

I. Mission Statement

The purpose of the First Evangelical Free Church Child Protection System is to promote the safety and well being of the children and youth in all the church's ministries and activities.

II. Screening Policy

Please refer to the church Child Protection Screening Policy Manual.

III. Supervision Policy

A. Every worker must comply with state statutes regarding sexual offenses (Chapter 30 Article 9).

B. Every worker must follow the **Child Protection Policy including the church **Reporting Procedure** for reporting suspected abuse or neglect.**

C. Whenever possible, two adults should be present in the room with the children or youth.

D. An occasional worker (helping no more than two to three times a year) for a non-overnight event may be approved by the appropriate ministry leader for that event without further screening.

E. An occasional worker for an overnight event must complete the Child and Youth Ministry Disclosure Statement for pastoral approval. If approved by a pastor, no further prescreening is needed.

F. Parents who are not certified by the Child Protection Committee may help their own children during ministry activities. The appropriate ministry leader may allow them to also provide auxiliary help to other children as long as they are in direct line-of-sight

supervision of certified workers to whom the ministry leader delegates such supervisory responsibility.

G. The deaconesses have devised and implemented a nursery drop-off and pick-up procedures and a system for supervising Ladies' Bible Study babysitters.

H. Private Meetings:

A private meeting is defined as a pre-arranged meeting outside of regular church activities between an adult and a minor.

Mandates:

1. Parental permission must be obtained before a worker may have a private meeting with a child/youth.

2. Another ministry leader must be informed of the meeting in advance of the private meeting.

3. At a private meeting between an adult and a minor when the adult is of the opposite sex to the minor, there must also be either a parent of the minor or another adult of the same sex as the minor in attendance.

Recommendations:

For a private meeting with a child/youth, a third party should be present and/or the meeting should be held in a public place or with another person present in the building.

I. Church employees:

1. All regular paid adult church employees shall undergo a police background check. The church will cover the cost of the background check. The results will be kept confidential to the committee directly governing the hiring of the employee and to

the Child Protection Committee. The hiring committee will initiate the background check and the communicating of results.

2. Paid regular adult church employees (e.g. nursery workers, grounds and maintenance workers) do not need to be members or adherents in our church but are otherwise subject to all church Child Protection policies and procedures.

IV. Reporting Policy

A. All matters relating to the reporting process shall be strictly confidential.

B. Incidents involving a child/youth before the 18th birthday:

1. The person with the concern regarding possible child molestation (hereafter called "the reporter") shall go directly to a pastor and discuss the issue. If a pastor is unavailable, the reporter shall go to a church officer or ministry leader who will assume the pastor's responsibilities for the remainder of the process.

2. The pastor shall provide a copy of the Child Protection Reporting Form, which the reporter shall fill out in the pastor's presence.

3. If it is deemed appropriate by the reporter or the pastor, the reporter shall immediately telephone the proper state authorities in the pastor's presence and shall complete the form, documenting the call. The pastor shall serve as the official witness of the telephone call. If the allegation is against a child/youth ministry worker, the pastor shall immediately suspend the "offending party" from children/youth

ministry pending the outcome of the investigation.

4. If the suspected infraction is of such a nature that reporting it to the state is not deemed necessary, the pastor may counsel the “offending party” regarding church policy and the importance of avoiding of even the appearance of evil in order to avoid future problems. The pastor may put the “offending party” on probation if necessary.

5. The pastor shall inform the liability insurance company of the existence of a reporting.

6. A pastor shall be informed immediately of the appearance of a government-investigating official. The pastor shall confirm the identity of the official prior to allowing the official access to the child/youth in question. If a pastor is not available, a church officer or ministry leader will assume this responsibility.

C. Incidents involving a youth older than 18 years olds:

1. Anyone who has reasonable suspicion of inappropriate sexual, physical or verbal treatment of a youth between the 18th birthday and graduation with the first undergraduate degree shall report the matter to a pastor.

2. The pastor and/or deacons shall interview the reporter, alleged victim and alleged offender as well as any witnesses deemed appropriate.

3. All matters shall be confidential. All written documents shall be filed in a secure confidential file.

4. Alleged offenders shall be relieved of ministry with children or youth until a decision is rendered.

5. Decisions by the pastor/deacons may be appealed to the executive board.

6. The alleged victim 18 years or older maintains the legal right to decline or accept continued investigation by the church and to pursue legal recourse.

V. Training Policy

A. The Child Protection Committee shall provide training in the Child Protection System annually to the child/youth ministry leaders and workers.

B. All leaders of each child/youth ministry are strongly recommended to attend the child abuse seminar given by the state and all other workers are encouraged to attend. Leaders and workers will not be required to attend because of the limited dates when the seminar is offered locally. The church will cover registration costs whenever such a seminar is offered.

C. The Child Protection Committee encourages the church to help defray the costs for sponsoring such a seminar with other organizations whenever it is feasible.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF CHILDCARE

Please refer to the church Child Protection Screening Policy Manual.

Questions

Please refer any questions to your Ministry Leader. If the Ministry Leader is not available, refer questions to any member of the Child Protection Committee who are the Pastor of Christian Education and Family Ministries, the Chairperson of Christian Education and one appointed Deaconess.

Child/Youth Worker's Child Protection Policy Manual

