

# Beijing Baptist Church Child Protection Policy

V1.0 Nov 2015

## General Purpose Statement

Beijing Baptist Church (the Church) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children participating in activities of the Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

## Notes for Parents

As well as protecting the children, we seek to give parents peace of mind and minimize interruptions for the main gathered church.

Please:

- Make sure you have filled in the child information form so that we know the key information about your child and how to contact you
- As regular attenders parents can allow the children to be taken out from the service as a group, but please collect your children promptly after the service finishes.
- Visitors who have children are to accompany their children to the classrooms when all the children leave together so that a) they know where the classroom is to collect the child, b) so that the workers on that day know who can collect that child.
- Don't allow your child to go to Nursery or Kids' church if they are sick (including having a green or yellow runny nose).
- Do familiarize yourself with this policy.
- Consider volunteering.
- The childcare workers are only allowed to give the children back to that child's parents. Please don't embarrass the workers by asking someone else to collect your child for you.

## Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

The term "worker" includes all paid and volunteer persons who work with children or have direct responsibility for the children. (Explicitly all roles listed on the Beijing Baptist Children's ministry role profiles see Appendix A)

The "nursery" (or Crèche) provides care for children under the age of 3 years old.

"Kids' Church" cares for and teaches children who are aged 3 years old and above.

A "referee" is any person who gives a reference for any applicant seeking to volunteer for the children's ministry

"Parents" is short for parent, parents, i.e. the person or persons directly responsible for that child.

## Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

### a) Three Month Rule

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with Beijing Baptist Church, on a regular ongoing basis (including regular attendance), for a minimum of 3 (three) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation of suitability of the applicant for working with children.

### b) Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application form, to be supplied by the church. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous Church affiliation, disclosure of any previous criminal convictions, and details of at least two referees<sup>1</sup> who are qualified to vouch for the prospective worker's suitability to work with children.

The application form also includes current employment situation and contact details for employer, whom might need to be informed in the case of an allegation being made.

The completed application will be maintained in confidence on file by the Church.

### c) Reference Checks

Before a prospective worker is permitted to work with children both references should have been received and reviewed. These references should provide assurance of the prospective worker's suitability for working with children in a church context. As a general rule, these references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references. However, it may be the case that a personal or family reference may be the only or best option available, particularly for younger applicants. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file by the Church.

### d) Disqualifying offenses

Criminal offenses as disclosed on the application form do not necessarily disqualify a person from working with children. What constitutes a disqualifying offense will be determined by Pastor in consultation with the elders and deacons on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances.

Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

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<sup>1</sup> Referees need to have known the applicant for at least 6 months.

- Need to have seen the applicant working with children
- Need to be over 18 years old

Can be from home country or China

When suitable international criminal records checks become available in Beijing, these checks will be considered to be added to our worker selection process.

**e) Other criteria**

Helpers do not necessarily have to be members but they should be Christians<sup>2</sup>.

Teachers should be ordinarily be members of Beijing Baptist church.

A paid Chinese *Ayi* (if employed) should also fill out the application form and have her references reviewed; however she doesn't have to be a Christian and is exempt from needing to have attending Beijing Baptist for 3 months.

**f) Teenage Workers**

The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children. (i.e. Cannot be responsible for taking children for bathroom trips)

## Definitions of Child Abuse or neglect

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care

## Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse or neglect

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The Pastor should be told.
2. The pastor with one the elders or deacons shall consider with the allegation is reasonable. If unreasonable, or unfounded, then the allegation should be recorded, but no further action taken.

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<sup>2</sup> A paid Chinese *ayi* does not need to be a Christian

3. The pastor will notify the parents of the child.
4. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be suspended from working with children, pending an investigation, and instructed to remain away from the Church premises during the investigation.
5. Civil authorities<sup>3</sup> will be notified, and the Church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of suspected abuse as the law then exists. The Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
6. The pastor will be the Church's spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. The Church leaders will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the Church should refrain from speaking to the media.
7. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

Following appropriate investigation, if it is concluded that misconduct seems likely to have occurred<sup>4</sup>, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The accused person will be removed from their position working with children or youth.
2. The accused person will be removed from membership.
3. The congregation at BBC will be informed.
4. The pastors of international churches in Beijing will be informed.
5. We also retain the right to inform the employer of the accused.

In the event we become aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child occurring at a separate time to when they at Beijing Baptist, this too should be reported immediately to the pastor for further action.

## **Practicalities on a Sunday**

### **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities.

However, circumstances may arise where it is necessary for a worker to leave the room for a short period of time and for only one worker to remain. For example, one worker may be required to accompany a child to the restroom; to escort a child back to a parent in the congregation; or to attend some other unavoidable and urgent matter. In such cases, one adult worker may remain in the classroom with the children; however, the classroom door must remain open.

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<sup>3</sup> Civil authorities may include: local police, the embassy of the accused, and the police in the home country of the accused.

<sup>4</sup> We are not a legal body. It is up to civil courts to establish guilt, so we continue to refer to the accused rather than the guilty party.

## Open Door Policy

### Kids' Church

Where there are two or more adult workers in the room, workers may elect to close a classroom door where there is sound reason to do so (for example, to block out outside noise or to create a safe and secure environment for the children).

Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

If circumstances arise where only one adult worker remains with the class, then the class door should remain open.

### Nursery<sup>5</sup>

The door to the nursery room should remain open and a stairgate used to prevent children from leaving unattended.

## Nursery Helper Child Ratio

As per the Church's Two Adult Rule, the nursery will be staffed by at least two workers (unless the children in the nursery are being cared for by their own parent, in which case the parent of the children is permitted to care for their children in isolation).

The precise number of workers required for the nursery will depend on the total number of children requiring care. In the nursery 1 adult per two children under 24 months, and 1 adult per three children aged between 2 and 3 is required. Children aged three and above should generally attend Kids' Church classes or remain in the main congregational meeting room.

To determine the required number of nursery workers, use the following formula:

- Each child under 24 months requires 0.5 workers.
- Each child aged between 24-36 months requires 0.33 workers.

For example, if there are four children aged under 24 months and two children aged between 24-36 months, the total worker/child ratio required would be 2.0 plus 0.66 (2.66) requiring three carers to be present.<sup>6</sup>

## Check-in/Check-out Procedure

### Nursery

Parents of children in the nursery can bring their children along to the nursery any time after 10 AM. Parents should collect them as soon as the service finishes.

The nursery helpers must only allow the parents to collect each child.

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<sup>5</sup> The open door policy is not only to ensure the protection of the children, but also to be above reproach in the situation that the two crèche helpers are of the opposite sex.

<sup>6</sup> Even if the result of applying this formula is less than two, two helpers must be present in accordance with the Two Adult Rule.

### Kids' Church

Children of regular attenders going to Kids' Church will be escorted to the Kids' Church room.

### Visitors

Visitors who have children are to accompany their children to the classrooms when all the children leave the worship service together so that a) they know where the classroom is to collect the child, b) so that the workers on that day know who can collect that child.

## **Sick Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Beijing Baptist Church. In general, children or workers with the following symptoms should NOT attend:

- Fever, recurrent diarrhea or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and a parent will be contacted to request that the child be collected.

## **Information on Children**

Parents are required to fill out a form providing details about their children, including name, date of birth, contact details, allergies, and medications.

This documentation is kept in paper form at the Church, available, and kept up to date.

Visitors who place their children in our care are also required to fill out such information.

## **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of Beijing Baptist Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Nursery coordinator or Kids' Church coordinator to develop a plan of action.

## **Allergy / Food Policy**

During Kids' Church, children will be provided with water and a small snack, for example fruit, crackers or biscuits/cookies. These snacks should not contain nuts; however parents should be advised that it is prudent to notify the Kids' Church workers of any allergies or intolerances.

For parents of children in the nursery, please provide your child with a small snack but again notify the child workers of any allergies. Nursery workers will not share snacks amongst children; however, it is prudent to advise the Nursery workers of any allergies or intolerances.

## **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of Beijing Baptist Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

If a child is disruptive, then one worker should fetch the parent from the service, making sure that another Children's worker remains behind.<sup>7</sup>

Workers should consult with the parents and the coordinator of the children's ministry, if assistance is needed with longer-term disciplinary issues.

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<sup>7</sup> Same principle applies if a child is distressed.

## **Restroom Guidelines**

### **Nursery**

As required, a nursery helper may change a baby's diaper.

The helper should change diapers in the nursery room, and as discretely as possible, whilst remaining in the view of another worker.

### **Kids' Church**

The gender of the washrooms used will be the appropriate ones for the adult helper. If the helper is female both boys and girls will be taken to toilet in the female bathroom and vice versa.

To avoid a one-on-one situation with the child being with a worker alone, if a child needs to use the toilet, the worker should ask if another child needs to go, or ask the child to pick a friend to go along with the first child.

If parental permission is given (as indicated on the Child information form), two children may go together without the presence of a helper (as long as permission is given by the parents of both children). As we are in public premises it is not recommended that a child goes to the bathroom on his/her own.

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

The text for parental permission on the child information form is as follows:

Toilet Procedure options:

- A) An adult kids' church helper should accompany my child to the washrooms and provide help as necessary.
- B) My child does not need to be accompanied by an adult when visiting the washroom. As long as my child is accompanied by another child, then they may together go to the bathroom.

As kids' church only goes to age 6, the third option of a parent giving permission for a child to go on their own to the bathroom is not given as an option.

## **Accidental Injuries to Children**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/ will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.



## Training

When considered necessary, Beijing Baptist Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new and current childcare workers.

## Recommended reading:

The following book is worth reading by any parent, teacher or helper who wants to understand more about the how's and why's of protection children.

*On Guard: Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse at Church* by Deepak Reju

## Appendix 1 Beijing Baptist Church Kids' Church Role profiles

### Crèche helper

- Serves in the crèche – plays and cares for the kids.

### Crèche Rota co-ordinator (Currently Hilary)

- Usually also serves as a crèche helper
- Arrives in a timely manner to ensure helpers are in place and find replacements if not.
- Works with the other crèche helpers to plan a rota providing sufficient cover, and backup.
- Document rota such that Mark and other leaders can easily refer to who is on duty that week.
- Works with the deacon to recruit sufficient volunteers.
- Works with the deacon to ensure that the child protection policy is being followed

### Kids' church helper

- Serves in the kids' church, supports the kids' church teacher by any available means
- does not carry the responsibility of up-front teaching.

### Kids' church teacher

- When on duty, overall responsibility for the class, the teaching and the kids' church helper.

### Kids' church leader (Currently Jen)

- Usually also serves as a teacher
- Plans the teaching material and provides training and feedback for the other teachers.
- Works with the deacon to recruit sufficient teachers.
- Maintains the teaching rota.
- Works with the deacon to ensure that the child protection policy is being followed

### **Deacon(s) for Crèche / Children's church**

- Supports the coordinator and kids' church leader to recruit volunteers.
- Seeks to ensure the child protection policy is being followed.
- Reviews the child protection policy with the other deacons and pastor.
- Holds the paper copy of all volunteers.
- Checks references for each volunteer, and decides suitability with crèche coordinator or kids' church leader.

### **Pastor**

- Final responsibility under God for both the welfare and spiritual education of the children entrusted to BBC. Therefore, with the help of other deacons and elders, supports and reviews the crèche and children's church ministry at BBC.