

General Conference Official Statements on Protection of Children

Jesus loves to minister to children. Today, we have the privilege of volunteering our time, talents, and service in numerous ways to help fulfill the gospel commission. As a volunteer you have the privilege of working with children, one of God's most precious gifts. Beyond protecting children from abuse, we also desire to empower volunteers to help kids grow in their experience and understanding of Jesus and His saving grace. So we encourage you to walk with God daily, letting His love fill you up and spill over to the kids you serve.

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.

Redemptive Correction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places a priority on church-based parent education that helps parents develop the skills necessary for a redemptive approach to correction. Many children experience harsh punishment in the name of a biblical approach to discipline. Correction characterized by severe, punitive, dictatorial control

often leads to resentment and rebellion. Such harsh discipline is also associated with heightened risk for physical and psychological harm to children as well as increased likelihood the youth will resort to coercion and violence in resolving their differences with others. By contrast, examples from Scripture as well as a large body of research confirm the effectiveness of more gentle forms of discipline that allow children to learn through reasoning and experiencing the consequences of their choices. Such milder measures have been demonstrated to increase the likelihood children will make life-affirming choices and espouse parental values as they mature.

MAKING CHURCH A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN

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. Other practical measures toward making church a safe place for children include attention to the safety of the church facility and its surroundings and the careful supervision and monitoring of children and their environment during all church-related activities. Education regarding what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate interaction between adults and children, the warning signs of abuse and violence, and the specific steps to be followed should inappropriate behavior be reported or suspected are vitally important. Pastors and church leaders who are visible and approachable play an important role in prevention as well as in responding well to the needs of children whose safety may have been jeopardized. Regular updates are needed regarding their moral and legal responsibility to report child abuse to appropriate civil authorities. The designation of trained personnel and specific protocols at wider levels of Church organization will help to ensure appropriate action and follow-through when abuse is reported within the church setting.

Because of the complex nature of the problem of child sexual abuse and violence against children, intervention and treatment of perpetrators requires resources beyond the scope of ministry provided by the local church. However, the presence of a known perpetrator in a congregation calls for the highest levels of vigilance. While perpetrators should be held fully responsible for their own behavior, the supervision of persons with a history of inappropriate behavior is necessary to ensure that such persons maintain appropriate distance and refrain from all contact with children during church-related activities. Provision for alternative opportunities for perpetrators to

grow spiritually in settings where children are not present greatly enhances child protection.

Fostering Emotional and Spiritual Healing

Children who have been personally victimized or who have witnessed disturbing events need the care of adults who treat them with sensitivity and understanding. Practical support that helps children and families maintain stability in the midst of turmoil empowers victims and their families and promotes healing. The Church's commitment to breaking the silence frequently associated with child sexual abuse and violence, its efforts toward advocacy and justice for all victims, and deliberate action to safeguard children from all forms of abuse and violence will contribute much toward the emotional and spiritual recovery of all concerned. The Church regards the nurture and protection of children as a sacred trust.

(This statement has been informed by the principles expressed in the following biblical passages: Lev. 18:6; 2 Sam. 13:1-11; 1 Kings 17:17-23; Ps. 9: 9, 12, 16-18; 11:5-7; 22:24; 34:18; 127:3-5; 128:3-4; Prov. 31:8-9; Is. 1:16-17; Jer. 22:3; Matt. 18:1-6; 21:9, 15-16; Mark 9:37; 10:13-16; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; 1Tim. 5:8; Heb. 13:3.)

¹*Approved 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.*

<https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/statements/article/go/-/nurture-and-protection-of-children/>

Mission, Purpose, Principle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH RELATED TO CHILD/MINOR SAFETY

The Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to provide a safe, spiritual and abuse-free environment for every child who attends the Organization's programs and activities.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FOR CHILD/MINOR SAFETY?

It is the purpose of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to prevent any form of child abuse, physical, emotional, or sexual and to protect employees and volunteers from false allegations. Each Union and Conference should work in partnership together with pastors, teachers, church leaders, children and parents to promote the welfare, health and development of children. Child protection is everyone's responsibility.

All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.

PRINCIPLE

Zero tolerance of child abuse: Child abuse will not be tolerated by the Seventh-day Adventist church; neither will knowingly engage, directly or indirectly, anyone who poses a risk to children.

Sharing responsibility for child protection: To effectively manage risks to children, each conference should require the active support and cooperation of ministers, all church members, leaders and volunteers implementing the North American Division's safety procedures in any and all activities.

- **What are the Church's Guidelines and Procedures to Keep Children and Youth Safe?**
 - **Objectives**
 - a. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a moral and civil duty to protect the

Children and youth entrusted to its care. The local community also has an expectation that the church will provide a safe haven for children who participate in its ministries.

b. The church is committed to providing safe worship and educational environments to help children and youth learn to love and follow Jesus Christ.

“Church should be a safe place to bring our children. Everyone involved in work with children who are minors must meet all Church and legal standards and requirements.” (Church Manual, Edition 18, pages 168-169.)

c. Jesus placed a high value on the protection of children (Matthew 18:1-6); therefore, child protection is an essential element in all church-sponsored children’s activities.

○ **Volunteer Selection and Management**

The work of volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of the Church’s mission and ministry. 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.

a. Selection and Screening of Volunteers

1. It is the responsibility of the local church and/or school to select, screen and manage trustworthy individuals to fill volunteer positions in ministry for children and youth activities. *(There are some conferences that have adopted this task and expense on behalf of their churches)*
2. In selecting individuals for volunteer positions, only persons who support the mission of the organization should be recruited.
3. The church shall adopt a practice that no adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has held membership in the congregation or has been known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.
4. All volunteers are required to participate in a screening procedure that will include a signed Volunteer Ministry Information Form, names of three (3) personal references and a criminal background check wherever possible. Individuals who submit incomplete forms will not be considered for a volunteer position.
5. Background screening should be completed before the volunteer is allowed to serve.
6. All volunteer leaders, regardless of their previous experience, shall submit to the screening procedure provided by the church. The volunteer screening procedure should be updated for each individual every three (3) years.

(Individuals who are unwilling to support the volunteer screening guidelines and practices should not be allowed to serve).

7. The local church or school is responsible for the cost of implementing these screening procedures. The local conference may provide financial assistance at their discretion. *(There are some conferences that have adopted this task and expense on behalf of their churches)*
8. It is the duty and responsibility of the church to maintain all volunteer information on a confidential basis at all times. *(There are some conferences that have adopted this task on behalf of their churches).*

○ **Supervision of Volunteers**

1. Failure to comply with the established volunteer guidelines and code of conduct will result in the volunteer being asked to terminate participation in the ministry.
2. All allegations of inappropriate conduct involving a minor will need to be reported to the authorities. The church will respect the rights of all parties involved in the alleged incident and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially, and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.
3. Appropriate corrective action - discipline, counsel, or removal from ministry – will be taken when necessary.

○ **Orientation and Training of Volunteers**

1. Provide all volunteers with an understanding of the ministry's mission and the expectation the church has for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse-free manner.
2. Explain and provide in writing the expectations, code of conduct, and rules to be followed by volunteers in relation to supervision and interaction with children and youth. Reaffirm that alleged incidents of child abuse will be investigated and reported to authorities in accordance with local law.
3. All volunteers will be required to participate in educational courses on child abuse (physical and sexual) and the necessary steps to be taken to prevent the occurrence of child abuse incidents.
4. Training should include instructions on appropriate methods of physical contact to affirm children.

You may find this policy at NAD Policy FB20 Child Protection and Volunteer Screening at http://adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/cpp_nad_fb20_childprotectionandvolunteerscreeningpoliciesforchildren_youthministries_arm.pdf

- **Volunteer Code of Conduct and Guidelines**

FB 25 Youth/Children's Ministry Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. *Acknowledgement* – Because I want our children and youth to experience the best possible environment, it is important for those working with children and youth to have guidelines for conduct in order to protect not only those under their care but themselves as well. As a ministry volunteer, I want parents and others to be comfortable with me.
2. *My Commitment to Volunteer Ministry* – As a Youth/Children's Ministry Volunteer:
 - a. I will provide appropriate adult supervision at all times for the children for whom I am responsible.
 - b. I will have at least one other adult, eighteen (18) years of age or older, to help with the supervision of children. If I find myself in a situation where I am the only adult present, *Under No Circumstances* will I allow myself to be alone with one child (the two-person rule). This protects the child as well as protecting me the adult, from possible allegations.
 - c. I will ask a child's permission before physically touching him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is specifically true for any areas that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and/or shorts. If an injury is within this area, I will make sure another adult works with me as care is provided.
 - d. I will refrain from physical and verbal attacks and corporal punishment, which are inappropriate behaviors and should never be used as discipline. I will attempt other forms of discipline such as "time out" or "sit-in-that-chair", which may be safer, more helpful discipline methods to use with children.
 - e. I will affirm children with appropriate touching by keeping hugs brief and "shoulder-to-shoulder" or "side-to-side." I will keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level. For small children who like to sit on laps, I will encourage them to sit next to me. I will be particularly careful when taking small children to the restroom; for instance, I will take another adult along, or leave the door open.
 - f. I will avoid conducting activities in rooms that do not have an interior viewing area, or I will leave the door open during the activity to allow easy observation by others.
 - g. I will comply with the volunteer screening process and complete the Volunteer Ministry Information form, as required by the church.
 - h. I will be aware of the evidence, signs and symptoms of child abuse and will become educated about the legal requirements for reporting suspected cases of abuse. I commit if I become aware of any behavior by another individual, which seems abusive or inappropriate towards child, I will

immediately report that behavior to the church pastor, elder, school, and/or conference administration and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.

- i. I will cooperate with church leadership in conducting children and youth ministries by being a volunteer who is loving, kind, firm, and always a thoroughly professional person. I understand that working with children and youth is not only a privilege; it is also a serious responsibility that must be approached with utmost care.
- j. I will participate in orientation and training programs conducted by the church.
- k. I will uphold the standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- l. I, the undersigned, have read this document and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for the Youth/Children's Ministry Volunteers as outlined above. I will retain a copy of the document and keep it for reference.

Signed _____

Date: _____

You may find a sample of this form at: <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>

In addition to the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers, all volunteers are expected to adhere to the following rules:

- S** Supervise minors at all times
- A** Appropriate verbal communication and physical behavior
- F** Follow the two-adult rule
- E** Engage, support, and supervise youth interactions

- K** Kids' privacy is to be respected
- I** Implement travel safety
- D** Discipline kids appropriately
- S** Screen volunteers

1. **SUPERVISION** – well-trained adult supervision will greatly minimize the risk of inappropriate conduct during children and youth ministries activities and events. It will also minimize the potential of false accusations being brought against an adult staff member or volunteer.

- a. Adults supervising children and teens must be constantly vigilant for signs of inappropriate behavior by other adults. When there is a breach of the code of conduct, this should be addressed immediately by the ministry's leader to protect the minor, the adult, and the ministry.
- b. It is important to remind adult staff members on how to properly interact with children. Take note if a staff member is over-friendly or establishes a special relationship with a child that includes direct contact outside the ministry.
- c. Listen for indications from a child that they are uncomfortable confused, or fearful. These may be indications that the child is reaching out for help.
- d. Never leave unattended a child or group of children for whom you are responsible for. Provide appropriate adult supervision at all times.
- e. Parents are responsible for supervising their children before and after church sponsored children's programs and seeing that their children are picked up at the appointed dismissal time. Every reasonable effort will be made to release children to their parent or designee.
- f. No child shall be released to another older child or permitted to go to the restroom accompanied by an older child unless the child is a sibling. Provide extra care when taking small children to the restroom. Take another adult along, or leave the door open.
- g. Minors under 18 years of age (children and teens), should not be permitted to remain on church property unless two adults are present.

h. Elements of Effective Supervision

- Always have a minimum of two adults supervising children and youth at all times.
- Have a record of the names and numbers of all children or youth participating in the ministry event and how to best contact parents or guardians in the event of an emergency.
- Have vision panels or windows which allow easy sight into all classrooms and office areas.
- Adults must be fully engaged in the responsibility of supervision and watchfulness at all times.
- Do not allow distractions (e.g. phone or personal conversations, texting, computer or tablet use) during assigned supervisory responsibilities.
- Keep track of the whereabouts of all children and youth throughout the event facilities.

- Be especially vigilant of time spent and the number of children or youth in restroom areas.
- Make sure areas not being used in the facility are properly locked, limiting access by unauthorized individuals.
- Make sure all exterior areas are properly illuminated during nighttime activities.
- Have roving adult supervision monitoring the facility and parking lot areas during the event.
- Never be alone with a child (if possible). In the event you are the last adult left with a child, call the parent or child's guardian. If they cannot be reached, call another trusted adult to notify them of your situation, the steps you are taking to contact the parents, and ask if they could return to assist.

[https://www.adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/prevention/infosheets/youth-supervision info-sheet eng.pdf](https://www.adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/prevention/infosheets/youth-supervision%20info-sheet%20eng.pdf)

Best Practices in Supervision of Children and Youth webinars

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qH-E3YX97c&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5CWmpCHIK8&feature=youtu.be>

Child Protection Resource Guide For Seventh-day Adventist Pastors

<https://www.adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/prevention/child-protection-resource-guide.pdf>

○ **Volunteers' Behavior**

- a. A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children.
- b. Under no circumstances may volunteers give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
- c. Alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by any individual on church premises or during a sponsored activity.
- d. Only age-appropriate language, material on media products (such as camera phones, internet, video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people (sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable).

○ **Appropriate Touch**

- a. Always ask a child's permission before physically touching him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is especially true for any

areas that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and/or shorts. (If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as care is provided.)

- b. Volunteers must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (this should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child).
- c. Affirm children with appropriate touching by keeping hugs brief and “shoulder-to-shoulder” or “side-to-side.” Always keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver’s kiss should be to the forehead or cheek only – not elsewhere. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.

For more information on Appropriate Touch for Staff & Children visit the following link: <https://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>

- **Appropriate Discipline**

- a. Any discipline administered shall occur within the visual contact of another adult. Any form of physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
- b. Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children is unacceptable.

- **Respect for Children**

- a. Children’s need for privacy should be respected at all times. Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and restrooms.
- a. Photographs of children or young people must never be taken while they are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility).
- c. Tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be carried out for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

- **Traveling with Minors**

Volunteers should not travel alone with a child or young person.

- a. If only one adult is available, there should be a minimum of two children or young people present for the entire journey.
- b. If an emergency situation arises where it is necessary to travel alone with a child, the child’s parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.

TRIPS

- a. All trips and any meetings conducted off the church premises must be pre-approved by the church board. All overnight activities or miscellaneous trips must have prior documented approval of the church board. All minor attendees must have a signed parental permission slip for each trip as well as an emergency medical treatment release. Parents must be notified of adults in charge of the activity.
- b. All trips, including day trips and overnight stays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies.
<http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/solutions-newsletter/august-2013/youth-trips!-where-are-the-rules> and <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities>
- c. Adequate liability insurance through your local Conference and Adventist Risk Management should be in place prior to any trip.
- d. Appropriate auto insurance companies should be in place prior to any trip.
<http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/drivers-and-transportation>
- e. Written consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.
- f. A copy of the trip itinerary and contact telephone numbers for leaders should be made available to parents and guardians.
- g. There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.
- h. Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules are followed and appropriate boundaries are maintained.
- i. The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip.
- j. Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same gender as the group being supervised.

If in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a child's sleeping areas without another adult being present he or she should immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility.

TRANSPORTATION

- a. When transporting children or youth, there should always be two adults in each vehicle. The driver's responsibility must be focused on the highway and traffic conditions. They cannot safely drive and provide vehicle supervision at the same time.
- b. Why can't we use **15-passenger vans**?
The use of 15 passenger vans are not approved for use in church and school sponsored events by the Adventist Risk Management Liability.
<http://adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/solutions-newsletter/january-2017/15-passenger-vans-what-is-the-danger#.WHuzmCavWBE.email>

SUPERVISION

- Best Practices in Supervision of Children and Youth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qH-E3YX97c&feature=youtu.be>
- Supervision Seminar
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5CWmpCHlK8&feature=youtu.be>

CHILD ABUSE

The above Guidelines have been adapted from the North American Division working policy and Adventist Risk Management Resources
<https://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse - The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), (42 U.S.C.A. §5106g), as amended and reauthorized by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

It constitutes any inappropriate physical contact, sexual contact or communication by any adult through use of their authority over a child. Abuse can also occur between two children. Even if a child out of ignorance, innocence or fear does not resist, it is still abuse.

Physical abuse is any injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation of the injury.

Mental/Emotional abuse is any verbal communication that harms a child, such as harsh criticism, degrading, belittling, threats, disparaging name-calling, unnecessary shouting, demeaning terminology, unrealistic demands for perfection, violent or obscene language, etc.

Sexual abuse violates a child's sexual privacy whether by fondling, visually or by verbal remarks. It includes fondling of any intimate parts of the child's body, oral, genital and/or anal penetration by any foreign object, oral, genital or anal sexual intercourse, telling a child to masturbate, exhibiting or showing any genital parts to a child, allowing a child to witness or watch any forms of sexual activity, showing any pornographic materials, etc.

For more information visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/>

What are Some FACTS of Sexual Abuse?

- Research suggests that one in 20 men may have sexually molested children, and between 5 and 20% of the individuals who offend children are females. Also, 40% of children who are abused are abused by older children or teens. There is NO easy way to identify an offender at a glance. Therefore, the only way your children can be kept safe is for you to know where your child is and what he/she is doing at **all times!**
- Offenders who primarily target boys abuse an average of 30 boys before being apprehended.
- One out of every 3 to 5 girls and one out of every 4 to 6 boys are molested prior to their 18th birthday.
- Over the course of their lifetime, 28% of U.S. youth ages 14 to 17 have been sexually victimized.
- Children are most vulnerable to sexual abuse between the ages of 7 and 13.
- Sex offenders commit an average of 120 separate crimes before they are caught.
- There are offenders living in all of our neighborhoods and communities.
- Child sexual abuse is not solely restricted to physical contact; such abuse could include noncontact abuse, such as exposure, voyeurism, and child pornography.

With Whom Is Sexual Abuse Most Likely to Occur?

- 85% of cases involve parents, step-parents, boyfriends, in-laws, grandparents, uncles, friends of the family, or neighbors.
- 25% involve people who work in youth service organizations such as sports, youth clubs, camps, churches, and daycare programs.
- 5% of cases involve strangers.

How Does Criminal Sexual Behavior Start?

- Most sex offenders grow up in homes where there is a lower level of stability and empathy for others.

- The majority report childhood neglect, emotional and physical abuse, and domestic violence. These experiences create self-centeredness and interfere with the development of pro-social behavior and moral development.
- 75% of offenders started offending prior to age 18. The average age of first offense is 14.

How Does Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse Contribute to Sexual Abuse?

- There is evidence that exposure to domestic violence may cause more long-term harm than other forms of child abuse.
- Exposure to domestic violence may cause male children to develop pro-rape attitudes and arousal to violence.
- Parents who abuse drugs and alcohol provide a lower level of care and stability for children, forget to feed them, don't supervise them, thus making these an easier prey for offenders.
- Some offenders specifically target drug addicts to "trade sex for drugs" and abuse their children.
- When "high," some offenders become hyper-sexual.

What Are Some Dangers of the Internet?

- The Internet offers offenders another avenue to contact and approach children.
- The Internet is causing some people to cross the line for the first time in their lives.
- Cyber-sex becomes addictive to some people.
- The Internet is exposing children to more, and worse deviant forms of sexuality.
- 20% of children are accidentally exposed to pornography via the Internet.
- One in five children who use the Internet are approached online by an adult seeking sex.

What Are Some Sexual Behaviors Among Children?

- Normal healthy children experience sexual curiosity and pleasurable feeling and sexual play.

What Are Some Inappropriate Sexual Behavior Clues?

- Adults who seem pre-occupied with the sexual development of children, or make sexualized comments to or about children.
- Adults who act "flirty" around children or teens.
- Adults who act jealous of children's or teens' relationships with each other.
- Adults who "accidentally" touch private parts.

What Are Some “Boundary Violation” Clues?

- Adults who engage in frequent physical contact with children (wrestling, tickling, horseplay, hugging or lap-sitting).
- Adults who don’t allow children privacy, “walk in on them” while they are dressing or using the bathroom.
- Adults who act like children or allow children to do questionable or inappropriate things.

What Are Some Child / Teen – Focused Lifestyle Clues

- Adults who work with children but also spend their free time doing “special” things with children.
- Adults who do not have children but seem to know a lot about the current fads or music that is popular with children or teens.
- Any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate shall be reported to the pastor or church elder immediately.

Is It “Too Good To Be True” Clues?

- Adults who buy children special gifts for no reason.
- Adults who want to take children on outings that involve being **alone** with them.
- Adults who seem able to infiltrate family / social functions or are always available to baby-sit.
- (Resources) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWyEbKNynao>

And Finally

- Remember, probably 90% or more of the people you know are good people.
- Adults, not children, are responsible for the safety and welfare of children.
- If a child says he / she has been abused, it’s likely true, believe them.
- Most victims can overcome the abuse if we all act calmly and responsibly.
- It’s best for everyone if we report and if the victim, family, and offender get good treatment.

Some of the information above was collected from Cory Jewell Jensen – Co-Director, Center for Behavioral Intervention / Beaverton, Oregon 9700, Adventist Risk Management <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>, and The National Center for Victims of Crime <http://www.victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/child-sexual-abuse-statistics>

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT. (DHS & CHILDWELFARE.GOV)

Q. WHERE DO I REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

A. Each State has a system to receive and respond to reports of possible child abuse and neglect. Professionals and concerned citizens can call statewide hotlines, local child protective services, or law enforcement agencies to share their concerns. For more information, visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/>

The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline - 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. Serving the United States, its territories, and **Canada**, the hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <https://www.childhelp.org/hotline/>

Q. HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD MALTREATMENT

A. Anyone can report suspected child abuse or neglect. Reporting abuse or neglect can protect a child and get help for a family it may even save a child's life. In some States, any person who suspects child abuse or neglect is required to report. To see how your State addresses this issue, read the Information Gateway publication, *[Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandatory-reporting/)* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandatory-reporting/>

Q. WHO MUST REPORT?

A. Any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect should report such incident. Reporting abuse or neglect can protect a child and get help for a family it may even save a child's life. In some States, any person who suspects child abuse or neglect is required to report. To see how your State addresses this issue, read the Information Gateway publication, *[Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandatory-reporting/)* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandatory-reporting/>

Q. WHO DO I CONTACT IF I SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE?

A. A person making a report of child abuse shall make an oral report by telephone or otherwise to a local Child Welfare office of the Department of Human Services/CPS, to the division's designee, or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of the contact. A law enforcement agency can be defined as a local

police department, county sheriff, county juvenile department, or State Police.

Q. HOW DO I RESPOND TO A CHILD WHO REPORTS ABUSE TO ME?

A. Believe the child if she/he reports sexual abuse. It is rare for a child to lie about sexual abuse. So, tell the child that you believe them and that you are going to contact people who can help. Respect the privacy of the child. The child will need to tell their story in detail later, so don't press the child for details. Remember, you need only suspect abuse to make a report. Don't display horror, shock, or disapproval of parents, child, or the situation. Don't place blame or make judgments about the parent or child.

Q. WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO REPORT?

A. If possible report the names and addresses of the child and parent; the child's age; the type and extent of the abuse, as well as any previous evidence of abuse; the explanation given for the abuse; and any other information that will help establish the cause of abuse or identify the abuser.

Q. WILL MY REPORT BE CONFIDENTIAL?

A. The reporter's identity will remain confidential to the full extent allowable by law. If court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called as a witness or the court may order that the reporter's name be disclosed. Only people with firsthand knowledge of the child's situation can provide testimony proving that abuse has occurred.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I REPORT?

A. Child Protective Services (CPS) follows a process that includes six possible decision points for every child abuse report. For each call CPS receives, the process begins with screening. If the information indicates possible abuse, a caseworker assesses the family situation by getting more in-depth information and determines whether abuse occurred and whether a child is at risk of further harm. If a child has been abused or neglected, CPS and law enforcement staffs decide, with family help if possible, whether the child can be safely left at home. Risk factors, strengths and needs of the child and family are assessed. A safety plan may be developed immediately. Later, the agency and family may develop a plan for service. A case is closed when protective services are no longer needed to keep the child safe.

Q. WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

A. If you need more information on child abuse and neglect, contact your [local Child Welfare branch office](#) of the Department of Human Services. If someone is being hurt or is in danger right now, call 911 immediately. Report child abuse to your local Department of Human Services (DHS) or a local police department, county sheriff, county juvenile department, or State Police.

STATE LAWS ON REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

For State Laws on Reporting and Responding to child abuse and neglect, visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/can/reporting/>

More FAQs

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/aboutus/faq/can/>

Additional Child Protection Resources:

Child Protection (ARM)

<http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>

Child Protection Resource Guide for Seventh-day Adventist Pastors

<https://www.adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/prevention/child-protection-resource-guide.pdf>

Keeping Minors Safe as Your Church Ministers to SEX OFFENDERS

MINISTRY TO SEX OFFENDERS WITHIN THE CHURCH

FB 20 Child Protection and Volunteer Screening Policies for Children and Youth Ministries

The Church has a responsibility to provide worship opportunities and ministry to individuals who have previously engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct or physical

abuse involving children or youth. When an offender wishes to be actively involved with the Church, and if it does not conflict with requirements of parole, the following practices will be followed:

- a. The individual agrees to attend adult Sabbath School, worship services, and other church related activities on a chaperoned basis and will not interact on a personal basis with any child under the age of eighteen (18).
- b. The individual will not be allowed alone in any building on church premises where activities involving children under the age of eighteen (18) are being conducted.

If a child in the congregation approaches the individual on church premises or in public during a church sponsored activity the person will politely and immediately excuse themselves from the situation.

- c. The local church pastor and elders will meet personally with the individual and enter into a five-year covenant agreement that outlines the expected conduct to be followed at all times while on church premises or while involved in a church sponsored activity. Compliance with the conditions outlined in the covenant agreement will be reviews on a periodic basis and maybe renewed at the end of the five year term. Inappropriate conduct or failure to comply with the terms of the covenant agreement may forfeit the individual's participation in church services or sponsored activities at any time.

https://www.adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/cpp_nad_fb20_childprotectionandvolunteerscreeningpoliciesforchildren_youthministries_arm.pdf

HOW TO DEAL WITH A CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER

- ***What should church leaders do when they learn that a convicted child abuser is attending church?***

This is a problem that poses a significant “dilemma” to a church pastor who wishes to make his church safe for members, particularly children, and also wishes to deal with the offender in a “redemptive” manner and afford him (or her) the opportunity to worship. Even so, it is important for the pastor to know that child abusers are often individuals who cannot be cured, who are driven to repeat their conduct, and many times sincerely hold a persuasive conviction that they will not repeat their offense.

If a person abuses a child/minor on church premises or at church functions and its leaders know *or should have known* the person is a child abuser, the church will have a difficult case to defend. The church will need to demonstrate that it exercised a high degree of care and vigilance in the supervision of the individual. The following guidelines have been developed for implementation:

1. Individuals who are known to have committed physical or sexual abuse may not work or serve as volunteers or staff in any church or school sponsored activity or program for children.
2. **Exclusion.** Obviously, the risk of liability based on negligent supervision of the offender is eliminated by total exclusion from the church or school property and activities.
 - a. The person does not have to be cut off entirely
 - b. The pastor or other church leadership can meet with such a person off the church premises to provide spiritual support.

NOTE TO CONFERENCES - In reviewing whether a person should be allowed to participate in church services and other activities, the individual's record and facts of the offense should be considered. Legal counsel in the jurisdiction should review the Participation Agreement to be sure it meets with all legal requirements of the jurisdiction and be suitable for the individual.

(Adventist Risk Management's Church Attendance/Participation Agreement for Sex Offenders, <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>)

3. **Close Supervision.**
 - a. The church board or board of elders will designate a "chaperone" to accompany the abuser at all times when present on the church or school property or at church or school functions.
 - b. The chaperone should be a responsible, mature adult of the same gender as participant, over 30 years of age; with no sexual misconduct history, and not a relative of the abuser.
 - c. It need not be the same chaperon every week.
4. **Church Attendance / Participation Agreement for Known Sex Offenders.**

NOTE TO CONFERENCES - In reviewing whether a person should be allowed to participate in church services and other activities, the individual's record and facts of the offense should be considered. Legal counsel in the jurisdiction should review the Participation Agreement to be sure it meets with all legal requirements of the jurisdiction and be suitable for the individual. (Statement from Adventist Risk Management's Church Attendance/Participation Agreement for Sex

Offenders, <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>)

- a. The church leaders can permit an offender to attend church and participate in its activities subject to specified conditions to which the offender agrees in writing.
- b. Such an agreement may specify that:
 - i. He or she is not to perform any responsibilities directly or indirectly with children.
 - ii. Is not to transport children to or from church or church functions.
 - iii. Is not to attend youth (under 18) functions.
 - iv. Does not sit with children during church services or functions.
 - v. And does not have any contact off the premises with children who are church members.

(To acquire a sample of the Church Attendance/Participation Agreement for Sex Offenders, visit <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>)

If there is a convicted sex offender attending church, a deacon or other responsible adult should be assigned to monitor the person while on the premises. The offender shall be informed of the procedure. (For more information on the Chaperone' criteria, find Adventist Risk Management's Church Attendance/Participation Agreement for Sex Offenders doc, <http://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection>)

- c. If a sex offender transfers to or attends another church, notification of the previous history will be provided to the new congregation.
 - d. Be knowledgeable of the legal requirements for reporting suspected cases of abuse. Work closely with your church pastor and conference leaders when reporting.
 - e. If the offender is a minor, the agreement has to be signed by his or her parents. The local conference's legal counsel should review the agreement.
5. **Notification of Families.** The church should consider the possibility of privately notifying the parents of children.

Under certain circumstances, courts have found the church to have a "duty to warn" church members of the presence of child abusers and other persons

believed to be child abusers who attend church or otherwise participate in church functions. Such a step is often difficult to administer, particularly since new or guest families may not receive the warning. Furthermore, the child abuser may feel this is an unjustified step to take. Nevertheless, warning other families may be necessary. The offender or his/her family should be informed if such a step is contemplated.

Helpful Child Protection Resources:

Child Predators Video by Adventist Risk Management

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWyEbKNynao>

Sex Offenders In Church Article by Adventist Risk Management

https://www.adventistrisk.org/sitemedia/siteresources/pdfs/cpp_sexoffendersinchurch.pdf

Sex Offenders: Keeping Children, Schools, and churches Safe Article by Adventist Risk

Management <https://www.adventistrisk.org/prevention-resources/safety-topics/child-and-youth-activities/child-protection> (Reference Resources)

Dealing with child abusers who attend church services and other functions should be done aggressively. In most cases the offender has a criminal record. The church pastor should work with the parole officer and request an affidavit from the offender or from the court, this document will indicate charges and convictions. Be sure to determine whether there are any paroles or probation conditions to his/her release. Consider contacting the parole or probation officer or prosecuting attorney who pursued the criminal action for advice. The benefit of any doubt should be in favor of the church members.

WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH DO WITH INDIVIDUALS WHERE ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE

If it is alleged that an individual has shown inappropriate conduct toward children the following guidelines have been developed for implementation:

1. Don't try to handle the situation yourself and don't talk to the alleged offender before you call DHS (Child Protective Services) or law enforcement.
2. Report to your church pastor or first elder. The pastor is to notify conference administration and legal counsel of the situation.

3. Don't allow any further contact between the child and alleged offender unless Child Protective Services tells you it is alright.
4. Remove the individual from all church responsibilities until evaluated. The church should respect the rights of all parties involved in the alleged incident and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially, and in accordance with local Child Protective Services.
5. Provide appropriate supervision for the individual when they attend any church events.

If alleged offender is causing custodial interference (interfering with parental control of the child), seek assistance from law enforcement.

Reporting is considered a request for an assessment of a suspected incident of abuse or neglect. Remember a report is not an established fact of guilt, but rather a request for assessment of the safety and condition of a child. It is the beginning of a helping process for children and families. All citizens are encouraged to report suspected cases to DHS or law enforcement.

Helpful Child Protection Resources:

Child Predators Video by Adventist Risk Management

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWyEbKNynao>

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