



Christ Covenant Children's Ministry CARE Policy

CARE Policy

Christ Covenant Church (CCC) recognizes that *children, youth, and vulnerable adults are entrusted to the care of adults who lead church programs both on and off CCC campus. CCC is committed to maintaining an environment where children, youth, and vulnerable adults are protected from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and in which church staff and volunteers are protected from potential false allegations of abuse.

*Children/Youth/Minor: Any person under 18 years of age involved in programs provided at or sponsored by CCC.

Vulnerable Adult: Any person 18 years of age or older who lives in or receives services from a licensed facility such as a nursing home, hospital, or treatment center for chemical dependency; has mental retardation, mental illness, or physical disabilities; or is in a family setting and would not by himself/herself report abuse or neglect because of impaired physical or mental function or emotional status.

In order to achieve these goals, CCC has developed the following procedures for staff and volunteers in the following four areas:

- Screening
- Training
- Supervision
- Reporting

Step 1: Screening Process

- Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children, youth, or vulnerable adults are required to complete the C.A.R.E. screening process (repeated every 5 years) which includes:
 - Form A: Primary Screening Form (volunteers) or Employment Application Form (employees)
 - Form B: Agreement to Comply
 - Form C: Confidential Background Information
 - Form D: Notice to Consumer of Intent
 - Follow-up Quiz with appropriate training for area of ministry
 - A copy of your driver's license
- In years 2, 3, and 4, complete one form: Annual Renewal Form
- All applicant forms shall be maintained in secure files and all information will be kept confidential. The Confidential Background Information form shall be kept in a sealed envelope, accessible only to the pastoral staff.
- Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse are not permitted to work with minors and/or vulnerable adults in any church sponsored activity or program.
- Special approval is required for non-member participants on an exception basis.

Step 2: CARE Training

Training required for each new volunteer includes:

- Protection of minors or vulnerable adults in CCC programs
- Protection of providers from exposure to “high-risk” situations and false accusations
- Awareness of the symptoms of abuse
- Understanding of the reporting procedures and the procedures for responding to abuse or suspected abuse
- Utilization of an effective check-in/check-out system for minors and vulnerable adults
- Readiness for medical emergencies, fires, lockdowns, including secure entrances/exits

Opportunities for further training will be offered periodically to ensure CCC’s adherence to current best practices. All staff members and volunteers are encouraged to attend training updates as offered through CCC.

Abuse as referred to in this document includes emotional, physical and sexual abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** includes any non-accidental physical injury caused or allowed to be caused by the youth’s parent or caretaker. It is not, necessarily, the intent of the parent/caretaker to injure the youth. Physical abuse may result from over-discipline or from punishment that is inappropriate to the youth’s age or condition. Signs of physical abuse may include, but not be limited to: unexplained bruising in various stages of healing, welts, fractures or burns in various stages of healing or in the shape of an object (rope, belt, restraints, electric burner), bed sores, weight loss or dry skin and lips, clothing inappropriate for weather condition, inadequate shelter or medical care, deliberate confinement of an adult in a dangerous environment.
- **Sexual Abuse** as defined by North Carolina law is: “Any person or caretaker who has the care of a child commits, permits or encourages the commission of vaginal intercourse, any sexual act, the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child in those acts for commercial or non-commercial usage or any other offense against public morality and decency provided by wherein Article 16. Chapter 14, by, with, or upon a juvenile in violation of law; commits, permits, or encourages any act of prostitution with or by the juvenile.” Signs of sexual abuse may include, but not be limited to: exhibiting sexual behavior not appropriate for the child’s age, detailed and sophisticated understanding of sexual behavior, reversion to bedwetting, speech loss and thumb sucking, sleep disturbances, pain/itching/bruising/bleeding in the genital area, venereal disease, frequent urinary tract or yeast infections, signs of depression, self-injury, aggressive behavior.
- **Emotional Abuse** is characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, withdrawal, aggressive behavior towards him/herself or others, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Signs of emotional abuse may include, but not be limited to: speech disorders, delayed physical or emotional development, habits disorders such as rocking/sucking, unduly passive or undemanding, anti-social, destructive attitude, depression or suicidal thoughts, attention-seeking activities and delinquent behavior (especially in adolescents).

Step 3: Supervision

In order to provide an environment that is safeguarding against abuse, CCC will maintain the following supervision practices:

Ministry Safe Committee: The Ministry Safe Committee will be composed of, but not limited to, the Executive Pastor, Senior Director of Church Administration, Director of Children's Ministry, Pastor of Youth Ministries, and C.A.R.E. Coordinator. The committee will monitor the need to add additional committee members.

Monitoring Plan: Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with minors and vulnerable adults.

Step 4: Reporting

- CCC has a zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and related activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer of CCC to act in the best interest of minors and vulnerable adults in every program.
- In the event that a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, sexual, or emotional), it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report his/her observations to the appropriate supervising CCC staff member.

Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

- CCC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for minors, vulnerable adults, and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law to the Department of Social Services of Mecklenburg County.
- Because sexual abusers "groom" minors and vulnerable adults for abuse, it is possible for a staff member or volunteer to witness behavior intended to "groom" a minor or vulnerable adult for abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report "grooming" behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the appropriate supervising CCC staff member. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

Safety Policies

TWO-ADULT RULE (Accountability for Volunteers)

- There must be 2 C.A.R.E. approved adults in the room before any children can be dropped off and 2 C.A.R.E. approved adults in the room **AT ALL TIMES**.
- Do not leave your volunteer partner in the room alone for any reason.
- Do not take children out of the room by yourself for any reason.
- Do not close yourself in any space alone with a child (i.e. bathroom, closet, etc).
- Children in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected back to the group.

DIAPER CHANGING & POTTY TRAINING POLICY

- To protect our male volunteers — only women may do the diaper changing.
- Keep the door to the bathroom/diaper changing station open to ensure eye contact between volunteers.
- Wear the plastic gloves provided.
- Spray disinfectant on the changing table and wipe down with a paper towel after each use.
- Children who are potty training will have a special tag to alert you.
- Do not help the boys “aim.”
- Keep contact as minimal as possible.
- Assist the child as little as possible.

PHYSICAL CONTACT POLICY

- Only forms of appropriate physical affection that are generally suitable in the church setting between staff, volunteers, and minors are allowed.

What's OK?

- Holding Hands
- Side Hugs
- Sitting on your lap for ages 5 and under
- Wiping off dirt and applying a band aid

What's NOT OK?

- Kissing (even Boo-boos)
- Piggy Back Rides
- Spanking/Swattling Bottoms
- Lap sitting for ages over 5

- Inappropriate touching and displays of affection should be immediately reported to a team leader, Ministry Director, or Executive Pastor.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other students/staff/volunteers.
- **Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant student.**

Commitment and Behavior

Appropriate Behavior

- Show respect to others – including adults, youth volunteers, and peers.
- Listen carefully.
- Participate fully.
- Obey policies and procedures.
- Speak appropriately. Refrain from swearing or speaking to a minor in a way that is harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Recognize an individual's physical and mental well being and act accordingly.
- Behave with another person's safety in mind.
- Maintain appropriate physical contact at all times.

Inappropriate Behavior

- Illegal activities
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, electronic cigarettes (including VAPING and JUULING, but not limited to), and/or illegal drugs
- Use of firearms or weapons
- Inappropriate contact of a sexual nature
- Any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Anything in violation of the current policies and procedures

Sexually Oriented Conversations:

Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any minor.

Sexually Oriented Materials:

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from possessing or transmitting to minors any sexually oriented materials including those in electronic form.

Discipline Policy for Children

Expected Behavior

- Showing respect to others – including adults, youth volunteers, and peers
- Showing respect for space – treating materials and toys well
- Obeying all directions

Inappropriate Behavior

- Disobeying adults or youth
- Disrespectful speech — to an adult, youth, or peers
- Distracting or disruptive behavior during any teaching or small-group time
- Not following directions
- Running, wrestling, or horseplay
- Refusing to participate in classroom activities

HOW DO I HANDLE A DISCIPLINE ISSUE?

Step 1: Prevention

- Offense is the best defense when it comes to classroom management. Be sure the children are busy and active with age-appropriate toys and activities.

Step 2: Correction

- Verbally redirect the child.
- Physically redirect younger children (take a toy out of the hand of a child who is using it to hit, for example).
- Remove the child from the situation, when necessary.
- Always use a calm, kind tone.
- Remind the child that he/she is welcome to rejoin the group when he/she chooses to obey.

Step 3: Seeking outside help

- The Children's Ministry Staff and Senior Team Leaders are always here to help you.
- If you are having repeated problems, contact your Senior Team Leader for assistance. He/she will speak to a staff member and/or the Director of Children's Ministry, as needed.

Step 4: Reaching out to the Family

- Be sure that the Senior Team Leader or a staff person is aware of any ongoing issues.
- You are not responsible to discuss problems with the family at pick up time.
- When necessary, the Director of Children's Ministry will reach out to the family with the intent of coming alongside them to help disciple their child.

What NOT to do:

- Volunteers and staff are prohibited from using physical discipline in ANY MANNER for the behavioral management of children.
- This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior.