

CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Seventh-day Adventist Church



1. Statement of Purpose

1.1. The _____ Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereinafter “our Church”) affirms its acceptance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Statement on the Nurture and Protection of Children

1.2. Statement on the Nurture and Protection of Children¹

Seventh-day Adventists place a high value on children. In the light of the Bible they are seen as precious gifts from God entrusted to the care of parents, family, community of faith and society-at-large. Children possess enormous potential for making positive contributions to the Church and to society. Attention to their care, protection and development is extremely important.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church reaffirms and extends its longstanding efforts to nurture and safeguard children and youth from persons - known and unknown - whose actions perpetrate any form of abuse and violence against them and/or sexually exploit them. Jesus modeled the kind of respect, nurture, and protection children should be able to expect from adults entrusted with their care. Some of His strongest words of reproof were directed toward those who would harm them. Because of the trusting nature and dependence of children upon older and wiser adults and the life-changing consequences when this trust is breached, children require vigilant protection.

1.3. Making Church a Safe Place for Children

In recognition of its desire to nurture and protect children, our Church adopts this Child Protection Plan, which incorporates and expands, as appropriate, the Child Protection and Volunteer Screening policies (FB 20) as voted by the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists²

The Church also takes seriously its responsibility to minimize the risk for child sexual abuse and violence against children in the congregational setting. First and foremost, church leaders and members must themselves live by a strict code of ethics that precludes even the appearance of evil as regards the exploitation of minors for the gratification of adult desires. The Church organization will ensure appropriate action and follow-through is taken when abuse is reported within the church setting.

¹Approved and voted by the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM) and released by the Office of the President, Ted N. C. Wilson, on June 23, 2010, and released at the General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, June 24-July 3, 2010.

² NAD Working Policy— FB 20 as voted in November 2011.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. Our Church desires to make its worship and educational environments free from abuse of all kinds
- 2.2. Our Church is committed to providing a safe environment to help children learn to love and follow Jesus Christ
- 2.3. Our Church acknowledges its responsibility, in concert with the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to select, screen, train and manage trustworthy individuals to fill volunteer positions in ministry for children and youth activities³
 - 2.3.1. Our Church understands that the work of volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of its mission and ministry
 - 2.3.2. In selecting individuals for volunteer positions, only persons who support the mission of the Our Church shall be recruited
 - 2.3.3. The management policies and procedures employed to supervise the work of volunteers must be consistent with the mission of the church or school and must support its successful achievement.
 - 2.3.4. Individuals who are unwilling to support the volunteer background screening and training policies shall not be allowed to serve
- 2.4. Our Church endeavors, through the implementation of this Child Protection Plan, to ensure that the programs it sponsors are safe and provide a joyful experience for children and youth
- 2.5. To achieve these objectives in its ministry programs, our Church implements this Child Protection Plan

3. Organizational Responsibilities

- 3.1. Our Church undertakes to protect children entrusted to its care from harm caused by abuse
- 3.2. Appropriate levels of adult supervision shall be provided at all times
- 3.3. Our Church will exercise reasonable care in the selection and supervision of volunteers, including:
 - 3.3.1. Selecting and recruiting appropriate individuals needed to supervise a specific ministry or activity

³ “Everyone involved in work with children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification.” (Church Manual, 18th Edition, 2010 – page 85.)

- 3.3.2. Training and orientating volunteers in order to provide proper supervision of the ministry or activity
- 3.3.3. Providing each volunteer with a written copy of the policies and/or expected code of conduct required by our Church
- 3.3.4. Providing proper oversight and management of volunteers
- 3.3.5. Taking appropriate corrective action to either discipline, counsel, or remove volunteer when necessary
- 3.3.6. Reporting all incidents of suspected child abuse to proper authorities in accordance with the child protection laws as required by the jurisdiction where the church is located
 - 3.3.6.1. Mandated reporters will report physical injury, child sexual abuse, willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, or neglect
 - 3.3.6.2. Where practicable, a member of our Church pastoral staff will be involved in the reporting process

4. Volunteer Selection and Management

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of our Church to select individuals who will serve in volunteer positions
- 4.2. No adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until the volunteer has been known to the members of our Church for a minimum of six (6) months
- 4.3. All volunteers shall be appropriately trained and background screened using Adventist Screening Verification before they are allowed to supervise children
- 4.4. Our Church Volunteer Service Committee is responsible for volunteer selection and management and will appoint a local administrator for the Adventist Screening Verification program
- 4.5. The Volunteer Service Committee will notify the appropriate ministry leader and the volunteer when the screening process is complete
- 4.6. All volunteer leaders, regardless of previous experience, shall submit to the screening procedure required by the church
- 4.7. The local volunteer administrator shall periodically review the performance of all volunteers (volunteer background screening and training will be updated every three (3) years)

5. Protecting Confidentiality

- 5.1. It is the duty and responsibility of all individuals involved in the screening, interviewing, and selection process of volunteers to conduct themselves with utmost integrity and confidentiality
- 5.2. The information received concerning individuals who volunteer their services to the church will be maintained at all times on a confidential basis by the church
- 5.3. All information received during the volunteer screening process, will be maintained by the church on a confidential basis.
- 5.4. Cost of Screening - The Michigan Conference of SDA is responsible for the cost of implementing these background screening and training procedures in accordance with its own policies.
- 5.5. All allegations of inappropriate conduct involving a child with a volunteer will be promptly referred to the appropriate investigative agency by the leadership of the church⁴
- 5.6. The church will respect the rights of all parties involved in any alleged incident and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially, and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws

6. Orientation for Volunteers

- 6.1. Our Church will conduct orientation meetings to train volunteers on its ministry expectations towards children and youth
- 6.2. Orientation will cover the following areas:
 - 6.2.1. The church's mission and the expectation the church has for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse-free manner
 - 6.2.2. The expectations rules to be followed by volunteers in relation to supervision and interaction with children
 - 6.2.3. Appropriate physical contact with children
 - 6.2.4. Appropriate supervision of children
 - 6.2.5. Openness and observation of activities
- 6.3. Our Church will provide orientation meetings at appropriate intervals during each calendar year

7. Volunteer Service Administrator

⁴ The _____ Seventh-day Adventist Church does not undertake by this Child Protection Plan to investigate allegations of misconduct and hereby limits the responsibility of its personnel and volunteers to reporting reasonable suspicion of abuse to the appropriate governmental agency.

7.1. In order to carry out the objectives of this Child Protection Plan, our Church will appoint a Volunteer Service administrator who is responsible for implementing the provisions of this Child Protection Plan to and administer the Adventist Screening Verification program for the church working in cooperation with the pastor or pastoral staff.

7.1.1. This individual will be nominated to serve by our Church Nominating Committee, with vacancies filled by the Church Board.

7.2. Responsibilities

7.2.1. Ensure that our Church Child Protection Plan is followed, including review of applications, communication with personal references and completion of the Adventist Screening Verification training and background screening

7.2.2. Coordinate training and orientation activities for volunteers

7.2.3. Report to the Pastor and/or pastoral staff on program compliance

Approved by

Date

Pastor/Family Ministries: _____

Church Board: _____

Effective: _____