

Child Protection Policy



guidelines do not automatically prevent sin. If that were the case, the command to Adam and Eve would have guaranteed that they would follow God and not eat the forbidden fruit. Or the decrees including the 10 Commandments would have perpetuated a moral utopia in Israel during the time of Moses. Unfortunately, the Bible frequently reminds us that rules and guidelines do not eradicate sinful behavior.

We do believe that such a policy lays down clear expectations so that we can expect much of each other, reduce any potential issues, and respond to concerns as they arise.

What can I do to help create a nourishing atmosphere for children?

We realize that a safe atmosphere is more than one where bad experiences don't happen.

You can personally contribute in many ways:

1. Get to know children by

name and interact with them when you are in our building. Talk, ask questions, become engaged in their lives.

2. Look for ways to serve the ministries that impact children. Read verses for AWANA students. Volunteer to help with a Sunday School class. Consider how to assist with MOPs or with a special project (like vacation Bible school). Take on a support role in the kitchen, nursery, or in a classroom. Offer to give a hand to Pastor D in an area of need.
3. Get to know the parents of children. No matter what your age, you can encourage parents.
4. Connect with preteens and teens at Harvest. Even maturing young adults need affirmation, encouragement, and the sense of value you can give.
5. Seek out opportunities to encourage those who serve children and teens. They can do great things as a result of your affirmation and support.
6. Pray. We have the amazing opportunity to help multiple generations discover Jesus and grow in his grace.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why have any policy at all?

We desire to be good stewards before God of children. We believe that following the guidelines of a basic child protection policy helps us live accountable before God and others.

Does a policy imply we don't trust God?

Like Nehemiah, who armed those who were building the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 4:15-20), we believe that taking careful precautions in doing God's work is not inconsistent with living by faith. Faith is essential to fulfilling the mission that Jesus gives us. But trust in Christ does not rule out striving to do what is wise. (See Luke 22:36.)

Who does the policy protect?

It applies to any child from nursery through sixth grade.

Why background checks?

Background checks are only one component of our process to provide the best

workers and volunteers for those who work with children. We believe that the best volunteers are those who are engaged with others at Harvest, who are growing in the word, and who are maturing as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Because we don't always have a thorough and intimate knowledge of volunteers, we use background checks as one tool to help us recruit and retain the best people possible.

Even John writes about the fact that not all who were part of the early congregations were willing to conform in doctrine or practice with the teachings of the gospel. (1 John 2:19) We want to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. (Matthew 10:16)

What kind of information does the background check ask about?

The background check searches and verifies three areas.

1. Identity verification. Are you who you claim to be? It verifies your name, address, and social security number.

2. Criminal database search. It checks your identity with the following agencies:

- Department of Corrections
- Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
- Department of Criminal Justice

3. Sex offender registry.

No other information is requested beyond these three areas. It does not make checks for such things as financial dealings, moving violations, or parking tickets.

Who has to take background checks?

Background checks are required for our pastoral staff, elders, and those who are involved in one-on-one contact with children. This includes those who teach, counsel, transport, or chaperone under age children.

Will this policy prevent all problems?

The Bible clearly teaches that laws and