

# Youth Protection Policies & Procedures

## 0. Foundation

As followers of Jesus, we believe that protecting the vulnerable and innocent is a necessary component of the gospel. We take seriously Jesus' warning in Matthew 16:6 *"but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."*

Offenders are statistically more likely to be a part of the community. With this in mind, we heed Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:15 that there are "wolves in sheep's clothing" and that accountability and oversight are necessary no matter who the individual leader happens to be.

## Definition

Child abuse refers to **physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual harm inflicted on a child**. This includes specific actions such as stalking, voyeurism, and any other act that causes harm to a child. Abuse is often identified by a power differential. Whenever there is a power differential, precautions must be in place for accountability and oversight.

## 1. Application

This policy is applicable to all volunteers or staff having contact with students under 18, or over 18 but not yet graduated from high school, including, but not limited to, pastors, staff, teachers, volunteers, chaperones, and drivers.

## 2. Adult-Student Contact

a. Inappropriate Displays of Affection including but not limited to:

- i. Any form of sexual contact or contact perceived as stimulating
- ii. Intimate kissing
- iii. Initiating full frontal hugs or "bear hugs"
- iv. Massages
- v. Lying next to or sleeping right beside youth, or under the same blanket.
- vi. Tickling or wrestling
- vii. Touching or hugging from behind
- viii. Showing affection in isolated/inappropriate areas such as bedrooms, closets, restricted or private rooms.
- ix. Comments that relate to physique or body development
- x. Patting on the thigh, knee or leg
- xi. Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- xii. Piggyback rides between sexes or when inappropriate
- xiii. Any other unwanted touch
- xiv. Any form of physical contact in isolation with an adult.

b. Appropriate Displays of Affection

- i. Use of appropriate physical contact in a public setting to show support, encouragement and healthy affection toward youth who are receptive to this form of emotional

expression is acceptable. However, adults must exercise good judgment and never force any physical contact on any youth. Examples of appropriate displays of affection may include:

- i. Holding hands during prayers or when a person is upset
- ii. Side-hugs
- iii. Holding hands while walking with small children
- iv. Hand-shakes
- v. High-fives, hand slaps and fist bumps
- vi. Verbal praise
- vii. Arms around shoulders
- viii. Pats on the shoulder/back

#### c. Appropriate discipline

Adults will employ only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages, builds self-esteem, self-control and self-direction. Examples of positive discipline include:

- i. Use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
- ii. Reminding youth of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements
- iii. Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- iv. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the youth's age and development.
- v. *Harsh or cruel treatment under the guise of discipline is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.*

#### d. Inappropriate language

- i. Discriminatory or lewd comments or jokes
- ii. Gossip & slander
- iii. Any type of verbal shaming or putting down
- iv. Bullying
- v. Expletives
- vi. Using any of God's names inappropriately (i.e. omg, Jesus Christ, etc.)

### 3. Boundaries

#### a. General

Adults involved in CBMC youth activities must assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all Student Ministry relationships.

- i. **Two Adult Rule** – Two or more adults are to be present during any CBMC sponsored youth activity. If one-on-one interactions between adults and youth are unavoidable or absolutely necessary, the interaction should occur in an area that is visible to others and with the knowledge of another adult. Where application of this rule is not possible or practical (e.g. emergencies) a “roaming adult” should be utilized. Youth activities that cannot meet requirements of the two-adult rule will be cancelled.
- ii. **Proportional Adult Coverage/Supervision** – It is recommended that there be a minimum of 1 adult per 10 youth for high school level activities, 1 Adult per 7 youth for middle school age activities. Per the two-adult rule, no activity will have less than two adults, preferably one male and one female if mixed gender youth are participating.

- iii. **Off-site Activities** – It is preferable that one or more of the accompanying adults be parents/guardians of participants.

b. Transport:

All youth must ride in vehicles driven by authorized adults which must:

- i. Be 21 or older and have a valid California driver's license, qualified for the vehicle being operated.
- ii. Have no record of convictions for the past five years for DUI, driving with a suspended or revoked drivers license or reckless endangerment.
- iii. Have proof of insurance
- iv. Never be alone in a vehicle with a youth other than his/her own child. Therefore, no fewer than three persons, one of them an adult, should occupy a vehicle traveling to/from an activity.
- v. Vehicles with only two seats cannot be used.
- vi. Ensure vehicles are not filled beyond capacity for their use, that seat belts are always secured and that occupants behave.
- vii. Must understand emergency contact procedures and maintain contact with the person in charge (e.g. cell phone)

c. Exceptional Transport Situations

Only under unusual circumstances should an adult be alone in a car, room, or other accommodation with a youth. This might include:

- i. A child is unable to be picked up by a parent, and there are no other volunteers to accompany him/her. In this case, the youth pastor and/or parent should be notified of the situation, and, if possible, keep the pastor or parent on speakerphone during drive.
- ii. A case where a youth is ill or in a bona fide medical emergency. In this case, the adult should make every effort to enlist the help of another youth or adult to be present and assist. Note however, the welfare of the youth takes precedence and whatever action is necessary and appropriate must be taken.

d. Communication

- i. Digital communication between students and volunteers should pertain to specific questions or messages for the ministry. Conversations should be reserved for face-to-face interaction under normal conditions. *(During this time of Covid, there is more encouragement and room for digital communication being the primary way of communicating.)*
- ii. Communication via email or Facebook Messenger is preferred and should not be deleted (apps that do not hold data, like Snapchat, are to be avoided).
- iii. Any messaging should take place during daylight hours or before 10 PM. Late night communication is strongly discouraged.
- iv. If there is a unique need for an adult to talk with a youth in private, the adult should choose a quiet place that is in plain, public view. Examples of this may include open areas around the church (courtyards or hotel lobbies if on a trip), short walks down a sidewalk, a restaurant or other location where people are present in the area.
- v. *Be mindful of the frequency and length of your communication. A healthy, moderate level of communication can be helpful in building relationships with the youth, but too much can be harmful.*

#### **4. Screening**

1. Each volunteer is required to complete an application process which includes a personal interview.
2. Each volunteer will have to participate in Live Scan background check and fingerprinting.
3. Each adult volunteer must be a member of CBMC. Underage volunteers (age 14-17) may serve youth in ministries for ages 13 and under.
4. Each volunteer will be directly asked if they have ever abused a minor or been accused of abusing a minor.
5. Each volunteer will have their social media checked.

#### **5. Reporting**

1. Any person, adult or youth, must be ready to safeguard and protect the trust and safety of children and youth. Anyone who has "reason to believe" or evidence that a child/youth is a victim of abuse or neglect has a duty to report. This duty to report is not limited to events or activities at CBMC or under our supervision. A failure to report can be considered a criminal offense and potentially subject to civil liability.
2. CBMC understands that appropriate government agencies must respond and investigate reports of abuse/neglect of a child/youth to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). CBMC will always fully cooperate with such governmental agencies, and in no way attempt to interfere in or obstruct such agencies or their investigations.
3. If anyone is unsure whether an incident or condition should be reported, they should discuss the circumstances with the responsible pastor. Additionally, CBMC asks that if an incident or condition is reported to the CDSS, that the responsible pastor be notified of the situation. Find form at: [http://ag.ca.gov/childabuse/pdf/ss\\_8572.pdf](http://ag.ca.gov/childabuse/pdf/ss_8572.pdf)

#### **6. Counseling**

Student Ministry volunteers are not professional counselors. As they begin to trust the Student Ministry staff, they will begin to confide in them. Problems arise when a young person confides in a volunteer, expecting them to maintain confidentiality. Unfortunately, not all counseling issues can remain confidential. Volunteers are required to report to the responsible pastor immediately if they suspect harm or endangerment.

##### **a. Instances of required reporting:**

- i. A young person is being abused sexually or physically.
- ii. A young person is threatening to hurt him/herself (suicide, cutting, etc)
- iii. A young person is threatening to hurt someone else (homicide, revenge, etc)
- iv. A young person reveals a personal crisis/endangerment (pregnancy, drug abuse addictions, criminal activity, etc).

b. If any of these situations arise, the responsible pastor will take the appropriate course of action, including the consulting of authorities and/or parents, or pursuing professional counseling options. The responsible pastor is available to give counsel and guidance on any issues or concerns that arise.

*Because we are dealing with minors, we will use the utmost discretion as to who to involve in various issues. We desire to build trust with our young people, but not to the extent of keeping parents excluded from their child's life.*

## **7. Dress Code**

Modesty is of supreme importance and all volunteers should consider their outfits prior to attending any event.

1. Clothes with inappropriate messages or images are not permitted
2. When in doubt, don't wear it. Revealing clothes, short skirts/shirts, etc., are best left at home (men and women).

## **8. Injury & First Aid**

We can administer ONLY band-aids and ice packs. If a youth participant is injured while under our supervision, the volunteer in charge will immediately notify the responsible pastor. The responsible pastor will notify the youth's parents. All injuries must be reported no matter how insignificant or minor they may seem.

## **9. Care of Documents**

All information will be treated in a confidential manner, except as required by legal reporting requirements or legal process. Documents will be kept in secure storage available only to those charged in this policy with the responsibilities requiring direct access to information within their purview. This secure storage will house all Screening Forms, Applications, Volunteer Acknowledgement Forms and any other sensitive information related to youth protection

## **10. Consequences**

Accusations of serious misconduct will result in the immediate suspension of the volunteer until an investigation can take place. Discipline for violation of any above criteria will follow the CBMC church discipline policy.

# VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

## Volunteer Acknowledgement

The Student Ministry policy & procedures contains important information about CBMC. I understand that I should consult the youth pastor if I have any questions that are not answered in this handbook.

I also acknowledge that revisions to this handbook may occur at any time. My signature below acknowledges that I have received and read all Student Ministry policies & procedures. My signature also indicates that I agree to serve faithfully and to comply with and adhere to these policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

