

# **Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy**

## **Grandview Christian Church**

### **Introduction**

To help protect children, Grandview Christian Church has adopted the following Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy. It is important that all Grandview paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent abuse against children. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children. Anyone working with minors at Grandview Christian Church must review and sign this policy on an annual basis.

### **Purpose**

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child and youth abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist Grandview Christian Church in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

## Definitions

The following terms are used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff:* Any pastor, minister, preacher, or employee who is paid.
2. *Child/Youth/Minor:* Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult:* Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer:* Any unpaid person engaged or involved in ministry activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
5. *Sexual Abuse:* The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct, or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct; or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
6. *Child Emotional Abuse:* Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

## **Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures**

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Volunteer Application and Consent to Background Check:* Any paid staff and volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Volunteer Application and/or the Background Check Consent form. Both staff and volunteers must pass a background check before working with minors.
2. *Criminal Background Check:* Grandview Christian Church will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated periodically.
3. *Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy:* All volunteers at Grandview Christian Church must review and sign the Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy before working with minors.

## **Confidentiality**

Information obtained through the screening, application; reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible. These materials will be archived in a confidential file for each applicant.

## **Supervision Procedures**

Unless an extenuating situation exists, Grandview Christian Church:

1. Will have an adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.

2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
3. Will release children through 6<sup>th</sup> grade only to a parent, guardian, or authorized adult and utilize a sign-in/sign-out system.
4. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
5. Will ensure paid staff and volunteers refrain from transporting minors alone in vehicles.
6. Will require that preschool children be accompanied to the restroom and/or changing rooms and that any paid staff or volunteer involved wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same gender as the minor.
7. Will require that preschool and elementary age children be accompanied by a parent, guardian, paid staff, or volunteer or paid staff when utilizing changing rooms of any kind
8. Will encourage minors to use a “buddy system” when on trips off Grandview Christian Church’s property.
9. Will designate a “confidential counselor” to whom any minor can go at any time, without special permission, to discuss any problems he or she is having.

### **Behavioral Guidelines for Volunteers and Paid Staff**

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, Grandview Christian Church events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Whenever possible, at least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present.

Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.

4. Avoid all inappropriate and/or unwarranted touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
5. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including, but not limited to, physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
6. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
7. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of Grandview Christian Church for handling.

## **Policy Training and Maintenance Procedures**

### **Disqualification**

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deterred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.

2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult; assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor, or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

### **Sexual Offenders at Grandview Christian Church**

Grandview Christian Church may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation, but he must adhere to specific guidelines. However, first check with the offender's probation/parole officer for any restrictions regarding attending services or other functions where children are present. Ask the probation/parole officer to put any restrictions in writing. If restrictions don't prohibit participation, implement the following three guidelines.

1. A known sexual offender may not participate in any of the child or youth programs in any way.
2. A known sexual offender may only participate in a predetermined service each week.
3. The identity of the sexual offender will be disclosed to paid staff, elders, and the security team.

### **Response to Sexual Abuse**

Grandview Christian Church will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Executive Minister (or an appointed person) will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Executive Minister is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the Chair of the Elders will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the federal and state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to Grandview Christian Church's insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. Grandview Christian Church may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. An official of Grandview Christian Church (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of Grandview Christian Church and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations for actions.
6. An official of Grandview Christian Church will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. An official of Grandview Christian Church will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
8. During the investigation, an official of Grandview Christian Church shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, inform them of the actions taken, and assist them in their process of healing.
9. An official of Grandview Christian Church (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
10. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of Grandview Christian Church.
11. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.

12. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of Grandview Christian Church's attorney.

### **Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy Acknowledgment**

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. Grandview Christian Church reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this policy and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the policy and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with Grandview Christian Church or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the Grandview Christian Church's Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of Grandview Christian Church.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date