

# Jersey Shore Baptist Church Policy Statements

## Purpose

These policies are drafted as a best practice to ensure the safeguarding of Jersey Shore Baptist Church members, visitors, employees, volunteers, students and/or any other participant in ministries. Participants may be collectively referred to as “consumers”.

## Scope

This policy applies to all ministries, employees, and volunteers of Jersey Shore Baptist Church. All ministries covered by this policy are collectively referred to as the “organization”.

## Abuse in General

Jersey Shore Baptist Church has **zero tolerance** for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of students in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service. Further, this organization will fully cooperate with law enforcement throughout the investigation and resolution of mistreatment or abuse incidents. Definitions of abuse can be found in the Appendix.

## Abuse of One Consumer by Another Consumer

The organization has **zero tolerance** for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among consumers within the organization. This organization is committed to providing all consumers with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one consumer by another consumer. Conduct by consumers that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, the organization will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior. Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all consumers, employees, and volunteers. See the appendix for definitions of Bullying.

Employees and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees and volunteers, other adults, or Consumers to the Senior Pastor who can be reached at 609-705-0697.

## Physical Contact

Our organization’s physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting consumers, employees and volunteers. Our organization encourages appropriate physical contact with consumers and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards consumers will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<p>Contact initiated by the consumer such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a consumer to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Allowing consumers, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer’s lap</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a consumer outside of accepted and documented medical treatments</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the consumer or the employee or volunteer</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that is outside authorized and documented personal care assistance.</li> </ul>

## Verbal Interaction

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to consumers in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Employees and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with consumers. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with consumers. Our organization's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions include but are not limited to:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li><li>• Strength-based conversations</li><li>• Self-disclosure as a supervised therapeutic tool by licensed clinicians, medical professionals, and pastoral counseling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving consumers in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</li><li>• Secrets</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming, belittling</li><li>• Oversharing personal history</li><li>• Derogatory remarks</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate consumers</li><li>• Derogatory remarks about the consumer or their family</li><li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li></ul>

## **One-on-One Interactions Between Employees, Volunteers, and Consumers**

One-on-one interactions with consumers should only occur under authorized circumstances. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the organization clearly communicates expectations for employees and volunteers and gives examples of appropriate behavior when authorized one-on-one interactions occur. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are authorized, employees and volunteers should observe the following guidelines to limit the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

- Meet consumers in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical interactions and/or affection during one-on-one interactions at all cost.
- If physical interactions occur, ensure appropriate physical and verbal interactions align with this organization's established policies and are limited to the task at hand. Immediately share the nature and extent of physical interactions that occurred during the one-on-one interaction with an appropriate member of the Pastoral Staff after the interaction has ended.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by, or is in camera view.
- Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a consumer and encourage them to randomly drop in or pass by the interaction.
- To the extent possible, ensure one-on-one interactions occurring behind closed doors are scheduled in advance, occurring in a room with windows or glass in the door, and/or are communicated to your supervisor.
- Ensure one-on-one interactions are documented, especially if behind closed doors. Keep documentation of these meetings (such as in shared calendar, case notes, etc.) and share with your supervisor.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including physical interactions, disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted or that made you uncomfortable.

## **Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy**

This organization strongly encourages employees and volunteers to refrain from electronic communication and/or social media use with consumers, this organization offers the following guidelines:

- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from making comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.

- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from posting inappropriate pictures or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- This organization monitors its social media pages and removes any posts that violate the organization's policies for appropriate behavior.
- This organization informs parents/guardians of any such prohibited posts or online behavior.
- Employees and volunteers are encouraged to have "private" profiles so that consumers do not have access to their private information.
- Employees and volunteers should keep communications professional in nature and limit discussion to programmatic purposes.
- If a consumer reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult or child, the employee or volunteer must report this information to a Pastoral Staff member and child protective services or law enforcement immediately.
- Employees and volunteers may choose or be required to include a supervisor or the organization in their direct communications with a consumers.
- Parents/guardians may request in writing that a consumer not be contacted through any form of electronic communication or social media by the organization.

### **Mandatory Reporting Requirements for Employees and Volunteers**

All employees and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. Employees and volunteers are trained to know and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. Employees and volunteers will:

1. Be familiar with the symptoms of abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse;
2. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect against abuse;
3. Report suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws; and
4. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

## **Requirements for Cooperation with Investigations**

This organization takes every allegation of abuse or misconduct seriously and will fully cooperate with authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse or misconduct. Employees and volunteers shall cooperate with any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization.

Cooperation with investigations includes, but is not limited to:

- Promptly acknowledging and responding to requests for information;
- Making oneself available for meetings with investigating officials;
- Providing full, accurate, and truthful information;
- Keeping confidential information learned or transmitted during the investigation, unless directed by legal authorities, and
- Preserving relevant information and documents.

An employee or volunteer's failure to cooperate with an investigation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from the organization.

## **Overnight Activity and Field Trip Policy**

Overnight activities and residential settings can present unique risks to consumers and employees and volunteers. Overnight and residential settings often involve changing clothes; consumers of different ages interacting in a more intimate atmosphere than regular program activities; more unstructured and novel activities; and increased opportunities for a consumer to avoid supervision and for employees and volunteers to be distracted.

### **Supervision Guidelines for Overnight Activities**

- All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the Senior Pastor. Include a written/structured schedule of events.
- Employees or volunteers are expected to observe overnight activities regularly and randomly on a scheduled and periodic basis.
- The Senior Pastor or Ministry Director should appoint a "lead" employee to supervise the overnight activity. A meeting with all employees and volunteers should be conducted to discuss the unique risks of overnight trips, unique elements of the specific overnight trip, and to review the specific policies and procedures that apply to the overnight activity.
- Provide parents/guardians with written information about the overnight activity. Information should include the location, duration, and type of activities to take place during the overnight. All parents/guardians must sign a permission slip for their consumers to attend the overnight activity.

- Determine the appropriate employee-to-consumer ratios before the event and schedule employees accordingly. Consider increasing the employees needed for supervision depending on the overnight activity details.
- Meetings with the group should be hosted in open and observable areas; meetings should not be hosted in employee or consumer rooms.

#### **Overnight Activities at a Facility**

- Authorized areas within the facility must be clearly defined and explained to the consumers.
- Assign each employee to a specific group of consumers to supervise. Each employee should then maintain a roll sheet that lists consumers in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the overnight activity.
- Assign employees to high-risk areas in your organization's facility, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, etc. If it is not possible to assign specific employees to these areas, assign specific employees to conduct periodic facility "walk-throughs".
- With regards to sleeping arrangements, separate the male and female consumers into separate rooms and post employees at the entrances and exits to these rooms. If this is not feasible, separate males and females by as much space as possible.
- When performing room checks, employees should always go in pairs.
- For overnight activities where sleeping is not part of the activity (i.e. a lock-in), require at least three employees to stay awake overnight.

#### **Overnight Activities Away from the Facility**

- Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited unless approved by the administration.
- Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the consumer.
- Assign each employee/volunteer to a specific group of consumers to supervise. Each employee/volunteer should then maintain a roll sheet that lists the consumers in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the event.
- If in a cabin type setting, the employee/volunteer should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of consumers sneaking out (such as by the door).
- In hotel rooms, assign consumers to rooms based on gender and age. Employees/volunteers should not share rooms with consumers. If employees/volunteers must share rooms with consumers, employees/volunteers must have their own beds and never change in front of consumers.
- All employees/volunteers are to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

### **Transportation Policy**

All transportation provided by the organization will be conducted by an employee or volunteer who has received written approval from the administration to participate in such activities. The employee or volunteer must possess a valid Drivers License and be covered by the organizations auto-insurance policy when utilizing organization equipment or vehicles. In

cases where an employee or volunteer utilizes a vehicle not owned or operated by the organization: The employee or volunteer must have a valid Driver's License; the vehicle must have a valid vehicle inspection, vehicle registration and auto-insurance policy. The employee or volunteer must comply with the JSBC Staff Handbook section 4.12 "Use of Ministry Equipment and Vehicles".

## **Crisis Management**

Crisis – defined as any occurrence that harms a consumer, threatens the public reputation or immediate financial integrity of the organization, or that may create a situation of legal liability to the organization or its directors or officers. Examples include allegations or incidents of suspected abuse including consumer-to-consumer abuse, arrest of current or former employee or volunteer for child pornography, etc.

### **Key Crisis Management Objectives**

- Prioritize consumer protection and safety.
- Be proactive, timely, transparent, accurate, consistent, and unified in the messages presented internally and to media, stakeholders, and the public.
- Maintain strong relationships with various stakeholders.
- Evaluate the organization's policies and protocols and demonstrate to stakeholders and public how the organization is evolving to correct past challenges and improve the organization's safeguarding efforts.
- Prepare for a potential crisis year-round, not just when one occurs.

### **Prior to Allegation/Incident**

- Determine who from the organization will be on the Crisis Management Team.
- The Crisis Management Team will decide if the incident requires the retention of legal counsel.
- In circumstances requiring legal counsel, counsel will have the authorization to provide exemption or exception to these policies.
- Educate all employees and volunteers on what to do if someone alleges current or historical abuse involving a consumer, employee, or volunteer of the organization.
- All employees and volunteers should know how to fulfill their duties as mandated reporters.
- All employees and volunteers should be trained on how to complete the appropriate incident forms for the organization.

### **Once Allegation/Incident Occurs Secure Immediate Safety and Minimize Access**

- To the extent possible, ensure the victim-survivor is secure and safe from additional harm or abuse.
- Follow all mandated reporting requirements and contact the authorities as appropriate.
- If the accused person is an employee, follow progressive discipline procedures accordingly. This may involve suspending the accused during the investigation.



- Where applicable, prevent the accused from having further access to consumers until a thorough incident review and/or investigation is completed. Before beginning an internal incident review, verify with local authorities that this will not interfere with their investigation.
- When applicable, notify other employees that there has been a critical incident and the crisis management plan has been activated.

### **Initial Communication Plan**

- Designate a point person to respond to all inquiries from parents/guardians, the media, and other stakeholders. Prepare a short media statement in advance or anticipation of receiving a media or public inquiry.
- All oral and written communication should speak with a voice of compassion and confidence.
- All employees and volunteers should know how to refer media inquiries to the appropriate spokesperson.
- As soon as possible, meet in person (not over the phone) with identified victim-survivors and their parents/guardians. Reassure them that you are taking the allegation or incident seriously.
- Find out what response they desire and be prepared to explain what support you will offer, such as counseling or therapeutic services.
- The message should communicate:
  - Empathy: Begin by stating that such incidents run counter to your organization's values.
  - Facts: Include a summary of the incident, including information about any suspensions, investigations, arrests, etc.
  - Contact Request. Ask parents/guardians to contact the organization or the specified authorities if they suspect their consumer may have been abused.
  - Your Response: Explain that your organization is fully cooperating with the authorities. Describe proactive steps the organization is taking such as offering resources to individuals, hosting a parent/community meeting, training employees and volunteers, and conducting an independent investigation to learn from this incident so the organization can prevent it from happening again.
- Provide information regarding the proactive steps leadership is taking in response to the incident.
- Describe resources the organization is providing families and give parents/guardians a chance to ask questions.
- Consider reaching out in writing to parents/guardians of all consumers attending your organization or the specific program in which the accused offender was involved or had contact with consumers.
- Host a parent/community meeting to speak directly with concerned families and directly answer any questions before rumors or misinformation is spread.
- Communicate as much information as you can about the incident.
- Provide parents/guardians with information about how to talk to their consumers about abuse.

### **Ongoing Communication and Response**

- Determine how to manage ongoing relations with authorities, parents/guardians, the community, and media relations.
- Consider adding a designated page to your website with updated details about the incident.
- Designate specific individuals in the organization to handle various communications and outreach efforts.

### **Promote Prevention at All Levels of the Organization**

- Educate parents/guardians on abuse prevention information. Offer a workshop during which parents/guardians can learn how to protect their consumers from abuse. This is an educational session that is different from the parent meeting described above.
- Provide a consumer education program to all consumers involved with the organization on how to protect themselves from abuse and how to express concerns.
- Train (or re-train) all employees and volunteers on how to identify and report “redflag” behaviors that do not rise to the level of suspected abuse. This is an important part of the overall response and ongoing prevention effort.

# Appendix

## Definitions of Abuse

Abuse exists when there is endangerment of a Consumer's physical or mental health due to injury by act or omission. Abuse and neglect include the following:

- *Neglect*: includes failure, refusal, or inability on the part of a caregiver, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, water, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the consumer.
- *Physical Abuse*: includes physical injury inflicted on a consumer by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, or great bodily harm. Conduct qualifying as Physical Abuse may include, but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints, pushing, or other forceful physical contact.
- *Verbal Abuse*: includes language that is degrading or threatening, and includes verbal interactions such as name calling, insults, cursing, derogatory remarks, belittling, and shaming.
- *Sexual Abuse*: includes a wide spectrum of interactions with consumers including rape, certain physical assault, sexual battery, physical sexual contact, sexually explicit or offensive verbal communication, verbal sexual harassment, voyeurism, sexually oriented conversations, sexual intercourse or sexual touching of a consumer, sexual exploitation, exposing of genitalia, viewing of sexual activity, or permitting, allowing or encouraging a consumer to engage in prostitution.
- *Emotional Abuse*: includes conduct that reasonably causes harm to a consumer's psychological or intellectual functioning, which is exhibited by emotional damage such as severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggression. Emotional damage may be demonstrated by substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response or learning, which are incompatible with the consumer's age or stage of development. Emotional Abuse includes the following conduct: shaming, humiliation, and cruelty.

## Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- *Verbal bullying*: when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- *Nonverbal or relational bullying*: when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- *Cyberbullying*: the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images;
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person;

- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad;
  - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- *Hazing*: an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
- *Sexualized bullying*: when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

## Roles & Responsibility

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Senior Pastor – Phil Erickson	Review, challenge and provide final approval. Comply with all applicable sections of these policies.
Board of Deacons	Review, challenge, and comply with all applicable sections of these policies
Pastoral Staff	Review, challenge, and comply with all applicable sections of these policies
Employees	Comply with all applicable sections of these policies
Volunteers	Comply with all applicable sections of this handbook

## Review and Approval

<b>Creation of Document</b>	3/20/2024
<b>Most Recent Review of Document</b>	3/20/2024
<b>Approval of Document</b>	3/20/2024
<b>Risk Rating of Document</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Next Scheduled Review of Document</b>	3/01/2025

## Risk Rating Methodology

Each document created by the Church (except for the Constitution) will be given a Risk Rating based on the content of the document and the propensity for the document to require review. The review cadence of all documents will follow the below table:

RISK RATING	REVIEW CADENCE
High	Annually
Medium	Every Two Years
Low	Every Three Years

**1 Corinthians 14:40**