

Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin's Child Protection Policy

Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities which include Camp, Vacation Bible Schools, and Retreats.

Policy Purpose:

Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin (RBC) is committed to providing an environment that is a safe place for children and youth and that will protect them from any abuse when they are involved in RBC related activities. RBC adopts these policies and procedures not only to maximize safety and prevent child abuse from occurring within its church community, but also to guide and protect volunteers and employees from unwarranted allegations of child abuse.

Terms and Definitions

- **Child abuse:** An act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust (even though he or she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens harm to a child's physical or mental health or welfare. Types of abuse may include physical abuse, including physical injury or threat of injury; physical neglect, such as failure to provide necessary care to a child; sexual abuse; mental abuse or neglect; emotional abuse; and spiritual abuse. Child abuse includes, but is not limited to:
 - **Neglect of Basic Need:** A form of abuse. Denial of food, water, cleanliness, clothing, and sleep are not appropriate means of discipline.
 - **Physical Abuse:** Any physical force applied by an adult or older youth in a position of care or authority to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Physical force (hitting, spanking, shaking, shoving, etc.) is not to be used by leaders in our programs.
 - **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual contact or sexual interaction between a child (under the age of eighteen years) and an adult; any use of a child for the sexual simulation of an adult, a third person, or the child; any risqué jokes, innuendo, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome casual touch, unwelcome and inappropriate hugs and kisses, and sexually suggestive pictures between an adult and a child, as deemed inappropriate by any reasonable adult. Even if a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, out of ignorance, innocence, or fear does not resist, it is still abuse.
 - **Emotional Abuse:** Inappropriately belittling, hateful, or angry words and/or actions directed toward a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Discipline by humiliation is also emotional abuse.
 - **Spiritual Abuse:** Using religious references to shame or by guilt to motivate a child into a particular action or behavior.
- **Volunteer/Staff:** Any person who works for salary/wages or as a volunteer with Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin (RBC). This includes any time at camps, retreats, or Vacation Bible Schools.

Volunteers/Staff: Background Requirements

Volunteers working with youth or children in any volunteer ministry of Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin (RBC), will be required to provide, complete, or undergo the following:

- A Volunteer Ministry Application.
- A specific statement that the individual has no prior conviction for child abuse or sexual misconduct; and prior to becoming a volunteer, RBC will obtain a background check for that individual. Every 3-5 years, RBC will perform national criminal database searches and national sex offender registry searches on existing volunteers and each volunteer shall be required to execute any documents that RBC might request for such purpose. Any individual who has lived outside Wisconsin in the last five years may be subject to additional county or state court search. Each new volunteer, prior to beginning any volunteer role, will be required to sign an acknowledgement that he or she has received a copy of the RBC Child & Youth Protection Policy, understands it, and will comply with its terms.
- Each new volunteer will be provided orientation and training on child abuse, including its recognition and prevention.
- Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding related to an allegation of child abuse or neglect MAY NOT work with children and youth with Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin. Refusal to complete the Volunteer Application process or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from volunteer service with children and youth: drug related activity, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy, or abuse of a minor.

General Procedures

- **Supervision:** *Two Leader/Open Door Policy*

Whenever possible, any adult who is present in a Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin (RBC) sponsored activity for children or youth should be accompanied by another adult. RBC employees and volunteers should not, during an RBC program, be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. In order to avoid situations where an individual is alone in a room with children, all children's and youth activities should be supervised by at least two adult leaders. Whenever possible, these adults should be unrelated. The presence of two leaders is to protect children and youth against situations in which abuse might occur, and to protect leaders against false allegations of abuse or neglect. Any area in which programs for children or youth are taking place may be visited without prior notice by staff, parents, or other volunteer workers. No windows may ever be totally blocked so as to prevent visual observation into the classroom. In the event that two leaders cannot be present in the room, such that one leader is alone in a room with one or more children or youth, a door or half door from the room **must be left open**. The leader should not position himself or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway cannot see him or her. Furthermore, at any counseling session with children or youth, the door or half door of the room used **must remain open** for the entire session. The session should be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance. Each classroom for children and youth should ideally have a door with an observation window or a half door, such that the upper half may be kept open. If it does not, and two leaders are not present in the room, then the door must remain open at all times.

Code of Conduct

1. Staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the RBC Child Protection Policy guidelines in all their interactions with children and youth.
2. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable or that disregard their right to say no.
3. Staff and volunteers may not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
4. While supervising children and youth participating in RBC programs, staff and volunteers should know where participants are at all times.
5. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported according to the RBC Child Protection Policy.
6. Staff and volunteers are discouraged from being alone with children or youth.
7. Under no circumstances should volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized by the parent or guardian.
8. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
9. Being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
10. Possessing or using concealed weapons or firearms while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
11. Smoking or use of tobacco *in the presence of* children, youth, or parents while working or volunteering is prohibited.
12. Staff and volunteers should not release children to any adult or family member, including older siblings, other than the child's parent/guardian unless prior written or verbal permission has been obtained from the parent.
13. Profanity, inappropriate jokes and media, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, youth, or parents are prohibited.
14. Staff and volunteer adult and youth leaders shall wear appropriate dress when volunteering with children and/or youth.
15. Staff and volunteers are required to read, sign, and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and will watch the **Keeping Children Safe and Secure** video found on the website.
16. Staff and volunteers are required to report any concerns or suspicions regarding their observations of any individual's interaction with a child. Except for concerns related to alleged or potential abuse, which require specific immediate reports, these concerns may be reported to the individual. If the concerns are not alleviated by a change in the individual's behavior, a second report must be made to the Directors of Rural Bible Crusade of Wisconsin.
17. If it is necessary for an adult to take a child or youth home after an event, all staff and volunteers shall abide by safe driving laws when transporting children or youth. Driving record history shall be obtained on all youth leaders and volunteers. Written permission **MUST** be given by the parent for an RBC staff member to transport them.