

Faith and Conduct Policies for Staff and Volunteers

Children/Youth Workers' Responsibilities

A youth worker is an individual who supervises or has custody of any child under the age of 18. This would include, but not be limited to, nursery attendants, elementary program teachers, youth group leaders, assistants, Bible study childcare volunteers, etc.

1. Procedures for maintaining a safe environment

- a. All youth workers should pray regularly for the children in our church, thanking God for the privilege of ministering to them and asking him to protect them from any kind of harm; workers should also pray that God would give them wisdom and discernment so that they will be sensitive to ways to help and protect the children.
- b. All youth workers must read this policy statement, especially the sections describing signs of abuse and youth workers' responsibility to report inappropriate behavior. This policy statement shall be made readily available to all youth workers.
- c. Whenever practicable, youth workers will work together in teams of at least two people.

2. Responsibility of youth workers to admonish or report inappropriate behavior

- a. There are two problems that youth workers should watch for:
 - (1) Behavior by anyone in this church, especially a youth worker, that indicates that he or she may be inclined to abuse, molest, or otherwise harm any child, especially one under the care of this church.
 - (2) Indications that a child under the care of this church is being abused, molested, neglected, or otherwise harmed, whether by someone in this church or outside this church.
- b. Admonishing and reporting inappropriate behavior by a youth worker
 - (1) If you observe a youth worker (or another member of the church) talking or acting in a manner that seems to be innocent but might appear to others to be inappropriate, you should privately admonish that person and encourage him or her to exercise greater care in words and actions (see Matt. 18:15).

- (2) If you observe a youth worker (or another member of the church) talking or acting in a manner that gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of improper involvement with a child, or of the potential for improper involvement with a child, you should promptly report your concern to the staff member assigned to that ministry area, who will look into the matter and take appropriate corrective measures.
- (3) Behaviors to watch for in youth/children workers:
 - (a) Inappropriate comments about sexual matters, especially about or in the presence of children.
 - (b) Use of pornography, including inclination toward sexually explicit television shows, movies, books, or magazines.
 - (c) Excessive and inappropriate attention to a particular child, especially if it involves an effort to be alone with the child.

c. Reporting actual or suspected abuse or neglect of a child

- (1) State law requires volunteer youth workers in a church to make an immediate oral report to the local child protection service or the local law enforcement agency if there is reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect. Should a youth worker voluntarily make a report to civil authorities, however, the law provides that he or she will be immune to civil or criminal liability, provided the report was made in good faith and without malicious purpose (Indiana Code 31-33-5-1 and 4).
- (2) No single indicator of abuse or neglect is necessarily cause for alarm, but it may be cause to observe a given person or situation more closely. When multiple indicators appear together, however, it is appropriate to discuss the situation with someone else in the church or, in urgent cases, to make an actual report to the civil authorities.
- (3) Indications of physical abuse: child reports injury by others; unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations, burns, fractures, abdominal injuries, or human bites; child is unusually wary of physical contact with adults, demonstrates extremes in behavior, or seems frightened of parents or caretaker.
- (4) Indications of sexual abuse: child reports abuse by others; has difficulty walking or sitting; torn, stained, or bloody underclothing; complaints of pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters; or other unusual and excessive behaviors inappropriate for a child of that age.

- (5) Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, you should talk with an appropriate person to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child and help the family. Talk first with the staff member assigned to your area of ministry, who will help you decide what steps are appropriate and, if necessary, who else to contact.

Policy for Screening Workers

Purpose: Recognizing God's tender love and concern for children (see Luke 18:16), we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect the children of this church from being physically or sexually abused while they are under our care. It is also our responsibility to guard our youth workers from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a youth. To reduce the risk of these problems, we have adopted the following guidelines for screening and supervising all of our youth workers.

1. All applicants for working with children shall complete the following screening process:

Personal interview with staff member assigned to that particular area of ministry.

Information and Release Forms will be completed and given to the staff member.

Personal references will be contacted by the staff member interviewing applicant. References may be interviewed in person, by telephone, or in writing.

Background Check will be performed after personal interview has been completed and after personal references have been checked. Background checks will be run every three years for as long as the volunteer continues to serve with youth.

2. A background investigation shall be conducted on all applicants for paid staff positions, and, at the discretion of the interviewing staff member, may be conducted for any other applicant. This investigation may include: (1) contacting churches or other organizations where the applicant has served; (2) contacting employers for whom the applicant worked within the past five years; and (3) requesting a national criminal background check.
3. All information acquired during the screening process will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to others outside the Board of Elders unless the interviewing staff member or the Board of Elders deems that limited disclosure is necessary to protect a child from possible harm.
4. Final approval to work with youth shall be made by the interviewing staff member.

Volunteer Information Form

A parent or guardian may complete this form for any applicant who is 17 years old or younger.

Personal

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Marital Status Single Married Divorced

Spouse Name _____ Phone _____

Children's Names/Ages _____

Occupation

Where employed? _____ Phone _____

Can you receive calls at work? Yes No Hours _____

What educational or occupational experiences have you had pertaining to children?

Personal References

List two references including a member of the pastoral staff from your former church, if possible. Please do not use family members as references.

Name _____ Phone _____

Relationship _____ Email _____

Address _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Relationship _____ Email _____

Address _____

Have you read our church's policies on child and youth safety and protection against abuse?

Yes No

Have you ever been convicted or pleaded guilty to child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor? Yes No

If yes, please explain. _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime (other than minor traffic violations)?

Yes No If yes, please explain. _____

Name of the person who referred you for child/youth work at ECC: _____

List name of ministry that you will be involved in: _____

In what month and year did you begin attending ECC? _____

Signature of applicant

Date

Signature of parent or guardian if applicant is under 18

Date