
Our Objectives

- 1) Educate church leaders and ministry workers concerning risk of abuse and need for safety of children
 - 2) Provide a safe environment where children and their families can grow in faith and knowledge of Christ.
 - 3) Protect leaders and workers from mistaken or groundless accusations.
 - 4) Reduce the liability of Grace Community Church.
-

Our Reasoning

Luke 18:16 says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

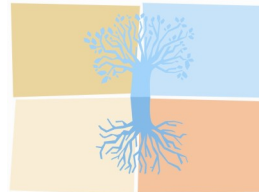
Because we recognize God's tender love and concern for children, we want to do all we can to protect them from potential harm or abuse. Also, we want to protect our workers from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior. Finally, we want to protect our church from the trauma that even one incident of abuse could bring to our congregation.

Areas of Emphasis

- 1) Selection and Screening of Workers
 - 2) Establishing Basic Guidelines for Safety
 - 3) Education of ministry leaders and volunteers
 - 4) Responding properly to allegations
-

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

- If a volunteer worker suspects that a child has been abused, that person should immediately report it to the leader on site.
- The leader on site should fill out an Incident Report Form to immediately inform the Child Safety Team of the situation and to document important details.
- Do not interview the child or youth regarding the suspected abuse. Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other workers, parents, etc...All information should be kept confidential.
- The Child Safety Team will investigate all situations and notify proper legal authorities if necessary.
- If the worker who reported the situation has further questions they should be addressed to the Child Safety Team.



Grace Community Church exists to lead people to and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ so they may abound in fruitfulness to God's glory and their most profound joy.

John 15:1-11

Grace Community Church

Reducing the Risk: Child Safety Policy

Our Mission

Coming alongside parents to bring every child into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and helping them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.



Our Purpose

To reduce the risk of physical or emotional abuse to our children and to protect staff, workers, and the ministry of Grace Community Church.



Definition of Roles

Child Safety Secretary:

The person is responsible to work with ministry directors to insure that the screening process is completed for each worker and for maintaining the records on authorized workers.

Child Safety Team:

This team is responsible for reviewing the screening information and making decisions concerning authorization. It will consist of the Senior Pastor, Student Ministries Pastor, one elder, and the Child Safety Secretary.

Ministry Director:

The person(s) in leadership of a particular area of ministry. These include the AWANA Directors and Commander, Children's Ministry Director(s), Student Ministries Pastor, Preschool Director, and others who supervise adults working in ministry.

Primary Volunteer Workers:

All adults who regularly supervise or teach the children or teens of our church are considered primary workers. Primary workers must be at least 18 years of age and a minimum of 5 years older than the group they are ministering to.

Secondary Helper:

On occasion a ministry of the church may need to obtain additional help for a special event or drivers for an event offsite. These helpers must be under the supervision of a primary worker and have been approved by that worker.

Youth Volunteer:

Youth may be used to assist adult workers in ministry. However there must be under direct supervision. They should not take the place of adult volunteers.



Basic Guidelines for Safety

- Two adult Rule at least two workers must be present at all church activities involving children or youth. This reduces the risk of abuse and provides protection for the workers from unfounded claims of abuse. Workers should only be alone when absolutely necessary and then only for short period of time. If there are classrooms where only one adult is teaching, they must be in a room with a window in the door and another adult must be assigned to rotate between the classes while they are meeting.
- If an off-site activity is planned the two-adult rule should be followed, parents should be fully informed, and notice must be given to the ministry director before it is announced.
- For overnight activities there should be two adults present and at least one of each gender represented if the activity includes both sexes. If these criteria cannot be met the event should be postponed. Parental permission slips should be used if the activity is out of the area.
- Before leaving an event leaders should make sure that all children are picked up. The two-adult rule should be followed so workers are not alone waiting for a child's ride.
- All events are to be open door whenever possible. This means that church members, parents, and staff can come to observe activities if they are able to do so without disrupting the activity.
- Corporal punishment or the threat of it is not to be used on any child by a worker, even if given permission by the parent.
- Infants, 2's and 3's are to be checked in and parents given a return tag which should be presented when the child is picked up.
- Workers should arrive 15 minutes early so children may be checked in by parents.
- Changing diapers should be done in the room on the changing table or on the floor. Do not leave a child on the table unattended.
- When taking preschool children to the restroom, a worker should accompany them to the restroom but remain outside the stall. Only enter to help if needed and then the stall door should be left open.
- Older children may go to the restroom alone, but out of classroom time should be closely monitored.
- A good rule to follow is to be "above reproach". This means avoiding even the appearance of misconduct.
- Drivers for church sponsored activities must be at least 23 years of age.



Selection & Screening of Workers

Six Month Rule for Volunteers—Before volunteering to serve in the teaching or caring ministries of our children, Grace Community Church requires that all applicants be **regularly attending Grace** for six months. This time may be shortened in instances where the volunteer is well known or has exceptional references that have been thoroughly checked.

Application Process—Primary Volunteers must be screened using the following procedures: 1) Fill out Primary Volunteer Worker application. 2) Check of references. 3) Personal interview with the ministry director for that area of ministry. 4) Criminal background check. 5) View required videos and review the Child Safety Policy.

Information collected through the screening process will be kept in a secure file. Limited access will be afforded only to the Child Safety Team, church staff, and church legal council. Should the information raise concern further investigation will be done by the Child Safety Team before determining an individual's authorization.

Education of Ministry Leaders & Workers

- All ministry directors must view and discuss the following segments of the video Reducing the Risk:
 1. Making Your Church Safe from Child Sexual Abuse (25 minutes)
 2. Principles of Supervision (15 minutes)
 3. Responding to Allegations of Abuse (25 minutes)
- All primary volunteer workers must view:
 1. Making Your Church Safe from Child Sexual Abuse
 2. Principles of Supervision
- All workers and leaders must also read through the "Child Safety Policy" as well as any specific guidelines implemented by the ministry directors for their area of ministry.

