

# **SAMPLE**

## **(Church Name)Church Child Protection Policy**

### **General Purpose Statement**

(Church Name) Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the practices described below, our goal is to protect the children of (Church Name) Church and young visitors from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” includes all persons under the age of 18 years. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

### **Selection of Workers**

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

**a. Six Month Rule**

No applicant will be considered for any position involving contact with children until she/he has been involved with (Church Name) Church for a minimum of six months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

**b. Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at (Church Name) Church.

**c. Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for which the individual is applying.

**d. Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant’s references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at (Church Name) Church.

#### **e. Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- Those who will be involved in our school/preschool/day care center, if any;
- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of children; and,
- Those having occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as church/temple sponsored athletic team coaches and vehicle drivers).

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Session of (Church Name) Church on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at (Church Name) Church.

#### **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom must remain open and there must be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

#### **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at (Church Name) Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, he/she must immediately report it to the pastor and/or Session of (Church Name) Church for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at (Church Name) Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the procedure below shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse of misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and (Church Name) Church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. (Church Name) Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The company insuring (Church Name) Church will be notified, and one or more church representatives will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The Clerk of Session will be the spokesperson for (Church Name) Church to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church must refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

7. Any person who is not found innocent [why not say guilty?] of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

## **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors must remain open unless there is a window in the door or a window beside the door that affords a good view of the space. Doors are never to be locked while the room is occupied.

## **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14;
- Must be screened as specified previously;
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

## **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children below Third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a “child check” for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the “child check” in order to sign the child out from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the “child check,” <FILL IN> will be contacted. <FILL IN> will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

## **Sick Child Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all the children at (Church Name) Church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted and requested to pick up the child for the day.

## **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of (Church Name) Church NOT to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with <FILL IN> to develop a plan of action.

## **Discipline Policy**

It is the policy of (Church Name) Church NOT to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with <FILL IN> if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

## **Restroom Guidelines**

Children age five years and younger should use a classroom restroom if one is available. If a classroom restroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway restroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the restroom alone. The workers should check the restroom first to make sure that it is unoccupied, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, a worker should open the restroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, workers should prop open the restroom door and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over age five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the restroom first to make sure that it is unoccupied; then, allow the children inside. The worker should remain outside the restroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a restroom with the door closed and never be in a closed restroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the restroom prior to each class.

## Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under the church's care, the steps below will be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

## Training

(Church Name) Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers or anyone who comes into contact with children, and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

## Employee/Worker Acknowledgment

I have read this Child Protection Policy and understand its content.

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Employee/Worker's Name

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Date