

New Life Community Church
Child Protection Policies and Procedures

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The New Life Youth and Children's Ministries departments are committed to providing a safe, secure, and loving environment for all children who are left in the care of staff, teachers, nursery workers, and other volunteers within the church. Policies will be written for the following three reasons:

1. The safety and security of the children
2. The safety and protection of the staff and volunteers
- 3 The safety and security of the church

The responsibility to provide a safe environment includes recruiting and training volunteers, providing proper supervision, maintaining a safe facility, caring for the specific needs of children, and safeguarding against child abuse. All of these issues are included in this policies and procedures document. It is important to realize that the elder board will act on behalf of the congregation and shall be the final arbiter of all questions of doctrine, discipline, policy, property, and matters of faith and practice whatsoever.

I. Staffing In Youth/Children's Ministries

A. All volunteers in New Life's Children's and Youth Ministries must demonstrate a regular attendance pattern for a minimum of three months before becoming eligible to volunteer, and must meet the following requirements:

1. Application

An application must be filled out by all adults that work in any teaching, leadership or volunteer role within Youth/Children's Ministries.

2. Reference Check

Two personal references will be requested on the application. These references should exclude relatives and include one reference from outside the church. One reference must be a person other than the parent of a child who has been under the volunteer's care, ministry or leadership. Each reference will be contacted by phone or mail and a record of the results will be kept on file.

3. Background check

a. A criminal records/background check will be done on all adults who apply to work in Youth/Children's Ministries who will be teaching on a regular basis. Adults who are on a rotating schedule every 6-8 weeks will have to work in a classroom with an adult who has been screened.

Items that may result in disqualifying an applicant include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) An arrest, prosecution or conviction for child molestation or a Related offense

(2) A conviction for driving while intoxicated or driving under the influence

(3) A conviction for burglary

(4) A conviction for armed robbery

(5) A conviction for assault and battery or domestic violence

(6) A conviction for embezzlement

b. Applicants must sign a permission form to allow for their background to be done.

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4. Doctrinal Statement

Every volunteer that teaches children or youth will sign a letter of agreement with the doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Free Church.

5. Job Description or Commitment Form (If applicable)

A job description/commitment form will be signed by each volunteer in the Youth/Children's Ministries.

6. Final approval for working in Youth/Children's Ministries will be made by the High School Pastor, Middle School Pastor or Children's Director as appropriate.

B. Each classroom will be adequately staffed by the following standards:

1. There will be a minimum of one responsible adult worker in all classrooms. Children who are in 5th grade and younger must never be left alone in a classroom without an adult present except in the case of an emergency.
2. It is recommended that the door to the classroom remain slightly open during teaching times, or a window be placed in the doors so that the class is visible at all times, especially when only one worker is in the room.
- 3). Teens 12 to 17 years old should only care for children with an adult 18 years or older. The only time that 2 or more teens can care for children without an adult present is when a program or activity that requires childcare and the parents must remain on site.

II. Child Abuse: Symptoms, Prevention and Reporting Procedure

A. As defined by the "National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse" there are four types of child abuse which include:

1. Physical Abuse--non-accidental injury which may include the following signs:
 - a. Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or abrasions.
 - b. Unexplained injuries such as a patch of hair missing, a limp, etc.
 - c. Wears long-sleeved tops during the summer months to cover bruises on arms.
 - d. Verbal testimony or prayer requests.
 - e. Extreme aggression or withdrawal.

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2. Neglect- the failure to provide a child with basic needs including food, clothing, education, shelter, and medical care. Symptoms include:
 - a. Child is inadequately dressed for inclement weather.
 - b. Child is dirty and smells or has bad breath, hair falling out or lice.
 - c. There are unattended medical needs.
 - d. Child is malnourished and constantly hungry.
 - e. There is a lack of supervision or abandonment.
3. Sexual abuse-- the sexual exploitation of a child by an older person which is done for sexual gratification, out of a need for power or for economic reasons. Symptoms include:
 - a. "Acting out" of sexual behavior.
 - b. Torn or bloody underclothing.
 - c. Venereal disease.
 - d. Discomfort when sitting.
 - e. Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area.
 - f. Difficulty with urination.
4. Emotional abuse-- a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self worth. Parents of these children use the following tactics to abuse their children:
 - a. Constant criticism, belittling, insulting, and manipulation.
 - b. Do not give love, support or guidance.

B. Prevention of Child Abuse Allegations within the Church

1. All workers within Youth/Children's Ministries will carefully follow the staffing procedures as written in this policy.
2. Workers are never allowed to be completely alone with a child behind closed doors. If a child needs to be talked to alone, he or she must be taken to a location where both the worker and the child can both be seen by other people.
3. The "appropriate touching" policy will be followed by all workers within the ministry. This policy is as follows:

Children may be hugged, given "high-fives", you may place arm around shoulder, or hold hands. At no time may a child be touched on or near a sexual organ, on or near the buttocks. Spanking is not allowed.
4. Restroom guidelines --parents should take children to the rest room prior to each class or service. If children must go to the restroom during class, teachers must follow the following procedure:
 - a. Teens are not allowed to assist children in the rest room, except in babysitting situations as outlined in Paragraph I B 3 above.
 - b. Only women should assist girls or boys in the rest room. In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting children in using the restroom.

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- c. It is advisable for each group to have a scheduled restroom break where they can go as a group.
 - d. Nursery: The diaper changing area should be located where at least one other worker can view the changing procedure.
 - e. Toddlers-4 years: Children may use the restrooms within the Toddler and 2-year old classrooms. Ask the child if they are able to go alone-- if so, the teacher remains in classroom and allows child to go alone. If the child requires assistance, keep the door of the restroom open and make sure there is another worker that can see you as you assist the child. Children 4 and under may use the restrooms within the Toddler, 2's, and preschool classrooms. If the 4-year olds decide to use the restroom down the hall the adult may stay outside the restroom with the door propped. If the child needs assistance they must get help from a paid staff person to assist them. Volunteers should never be alone with the child in an unsupervised restroom and never go into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.
 - f. Four-year olds-- 5th grade: Children may go with a "buddy" of the same sex, and within a short time limit. If children exceed the time limit, an adult must be sent immediately to the restroom. Do not allow groups of three or more to go to the restroom at one time. If an adult does escort children to the restroom they must prop the door open to make sure everything is in order. The volunteer should then remain outside the rest room door and wait for the child before escorting him back to the classroom. Volunteers should never be alone with the child in an unsupervised restroom and never go into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.
 - g. Sixth grade and older may go alone or with a "buddy" of the same sex, and within a short time limit.
5. Whenever possible, if a young person requests spiritual direction, the session should include two adults. However, it is recognized that sometimes students will want to meet one-on-one with an adult. In such cases, the meeting should take place in a secure yet publicly visible environment (such as an office with a window). Young people who require extended one-on-one meetings (especially if this involves special needs outside the young person's spiritual development) should be referred to the pastoral staff, who will evaluate whether a referral to a professional is needed, and/or whether parents should be contacted.
6. Secret activities, clubs and organizations are not authorized.

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7. Youth/Children's Ministry leaders are generally not allowed to transport young people to and from youth/children's program activities. This is the responsibility of the young person's parent. Exceptions may be made for special group car pooling arrangements approved by the church and parents, and in emergencies or special circumstances, where parents are informed and approve in advance, and/or the employee or volunteer notifies another Youth/Children's Ministry leader in advance.
8. No hazings or initiations are allowed in any formal or informal activities of the Youth/Children's program.
9. Adults must respect the privacy of children and youth in showers, bathrooms, changing areas, during camp-outs or overnight trips, etc., and intrude only when health and safety require.
10. Adults should also take care to preserve their own privacy in showers, bathrooms, changing areas, during camp-outs or overnight trips, etc. whenever possible.
11. Alcoholic beverages, drugs and pornographic materials are never appropriate.
12. Young people should not be pressured or forced to participate in any activities, and especially strenuous recreational activities.

C. Reporting of Possible Child Abuse

1. A church worker will report any suspected child abuse to the High School Pastor, Middle School Pastor or Children's Director as appropriate. The "Suspected Child Abuse Report Form" will be filled out. Confidentiality must be maintained by all persons involved in the situation to avoid a possible defamation of character lawsuit by the persons involved. Parents must not be contacted.
2. Suspected abuse will immediately be reported to the pastoral staff that will then confer with a support team consisting of an attorney, District Superintendent and Child Abuse Agency.
3. The elder board, acting on behalf of the congregation, shall be empowered to function as the highest authority and make the final decision concerning the suspected child abuse.

D. Church Worker Accused of Abuse or Molestation

1. The accused party will be presumed innocent until proven guilty. If two adults were present at the time of the alleged incident, one of whom was the accused, and the other adult states in writing that he or she observed no incident to occur, then the accused employee or volunteer shall remain in their volunteer position or as a church employee throughout the investigative process.
2. The church attorney should be consulted and any recommendations made shall be considered by the elder board.
3. The church will keep all interested parties notified of the progress in the investigation and other matters.

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4. If the accused is in fact guilty, then the church will take all reasonable steps to cooperate with law enforcement authorities in any action they may take against the accused.
5. The elder board, acting on behalf of the congregation, shall be empowered to function as the highest authority and make the final decision when an accusation is made against a worker.

III. Special Events and Overnight Policies

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, to plan social activities, and to involve their pupils in field trips and service projects. However, precautions need to be taken with these activities. The safety guidelines outlined below should be followed.

A. Field Trips and Special Events

1. Off-site activities should be pre-approved by the High School Pastor, Middle School Pastor or Director of Children's as appropriate, and parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
2. Parental consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating. Forms must be kept in leaders' possession during trips and events. Consent and release forms may be rescinded in writing by parents or guardians at any time prior to the event.
3. All drivers transporting children during an activity must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. They must also be cleared through a DMV check. Any person driving a 15-passenger van will be required to complete an approved training course (e.g. "Coaching the Van Driver") designed to educate drivers in the particular issues associated with these vehicles. The number of occupants in the vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts. Seat belts must be worn by everyone in the vehicle.

B. Overnight Events

1. All overnight events must be pre-approved by the High School Pastor, Middle School Pastor or Director of Children's as appropriate and written on the church calendar.
2. Parental consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating.
3. There must be at least one approved adult at every event.
4. There should be one adult leader for every 10 children.
5. No medications of any kind will be administered by any staff or volunteers unless a release form has been signed by the child's parents or guardians. All medications must be administered by an adult.

IV. Training of Ministry Volunteers

All ministry volunteers will be trained regarding child safety and child abuse prevention. They will also have additional training in the areas that they are serving. For instance, Awana leaders will be trained according to the area they are serving as well as a CPP training.

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Sunday School teachers will receive ongoing training throughout the year and a copy of this Child Protection Policy and Procedures document will be provided. Each teacher will sign a form stating that they have received a copy of the document.

A. Fire (We will have a fire drill in Children's area at least 2 times a year!)

At the sound of a fire alarm all teachers must proceed as follows:

- Line the children up
- Take the attendance sheets with you if they are easily accessible
- Calmly take your children out the nearest door and meet in the front parking lot
- Take attendance once you arrive and make sure everyone is out of the building
- Wait for further instructions

B. First Aid

1. How to respond:

- If the injuries are severe call 911 immediately.
- Separate the injured or ill student from other children.
- Isolate the area where any blood or body fluid may have dropped on carpet, toys, chairs, etc.
- Keep other children from having contact with the body fluid.
- Locate the universal precaution kit and put on latex gloves.
- Attend to the child as needed using contents of the universal precaution kit.
- Clean the room following universal precaution guidelines. Notify the custodian.
- Wash hands carefully with antibacterial soap.

2. Let the High School Pastor, Middle School Pastor or Director of Children's as appropriate know the details of the injury and the action that was taken to care for the child. Fill out an injury report which will be kept on file. Parents must be notified about what happened to their child.

I, _____ (please print) , hereby acknowledge receipt of the New Life Community Church Child Protection Policies and Procedures, dated _____, and further affirm that I have read, understand and agree to comply with all the provisions of the policy.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

***When returning your signed Child Protection Policy, please include all 8 pages!**

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New Life Community Church
Statement of Faith

We believe...

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
 2. In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross, a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.
 4. That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and, during this age, to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.
 5. That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore, lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
 6. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection provide the only ground for justification salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God.
 7. That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation.
 8. That the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head.
 9. That only those who are, thus, members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
 10. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.
 11. In the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
 12. In the bodily resurrection of the dead: of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.
- Acceptance:

I, _____ (please print) , hereby acknowledge that I have carefully read the New Life Community Church Statement of Faith and do accept and endorse it without reservation.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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