **at least 6 months** (volunteers);
- Complete and pass **Sexual Abuse Awareness Training** (volunteers and employees) as well as any further required training. This training must be renewed **every 2 years**;

- Complete Calvary's **Child Protection Screening Process** (volunteers and employees);
- Sign the **Child Protection Policy and Procedures** acknowledgment and agreement statement indicating that all the material has been thoroughly read, reviewed, and understood and that workers will agree to comply with all policy requirements;
- Consent to a **Criminal Background Check** (adult employees and volunteers). Background checks must be renewed **every 3 years**.

Child Protection Screening Process

Calvary's Child Protection Screening Process includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- An Employment Application (employees);
- A Safety Application (employees and volunteers);
- An interview (employees and volunteers);
- References checks (employees and volunteers).

Workers Who are Minors

Workers serving the children of Calvary, who are themselves minors, are a valuable resource in the care and support of our children. The following guidelines apply to these workers:

- Must be at least 14 years of age;
- Must be under the supervision of a screened adult and **not** left alone with children;
- Must complete all worker requirements as specified above where applicable. It is recommended that parents/legal guardians preview the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training videos prior to their minor starting the training. Furthermore, it is recommended that a parent/legal guardian and their child watch the videos together, using this training as a teachable time to discuss child sexual abuse;
- Must provide a signed consent from a parent/legal guardian prior to serving.

Supervisory Requirements

To effectively protect our children and workers of Calvary, the following supervisory requirements apply to all employees and volunteers who have contact with minors in any program at the church or a church-sponsored event:

- **TWO ADULT RULE:** At **least two, unrelated adult workers** will be present at every function or program involving minors. This includes each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed areas. One or more of these adults must be 21 years of age or older. For larger groups, the number of adult supervisors must be increased in accordance with ratio requirements.

- **RULE OF THREE:** In limited circumstances, when the “Two Adult Rule” cannot be implemented, at least 3 individuals must be present, with at least one being a screened adult employee or volunteer. One of the two helpers needs to be unrelated to the screened adult.
- **ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION:** While adult workers should avoid being alone with a minor, Calvary recognizes that there may be exceptions in circumstances such as mentoring or counseling of youth. Any one-on-one interactions must take place in a location where the adult worker and the youth are visible to other adults adjacent to where the one-on-one interactions are taking place. A worker should NEVER be in a house or private location alone with one minor. Employees and volunteers must obtain approval from parents/guardians and the Child Protection Supervisor before meeting with a minor one-on-one.
- **OPEN DOOR POLICY:** Doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door, and all windows should remain uncovered. There should be a clear view into rooms. Furthermore, doors should NEVER be locked while persons are inside the room.
- **“NO-GO” ZONES:** Areas that are difficult to properly supervise and/or are secluded (ex. unused rooms, closets, offices) should be kept locked with limited key access.
- **WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS:** Ratios for optimum supervision vary due to the age of participants, the nature of activities, and the location where the activities are taking place. The supervisor overseeing the age group holds primary responsibility for setting and maintaining a reasonable ratio. As stated above, the goal is to have a minimum of two, unrelated adult workers present, even if the number of children is under the ratio.

See chart below for recommendations:

Program	Workers	Children
Infant/Toddler (0-2 years)	At least 2	Up to 6
Preschool (3-5 years)	At least 2	Up to 8
Children (K-5 th)	At least 2	Up to 10
Youth Ministry (6 th -12 th)	At least 2	Up to 20

- **CHILD CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT:**

Workers should arrive at least 15 minutes before a scheduled service or activity. They must remain at their assigned post until all children in their care have been picked up and/or until their duties are fulfilled. Workers are to release children in their care **only** to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child. Children are released from our care only after the authorized individual has completed the specified check-out process utilized by the church.

Wellness Policy

In order to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children and workers at Calvary:

- Children and workers who are ill with a fever of 100.4 or higher, or a communicable disease that can be transmitted airborne or through touch and/or close proximity, will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
- A suitable worker - one who has been previously approved through our ministry screening process - must take the place of the worker who is ill.
- Participants should be returned to a parent or guardian **as soon as** the illness is discovered. If immediate return is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that allows the adult worker to monitor the participant until they can be returned to a parent or guardian.
- Medications (prescription or non-prescription) will **not** be administered by workers to children under our care. Medications should only be administered by a parent or guardian. Exceptions may be granted for parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (ex. asthma, severe allergic reactions, etc.) Parents or guardians of such children should address their situation with church/ministry leadership to develop a plan of action. A Parent and Physician Order for Medication form should be completed by the parent/legal guardian and the child's physician prior to any medications being administered.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed by Calvary workers:

- For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or legal guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.

- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent or legal guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor (if applicable). If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring First Aid or treatment by a medical professional. The Incident Report Form must be signed by the parent/legal guardian to ensure that they were informed of the incident. A copy of the form should be provided to the parent upon request. The original form should be given to the ministry leader to be kept in a designated secure location at church for one year following the incident and shredded following that time.

Discipline

Calvary employees and volunteers are **prohibited from using any form of physical discipline in any manner** on minors.

- This prohibition includes: spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting, shaking, or any other physical force as retaliation or corrections for inappropriate behaviors.
- Physical restraint should **only** be used in a situation where it is necessary to prevent a child from physically harming themselves or another individual.
- Disruptive minors may be removed from the group when necessary while still maintaining appropriate supervision.
- Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the ministry leader(s) and to a parent/guardian and may be recorded in writing.

Physical Contact and Affection

Calvary is committed to protecting children in its care while promoting a positive and nurturing environment. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by workers:

- Appropriate forms of physical contact such as lap-sitting (nursery-age child), hugging (brief and open), pats on the back, an arm around the shoulder (brief and loose), high-fives, and hand-shakes between workers and children are important for children's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection such as kissing, touching sensitive areas, massages, and physical affection in isolated areas are forbidden.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse should be **immediately** reported to the ministry leader, the Child Protection Supervisor, or Senior Pastor (Session Representative when the Senior Pastor is unavailable).
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never be based on the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.

- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or workers. **It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.**
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of employees and volunteers must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Workers are responsible for protecting minors under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal Interactions between workers and children of Calvary should be positive and uplifting. Workers need to be mindful of their mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of the children in their care.

- Appropriate verbal interaction should involve positive reinforcement, appropriate jokes, and praise and encouragement as much as possible.
- Inappropriate verbal interaction includes yelling, name-calling, sexually-oriented conversations with children or teens, compliments related to physique or body development, and crude or sexualized jokes.

Self-Disclosure

As part of our commitment at Calvary to bring glory to God in this generation and the next, we expect that personal testimony may be shared with children. However, it is vital that all workers:

- Have a clear purpose of discipling minors and pointing them to Christ, and that any self-disclosures be limited in scope to what is necessary for those purposes;
- Do **not** promise confidentiality to minors, as workers may need to disclose information about abuse or illegal or destructive behaviors for the sake of helping a minor;
- Be cautious about words or actions that give the impression of favoritism or that may lead a minor to misunderstand the nature of the relationship.

“Just Say No To...”

Calvary prohibits workers from:

- the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any church program or activity;

- from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during church activities or programs;
- possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually-oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property, or electronically via phone, email, social media, etc.

Diapering and Restroom Guidelines

Parents or legal guardians are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the restroom prior to each class or activity. Because many children may require full or partial assistance with their bathroom activities, all workers of Calvary will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- Only **adult female** nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either gender.
- Changing diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

Bathroom Assistance for Children Younger than Kindergarten

- Only **adult female** workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in bathroom assistance with young children of either gender.
- Use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom, **never** taking a child alone.
- Leave the bathroom door ajar with a second worker nearby for additional accountability. A worker should **never** be alone with a child in the bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.
- Never leave young children unattended in a restroom.
- Children should be verbally assisted where possible. If physical assistance is necessary, another staff member or volunteer should be present, when possible.

Bathroom Assistance for Children Kindergarten through 5th grade

- At least one adult worker should take children to the restroom if possible.
- If a worker cannot accompany an older child, use the buddy system so that there are two children accompanying the child (all three children of the same gender) needing to use the restroom.
- For the protection of all, a worker should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

- The worker should check to make sure the facility is safe and then wait outside the restroom for the children.
- Children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.
- If assistance is required, **the presence of a second adult worker is also recommended.** The worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.
- Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Transportation Procedures

Employees and volunteers of Calvary may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for minors. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in transportation:

- Whenever possible, screened adults will drive. If it becomes necessary for parents or guardians who have not been screened to drive, parental consent will be obtained prior to the event.
- Workers should obtain parental permission and notify parents **before** driving students.
- Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided and parents should be notified of any unplanned stops.
- Workers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Workers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- Follow safe driving practices (i.e., wearing seat belts, hands-free phone usage, observing speed limits, etc.) to set a good example and keep children safe.

Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect and Reporting - NC Law

Calvary recognizes that a vital aspect of caring for the children of our church and the broader community is being knowledgeable of North Carolina laws regarding child abuse and neglect and make every adult congregant aware of their individual responsibilities in this area.

According to North Carolina law (North Carolina General Statute, Section 7B-301):

- **All** adults or institutions in North Carolina are **required by law** to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services in the county where the minor resides. In Wake County, the **CPS report line is 919-212-7900** and is available **24/7**.
- Individuals and institutions **do not need** anyone's permission to file a report and do not need proof, only "reasonable suspicion."

- Any individual or institution who “knowingly or wantonly” fails to report the case of a minor or prevents another person from making a report is **guilty** of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect and Reporting - Calvary

According to North Carolina law, **any** adult who is employed by or volunteers for an organization that serves children is a **mandated reporter**. This includes clergy, staff, and all volunteers in a church. Therefore, Calvary has a moral and legal obligation to report suspected abuse and neglect. There is **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and activities. It is the responsibility of **every** employee and volunteer at Calvary to act in the best interest of all children in every program. We must **always** err on the side of protecting children in our care! In regards to Calvary’s reporting policy:

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other academic studies indicate false accusations of child sexual abuse are rare: less than 3%. So... **workers should NOT allow fear of false allegations to keep them from reporting suspected abuse!**
- Volunteers and employees who become aware of or have reason to suspect that a minor has been abused (physically, emotionally, and/or sexually), or neglected **regardless of where it may have occurred, MUST** immediately inform the ministry leader, Senior Pastor (Session Representative when the Senior Pastor is unavailable) or the Child Protection Supervisor for further action.
- All incidents reported to the Senior Pastor and Child Protection Supervisor **MUST** be reported to the NC Department of Social Services Child Protective Services.
- The volunteer or employee may be required to complete a “Suspected Abuse or Neglect Report Form.”
- The reporter may, and when legally required to do so, directly contact the appropriate state/local agency, which is responsible for the investigation of incidents of alleged child abuse. In North Carolina, the appropriate agency is the Department of Social Services in the county where the minor resides.
- Any questionable or suspicious circumstances involving children or workers must be reported immediately to the ministry leader, Senior Pastor (Session Representative when the Senior Pastor is unavailable), or Child Protection Supervisor for further action.
- If there are questionable or suspicious circumstances involving an ordained pastor employed by the church, Calvary’s ruling elders **must be notified immediately** for further action.
- If there is any question as to whether or not a report should be made to the authorities and ministry leaders are considering not making a report, the ministry leader(s) will ensure that an attorney is **immediately** contacted to provide a written opinion as to

whether the organization should report the suspected abuse or neglect to authorities. Every attempt should be made to obtain the written report within 24 hours after the ministry leader first becomes aware of the situation. The attorney's advice should be acted upon **immediately**, including reporting the incident to the authorities. An attorney should be contacted **immediately** if the worker becomes aware of possible abuse or neglect of a participant by a parent or legal guardian and is unsure whether to make a report to the authorities. **WHEN IN DOUBT, REPORT!**

- All reports of child abuse or neglect **will be held in absolute confidence**, and no person should communicate any information concerning the alleged event to anyone except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation.

Response Plan for Child Abuse or Neglect Allegations

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred on the premises of Calvary or during church-sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be implemented by the Senior Pastor, Child Protection Supervisor, and/or ruling elders unless alleged to be involved:

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the minor(s) will be notified. If the parent or legal guardian is the suspected perpetrator, the Senior Pastor and/or Child Protection Supervisor will defer to local authorities on notifying the parent or guardian.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. If the alleged abuse involves an ordained pastor employed by the church, the designated elder of Calvary will notify the Eastern Carolina Presbytery, and the Stated Clerk's office will be made aware of the situation.
5. The insurance company will be notified, and the church will complete an incident report. Any documents received, relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.

6. One person (or the church's attorney) will be chosen to act as the official spokesperson of the church to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the public.
7. A pastoral visit and/or visit with the family's Shepherd Elder will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation. In addition, resources for counseling, and/or other aid to both the victim and the alleged abuser will be made available.
8. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

Calvary is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for our children and their families. In the event of a violation of the Child Protection Policy or Procedures:

- Workers must promptly notify the ministry leader, Senior Pastor, or the Child Protection Supervisor when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
- Ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them.
- It may become necessary to immediately dismiss the worker, take disciplinary action, or reassign the worker. The worker may be prohibited from future participation.
- Failure to report a violation may also result in dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment.
- As stated above, any employee or volunteer who is found guilty of abuse or misconduct will be permanently removed from their position.
- Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Session.

Amending the Child Protection Policy and Procedures

In cases where the Child Protection Policy and Procedures requires a change, a written submission of proposed changes will be made to the Session of Calvary and approved by the Session before the changes take effect. When changes are made, the Session will immediately communicate them to all of the workers in whatever manner is agreed upon.

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Calvary's Child Protection Policy and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Calvary.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Calvary.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the policy and procedures. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time.

If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

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

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of Calvary's Child Protection Policy and Procedures Manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page is to remain attached to the Calvary Child Protection Policy and Procedures]

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[This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the Child Protection Supervisor]