

Buck Run
BAPTIST CHURCH

Child & Volunteer Protection Policy

2025 - 2026

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2

Introduction 3
- Vision 3
- Purpose 3
- Protection Policy Team 3

Background Screening 4
- Background Checks 4
- Disqualifications 4

Abuse Reporting 5
- Defining Abuse 5
- Mandatory Reporting 6
- When and How to Report 6

Digital Information for Minors 7
- myBuckRun Data 7
- Photography of Minors at Church Events 8

Student Ministry Safety and Security Policies 9
- Drug and Alcohol Usage 9
- Weapons 9
- Transportation and Vehicle Safety 10
- Off-Site Activities 10
- Overnight Policy 11

Minor-Aged Serving : Helper Position 12
- Qualifications for Minors Serving in Kids Ministry 12
- Restrictions on the role of Hlper 13
- Serving Covenant 15

Emergency Response Plan: Student Ministry 16
- Medical Emergency 16
- Building Evacuation (Fire Plan) 16
- Tornado Warning 17
- Active Shooter/Intruder 17

Policy Violations and Exceptions 18
- Outside Rule 18

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 church's Registered Sex Offender Policy). 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.

Student Ministry Safety and Security Policies

Drug and Alcohol Usage

The use of drugs (both recreational and illegal) or alcohol will not be permitted by staff, volunteers, or students during any Student Ministry functions—whether on church property or off-site. Staff, volunteers, or students will be removed and, in the case of students, parents or guardians will be involved immediately. Staff, volunteers, or students may be required to attend counseling before returning to Student Ministry gatherings.

Weapons

No student participating in a Buck Run Student event (on campus or off) is permitted to carry a weapon of any kind including, but not limited to guns, knives, etc.

Transportation and Vehicle Safety

There may be times when a Buck Run staff member, volunteer, or associated adult will tasked to provide transportation for a student or group of students as part of a Student Ministry event.

For an adult to be able to provide such transportation, the following requirements must be met and verified through a form submitted annually:

- They must be at least 19 years of age.
- They must have a valid driver's license as well as proof of insurance.
- They must have no past DUI's or DWI's on their driving record.
- They must exhibit responsible driving habits.

When a Student Ministry leader provides transportation for a student or group of students, it is understood that the student is entering the car willingly and with permission of their parent or guardian. The volunteer will drive with care, upholding the laws of the state. The driver as well as Buck Run Baptist Church will be indemnified of all claims in the event of an accident.

No Student Ministry leader may be in a vehicle alone with a student younger than 9th grade as part of a Student Ministry event. Any exception to this rule must have prior approval from the Executive Pastor.

Buck Run is not responsible for students before they arrive to Student Ministry gatherings or after they have departed. Any arrangements between families and Student Ministry leaders for transportation to and from student events are the responsibility of those parents and leaders and not the responsibility of Buck Run.

Off-Site Activities

All employees and volunteers must comply with the Protection Policy even when a church-sponsored event occurs off campus. Since each off-site facility will be different, it will be the responsibility of the ministry leaders to determine how best to use the facility in order to comply with the Protection Policy. Whenever children or students will be off campus

and outside the direct supervision of their parent or guardian, a *Student Ministries Consent and Release Form* must be completed annually and on file with the ministry. The ministry leaders of those off-site activities must have at all times a list of names, emergency contacts, medical conditions, and an agreement allowing permission to treat a child or student if they are injured or become sick during the off-site event.

Outings present unique risks for the safety of minors. All off-site activities must meet the following guidelines:

- Clear communication has been provided for both parents and students regarding both details of the event and any guidelines.
- A Student Ministries Consent and Release Form has been obtained from a parent or guardian.
- At least a 1/7 adult/student ratio is established, with a higher ratio being appropriate for certain events.
- Minors must be monitored throughout the off-site activity.
- One-on-one meetings with students younger than 9th grade should take place at a public location with high visibility. If the subject of this meeting requires privacy it should be held on church property or at a time and place approved by the Protection Policy Team.
- Under no circumstances should a one-on-one meeting between a Student Ministry leader and a student of the opposite sex occur off-site.

Overnight Policy

Some Student Ministry events involve overnight sleeping arrangements (summer camp, student conference, retreats, etc.). These events must be approved by the Protection Policy Team. Small groups (Connect Groups and D-Groups) are not permitted to have overnight events.

When these events occur, leaders will be responsible for ensuring the following guidelines are followed.

- A clean, safe environment will be provided for sleeping, showering, and dressing for all students that are involved.
- Males and females will have separate sleeping areas and restrooms.
- At no time should anyone be behind closed doors alone with a student (this includes another student).

- No male participant will be allowed to enter the sleeping area or restroom of the female participants, and vice versa.
- Student ministry staff, leaders, and volunteers will not sleep in the same bed as a student.
- Curfew times will be clearly stated and adhered to.
- All participants (leaders and students) should wear appropriate sleeping attire.
- No one (leaders, volunteers, or students) should be nude in the presence of students.

Minor-Aged Serving : Helper Position

There are limited situations in our Next Gen Ministries that allow for Students to serve as Helpers in Kids Ministry events. Because of the statistical history of child abuse cases involving a minor with another minor, and because of the legal and logistical challenges in performing background checks on minors, we have set limitations on how minors are allowed to serve in our Kids Ministry.

Middle or High School students may go through a screening process to become a Kids Ministry Helper. This position does not exist for regular Sunday morning or Wednesday night Kids Ministry activities. However, it may be utilized for special Kids Ministry events, such as Vacation Bible School.

Qualifications for Minors Serving in Kids Ministry at Buck Run

- Elementary age students or younger are not permitted to serve in Kids Ministry.
- Middle and High School students serving as Kids Ministry Helpers must meet the following qualifications in order to participate.
  - They must have attended Buck Run Baptist Church for at least one year.
  - They must be a baptized member of Buck Run Baptist Church.
  - They must be actively involved in the Student Ministry at Buck Run, specifically

- within Discipleship Groups.
- They must have a reputation that is above reproach with adult leaders within our
- Student Ministry.
- They must have verbal approval from their parent and/or guardian to serve
- within Kids Ministry at Buck Run.
- They must have an in-person interview with someone from the Next Gen Ministry Team in order to understand the qualifications and expectations of helpers who
- serve in Kids Ministry at Buck Run.
- They must have a serving covenant signed by themselves, a parent/guardian,
- and student ministry leaders. They may be asked to sign additional serving covenants based on specific events in which they are participating.
- Once each of these steps has been completed, they must receive pastoral approval to serve as a Helper in Kids Ministry events. This process must be completed every year.
- For each Kids Ministry event, they must participate in all volunteer equipping meetings required by the Kids Ministry team so they are able to review expectations for service.
- Middle School students must serve alongside a parent/guardian at Kids Ministry events. The student and their parent/guardian should be together at all times.
- The Buck Run Kids team has discretion over all Helper placements.
- The Buck Run Kids team may require a High School student to serve with a parent/guardian in some cases.
- The Buck Run Kids team has the right to remove any student's privilege to serve as a Helper at any time if necessary.

Restrictions on the role of Helper

- Kids Ministry Helpers will not be primary teachers in any Kids Ministry class.
- Kids Ministry Helpers may never be alone with a child or group of children, and they will always serve alongside at least two qualified

adults. Middle School students must serve alongside at least one qualified adult in addition to their parent/guardian.

- Kids Ministry Helpers are not permitted to take children to the restroom or assist any child in the restroom.
- Kids Ministry Helpers are not permitted to change diapers.
- Kids Ministry Helpers will not serve at overnight Buck Run Kids events.

Serving Covenant

Thank you for your willingness to come alongside our Buck Run Kids team! Every volunteer that serves in Buck Run's Next Gen Ministries is required to have a current background check on file. Because of legal and logistical challenges, we do not run background checks on minors. This document outlines a few important health and safety guidelines for minors serving in Buck Run Kids.

Your signature and a parent's signature at the bottom of this form indicate that you have read through, affirm, and agree to abide by the following guidelines for minors serving in Buck Run Kids.

- I understand that the way that I act, speak, and treat others is a reflection of Christ and an example to other believers (1 Tim. 4:12) and agree that I will strive to be above reproach in my service in Buck Run Kids.
- I understand that my role as a Helper is to assist the Buck Run Kids Team and adult leaders.
- I understand that I am never to be alone with a single child or a group of children without an adult present.
- If I am a middle schooler, I understand that I must serve alongside my parent/guardian.
- I understand that I am not permitted to take children to the restroom, assist any child in the restroom, or change the diaper of any child at a Kids Ministry event.
- I understand that while I am serving, I should be fully present and attentive to my serving role. I will not be distracted by my cell phone, my friends, or anything else.
- I agree to serve in the specific role assigned to me by the Buck Run Kids Team.
- I agree to no cell phone usage during scheduled Buck Run Kids activities.
- I understand that the Buck Run Kids team has the right to remove any student's privilege to serve as a Helper at any time if necessary.

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Date

Emergency Response Plan: Student Ministry

While we pray that emergencies do not occur during ministry gatherings, we want to be prepared for any situation that may present itself during our gatherings and events. This part of our policy can be found inside the Student Room so that leaders are ready to execute the emergency plan as necessary.

Medical Emergency

Buck Run's membership includes multiple medical professionals that serve as medical volunteers during Buck Run events. These skilled professionals are trained to provide medical care for the individual or triage the situation until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrives.

- If you witness a person in need of medical care, immediately tell the Student Pastor so a medical volunteer can be alerted. If the situation is critical, immediately call 911. If the medical need involves a student in the care of the church, the Student Pastor will call the parents and bring them to their child's location.
- If the status of the individual safely permits, escort him or her to a location that affords the individual a quiet and private environment. DO NOT move the individual if movement could result in further injury.
- After the individual is stable, the ministry leader present will fill out an incident report with the help of the other responsible parties.
- The Student Pastor will be trained in CPR and have a current list of medical volunteers.
- First Aid supplies will be kept within the Student Room.

Building Evacuation (Fire Plan)

In the event of a fire or other emergency that requires evacuation, take immediate action that includes accounting for everyone who was in the building.

- Instruct those around to stay calm, remain silent, and walk while evacuating. Follow provided instructions from the Student Pastor.
- Evacuate the building using the location's pre-planned evacuation

route that will be posted in the Student Room.
- Once out of the building proceed to and gather at the designated meeting location then ensure that every student is accounted for.
- If the cause of the evacuation is a fire, do not attempt to extinguish the fire yourself.
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason.
- While at the designated meeting area, do not attempt to leave the area. This may hinder the arrival of emergency personnel.
- Church Staff and Welcome Team leaders are responsible for directing emergency personnel.
- When the emergency is cleared you will be given the all-clear.

Tornado Warning

Tornado warnings require you to stay inside the building to protect others and yourself.

- Instruct others to remain calm and stay in the building due to the emergency. Going outside poses a risk of injury or death.
- Leaders will move all students to the lower level of the Student Room and take a safe position under the mezzanine away from doors.
- Stay in your safe location until given the all clear by the Student Pastor.

Active Shooter/Intruder

If you hear gunfire, see a person with a gun or other weapon, or become aware of any other physically dangerous situation, take immediate steps to protect others and yourself. Remember to ***Run! Hide! Fight!*** In every action taken, prioritize the safety and well-being of the students that are in your care.

Run!

- If you are near an exterior exit, try to escape from the building and proceed to the designated meeting location. If a phone is available, call 911 immediately.

Hide!

- If it is not safe to run, move to an office or classroom, close the door and lock it if possible, leaving main entrances unlocked for police entry. Use desks and chairs to block the doorway if possible.
- Stay away from windows and out of view. Turn off the lights. Hide behind heavy furniture or anything that will hide your location and protect you from gunfire.
- If a phone is available, call 911 immediately. Silence all cell phones. And pray.
- Remain hidden until emergency professionals give the all-clear.

Fight!

- If the gunman approaches you, your actions will depend solely on your judgment and capabilities. No strategy is 100% effective. However, taking decisive action often results in preserving the lives of others.

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 policies apply to 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 the 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 exempts 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).