

Child & Youth Protection Policy

Updated: May 28, 2008



1. Purpose:

- a. Provide a safe, nurturing environment for all children and youth while they are engaged in any activity sponsored by Faith Church.
- b. Prevent the following types of inappropriate conduct:
 - i. Physical Abuse, including any physical contact intended to do harm, any hitting or touching in anger;
 - ii. Emotional/Verbal Abuse, including insults, name calling, belittling remarks, unfavorable comparisons with other children or youth, shaming, deliberately causing fear, or using speech to hurt;
 - iii. Sexual Abuse, which is defined as any sexual contact or inappropriate sexual comments / language with children or youth in a leader's charge.
- c. Protect the Church, volunteer leaders, and staff from any false accusations of abuse.

2. Selecting and Screening Volunteers & Staff:

- a. It is the policy of Faith Church that **all** adults working with or supervising minors during any church-sponsored activities must satisfactorily complete an application form and consent to a police background check. Background checks will be conducted at the discretion of the Discipleship Purpose Team.
- b. The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our activities and programs.

3. Two Adult Rule:

- a. Ordinarily, there should be at least two adults working with each group of children or youth. In those cases when older youth are part of the care-giving team for children, an adult must always be present with the group. Insofar as possible, no one should be left alone, one-on-one, with a child or youth.
- b. The only exception to this two-adult policy would be in a situation in which the contact occurs in a public place and other persons are in and out of the areas where the adult is working with children or youth. Public places include a classroom or office, if the door is open or has a window that provides visibility into the room and there are adults in the building who have opportunity to view the room. This rule is intended to protect children and to protect the leaders from false accusation.

4. Suspicious Behavior and Alleged Violations:

- a. If abuse is observed, the first priority will be to secure the safety of all those involved. Any behavior which might suggest inappropriate conduct or relationships with youth and/or children shall be dealt with immediately, either by commenting to the offender (in the case of a minor boundary violation deemed to be caused by ignorance) or reporting to one of the Church pastors, Director of Christian Education or Youth Director. All such reports will be seriously considered, prompt warnings will be issued as appropriate, and situations carefully monitored.
- b. Report of an allegation is not a presumption of guilt, and, therefore, appropriate care will be exercised to provide the accused with an opportunity to be heard. The seriousness of the allegation will determine the level of consequences at the discretion of the Executive Board, the Church Staff, the LOGOS Advisory board, and / or the appropriate Ministry Purpose Teams of the church. If it is believed that the law has been violated, law enforcement authorities will be notified promptly.

5. Training Policy:

- a. All volunteers who work with children or youth will be trained in understanding the nature of child abuse and its effects on the lives of children, in recognizing signs of possible abuse, and in the reporting requirements of the state.
- b. All volunteers will be trained in the policy of Faith Presbyterian Church.