



Buck Run
BAPTIST CHURCH

Child & Volunteer Protection Policy

2025 - 2026

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Introduction

Vision

Buck Run desires to offer a safe and secure environment for kids, students, and families who participate in our ministry activities. Our goal in laying out these policies and practices is to protect the children, students, families, and volunteers of our church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Purpose

This Child & Volunteer Protection Policy defines rules and guidelines for the safety of children and students (from birth to 12th grade) when and where the church maintains a responsibility to ensure their well-being. Through heightened awareness, proper education, and training, the congregation, staff, and volunteers can work together to make our church an even safer environment.

Protection Policy Team

The Pastoral Staff will appoint a team of pastors and ministry leaders to the Protection Policy Team, which will serve to address the safety and protection of the kids and students in their care. The Policy Protection Team will typically include the Executive Pastor, the Family Ministries Pastors, and three non-staff volunteers (at least one of which will be a woman).

The Protection Policy Team is charged to complete an annual review of the church's Child & Volunteer Protection Policy, ensure that the local church's ministries are in compliance with these policies, and review any registered sex offender cases that arise in the church (see the policy below). The Protection Policy Team may seek the guidance of legal counsel or others to serve as consultants in the work of the committee.

If a report of misconduct and/or abuse is made to the authorities, the Executive Pastor will notify the Protection Policy Team of the steps that have been taken and consult the team on subsequent steps.

Background Screening

Background Checks

Any non-staff volunteer interacting with minors will be required to undergo a background check before interacting with minors. All staff will undergo a background check regardless of their role. Background checks will be renewed every three years.

Volunteers required to undergo background checks include but are not limited to:

- Church Staff and Spouses
- Kids Ministry Volunteers
- Student Ministry Volunteers
- Deacons
- Community Group Facilitators

In addition, organizations that hold events involving minors on Buck Run's property (e.g. non-profit organizations, schools, and churches) must submit a form affirming that all adults interacting with minors have received a background check.

Disqualifications

Circumstances that disqualify an individual from serving with one of our kids or Student Ministry teams include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Currently under investigation by Child Protection Services (CPS), the Department of Social Services (DOSS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for criminal sexual misconduct, neglect, endangerment of a minor, or physical abuse
- Prior incidents of sexual misconduct or other forms of abuse (see Defining Abuse below)
- Felony/misdemeanor convictions that involve crimes resulting in

- harm to another person
- Felony/misdemeanor convictions related to the sale of drugs within the past ten years
- Felony/misdemeanor convictions related to illegal use, sale, or possession of firearms in the past ten years

Other disqualifications may be applied at the discretion of the Pastoral Staff in conversation with the Protection Policy Team.

Abuse Reporting

Buck Run takes all indicators and suspicions of child mistreatment seriously. We are aware of research that indicates that children who are mistreated in one way are at a significant increase in risk of being mistreated in multiple ways. Therefore, as our church becomes aware of an indicator or report of a child being mistreated, we will take steps to protect the child from both known and potential risks and be extra attentive to and supportive of the child.

Defining Abuse

As our church's front-line for kids and student programming and pastoral counseling, church staff and volunteers have regular opportunities to observe children's behavior, family dynamics, and families' care-giving styles. They are often privy to the intimate details of congregants' lives. Unlike formal educators, our staff have ongoing contact with entire family units and their acquaintances and, as such, may be in a unique position to detect child abuse and other forms of mistreatment. For this reason, it is important to have a clear definition of abuse. Buck Run operates with the following definitions:

Child Abuse or Neglect — Any act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk of death, serious physical or emotional harm, or sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.

Sexual Abuse — Employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing visual depiction of such conduct. Sexual abuse also includes rape, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, incest with children, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children. The age of consent in Kentucky (KRS 510.020 and 510.040 through 510.140) is sixteen years of age.

Mandatory Reporting

The abuse of children is not only a sin, but it is a serious crime. When adults report suspected child abuse to the legal authorities, their report could save a child's life. In contrast, silence about suspected abuse brings incredible harm to victims and emboldens offenders. Buck Run encourages its members, both mandated reporters and not, to contact the authorities immediately when a child discloses abuse, when they witness child abuse, or when they observe signs of abuse.

According to Kentucky statutes (KRS 620.030), any person who knows or who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is neglected or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made.

- This includes physical, sexual, mental abuse, neglect, or human trafficking.
- This includes but is not limited to teachers, school personnel, or child-caring personnel. This makes anyone working with minors at Buck Run a mandatory reporter.
- The clergy-penitent privilege will NOT be exercised when it comes to reporting cases of suspected child neglect or abuse.

When and How to Report

If you suspect that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused you should notify the ministry leader or the Executive Pastor who will help you initiate a report with the Child Protective Services (CPS). If the suspected abuse is by a church staff member, it should be reported

directly to CPS at (877) 597-2331.

- It is not the responsibility of the person reporting or the staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions. Our role is to comply with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA, Federal Public Law 93-247) as well as State statutes and cooperate fully with CPS and local law enforcement as they do their work.
- It is paramount in such situations that confidentiality be maintained. Under no circumstances should confidential information about a child be shared with other parents or volunteers.
- If a child indicates that a parent or another adult is causing harm, DO NOT talk with that parent/adult about the allegation. Talking to that parent/adult could result in additional abuse. People who sexually abuse children utilize authority, trust or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetuate the abuse.

When contacted, the ministry leader will contact the Executive Pastor who will help guide the ministry leader and reporter through the process of reporting. If a report is made to authorities, the Executive Pastor will notify the Protection Policy Team and consult the team on subsequent steps.

Digital Information for Minors

myBuckRun Data

Buck Run uses Church Management Software, referred to as myBuckRun in our ministry, as its primary church management database. We take the privacy of minors seriously and have established the following procedures to protect their information within the system.

Children Under 12 — All children under the age of 12 are assigned an “unlisted” profile in myBuckRun. Unlisted profiles are not visible to general church members and can only be accessed by Administrators and key Next Gen Ministry leadership.

Minors Ages 12–17 — Minors between the ages of 12 and 17 are not automatically assigned unlisted profiles; however, their contact information is hidden from all users except Administrators. Group Leaders and

Schedulers may communicate with minors through myBuckRun’s group messaging and scheduling notification features if a minor is part of their group or serve team. The myBuckRun system does not permit Group Leaders or Schedulers to view a minor’s personal contact information. These restrictions are lifted upon the individual’s 18th birthday, at which point they are no longer considered a minor and their profile is treated as a standard adult profile.

Parental Control of Privacy Settings — Parents of minors ages 12–17 can adjust their child’s privacy settings in myBuckRun. Parents may:

- Change their child’s profile to “unlisted,” which removes visibility entirely and prevents the minor from being scheduled to serve or communicated with through groups.
- Remove existing restrictions, making their child’s contact information visible to a broader audience within myBuckRun.

Parents who wish to adjust their child’s privacy settings should contact a Next Gen staff member for assistance.

Photography of Minors at Church Events

Buck Run’s Kids and Student Ministries photograph events and activities to document and share what God is doing in our church community. The church is also committed to protecting the privacy and safety of every child in our care. The following procedures govern the taking and sharing of photographs that include minors.

Parental Opt-Out — Buck Run recognizes that not every parent wants their child’s image to be shared publicly. Parents who do not want their child’s images to be posted publicly may opt out by submitting a written request via email to the church. Upon receipt, their child will be excluded from published photography.

Approval Process for Social Media — All photographs that include children and are intended for posting on church social media platforms must be reviewed and approved by a Kids or Student Ministry staff member prior to posting. Photography volunteers and other staff are not

authorized to post images of minors without this approval.

Additional Safeguards — The following practices are observed when photographing and sharing images of minors:

- We do not post or share any personal information about children on social media.
- We avoid sharing photographs in which a child's name tag is visible.
- Wide, candid shots of large groups may include children who are not easily identified. Close up shots of children will be checked thoroughly to ensure no opted-out children are included.

Community Group Safety and Security

General

- As a program of Buck Run, Community Groups must follow the guidelines of the church's Child and Volunteer Protection Policy even if the gathering does not occur on church property.
- Community Group childcare will offered during the group's discussion time. During this period, minors cannot be left alone and must be led by a team of two or more adult volunteers (teenagers are not permitted to oversee minors). These adults must be Buck Run members with up-to-date background checks on file with the church. The church staff will provide facilitators with lists of those in their group that are approved to facilitate childcare.
- Cell phone use by leaders should be limited to emergencies. Phones should never be pulled out while in a bathroom assisting a child. Screens cannot be shown to children.

Policy Violations and Exceptions

Buck Run takes policy violations seriously. Any staff, volunteer, parent, or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way. Our church expects all adults to practice bystander

intervention when they see a policy violation and report policy violations to the Protection Policy Team.

Policy exceptions should be rare, pre-approved for emergencies, and documented.

Outside Rule

This *Policies and Practices for Child & Volunteer Protection* policy applies to children (from birth to 12th grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific kids and Student Ministry-related church-sponsored activities. The following polices apply for other interactions with minors on church property and during church-sponsored events such as community group meetings.

Special Events

Throughout the year there will be special events that include the care of and participation of minors (e.g. Vacation Bible School, camps, student conferences, mission trips, etc.). The Protection Policy Team will create a unique policy for each event to accommodate the uniqueness of the event while ensuring that every minor under that care of Buck Run is safe.

Tutoring and Lessons

Anyone who provides private lessons (music lessons, tutoring, etc.) to minors on property must have a signed release from the parents that exempt the church from liability.

Counseling Children

Staff pastors and counselors who provide counseling for children of members should receive permission from a parent or guardian before the first session. The counselor's consent form should be signed by the parent. The counselor will not counsel alone in the church building or at home alone with the child, but can only counsel when at least one other person is around (for example, a parent is waiting directly outside of the office or in the general vicinity).