



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

We value children and families at Church For All Nations, therefore we are especially concerned about the welfare of children. This policy has been developed to provide employees, volunteers and parishioners at Church For All Nations with clear guidelines for protecting children and preventing abuse when we work with children, or volunteer in a ministry that has contact with children at Church For All Nations. This policy pertains to your relationship, contact and volunteer work with children through Church For All Nations ministry (and as a result of your ministry here) and is not meant to address relationships with your family, relatives or personal friends.

This policy also pertains to prevention of the abuse of people over the age of 18 who are physically or mentally unable to protect themselves and/or who require adult supervision.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

We do Criminal History and background checks through appropriate criminal-reporting agencies on all staff members and volunteers, screening applicants for past incidents of child abuse to the fullest extent permitted by law. This is done prior to their involvement in any Church For All Nations sponsored activities or programs. Persons who have a history of illegal, abusive or inappropriate behavior with children and persons who have a history of violent criminal behavior may not participate in Church For All Nations programs that include children. Reference checks that are conducted will be documented and filed, prior to employment or volunteer service, for each prospective employee and volunteer.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROCEDURES

To prevent physical or emotional abuse, staff and volunteers are to use positive interactions when working with children and youth. If a staff member or volunteer is having difficulty with a child, they should contact their supervisor or pastoral overseer for assistance. The following discipline/control methods may **not** be used:

- Actions which inflict pain, such as spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, hair-pulling or hitting
- Personal or emotional attacks, such as name-calling, humiliation, ridicule or insults

Church For All Nations requires staff and volunteers to abide by the following guidelines, without exception:

- Children **must be under the supervision of two or more adults** at all times. Children may never leave a room, fieldtrip, bus, etc. by themselves. There should always be two adults with classes, groups, teams, etc.
- In classroom settings, there can be one adult with a helper in the classroom—when there is an adult supervisor monitoring the area. All classrooms must have uncovered windows on the doors. Children may not be in the room alone with the adult nor may they leave the room, take part in a fieldtrip, ride a bus or participate in any activities by themselves or with the single adult.
- For younger children, who need assistance with the bathrooms, female volunteers and staff may take boys or girls to the bathroom, but male teachers may not take girls to the bathroom or change diapers. Adults may assist younger children with hygienic needs—washing hands, cleaning faces, wiping bottoms, etc. if help is needed—only with another adult or junior helper (over the age of 12) present.
- **At no time may an employee or volunteer be alone with children or youth (with the exception of the above classroom rule).** This includes travel and transportation—two adults must be in the car, van or bus. All conversation, mentoring, tutoring and instruction must take place in a public setting where two or more adults are within view. Adults may not be alone with children or youth in any location that is not in full public view—including the home of the adult, youth or child; secluded office or classroom locations; bathrooms or workrooms; secluded parks, trails or recreation areas; and any other areas not in public view.
 - The **only exception** to the “two adult” rule is that you may transport youth to and from church when two or more youth (ages 12 and older) are in the car together. There must be two youth present at all times.
- Staff and volunteers may not invite children, youth or mentally/physically challenged adults to **visit or stay alone with them** in their home overnight or for extended periods of time
- Staff and volunteers may not hand out their personal email address or phone number to minors for anything other than an express ministry purpose. No staff or volunteer may contact a child by email or phone without the permission and knowledge of the parent. Reminder phone calls to minors for an event may be made from the church building or from an observable location.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Washington State law requires the mandatory reporting of all suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services within 24 hours. In our desire to protect and serve children, Church For All Nations fully supports and cooperates with this mandatory reporting requirement. Church For All Nations and its staff and volunteers are not required to investigate or prove abuse; however, they are required to report all suspicions of abuse.

“Child abuse or neglect” means the physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment or mistreatment of a child or vulnerable adult by any person. If volunteers or employees see indications of suspected abuse, they are required to report to their pastoral overseer or an Elder immediately. Indicators may include the following:

- Unusual or frequent bruises or cuts
- Welts
- Fractures
- Burns
- Internal injuries
- Injuries to genital or anal areas
- Injuries that are not consistent with the child’s explanation
- Injuries inconsistent with the child’s age and developmental phase
- Presence of multiple injuries in various stages of healing
- Age inappropriate sexually explicit conversations, drawings and/or descriptions
- Sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or interest in sexual activity
- Comments from the child indicating physical or sexual harm

The presence of any of the above indications may be just a simple childhood issue, injury or an accident, but even suspected abuse must be reported to your supervisor. This information should be considered sensitive and extremely confidential. Do not discuss your observations with other teachers, the child or the parents. In all situations, the person bringing a report of suspected child abuse should be assured that Church For All Nations takes these allegations very seriously and is grateful that the person making the report had the courage to speak out.

If the pastoral overseer is not available, the volunteer is to inform another pastoral staff member. If the volunteer or staff member is uncomfortable reporting suspicions to the staff member responsible for the program, they may also report to another pastoral staff member.

The pastoral staff member who receives the report is responsible for reporting the facts and the condition of the child. This will be done as soon as possible and **within 24 hours** of receipt of the report. The staff member should complete the Child Abuse Report Form and submit a copy to Pastor Ken Ecker for the Council of Elders, as soon as possible and within 24 hours of receiving the initial facts.

Staff and volunteers should review any observed or alleged child abuse incidents with the responsible full-time staff before going directly to Child Protective Services. If there is an emergency situation, however, the law protects from liability those who report in good faith what is believed to be an incident of child abuse. In the case of an emergency, staff or volunteers should proceed to protect the child and call the appropriate authorities including CPS (1-800-422-7517—24-Hour Access Number).

In the event of suspected child abuse, staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation or interview the possible victim—in-depth questioning of suspected victims of child abuse can hinder the legal process and may be considered interference with the child’s testimony.

As Christians, we can keep each other accountable. If you see another employee or volunteer engaging in inappropriate behavior or violating the policies in these guidelines, you should discreetly discuss your concern with the pastoral overseer or an Elder. We do not want to create a climate of mistrust and suspicion—but the safety of our children is of utmost importance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CFAN CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

I, (print your name clearly) _____, a volunteer or staff member of Church For All Nations, hereby acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the Church For All Nations Child Abuse Prevention Policy. I agree to abide by the guidelines and policy statements. I further agree that I will not act in a manner at variance with these guidelines and policy statements unless clearly authorized in writing by a superior. If at any time I am uncertain as to the application of any policy statement to a particular situation, I will seek advice from a superior before taking action.

Signature _____ Date _____