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# **SAFE CHURCH POLICY AND PROTOCOLS**

## **CHRIST'S CHURCH OF FLAGSTAFF**

(updated September 1, 2016)

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## **SAFE CHURCH POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH OF FLAGSTAFF**

### **Statement of Purpose**

Christ's Church of Flagstaff has written this policy on abuse prevention for church employees and volunteers for the purpose of defining and implementing procedures to protect the welfare of children participating in the church. Within this policy and protocols, "abuse" refers to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of children, youth, or adults with developmental disabilities. The intent is:

- To establish ethical standards of behavior which are consistent with scripture, the leadership of Christ's Church of Flagstaff (CCoF), and criminal law
- To provide training for our members and staff about prevention of abuse
- To establish a procedure for prevention of abuse
- To establish a process for reporting and responding to allegations of abuse
- To do everything reasonable to assure a caring and safe environment where everyone can worship, study, grow, and serve while on their spiritual journey

### **CCoF's Biblical Response to Protect Children**

Jesus calls us to a life in which we love God and love one another. Jesus' ministry welcomes children and holds them up as examples of faith (Mark 10:13–16). Scripture reveals that God's concerned with protecting and nurturing children, who are the most vulnerable members of society (Exodus 22:21–23).

We affirm:

- In baptism, we become members of the body of Christ called to love and serve one another. Together we promise to be part of the ongoing Christian nurture and discipleship of God's children. We promise to live our lives in such a way that enables children to experience the love of God and come to trust and follow Jesus Christ.
- Acting as Christ to one another, we have a calling to prevent harm, end suffering, and be God's agents for healing human brokenness. As members of the body of Christ, if one member suffers, all suffer together (I Corinthians 12:26).
- To abuse anyone is to abuse God, for we are made in God's image and God's Spirit lives in each of us (Genesis 1:27, John 1:12).
- To abuse or neglect a child, whether physically, sexually, or emotionally, is a sin (Matthew 18:6–9, Luke 17:1–2).
- Sexuality is a gift of God, and when used as intended leads to wholeness and fulfillment bounded by loving and non-exploitive relationships.
- The spiritual cost of abuse to victims and survivors is beyond measure. The resulting betrayal and loss of trust cuts to the core of a victim's faith and ability to trust in God and others.
- Abuse is not the fault of the victim; it is always the responsibility of the abuser.

- Those who serve in the ministries of the church bear a particular responsibility for upholding the gospel. The conduct of our pastors, church staff, leaders, and volunteers should be living examples of Jesus Christ.

**Websites and Resources:**

[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment>

<https://www.azdes.gov>

<http://www.healthychildren.org>

Child Abuse Reporting Form-

[http://azdes.gov/dcjf/cps/mandated\\_reporters/dcysform](http://azdes.gov/dcjf/cps/mandated_reporters/dcysform)

**Reporting Phone Numbers**

Child Protective Services      1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445)

Flagstaff Police Department    (928) 774-1414

Coconino County Sherriff      (928) 774-4523

## Definitions

**Abuse:** can be physical, mental (emotional), or sexual and can happen through neglect, overt acts, or failures to act

**Adult:** a person 18 years of age or over

**Child:** a person from birth through grade 5

**Church:** refers to our particular church, Christ's Church of Flagstaff (CCoF)

**Employee:** a person hired or called to work for CCoF for salary or wages

**Incident/Accident Report:** information that documents an allegation of abuse

**Member:** a person who has completed Pathway- Joining God's Family Class

**Officer:** a person currently serving as an Elder-Director or on the Executive Leadership staff

**Church staff:** staff person hired to supervise any area of church ministry

**Regular Attendee:** a person who is not a member of CCoF, but who attends worship and participates in its varied ministries

**Safe Church Administrator:** a specified employee of CCoF, normally the Executive Pastor

**Safe Church Response Team:** those persons chosen to respond to an alleged incident of abuse including the staff member directly overseeing the ministry where the allegation/disclosure has been made and members of the Executive Team.

**Safe Church Task Force:** a task force of the church responsible for (1.) implementing policies and protocols to be used in the screening of volunteers who work with children, youth, or adults with developmental disabilities; and (2.) providing training and education programs aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children and youth

**Arizona Statutes** reflecting Definitions and Reporting:

ARS 13-3620 Duty to Report

ARS 13-3623 Definitions of abuse

**Child Sexual Abuse includes contact and non-contact acts with a minor:**

- **Noncontact acts** include but not limited to: offender making sexual comments to the child, exposing intimate parts to the child sometimes accompanied by masturbation, voyeurism (peeping), showing child pornographic materials,

inducing a child to undress and/or masturbate self, photographing or video recording of child in sexual explicit manner (pornography) including any distribution thereof (exploitation)

- **Sexual contact** includes but not limited to: offender touching the child's intimate parts (genitals, buttocks, breasts), offender inducing the child to touch his/her intimate parts, oral contact with child's mouth or intimate parts, digital (finger) or object or penile penetration of private parts or mouth of child

**Emotional child abuse** Emotional child abuse is maltreatment which results in impaired psychological growth and development. It involves words, actions, and indifference. Abusers constantly reject, ignore, belittle, dominate, and criticize the victims. This form of abuse may occur with or without physical abuse, but there is often an overlap. Examples of emotional child abuse are verbal abuse; excessive demands on a child's performance; penalizing a child for positive, normal behavior (smiling, mobility, exploration, vocalization, manipulation of objects); penalizing a child for demonstrating signs of positive self-esteem; and penalizing a child for using interpersonal skills needed for adequate performance in school and peer groups. In addition, frequently exposing children to family violence and unwillingness or inability to provide affection or stimulation for the child in the course of daily care may also result in emotional abuse.

**Physical child abuse** Physical abuse is the most visible forms of abuse. It is generally defined as "any non-accidental physical injury to the child" and can include striking, kicking, burning, or biting the child, or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child. Suspicious soft tissue injuries include patterned markings (object imprints/bruising) and injuries that don't correlate with the history of the event.

**Child neglect** Child neglect is the most common form of maltreatment. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and/or development. Basic needs include water, food, clothing, shelter, medical care and appropriate supervision to protect from harm. It is an intentional or passive disregard for a child's overall well-being.

**Arizona Statutes** reflecting sexual abuse/exploitation:

ARS 13-1404 Sexual abuse-involving a minor  
 ARS 13-1405 Sexual conduct with a minor  
 ARS 13-1406 Sexual assault- involving a minor  
 ARS 13-3553 Sexual exploitation of a minor

**Statement of Compliance:** signed by all volunteers and paid employees agreeing to abide by the requirements and procedures set forth in the Safe Church Policy of CCoF

**Student volunteer:** anyone who has completed grade 5 to age 18, who provides services for the church without being paid. These are the age limits that an adult volunteer and a student volunteer can serve in a ministry area that involves youth and children:

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Volunteer Age Limit to Serve</b>
High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	23 yrs.
Middle School (6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	18 yrs.
Later Childhood (2 <sup>nd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	14 yrs.
Early Childhood (Birth-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade)	12 yrs.

**Volunteer:** a person, student or adult, who provides services for the church without being paid. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, teams, committees, or other groups.

**Youth:** anyone who has completed grade 5 to age 18

## **Policies and Procedures Regarding Volunteers and Employees**

As an organization committed to the prevention of abuse and sexual abuse in the church, CCoF requires that all employees and volunteers who work with children, youth, or adults with developmental disabilities will be selected, screened, trained and supervised to minimize the risk of abuse by volunteers or employees of CCoF.

### **A. General Criteria**

1. All policies and procedures on the calling and screening of employees and volunteers who work specifically with children and youth shall be in compliance with Arizona regulations on child abuse (ARS 13-3620, 3623).
2. Screening shall be valid for a period of three years for actively-serving employees and volunteers.
3. Information obtained through the application and screening form, personal interview, reference checks, and criminal references will be kept confidential.
4. Any adult or youth who has been convicted of or pled guilty to child abuse or has a criminal conviction noting child endangerment will not be permitted to work directly with children and youth in any capacity under any circumstances.
5. All volunteers who work directly with children and youth shall ordinarily be:
  - Having attended CCoF for at least 6 months. Exceptions to this will be considered for college students who have 1 year of prior ministry experience in a similar ministry.
6. The Children and Youth ministries shall maintain a list of volunteers with clearances, willing to be called at the last minute to fill in for a nursery worker, children worker, or youth coach, so that teams the 2-person rule is in play with children and youth at all times.
7. All workers, paid or volunteer, are required to complete a training session on the church's abuse prevention policy. Completion of the training indicates they have read the Policy and Protocols, understand its meaning and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with said Policy and Protocols.
8. All volunteers are required to wear photographic identification when engaged in direct ministry with children, youth, or adults with developmental disabilities
9. All employees are required to wear photographic identification at all times while working or while engaged in ministry events on or off campus. Non-compliance

with this requirement or any other conditions of the Safe Church Policy may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

#### **B. Screening of Employees and Volunteers**

The procedure for calling and screening all employees and volunteers who work directly with children and youth will ordinarily consist of the following:

1. **Application:** is to be completed by the applicant, filling out answers to all information and questions and providing three references. As a part of this process, each applicant shall sign a statement indicating they have read the CCoF Safe Church Policy Manual.
2. **Background Check:** All employment applicants and adults who want to volunteer directly with children and youth will undergo a national criminal records check. A volunteer who does not comply will not be allowed to serve.
3. **References:** All references will be contacted by CCoF personnel with 2 of the 3 contacting references responding before continuing with the screening process.
4. **Face-to-Face Interview:** will be assigned and coordinated with a non-ministry interviewer (staff or trained volunteer)
5. **Monitoring:** Initial monitoring of new volunteers will consist of 6 week evaluation period by both volunteer and ministry leader. Background checks will be redone every 3 years for employees and volunteers working with children and youth.

#### **Safe Church Task Force/Safe Church Administrator**

The Safe Church Task Force and the Safe Church Administrator are to implement policies, procedures and protocols for the screening of volunteers and employees who work directly with children and youth; and, to provide training and education programs aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse.

#### **A. Powers and Duties of the Safe Church Task Force:**

1. Provide adult and student volunteer training for new volunteers who work directly with children and youth and all new employees, at least once a year, regarding the policies and procedures of CCoF.
2. Review annually the policies of Youth Ministry and Children's Ministry to determine compliance with this policy and to recommend changes as needed.
3. Maintain liability insurance covering sexual misconduct on the part of an employee, volunteer, or other person acting on its behalf.
4. Make a report to church leadership on the administration of its responsibilities and suggest any recommendations for revisions/changes to this policy.
5. Conduct periodic inspections of the building in concert with the Trustees and insurance advisors, looking for ways to make the property safe from abuse (e.g., windows in classroom doors, locks for boiler rooms and closets, etc.).

#### **B. Membership:**

1. Chairperson who is a member Executive Leadership Team
2. Staff person from Children's Ministry
3. Staff person from Youth Ministry
4. Staff person from Abundant Life Preschool

5. Member of the congregation at large- preferable in public sector work with children
6. Training will be done each year to enable task force members to fulfill their responsibilities.

**C. Powers and Duties of the Safe Church Task Force:**

1. Maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained through the application and screening form, reference checks, criminal records check and child abuse clearance.
2. Review applications of adult and student volunteers that need a new background check for 3 year renewal.
3. Recommend all policy revisions to the Executive Leadership Team
4. Provide information about abuse and the church's policy on abuse in the church publications and/or website for transparency.

**Training and Education**

People with an inclination toward abuse are greatly inhibited when a church is diligent in providing training and education about the nature and consequences of abuse as a violation of God's will and purpose for the church.

Training and education to prevent abuse at CCoF is designed for volunteers and employees, and for creating awareness in the congregation. Employees and volunteers who work directly with children and youth will have periodic training. All employees will have training at the beginning of their employment and annually thereafter. All volunteers will have training at the beginning of their service, annually, and when they are rescreened thereafter.

**A. Training and Education of Volunteers and Employees.**

This does not apply to contract employees who do not work directly with children and youth. Training sessions are offered as needed for new employees and new volunteers who work directly with children and youth.

On-going training shall be mandatory and held once a year and ordinarily include, but not be limited to the following topics:

1. Sexual abuse awareness
2. Mandatory Reporting
3. Team discussion on reporting scenarios
4. CCoF Policies and Safe Church Document review
5. Do's and Don'ts and 4 Questions when a child makes a disclosure
6. Sign a statement of compliance agreeing to abide by the requirements set forth in the Safe Church Policy of CCoF

**B. Intention of transparency and disclosure with the CCoF congregation.**

Information highlighting our Safe Church Policy, for prevention of abuse, shall be made available to the congregation through CCoF's website or a printed copy is available at the church office.

## SAFE CHURCH PROTOCOLS

CCoF implements its Safe Church Policy with the following Safe Church Protocols. The Protocols are the guidelines ordinarily followed by church ministries. The Safe Church Task Force shall monitor and revise Protocols.

### Protocol Regarding Classrooms and Events

Incidents of child sexual abuse or impropriety are decreased by keeping perpetrators from having access to potential victims such as children and youth. The Safe Church Task Force shall be responsible for implementing the following protocols:

#### A. General Criteria

##### 1. *Two Person Rule:*

Employees and volunteers who work directly with children and youth will work in teams of two. Normally at least 1 adult and 1 student volunteer who are not related to one another shall be present at all activities sponsored by CCoF involving children and youth. A room cannot be opened until the Two Rule has been met.

##### 2. *Exceptions:*

- a. Exceptions to this two-person rule would be:
  - i. A situation in which the meeting occurs in a place where other people continually flow in and out of the area where the adult is working with children and youth.
  - ii. When a parent or legal guardian has consented for a one-on-one meeting to occur, the meeting with any child or youth shall be held in a room with an unobstructed window in the door or with the door open or in a public area offsite such as a coffee shop, mall, etc.
  - iii. During the designated High School Neighborhood Group event/meeting and when only 1 leader is available to lead the group, the group will move to a public location.
  - iv. As soon as feasible, either during the activity or at its conclusion, an adult worker (program director or volunteer) who is the only adult present during an activity involving children and youth should report that fact either to the immediate supervisor or pastor.
  - v. Abundant Life Preschool staff are exempt from this rule as long as they are in compliance with AZ State licensing and regulations concerning adult/child classroom ratios and mandated employee supervision.
- b. Employees and volunteers who by doing so assume full responsibility may supervise their own children without a second person. This exception permits the hiring of a child care provider to supervise the children within the confines of an employee's work space.

#### B. Criteria for Communication Policy (Social Media)

No inappropriate communication with children or youth is allowed.

1. "Communication" is defined as any communication with children or youth that takes place in person, in writing, over the phone, computer internet, text messaging, phone or tablet applications or e-mail.
2. "Inappropriate" is defined as content that is degrading, sexual, slanderous, suggestive, vulgar, explicit or predatory.

### **C. Criteria for On-Site Events**

1. *Times for Drop-Off and Pick-Up:*
  - a. Children and youth may arrive no more than 20 minutes prior to the time scheduled for the event. Children and youth must be picked up no more than 20 minutes after the ending time of the scheduled event.
  - b. Parents may not leave a child or youth at any event or on the church premises unless two approved volunteers and/or program staff are present.
  - c. Each ministry area responsible for an event must provide two approved volunteers and/or program staff to wait with children and youth until all children are picked up.
  - d. In the event of a parental emergency and the parent is unable to pick up a child, transportation may be provided with oral permission of the parent to the event leader.
2. *Doors and Windows in Offices and Classrooms:* All offices, conference rooms, and classrooms shall have an unobstructed window in the door. Rooms used in conjunction with children or youth classes or activities shall have a window or have the door open when in use. One-on-one counseling with any child or youth shall be held in a room with an unobstructed window in the door or with the door open.
3. *Dismissal Protocol:*
  - a. Children up through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be released only to properly identified and pre-authorized adults or siblings.
  - b. No child or youth will be dismissed to someone who is visibly impaired. (The police will be notified if there is a forced attempt to take a child in this situation.)
4. *Bathroom Protocol for Toddlers and Preschoolers:* Bathroom doors in toddler and preschool classrooms shall remain partially open, unless the parent accompanies the child in the bathroom.

### **D. Protocol for Out-of -Town Events**

1. Written permission by use of the Release for Out-of-Town Event and the CCoF Medical Release shall be issued for each Out-of-Town event. Forms shall include medical release information, permission to attend specified events, and emergency contact phone numbers. All forms must be signed and turned in prior to departure.
2. Staff or volunteers transporting children or youth for church sponsored events will not normally be alone with one child or youth, unless a parent or legal guardian has signed permission for one-on-one transportation to occur. In the event of a parental emergency and the parent is unable to pick up a child or youth,

transportation may be provided with oral permission of the parent to the event leader.

3. Adequate supervision ratios of adults to children/youth will be established by church staff overseeing said age groups.

## **Protocol for Responding to and Reporting Disclosures of Abuse**

### **A. Reporting Suspected Abuse**

1. *Mandatory reporting according to Arizona law:*
  - a. *Mandated Reporters.* Arizona Child Protective Services Law requires people who, in the course of their employment, come in contact with children or youth to report suspected child abuse. These people are called “mandated reporters” for suspected child abuse. Pastors as mandated reporters are to call Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline, 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445). (A-7, A.R.S. s. 13-3620)
  - b. Failure to report known or suspected child maltreatment is a crime punishable under Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S) s. 13-3620
  - c. Mandated reporters who suspect abuse should ask only these four questions:
    - What happened?
    - Who did this?
    - Where were you when it happened?
    - When did it happen?
2. *Suspected abuse to be reported to the designated program director or pastor by a volunteer or employee, who:*
  - a. Through direct observation or firsthand knowledge, knows that another volunteer or employee has abused a child, youth, or adult with developmental disabilities.
  - b. Receives a direct report from a child, youth, or adult with developmental disabilities that another volunteer or employee has abused him or her.
  - c. Has a reasonable suspicion that another volunteer or employee has abused a child, youth, or adult with developmental disabilities.
  - d. Has a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred by someone other than a volunteer or employee.
  - e. Through direct observation or firsthand knowledge, knows that abuse has occurred by someone other than a volunteer or employee.
3. *Procedure for Reporting Allegations of Abuse:*
  - a. A volunteer suspecting abuse is to first contact the designated program director in their ministry area or a pastor of the church.
  - b. A program director or pastor will immediately consult with the appropriate agency to report any suspected abuse. Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline, 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445) or Law Enforcement may be the preferred contact due to imminent danger situations (Flag PD 928-774-1414 Dispatch). The program director or pastor will complete a written CCoF Incident/Accident Report (See Appendix XXX) regarding any suspicion, knowledge, or report of

child abuse within 48 hours. A copy of the report will be retained by the Safe Church Administrator in confidential storage.

- c. The program director or pastor will notify the appropriate people on the Executive Team immediately.
- d. Unless the suspected abuser is the parent or guardian, the parent or guardian will be contacted as soon as possible by a program director or pastor.
- e. The individual making a report of alleged abuse shall not reveal the existence or content of the report to any person other than those to whom reporting is necessary.
- f. Nothing in these protocols shall be construed as preventing anyone from making a report to an authority if they themselves believe it is necessary in order to protect the child or youth.

4. *Information Required in an Incident Report:*

Information obtained for the purpose of documenting an allegation of abuse does not constitute an investigation on the part of CCoF or the reporter. When documenting a disclosure from a child it's best to use quotes whenever possible to document exactly what the child said. Some of the information may not be available at the time of reporting.

- a. Name, age, gender, address, phone number of the victim and parents or other person responsible for the care of the victim
- b. Name, age, gender, address, phone number of the alleged offender
- c. Nature of the alleged abuse or misconduct
- d. Reason for suspecting abuse or misconduct
- e. Number of times the alleged misconduct occurred
- f. Date and location of each incident
- g. Relationship between the victim and alleged offender
- h. Other evidence such as eyewitnesses who support the allegation
- i. Reporter's relationship to the victim
- j. Actions taken by the reporting adult, program director or pastor such as responding to the victim, talking to the parent(s), reporting to a government official, or obtaining medical care for the victim

5. *Information Provided to a Parent or Guardian about an Alleged Abuse:*

- a. Advise the person that Arizona law requires making an immediate oral report to Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline, 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445) or Law Enforcement.
- b. Advise the person that professional counseling and pastoral care are available.
  - Inform the person he or she may contact the appropriate civil and/or criminal authorities.
- c. Offer the person a copy of CCoF's Safe Church Policy and Protocols.

**B. The Executive Team shall:**

- 1. Be informed upon submission of the oral report to the Executive Pastor, an attorney representing CCoF (as needed), and the program director or pastor overseeing the ministry area in which the incident occurred.

2. *Within 48 hours of submission of the oral report the response team shall:*
  - a. Notify the liability carrier of CCoF.
  - b. At its discretion, if the accused is a church volunteer, relieve that person immediately of his/her duties until the investigation is completed. If the accused is a church employee, that person will be directed to leave the premises immediately and will be placed on administrative leave with pay until such time as the investigation is completed. Any investigation shall be limited to that conducted by the appropriate civil authorities or criminal law enforcement authorities.
  - c. When appropriate, prepare a public statement to convey news to the congregation and the media. The names of the alleged victim and the accused will be withheld from all such statements.
  - d. Determine who needs to know about the incident of alleged abuse.



### SAFE CHURCH POLICY MANUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The Safe Church Policy Manual describes important information about the church, and I understand that I should consult my ministry director regarding any questions not answered in the manual.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the manual may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that the revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this manual is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document.

I have received the manual, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this manual and any revisions made to it.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_