



Child Protection Policy

Christ Fellowship Church

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Note: Much of this was adapted from Capitol Hill Baptist Church's Child Protection Policy:
<http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/ministries/children/child-protection-policy/>

Table of Contents

Vision	1
Mission	1
Staff and Volunteer Expectations	2
Child Protection	2
Protecting Children Before They Arrive	3
Protecting Children as They Arrive & Depart	4
Protecting Children While They Are in Our Care	6
Healthy Child Policy	14
Neglect & Abuse Prevention, Reporting, and Response.....	15

Appendices

Inappropriate and Appropriate Touch.....	24
Child Abuse Reporting Form.....	25
Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in AL.....	26
Accident Report Form.....	29

Our Vision: Generations of Godliness

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, ESV)

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14-15, ESV)

Our Mission: To Glorify God

The children’s ministry of Christ Fellowship Church exists to *glorify God* by:

- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4).
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17).
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10).
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1).
- Encouraging children to learn to serve and to not just be served (Mark 10:43-45).
- Maintaining a safe and secure environment for our children.
- Maintaining the highest ethical standards such that volunteers and teachers always live and serve above reproach, protecting the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Preparing children to one day walk with God as adults, which means getting them ready to be a part of the public meetings of the church and Lord willing, one day, a fully participating member.

Staff and Volunteer Expectations

All children's ministry staff and volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Ministering to the children
- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege brings with it responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children

Child Protection

Our first concern is that children be safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all children's ministry volunteers
- Perform background checks on all full-time church staff, regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children
- Require training for all children's ministry staff and teachers
- Use a parent authentication identification system
- Employ volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Have at least one floater to promote and maintain safety in the kids area
- Equip each room with a first aid kit
- Educate our staff and teachers to recognize suspected child abuse, require them to understand and follow any applicable reporting laws, and encourage them to report suspected abuse to church officials
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to children's ministry
- Adhere to a two-volunteer policy whenever possible
- Equip our volunteers to know how to evacuate children safely in case of an emergency

Parameters for the Child Protection Policy

This child protection policy applies to children (from birth to fifth grade) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's public worship services or specific children's ministry-related church-sponsored activities (bible studies held at the church with accompanying childcare, etc.). Any form of abuse, harm, neglect or other problems related to children at home, school, or in any bible-study, activity, or venue not directly related to children's ministry at CFC is not covered by this policy.

Personnel Summary

Adults are individuals nineteen years or older.

Minors are individuals under nineteen years of age (under Alabama law).

Staff are the paid employees of the church. All full-time church staff are required to receive a background check regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.

Volunteers are adults who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. All volunteers who serve in children's ministry are required to go through screening procedures before they serve. Volunteers include childcare workers, Growth Group coordinators, and anyone else who serves in CFC Kids. The term 'volunteer' will be used throughout this policy manual as an all-encompassing term for anyone who serves the children and is not church staff.

Teachers are adults who serve in the primary teaching role for our classrooms. Teachers are required to go through screening procedures and children's ministry training.

Helpers are minors who are at least one grade older than the children they are assisting and are assisting in some area of children's ministry alongside an adult. Helpers must be children of adults who are active members or attenders at CFC. They are not required to go through childcare training, but will be vetted by the children's ministry staff. Helpers will be supervised by the adult volunteers in the same room.

Pastors/elders are elected officers of the church who serve the church by providing teaching and leadership to the congregation as a whole. They must go through both the screening procedures if they are to serve in children's ministry, just like any other volunteer.

Protecting Children Before They Arrive

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday services. Every volunteer who wishes to serve in children's ministry is required to go through a screening process.

Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, CFC has established a screening procedure to approve all volunteers to work with our children:

- All volunteers must be members in good standing of a Growth Group at CFC.
 - NOTE: The two current exceptions to this rule are those who provide childcare for Sunday evening services and the infant room attendant on Sunday mornings.
- All volunteers must be nineteen years of age or older.
- Children or youth who are at least one grade older than the children they are assisting are welcome to help (subject to the approval and direction of a staff member), but they are always in addition to the adult volunteers.
- All teachers must have completed CFC's childcare training.

- Criminal records checks and other appropriate screening checks will be completed.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.
- Teachers are to be approved by the Children’s Ministry Deaconess in consultation with one of the elders.
- All volunteers must repeat the screening procedures and criminal background checks every five years.

CFC reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin, suffering, or life issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer’s ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children.

Any volunteer, helper, deacon, staff, elder, or other CFC member who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by a volunteer must report that knowledge to the Children’s Ministry Deaconess and/or the elder who oversees children’s ministry. He or she also must be personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose to the authorities.

Training

All children’s ministry staff, teachers, and Growth Group Kids Coordinators must attend CFC’s childcare training before they are allowed to work with the children. Annual training sessions will be scheduled for teachers to update them on policies and procedures. Full-time staff who do not have direct contact with children will receive training on child protection policies. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

Protecting Children As They Arrive and Depart

Arrival and Departure Times

Volunteers should be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of any service, so that parents have enough time to transition their children before the service begins.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the service. In the event that a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of the service, volunteers will ask the Growth Group Kids Coordinator or a staff member to locate the parents.

Signing a Child in to Children's Ministry

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a children's ministry program will sign the child in to the appropriate classroom, nursery, or activity when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that CFC event or program. The parent should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have. For more details on our procedures for caring for children with allergies, please see the "Snacks and Food" on page 11. Check-in and check-out of children applies to all children birth through 4 years-old.

Growth Group Kids Coordinators, teachers, and staff have the right to refuse any child at check-in due to one of the following reasons: potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the room being closed because of an insufficient adult to child ratio, or anything else that might impair our ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

A parent or designated guardian must be in the church building at all times while their children are checked-in.

Parental Authentication Identification System

In order to protect the children in our care, children from birth through age 4 must be signed into his/her class by a parent or guardian.

Upon signing the child in, the child will receive a label with an identification number, with the child's parent taking the corresponding label and ID number. The intent is for the identification number to be used to match the parent with child.

In addition to signing in at the sign-in desk, parents must sign their children into their classroom as they arrive. This will generally be done by taking an additional label from the check-in desk and affixing it to a clipboard at the child's classroom. Otherwise, parents are asked to sign in at the classroom. This may seem redundant, but we want each classroom to have a roster of who is in their classroom so they know who they are responsible for in case of an evacuation or other emergency procedure.

At the end of the session when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

1. A teacher or volunteer will bring the child to the door and remove the child's label before releasing the child to the parent.
 - a. For children of visitors, volunteers must check the visitor's ID number and the child's label to ensure that the numbers match. If a visitor does not have their ID number, the volunteer who helped check the child in may identify the parent or guardian. If he or she is unavailable or unable to identify the parent, they must provide a driver's license or other form of identification that corresponds to the child's information.

- b. For member parents, if the child or parent is unknown to the volunteer, the volunteer will match the number on the member parent ID card and the child's label. If the parent does not have their ID card, the volunteer will use the membership directory or contact a staff member to make the match between parent and child.
2. Volunteers will REMOVE & DESTROY child labels before children leave their room. This will prevent strangers from referring to the child by name and potentially luring them away from their parents.

Only the parent/guardian who signed the child into the class is authorized to pick up the child. The exceptions to this are:

1. In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a service, the child will be released to the care of an elder or staff member.
2. A member can send their spouse to pick up their children.
3. A member parent may make prior arrangements with a staff member to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a service. This must be verified by the staff member at the time of pickup.

Divorce, Separation or Custody Visitation

In a situation where the parents are divorced or separated, the volunteers should only release the child to the parent who brought the child to check-in. If the other parent or anyone else attempts to check-out the child, the volunteer should immediately contact a staff member. If a parent presents a court order for a child, the police must also be present and we are to release the child to police custody. In any of these circumstances, the volunteer should immediately contact a staff member and the elder over children's ministry.

Protecting Children While They Are In Our Care

Two Volunteer Rule

For all children's classes and programs, at least two qualified, adult volunteers must be present in each classroom at all times.

Helpers are always in addition to and supervised by at least one adult. Helpers are never to be left alone at any time with children without the presence of an adult volunteer.

Under no circumstances should a child ever be left alone in a classroom.

If any exception to the two volunteer rule is made for certain events, at least one adult volunteer must be present in each classroom at all times, and that adult should be highly visible to other adults at all times. Doors must be kept open any time there is only one adult present.

A staff member or volunteer may take children out of the nursery or classroom only for a compelling reason, such as to use the bathroom or in cases of illness, emergency, or evacuation.

Staff or volunteers should not have private one-on-one meetings with a child. When a meeting on the church premises is necessary, it should be done with at least one other adult present, and held with the knowledge and consent of the staff and the parents.

Visibility

When children's classes or programs are in session, the room setup should allow for unobstructed views from the outside of everyone inside the room.

Floater

The Floater is a qualified male or female volunteer whose duties are not limited to any one classroom. Floaters generally move about the rooms during scheduled session times to observe any unusual activity and be of service to volunteers (e.g., locating parents, substituting temporarily for another volunteer, or taking children to the bathroom [if the floater is female]). A Floater is on duty during Sunday morning services.

Child-to-Volunteer Ratios

In addition to always having at least two volunteers present, the following ratios are maintained during the Sunday morning gathering of the church:

- Red Class: One adult for every two children
- Orange Class: One adult for every four children
- Yellow Class: One adult for every five children.
- Green Class: One adult for every six children
- Blue Class: One adult for every seven children
- Kindergarten and 1st Grade: One adult for every eight children
- 2nd and 3rd Grade: One adult for every ten children
- 4th and 5th Grade: One adult for every twelve children

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom if doing so would exceed the ratio unless and until additional volunteers are added. If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, a staff member or the Floater should be notified and asked for more volunteers in order to maintain these ratios. Whenever age-groups are combined, the ratio is determined by the age of the youngest child.

Diaper Changing and Rest Room Procedure

Red and Orange Classrooms

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children prior to signing them into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once or as need during service. Only women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers will be changed in the classroom.

Yellow, Green, and Blue Classrooms

Parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into CFC Kids. At check-in and drop-off, parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty training. In the event that a child needs to use the rest room, a female volunteer will take the child to the rest room. If possible, volunteers will take more than one child at a time. The floater will be available to step into the class temporarily if necessary to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios, or if the floater is female, she may take the children to the bathroom. The volunteer should wait outside the closed restroom stall door unless the child requires assistance. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer) before returning to the classroom.

If a child is not potty trained, a female volunteer will change the child's diaper at least once or as needed during the service. Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.

Kindergarten through Fifth Grade

Any child needing to use the rest room will go with another child of the same age and sex. A female volunteer will accompany the pair to the rest room, check to ensure that the bathroom is empty, and wait outside the closed bathroom door until the children are finished. The children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return with the volunteer to their classroom. The Floater will be available to step into a classroom temporarily if necessary to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios, or if the floater is female, she may take the children to the bathroom.

Appropriate Discipline

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior may include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children). During correction, a child should never be removed from the classroom.

Correction should be discrete; in the classroom (not in the hallway); and never outside of the sight of others.

Steps of correction might include (depending on the age of the child): (1) removing the child from the situation or problem; (2) pointing out the problematic behavior; talking to the child about his/her sin and need for Christ; (3) praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity; (4) helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate. Volunteers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce children to the gospel.

Children's ministry volunteers and staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, volunteers should ask the floater or a staff member to call the parents. If the child assaults, harasses, or bullies other children, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, the parents should be immediately called so the child can be removed. Volunteers and staff are allowed to physically restrain a child if he/she is physically endangering other children. Please report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to the a staff member. Once a child is removed from children's ministry, reinstatement is possible at the determination of a staff member. A child may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced.

For further information regarding discipline, please speak with a staff member.

Physical Touch Policy

Two types of relationships are important to consider: volunteer-to-child and child/teen-to-child.

Volunteer-to-Child

While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or showing godly love and care, it can also be misinterpreted. Particularly in our interaction with children, we want to be blameless and above reproach. The following will help workers to avoid any compromise or concerns in this area.

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security and maturity in their interactions with adults. Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of children and not the adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.

- Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploits the child's lack of knowledge, satisfies adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violates laws against sexual or physical contact between adult and child, and any attempt to modify child behavior with physical force.
- Only women can take children to the restroom or change diapers.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for children in the color coded classrooms.
- In general, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- Volunteers should refrain from rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief time. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of the head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is private or personal, unless when necessary while assisting in a diaper change or restroom visit.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.

Child/Teen-to-Child

- Nobody under nineteen should ever be alone with children while in children's ministry.
- No inappropriate touching (as defined above and in Appendix 1) of any kind will be accepted.
- Fighting will not be tolerated and any child participating in violent action will be dismissed from a class/program and placed into his or her parent's care.

Further guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate touch can be found in Appendix 1.

Parents in the Classroom

If a child would feel more at ease with a parent in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are going through separation anxiety. If this goes beyond a few minutes and the child cannot remain without the parents, the parents should remove the child from the classroom. While accompanying their children, a parent should be kindly but firmly dismissed if the parent is causing difficulty or presenting concerns for the welfare of the class.

Food and Drink Policy

The primary mission of Children's Ministry at CFC is to provide a safe and loving environment for the children entrusted to our care so that their parents may be fed spiritually without undue concern.

One of the ways we protect children is to limit the food and drink allowed in classrooms. Volunteers may not bring food or drink to share with children when they serve.

In most classrooms, an allergen free cereal and water are supplied for snack time.

If a parent wants to feed their child something other than an allergen free cereal or water that parent is welcome to sit in the classroom briefly or step outside into one of the seating areas in the foyer to feed their children. (The exception to this is in the nursery, where milk and formula are also allowed.)

If a particular snack will be given as a part of the lesson that day, a warning will be placed at the check-in table and at each individual classroom listing all elements of the snack.

Administering Snacks and Food

Red and Orange

Volunteers may offer ***properly labeled sippy cups*** containing milk, formula, or water, as provided by the parents upon signing the child in. In addition, an allergen free cereal will be offered with parental consent.

Yellow

Volunteers may offer properly labeled sippy cups ***containing only water***, as provided by the parents upon signing the child in. In addition, an allergen free cereal and water will be offered with parental consent.

Green, Blue, and All Grade Levels

An allergen free cereal and water will be offered to the children.

If a child should not be given a snack of this nature, the parent should do the following:

- Verbally notify the floater, Growth Group Kids Coordinator, or staff member on duty
- Note the nature of the allergy and how to respond to an allergic reaction in the appropriate spot on the sign in label.

Ongoing Care for Children with Allergies

Parents of children with allergies should talk with a staff member about how to handle any allergic reactions. Upon parental request, allergy information about children of members may be posted in the child's classroom.

If a parent desires to feed their child anything other than the provided snack at any time during the services, we ask that they administer the food personally to their individual child in the foyer outside the children's area or outside of the building.

Serving Snacks

Volunteers should always check each child's label for allergy information before serving a

snack. If instructions are not clear, no food should be given to the child without clarification from the parent/guardian. The volunteer may send to clarify with the child's parent or guardian.

Security and Emergency Response

Emergency Situations

In emergency situations, if appropriate, 911 will be called to secure help and/or the floater will find a staff member to assist with the emergency.

Accidents, First Aid, and Medical Emergencies

All rooms are equipped with basic first aid kits. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called and parents should be located and informed immediately. Volunteers should complete an Accident Report Form (See Appendix 4) for all injuries, whether major or minor prior to leaving the premises on the day of the accident.

In the case of a medical emergency, a teacher, Growth Group Kids Coordinator, or staff member will summon medical volunteers to the children's ministry area. Depending the severity of the situation, someone may also call 911.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire a staff member or volunteer should call 911 and also assist all children in immediately evacuating the building. Parents should not report to the children's area because they risk creating chaos and blocking the exits for children. Instead, parents will meet their children outside of the church building.

Tornado Procedures

In the event of a tornado warning, a staff member will monitor the weather to determine if further action is needed. Should they decide that children and volunteers need to take cover, volunteers will lead their classrooms to one of the designated tornado shelter areas as directed by a staff member.

A Live Threat

A live threat includes a shooting or some other type of security hazard.

Step 1: Volunteers and Staff Evacuate Children

- As soon as a staff member or a volunteer is confronted with a real threat, they respond immediately.
- If it is safe to do so, the first course of action should be to evacuate the building.

Step 2: Volunteers and Staff Communicate the Danger

- When it is safe to do so, whoever sees or hears the live threat should notify the floater or a staff member about the problem. Staff or the floater will then notify the remaining volunteers about the live threat.
- When it is safe to do so, a staff member or a volunteer should call 911. Give the following information:
 - Location and the nature of the threat.
 - If shots have been fired tell police we have an "active shooter."

Step 3: Hide.

- If running is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible.
- Close all doors.
- Barricade the doors with heavy furniture.
- Close and lock windows and close blinds.
- Turn off the lights.
- Silence all electronic devices.
- Maintain silence.
- Have children lie or sit on the floor away from the door. If possible, stay out of sight of any windows.

Step 4: Staff or Volunteers fight the Live Threat

- If neither running or hiding is a safe option, as a last resort, when confronted by a shooter or some other danger, adults in immediate danger should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as a fire extinguisher or chairs.
- Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to confront the potential danger.

After the area has been made safe and secure by police a staff member will communicate an "all clear" sign to anyone who is in lock-down mode.

Missing Child or Kidnapping

In the case of a missing child, a staff member and/or floater will first do a thorough check of the children's ministry area and all bathrooms to make sure the child is not in another part of the building. If the child is not found after a thorough check of the children's ministry area then the floater will notify a staff member, who will then notify the elders to block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff. The floater and other volunteers will continue to search for the child until they are found. If the child is not found, a staff member will call police to secure further help.

In the case of a kidnapping, a staff member or the floater should call 911 to secure help from the police and summon all elders to block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or an elder.

Parent Involvement in Emergency Procedures

The elder who oversees children and/or a CFC Kids staff member will decide how and when to notify parents about security or emergency situations. Involving parents too early might cause unnecessary fears or panic. If an emergency does happen, parents will need guidance, pastoral care, and counseling, so we rely on an elder or staff to walk with parents through difficult situations.

Healthy Child Policy

Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, several guidelines are in place concerning disease.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home.
2. Volunteers will use proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills.
3. Hand washing or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and volunteers.
4. Toys and equipment should be washed and disinfected regularly.
5. CFC is dedicated to preventing the spread of illnesses among the children. Growth Group Kids Coordinators and CFC Kids staff members have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the *Healthy Child Policy* guidelines.

A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever, vomiting, or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice

- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow, or constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be removed from the class with a volunteer while the floater or staff member locates the parents.

Please inform the a CFC Kids staff member if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending a CFC event so that other parents may be notified if necessary. If a child contracts an illness and has been in contact with other children while at CFC, it is the responsibility of parents to notify a CFC Kids staff member.

Neither volunteers nor church staff may give any medication to any child.

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact a CFC Kids staff member before signing the child into class. This allows the staff to assess the needs of the child and assist parents in transitioning their child into a classroom setting.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers from illness. These methods are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in any setting and should always be used.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e. clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- In rooms with children ages 2 years and below, remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Set them in a separate container to be washed.

Neglect & Abuse Prevention, Reporting & Response

Definitions

What is child neglect and abuse? It is important to define our terms.

Child neglect is failure, whether intentional or not, of the person responsible for the child's care

to provide for the child's basic needs such as adequate food, clothing, medical and dental care, supervision, and/or proper education, or the failure to protect the child from harm.

Child abuse is any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk or serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual harm, or exploitation of a child by a parent or a caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and an adult. This includes activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or child. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered to be forced whether or not the child consents to it.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by a child is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between children, with or without the consent of either child, when one child has power or perceived authority over the other child. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children.

Sexual exploitation includes forcing a child or soliciting a child for the purposes of prostitution or using a child to videotape or photograph pornography.

Child sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact with a minor, non-touching offenses, or sexual exploitation of a minor. This is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they cannot be personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child spiritual abuse the use of spiritual authority (the Bible or church authority) to emotionally, physically, and/or sexually abuse a child.

Prevention

CFC takes protection against and reporting of neglect and abuse very seriously. In an effort to prevent abuse and neglect, we:

- Educate and equip staff and teachers about neglect and abuse
- Adhere to the procedures and guidelines as set out in this policy manual. Many of the policies are written to protect children, including the two adult rule, visibility guidelines, and diaper and bathroom policy.
- Screen volunteers prior to contact with any children, which includes requiring a criminal background check.
- Require all full-time staff to submit to a criminal background check within a month of joining staff.
- Repeat screening procedures and criminal background checks for full-time staff and volunteers every five years.

- Require volunteers and teachers to have attended for at least six months prior to serving in children's ministry.

Any instance of suspected or observed abuse or neglect should be handled with the following guidelines.

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) consists of the pastor overseeing children's ministry, one additional elder, CFC Kids staff members, and any CFC member who has been designated by the elders. All members of the CPC stand ready to address all allegations of neglect and abuse in accordance with the CFC church covenant and the laws of Alabama.

Reporting of Neglect & Abuse

Point of Contact for Reporting

Anyone who suspects, witnesses, or has any reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be neglected and/or harmed or threatened with abuse in any form should contact a CFC Kids staff member or the elder who oversees children's ministry. This reporting includes questionable behavior (overly flirtatious behavior, shoulder massages or other intimate acts, etc.) and/or possible offenses (volunteers observing actual abuse or possible evidence of abuse, like abrasions, lacerations, etc.).

Any person who serves as the initial point of contact is required to report *all* allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to the entire Child Protection Committee.

Guidelines for Mandatory and Permissive Reporters

In reporting of neglect or abuse to the authorities, it is important to distinguish between permissive and mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter may include social workers, teachers and other school personnel, physicians and other health care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement officers, and clergy. Permissive reporters include anyone who is not a mandatory reporter, which will include many of CFC's volunteers.

The church has a moral and ethical obligation to report any neglect and abuse, so if the person suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse, the person must talk to the point of contact for reporting— a CFC Kids staff member or the elder who oversees children's ministry.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a mandatory reporter, he or she must follow the guidelines and laws set out for mandatory reporters. He or she must fulfill his/her obligations to the law, including reporting to Child Protective Services or the police. At no time will the mandatory reporter be prohibited from reporting, even if their

consultation with staff or leadership in the church results in a disagreement. If you are a mandatory reporter, it is important that you know whether you must report only in the context of your professional duties or whether the obligation to report also applies when you're away from your professional duties or functioning as a volunteer at our church.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a permissive reporter, they should contact a CFC Kids staff member or the elder who oversees children. Because permissive reporters do not have professional training or experience in recognizing abuse, and because many of CFC's volunteers are single adults with very little experience with children, they are required to report first to a CFC Kids staff member or the elder who oversees children. If reporting to Child Protective Services or police is deemed as warranted by the Child Protection Committee and the elders of CFC then that person must report. At all times, this person will be required to fulfill their obligations to the law.

State and federal laws authorize civil or criminal penalties or civil liability for failing to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. In addition, obstructing or interfering with an investigation of child abuse can result in criminal charges.

The church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has a reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse.

More Guidelines on Reporting

When available, the following information will be documented and reported when helpful:

- The name, age, gender, and address of the victim(s).
- The name, age, gender, and address of the alleged perpetrator/offender(s).
- The nature, frequency, date(s), and location(s) of the abuse alleged to have occurred.
- The relationship between the victim and the alleged perpetrator/offender.
- Other evidence that supports the allegations (eyewitness, medical exams, confessions, etc.)

What should a volunteer, staff member, or elder do when they suspect, hear about, or observe what appears to be a sign or symptom of neglect or abuse? Talk immediately with a CFC Kid staff member and/or the elder who oversees children. The volunteer, staff, or elder should document this information on the *Child Abuse Reporting* form, which is found in appendix 2. After a staff member or the elder who oversees children serve as an initial point of contact, they are required to report *all* allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to the entire Child Protection Committee.

What should CFC Kids staff or the elder who oversees children say or do with the child who is allegedly neglected or abused? Talk with the child and find out how the injury happened, though be careful of the level of detail you pursue. Asking for too much detail might be harmful for a child as it causes them to relive the abusive experience. If the child is describing

what might be abuse, the objective is to obtain very general information that may help substantiate or alleviate the suspicion. Ask the child open-ended questions and get them to relay the event in their own words. Be careful to not suggest answers to the child and be sensitive to the fact that the child will be scared to tell the story, sometimes out of fear that it will upset adults or will not be believed. Write out a report that should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of the conversation with the child, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not ask the child to undress in order to show bruises or injuries that are not visible. Include all of this information on the *Child Abuse Reporting* form, which is found in appendix 2.

What should volunteers or staff report when they hear of a story of abuse? Note *what* the child said happened, *who* the child was with when it happened, *where* it happened, and *when* it happened. All of this should be documented.

What should a volunteer or staff do when they observe an incident that may be abusive? Immediately intervene to protect the child; follow-up immediately with a CFC Kids staff member or the elder who oversees children; write out a report about the incident; and act in accordance with all reporting laws. The volunteer or staff should keep an on-going log of the suspected person's behavior and anything else that is relevant concerning the person or the child or their relationship.

How Can We Learn About the Different Laws, Regulations, and Guidelines in Alabama?

Laws, regulations, and guidelines for reporting child neglect and abuse differ from state to state. For general information on guidelines for mandatory or permissive reporters in Alabama, see appendix 3 of this document, *Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in Alabama*. For specific questions regarding your legal obligation under one or more of these laws, please consult with an attorney.

Response to Neglect & Abuse

CFC will ensure that a caring response is always provided to any suspicion or witnessing of neglect or abuse. Every allegation of neglect or abuse will be taken seriously. Proper guidelines for handling such complaints will be followed diligently and exhaustively. The victim(s) and victim's family will be cared for by the church in whatever way is available. Situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for all parties' privacy and confidentiality.

Who Should be Notified?

The church will seek professional assistance when deemed appropriate by the Child Protection Committee and the elders of CFC. Notification will be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to neglect or abuse. The church may:

- Report suspicions or firsthand accounts or any knowledge of abuse to civil authorities. Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities.

- Notify church disciplers, counselors, or medical personnel in order to obtain ongoing care for the victim(s) and victim's families.
- Notify an insurance agent, denominational leaders, or any other outside officials.
- Notify and consult with a church attorney.

How Will CFC Respond to Allegations, Admission, or Criminal Conviction?

Allegations of neglect or abuse, admission of child abuse by staff, elder, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of CFC, or criminal conviction of abuse should:

- be reported to CFC's elders. This disclosure of abuse is to be done regardless of the source of the information and should be conveyed to the elders within 48 hours of the allegation being made or the admission of child abuse or criminal conviction.
- immediately result in removal of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any activity or program involving children;
- result in immediate ineligibility of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from being granted approval to participate in any activity or program involving children.

The Child Protection Committee and the elders of CFC will decide on other appropriate responses to allegations, self-admission of guilt, or criminal conviction, some of which may include:

- Contacting police or CPS.
- Notification of staff, teachers, and any volunteers.
- Reporting allegations, self-admission, or criminal conviction to the congregation during CFC's public services or members' meeting.
- Barring from any activities or church programs with children or the children's ministry areas at the church building.
- The Child Protection Committee will designate CFC members or staff who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on CFC's property or anywhere in CFC's buildings. The alleged perpetrator will be notified of this requirement immediately after allegations are made known to staff or elders.
- Disciplining (removal from membership) of alleged perpetrator or criminal offender in a public members' meeting by the congregation.
- Barring alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any and all church property.
- Suspension or termination of a paid staff member or volunteer position.
- Acknowledging to another organization about allegations against or termination of staff, an elder, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of CFC for misconduct or abuse against children.

If staff, CFC elders, or a member of the Child Protection Committee learns from CPS or police that allegations of neglect or abuse are being investigated or criminal charges have been filed, the CFC elders should:

- Be careful to not interfere with the investigation by police or CPS;
- Prevent contact between the accused and the accuser if appropriate;

- Remove the accused from activities or programs involving children, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Appoint a member of the Child Protection Committee or the elder board to be a liaison with CPS and the police.

If an adult alleges an incident of neglect or abuse that happened when he was a child in a CFC program, then:

- Members of the Child Protection Committee should hire a trained mental health professional (preferably who is not associated with the church) who can provide the Child Protection Committee with an assessment. The victim will have to provide consent for such an interview and to have the assessment released to the Child Protection Committee in confidence.
- If the accused is no longer a part of CFC then the Child Protection Committee should consult with the elders and legal counsel to determine legal and moral need to report to police or CPS and any other organization that the accused may be a part of since his departure from CFC.
- Even if government officials are no longer bound to investigate due to a statute of limitations, CFC should respond to *all* allegations with the care and diligence traced out in this policy manual.

Confidentiality

The church, as well as permissive or mandatory reporters, will maintain confidentiality to the extent that it deems appropriate for the care of its members and consistent with applicable law. Maintaining appropriate privacy for any potential victim and his or her family is a high priority, so allegations and suspicion should be reported only to the persons specified in this policy manual.

Response to Media

If appropriate, the CFC elders will respond to the media. Normally, one elder or member will be designated by the elder board to speak to the media on behalf of the church. A written statement should be distributed at the time of media disclosure. Great care should be taken to disclose only facts and not suspicion. Disclosed facts might include the nature of the abuse allegation and when the alleged abuse happened. Great care should be taken to protect the identity of all parties involved (the alleged abuser and victim). Alerting the media lets the alleged victim know that allegations will be taken seriously and gives other vulnerable members of the community a chance to be protected.

Sexual Offenders in the Church

When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends CFC or a CFC Related Activity

If CFC's elders or children's ministry staff learn in advance that an alleged or convicted sexual offender is wanting to attend a CFC service:

- The Child Protection Committee must decide whether to admit him or her to church services or CFC related activities. Admission of the offender will be based on factors such as extent of prior convictions, and his or her willingness to follow guidelines set out by this policy. This is not a comprehensive list of admission criteria.
- A member of the Child Protection Committee (or a designated member of CFC) will contact the offender letting him or her know that he or she must be accompanied at all time while on CFC's property or anywhere in CFC's buildings.

If an alleged or convicted sexual offender participates in any CFC related activity or public service that has the possibility of children being present:

- The elder overseeing children's ministry, children's ministry staff, the teachers, and floaters should be notified.
- The Child Protection Committee will designate CFC members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on CFC's property or anywhere in CFC's buildings.
- He or she will not be allowed beyond the worship room towards the children's area. He or she must stay away from the children's area and the restrooms on that side of the building.
- The Child Protection Committee will work with members to come up with guidelines for CFC related activities that are not on church property, but elsewhere.

When An Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends Regularly

If he/she chooses to attend regularly:

- The elders will be notified.
- The sexual offender should provide a member of the Child Protection Committee with the name of his/her probation officer. Someone from the Child Protection Committee will contact the probation officer and find out 1) more about the underlying offense – offenders tend to minimize their offenses, and 2) the specific terms of the probation in order to make sure the offender stays in compliance while at the church.
- If deemed necessary by the elders, the congregation will be notified in a public service of the church, most likely the members' meeting. In addition, all parents of CFC kids will be notified directly. CFC reserves the right to forbid someone from coming to the church for worship services, programs, or activities. When participating in church activities outside of the church building, the same guidelines apply.

When A Sexual Offender Seeks Membership at CFC

If the offender seeks membership at CFC, the elders retain a right to refuse to recommend an individual for membership. If the elders offer membership to an offender, it will be conditional on his or her agreement to:

- Verify the history of offenses, convictions, and adjudication of sexual offenses and disclose them to the CFC elders and the members of the Child Protection Committee.
- A member of the Child Protection Committee contacting his/her probation officer to find out the underlying offense and the specific terms of probation.
- A CFC Kids staff member or the elder over children's ministry doing a thorough criminal background check. If the information provided by the offender differs from the information given by the probation officer or gathered by staff or elder, that will be grounds for denying membership.
- Disclosure of information to parents and the congregation. The information released to the church is at the discretion of the elders. Communication detailing this information will be sent directly to all member parents.
- Refrain from any form of communication (including phone, IM, texting, email, social media, or any type of technology), social fellowship, physical contact, mentoring, baby-sitting, or coaching with children or youth or participate in any activities or programs related to children or youth both inside and outside of the church.
- The Child Protection Committee will designate CFC members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on CFC's property or anywhere in CFC's buildings or in attendance at any church related services, activities, or gatherings that has the possibility of children being present.
- Any restrictions that elders determine.
- Permission to notify the leadership, congregation, and parents of anything that the elders deem significant for these groups to know.
- A warning that the church will report any suspected activity to civil authorities.
- A warning that any violation of the code of conduct (including allegations or suspicion of abusive behavior) can result in discipline and banning from the church facilities or any church related programs and activities.
- Sign a written document that details all of these items, plus anything else that the elders or the Child Protection Committee deems important to include.

Other Guidelines About Sexual Offenders

If a convicted sexual offender applies for a volunteer or staff position, he or she will be denied by the church. Exceptions may only be made upon the approval of the elders, full-disclosure to the congregation, and a congregational vote.

If a sexual offender does not disclose a former allegation, conviction or adjudication, and it is revealed later, the offender will be removed from any paid or volunteer position immediately and may be removed from membership as well.

If a sexual offender is a minor, the church reserves the right to bar that minor from any children or youth activities, and will follow the guidelines set out above for any sexual offender who seeks participation in church-related public services, programs, or activities.

If a sexual offender leaves CFC (as a member or regular attender) and begins attending another church, the elders will disclose allegations or self-admission or criminal conviction of neglect or abuse to the leadership at the next church.

APPENDIX 1:

Inappropriate and Appropriate Touch

Inappropriate Touching

- Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reasons.
- Squeezing of arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body.
- Tickling children over 4 years old. It is over stimulating and is considered by some professionals to be a deceptive device that could lead to inappropriate touching.
- Children sitting on laps of adults is inappropriate for ages 5 and older.
- Holding or restraining children on the lap. However, holding a child 4 years and younger is appropriate for short time spans when comfort is needed by the child or the child's behavior is out-of-control or endangering other children.
- Touching a child in the genital areas except for younger and developmentally delayed children requiring a diaper change, bathing/washing, and assistance with using the bathroom. Otherwise, touch in the genital area is only permitted by medical personnel in case of injury or suspected injury.
- Kissing a child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. A child should never be allowed to kiss a staff member, volunteer, or another child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. Children are also not allowed to kiss one another. (Note: A kiss is appropriate on the cheek when it is included in a greeting).
- Slapping a child on the behind, even when playing.
- Fondling children, even in non-private areas.
- Carrying a child on the back unless the child is unable to walk.

Appropriate Touching

- A comforting pat on the shoulder and back, or allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder is appropriate.
- Back rub to help comfort, or put an irritable child to sleep is appropriate.
- High-fives, handshakes, or the touching of two fists are appropriate and recommended touch, especially when interacting with older children.
- Holding hands is permitted with children 7 years and under when initiated by the child, or when helping a child to walk, climb stairs, etc.
- Holding a child firmly with your hands to restrain him/her is appropriate when it is used to prevent a child from an accident, injury, hurting self, others, or you.

APPENDIX 2: **Child Abuse Reporting Form**

Instructions: If a volunteer, staff, teacher, or elder suspect, hear about, or observe signs or symptoms of abuse, please: (1) Talk immediately with the a staff member or the elder who oversees children; and (2) document any relevant information on this form.

This report should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of what the child said, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not go back and interview the child. Fill this form out based on whatever information has already been obtained.

Today's Date: _____

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Name of Volunteer: _____

Signs or Symptoms of Abuse Observed:

Bruises or Injuries that are Visible:

Emotions expressed by the Child:

Summary of the Conversation with the Child:

Anything Else that is Relevant:

Check all that apply:

- Growth Group
Coordinator Notified
- Kids Staff Notified
- Elder Notified

APPENDIX 3:

Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in Alabama

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children's Bureau — <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

Introduction

The following guidelines are only intended to serve general educational purposes, and are not intended as a substitute for competent legal advice from an attorney familiar with the laws and regulations regarding child abuse and neglect in Alabama. Each individual CFC employee and volunteer is responsible for fulfilling his or her personal obligation to comply with the laws and regulations applicable to him or her with respect to reporting child abuse and neglect, and may need to consult with a legal professional in order to understand and comply with applicable laws and regulations. However, in determining any legal obligations that CFC may have with respect to reporting child abuse or neglect, it may need the assistance of a staff person or volunteer to determine relevant facts and circumstances.

Professionals Required to Report

Ala. Code § 26-14-3

Reports are required from all of the following:

- Hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, pharmacists, physical therapists, and nurses
- Public and private K-12 employees, teachers, and school officials
- Peace officers and law enforcement officials
- Social workers
- Daycare workers or employees
- Mental health professionals
- Employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education
- Members of the clergy
- Any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to a child

Reporting by Other Persons

Ala. Code § 26-14-4

Any other person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected may report.

Standards for Making a Report

Ala. Code § 26-14-3

A report must be made when the child is known or suspected of being a victim of abuse or neglect.

Privileged Communications

Ala. Code §§ 26-14-3; 26-14-10

Only clergy-penitent and attorney-client privileges are permitted.

Disclosure of Reporter Identity

Ala. Code § 26-14-8

The department will not release the identity of the reporter except under court order when the court has determined that the reporter knowingly made a false report.

Immunity for Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

Ala. Code § 26-14-9 (LexisNexis through 2011 Reg. Sess.)

Any person, firm, corporation, or official, including members of a multidisciplinary child protection team, quality assurance team, child death review team, or other authorized case review team or panel, by whatever designation, participating in making a good faith report in an investigation or case review authorized under this chapter or other law or department practice or in the removal of a child pursuant to this chapter or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting therefrom, shall, in so doing, be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

Individual Responsibility to Report

Ala. Code § 26-14-3

All mandated reporters are required to immediately make an oral report when they know or suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect. The oral report shall be followed by a written report.

Content of Reports

Ala. Code § 26-14-5

The report shall contain, if known:

- The name and location of the child
- The names and addresses of the child's parents, guardian, or caregivers
- The nature and extent of the child's injuries
- Any evidence of previous injuries
- Any other information that might establish the cause of the child's injuries
- The identity of the person or persons alleged to be responsible for the child's injuries

Agency Receiving the Reports

Ala. Code §§ 26-14-3; 26-14-1

Reports must be made to a duly constituted authority. A duly constituted authority includes:

- The chief of police of a municipality or municipality and county
- The sheriff if the observation of child abuse or neglect is made in an unincorporated territory
- The Department of Human Resources (DHR)

- Any person, organization, corporation, group, or agency authorized and designated by DHR to receive reports of child abuse and neglect

Failure to Report

Ala. Code §§ 26-14-3(g); 26-14-13

Any person who knowingly fails to make the report required by the reporting laws shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than 6 months imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.

APPENDIX 4:
Accident Report Form

Date of Accident: _____ Time of Accident: _____

Name of Child Involved: _____ Age: _____

Address of Child: _____

Location of Accident: _____

Emergency Personnel Contacted: Yes _____ No _____

Parent or Guardian Contacted: Yes _____ No _____

Parent or Guardian's Name: _____

Name of Person(s) Who Witnessed the Accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Describe the accident:
