

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH - CHILD SAFETY TRAINING

Why do we need the child protective policies/procedures in our church?

We desire to be a church that values children and provides a caring environment in which each one can learn about the love of God. In order for that environment to flourish, structure is necessary to provide objective guidelines. There are three main considerations: the safety of each child/youth entrusted to our ministries, protection of volunteers against any allegation, and the legal protection of the church. It is the desire of the children's ministry team to raise the awareness level and increase understanding of the issues surrounding sexual abuse, but is not intended to cause undue suspicion.

Sexual abuse is any contact or interaction (visual, verbal, or psychological) between a child/adolescent and an adult when the child/adolescent is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or any other person. The Wounded Heart by Dr. Dan Allender c. 1995.

Summary of Legal Definition in NYS: A sexually abused child is a child less than eighteen years of age whose parent- or other person legally responsible for his/her care- commits or allows to be committed a sex offense against such child, as defined in the Penal law; commits incest; allows, permits or encourages such child to engage in acts or conduct which constitute prostitution or a sexual performance.

The New York State Penal law can be found at: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?cl=82&a=> Articles 130 (Title HA 130) and Article 235 (Title MA 235) pertain to sexual abuse.

Notes:

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES **OF CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

I. WORKER SELECTION - All workers require screening - both paid and volunteer

Primary:

- An application
- A personal interview
- Reference checks - personal and previous church
- Completion of criminal records check authorization form - used as appropriate

Secondary:

- “Six month” rule - only regular attenders will be allowed to serve with minors
- Adults with a history of criminal child abuse violations will not work with minors
- Adult survivors of child abuse must meet with pastor or professional staff
- Obtain an agreement to follow policies
- Attend membership classes

II. WORKER SUPERVISION

Two adult rule - an adult should not be alone with a child/youth
The two adults are not related

Train employees and volunteers

- Provide information on sexual abuse
- Inform regarding all safety policies and procedures

Child/parent identification system for babies and toddlers

Windows on classroom doors

Adequate staffing

- Supervisory personnel “Administrator” - an adult who is on-call for any needs (especially bathroom) and randomly observes the classrooms

Behavioral parameters:

- Adult volunteers are strictly prohibited from having sole custody of a minor with few exceptions (e/g/, a younger brother or sister of the adult volunteer, or parental permission has been obtained and a member of the church staff has been notified in advance of the meeting).

Parental permission for sponsored activities - all adult supervisors and helpers screened

Confront suspicious behavior or anything inconsistent with the safety policies and procedures immediately - tell children's ministry director

GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE CONTACT

APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE

SECURITY

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Minimum of two care providers at all times.2. Supervision or witness of any contact of same or opposite sex.3. Release of a babies and toddlers only to a person with proper ID. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Care providers alone with a child.2. Time with same or opposite sex without supervision.3. Release of a babies and toddlers without proper ID - in case of a problem, staff releases |
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DISCIPLINE

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Praising the specific behaviors you want to see in your group (i.e. "good listening," "thank you for waiting")2. A firm gentle voice addressing and redirecting the behavior (i.e. "you are running; walk, please")3. Confidential parental discussion when necessary.4. Age appropriate "time outs" or withdrawal from activity. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Corporal punishment of any kind.2. Any words or tone that would cause a child to think he/she is the "problem" rather than specific behavior being addressed (e.g. screaming at child).3. Any words that could cause feelings of condemnation or shame in a child about any aspect of their person... including derisive references to anything physical, emotional, mental, or position (or station) in life, such as saying, "Are you a strong boy? Strong boys don't cry," or "Shame on you." |
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PHYSICAL CONTACT

APPROPRIATE

1. Physical contact of:
 - * non-demanding, gentle touch of shoulders, hands, arms, head, back;
 - * sitting child on leg (appropriate only at preschool or kindergarten age level).
 - * “high fives,” or shaking hands

INAPPROPRIATE

1. Physical contact of:
 - * kissing;
 - * demanding hugs and kisses;
 - * touching chest, genital area, upper legs, buttocks, waist, stomach;
 - * sitting child in center of lap
 - * sitting child above age 6 on one or both legs;
 - * opposite sex piggy back rides;
 - * seductiveness or suggestive contact.
2. Physical contact of any kind which is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of care providers.
3. Any touching used to express power or control over a child.

BATHROOM PROCEDURES

Infant, Toddler, 2,3
Parents will be called to change diapers

At ANY age...
Being alone with a child in the bathroom.

Bathroom Policy - all children

- * Check the registration information to assess parent preference - it is their choice whether they will be called from the service when their child needs to go to the bathroom.
- * Administrator will call parent or take child to the bathroom - wait until the bathroom is clear of other people, stand at the open door. Children will be encouraged to do the best they can. If further assistance is needed, the parent will be called.

A worker changing diapers.
Any closed door situation with a child.

The administrator is the only person who will take a child to the bathroom.

III. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

What should I do if I see or hear of something that may not be appropriate?

As soon as you are able, consult with the Children's Ministry Director or Life Stage Ministry Director in the church. They will work together with you and the Pastor to determine what steps should be taken. If there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse, the designated church reporter will make the call to the child abuse hotline. As a church, we do not make a determination as to the truth of the suspicion. We would then cooperate fully with any parties investigating the incident. In the event that the church team determines that a hotline call is not warranted and you feel that it should be, it is your responsibility to make that call (1-800-342-3720).

The volunteer or staff person bringing the concern must immediately complete the Observed Concern/Injury Form which documents the behavioral and verbal specifics which relate to the incident.

Are you a mandatory or permissive reporter under state law?

In New York State, clergy and church officials are not mandatory reporters.

"Mandatory reporters (as defined by state law) face criminal penalties for not reporting. Permissive reporters are permitted to report but they are not legally required to do so. However, it is possible that permissive reporters who do not report reasonable suspicions of abuse will be sued later by victims who allege that their suffering was perpetuated by the failure to report. Therefore, do not automatically dismiss a duty to report on the ground that you are merely a permissive reporter under state law."

Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church c. 1993 p.54

We desire to be faithful to God in honoring the safety of the children in our care.

IV. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

All allegations need to be taken seriously.

Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality - go to the appropriate leader, not to a friend.

The church will immediately contact insurance carrier.

Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of a church attorney.

Adequate care must be shown for the well-being of the victims.

The victim should not be held responsible in any way.

Maintain adequate records: applications, references, interviews

Document efforts of handling the situation

The Senior Pastor will be the spokesperson for the church.

**** Please contact the trainer with any questions pertaining to the safety of the children at Cornerstone Community Church. Trainer: Beverly Babcock 853-4727**

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH
CHILD SAFETY TRAINING

I have attended the two hour training in which the child safety policies/procedures were explained and I agree to follow all policies/procedures of Cornerstone Community Church. These policies/procedures have been explained in a manner in which I understand and I have a written copy to take home for review. Topics covered included: general information on child sexual abuse, guidelines for appropriate behavior and discipline, bathroom procedures, the necessity of screening staff and volunteers, appropriate supervision, reporting obligations and a general understanding of our church's response to an allegation. Should I have any questions regarding any of these policies/procedures, I will contact the trainer.

Trainer's Name: Beverly Babcock

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____