

CPP CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to MacArthur Blvd Baptist Church's program!

At MacArthur Blvd Baptist Church (MacArthur Blvd) we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

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

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign the appropriate space on either the Volunteer Application or the Paid Workers Application.

Sincerely,

MacArthur Blvd Baptist Church

OVERVIEW OF THE MACARTHUR BLVD BAPTIST CHURCH'S SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we care for our children and desire to protect them, MacArthur Blvd Baptist Church (MacArthur Blvd) requires all volunteers and staff members to complete **FIVE SAFETY STEPS** *before employment or volunteer work begins.*

STEP ONE: Screening Process

Volunteers and staff members are required to complete the MacArthur Blvd Screening Process, which requires volunteers and staff members to:

- Complete an Employment or Volunteer Application
- Complete the Disclosure and Authorization – Background Investigation form
- Complete a face-to-face interview
- Provide reference to be checked

STEP TWO: Background Check

MacArthur Blvd requires that all volunteers and staff members who work with children undergo a basic background check which includes:

- SSN Verification & Address History Search
- National Criminal Database Search
- National Sex Offender Search
- Re-verification of Criminal Records
- Alias Names Search

Depending upon position, differing levels of background check may be required.

STEP THREE: Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training

MacArthur Blvd's policies and procedures require that volunteers and staff members avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Volunteers and staff members are required to report any policy violations to MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

Volunteers and staff members should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child 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 MacArthur Blvd regular volunteers and staff members with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse or maltreatment, MacArthur Blvd requires all regular volunteers and staff members to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided online through Protect My Ministry (www.ProtectMyMinistry.com). An online link will be emailed to potential volunteers and staff members. Sexual Abuse Awareness Training is required for all regular volunteers and staff members and must be renewed every other year.

STEP FOUR: Policies and Procedures

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

STEP FIVE: Six-Month Waiting Period

Before a member is allowed to volunteer to work with children, they must have attended and been involved at MacArthur Blvd for a period of at least six months. A supervisor of a ministry area may make exceptions, but exceptions will be a rare circumstance.

PARENT TRAINING

In an effort to increase parent awareness of abuse and maltreatment of children, MacArthur Blvd offers Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training without cost to all parents of children attending MacArthur Blvd upon request.

In the alternative, MacArthur Blvd will provide written materials to parents concerning sexual abuse and maltreatment prevention.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

ABUSE TOLERANCE

MacArthur Blvd Baptist Church (MacArthur Blvd) has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in MacArthur Blvd programs and activities. It is the responsibility of every volunteer and staff member at MacArthur Blvd to act in the best interest of each child in every program.

In the event that volunteers or staff members observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

MacArthur Blvd is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children. 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 MacArthur Blvd Executive Staff 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 the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behavior to the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

MacArthur Blvd staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all MacArthur Blvd policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, MacArthur Blvd 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 abuse of a child should be directed to the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agency.

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 or vulnerable populations at MacArthur Blvd. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may result in termination of employment from MacArthur Blvd.

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 or vulnerable populations at MacArthur Blvd.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at MacArthur Blvd are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

Texas State Law requires that any person having cause to believe 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. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to MacArthur Blvd Preschool

Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor, and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

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, the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor will take appropriate action on behalf of MacArthur Blvd when a report of abuse occurs.

Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously, and will be reported in accordance with this policy to the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor. If appropriate, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400), or Child Protective Services (817-321-8680) will be notified.

WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN VICTIMIZED

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to supervisory staff and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities (if required), MacArthur Blvd will provide the child or the child's parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow the child (or parent, on the child's behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as available counseling options.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

NURSERY AGE CHILDREN

Because very young children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

DIAPERING:

- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Changing diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- Children should be changed on changing stations only.

TOILET TRAINING

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- Young children will never be left unattended in the bathrooms.
- Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card.
- Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child, and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from MacArthur Blvd in the preschool area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

School-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, 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.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents will offer instruction to change the diapers of special needs individuals.

MEDICATION

Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer with a doctor's prescription. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment/medication and insect bite cream, after a parent information sheet is signed by a parent or guardian.

GIFT GIVING

Staff member and volunteers are prohibited from providing special gifts to any individual child privately. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition. Any requests for variance from this policy must be addressed to the appropriate MacArthur Blvd staff member.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in the facility, during a MacArthur Blvd activity or while working with children. Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to children.

TOBACCO

MacArthur Blvd is a tobacco-free facility. MacArthur Blvd requires staff members and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of children or their parents. MacArthur Blvd staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to children.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers at MacArthur Blvd should never be in the nude in the presence of children in their care.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

MacArthur Blvd recognizes that meeting program objectives may occasionally require that staff members and volunteers interact with children on an individual basis. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with children:

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual child at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meetings between a staff member or a volunteer and child behind closed doors. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member or volunteers will notify the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor immediately before or after the meeting.

TRANSPORTATION

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

- Children should never be transported without parental permission.
- Children should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- No cell phones may be used by the driver while providing transportation for children.
- No drivers under the age of 25 may provide transportation for children.
- Children should not use a vehicle belonging to a staff member or volunteer.
- When possible, there should be an additional adult present.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave their children in the care of MacArthur Blvd staff members and volunteers for services and activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in MacArthur Blvd activities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be involved in any and all services and programs in which children are involved at MacArthur Blvd. A parent accompanied by a child to any MacArthur Blvd program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

VOLUNTEER PARENTS

A parent who desires to participate in such a way as to have ongoing contact with children in MacArthur Blvd other than his/her own will be considered a volunteer parent. All volunteer parents will be required to complete MacArthur Blvd's Volunteer Application.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

MacArthur Blvd is committed to protecting the children in our care. MacArthur Blvd has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of MacArthur Blvd staff members or volunteers must foster trust at all times—personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in MacArthur Blvd programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for a child's development, and are generally suitable in the MacArthur Blvd setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or MacArthur Blvd staff and volunteers. It is much less likely that touching will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At the end of the program day or activity, MacArthur Blvd volunteers and/or staff members are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents or legal guardians.

In the event that a staff member or volunteer is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, he/she should immediately locate the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor before releasing the child.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in sexually oriented conversations with children. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any children in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms.

POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

MacArthur Blvd staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on MacArthur Blvd property or in the presence of children. If any such materials are purportedly necessary for classroom instruction, they must be approved in advance by the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

INTERNET/ELECTRONIC MEDIA

No computer at or related to MacArthur Blvd is to be used by staff members, volunteers or children to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy will lead to discipline from the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the MacArthur Blvd Preschool Minister, Children's Pastor or Student Pastor.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. MacArthur Blvd staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to provide nurturing care to children. Staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.