



CHILD SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

FEB 2022

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to a ministry leader or staff member.

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Good News Church has zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Good News Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program/activity.

MINISTRY PRACTICES

RULE OF 3

Strive to always be in groups of 3.

In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a location occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Good News Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Good News Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Children's/Student Ministry programs:

1. Hugging (only initiate side hugs preferred), pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development, and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Inappropriate areas of touch are anything in the bathing suit areas. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to a ministry leader or staff member.
3. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

BATHROOM ASSISTANCE

Depending on age/development, a child may need help in the bathroom. Use as little physical contact as possible while assisting and always keep the door partially open or invite a second volunteer to be present. Babies/children in diapers should be changed only by adult volunteers in an area easily observed by others.

NUDITY

Special events, camps, and mission trips will often include overnight stays where showering and changing of clothes is necessary. However, staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children in their care and promote an environment of modesty.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer application and screening process.

DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

1. Verbally redirect the child
2. Separate the child from the group. Time-out should be roughly 1 minute for every year of the child's life
3. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the ministry leader and parents.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from initiating any sexually oriented conversations with children and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program. The student ministry may, at times, engage in age appropriate group discussions about sex for the purpose of helping them understand God's design for sex. In most cases, the Student Ministry leader will communicate with the parents ahead of time to allow their students to opt-in/out.

REPORTING

REPORTING A VIOLATION OF POLICY

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to a ministry leader or staff member. In most cases, a written statement will be required.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Oklahoma state law requires all adults to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse. When reporting in "good faith" you are immune from criminal and civil liability.

You should promptly notify a ministry leader or staff member and call: Oklahoma Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-522-3511

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

Good News Church Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child may be immediately suspended from participation in Children's/Youth Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by the church, law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or students at Good News Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Good News Church.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or students at Good News Church.



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Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Good News Church's 2022 Child Safety Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the matters set forth. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Good News Church.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____