



family ministry handbook

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

Thank you for serving in Family Ministries at Fellowship.

This handbook is designed for all Fellowship Family Ministries, which includes Fellowship Kids, Fellowship Youth, and any additional events within the Family Ministry department at Fellowship.

When you receive this handbook, we ask that you please:

- Read it in its entirety before you begin working with children and youth.
- Connect with your specific supervisor if there is something you do not understand or if you have questions.
- Keep a copy of the handbook nearby for easy reference in case any issues arise.

Comply with the policies and procedures in the handbook consistently. If for some reason you cannot comply, please promptly notify your supervisor.

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1.0

types of abuse

As a Family Ministry volunteer, California law requires you to be a mandated reporter. You will receive an email from our HR Department at Fellowship for a two-hour training that must be completed before you start volunteering.

Below are general definitions of various forms of abuse. These definitions are intended to provide general guidance for the purpose of using this handbook. These definitions are not exhaustive and do not necessarily include every form of abuse that must be reported under California law.

Physical Abuse

An injury that is inflicted by other than accidental means upon a young person, including intentionally injuring a young person.

Sexual Abuse

Any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a young person and an adult or between two young people. This includes any activity meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other young person. Sexual abuse also includes sexual exploitation, which includes preparing, selling, or distributing pornographic materials involving children; performances involving obscene sexual conduct; or child prostitution.

Emotional Abuse

A mental or emotional injury to a young person that results in an observable and material impairment in the young person's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Neglect

The failure to provide for a young person's basic needs or the failure to protect a young person from harm.

2.0

code of conduct with children and youth



THE FOLLOWING POLICIES ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST CHURCH STAFF
AND VOLUNTEERS IN MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT INTERACTIONS
WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, please contact your supervisor.

The church is committed to creating an environment for children and youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from service.

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. The church will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Code of Conduct with Children and Youth outlines specific expectations of the staff and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1

Children and youth will be treated with respect at all times.

2

Children and youth will be treated fairly regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, or age.

3

Staff and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by this handbook.

4

Staff and volunteers will avoid affection with children and youth that cannot be observed by others.

5

Staff and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by this handbook.

6

Staff and volunteers will not stare at or comment on children or youth's bodies.

7

Staff and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with children or youth.

8

Staff and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children or youth.

9

Staff and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on church property or during church activities.

10

Staff and volunteers will not have secrets with children or youth and will only give gifts with the prior permission of a supervisor.

11

Staff and volunteers will comply with church policies regarding interactions with children and youth, even when outside of our programs.

12

Staff and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with children and youth.

13

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with children and youth in a private setting. Including zoom and phone calls. Staff and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual children and youth.

14

Staff and volunteers will not abuse children or youth in any way including (but not limited to) the following:

Physical Abuse:

Hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints

Verbal Abuse:

Degrading, threatening, cursing

Sexual Abuse:

Inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually-oriented conversations

Mental Abuse:

Shaming, humiliation, cruelty

Neglect:

Withholding food, water, shelter

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The church will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one young person by another young person.

In addition, the church will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take the steps needed to eliminate such behavior. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including the following:

Physical Bullying

When one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

Verbal/Virtual Bullying

When someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling or texting other hurtful names.

Nonverbal or Relational Bullying

When one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

Cyberbullying

The intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of

any technological tool, Zoom, group messages, email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs).

Cyberbullying can involve the following:

- Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.

Hazing

An activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.

Sexualized Bullying

When bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all children, youth, staff, and volunteers.

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All staff and volunteers must follow California-specific mandatory reporting requirements. Whenever there is an incident report filled out, volunteers must immediately report suspected child abuse to the Child Welfare Services or law enforcement. It is also recommended that you verbally notify a supervisor and promptly complete or assist the supervisor in completing the Incident Reporting Form attached to this handbook as Exhibit 1 and submit it to his or her supervisor. Staff should be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse or general accident or injury. Staff will:

- Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
- Know and follow church policies and procedures that protect minors against abuse.
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by California mandated reporter laws.
- Pastor will follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

17

Staff and volunteers will report by phone or email concerns or complaints about other staff, volunteers, other adults, children, or youth to a supervisor.

18

The church cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of the alleged abuse. Any staff or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the church or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination or removal from service.

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Every volunteer needs to be fingerprinted via Live Scan as a type of background check. Before you start volunteering, instructions will be given to you for completing the Live Scan. You cannot start to volunteer prior to your Live Scan completion.

If you are coming to shadow a Youth or Kids event and have not completed the Live Scan, you are mandated to wear a lanyard at all times.

3.0 policies

- 3.1 Physical Contact
- 3.2 Verbal Interaction
- 3.3 One-on-One Interaction
- 3.4 Off-site Contact
- 3.5 Electronic Communication
- 3.6 Gift Giving

3.1 PHYSICAL CONTACT

The church's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting minors and staff.

The church encourages appropriate physical contact with children and youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff or volunteers towards young people in the church's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from volunteer service. This now includes making sure children and youth feel safe as it pertains to following the current CDC guidelines of masks, social distancing, and access to handwashing and sanitation supplies.

The church policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate Physical Interactions

- Side hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate
- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands (with children in escorting situations)
- Carrying an infant or toddler when necessary or a minor who is unable to walk or for purposes of safety
- Rocking a toddler or infant to sleep

Inappropriate Physical Interactions

- Full-frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in isolated area
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling
- Piggyback rides
- Tickling
- Allowing a child or youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg
- Any type of massage given by or to a child or student
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child, student or the staff or volunteer
- Compliments relating to physique or body development
- Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

3.2

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to minors in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Staff and volunteers must not initiate sexually-oriented conversations with young people.

Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors.

The church's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions

- Positive reinforcement
- Encouragement
- Appropriate jokes
- Praise

Inappropriate Verbal Interactions

- Name-calling
- Shaming
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children or youth in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers
- Belittling
- Derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children or youth
- Secrets
- Derogatory remarks about the young person or his/her family
- Cursing
- Off-color or sexual jokes

3.3

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a minor. The church aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the parent and supervisor.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, staff should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

Appropriate Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions:

When meeting one-on-one with a minor, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.

Written permission from parent or guardian for one-on-one meeting approved for students under 16 years of age before scheduled meeting time outside of youth programming.

There needs to be two mandated reporters present at all times for one-on-one meetings with a minor.

Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.

Document and immediately report to your immediate supervisor or group leader any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

Approved scenarios include:
More than two students or two mandated reporter adults

Location examples include:
Fellowship Center patio, Starbucks, Yogurtland, etc.

Discipleship and Spiritual Development:

One-on-one situations, such as discipleship and spiritual development sessions, introduce additional risks for false allegations. Staff and volunteers should be aware of our policies regarding discipleship and spiritual development:

Staff and volunteers must have prior approval from pastoral staff for any discipleship and spiritual development meetings.

Discipleship and spiritual development sessions with church youth may not occur outside of the organization.

Supervisors must keep a schedule of discipleship and spiritual development sessions, which should include times, youth involved, and the location of sessions. This must be communicated pre or post-meeting with a parent.

Parents/guardians must be informed and in agreement about the sessions scheduled and the person leading the sessions.

3.4

OFF-SITE CONTACT

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and our church at increased risk.

Children

The church prohibits interactions with children outside of regularly scheduled program activities unless prior approval is obtained by the church's supervisor who coordinates the age-appropriate program.

Youth

The leader must have the approval to have outside contact with youth from the church. However, if off-site contacts are unavoidable (such as during discipleship programs), the church has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.

Appropriate Outside Contact

- Taking groups of youth on an outing (must follow "rule of 3" by having at least two church-screened and approved employees/volunteers or two youth of the church)
- Attending sporting activities with groups of youth
- Attending functions at a student's home with a parent/guardian present

Inappropriate Outside Contact

- All outside contact must be approved by a parent and ministries Pastor.
- Taking one student on an outing without a parent's written permission
- Visiting one student in the student's home without a parent/guardian present
- Entertaining one student in the home of a staff member
- Spending the night with a staff member. Sleepovers are strictly prohibited unless organized by the church for a group activity.

Appropriate Electronic Communication*For children (under 13 years old)*

- Sending and replying to emails, direct messages, or text messages from a child **ONLY** when copying in a supervisor or the child's parent and with parent permission.
- Communicating through "organization group pages" on Facebook or other approved public forums

For youth (13 years and older)

- Conversations via text messaging that are transparent (group conversations). Such messages are not to be deleted and are to be made available for inspection by a supervisor at any time upon request.
- Use of social media such as Facebook and Instagram for public conversation **OR** in groups

Inappropriate Electronic Communication**For children (under 13 years old)**

- Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, degrading or humiliating comments
- Sexually oriented conversations
- Private messages between a child and a volunteer

- Posting pictures of church children on social media or websites without executed releases by the child's parent/guardian

- Posting inappropriate comments on pictures
- "Friending" church children on social networking sites **For youth (13 years and older)**

- Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, degrading or humiliating comments

- Sexually oriented conversations
- Posting pictures of youth on social media or websites without executed releases by the student's parent/guardian
- "Friending" youth on social media sites or apps that delete or do not save the communication between parties

Cell Phone Usage

While working with minors, staff/volunteers are discouraged from using an electronic communications device except if approved by the supervisor for a specific purpose, during approved breaks, emergency situations, or if required as part of the job duty or task assignment such as timer, approved music, and or taking approved photos.

Internet use, text messaging, and/or emailing pictures while assigned to work with minors is discouraged regardless of whether for business or personal reasons. Staff needs to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

Photographs, video, or audio shall not be taken of minors unless approved by a Pastor or in the case of an emergency.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video church minors for personal and/or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of volunteering or removal from service.

Acceptable Use of Cell Phones during Program Hours:

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or church-issued electronic communication devices. However, such use should be limited as much as possible. Certain situations may require more use of electronic devices

3.6

GIFT GIVING

Molesters routinely groom minors by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the minor. They might instruct the minor to keep the gift a secret, which then starts teaching the minor to keep secrets from parents or staff. For this reason, staff and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of minors, and only under the following circumstances:

- The supervisor must be made aware of and approve the gift, also the way in which the gift will be given.
- The only gifts Fellowship is allowed to give are prizes within programming or in group settings.

monitoring and supervision

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- 4.2 Checking Members into a Facility
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When staff and volunteers are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When children and youth are adequately supervised, they too are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. Similarly, the physical premises must be monitored, particularly out-of-the-way locations or locations that might permit an offender undue access to or privacy with a young person.

Effective supervision and monitoring require that a variety of methods be used frequently, at both scheduled and random times.

4.1 FACILITY MONITORING

Building architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, the risk is managed. In order to ensure that all of the locations are properly and consistently monitored, designate a staff member who must complete a site inspection.

Locations that need monitoring - all entry and exit points: hallways, restrooms. Doors must remain open and there must always be a clear view into the space.

4.2 CHECKING MEMBERS INTO A FACILITY

When anyone (attendees, volunteers, maintenance, cleaning crews, etc.) enters the facility during operational hours, they must check in with the front desk or check-in area and have a visitor lanyard and be escorted by a staff member.

When possible, ensure a single point of entry and exit in the facility.

If there is more than one entrance or exit, ensure these other points of access are consistently monitored.

4.3 GENERAL SUPERVISION

Administrative and Supervisory Visits to Children and Youth Ministry Programs

Family Ministry supervisors should regularly visit all programs to ensure that all activities are well-managed and that these policies are observed by all in attendance.

Ratios

Each program will follow the youth to staff ratio requirements:

- 0-1-year-old - 3 kids to 1 Adult
- 2-5 years old - 6 kids to 1 Adult
- 6-11 years old - 10 kids to 1 Adult
- Middle School and High School (12-18 years old) - 10 Kids to 1 Adult
- One on one special needs buddies
- Minors who serve still need an adult in the room to maintain above ratios

The youth-to-staff ratio should be adjusted for programs that serve minors with special needs.

Never have one adult alone with kids in any room. Always have 2 volunteers. If 1 volunteer is alone in a room with kids/youth, the door must remain open and the hallway monitor must remain available to assist at any time. Goal is to move a volunteer to join the room keeping them at a safe ratio and or move the kids and volunteers to another room to join a group.

Mixed Age Groups

In most incidents involving one minor abusing another minor, the minors are from different age groups. Each ministry should provide additional monitoring and supervision of activities that involve minors from different age groups. Staff and volunteers must be aware that close line of sight supervision is required when monitoring programs that mix age groups.

4.4 MONITORING MINORS IN FACILITIES

Children under the age of 12, or below 6th grade, should not be alone in a church facility without a parent or guardian present. By this age, most minors have had the experience of being without immediate parental supervision. In addition, 12-year-old minors are able to use self-protection skills in the event that they are approached inappropriately by another minor or by an adult.

That said, because the program is responsible for all minors in the facility, the following practices must be followed:

Require a parent or legal guardian to complete a new family application

This is our check-in form which includes identifying information, any special medical or behavioral circumstances, any legal indemnifications, the child's date of birth, and emergency contact information.

In addition, require, through parents/guardians, all children to make sure the new form has potty use and training details for them to be aware of.

Sign-in AND to sign-out of the facilities so that the program has a record of the children who are in the facility at all times. The sign-in and sign-out procedure must be done in accordance with the church's checking in/out protocol, which is a policy independent of this handbook.

Before publishing any photos and/or videos of the child, please make sure that we have a signed release form by the parent.

Snack Distribution

Due to allergies of children and youth, we will not allow any outside snacks or drinks in the classrooms at any time for staff and volunteers. If a child brings it in it will need to remain outside on a table or with a parent.

Volunteers will be required to enjoy their coffee/snack in the designated volunteer lounge before, in-between, or after services. The approved snacks for programming are:

- Early Childhood - Gluten-Free snack and water.
- Elementary - Gluten-Free Fruit snacks, extra treats for special events and water. Must post outside at check in all and any food that will be distributed.
- Youth - Pizza, chips, ice cream, candy and water.

For snack bars, all food items are for sale.

While in the facility, minors can be supervised directly, indirectly, or with a combination of the two techniques.

For direct supervision, the program may offer structured, scheduled activities like basketball tournaments, swimming activities, arts and crafts, etc. These activities should have one or more staff and volunteers assigned to lead and supervise.

For indirect supervision, the program must designate certain building areas as authorized areas. Authorized areas could include a gymnasium, a game area, or a classroom for doing homework, and so on. Authorized areas must be easily visible and routinely and systematically checked by staff/assigned volunteers every 5-10 minutes. Children and youth should know that they will be supervised by staff or volunteers at all times, and all staff and volunteers should know which areas are authorized and which are not.

Develop supervision standards for the authorized areas for each facility/ ministry, including in accordance with any policy independent of this handbook. For example:

Determine how frequently authorized areas should be monitored by staff/volunteers. The goal every 5-10 minutes.

Assign staff specific supervision responsibilities over authorized areas. Add an opportunity to download after shift. What did they observe?

Require staff to record when they monitor authorized areas: this may be accomplished by using checklists or tracking on a note.

All program staff should wear name tags or identifying clothing so that the children and youth can easily recognize them as staff/volunteers.

Train all staff, including in accordance with any policy independent of this handbook:

To greet minors that enter the facility; to direct minors to the structured activities or authorized areas; and, to redirect minors who are not in an authorized area or who are not participating in a structured activity.

To be aware of the risks involved with mixing age groups and how to monitor activities involving mixed age groups.

To routinely monitor high-risk areas (such as bathrooms and unused rooms).

Ultimately, all minors must be supervised at all times, regardless of age. The key to remember is that they can be supervised directly in structured activities and indirectly when they are in authorized areas.

4.5 MONITORING HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES

Bathroom Activities

Most incidents of minor-to-minor abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, staff and volunteers must adhere to the following guidelines:

When supervising restroom use, adult staff and volunteers should first quickly scan the bathroom to make sure it is safe and empty before allowing minors to enter.

For "Group Bathroom Breaks"

Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom if one is available.

Staff or volunteers must only take groups of two or more children to the bathroom – following the "rule of three" or more. A child should never be taken alone unless there is an emergency. Hallway lead should be made aware and also communication to parent must follow.

If the bathroom only has one stall, only one child should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff or volunteer. Doors are always to remain open.

If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many children as there are stalls.

Minimize children of different ages using the bathroom at the same time. Only 3's room, only 4's, only k-1, etc.

Staff should stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the staff member should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If the young person requires assistance make sure another leader is made aware and the staff or volunteers should always keep the door open to the bathroom and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

For single-use restrooms

Require children to ask permission to use the bathroom.

Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.

All bathroom uses must be supervised by hallway lead/volunteer/ or staff member.

Staff or volunteers are prohibited from using the bathroom at the same time as children. If a staff member/volunteer is using the bathroom, hallway lead or ministry staff must be notified. When possible use alternate restrooms for volunteers/staff.

Potty Training

If parents indicate that their child is potty training we need to make sure they understand our policies. We will try to accommodate each child and family while adhering to the rules we have in place. We will encourage them to pack extra clothes, pull ups, and supplies however we will not proceed in changing them. We will provide the space for a parent to come and take care of their child.

- If a child has an accident, we will call the parent to come right away and decide how they wish to move forward.
- We will always notify a parent via text if their child is having potty issues. Such as saying they need to go every 5 minutes or longer than 15 minutes. If they have diarrhea, if they appear to be constipated or if they poop in their diaper, pull- up, or underwear, we will not attempt to change any Poopy Diaper without a parent's consent. This means all babies and toddlers will have a parent paged to come and change the soiled diaper.
- Staff shall escort children back to the classroom after the bathroom trip is over. Ensure handwashing and or hand sanitizer has been used.
- For the protection of all, staff and volunteers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Shower Activities for Camps and Missions Trips

Staff or volunteers and children or youth must shower at different times. Create shower schedules that will permit supervision of the youth while staff shower.

While the children or youth shower, at least one staff member should stand in the bathroom doorway and within earshot of the minors. Ensure that only one child or student is in each shower (consider utilizing shower curtains that do not go all the way to the floor, so that staff can easily see how many minors are in each shower stall.

Transition Times and Free Times

Transition times and free-choice times (or free times) pose a high risk for incidents because during these times, staff and volunteers may not be assigned a particular group of minors to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following procedures:

- Require minors to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
- Specify the staff/volunteer-to-child/student ratio.
- Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
- Ensure that all staff/volunteers are assigned specific areas to supervise ("zone monitoring").
- Include bathroom procedures.
- Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
- Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

Playground Activities

The playground procedures require:

- Definition of specific and narrow geographic boundaries around the playground area.
- Specific instructions on how to monitor barriers of supervision (such as storage sheds, playhouses, tunnels, and shrubs).
- That all staff/volunteers are assigned specific areas to supervise ("zone monitoring").
- Specific bathroom procedures.
- Staff/volunteers to conduct periodic roll calls for each age group.
- Staff must have names listed on a roster with them and parent contact number in case of emergency.
- Supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and assessments of the activity period and of the entire activity area.

Transportation Activities

Transporting children and youth may increase the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse because staff and volunteers may be alone with a minor or may make unauthorized stops with them. In addition, transportation activities may provide a time for unsupervised minors to engage in minor-to-minor sexual activity. Please make sure parents are always aware of who is driving their child. Make sure to give a report to the supervisor or staff on details of the trip.

The transportation guidelines:

Require written parent permission/releases from all children or youth on the trip. Staff must take these permission forms and medical releases with them on the trip or have immediate access to such.

Require staff to have a list of the children or youth on the trip. The staff must take roll when boarding the bus, when leaving the bus, periodically throughout the trip, and then again when boarding the bus.

Specify staff-to-children/student ratios. When possible, do not count the driver in the supervision ratio. Goal of 2 adult leaders to group of kids/youth in a vehicle.

Require staff to sit in seats that permit maximum supervision.

Discourage mixed age groups from sitting together. When possible, high risk young people are seated by themselves or with a staff member.

Prohibit drivers from making unauthorized stops.

Require documentation of all and especially any unusual occurrences.

When public transportation is used:

In addition to the transportation procedures listed above, children or youth should remain in one area of the bus, if possible.

Staff and volunteers that are assigned to a group should remain with that group on the bus.

Take a headcount or call roll immediately after entering and leaving the bus.

In situations where staff/volunteers transport children or youth in non-organization vehicles:

Supervisors must be notified of all transportation activities.

Use the “rule of three” when transporting minors: At least two adults must transport a single minor, or at least two minors must be present if transported by a single adult. If it is not possible to follow the “rule of three,” such as due to having dropped off a minor, staff/volunteers must call the remaining minor’s parent/guardian or the immediate supervisor (whichever is first reached) to notify the individual of the circumstances and estimated time of arrival.

Children and youth must never be transported without written permission from a parent. If it is not practical to obtain written permission, and transportation is necessary, staff should obtain written permission by email or text message from the minor’s parent/ guardian. All staff and volunteer drivers must be screened, and pre-approved for driving by the applicable Family Pastor.

Minors must be transported directly to their destination.
No unauthorized stops may be made.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with minors while in vehicles.

The off-site/online procedures include:

Requiring supervisor approval for all off-site/online activities.

Requiring parental approval.

Specifying staff-to-child/youth ratios for the activity.

Requiring staff and children/youth to be easily identifiable.

Including specific bathroom procedures as applicable to the outing.

Including transportation procedures.

Including instructions for a supervisor to observe the off-site/online activities at scheduled times and random intervals.

Considering specific recommendations based on the location and type of activity (for example, Amusement parks, Water Parks, Arcades, etc).

4.6 OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES

Overnight stays present unique risks to children/youth and staff/volunteers. They often involve changing clothes, groups of both genders and different ages in a more intimate atmosphere than usual, more unstructured activities, and increased supervision demands for staff.

Supervision Guidelines

All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the supervisor responsible for that age group.

Supervisors are expected to regularly and randomly observe overnight activities on a scheduled and periodic basis.

The applicable Pastor should appoint a “lead” staff/volunteer to supervise the overnight. A meeting with all staff/volunteers is conducted to discuss the unique risks of overnight trips, unique elements of the specific overnight trip and to review the specific policies and procedures.

Provide parents with written information about the overnight activity. All parents must sign a permission slip for their child or student to attend the overnight.

Determine the appropriate staff-to-child/student ratios before the event and schedule staff/volunteers accordingly (minimum of 2 adults and 2 young people)

Meetings with the group should be hosted in open and observable areas; meetings should not be hosted in staff, volunteer, children, or student rooms.

If possible let parents have the opportunity to meet their child’s leader and share contact information and communicate if there are any desired communications.

Overnights at the Facility

Physical boundaries within the organization must be clearly defined. Follow all protocols as listed in onsite hosts guidelines.

Assign each staff/volunteer to a specific group of minors to supervise. Each staff member should then maintain a role sheet that lists all of the minors in his or her group. Headcounts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the evening.

Assign staff to high-risk areas in your organization’s facility, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, etc. If it is not possible to assign specific staff to these areas, assign specific staff to conduct periodic facility “walk-throughs.”

Overnights at the Facility (Cont)

With regards to sleeping arrangements, separate the male and female minors into separate rooms and post staff/volunteers at the entrances and exits to these rooms. If this is not feasible, separate males and females by as much space as possible.

When performing room checks, staff/volunteers should always go in pairs. The pastor must check in on all rooms and with all leaders each night and each morning.

At least one staff member must stay awake until all minors are asleep.

Overnights Away from the Facility

Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited unless approved by the supervisor, or parents of minors have communicated to one another and take full responsibility for all occurrences.

Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the children or youth.

Assign each staff/volunteer to a specific group of minors to supervise. Each staff/volunteer should then maintain a role sheet that lists all the minors in his or her group. Headcounts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the event.

If in a cabin-type setting, the staff/volunteers should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of children or youth sneaking out (such as by the door).

In hotel rooms, assign minors to rooms based on gender, age, or siblings. Staff/volunteers should have their own rooms. If staff/volunteers must share rooms with minors, they must have their own beds and never change in front of a minor.

All staff/volunteers are to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

4.7

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Youth who participate in leadership programs are still student participants and not staff or volunteers. Therefore, even though they are often given more responsibility, youth in the leadership programs must be provided with guidelines regarding appropriate behavior and then supervised accordingly. In addition, staff and volunteers must understand and recognize that these youth are still young people and not their peers. Therefore, the following guidelines are recommended for student leadership programs:

Create a screening process for student leaders which includes:

A standard application

An interview with behaviorally-based interview questions

References (from teachers, counselors, family friends, etc.)

Train student leaders in their role in programs and on program policies about appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This training should include the following information:

Follow the policies of this handbook

Appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal interactions and the importance of maintaining behavioral boundaries between student leaders and children and between student leaders and staff and volunteers.

Prohibiting student leaders from being one-on-one with children, and requiring an adult staff member to always be present (youth must be volunteering alongside an adult)

Prohibiting student leaders from escorting children to the bathrooms when possible

Prohibiting student leaders from assisting children with changing their clothes

Create a system to monitor the student leaders:

Designate a specific employee or volunteer who is in charge of the student leadership program and its participants.

Require student leaders to wear lanyards that identify them as leaders-in-training or student leaders and differentiate them from both staff/volunteers and from children using a different color.

Require a supervisor to conduct regular check-ins with student leaders and their program supervisors.

4.8

SUPERVISOR'S MONITORING ON - SITE AND OFF-SITE / ONLINE PROGRAMS

Keep a record.

Document your supervision visits. Include information such as your arrival/departure times, which children/youth and parents were present, and a summary of the information collected. Provide staff with feedback about visits.

Vary your observation times.

Do not develop a predictable pattern of observation. Drop in at different times each day. Occasionally leave and come back immediately.

Arrive before staff.

Check punctuality and the routine that staff follow to prepare for the children/youth to arrive.

Survey the physical environment.

Is this a suitable location for the activity (e.g. size of area for number of minors, ability to supervise all areas used by minors, landscaping that may inhibit supervision.

Watch activities.

Are they planned and organized? Are the staff actively involved? Ask to see the schedule of activities and compare with what is really going on at a given time.

Observe bathroom.

Observe bathroom activities to ensure that the staff are complying with the established policies and procedures.

responding

- 5.1 Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations
- 5.2 Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult
- 5.3 Responding to Minor-to-Minor Sexual Abuse and Sexualized Behavior



How an organization responds to suspicious or inappropriate interactions, policy violations, and incidents or allegations of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individuals involved and the damage to the organization. Once a staff member, volunteer, minor, or parent has expressed a concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a minor, swift and determined action must be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to minors, to the accused staff member, and to the church.

5.1 RESPONDING TO SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS OR POLICY VIOLATIONS

Because the church is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that every staff member and volunteer actively participates in the protection of minors. In the event that staff or volunteers observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other staff or volunteers, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to CPS, another government agencies or 911 in case of an emergency.

It's recommended that the supervisor then reports to his/her direct report and then to HR. Determining if counsel and care needs to follow up.

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Staff/Volunteers and Minors

- Violation of the abuse prevention policies described above
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with minors
- Buying gifts for individual minors
- Making suggestive comments to minors
- Picking favorites

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with minors will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

Staff and Volunteer Response

If a staff member witnesses suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another staff or volunteer, the witnessing staff or volunteer is instructed to do the following:

Guidelines for Staff/Volunteers Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report the behavior to a supervisor or other authority.
- If you are not comfortable making the report directly, make it anonymously. Volunteers should make the report to church staff first. This allows the church staff to assess what it already knows about the subject, staff member, or minor to determine next steps.
- If the report is about a supervisor, contact the next level of management.
- Document the report but do not conduct an investigation.
- Keep reporting until the appropriate action is taken.

Supervisor Response

In the event that a supervisor receives a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from a staff member or volunteer, the supervisor is instructed to do the following:

Guidelines for Supervisor's Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations

- Report to the next level supervisor and determine the appropriate person to respond to the concern.
- Determine the appropriate response based on the report.
- Speak with the staff or volunteer who has been reported.
- Review the file of the staff or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported.
- Document the report on the appropriate form found attached to this handbook.
- If at any point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the state authorities and file a report.
- If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.
- Advise the person who reported the behavior that the report is being taken seriously.

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- Increase monitoring or supervision of the staff, volunteer, or program.
- If policy violations with minors are confirmed, the staff or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination or removal from service.
- If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other staff, volunteers or minors.

Organizational Response

Guidelines for Organizational Response

- Review the need for increased supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.

5.2

RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE BY AN ADULT

Staff or Volunteer Response to Abuse:

As required by mandated reporting laws, paid staff and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor—whether on or off church property or whether perpetrated by staff, volunteers, or others—to state authorities. It is our recommendation that you also report it to a church-paid staff as directed under the “Staff and Volunteer Response” in Section V.A.1. above.

A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is generally immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice.

**Refer to California’s mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse and more specific reporting information.*

In addition to reporting to state authorities, paid staff are required to report any suspected or known abuse of minors perpetrated by staff or volunteers directly to leadership so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and others who may be at risk. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made to the following:

Immediate Supervisor and Ministry Pastor

Additional Guidelines for Staff/Volunteer Response to Incidents or Allegations of Abuse

- If you witness abuse, staff or volunteers should interrupt the behavior immediately.
- If abuse is disclosed to you, assure the individual disclosing that he or she was correct to tell you.
- Protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution, or further abuse.
- Immediately report the allegation or incident to the proper authorities (based on mandatory reporting requirements). It is recommended volunteers should report to the staff that oversees the program. Paid staff and volunteers must complete mandatory reporting obligations to local authorities.

- Be sure to document the incident, disclosure, or any circumstances causing your suspicion of abuse. State only the facts.
- It is not your job to investigate the incident but it IS your job to report the incident to your Child Welfare Services or law enforcement in a timely manner.
- Check back to make sure appropriate steps were taken. If not, report to your supervisor or the appropriate government authority.

Supervisor's Response to Abuse:

In addition to the above response procedures, supervisors should ensure the following:

Guidelines for Supervisor's Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse

- First, determine if the minor is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc.
- Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others. Stick to the facts.
- Contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency.
- If the alleged abuse involves a staff member or volunteer, notify the Executive Pastor or the supervisor for that specific area.
- Suspend the accused staff or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

5.3

RESPONDING TO MINOR-TO-MINOR SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUALIZED BEHAVIORS

The thought that one minor may sexually abuse another does not occur to many people. Unfortunately, abuse between peers has increased 300% in the past few years. Minor-to-Minor sexual activity and sexualized behaviors often remain unreported in organizations because staff and volunteers are not comfortable documenting these situations, or may not know how.

Minor-to-Minor Interactions

Most serious incidents of minor-to-minor abuse are preceded by more subtle incidents such as name-calling, taunting, or roughhousing. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe. The church recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited:

Prohibited Minor-to-Minor Interactions:

- Hazing
- Bullying
- Derogatory name-calling
- Games of Truth or Dare
- Singling out one child for different treatment
- Ridicule or humiliation

In order to adequately respond to and track incidents within the church, all sexual activity between minors and sexualized behaviors of minors must be consistently documented.

Staff and Volunteer Response

Minor-to-Minor sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, sexting, and similar types of interactions.

If you witness minor-to-minor sexual behaviors, you are instructed to follow these guidelines:

Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers Responding to Minor-to-Minor Sexual Activity

- If you observe sexual activity between minors, you should immediately separate them.
- Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted and separate the minors.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Complete the necessary paperwork including what you observed and how you responded.
- Follow your supervisor's instructions regarding notifying the authorities and informing the parents of the minors involved.
- In some cases, if the problem is recurring, discipline may be required including not allowing one or both minors to return to the program.

Supervisor's Response

In the event that a supervisor receives a report of a minor's sexualized behavior or minor-to-minor sexual activity, the supervisor should do the following:

Guidelines for Supervisor's Responding to Minor-to-Minor Sexual Activity

- Meet with the staff who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- Confirm that the minors involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- Review the incident report to confirm it is accurately and thoroughly completed.
- Meet with parents of the minors involved.
- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- Notify the proper authorities.
- Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- Review the need for additional supervision
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures
- Review the need for additional training
- Review the need to alert others to ensure safety

Organizational Response

After the internal review of the sexualized behavior or minor-to-minor sexual activity, the church will determine what can be done to prevent a recurrence, such as:

Guidelines for Organizational Response

- Review the need for additional supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.
- Alert others in the organization.



I agree to comply with the policies set forth in this Family Ministry Handbook.

Employee's Signature

Date

Printed Name