

Child Safety Policy

Community Bible Church of Solano County, Inc.



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1.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

February 24, 2023

- Document created

May 12, 2023

- Added Document History
- Updated chart in section 8.2 “Required Training Hours” to include “Elder Board Members” along with “ordained pastors” and changed number of hours required for volunteers from 4 to 2 hours.
- Added Title to top of page, moved logo.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe policies and procedures for protecting children (under age 18) from abuse at ministries of Community Bible Church. All appropriate personnel in this organization will become familiar with and agree to abide by this policy prior to working with minors.

3.0 MINISTRY PURPOSE

Community Bible Church of Solano County, Inc. (CBC) is an evangelical, non-denominational, Christian church. Our mission is to exalt Christ by making disciples locally and globally. By extension, our mission to the next generation is to disciple the next generation toward a Christ-exalting, mission-minded and biblical worldview.

Because we serve Jesus Christ as Lord, we recognize Him to be the ultimate authority over this church, and His Word to be the clearest expression of His will. This church belongs to Jesus Christ, so we will obey His Word first and foremost. As the Bible instructs, we will always seek to honor the authorities that God has placed over us, but we will not do so if it compromises His expressed will.

The Bible also teaches us that every believer has a duty to protect the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of those most vulnerable among us. (Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 22:6, Mark 9:42, and James 1:27). At CBC we understand the responsibility placed upon our church by both God and parents who entrust children to our care. God's Word teaches us that Christians are to display certain Christlike character qualities, including: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-24). We will always strive to encourage, and demonstrate these attributes in all of our relationships, particularly in working with children or youth.

For these reasons we promote behavior consistent with God's word found in the Bible. Consequently, all who consider a position on our staff, student or children's ministry, shall freely and willingly agree to the standards of behavior outlined in God's Word which are reflected in this policy. The standards included in this policy are not exhaustive; rather, they provide guidelines of conduct that we believe are in accordance with Biblical standards of behavior. As representatives of CBC, we strive to keep our actions above reproach in all things. Consequently, the following standards of conduct shall apply to all staff and volunteers. Violations of these standards by employees are regarded as a serious breach of integrity and could result in discipline, up to and including termination. Violations of these standards by volunteers may result in your removal from volunteer team. Anyone known to pose a threat to children will be prohibited from working in any ministry involving children.

As an employee, regular volunteer or administrator of CBC, I agree to follow the standards of conduct of this ministry.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Organizational Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “**child**” or “**children**” or “**youth**” includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

- **Youth Service Organization:** CBC has activities that involve the direct supervision of children. Youth Service Organization is defined by the State of California in Business and Professions Code section 18975.
- A **regular volunteer** is any volunteer who is 18 years of age or older and who has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year.
- An **occasional volunteer** is any volunteer who is 18 years of age or older and who has contact with children and works less than 16 hours per month or less than 32 hours per year.
- **Employees** includes all employees, whether they work with children or not, including seasonal, occasional, and part-time employees.
- **Administrators** may include ministry leaders include clergy, HR administrators, board members and elders.
- **Mandated Reporters:** California Penal Code section 11165.7 identifies who are considered mandated reporters.

4.2 Child Abuse Definition

In general, **child abuse** is the physical, emotional, or sexual maltreatment, or the neglect of the health, safety, and welfare, or the exposure of a child to unreasonable risk of physical or emotional harm. Signs of abuse may be plainly obvious or they may be subtle, and they may be isolated one-time occurrences, or ongoing and repetitive. Whether or not a situation is ultimately defined as abusive may depend upon the totality of the circumstances of the situation. Child abuse may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Intentionally inflicting injury upon a minor.
- Placing a minor in a situation where they are likely to be injured.
- Engaging or allowing a minor to be engaged in sexual activity.
- Allowing a minor to witness sexual acts or to be exposed to pornographic materials.
- Allowing a minor to witness the abuse of another individual (domestic violence).
- Inflicting excessive punishment upon a minor.
- Giving or allowing a minor to be given or to consume illegal and/or controlled substances.
- Neglecting a minor by withholding or denying food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care, or unnecessarily restricting freedom of movement, or failing to protect a minor.
- Allowing or perpetrating any form of exploitation of a minor.
- Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, any sexual contact or interaction between a minor and an adult or when a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of another adult or minor. Sexual behavior between an adult and a minor can never be viewed as consensual and is always considered nonconsensual even if the minor agrees to or was the one to initiate the behavior.
- Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior attacking a child’s self-worth. It includes belittling, terrorizing, isolating, rejecting, ignoring, and corrupting the child. When continued over a period of time, these activities affect the child’s emotional development.

5.0 ROLES

- **Elders** are the officially-appointed officers of CBC.
- **NextGen Leadership Team** leads the children and student ministries of CBC.
- **NextGen Records Administrator** keeps official records of under-18 ministries.

6.0 MANDATED REPORTERS

According to California’s online *Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training*, mandated reporters are defined generally as “people who come into contact with children as part of their employment, practice of their profession, and sometimes as volunteers in child-serving programs.”

In the context of this church, mandated reports are employees, pastors, and regular volunteers of children/student ministries of CBC.

The following are examples of circumstances in which mandated reporters may exercise vigilance:

- Through contact with children in a regularly-scheduled ministry program, activity, or service.
- As someone makes a specific disclosure to you and the child is identifiable.
- Upon exposure to images or videos of a child being abused.

6.1 Individual Reporting

If you have knowledge of or observe a child who you know or reasonably suspect has been the victim of child abuse, or reasonably suspect that a child is suffering from or at risk of suffering from serious emotional damage, report the known or suspected incident of child abuse to a child protective agency.

6.2 Group Reporting

When two or more persons, who are required to report, jointly have knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement.

In this case, a single report may be made and signed by the selected member of the reporting team.

7.0 SELECTION AND SCREENING

7.1 General Process

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened according to the policies below. These procedures may also apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered (Applicable state and/or local law may regulate at which time during the hiring process and to what extent an employee may ask about an employment applicant’s criminal history).

7.2 Six Month and Membership Rule

No person over 18 will be considered for any regular volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been regularly involved with CBC for a minimum of six (6) months and has become (or is at least in the process of becoming) an official member of CBC.

7.3 Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete an application requesting basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions.

7.4 Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be conducted with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

7.5 Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past.

7.6 Criminal Background Checks

All administrators, employees and regular volunteers must undergo a background check as set forth in Business and Professions Code section 18975 and Penal Code section 11105.3 to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be required to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check.

Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

7.7 Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for workers who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14 to serve in ministry without parental supervision. Those under age 14 must be accompanied by their parents.
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above (with the exception of a background check, which cannot be conducted on minors).
- To the greatest extent possible, teenage workers will be under the general supervision of two mandated reporters and will not be left alone with children.

- Once teenagers turn 18, they will be subject to the full selection and screening process

We will not have any ministry staffed solely by teenagers, as using only underage workers does not meet the requirements of Business and Professions Code section 18975.

7.8 Records Management

All records pertinent to child protection and safety will be kept securely on file with the NextGen Records Administrator of CBC.

8.0 TRAINING

8.1 Child Abuse & Neglect Identification and Reporting Act (CANRA)

Child abuse and neglect, as defined in CANRA (1980), includes: physical abuse, sexual abuse (including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation), willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, and neglect (including both acts and omissions).

An administrator, employee, or regular volunteer of CBC shall individually complete training in child abuse & neglect identification and training in child abuse & neglect reporting consistent with Business and Professions Code 18975(a). This training will cover types of abuse & neglect, what the law requires of mandated reporters, how to spot evidence of child abuse, examples of different types of abuse, how to report abuse, what happens after a report is filed, and more. Prior to employment or volunteering at CBC, this training must be completed.

8.2 Required Training Hours

The following describes the required training hours pertinent to various roles at CBC.

Type or Role	Training Requirement	Equivalent Hours
CBC employees	General Training	4
Ordained Pastors Elder Board Members	General Training	4
	Clergy Training	2
Regular Volunteers	General Training + specialized training if applicable (i.e. sports coaching, camps, etc)	2

9.0 SUPERVISION

9.1 Two Adult Rule

To the greatest extent possible, we will require the presence of two biologically unrelated mandated reporters when ministry activities involve contact with, or supervising, children.

9.2 Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be both closed and locked while persons are inside the room unless experiencing an emergency or emergency drill with procedures that dictate otherwise.

9.3 Restroom Guidelines

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class. However, if children must use the restroom, below are the age-based guidelines.

9.3.1 Children Pre-Kindergarten

- Always go to the restroom in a group.
- Never take them to the bathroom alone.
- Workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, then allow the children inside.
- Workers remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.
- If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

9.3.2 Children K-6

- **Boys:** At least one adult male should take boys to the restroom. **Girls:** At least one adult female should take girls.
- Workers should check the bathroom first to ensure the bathroom is empty, then allow the children inside.
- Worker remains outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.
- For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

9.4 Check-in/out Procedures

Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity. They must remain at their assigned post until all people in their care have been picked up by an authorized person.

For grades 6 and under, no children should be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation. Workers are to release children grades 6 and below in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child.

10.0 INJURIES AND MEDICATIONS

10.1 Injuries

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

10.2 Medications at Weekly Meetings

For our weekly ministries, it is the policy of CBC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the appropriate leaders to develop a plan of action.

11.0 DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of CBC not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their particular ministry pastor/elder when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. The Pastors/Elders of CBC who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.

12.0 REPORTING ABUSE

Mandated reporters must report to a county child welfare department, child protective services or to local law enforcement (police or sheriff's department) immediately by phone. A written report must then be sent within 36 hours by fax or electronically (if available). Written reports must be submitted on the California Suspected Child Abuse Form 8572. This form can be found at the California DOJ website: https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss_8572.pdf

More information on mandated reporting can be found at the Mandated California Reporter training website, located here: <https://mandatedreporterca.com/about/faq>

13.0 APPENDICES

13.1 Appendix A: Investigations

The following describes our policies for outside investigations. This section is subject to review. Most of it comes from template.

1. CBC considers any allegation of abuse or neglect a serious matter. If appropriate each situation will be fully investigated first through civil authorities, then by ministry leaders following a consultation with qualified legal counsel. The ministry will not interfere with a pending law enforcement investigation.
2. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to the abuse or molestation will be terminated consistent with the established employment practices of this ministry.
3. Volunteer subjects of any investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
4. This ministry will permanently remove any employees or volunteers from all activities related to the organization if they are found guilty of abuse or molestation. Whenever termination of employment is a factor, we also will consult with legal counsel.

13.2 Appendix B: Law Enforcement

The following describes our policies for interactions with law enforcement. This section is subject to review. Most of it comes from template.

1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers of CBC will cooperate fully with law enforcement or governmental agencies investigating abuse and neglect.
2. The leadership of this ministry will seek legal counsel as soon as possible after we receive notice of possible abuse or molestation within the organization and a report will be provided to our insurance carrier. Advice from legal counsel will be the basis for our response to the allegations.

13.3 Appendix C: News Media

The following describes our policies for interactions with news media.

A designated member of our CBC pastoral staff or our attorney will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. Our spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, doing so in a prudent manner to avoid compromising an ongoing investigation and to maintain the privacy of the individuals involved.