

# WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

- **A "Child" as described in Michigan law governing child abuse**, is defined as a person under 18 years of age.
- **"Child abuse" under Michigan statute means** "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a teacher or teacher's aide which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse; sexual exploitation; or maltreatment." (Michigan Penal Code)
- **"Sexual Abuse" means** engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration as defined in the Michigan Penal Code. It is any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator.
- **In a more easily understood way, child sexual abuse is:**  
"Any sexual activity with a child--whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim." (*National Resource Center on Child Abuse*, 1992)
- **Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.** All child abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.
- **Violent/touching behaviors** may involve but are not limited to:
  - Fondling
  - Oral, genital, and anal penetration
  - Intercourse
  - Forcible rape
- **Non-Violent/non touching behaviors** may involve but are not limited to:
  - Verbal comments
  - Pornographic materials--viewing with child or using them as a model
  - Obscene phone calls
  - Exhibitionism
  - Allowing children to witness sexual activity
- **Basically, child sexual abuse is criminal behavior** that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially and developmentally ready.

# **POLICY FOR PROTECTION AND CARE OF MINORS**

at

## **Lake Pointe Bible Church, Plymouth, MI**

At Lake Pointe Bible Church, our principles and beliefs require that we respect and protect all children. As a church we affirm that child abuse (whether sexual, physical, emotional, or verbal) is both sinful and criminal behavior, and so we hold to a zero-tolerance policy. That is, if any staff or volunteer commits even one small abusive offense, they will no longer be allowed to minister in our church. It is our desire to provide a safe and healthy environment for all who are participants in our ministries. It is our policy to *screen* and *train* all workers in our children's and youth ministries in order to ensure this end.

### **SCREENING and TRAINING**

All persons who have a ministry with minors at Lake Pointe Bible Church must meet the following requirements:

1. Have attended Lake Pointe Bible Church for at least 6 months prior to working in any volunteer capacity in the church which involves minors. All persons working with minors will be placed by means of a screening process, including a training component dealing with the issues of child abuse.
2. Persons who are known to have committed previous acts of child abuse or criminal sexual misconduct shall not be allowed to work with minors.
3. Persons who have been victims of child abuse (identified through the screening process) will be requested to meet with an elder to determine a ministry role for which they are best suited.

### **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

All allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously. Reports will be handled in a prompt and confidential manner.

1. If abuse is observed, reported, or suspected, it must immediately be reported to a church elder and then to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
2. Under direction of the elder, an incident form (attached) shall be filled out and an investigation shall be initiated and completed.
3. Lake Pointe Bible Church will cooperate fully in any investigation of this matter by the police or the State of Michigan Child Protective Services.

### **RECOVERY**

The elders will coordinate efforts to obtain qualified counseling and support for all parties to assure, where possible, that the church serves as a redemptive community for all persons involved.

# Lake Pointe Bible Church

## POLICY STATEMENTS

*These are the rules we will follow to prevent child abuse in our programs*

### SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

1. In all LPBC children's ministries, we require **two adults in every classroom**, or an adult and a teen. If this ideal cannot be met, it is appropriate to have one adult and a roving supervisor. An adult is considered anyone 18 or over.
2. All classrooms used with minors must have **a door with a clear window** and must **never be locked**. During any children's program, classes may be visited randomly and unannounced by any elder, parent, or ministry leader.
3. All groups of minors involved in activities or trips must be **accompanied by at least two adults**. Certain exceptions to this minimum may be allowed: one-on-one discipleship, counseling, or small group activities. Exceptions may only take place, however, *after notification and permission has been given by an elder and the minor's parent*. Discretion regarding time and place of activities should be used.
4. Workers should try **not to be alone** with any child/children at any time. If you are the first teacher in a room, ask a parent to stay until another teacher arrives. If this is not possible, try to stay in a visible location in the classroom.

### BATHROOM PROCEDURES

1. When first bringing **an infant or toddler** to Lake Pointe, the parent or guardian will be asked to sign a paper stating their preference regarding diaper changing. For parents who desire our workers to change a diaper, this should be done by a female adult worker. Remain where others may see you. Youth helpers and other parents should not assist.
2. If assisting a toddler in the nursery restroom, **leave the door slightly open** so that others can hear that everything is all right in the room. The child's privacy, however, needs to be protected.
3. **Only women** should assist children in the bathroom. No men or young people should take this responsibility.
4. In classrooms for children three years old and older, **no teacher should change diapers or soiled clothing**. If a child needs to be changed, the parent or child's caregiver should be contacted.

5. Children should be encouraged to **use the restroom before class starts**. A teacher may choose to make a trip of the entire class to the restrooms. Individual restroom breaks during class should be discouraged. When a child age three through 3rd grade needs to use the restroom not contained in the classroom, a teacher should walk to the restroom with the child and wait in the hall. Open the door and ascertain that the restroom is empty, then allow the child to go in. If the child/children are in for an excessive amount of time or other reasons for suspicion become apparent, investigate and take appropriate action.  
  
Appropriate action may involve requesting another adult's assistance, propping open the door with the stopper and/or requesting permission to enter for a quick look to monitor the situation. If entering, keep the outside door open but allow for the child's privacy needs. If a child is having difficulties with their clothing (buttons, belts, zippers, snaps, etc.), assist only in the presence of another adult.
6. For youth in grades 4-12, the **buddy system is recommended**, where two go to the restroom together. If a problem occurs, get another adult to go into the bathroom with you.

## ADEQUATE PERSONNEL RATIOS

An adequate number of adults will supervise all activities and programs. Supervision will also be maintained *before* and *after* all events until all children or youth are in the custody of their parents or someone assuming responsibility for them. We will strive for this teacher to child ratio:

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>WORKER to CHILD RATIO</u>
Ages 0-12 months	1:2
Ages 12-30 months	1:3
Ages 30 months-6 years	1:5
Grades 1-3	1:6
Grades 4-6	1:8
Grades 7-12	1:8

A two adult minimum should always be maintained.

# DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

1. **Corporal (physical) punishment or verbal abuse are never to be administered** by teachers or ministry workers to any child attending Lake Pointe Bible Church. This is in accordance with Michigan State Law.
2. Children attending Lake Pointe Bible Church are to be **made aware of existing rules** and the consequences which follow if such rules are broken.
3. With little ones, a **time-out chair is appropriate** if redirection fails. Older children should be separated from the group but not completely removed from the classroom. Never physically "manhandle" a child. Parents, in their protectiveness, can easily misunderstand someone else disciplining their child.
4. If unacceptable behavior occurs and the child has been warned that he/she is breaking the rules, then **parents are to be asked to come to the classroom**. A three-way conversation to discuss how to handle the problem should take place.
5. If such behavior occurs again after the above steps have been taken, then **the student is excused** from the classroom for the remainder of the day. No student is to be unsupervised at this time and must be taken to his/her parents.
6. If these procedures do not bring about correct behavior in the classroom, **two elders will be asked to intervene** with the parents of the child involved.
7. When handling a child, please **keep your hands in the "safety zones"** so that none of your actions will be misunderstood. **Rule of thumb:** Do not touch a child in areas that a bathing suit would cover.
8. Lake Pointe Bible Church will encourage parents to protect their own children by **picking them up promptly**, and keeping watch over them when they are not in class. Parental responsibility for their child is important.
9. **"Rough-housing" or unnecessary body contact is not to be allowed** at Lake Pointe Bible Church. Even if the child/young adult encourages it, parents and other adults can misinterpret.

LAKE POINTE BIBLE CHURCH

# APPLICATION FOR MINISTRY WITH MINORS

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_ How Long? \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address \_\_\_\_\_ How Long? \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you attended this church? Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of Lake Pointe Bible Church?  Yes  No

If yes, how long you have been a member Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_

Have you reviewed and are you in agreement with Lake Pointe Bible Church's Doctrinal Statement?  Yes  No

Briefly describe what it means to you to be a Christian: \_\_\_\_\_

List **name, contact person, and complete address** of other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years. List all previous church work involving children and youth.

Church Name Contact Person/Address	Type of Work/Position	Dates

List all previous non-church work involving children and youth:

Organization Name/Contact Person/Complete Address	Type of Work/Position	Dates

Please list any training, experience, or other factors that have prepared you for children or youth work: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the type of ministry you prefer:

- Nursery   
  Toddlers   
  Preschool   
  Sunday School  
 Middle School   
  Sr. High   
  MOPS   
  AWANA   
  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Two Personal References (not relatives):**

Name \_\_\_\_\_                      Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_                      Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_                                      \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Questions**

If you prefer, you may refuse to answer the following questions and choose instead to discuss them in confidence with a designated elder rather than answering them on this form.

Have you ever been accused, convicted of, or plead guilty to the crimes of child abuse and/or sexual molestation of a minor or criminal sexual misconduct?     Yes     No  
 If yes, give explanation with date(s); use separate sheet if necessary \_\_\_\_\_  
 Were you a victim of abuse or molestation as a minor?     Yes     No

As a church volunteer, do you agree to observe all Lake Pointe Bible Church policies regarding work with children or youth?     Yes     No

**My Commitment to the  
 Children's and Youth Ministry at  
 Lake Pointe Bible Church**

To be signed by all ministry staff and volunteers

I have trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and am committed to live my life for Him. Because of my commitment to Jesus Christ, I choose to live an exemplary life in accordance with Scripture, and be a role model for the young people at Lake Pointe Bible Chapel.

I believe that the Bible is fully inspired by God without error and is the final authority in all matters of Christian life and doctrine. I desire to faithfully teach God's Word and live by it in all aspects of my ministry and Christian life.

I realize that in the ministry for which I am applying, I have the responsibility of guiding hearts and minds toward the person of Jesus Christ. I realize that being spiritually, emotionally, and physically able to be effective in this ministry is a requirement. If changes occur in my life and I can no longer live up to these commitments, I will inform the church leadership and step down from my position until I am able to again resume my ministry.

With support from the elders, leadership, and those in fellowship at Lake Pointe Bible Church, and my commitment to Jesus Christ, I give myself with a cheerful heart in ministry before God.

I have read the Child Protection Policy booklet for Lake Pointe Bible Church Children's and Youth Ministry Workers and agree to obey the guidelines outlined in it.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## **AUTHORIZATION FOR CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK**



By my signature below I hereby grant permission for the leadership of Lake Pointe Bible Church to pursue a criminal background check on me. I request that various police and governmental agencies release any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in its files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state, or national. I hereby release said police departments from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure. I understand that any unusual records found in my name will be revealed to and discussed with me for clarity and accuracy before any action is taken within Lake Pointe.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Print Maiden Name (if applicable) and any other names you may have gone by in the past \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number  
*(This will be blacked out after check is run)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Current Driver's License Number (and State)

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to your ministry leader at Lake Pointe.

# AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION BY YOUR REFERENCES

*Signing this form gives us permission to contact the references you listed on your application form.*

I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give Lake Pointe Bible Church any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth ministry.

In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Lake Pointe Bible Church, I hereby release any individuals, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization.

I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization in this application.

I further state that **I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT.** This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

# REFERENCE FORM FOR WORK WITH MINORS AT LAKE POINTE BIBLE CHURCH

*This is the form that will be sent to the references you listed on your application*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We recently received an application from \_\_\_\_\_  
to work with minors in a ministry here at Lake Pointe Bible Church. Your name was given as a reference. An authorization for release of information has been signed by the applicant, and all information given is by you is confidential. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience to return your response.

What is your relationship with the applicant, and how long you have known him or her?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being a low rating, and 10 being a high rating), please rate the applicant on each of the following characteristics.

Characteristic	Rating	Comments
1. Dependability	_____	_____
2. Ability to work well with others	_____	_____
3. Trustworthiness	_____	_____
4. General attitude	_____	_____

Please state any personal feelings or information you have concerning this applicant pertinent to their personality, their history or experience with minors, or their potential future ministry with minors.

Is there any reason you feel this applicant should not work with minors?  No  Yes  
If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person giving the reference**

**Date**

Thank you for your time in answering this request.

Sincerely,

Lake Pointe Bible Church Credentials Secretary

*LAKE POINTE BIBLE CHURCH*  
**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

This form is to be used for collecting information if there is an allegation or observation of sexual abuse or if there is inappropriate or suspicious behavior.

**Child's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Male**    **Female**

**Child's Age** \_\_\_\_\_                      **Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Date & Time of Incident** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Adults and Children Present** \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific Description of the Incident (use additional paper if necessary):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Any Statements Made by Child Involved (use exact quotes even if childish words or incorrect grammar is used):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsive Action Taken:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature(s) of Person(s) Describing Incident**

Print \_\_\_\_\_ Full  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person Completing Incident Report Form**

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Result of Action Taken by Elder Designee:**

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**Signature of Elder Designee**

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_