



Cross Lanes Baptist Church

Our Kids First

A Question and Answer Pamphlet on the Background Check Component of Cross Lanes Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy

"Our Kids First" The name has a two-fold meaning. We chose this name because of the love Christ has for kids and the importance He placed upon them. Second, the name stresses the servant attitude we all need to maintain toward our young people. We must put self-asunder, according to Christ's example, and place the best interests of the next generation of Christ's church at the forefront. This is more important now than any time previously in our Nation's history. Our kids face more unique challenges to day than at any time before.

One key component of our policy is to assure that **each and every person working with kids under the age of 18 submits to a criminal background check every two years** to assure they lack any prior convictions involving a minor. We understand this request will spawn many questions. In this brief pamphlet, we have tried to anticipate those questions and briefly respond to them.

First, on behalf of our entire Church, and especially the little ones, let us extend our **deepest appreciation** and gratitude to you for serving in our student and children's ministries. Your service mimics Christ's own willingness to sacrifice His precious time and comfort to bestow a blessing on kids who visited with Him. Second, at the end of the pamphlet, there is a brief form to fill out and return to the Church Office permitting the brief check to be conducted.

Who is responsible for the decision to conduct background checks?

The background checks were approved by the Congregation, at a Congregational Business Meeting. The recommendation to require the checks was made by the Deacon Body, the Bible Fellowship Leadership Team and the Children and Preschool Ministry Teams.

Is it really necessary to require these checks?

25% of all children will be sexually assaulted in some form before their 18th birthday. Most involve non-violent incidents at the hands of someone familiar with either the child or the parent. Our State has over 1700 registered sex offenders, some of whom are even former pastors. Further, the overwhelming majority of our State's sex offenders currently reside in Kanawha County. One reason for this is that sex offenders routinely gain access to their victims by becoming involved in volunteer activities that will make kids available to them. The predators are aplenty and, unfortunately, our kids and our Church, are targets.

Who gets to see the results of the background check?

The Pastoral Secretary will conduct the checks. The results will be maintained in a locked file.

What company assists us and what is their reputation?

The company is called *Protect My Ministry*. The company is located in Tampa, Florida. With thousands of ministries served across all fifty states they are committed to helping faith-based organizations maintain a safe environment. Their processes, products and solutions have made *Protect My Ministry* the industry leader for church background checks. To learn more you can visit their web page at www.protectmyministry.com.

What would disqualify a person from service?

We are not interested in speeding tickets or other, minor traffic violations. *Rather, we are concerned only with felony convictions involving a minor or major motor vehicle offenses if driving a church vehicle.* If such a conviction is found, the person will be informed and removed from service with our kids or prohibited from driving a church vehicle. If a felony conviction involving a minor is found, we will also assure their name appears on the WV State Police Sexual Offender Registry as required by law.

Once I consent, how long will it take to perform the check?

In most cases the check will be performed as soon as possible. The results are instantaneous in most cases. Sometimes, it will take a couple of days depending on software.

Will you inform me of the results of my check?

The only individuals who will be informed of the outcome of their checks are those who have been found to have a prior conviction involving a minor. If you would like to know anything that appears on the check, however, the Pastor will make a confidential copy of your report available to you upon request.

I had a background investigation performed by my employer. Can I just use that one?

For consistency sake, we will need to re-perform the check. The databases used by employers for this purpose vary greatly in quality. *Protect My Ministry* has a very comprehensive database, with consistent results, and we need to apply the same standards to everyone to assure fairness. Should the threat of litigation ever arise, the Church is best protected by a comprehensive and consistent policy that applies across the board, without exceptions.

What if I feel offended you would even ask to search my background?

Please do not take this policy personally or treat it as a lack of trust in either your character or abilities. The search process is meant to provide the highest level of protection for our kids. It is our sincere hope everyone will take a servant attitude, putting pride aside and the interests of our children first. Consider the alternatives to not doing the checks. First, should an incident ever occur, the witness of our Church, intact in the community for nearly six decades, would very quickly evaporate. We thus need to take every reasonable measure to protect our hard-won efforts over the year to demonstrate Christ's love and integrity to our community. Second, in this day and age, one can expect many parents to understandably be concerned about leaving their children in the nursery with strangers. This policy will provide an added comfort for those parents that we take child protection very seriously.

What might happen to our Church if an abuse allegation is made?

There are many terrible consequences to be suffered by a body of believers when allegations of this nature are made. The two recurring results, however, are (1) the threat of litigation; and (2) the sometimes irretrievable damage to the Church's witness in the community. Lawsuits, usually filed by the child's parents, have alleged, among other things, that churches were negligent for hiring the offender, in supervising the children, and in failing to take proper steps to protect the child victim. Legal defense in a sexual abuse lawsuit can be extremely costly and prolonged—whether the suit is successfully defended or not. Where negligence is proven, judgments have sometimes been large. Beyond the financial consequences, a sexual abuse lawsuit can have a major effect on a church's reputation. It would also lead to considerable distraction from our ministry in the community.

Do other nonprofit organizations do these checks?

If you applied to teach in our State, you could not set foot in the classroom prior to being fingerprinted and checked through the FBI. The same rule applies to athletic coaches in our schools. We are asking no more of our wonderful volunteers than is asked of many public employees on a daily basis.

How do I give you the authority to do the brief check?

There is a permission slip attached to this pamphlet which will allow the Pastoral Secretary to perform the brief check. Please sign it and turn it back in to the church office. The church's office address is 108 Cadle Drive Cross Lanes, WV 25313. We will need this permission slip prior to you working with any of our students or children.

Thank you for your servant attitude and agreeing to let us complete this process.

God Bless You.



Consent to Perform Background Check

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Maiden Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Birthdate: _____ Driver's License or State ID: _____

Email Address: _____

I am a volunteer worker with the Cross Lanes Baptist Church and have been advised that the church conducts a criminal history background check. I do hereby consent to the Church's use of any information provided on this form or in the Church's records in performing the criminal history check. The church has informed me that I have the right to review and challenge any negative information that would adversely impact a decision to let me volunteer. In addition, I have been informed that I will have a reasonable opportunity to clear up any mistaken information reported within a reasonable time frame established within the sole discretion of the Church. Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, I have been advised that upon request I will be provided the name, address, and telephone number of the reporting agency as well as the nature, substance and source of all information.

_____ I agree to submit to a background check **every two years** as I serve with minors at Cross Lanes Baptist Church.

Signature

Date