

Lakehoma Church of Christ

Safe Place Policy and Procedure Handbook

WELCOME

Welcome to the Children's and Youth Ministry volunteer teams of Lakehoma Church of Christ. The Staff and Elders are excited about your gifts and skills, and we look forward to your service here at Lakehoma Church of Christ.

Your willingness to join our team and help fulfill the mission of Lakehoma Church of Christ is a great gift to our church family and community. Thank you for choosing to give your time and abilities to serve God as a volunteer with our ministries.

PURPOSE

The pages of this handbook provide an overview of policies and guidelines that Lakehoma Church of Christ has established for its Children's and Youth Ministry volunteers. In order to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for our ministry participants and to minimize the ministries' and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be closely adhered to. It's not possible to anticipate all situations that might arise in ministry or provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, the church will modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy or provision, as necessary or appropriate. At all times, the church will seek to comply with all applicable laws.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this manual, please talk with the Children's Minister, Youth Minister, or an Elder. If this person doesn't know the answers at that time, he or she will find the information you need and get back to you in a timely manner.

BELIEFS

Our beliefs and convictions concerning our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ set us apart from the world. These are some of the truths that we hold:

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and His death on the cross and resurrection on the third day reconciled us to Him, His blood poured out for the forgiveness of our sins. (*1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Colossians 1:19-20; John 3:16; Matthew 26:28*)

All scripture is divinely inspired by God. His word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:105*)

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but we are also justified by His grace through our faith in Jesus Christ. We are undeserving of the gift of grace that has been given to those of us who believe. (*Romans 3:21-25*)

Through our repentance and acknowledgement of our sins, and our baptism (immersion) into Christ,

we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are justified by the beliefs of our hearts, and are saved by the confessions of our mouths. (*Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-6, 10:9-10*)

The church is Christ's Body, it is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, and it exists to save the lost and to nurture and facilitate growth to those who have been saved. (*Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; 3:10-11; 4:12, 16; Colossians 1:18; Jude 23*)

It is our desire to follow the command to make disciples of all nations, so that all may hear the Good News of Christ. (*1 Corinthians 15:10; Matthew 28:19-20*)

Jesus Christ will return to take his children (the body of believers) to be with Him in eternity. (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Volunteers

Lakehoma Church of Christ follows these policies when inviting volunteers to serve in the Children's or Youth Ministries of the church. Under certain circumstances the Staff and Elders of the church may choose to alter any requirements listed in the policy on a case-by-case basis.

1. Potential volunteers must be a member of the church for six (6) months before they can serve with children, youth, or special needs. In some cases, as determined by staff or elders, potential volunteers may serve *with* an approved volunteer before that time commitment is reached.
2. Potential volunteers can express their willingness to serve via personal contact with the Children's Minister or Youth Minister or through the Ministry Involvement Form. A conversation will then take place with the appropriate staff member to determine the best place for one to volunteer based on his/her skills, talents, experience, and spiritual gifts.
3. Potential volunteers who apply to work with children, youth, or special needs will complete and return a Consent for Background check form prior to involvement and a volunteer application. A criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency. All information related to criminal background checks will be held in strictest confidence. Information from these forms will only be viewed by those individuals involved in the determination of eligibility for volunteers and will be kept in a secure file in the church office.
4. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person may result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry or volunteer position with the church.
5. Student volunteers must be at least 14 years of age to meet the requirements of an officially approved volunteer.
6. Student volunteers under the age of 14 years old may serve in the Children's Ministry programming, but they will be assigned and scheduled as an additional helper alongside

approved adult and older student volunteers. These classroom helpers will be given permission to serve on a case-by-case basis.

7. Potential volunteers must read and adhere to Lakehoma Church of Christ's Safe Place Policy and Procedure Handbook.
8. The Children's Minister, Youth Minister, and Elders retain the option to deny and/or reassign the volunteer even if all other requirements are met.

Background Checks

As stated in the Volunteer Application Process, all volunteers at Lakehoma Church of Christ who work with children, youth or volunteer to help at a children, and/or youth event must consent to a background check screening procedure. The background check form will be provided by the church office. Lakehoma Church of Christ will cover the cost of this background check for all prospective volunteers.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Introduction

Our desire at Lakehoma Church of Christ is to draw people to Jesus. This includes our youngest children to our oldest youth who attend our church. We take our responsibility to care for our church family very seriously. These policies are intended to provide a safe and nurturing environment where both participants and volunteers can come to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. It's important for volunteers who work with children and youth to see themselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in the ministries and programs of our church. Our policies are designed to protect each individual and promote a safe and healthy learning environment.

Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for the children and youths in affiliation with Lakehoma Church of Christ programs and activities must agree to follow these policies. They represent minimum requirements. Leaders of individual programs may develop additional guidelines or recommended practices as appropriate to the ministry setting.

Check-In / Drop-Off / Pick Up (Birth-6th Grade)

Check-In Procedure – All children ages birth through 6th grade will be required to be registered at the Check-in Desk or Self Check-In Kiosk prior to entering their Bible Class. Children will be given a nametag. Children ages cradle roll through 1st grade will be given a nametag with a security code and parents will be given a security receipt.

Drop-Off Policy – Children shall never be left in a classroom without the teachers present. This is the responsibility of the parents.

Pick-Up Policy – Parents of children in the nurseries as well as the infant class through 1st grade must be picked up by a parent at their classroom. Security receipts must be presented to teachers.

Injuries or Illness

1. Volunteers who are ill (including those who have a fever, cough, sneezing, or other symptoms of a communicable disease) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity until well and no longer infectious.
2. A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
3. Children/youth/special needs students who are clearly ill should not be allowed to be dropped off by parents at the classroom.
4. Children/youth/special needs students should be returned to a parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to a parent or guardian. The preferred method for accomplishing this is by moving the student to an empty area of the room.
5. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids of any kind.
6. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a volunteer or child/youth/special needs student will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
7. Volunteers or children/youth/special needs students who have received an injury, which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The children/youth/special needs student's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when they pick up the injured person.
8. Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with the worker's coordinator/supervisor. 911 should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

Restroom Policy

Children

1. Only volunteers approved through our application and policy agreement may take children to the restroom.
2. For children ages two through 5 with restrooms in the classroom, volunteers should assist children only if they ask. A volunteer should never be alone with a child in the restroom with the door closed. Volunteers should encourage parents to take their children to the restroom before class begins.
3. For children ages Kindergarten and 1st grade, volunteers will take children to the restroom in groups whenever possible. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe, and then

wait outside the restroom until the children come out. If a volunteer has students in the restroom area, the entrance of the door should be propped open.

4. Volunteers should not touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
5. Volunteers must always avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Youth

1. Students in 2nd-12th grades will be allowed to visit the restroom on their own.
2. A volunteer should never be alone with a youth in the restroom with the door closed.
3. If it is necessary for a volunteer to accompany students to the restroom, the entrance of the door should be propped open.
4. Volunteers must always avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Classroom

Precautions

1. Doors will be left open or security windows left uncovered so the view into a classroom remains unobstructed.
2. Nursery changing tables in classrooms shall be in view of all nursery workers.
3. Wires, cords, audio/visual devices will be installed and managed correctly.
4. Electrical outlet covers will be used in the downstairs Children's Ministry area.

Staffing and Supervision

The Children's Minister or Youth Minister will approve teachers and other volunteers. All volunteers will be assigned and/or trained by the appropriate leadership prior to their active involvement with students.

For the safety of students and for the protection of volunteers, every effort will be made to have at least two (2) adults* present in each classroom, exceptions can be made in classes where one adult teacher is present if the following **additional requirement** is met: _____

1. There are no less than three (3) individuals present in the room. At least one must be a screened adult and the remaining two no younger than 5 years of age. Supervisory staff will routinely check on classrooms. Parents are encouraged to check on their children's classes, but should do so in a discrete way so the flow of the class isn't disrupted. Staff members, Children's and Youth Deacons, or Elders may visit any classroom and discreetly observe at any time.

Discipline Policy

The goal of our church's Children's and Youth Ministries is to foster a sense of both fun and learning. Often, discipline can be handled by redirecting the child or teenager to a more constructive use of time and energy. Keeping the learning environment active and fun will usually eliminate the need for a lot of discipline.

However, children and teenagers must also understand that sometimes it is necessary to follow a leader's specific instructions to keep the environment safe and fun for everyone involved. It's important not to disrupt classroom times because that takes away from the experience of fellow students.

When "discipline" is necessary, all interaction will carefully consider a child or teenager's integrity and fragility. All children/youth/ will be treated with gentleness, respect, and understanding. Physical punishment will never be used. Grabbing or shaking a child/youth can injure them and therefore should not be done.

If the classroom teachers and other volunteers are unable to control a child/youth after repeated attempts, the following steps will be taken.

1. The child/youth/ should be taken to their parents.
2. If the parents cannot be readily located, then they may speak with the Children's Minister or Youth Minister. He/she will discuss the incident with the child. Parents will be informed of the situation as soon as feasible.
3. Any occasion that requires a child or teenager to be removed from a classroom/event for the safety of the child/youth and others will be documented and kept in a secure file in the church office. The Children's Minister or Youth Minister should also be called at that time. Parents will be informed of the situation as soon as feasible.
4. If an incident arises that requires that a child or teenager be physically restrained for the safety of the child/youth or others, the safety team and/or 911 will immediately be called. Volunteers should make every effort to not physically engage a student who is placing others in an unsafe environment. The Children's Minister or Youth Minister and Elders will be notified, and the incident will be documented and kept in a secure file in the church office. Parents will be informed of the situation as soon as feasible.

If a child or teenager injures other children/teens or does anything to affect another child/teen in a negative way, the incident will be discussed with the child/teen and the parents will be informed of the behavior. The teacher and the Children's Minister or Youth Minister, along with the child's/youth's parents, will decide whether the child/youth will be allowed back into class or if further action should be taken. Expectations or boundaries determined from these actions will be clearly communicated to the parents and the child/teen.

Visitor Open-House Policy

If a visitor would like to attend a Bible class or immediate local event such as a devotional for the purposes of evaluating our church as a potential place of attendance, the following minimum requirements must be met:

1. Approval by the Children's Minister and/or Youth Minister.
2. General Visitation Information Sheet.

Events

Supervision

Volunteers in the Children's and Youth Ministries must practice the "2-adult rule" in relation to different ministry events. When serving at a church event, every effort will be made to have two (2) approved adult* volunteers all times, unless the following additional guideline is met:

- I. One approved adult volunteer may be sufficient if no less than three (3) individuals are present at all times. At least one must be a screened adult and the remaining two no younger than 5 years of age. One approved adult may be sufficient for small groups meeting in an open area and in the proximity of another supervising adult.

Permission and Medical Forms

All Youth participating in youth programs must have a Medication Consent Form on file. These forms will be kept on file for the year with the church. Completed forms will be brought on all youth off site events by the adult leader. A Trip Permission Form will be filled out and handed in for any offsite overnight trips.

Overnight Event

Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is a clean, safe environment provided for sleeping, showering, bathing, dressing and all other aspects of being away for a period of time. Adults must always respect the privacy of youth and each other. Likewise, youth must respect the privacy of adults and each other.

When the youth group includes both males and females, and stays overnight, both male and female adults must be present. (This also applies to overnight stays at Lakehoma Church of Christ)

Sleeping areas and access to bathroom facilities should be segregated between males and females. Every sleeping unit (hotel room, dorm room, cabin, tent, etc) should have either two adults of the same gender as the youth, or no adults assigned to it. In the rarest of cases when only one adult is available, the sleeping unit must have at least two youth of the same gender as the adult. Adults are not allowed to share a bed with a youth unless it is their own child. If absolutely necessary, beds may be shared by youth of the same gender. If separate bathroom facilities are not available, times for male and female and youth/adults use should be scheduled and posted prominently. Room assignments will be given ahead of time and be subject to parent approval.

When one room is used for sleeping, youth and adults of the opposite gender will sleep an appropriate distance apart as determined by the adult in charge.

Both youth and adults shall wear appropriate sleeping apparel.

In booking hotel rooms, reservations should be made, if possible, with all rooms on the same floor or location in the hotel. Adjacent rooms allow for enhanced supervision and safety.

No youth(s) should be allowed to leave the premises without authorized and appropriate adult supervision.

Curfews must be established and adhered to by all participants.

Exceptional Situations

Only under the rarest and most unusual circumstances should an adult be alone in a car, room, or other accommodation with a youth. This might include a case where a youth is ill or in a bona fide medical emergency. In this case, the adult should make every effort to enlist the help of another youth or adult to be present and assist. Note however, the welfare of the youth takes precedence and whatever action is necessary and appropriate must be taken.

If there is a unique need for an adult to talk with a youth in private, the adult should choose a quiet place that is in plain, public view. Examples of this may include open areas around the church (courtyards or hotel lobbies if on a trip), short walks down a sidewalk, a restaurant or other location where people are present in the area.

Vehicle Supervision

Drivers must practice the “2-adult rule.” When driving for a church event, every effort will be made to have two (2) approved adult* volunteers in the vehicle with students at all times, unless the following additional guideline is met: One approved adult volunteer may be in a vehicle if no less than three (3) students are present at all times.

Drivers must

1. Be at least 25 years old
2. Have a valid Oklahoma driver’s license, qualified for the vehicle being operated.
3. Have no record of convictions for the past ten years for DUI, driving with a suspended or revoked driver’s license or reckless endangerment.
4. Have proof of insurance
5. Ensure vehicles are not filled beyond capacity for their use, that seat belts are always secured.
6. Follow all local, state, and federal vehicle and driving guidelines.

Additionally, volunteers should keep watch over those in their car until all have been dismissed directly to an authorized person. Volunteers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person.

**If the two adults assigned to a volunteer position are married to each other, a third volunteer shall also be present in order to meet legal recommendations.*

Intern Supervision

While employed by Lakehoma Church of Christ, Interns are considered members of the ministry team but are subject to the leadership and guidelines set forth by the Children’s Minister, Youth

Minister, and Elders. Interns will be required to complete the Children and Youth Safe Place Training.

Due to the nature of their employment, the following items are highlighted for emphasis:

- Interns will not be allowed or insured to drive the vehicles owned and operated by Lakehoma Church of Christ.
- Interns may transport students in their personal vehicles to events with the express consent of the individual's parents and the Children's Minister or Youth Minister. Interns should never transport a single student on their own. The "2-adult rule" must be practiced.
- Interns are subject to all policies set forth for approved Lakehoma Church of Christ Volunteers.

General Safety Standards and Emergency Guidelines

Lakehoma Church of Christ strives to ensure an environment where members and visitors of all ages feel safe and secure.

General Guidelines

Volunteers should strive to follow these guidelines at all times:

1. Serve using good and common sense safety practices.
2. Refrain from unsafe acts that might endanger yourself, those around you, or the people you serve.
3. Use any safety devices provided for your protection; for example, use disposable gloves when changing diapers in the nursery and replace electrical outlet safety covers when outlets are not in use.
4. Report any unsafe situations or acts immediately to the appropriate Staff Member or to an Elder.

In addition, please note the safety guidelines in the following specific areas:

1. Fire Prevention
 - a. Turn off electrical equipment when not in use.
 - b. Notify the church office of any equipment that has cracked or exposed wiring, is causing a shock or emitting sparks, or appears to be a potential fire hazard.
2. Fire Emergency
 - a. Familiarize yourself with the locations of fire exits, alarms, and extinguishers in the areas of the church where you regularly serve.
 - b. If you see smoke or fire, pull the fire alarm to alert people in the building. If it's a small fire, use a nearby fire extinguisher.
 - c. If evacuation is called for, use the closest unaffected exit. Guide the group you're working with to walk in single file and to proceed quickly and calmly. Do not run.
 - d. If you and your group encounter smoke, stay low.
 - e. Move as far away from the building as possible for your safety and make room for emergency vehicles.
 - f. Keep your group/class grouped together until every child and adult within your group

has been accounted for. Check-In Coordinators or Children's Minister/Youth Minister will have those role sheets and distribute them. If there is someone missing from your group/class, then notify appropriate Staff or Emergency Personnel.

3. First Aid

- a.** First aid supplies are located in many areas of the church building.. Volunteers should also become familiar with the locations that also contain basic First-Aid Kits.

- i.** First-Aid Kit Locations

- 1.** Downstairs Workroom in Education Building
 - 2.** Kitchen
 - 3.** Church Office
 - 4.** When you use supplies from a First-Aid Kit, please notify the church office so they can be replaced as needed.

COMPLAINTS

If a student or parent makes a complaint regarding a teacher or other volunteer, the Children's Minister or Youth Minister will review the incident and discuss it with the volunteer involved. Parents will be notified of any actions (such as additional training, leave of absence, and or dismissal) that result from the complaint.

RECORD KEEPING

- 1.** An attendance list should be kept for all of the ministry's overnight functions with children or youth. The date of the function, along with the names of all participants and coordinators/supervisors should be recorded.
- 2.** A written incident/notice of injury should be prepared by volunteers whenever an injury should occur during a ministry function using the "Incident/Injury Report Form." The incident report should be forwarded to the worker's coordinator/supervisor promptly upon completion.

SUSPECTED, WITNESSED, OR ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

Recognition

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action, or lack of action, which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. For the purposes of this policy, a "child" is anyone under the age of 18 years or abuse of an adult with a disability.

Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

1. Physical Abuse: Any physical injury to a child, which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns or biting. It also includes a parent or caretaker's failure to protect a child from another person who has perpetrated abuse on a child.
2. Emotional Abuse: Emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, persistent teasing or constant family conflict.
3. Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between two children when one exerts power over the other, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, penetration or external touching of a child's intimate body parts, incest, exposure to pornography or manufacturing child pornography and performing sexual acts in front of a child for personal gratification. Sexual abuse also includes the willful failure of a parent or caretaker to make a reasonable effort to stop sexual abuse by another person.
4. Neglect: Depriving a child of their essential needs to the extent there is harm or risk of harm to the child's health or safety. This may include lack of supervision, lack of personal hygiene, lack of adequate nutrition that places the child below their normal developmental level, insufficient shelter or clothing and lack of necessary medical or dental care.
5. Different forms of abuse can take place in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuse may be an adult, an adolescent or another child.

Precautions and Prevention

The church will maintain these precautionary policies to prevent abuse from occurring within our programs and to respond in the best way possible if such an event happens beyond our control:

1. Completed records of criminal background checks and screening procedures should be kept for five (5) years after a volunteer completes their time of service.
2. The church will be prepared to show the precautions it takes with every volunteer who serves in areas where abuse could occur.

Reporting Requirements for Suspected, Witnessed, or Alleged Child Abuse

Lakehoma Church of Christ will practice a zero-tolerance and mandated reporting policy concerning child abuse in any form. Any suspicion for, witness of, or accusation of abuse will be taken very seriously. Volunteers serving children, youth, or special needs have opportunities to become aware of abuse or neglect of those in our care. In the state of Oklahoma, all persons who work with minors and the disabled are considered "mandatory reporters" of suspected abuse. That means not only church staff and leadership, but volunteers as well as interns, are directed by law to make an official report to state authorities.

All parents and volunteers will be informed during training events that the laws of the State of Oklahoma require all suspicion for, witness of, or accusation of abuse be reported to either the Department of Children's Services or the Police.

Volunteers or employees who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with a ministry activity will immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation.

Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform a ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation and will complete an "Incident/Injury Report Form."

Any ministry leader who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant will ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred.

Suspected or Witnessed Child Abuse – Policy & Procedures

The following outlines what steps shall be taken if you suspect or witness abuse in the life of a child involved with our church programs and activities:

Individuals suspecting or witnessing abuse shall report their observations as soon as possible to the appropriate Ministry Staff member.

The Ministry Staff member shall report the circumstances by contacting local authorities, including the Department of Family and Protective Services or the Police. The Staff member and the individual witnessing or suspecting the abuse will complete a written report at the time of the contact. Both persons will sign the document as testimony the report was made. The documentation will be kept in a secure file in the church office. The Eldership will be immediately notified of the situation.

Further action and steps will be determined by the Ministry Staff and Elders in full legal cooperation with local authorities, as deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

These steps also apply to all Ministry Staff Members and Elders making an accusation of abuse.

Allegations of Abuse – Policy & Procedures

An accusation of child abuse can occur in any church, no matter how many precautions it takes. We must always be prepared to listen to and hear any allegation of abuse. The following policies help us address situations of this nature with respect to all those involved. Like many policies listed in this handbook, we can't anticipate every possible situation and will amend or update these policies as needed.

The church will adhere to these policy requirements when an allegation of abuse occurs:

1. All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and reported in accordance with legal requirements.
2. Situations will be handled immediately, yet with due respect to people's confidentiality and privacy.
3. Appropriate care will be given to victims.
4. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of the organization.
5. The Elders of the church, church's legal counsel, insurance company and any organizational entity to whom the organization has a duty to report such allegations shall be informed of any report made.
6. After the required report is made, any conversations with any party involved in the alleged abuse case will be documented in written form, signed by the participating parties and kept in a secure file in the church office.
7. Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be investigated by the Children's Minister or Youth Minister and appropriate deacons/ministry leaders.
8. The alleged abuser will not be considered "guilty" or treated as such until an investigation can take place. During the process, prudent precautions will be taken and documented to prevent the alleged abuser from further exposure to any church-related ministry activities involving minors. Ministry Staff, Elders, and Volunteers shall not detail the event to those not involved with the incident. No one involved should engage in denial, minimization or blame.
9. The focus of the church leadership will be to provide effective pastoral care for the victim, the alleged abuser and both of their families. The purpose of this care is to provide an environment of spiritual, emotional and relational safety for the entire congregation.

The church will care for all persons involved by these means:

1. Get proper assistance for the victim and accused.
2. Reach out to the victim and accused; if the accused is a volunteer, the church will temporarily relieve him or her of duties until the incident is resolved. A volunteer who is determined to not be guilty of the alleged misconduct or abuse may still be reassigned or relieved of their previous position, depending upon the circumstances and the incident's resolution. Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from circumstances in which any potential for abuse might occur or from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with the church's employment practices).
3. Monitor the congregational response to the event. The Ministry Staff in conjunction with the Elders will – as prudent or necessary - provide guidance and discreet, appropriate communication about the event, including the need for any teaching, counseling or training that may arise in response to the event.

Any person who is found guilty of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children, youth, or the disabled within the church. The church will consult with legal counsel for advice if termination of employment is indicated.

A single church leader will be designated as spokesperson following notice of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation and (to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation) will convey only such information as necessary under the circumstances.

VIOLATIONS OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Volunteers and employees must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.

Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all volunteers and employees and will remove individuals from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the individual poses a potential threat to others.

PERIODIC REVIEW, CONFIDENTIALITY, & SAFE PLACE TRAINING

Periodic Review

This policy and procedures will be conveyed for review annually to all volunteers, coordinators, supervisors, and leaders to whom it applies. A renewal application will also be completed every three years by all volunteer workers associated with the church who will be working in any capacity with children and/or youth.

Should the renewal application show that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children, youth, or the disabled, they will be immediately removed from their current position, and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children, youth, or the disabled.

Confidentiality

Working as a volunteer in Children's Ministry and/or Youth Ministry means that you will come in contact with privileged information at times. Confidentiality is a critical issue in the spiritual life of a church family. Commonly referred to in the New Testament as gossip or slander, the damaging breach of confidentiality is condemned by Jesus and Paul as indicated in Matthew 15:17-20, Romans 1:28-32, 2 Corinthians 12:19-21, and 1 Timothy 5:12-13.

When confidences are broken, relational, emotional, vocational, and even spiritual damages are likely to follow. Sadly, often the greatest offenses of breaking confidences happen among well-intentioned people.

Therefore, to follow God's will with integrity and unity, it is expected that every volunteer strive to maintain confidentiality.

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INCIDENT/INJURY REPORT FORM

Reason for report

Date of incident _____ Class

Name(s) and Age(s) of Minor(s)

Quote the child's first words verbatim:

Briefly describe what happened:

What action did you take?

Has the incident been resolved? _____ Yes _____ No Explain:

Were there any witnesses? _____ Yes _____ No Names:

Signatures of witnesses (if possible):

Report submitted by: _____ Date

Report submitted to:
