

**BELLVIEW BAPTIST
CHURCH
Youth Ministry**

**Policies and Procedures
Manual**

**1710 N. Big Spring St.
Midland, TX 79701**

Dear Student Ministry Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Bellview Baptist Church!

At BBC, we take our responsibility to care for students very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which students can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for BBC staff volunteers and members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for students, protecting students, you, and the mission of BBC. The following procedures have been adopted and will be consistently enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

The BBC Staff

Bellview Baptist Church

Safety Policies & Procedures for Youth Ministry

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Overview of the Bellview Baptist Church Safety System

Because we love students and desire to protect them, BBC requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placement begins.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

BBC policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a Ministry Leader or a member of the BBC staff. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a student for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip BBC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, BBC requires all staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe sexual abuse awareness training (live or online at www.MinistrySafe.com). This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the BBC Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an Employment Application (employees only)
- complete the Safety Application (employees and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers)

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

My Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Student Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

BBC has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at BBC to act in the best interest of students in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Ministry Leader, or the Senior Pastor.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

BBC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Bellview Baptist Church Ministry Leader, Senior Pastor, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a ministry leader or a member of the BBC Staff. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a student for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a ministry leader or a member of the BBC Staff.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

BBC staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all BBC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Youth Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for students, BBC staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Ministry Leader, or the Senior Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Youth Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at BBC. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from BBC.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at BBC.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at BBC are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to a ministry leader or the Senior Pastor.

Texas law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Youth Ministry, the Ministry Leader or Senior Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the student spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation.

If appropriate, the Ministry Leader or the Senior Pastor will inform the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) or Child Protective Services (817-321-8680).

BUILDING SAFETY

The Youth Minister will be responsible for ensuring that the BBC Youth Ministry Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and students in student classrooms.

No student will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during youth ministry programming or meetings. Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single student, that staff member or volunteer will take the student to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a student desires additional conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members are present.)

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Any two students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

STAFF TO STUDENT RATIO

BBC is committed to providing adequate staff and volunteer supervision in all Youth Ministry activities. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for Youth Ministry activities:

For groups up to and including 20 students, there will be at least 2 staff members or volunteers. For all group sizes, BBC will always observe the 2 adults to 20 students ratio, making sure there are both male and female leaders present.

If workers are out of ratio, it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the responsible ministry leader or the Senior Pastor. The responsible ministry leader or the Senior Pastor will make diligent efforts to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to student ratios into compliance with this policy.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline Plan

We believe that at BBC, discipline is an effective tool to teach and mentor students. Our purpose is to *disciple* students while having realistic expectations.

It is the policy of BBC that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by students. Please observe the following procedures when dealing with behavior issues:

- 1) Verbally redirect the student.
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, separate the student from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the student).
- 3) Provide the student with a simple, understandable reason for the isolation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the student.
- 4) Monitor the student without giving your undivided attention. Allow them to rejoin the group if their behavior improves. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further isolation. Follow this with praise.
- 5) If the behavior continues, remove the student from all activities and ask them to leave (if they arrived on their own accord) or contact their parents/guardians to pick them up.
- 6) Any act of violence, physical altercation, or threatening will result in immediate removal from Youth Ministry. Parents/Guardians will be contacted and the Ministry Leader or Senior Pastor will discuss with them future involvement in Youth Ministry activities.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the Ministry Leader.

Youth Ministry Rules

Based on the verse Matthew 22:37-39 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart & all your soul & and all your mind... Love your neighbor as yourselves.”

- 1) *Show love for God.* By studying His word, worshiping Him and praising Him...
- 2) *Show love to others.* By building strong, positive, Christian relationships that build up those around us...
- 3) *Show love to ourselves.* By applying God’s word to every aspect of our lives as we strive to become more like Christ...

INTOXICANTS

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal/legal drugs while in any BBC facility, while traveling with students, or while working with or supervising students.

NUDITY

Staff and volunteers in BBC’s Youth Ministry should never be nude in the presence of students in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Ministry Leader concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

BBC recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff Members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students.

Individual Meetings

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed unless prior approval is obtained from the Ministry Leader.

In the event a one-to-one, closed door meeting is required, the Ministry Leader with another staff member or volunteer will meet with the student and their parents/guardians.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of students:

1. Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one student in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving BBC vans, or vehicles owned or rented by BBC, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 21 may drive BBC owned or rented vehicles unless rental policy states otherwise.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a student in the care of BBC staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Youth Ministry programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their student is involved at BBC. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their student is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with Youth Ministry programs will be required to complete the BBC volunteer application and screening process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

BBC is committed to protecting students in its care. To this end, BBC has implemented a 'physical contact policy', which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Youth Ministry programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in the student program:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and students are important for student's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Youth Minister or the Senior Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other students or student staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers in the Youth Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant student. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Student staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to the Ministry Leader or the Senior Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any student in the program. However, it is expected that from time to time, youth ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the students the church's views on these topics.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers of BBC's Youth Ministry are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented printed materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of students.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain Youth Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and staff/volunteers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Ministry Leader prior to the activity.
2. As long as any youth are awake, one of the leaders must also be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
3. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
4. In the event of a sleepover that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by staff or volunteers of the same gender.
5. Staff and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff and volunteers should never physically touch a student.

TOBACCO

BBC requires staff and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of students or their parents. BBC is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and students should be positive and uplifting. BBC staff and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to students in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of students.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of BBC's Youth Ministry Policies 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 BBC.

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

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my ministry position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that my service is volunteer and that I can choose to end this relationship at any time (if possible, by providing two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

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

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the Bellview Baptist Church Administrator]