



Child Protection Policy

Matthew 18: 1-10

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying. 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 'Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

Defining the Problem of Child Abuse:

In order to do effective ministry in the twenty-first century, the church of Jesus Christ must recognize the culture in which it ministers. This will allow it to provide Biblical perspective and answers to the needs and questions being asked. Furthermore, it must also be aware of the dangers that could render it ineffective and strategically approach these, taking the necessary precautions to protect its testimony while staying on the cutting edge of ministry. One such issue is that of child sexual abuse. If authentic Biblical Ministry is to take place, it will demand wisdom in addressing the culture and the church in which it ministers with compassion and hope to those who have been victims of abuse.

Consider some of the sad facts:

- 22% of Americans have been victims of child sexual abuse, although one third of them told no one at the time and lived with the secret well into adulthood. (L.A. Times survey, Aug. 1985, cited in B.S.A. video a Time to Tell)
- Current research indicates that 25-33% of girls and 10-17% of boys will be sexually abused by the age of eighteen. (For Kids Sake, Kent County Council for Prevention of Child Abuse)
- (These numbers are 1 in 7 boys and 1 in 3 girls in the Boy Scout of America research in "A Time to Tell")

Some common misconceptions about child molesters are that they are dirty old men or strangers. A child molester could be anyone. Most are very ordinary in outward appearance. The fact that a child molester can occupy a position of respect in the community and is usually known by the victim and often close to the victim's family makes it difficult to accept the idea that he or she could be a molester. (BSA Youth Protection Manual, pg. 159).

Objectives of Child Protection Policy:

Protect the Children

We should take all of the preventive measures within our means to ensure each child's safety. Children need to know that when they come to church they will be safe in every way; physically, emotionally and spiritually. If children are not safe, they will not hear the message of Christ.

Protect the Adults

To be falsely accused of sexual abuse can be devastating and, sadly, false accusations do occur. Thus, to have guidelines and procedures established protects workers from most false accusations that can be trumped up. In addition we will not place a volunteer in a potentially tempting situation and thereby tempt them to sin.

Protect the Church

One of the quickest and surest ways to render a church ineffective in a community is through the defamation of its name and scandalizing of its testimony. Any church is quite vulnerable to this occurring through an actual or alleged incident of child sexual abuse. By putting guidelines in place for our volunteers and keeping children safe, we are taking the utmost care of all our resources.

Though many of the reasons for developing and implementing a child protection policy could be identified as "pragmatic reasons" it must be noted that the theological foundation and primary motivation is love -- God's love for the well-being of children, workers, the church of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of Jesus' name. These are also the focuses of love within an authentic church of Jesus Christ (John 13:35, Acts 20:28-31, Eph. 5:25-26). Children are to be treated with respect, and no harm is to come to them physically or psychologically.

Definitions of Abuse:

1. Directly injuring or excessively punishing a child.
2. Placing a child in a situation in which they will likely be injured.
3. Emotional-verbal abuse.
4. Involving a child in sexual activity.

Legal Definitions of Abuse:

The following definition of "child abuse" corresponds with the definition provided by the Wisconsin child abuse laws, Wisconsin Statutes Annotated §48.981. We have adapted the following definition of child abuse from that provided in §48.981 (1), replacing references to other statutory provisions with brief summaries of those provisions to make this definition more understandable to church staff, members, and workers.

- § Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. "Physical injury" includes, but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, or great bodily harm. (See Wis. State. Ann. §48.981 (1) (e).)
- § Sexual intercourse or sexual contact with a child. (See Wis. Stats. Ann. §940.225, §948.2, and §948.025)
- § Employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any child to engage in sexually explicit conduct. (See Wis. Stats. Ann. §948.05)
- § Photographing, filming, videotaping, recording the sounds of, or displaying in any way sexually explicit conduct by a child. (See Wis. Stats. Ann. §948.05)
- § Producing, performing in, profiting from, promoting, importing into the state, reproducing, advertising, selling, distributing, or possessing with intent to sell or distribute, any recording or reproduction of a child engaging in sexually explicit conduct. (See Wis. Stats. Ann. §948.05)
- § Knowingly permitting, allowing, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution or sexually explicit conduct. (See Wis. Stats. Ann. §944.30.)

- § Emotional damage. “Emotional damage” is defined by law as harm to a child’s psychological or intellectual functioning which is exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or outward aggressive behavior, or a combination of those behaviors, and for which the child’s parent, guardian or legal custodian has failed to obtain the treatment necessary to remedy the harm. “Emotional damage” may be demonstrated by a substantial and observable change in behavior, emotional response or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child’s age and stage of development. (See Wis. Stats. Ann. §48.981 (1)(cm).)
- § Causing (by use or threat of force or violence) a child to view sexually explicit conduct. (See Wis. Stats. Ann §948.055.)

Definitions of Neglect:

When a child is:

1. Abandoned, or
2. Denied – food, clothing, shelter, appropriate care, supervision or medical attention.

Current conservative estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year.

Child sexual abuse occurs in every economic, social, racial, ethnic and religious group.

Types of Sexual Abuse: (that does not involve touch)

1. Sexual remarks or comments
2. Pornography, obscene phone calls
3. Exhibitionism, allowing children to witness sexual activity

There may be physical, behavioral or verbal indicators that a child is being sexually abused.

Physical Signs:

1. Lacerations or Bruises
2. Nightmares
3. Difficulty urinating or discomfort when sitting

Behavioral Signs:

1. Nervous or hostile behavior towards adults, self consciousness
2. Acting out sexual behavior
3. Withdrawal from activities and friends

Verbal Signs:

1. "I don't like to be alone with 'so and so' "
2. "That someone is doing things to them when they are alone"

REPORTING PROCEDURES:

The state of Wisconsin does not mandate that the pastor, pastoral staff, or volunteers in a local church report suspected sexual abuse of a minor. However, RiverGlen Christian Church may, and has chosen in this policy, to function as a "permissive reporter." If there is any reason to suspect that abuse has occurred, the following procedures will be followed:

When sexual abuse is suspected, or when a child or a child's parent first approaches a leader in ministry about possible abuse, the allegation must be taken seriously. The leader must not deny the problem, but remain calm and listen to the child or parent. The leader should assure them that they were right in sharing the problem, but make no promises to keep the information confidential.

Procedures:

Any occurrence, or any suspected occurrence, of sexual abuse (on or off the premises, by whomever) is to be reported immediately to the Student Minister or the KidVenture Director. In the event that these people cannot be reached, the Director of Operations is to be notified. Questionable behavior is also to be reported. Leaders are not to speak to anyone else about their suspicions.

Wisconsin statutes §48.98 1, (2)

(2) Persons required to report. A physician, coroner, medical examiner, nurse, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, other medical or mental health professional, social or public assistance worker, school teacher, administrator or counselor, child care worker in a day care center or child caring institution, day care provider, alcohol or other drug abuse counselor, member of the treatment staff employed by or working under contract with a county department under s. 46.23, 51.42 or 51.437, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, emergency medical technician -- advanced (paramedic), ambulance attendant or police or law enforcement officer having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected or having reason to believe that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur shall report as provided in sub. (3).

Guidelines for Positive Interactions with Children

"Two Adult" Rule - there must always be two adults present when supervising one or more children.

Behavior Management

1. The goal of discipline is to help kids learn responsible behavior
2. To facilitate appropriate and positive social interactions
3. Structure your time with children for success
4. Notice and praise positive behavior.

Ways to Avoid Problem Behaviors

1. Come Prepared
2. Keep things moving.
3. Be sensitive to the moods of the children in the group
4. Provide enough elbow room
5. Set clear expectations with the children

When Kids require Discipline or Guidance

1. Use a firm but gentle voice to address the behavior
2. Remove the child from the activity
3. Focus your remarks on the behavior you want to see
4. Don't use words or a tone of voice that shames or frightens a child.
5. Don't use sarcasm or scream at a child
6. Never make remarks that put down the individual as a person or make negative references about appearance, race or gender
7. Never use corporal punishment or spanking of any kind
8. Use touch in affirming ways:
 - Appropriate examples: high fives, pat on the back or shoulders, etc.
 - Inappropriate examples: demanding or expecting hugs, slapping on the behind, kissing, etc.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Contact with Minors

Security

Appropriate

- Minimum of two care providers at all times
- Supervision or witness of any contact of same or opposite sex
- Release a child younger than 5th grade only to a person with proper security tag

Inappropriate

- Care providers alone with child

- Sustained time with same or opposite sex without supervision or witness
- Release of a child younger than 6st grade to a person without proper security tag

Discipline

Appropriate

- Praising good behavior
- A firm gentle voice addressing the "offense"
- Confidential parental discussion when necessary
- Age appropriate "time outs" or withdrawal from activity

Inappropriate

- Corporal punishment of any kind
- Any words or tone that would cause a child to think he or she is the "problem" rather than a specific behavior being addressed (e.g. yelling at child)
- 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 in life, such as saying "Are you a strong boy? Strong boys don't cry, etc.

Physical Contact Appropriate

Appropriate

Physical contact of

1. Non-demanding, gentle touch on shoulders, arms, hands, head, back
2. Sitting child on leg (appropriate only at preschool or kindergarten level)
3. Physical contact which expresses affirmation and is not done for the satisfaction of pleasure of the care provider.

Inappropriate

- Physical contact of
 1. kissing, demanding hugs or kisses
 2. Touching chest. Genital region, upper legs, buttocks, waist or stomach
 3. Sitting child in center of your lap or between legs
 4. Sitting child above age 6 on one or both legs
 5. Opposite sex piggy back rides
 6. Seductiveness or suggestive contact

- Physical contact of any kind which is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of the care provider.
- Any touching used to express power or control over a child

Bathroom Procedures Appropriate

Appropriate

Infant, Toddler 2, 3, 4 and 5

- Diapering should be done in diaper stations and in the close proximity of other care providers, bathroom doors must remain open. If possible the person changing diapers should be female.
- Bathroom doors should remain open; child may require assistance.

Kindergarten - 6th grade

- Permission granted to use facility; unless special help is required due to medical conditions, care provider should remain outside door. Care Provider should check for other adult's already in bathroom and they should be asked to leave as soon as possible to allow child privacy.
- Workers must not be alone with children in a closed stall. When a child needs assistance in a bathroom or stall, any door must remain open at all times. If possible, a female care provider should escort children to the bathroom.

Inappropriate

- Allowing teen helpers to assist children in the bathroom.
- Being alone with a child - especially in the bathroom
- Diapering in a secluded area or without the presence of the other care providers, bathroom doors closed
- Accompanying older children (Kindergarten or elementary age) inside the bathroom when special help is not required.

Child Protection Guidelines for Student Ministries

THE OPPOSITE SEX:

- There is to be no dating of students under any circumstances by volunteer youth staff. Failure to comply will result in immediate dismissal.
- Staff is not to be alone with a student of the opposite sex at any time or for any reason.
- Staff is expected to dress in a modest fashion and set a Godly example for both staff and students.

- Staff is to be cautious of physical contact between themselves and students of any gender.
- Although staff and student relationships are encouraged, staffs personal regular social activities should not be solely with students.

ALCOHOL and Illegal Drugs:

- Staff should abstain from the use of alcohol in the presence of students. Failure to comply will result in immediate dismissal.
- When volunteer youth staff are together in public they should refrain from alcohol.
- Staff should be cautious in public use of alcohol (weddings, parties, etc.)
- Drunkenness will result in dismissal.
- Habitual use of alcohol and illegal drugs, whether in public or private, will result in dismissal.
- Staff will refrain from offering personal opinion regarding alcohol use. Staff needs to support family beliefs on the use of such things.

THE MEDIA:

MOVIES:

- Staff will be cautious of movies and movie themes discussed with students.
- JR. HIGH MINISTRY - only "G" & "PG" rated movies are permitted for viewing in staff/student contexts.
- HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY - rated "R" movies and above is strictly prohibited for viewing in staff/student contexts at all times.

MUSIC:

- Staff will be cautious of radio stations, concerts and artists listened to and discussed while students are present.

CONFIDENTIALITY - In minor issues, staff are expected to keep the trust of the students.

However, in many cases, the health and well-being of the student takes priority over confidentiality. Those situations that deal with particularly sensitive information should be brought directly to the Student Ministers attention, including suicide, drug/alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity and abuse. Volunteer Youth Staff are not expected to keep secrets with students, but have an open relationship with the Student Minister.

DISCIPLINE ISSUES - We expect staff to join together on smaller issues such as keeping students quiet or in line. However, when the need arises to discipline or dismiss a student or students, the Student Minister must be involved. Notify the Student Minister of all discipline problems so he can be aware and help direct if needed.