

## CHURCH CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

### **I. Policy**

Child abuse, both physical and sexual, is a significant problem in our country. Churches are often viewed as easy targets by child predators. It is our responsibility as a church to make every effort to provide a safe, secure ministry environment. This requires a policy, procedures, and a commitment to minimizing the risk to our children.

When child abuse is referenced in this policy, it refers to physical and/or sexual abuse.

Children Ministries are identified as any ministry involving participants under the age of 18. Those ministries are the Nursery, Sunday School, Children's Church, Awana, Vacation Bible School, and the Youth Group.

### **II. Procedures**

A. A standard application will be completed by all individuals interested in ministry with children. An individual interested in ministry with children cannot apply until he/she has been regularly attending church for at least the prior 6 months.

B. These applications will be reviewed by the Church Board of Elders, and the decision will be made whether to allow the applicant to continue in the process or be eliminated from further consideration. If the applicant is allowed to continue in the process, a background check will be initiated.

C. A designated individual will be tasked with completing a background check on the applicant. The background check will consist of the following:

1. A check will be conducted on the applicant through the Colorado Bureau of Investigation on-line to determine if the individual has a criminal history.
2. Prior pastors and church references listed by the applicant on his or her application will be contacted.
3. If the applicant discloses prior accusations, arrests, or convictions, the appropriate law enforcement agency may be contacted in an attempt to obtain any public records pertaining to it.

A final report will be made to the Elders on each applicant in writing. The Elders will then either approve or deny the applicant.

D. At the time this policy is implemented, it will be at the discretion of the Elders whether individuals currently working with children will be subjected to a criminal history check. Factors to consider will be length of time an individual has been involved

with the church, how well known the individual is by the Elders or others within the church, and whether or not there have been any questionable issues or concerns with the individual.

E. If an individual in the church has been accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime involving a child, special precautions may need to be implemented at the discretion of the Elders. These precautions will be two-fold in their purpose: to minimize potential risk to our children, and to minimize the risk of exposing the individual to potential new accusations.

1. In these instances, designated Elders will interview the individual regarding the accusation and circumstances surrounding it. The Elders will then determine if a formal safety plan should be initiated with the individual. If initiated, the safety plan will be in the form of a "Formal Safety Plan Agreement". This agreement will prohibit the following:
  - a. The individual will be prohibited from being involved with children ministries.
  - b. The individual will be prohibited from being alone with children.
  - c. The individual will be prohibited from being alone in areas of the church where children's classes are held, and will be prohibited from the nursery.
  - d. The individual will be prohibited from assisting with church related youth events.
2. If this agreement is violated by the individual, he or she could be prohibited from the church property.
3. Elders and Deacons will be made aware of these individuals and their restrictions.

F. As a matter of standard practice, any activities related to children off grounds, or on church property after hours, should be overseen by at least two adults, preferably one male and one female, if the activity involves both boys and girls.

G. The nursery will be staffed by a minimum of two adults. This is a necessary precaution as workers are many times involved with assisting children in the restroom, or changing diapers.

H. Youth workers will be supervised by an adult at all times. Youth workers are those individuals younger than 18 years of age.