

## Supplement 04

### Interview Guidelines

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**Interview:** An interview is a time to be face to face with the potential employee or volunteer. Direct questions about prior jobs and volunteer service may be helpful. It is also a time for you to educate the applicant about your church, ministry areas, and safety policies and practices. You should ask the potential employee or volunteer if they have any questions or concerns about the safety policies and practices. The applicant's reaction may be a helpful indicator of the level of buy-in the applicant has regarding the safety policies and practices. See Interview Guidelines.

Predators look for soft targets. By addressing the safety policies and practices in an interview, your church will send a clear message about the value the church places on keeping people safe from abuse. At the same time, you are learning more about the potential employee or volunteer and whether they are a good fit from the perspective of beliefs, background, safety, experience, demeanor, and responsibility.

It is best to ask open-ended questions in an interview.

#### SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Please consult an employment attorney in your community/area to review the language of your application and interview questions. Make sure the application and interview questions are in keeping with the State of Alabama Employment Laws. Your church should ensure that your practices do not violate the laws of Alabama.

- **What makes you desire to serve with our organization?** Be aware of answers that focus on the applicant and what they gain from the situation rather than on serving the children. Answers such as, "Working with children makes me feel fulfilled," may be a red flag. Follow up to see if they have the children's interest at heart or if they are seeking to have their own interests fulfilled by working with children.
- **Is there an age group of children you prefer to work with? If so, why?** Are they willing to work with any age group or sex? Do they have a preoccupation with a specific type of child? If they have a specific group in mind, follow up and ask, "Would you be willing to work with a different age-group?"
- **What sort of supervisors do you work well with and what sort of supervisors are difficult for you?** Do they express a desire for independence and a distaste for oversight?

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- **Have you reviewed our child protection policies? What did you think of them?**  
Applicants who do not believe the policies are necessary or who communicate a hesitancy to abide by the policy may not be child abusers but they are also less likely to be vigilant in keeping children safe.
- **Is there anything in your past we should know about as we consider you for this position?** Though someone with accusations or criminal behavior in the past may not share, it is helpful to ask and communicates to a past offender that you will be vigilant in protecting the children in your care.
- **Would anyone be concerned about you working with children or students? Why or why not?** Like the question above, this gives them an opportunity to share concerning information with you, but also communicates you will be vigilant about protecting the children in your care.
- **What would you do if a student expressed to you a hesitancy to be around another employee or volunteer or a dislike for that individual?** You could use a number of other scenarios in place of this one. What you are looking for in offering a scenario like this one is the applicant's response to potential concerns and awareness of grooming. Children will often make a partial disclosure or make a small comment to see if an adult is safe to disclose the abuse to. A question like this allows you to see how an applicant would respond and to train applicants to recognize grooming or partial disclosures if they do serve with your organization.
- **One day, you walk through the hall and find a child alone with a teacher in a classroom behind a closed door. When you come in, the teacher says that the child was misbehaving and needed to be corrected in private. Nothing appears to be going on that is inappropriate. The teacher says they are ready to rejoin the others. What would you do?** This scenario allows you observe if the applicant will follow the policies and procedures you have in place. If there is a disregard for observing policies and procedures, that attitude will put children and students in your care at risk.
- **You notice bruises up and down the legs of one of your students. When you ask what happened the child gets teary eyed and says his dad whipped him. Under or policies, would you report this to the authorities?** If the candidate says he wouldn't report it right away but would investigate the matter, speak to the father, or otherwise fail to follow your mandated reporting policies, he or she is not a good candidate.
- **What do you like to do with your free time?** This question allows you to get to know the applicant. Do they have adult friendships? Do they have other interests besides working with youth?

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During the interview, it is helpful to have at least two trained personnel interview the applicant. This allows for multiple things to happen at once: asking questions, observing non-verbals, listening to answers, recording responses, and having more than one person's assessment. Watch for inconsistencies or evasive responses in the interview that could indicate defensive behavior or deception.

As either part of the written application or a written portion of the interview, review key parts of your policy, and have the applicant affirm and initial the applicant's commitment to and awareness of policy. Some examples of statements for the applicant to review, initial, and ascribe to are:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received and read a copy of (the church's) child protection policy.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will protect children/students and will never engage in any behavior that is dangerous or will harm them physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will immediately report any inappropriate behavior that I observe or hear about regarding children/students and violations of the child protection policy.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will report any known or suspected abuse that I observe or hear about to church leadership and government authorities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will abide by all terms of the child protection policy, and if I have any questions, I will ask for clarity.