

The use of teenagers no matter how qualified highly increases the potential liability for the church, and additionally could prevent some potential parent from attending and/or joining your church. **The end result is that the church must make the final decision as to what liability they are willing to risk.**

**The Three Adult Rule:**

Three (3) or more adults should be present during **any church activity** away from the church facilities involving minors.

The adult to minor ratio for any activity away from the church should be **one (1) adult to every eight (8) minors.**

**Parental Permission:**

Minors attending regularly scheduled church activities are implied to have parental permission.

The worker shall obtain the written consent of the parent/guardian before going out alone with the minor, or spending time with the minor in an unsupervised situation. Such meetings should be held in church facilities where they can be visible or at a public where there is high visibility

**Questionable Behavior:**

Any observed **inappropriate conduct or relationship** between adult volunteers or paid staff member and a minor **should be confronted immediately.** Situations where such behavior continues should result in terminating the use of both the volunteer or paid staff member as appropriate.

Prior to beginning work with minors, each potential worker **should be counseled** concerning possible results of abusive relationships with minors.

Windows should be installed in **all classroom doors of rooms** used with minors.

Pairs of adults should be used as chaperons and supervisors for overnight events and should be approved by the senior pastor or his designee and/or personnel committee in advance of the event. There should be **one adult to chaperon every ten (10) participants.**

Each potential worker with minors **should be given a copy** of any existing policy concerning child abuse that the church may have during the recruiting process and they should acknowledge that they have read the entire document and agree with its contents.

### **Managing Security of Preschool Age Children**

All preschool children will be treated as individuals requiring security.

The parent/guardian bringing a pre-school child to any church-sponsored activity will be given a token, receipt or card. That token, receipt or card will match a similar item placed on the child at the time of arrival. First time parent/guardian should fill out an enrollment card giving the basic information on their child. No child should be given to a parent/guardian without that parent/guardian identifying himself/herself with and returning the token, receipt or card.

A secondary procedure should require that parents or guardians provide correct answers to identification questions.

### **Managing Reporting Obligations (Questions and Answers)**

A. Q: What constitutes sexual/child abuse?

A: In Kansas, child abuse is typically defined as any non-accidental physical injury, physical neglect, emotional injury or sexual act inflicted upon a child by a parent or caregiver. (See "Symptoms of Abuse/Molestation".)

- B. Q: Who must report sexual/child abuse?  
A: Under Kansas statute, teachers, administrators and other employees of schools (including day cares) are MANDATORY reporters. If they suspect sexual/child abuse, they are required to report it under penalty of law.
- C. Q: Who else may report sexual/child abuse?  
A: Anyone who is not a MANDATORY reporter is strongly encouraged to report any suspected child abuse. As a Christian, we have a moral obligation to report any suspected child abuse.
- D. Q: Can the reporter of child abuse be sued for reporting child abuse?  
A: Kansas law provides immunity from lawsuits against reporters of child abuse.
- E. Q: Can the identity of the reporter be protected?  
A: Under most circumstances, the reporter's identity will not be disclosed.

### **Symptoms of Abuse/Molestation**

Church workers and staff **should be alert** to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as the behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. **Some** of the signs are summarized below:

**Physical signs** may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

**Behavioral signs** may include:

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- "Acting out" of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

**Verbal signs** may include the following statements:

- I don't like (a particular church worker).
- (A church worker) does things to me when we're alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (a church worker).
- (A church worker) fooled around with me.