

# MARANATHA BIBLE CHAPEL'S PLAN TO PROTECT POLICY

## I. PROTECT THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING: RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

### A. Recruitment and Screening Process

1. Church leaders and/or the Ministry Lead determine if an individual is a suitable, prospective candidate for children's or youth ministry.
2. Prospective ministry personnel are to submit to the recruitment and screening process managed by the Ministry Lead. Individuals will complete the following:
  - Ministry Application
  - Six-month waiting period
  - Signed Statement of Faith
  - Final approval from church leaders
  - Plan to Protect Training
  - Reference checks
  - Criminal background checks
3. Prospective ministry personnel must complete the recruitment and screening process prior to being placed in a position of trust.
4. Ministry personnel who serve children and young people must have a personnel file kept with church records. These files are to be kept permanently.

### B. Qualifications for Ministry

1. All prospective ministry personnel will have regularly attended the church for at least the previous six months prior to serving in youth or children's ministry.
  - a) Exceptions can be made in circumstances when the ministry personnel have transferred from another church of the same denomination. However, they must have been long-time members and children's ministry workers in good standing. Reference checks must be received from at least three individuals, including one from their previous minister or children's ministry director.
2. Ministry personnel serving in children's and youth ministry are members or adherents in good standing who support the doctrines, direction and by-laws or constitution of the church.
3. Individuals that have been convicted of crimes against children and/or young people will not have any involvement in ministries or programs where children or young people participate.

### C. Ministry Application Form

1. Prospective ministry personnel are to complete a Children's Ministry Personnel Packet. Student leaders are to complete the Children's Ministry Personnel Application Form for Students.
  - a) Some individuals may transfer from another congregation unknown to the church leaders. They must include contact information or a reference from a pastoral staff member of their previous church.
  - b) To comply with privacy laws and regulations, the Ministry Application Forms must state the reason for which the information is being collected.

2. Ministry Application Forms are to be kept confidential and available only to the pastoral staff, Ministry Lead and the Plan to Protect Administrator.
  - a) Ministry Application Forms are to be kept on file permanently in a secure location.

**(Please refer to Volunteer Personnel Form #1)**

**D. Reference Checks**

1. Pastoral staff or the Ministry Lead will conduct reference checks on all prospective ministry personnel.
  - a) Prospective ministry personnel must sign a liability release before reference checks are conducted.
  - b) Be sure that the references provided fit within the acceptable categories stated in the Ministry Application Forms for adults and for young people who work with children.
  - c) Reference checks are conducted by telephone, mail or email to confirm the suitability of prospective ministry personnel.

**E. Interview**

1. Personal interviews will be conducted by the pastoral staff or Ministry Lead.

**F. Criminal Screening Checks**

1. The pastoral staff must identify state and local criminal background check procedures.
2. Criminal background checks must be conducted on all ministry personnel serving children or young people.
  - a) Criminal background checks are to be renewed every three years or as deemed necessary by the pastoral staff or Ministry Lead.
  - b) Criminal background checks are to be conducted on all ministry personnel 16 years of age and older. They should be kept permanently on file.

**G. Plan to Protect™ Training**

1. Abuse prevention education and training is required for all ministry personnel serving with children and young people and must be completed prior to ministry placement.
2. Attendance should be taken at training courses and noted in the personnel file for each individual.

**H. Approval Process**

1. All ministry personnel are to be approved by pastoral staff in consultation with the Ministry Lead upon completion of the recruitment and screening process.
  - a) Approval must be signed and dated.
2. The recruitment and screening process must be completed within a three-month period of time.
  - a) Ministry Personnel in process of completing the recruitment and screening process will not be placed in a position of trust.

## **II. PROTECT THROUGH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **A. Supervision of Ministry Personnel**

For the protection of our children, supervision of ministry personnel will be intentional. It will take place through quarterly formal visits and regular informal visits to classrooms and programs by ministry leaders.

### **B. Plan to Protect™ Program Maintenance**

The Plan to Protect Policy will be reviewed at the beginning of each ministry year. This ensures that training, the updating of files, and the physical environment are compliant with policy.

### **C. Teacher / Student Ratios**

1. Classroom settings must comply with established ratios for adults and children at all times. This includes offsite activities and trips. Established ratios are:
  - a) Two ministry personnel for every six infants (birth–18 months)
  - b) Two ministry personnel for every eight to ten toddlers or preschoolers
  - c) Two ministry personnel for every 10 to 12 elementary-age children
2. These ratios do not preclude the need to have two leaders present in a classroom at all times.

### **D. Classroom Staffing**

1. To comply with insurance requirements and to provide adequate supervision for children, a minimum of two unrelated ministry personnel must be present for supervision, except in the event of an emergency.
2. Ministry personnel between the ages of 12 and 16 must be assigned to work alongside another ministry personnel over the age of 16. It is recommended that there be at least a five-year gap between ministry personnel and the children they serve.
3. Ministry Personnel are not to be left alone with a child or young person.

### **E. Occasional Visitors**

Occasional visitors who join a class will have their attendance recorded and kept on file with the classroom attendance for that day. If they have not been screened and approved, they will not be placed in a position of trust with children who are not their own.

### **F. Ministry Personnel Identification**

Ministry personnel will wear visible name tags identifying them to parents, children, and newcomers.

### **G. Child Registration**

1. The names and addresses of children and their parents or guardians will be carefully maintained. They will be updated annually and kept permanently in a central file.
2. A statement will be included on all registration forms which stipulates the purposes and extent for collecting personal information of children and young people.
3. Registration forms will be available for all programs. It is the responsibility of the Ministry Lead or ministry personnel to ensure that forms are completed and submitted

for all participants. Diligent effort must be made to keep registration forms updated and current. Registration forms are to be filed securely.

4. In the case of a visiting child, the adult bringing the child will be considered the guardian for the day. Completion of a Visitor Registration Card will be required.

**(Please refer to Visitor Registration Card #11)**

#### **H. Receiving and Releasing Children**

1. For Babies to Kindergarten Children:
  - a) Receiving and releasing children under the age of six is strongly monitored. A mandatory sign-in and sign-out system is to be used in all children's programming.
  - b) Children are not to be dropped off in a classroom without ministry personnel present.
  - c) Babies and preschool children will only be released into the care of the child's parent or someone designated by the parent, with a signature, security number, or identification card.
  - d) Parents and visitors are not to enter the nursery or preschool classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so.

**(Please refer to Nursery Check in Form # 3)**

2. For Elementary Students - Elementary students should remain in the classroom until the parent or the parent's designee comes to pick them up and the student demonstrates recognition.

#### **I. Attendance**

1. Attendance of children must be taken each time a classroom or program is in session. These attendance records are kept on file permanently.
2. A record will be kept of ministry personnel on duty in each classroom or program. This record is maintained with the attendance records and kept on file permanently.

#### **J. Bathroom Guidelines**

1. Nursery:
  - a) Diaper changing procedures are clearly posted in the nursery diaper changing area.
  - b) Diaper changing is to be done only by an adult ministry personnel and must be conducted within view of other ministry personnel. Do this only if parents have granted permission.
  - c) If possible, it is strongly encouraged that the parents change the diapers.

**(Please refer to Public Notice #1)**

2. Preschool Children:
  - a) Preschool children are not to go to the bathroom alone.
  - b) One of the following will be adhered to when accompanying preschool children to the bathroom:
    - Two ministry personnel will escort a group of children to the bathroom, or
    - One ministry personnel will escort a group of children to the bathroom with one hall monitor appointed to assist with bathroom and security duties.

- c) No ministry personnel will ever be alone with a child in an unsupervised bathroom. They are never to go into the stall with a child and shut the door.
- d) When a preschool child needs assistance in the bathroom, ministry personnel may enter the bathroom stall to assist, under the following guidelines:
  - The outside bathroom door must be propped open and the adult must stand in an open stall doorway.
  - Ministry personnel will take into consideration the privacy of the child.

3. Elementary Children:

- a) Elementary boys and girls through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are not to be sent to the bathroom alone. Ministry personnel will escort the children to the bathroom and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. Ministry personnel should then remain outside the bathroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the classroom.
- b) Children in Planet 456 should not be sent to the bathroom in groups.
- c) Ministry personnel are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised bathroom. They should never enter into the stall with a child and shut the door.

**K. Architectural Precautions**

When churches plan to renovate or build, it is recommended that they keep the following suggestions in mind as they design children’s classrooms.

1. Doors and Windows:

- a) Install door windows and interior windows with clear sight lines in classrooms where programs for children and young people are held.
- b) Install half doors in rooms for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers.

2. Bathrooms and Washing Facilities:

- a) Build bathroom facilities in preschool rooms with windows in the bathroom door.
- b) Consider installing child-sized toilets in preschool rooms.
- c) Designate bathroom facilities for the sole use of children.
- d) Plan to install sinks in classrooms.

3. Nursery Facilities:

- a) Have nursery doors secured from the inside.
- b) Have windows in the doors to nursery sleeping rooms fitted with a radio transmitter into the adjoining room.
- c) Cover all electrical outlets with outlet plug covers.

**L. Health & Safety Guidelines**

- 1. Ministry personnel are encouraged to become certified and trained in First Aid and CPR.
- 2. Ministry personnel will be notified on the registration forms regarding children and young people with severe allergies. The information will be available in the children’s and youth departments for easy access.

3. Illness: A child who is ill and could therefore expose others to illness is not to be received into the nursery or classroom. Factors and symptoms to consider are:
  - a) Fever, unusual fatigue, irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat.
  - b) Children with a known communicable disease.

**(Please refer to Public Notice #2- Health Criteria for Children’s Ministries)**

4. Medications:
  - a) Ministry personnel are not to give or apply any medications. Parents are to be contacted and should administer all medications.
  - b) Medication is not to be left in a classroom.
  - c) For extreme cases in which Epi-pens or puffers are needed for allergies or asthma, written instructions are to be provided by the parent or guardian to the Ministry Lead. Requests should be written, signed, dated, and filed permanently. Only those who have been trained should administer the Epi-pen or puffer.

5. Infection Control Procedures:

The CDC has established a set of standard precautions for handling blood or bodily fluids to minimize the risk of spreading infectious diseases. These are adapted for children’s ministry areas at the church.

The guidelines are to be followed by any workers, whether paid or volunteer, with actual or potential exposure to blood and bodily fluids. Bodily Fluids include saliva, spit, urine, feces, nasal discharge, and discharge from open skin sores, sweat, and tears.

**(Please refer to Policy A - Infection Control Policy)**

6. Emergencies:
  - a) Church leaders will review emergency evacuation procedures semi-annually. These procedures are to be posted in a visible place in each classroom, showing the planned route of escape to the nearest exit.
  - b) Church leaders, in cooperation with the Ministry Lead, will arrange for annual fire and evacuation drills.
  - c) A first aid kit will be kept in each ministry area.
  - d) A parent will be contacted when an injury, accident or medical emergency occurs.
  - e) Incident reports are to be completed for any and all accidents. Injuries are to be reported to the Ministry Lead.

**M. Special Events and Overnight Policy**

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities, to plan social activities, and to involve their students in field trips and service projects. However, precautions need to be taken with these activities.

**(Please refer to Policy B - Special Events and Overnight Policy)**

**N. Proper Display of Affection**

1. All touch must be done in view of others

2. Appropriate Touch - Recognizing that children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love, touching children will be age and developmentally appropriate. We encourage ministry leaders to:
  - a) Hold a preschool child who is crying
  - b) Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears
  - c) Hold a child's hands when speaking, listening, or walking him or her to an activity
  - d) Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior
  - e) Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed
  - f) Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
3. Inappropriate Touch - Recognizing that the innocence of children must be protected, ministry leaders will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:
  - a) Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you
  - b) Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling
  - c) Do not hold a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child
  - d) Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in cases of diapering and assisting preschoolers as outlined in bathroom policies)
  - e) Do not carry school age children and do not allow them to sit on your lap
  - f) Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child or young person

#### **O. Computer Use, Internet and Social Media**

1. Children are not permitted to use church computers.
2. Communication with children 6<sup>th</sup> grade and under is prohibited with the following exception: Ministry Personnel may communicate with children via email with written parental permission, and copying parents/guardians on all emails.
3. Ministry Personnel will not initiate contact with children via text or using Social Media.

#### **P. Photography and Video Taping Policy**

1. Ministry Personnel must abide by the following guidelines:
  - a) Parental permission will be secured on an annual basis on the registration forms.
  - b) No photographs will be posted on Facebook, Instagram, or other online social networks without parental permission.
  - c) Photographs of children/young people will only be posted on the church's Website with written parental permission and will not be named or tagged.

### **III. PROTECT THROUGH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: YOUTH PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

#### **1. YOUTH MINISTRY PERSONNEL STANDARDS**

##### **A. Lifestyle**

1. For the protection of our young people, ministry personnel are to be committed to maintaining a consistent spiritual life. This includes prayer, Bible reading, attendance at youth events, planning meetings, and worship services.
2. Ministry personnel are to be role models of integrity at all times. Ministry personnel are to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and biblically questionable.

##### **B. Contacting Opportunities**

1. Ministry personnel are encouraged to meet with young people in small group settings and in teams.
2. The Ministry Lead must pre-approve the conducting of any one-on-one mentoring, with the information being documented and filed. (Names of the mentor and the youth.)
3. One-on-one mentoring must be done in public settings and only under the following conditions:
  - a) Written parental permission is granted.
  - b) Separate transportation is arranged or parental permission is given for ministry personnel to transport.
  - c) Ministry Lead will periodically check in with mentor.
  - d) Mentor will not be alone in a vehicle with a youth of the opposite gender.

##### **C. Open Door Policy**

Ministry personnel working with young people will not have a one-on-one or a small group meeting behind closed doors. It is required that the door remain open or that the meeting take place in a room with an unobstructed window in the door.

##### **D. Physical Contact**

1. Ministry personnel are aware of what constitutes appropriate touch:
  - a) One-arm hugs
  - b) Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
  - c) touch on the back or shoulder
2. Ministry personnel must refrain from inappropriate touch at all times:
  - a) Extended hugging
  - b) Sitting on laps
  - c) Kissing
  - d) Touching of thighs, knees, or inappropriate parts of the body
3. Ministry personnel must be cognizant of conduct that could be misinterpreted:
  - a) horseplay
  - b) tickling
  - c) extended backrubs



## **E. Dating**

Ministry personnel working with young people will not pursue a dating relationship with a student.

## **2. YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMMING**

### **A. Plan to Protect™ Program Maintenance**

A strategy for program maintenance will be developed and reviewed at the beginning of each ministry year to ensure training, the updating of files and the physical environment are compliant with policy.

### **B. Ministry Personnel Staffing Ratios**

1. Programs for young people must comply with established staffing ratios as follows:
  - a) Middle school events – Two ministry personnel for every 16 students
  - b) High school events – Two ministry personnel for every 20 students
  - c) Overnight/Offsite events – Two ministry personnel for every 10 students
2. To comply with insurance standards, there must be at least two unrelated ministry personnel at all events, except in the event of an emergency.
3. Overnight events with mixed genders must be accompanied by both male and female ministry personnel.
4. It is recommended that there be a five-year age gap between ministry personnel and the young people they serve. Any exception to this must be approved by the Ministry Lead.

### **C. Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Forms**

1. At the beginning of every ministry year, all young people must submit completed Youth Ministry Registration Forms, signed by their parents or guardians. These forms are to be photocopied, and originals maintained and filed permanently.
2. The Youth Ministry Registration Forms will not replace specific consent and authorization forms for activities that involve an elevated risk or for overnight trips. Off-site consent forms will be required and copies of all off site consent forms will be taken on all off-site trips and outings in case emergency medical assistance is required and the parent cannot be notified.
3. A release and permission statement will be included on all registration forms releasing the church from unforeseen and accidental damages.
4. A statement will be included on all registration forms which stipulates the purpose and extent for collecting personal information of young people.

### **D. Transportation**

1. Our first concern in transportation is the safety of our young people. Drivers must obey all the rules of the road including the speed limits. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.
2. For church-related activities, it is preferred that parents both drop-off and pick-up their young people at the event location.

3. All ministry personnel drivers transporting young people during church activities must complete the following prior to the event:
  - a) Be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead.
  - b) Provide a copy of their valid driver's license.
  - c) Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance policies.
  - d) Have had a minimum of five years of driving experience.
4. The number of occupants in the vehicle will not exceed the number of seatbelts. Seatbelts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
5. Trips and Offsite Travel Form will accompany the group with originals left in the church office and filed permanently. The forms consist of:
  - a) Names and numbers of all participants
  - b) Location of event and contact numbers
  - c) Drivers and vehicles involved

**(Please refer to Form #12 – Trips and Offsite Travel Form)**

#### **E. Computer Use, Internet and Social Media**

1. Youth are not permitted to use the church computers unless supervised by an adult.
2. Communication with young people 13 years of age and older via Social Media, emails, telephone, and texting is permitted under the following conditions:
  - a) Communication with young people via email, text, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or other online social networks will be used only with written parental permission that is on the Youth Ministry Registration Form #6.
  - b) Ministry Personnel may communicate with young people aged 12-13 via email with written parental permission, agreeing to copy all emails to parents/guardians.
  - c) Ministry Personnel may contact young people aged 13–17 via text or Social Media with written parental permission.
  - d) Ministry Personnel will limit their online communication with young people via Social Media to daytime hours (8:00 am–9:00 pm).
  - e) Online communication will not involve video messaging (FaceTime, Skype, etc.) in any form, unless it is a training post or group conference call approved by a Ministry Lead.
  - f) In the rare occasion that a conversation with a young person moves beyond what is appropriate or causes safety concerns, Ministry Personnel will notify their Ministry Lead immediately and submit a copy of the conversation to the Ministry Lead who will then take appropriate action.
  - g) Church members, adherents and Ministry Personnel are encouraged to demonstrate and model purity, integrity, transparency, and accountability with all communications including those noted above.

## **IV. PROTECT THROUGH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: REPORTING AND RESPONSE**

### **1. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Hearing of an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse/Maltreatment**

The following policies outline the recommended procedure and sequence for reporting suspected abuse/maltreatment cases.

1. For the protection of our children and young people, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse/maltreatment against children and young people will be taken seriously.
2. Upon hearing of potential abuse/maltreatment or allegations of abuse/maltreatment to a child or young person, the ministry personnel should complete a Suspected Abuse/Maltreatment Report Form documenting all pertinent information. The victim should not be asked leading questions. No one else, including the accused, should be contacted while completing the Suspected Abuse/Maltreatment Report Form. All forms must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel. **(See Form 5 – Suspected Abuse Form)**
3. Any allegations of the abuse/maltreatment of a child or young person must be reported to the proper authorities. The senior pastor, children’s pastor, or youth pastor should also be notified.

#### **Abstract of Sections from Article 6, Title 6, Social Services Law Section 412. Definitions**

##### **1. Definition of Child Abuse**

An “abused child” is a child less than eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for his care:

- 1) inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child serious physical injury, or
- 2) creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical injury, or
- 3) commits sexual abuse against the child or allows sexual abuse to be committed.

##### **2. Definition of Child Maltreatment**

A “maltreated child” is a child under eighteen years of age whose physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his parent or other person legally responsible for his care to exercise a minimum degree of care:

- 1) in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or
- 2) in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship; or
- 3) by unreasonably inflicting, or allowing to be inflicted, harm or a substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment; or
- 4) by misusing a drug or drugs; or
- 5) by misusing alcoholic beverages to the extent that he loses self-control of his actions; or
- 6) by any other acts of a similarly serious nature requiring the aid of the Family Court; or

7) by abandoning the child

#### **B. Reporting an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse/Maltreatment**

1. Any person, including, but not limited to, ministry personnel, who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child has been abused/maltreated must immediately report the matter to the appropriate agency in your state or to law enforcement. Reporting must be done orally by telephone or in person. **NYS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-342-3720**
2. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances may be in violation of the law and found to have committed an offense. They may also be subject to discipline action in the church.
3. In any and all allegations or suspicions of abuse/maltreatment that may have happened in the context of church ministry or a church member or attendee was the alleged subject:
  - a. The senior pastor or his designee must notify the church's insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse/maltreatment case.
  - b. The church will notify and work in conjunction with denominational leaders
  - c. The victim's parents must be notified by the senior pastor or by church leaders.

#### **C. Assessing and Investigating an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse/Maltreatment**

1. No persons, including church leaders, should assume the function of assessing, substantiating or investigating the need for intervention or interpretation of suspected child abuse/maltreatment.
2. The church and its individuals must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse/maltreatment has been filed with the Department of Social Services or law enforcement.

#### **D. Protecting Confidentiality and Dignity of the Victim and the Alleged Subject**

1. During the process of reporting and response, all ministry personnel will be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.
2. Situations of abuse/maltreatment must be handled forthrightly, with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality. Discretion must be observed, and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation. Confidentiality for the suspected victim and the accused must be protected.

### **2. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS**

#### **A. Spiritual Response and Counsel for the Victim**

1. For the protection of our children and young people, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse/maltreatment will be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care. The suspected victims will be treated with dignity and respect.
2. If requested, Church leaders will provide a list of resources for individual care and counsel both for the abuse victim and his/her family.

## **B. Biblical Response and Discipline for the Accused or Convicted**

1. The accused is to be treated with dignity and respect. If the accused is a paid ministry personnel, that person will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed
2. It is the responsibility and right of church leaders to exercise and practice church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18 and as stipulated in denominational guidelines.
3. Anyone accused of abuse/maltreatment to children or young people will be prohibited from having involvement in any ministry involving children 18 years or younger until they are cleared of any and all charges.
4. Anyone convicted of child abuse/maltreatment will be prohibited from involvement in any ministry involving children 18 years or younger. Church leaders may designate an individual to be responsible to be informed whenever the convicted person attends church activities. The designee will accompany the convicted person while on church property. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual that lists restricted activities and areas of the church that he/she is not permitted to do or use respectively. They will be prohibited from access to areas of the church designated for children or youth ministry.

## **C. Media Relations**

1. Public statements must be well-prepared and presented under the guidance of legal counsel.
2. It is the responsibility of the church leaders and senior pastor to designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the church to media and to the public in relation to a suspected child abuse/maltreatment case. All inquiries should be directed to this spokesperson. Comment should not be made by other individuals unless given permission to do so.

## **D. Ongoing Investigation**

1. Full cooperation must be given by all parties to civil authorities under the guidelines of legal counsel.
2. Until advised by legal counsel, church leaders and individuals should neither engage in denial, minimization, or blame, nor admit responsibility which could prejudice the case or cause increased liability to the church.
3. A confidential follow-up report with conclusions and action taken must be documented by the senior pastor, children's pastor, or youth pastor following a report of abuse/maltreatment. This report should be placed in a confidential ministry personnel file and kept permanently.
4. Children and youth ministry departments will inform others of any ongoing investigation strictly on a need-to-know basis.

All volunteers who work directly with **children/youth** must be familiar with Maranatha Bible Chapel's Plan to Protect Policy and related appendices.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this policy and understand that I, as well as those working under me, must follow these guidelines.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please sign and return this page to your Ministry Lead.**