

# Christian Faith Center's Safety Awareness Program

Working Together to Keep Our Church Community Safe  
January 2016



# Introduction

Welcome to the Church Safety Awareness Course. This course is for all volunteers at Christian Faith Center to better understand how we can work together to keep everyone safe. We will discuss what we can do to eliminate the risk of abuse to children. We will also cover appropriate interactions among church members.

# Please Complete this Course Away from Minors

We will be dealing with some concepts, which may be difficult to address so we strongly recommend this course be completed away from minors. All topics will be covered in a sensitive manner however, we do advise that this course be taken independently and away from children.

Ministries Working Together

# Ministries Working Together

The church is home to many different ministries.

Every Ministry is important.

# Ministries Working Together

We all work together. Just as the disciples served however they were needed, we too are to serve wherever we are needed.

When we look at our service from this perspective, we realize that we truly are the “hands and feet of Jesus.”

# Child Safety Awareness

Keeping Children and Youth Safe from Sexual Abuse



# Child Safety Awareness

If a person is not in a safe environment, be that mentally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually – we cannot minister effectively.

We want to eliminate the chance of anyone being harmed... especially children.

# What is Abuse?

The State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families defines abuse as:

The physical, sexual or emotional harm or risk of harm to a child under the age of 18 caused by a parent or other person who acts as a caregiver for the child.

# Types of Sexual Abuse

## Touching

Fondling

Intercourse

Forcible Rape

Oral, Anal, and/or Genital Penetration

## Non-Touching

Allowing Children to view Sexual Acts

Obscene Phone calls, texts, email, etc.

Exhibitionism

Pornographic Video Viewing

# Spotting a Sex Offender

Many think that they can spot a Child Molester based on his/her appearance.

A Sex Offender can be ANYONE.

Children at the highest risk of sexual abuse are Pre-Teens and Teens.

# Our Goal

**Our goal is to eliminate the RISK of an incident.**

Many people don't perceive that the danger of child sexual abuse is real.

In order for children to grow in their faith, we are to provide a safe environment, which will promote spiritual growth.

Victims of child sexual abuse deal with devastating effects. These effects can last a lifetime.

# Our Goal

We are committed to making this church the safest place for adults and children to grow spiritually.

# The Christian Faith Center Policy Statement

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention



# Reviewing the Policy Statement Regarding Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

In order to prevent such incidents from occurring, the church has put together a policy statement regarding child sexual abuse. This statement includes the requirements for becoming a volunteer, the supervision of minors both on and off church property, reporting incidents of abuse, and responding to allegations of abuse. Please read through the Policy Statement carefully.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

The members and staff of Christian Faith Center (CFC) are committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children and youth are protected from sexual abuse, physical abuse and/or neglect. Our goals are to protect children and youth in church programs, to educate workers and caregivers concerning abuse issues and to protect staff and volunteers, as well as the church as a whole, from potential allegations of abuse and neglect.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

## **I. Policy Statement regarding Screening of Compensated Workers and Volunteers.**

- 1) Individuals who are 18 years or over, who would like to work with children or youth are asked to complete a Children's Ministry Volunteer Screening Form which will include a criminal background check. The Background Check will be performed prior to any volunteer and/or paid work with minors.
- 2) Personal interviews will be required of all compensated workers and may be required of volunteers who have contact with children or youth.
- 3) Reference checks may also be made on all paid and volunteer workers.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

4) All information provided in the Screening Form, as well as any information collected through reference checks or other investigation or inquiries, is to be considered confidential Church property and is not to be released to any other party except on a need-to-know basis with the approval of the Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children's Ministry Director.

5) Christian Faith Center reserves the right to deny a potential and/or current volunteer from volunteering in any given ministry at any time.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

## **II. Policy Statement for Workers with Children and Youth.**

- 1) Persons who have been convicted of, or pled guilty to, physical and/or sexual abuse of children, or against whom such charges are pending, will not be allowed to work with children or youth.
- 2) All adult volunteers with youth or children are to be active members of the church who have been attending the church for six consecutive months. If not, they are asked to wait the six month period prior to becoming actively involved in the various ministries of CFC.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

## III. Policy Statement for Supervision of Workers with Children or Youth.

1) In classroom-type situations, for groups of children or youth who are ages 2 years and older, a single worker may be present as long as there are 3 or more children are present in the room. In non-classroom type situations, two workers should be present at all times during any activity involving children or youth, even if only one child or youth is present. This rule reduces the risk of abuse and also reduces the risk of false accusations.

If it is necessary for an adult to be alone with a child or youth, parental permission or authorization from the appropriate age group minister should be obtained. Such one-on-one situations should be avoided whenever possible by utilizing the “Two Adult Policy”(no child is to be left alone with only one other adult).

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

2) Questionable or inappropriate behavior should be reported immediately to the appropriate ministry leader; as such conduct can precede abuse, even though the observed act itself does not constitute abuse. (This includes excessive hugging, stroking, etc.) The person who displayed the behavior is to be approached by both the witness and a ministry leader to discuss that such behavior is inappropriate. Should the individual continue these inappropriate behaviors, he/she will be asked to step down from the volunteer position.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

3) Should a minor attempt to initiate inappropriate behavior with an adult or another child, (including inappropriate advances, gestures, comments, etc.) the appropriate ministry leader is to be contacted immediately. The ministry leader will contact the parent with either the witness or a church leader (such as a minister) immediately to discuss the incident to prevent future occurrences. A report will be made and placed into the child's personal file. Should these behaviors continue the child will be removed from the children's/youth ministry program until such time that the child can behave appropriately.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

- 4) If a person desires to plan an activity off church property, he/she must request permission from the appropriate ministry leader and always have at least one other adult present.
- 5) Classrooms used by children or youth are modified to include windows made of shatter-proof glass either in the doors or walls. Doors should be kept open when feasible.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

## **IV. Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Abuse of a Child or Youth.**

1) Incidents of abuse or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse of children or youth will be reported as soon as possible to the CFC minister or director directly responsible for the area of ministry where the incident occurred. Reports will initially be made orally and then in writing by completing an “Incident Report” Sheet.

2) If warranted, a report of the alleged incident of abuse or suspected abuse will be filed to the NJ Department of Child and Family services within twenty-four (24) hours or verify that such a report has been made. The person reporting the incident will document, in writing, all known facts and circumstances.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

3) Reports from persons requesting to remain anonymous will be made by telephone in the presence of a witness of the reporter's own choosing to verify the filing of the oral report.

4) All adult members of CFC, staff, and other adults participating in programs on the property of the church **are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse of children or youth.** They will be encouraged not to hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, inappropriate. The Church will be supportive of individuals who in good faith make reports of actual or reasonably suspected cases of abuse. All reports will be taken seriously but not judged prematurely.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

5) Organizations that use CFC facilities, and have reporting procedures of their own, will follow their established reporting practices. In addition to following their notification procedures, any organization that uses CFC facilities will also notify the Senior Pastor or his designee as soon as possible about any incident or suspected incident of abuse involving any person affiliated with such organization while using CFC church facilities.

6) The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

## **V. Responding to Allegations of Abuse of a Child or Youth.**

- 1) Every allegation will be taken seriously. Adequate care and respect must be offered to the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators until the allegation can be substantiated or cleared.
- 2) All procedures listed in the previous section on Reporting are to be followed.
- 3) All records relating to the matter will be maintained in confidential files.
- 4) All efforts in handling the situation will be carefully documented.
- 5) The parents/guardians of the suspected victim will be notified immediately.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

- 6) The liability insurer and attorney for the Church will be notified about the incident by the Senior Pastor or his designee, as appropriate.
- 7) The safety and security of the child must be safeguarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.
- 8) The Senior Pastor or his designee will be the sole spokesperson for the Church insofar as inquiries are concerned. The individual is to be confronted only after discussing the issue with the NJ Department of Child and Family Services.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

10) Any person accused must be treated with dignity and support. That person will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities, as circumstances dictate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

# Policy Statement: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

## **VI. Training and Education.**

All compensated workers and volunteers who work with minors will be trained regarding protection of children and youth from sexual abuse and protection of adults from false accusations of abuse. This initial training will include the following:

- a) The need for the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy.
- b) Church policies governing working with children and youth.
- c) Procedures for reporting observed or suspected misconduct mentioned above in responding to Allegations.

# Keeping Kids Safe

As ministry workers, it is our responsibility to make sure children are safe throughout the church.

# Ways to Eliminate the Risk of Abuse

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## **Two Adult Rule.**

No child should be alone with only one other person.

The two adult policy provides accountability and protection for all of our volunteers as well as for the children.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## Two Adult Rule

Call for Back Up, by contacting an Usher or another volunteer. If you are in another ministry and you see Children's Ministry Worker in need of assistance and you are able to help - Lend a helping hand.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## **Diaper Changing Policy.**

Volunteers are not allowed to change diapers of children who are not their own.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## **Bathroom Policy**

When children are using the bathroom, it is to be empty prior to a child entering. Children's Ministry volunteers bring young children to the bathroom but do NOT assist with toileting. Ushers and other volunteers are to be nearby to keep the two adult rule in place. They verify the child went to the bathroom independently and that the child returned safely to class.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## Bathroom Policy

Should a child need assistance, an usher or volunteer can help keep the two adult rule in place while the Children's Ministry Volunteer locates the parent. (For Nursery through use of the pager system, for young children by locating the parent/caregiver in the sanctuary.) The parent is to bring the child back to the classroom when he/she is finished.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## **Sign in & Dismissal Procedures for Children.**

Caregivers are asked to register children in Children's Ministry Classes.

Caregivers specify who is allowed to pick up the child at the close of service.

Youth Group Students are dismissed at the end of class to their caregivers.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## **Physical Touch.**

If a child initiates appropriate contact (hugs, etc.) that's OK. If a child begins to act inappropriately let the parent know and document the incident on an incident report. Try to have the child sit next to the volunteer not directly on the volunteers lap to avoid private areas. Should the child initiate inappropriate touching/behavior to himself/herself or to another individual, notify the Children's Ministry Director immediately.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

## **Church Events.**

All events which take place on or off church property and involve minors are to be approved by the senior pastor.

Permission slips are to be utilized as needed.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

To keep our children safe the church's Policy Statement is followed. We are to use the two adult rule remembering that **no** child is to be alone with only one other adult.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

Child protection policies are in place to keep both children and volunteers safe. They are to be followed for all events involving minors both on and off church property.

# Ways to Eliminate Risk of Abuse

Isolation, accountability, and power determine the amount of risk of an incident to occur to a minor.

# Isolation

By making sure students are not alone in the building or with one other person, we remove the chance of a child being isolated and the chance of an incident decreases.

# Accountability

The Two Adult Rule helps keep everyone accountable.



# Power

Removing the offender's power by working together.



# Ways to Eliminate the Risk of Abuse

We want to eliminate ANY and ALL risk of an incident occurring. Working together, we truly do keep our children safe.

# What Should You Do?

Think about these scenarios. What should you do?



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No child should be alone in the building. Get back up. Locate another volunteer and explain the situation. Together, ask the child to go to her class or to sit in service with her caregiver. If she refuses, locate her caregiver and have him/her come bring her to her correct class or to the Parent & Child room located upstairs across from the Nursery.

# What Should You Do?

**# 2 There has been an activity in the Gym for students ages 10 – 15. A child needs a ride home. You are able to take the child home. As you get ready to go, you remember the “Two Adult Rule” – No child is to be left alone with one adult. What should you do?**

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Ask another volunteer to drive with you to drop the child off at his home.

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One volunteer remains inside the Nursery with the half door open. This volunteer is able to watch both the children in the Nursery as well as the hall at the same time. The second volunteer walks the child to the bathroom and assists the child as best as possible from the hallway and waits outside all while the first volunteer is watching from the Nursery half door. At this point, the volunteer can look in the sanctuary for the child's caregiver for further assistance. Once the caregiver arrives the volunteer is free to return to the Nursery and the Two Adult rule has been kept without any accidents.

# What Should You Do?

**#4 A student in one of the classes begins to act aggressively toward the other children. The volunteer knows that it's her job to keep all children safe and that the child's caregiver needs to be notified. There are two volunteers in the class and 3 children. What should she do?**

# What Should You Do?

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This is the time to call for back up. One volunteer should look for an Usher or any other volunteer who is free, to help. The usher or other volunteer can either go up and find the caregiver or help the volunteer in the classroom as the other locates the caregiver. Once the child's caregiver is found one volunteer can escort them both to the parent and child room for the remainder of service.

# Remember...

Our job is to keep ALL children safe – no matter what ministry we are involved with. If you are able to help out a children's ministry volunteer by being the second adult as a child uses the bathroom or leaves the classroom setting for any reason, help them out. It blesses everyone when you lend a helping hand. And it helps keep our kids, our volunteers, and our church safe.

# What Should You Do?

**# 5 A College Student who use to be a part of the Youth Group returns to church one Sunday for a visit. You see him talking to some of the girls from youth group and then he begins to give a neck massage to one of the girls. Does this situation deserve a response?**

# What Should You Do?

**# 5 A College Student who use to be a part of the Youth Group returns to church one Sunday for a visit. You see him talking to some of the girls from youth group and then he begins to give a neck massage to one of the girls. Does this situation deserve a response?**

Absolutely. We want to eliminate the risk of ANYTHING happening. He is over 18. The girls are minors. Pre-teens and Teens are the most vulnerable to sexual abuse so you should contact the Youth Leader or another volunteer immediately.

Once you have spoken to the Youth Leader or other lead volunteer, TOGETHER go to him and gently let him know that he should not be touching the girls in youth group in that manner. This sends a clear message of not only how to treat others but also that people are watching to keep every child safe.

# Child Sexual Abuse Occurs When It Goes Unreported or Unnoticed.

**Child Molesters will not stay in a ministry in which volunteers are trained to report suspicious behavior by identifying symptoms of child abuse. Abusers thrive on secrecy. There is a higher risk of offenders to commit criminal acts in places they can remain unnoticed. It takes all of us working together to keep our kids safe.**

# Adult to Adult Interactions

Serving with Compassion and Integrity



# Adult to Adult Interactions

As members of the church, we want to promote an atmosphere of safety and love. We want to foster a welcoming environment so people will want to continue to attend the church and grow in their walk with the Lord.

The General Rule is if it “looks” or “feels” inappropriate, it probably is. Keeping this in mind, let’s look at appropriate church greetings.

# Adult to Adult Interactions: Appropriate Greetings

We recommend using these types of greetings: Hand shakes, side-by-side hugs, and the “bottom out” hug. We do NOT recommend “full body hugs” or hugging and rubbing up or down someone’s back.

Too much touching can make people feel comfortable.

We want to stay away from the “appearance” of evil. Following these gestures helps others feel safe, welcomed, and loved.

# Adult to Adult Interactions: Prayer, Counseling & Isolated Interactions

To prevent inappropriate interactions, volunteers who pray and/or counsel others should do so with people of the same gender AND in the presence of others such as in the Sanctuary.

Having others around prevents both inappropriate interactions as well as false accusations.

If at any point, you feel “uncomfortable” regarding a specific incident, contact a Department Head or Pastor.

# Adult to Adult Interactions

- Look out for each other
- Don't Gossip
- Don't Accuse Falsely
- Keep Everyone Safe
- Walk in Love and Compassion

# Conclusion

Inappropriate situations are avoided entirely by these simple changes. Again, we WANT to show the love of Christ to others and we want to keep all of our volunteers and church members safe as well. By following these simple procedures we will be able to cultivate an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and safety. Thank you for volunteering at Christian Faith Center and may the Lord bless you as you are a blessing to this church.