

Nowthen Alliance Church

Safety and Abuse Policy

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Volunteer and Staff Recruitment Policy

The following will serve as guidelines for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in the Children's Ministry Division and Student Ministries Division:

1. All potential volunteers must be regular attenders of Nowthen Alliance Church a minimum of six months before they are able to be considered for a position. The only exception to this rule is if a staff member or ministry leader has personal knowledge of a potential volunteer for at least six months. In this case, reference checks and a personal interview must be conducted.
2. Each potential volunteer must fill out a Volunteer Application form.
3. Nowthen Alliance Church reserves the right to do a criminal background check.
4. All potential volunteers will be interviewed, either in person or by telephone, asking specific questions regarding motivation for and history of working with children and young people, and a record will be kept of the interview.
5. In such cases where volunteers are unknown to the leadership of Nowthen Alliance Church, references in the Volunteer Application form will be called and a record will be kept of the conversations.
6. Annually, each volunteer will be required to sign a "read and understood" statement regarding the Nowthen Alliance Church Safety and Abuse Policy.

Classroom Guidelines, Health and Discipline Policy

Classroom Release Guidelines:

1. **Ages 0-Kinderarten** must be signed in and out by a parent or legal guardian. No infant or child will be released to an older sibling unless prior arrangements are made with the teacher.
2. **1st and 2nd grade students** must wait until a parent or legal guardian picks them up unless a release form is signed by a parent.
3. **3rd grade students and older** will be released when the class is finished unless a parent or legal guardian requests otherwise.

Classroom Staffing Guidelines:

1. All Volunteers must be approved to work with Children
2. Volunteers are expected to wear name tags.
3. The following student teacher ratios are to be maintained:
Nursery: 1:4
Preschool: 1:6
K-6th Grade: 1:15
4. **Bathroom Policy:** Volunteers and staff should never be alone with a child in a bathroom. Whenever possible a group of children should be taken to the bathroom together. The adult should prop the door open and wait outside, assisting if necessary with the door open.

Health Policy:

Children should not be admitted to class if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Runny nose with any discolored discharge
- Any unexplained rash or skin infection
- Any child on antibiotics should have been on the medication for at least 24 hours

Volunteers are not to give or apply any medications. If a child needs a medication, a parent or legal guardian must give it.

Toys in nursery and preschool areas must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

Discipline Policy:

Behavior Guidelines:

Appropriate behavior is defined as having a cooperative spirit.

Inappropriate behavior is defined as exhibiting defiant, disruptive or harmful behavior.

Discipline Policy:

First offense- verbal warning

The child will be verbally made aware of their inappropriate behavior by the teacher. The teacher will clearly define, without degrading or embarrassing the child, how they can alter their behavior so that it is acceptable.

Second offense- time out

The child will be removed from the activity in which they are disrupting. The teacher will determine if the time out can take place in the classroom or if the child needs to be removed and sit with the director. The time out should be one minute per year of age of the child.

Third offense- parent involvement

If a child continues to exhibit inappropriate behavior, the parents or legal guardians will be notified. If disruptive behavior is recurring, a parent may be required to accompany the child for a determined amount of time until behavior improves.

No child may ever receive corporal punishment on the part of a Nowthen Alliance Church volunteer or staff member. Only discipline as outlined in this policy may be administered as deemed necessary by the volunteer or staff.

Emergency Preparedness Policy

Fire Safety

In Case of Fire:

1. Line up students by door and take a head count.
2. Take your class attendance or sign-in sheet with you if possible.
3. Know your exit route (posted by the door in each classroom) and calmly lead students out by proper exit.
4. Proceed to designated meeting spot outside exit door.
5. Take a head count and attendance.
6. Return to building only after the "all clear" has been sounded.
7. Please do not release students to any parents or legal guardians from outside, but return to classroom and dismiss as usual.

First Aid/Emergency

-First aid supplies are located in the supply room in the first aid drawer. Bandages are located in each classroom for minor cuts and scrapes.

-Bodily fluids must be promptly and safely disposed of and the area properly cleaned. Workers must wear latex gloves. Soiled clothing will be returned to parents in a plastic bag. If a child has come in contact with the bodily fluids of another child, the parents or legal guardians will be notified.

-Medical emergency situations such as broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious injury should follow the following procedure:

- Keep calm and keep children and the injured as calm as possible.
- Do NOT move the injured child.
- Send a fellow teacher for help, never leave the injured child.
- The person in charge will call 911 after assessing the situation and give the information and directions as needed.
- Parents or legal guardians should be contacted as soon as possible.

-An Accident and Injury Report Form should be filled out for any accident that results in an injury beyond a simple cut or bump. The forms are located in the First Aid drawer in the supply room. The form should be turned in to the main office.

-Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Devices are located outside the Sanctuary and outside the Lower Level Worship Center. The names of persons trained to use these devices are listed in the devices' cabinet.

Church Van/Vehicle Use Policy

Driver Form

Any person driving anyone else on behalf of Nowthen Alliance Church must fill out a Driver Form. This form is available in the Main Office or see a Ministry Leader or Staff Member. Driver must be 25 years of age or older and must provide a valid driver's license , registration card and proof of insurance.

Church Driver's Safety Verification

The Church will be doing a driver's safety verification on all persons applying to drive a Church leased vehicle or to used their own vehicle to transport children and/or youth. The above mentioned forms are required and also the driver's Social Security Number. But please DO NOT put the Social Security Number on the form itself. But rather provide the number on a separate piece of paper and attach that piece of paper to the form when it is turned in. A copy of the form is sent to the Church's leasing company and we do not want to disseminate your Social Security Number to other entities

Church Van Policy

Only approved persons who have filled out the Driver Form may use the Church's 15 passenger van. A van inspection report must be filled out each time the van is driven.

Special Event/Overnight Policy

- Permission slips are required from the parent or legal guardian for each child participating in overnight events, off campus group activities or field trips.
- Supervising adults attending the overnight must be approved volunteers.
- Boys and girls must sleep in separate areas/rooms and only same sex volunteers may sleep in the same room as the children.
- All sleeping arrangements must include at least two approved volunteers.

Physical and Sexual Abuse Policy

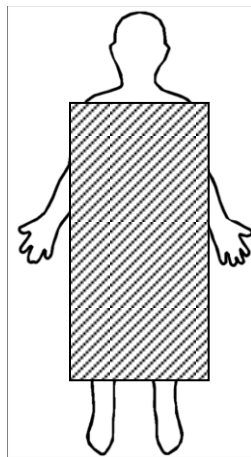
It is the express desire of Nowthen Alliance Church to provide an environment where children and young people can be changed through an encounter with Jesus Christ. Therefore, any form of sexual exploitation or physical abuse is contrary to our mission, the Scriptures and the State of Minnesota and will not be tolerated. Furthermore, Nowthen Alliance Church recognizes its responsibility to report suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment to Minors Act (MN Statutes, Section 626.556, subdivision 3).

Precautionary Guidelines

Taking precautions to prevent accusations of sexual exploitation or physical abuse is a necessary protective measure for anyone who works with children or young people. Nowthen Alliance Church is vitally concerned with the welfare of all children and young people under its care.

People who work with children and young people need to be aware of the following helpful boundaries that serve to prevent actions that may be mistakenly perceived and to clarify healthy expressions of true affection and affirmation.

1. No person in contact with children or young people will be allowed to touch them in areas roughly blocked out by the rectangle in the diagram below:



It is entirely possible to effectively show compassion and Christian caring through a pat on the arm, hand on the upper shoulder, etc. Actions such as tickling, massage, back rubs, knee squeezes, rump slaps or any other contact inside the blocked area must be avoided. Hugs should be brief, with arms placed only near the upper shoulders.

2. When sitting with children, always avoid having a child sit in your lap. Instead sit next to them.

3. Volunteers and staff should never be alone with a child in a bathroom. Whenever possible a group of children should be taken to the bathroom together. The adult should prop the door open and wait outside, assisting if necessary with the door open.

Allegations or Incidents

Following the allegation of or an incident of sexual exploitation or physical abuse within the confines of the ministry of Nowthen Alliance Church, the following procedures will be followed:

1. All allegations will be taken seriously.
2. All actions in response to allegations or incidents will be based on Christian concern for:
 - the alleged victim
 - the ministry of the church
 - the alleged perpetrator
 - others necessarily involved, such as family, persons reporting, etc.
3. All actions in response to allegations or incidents will follow expert advice gathered from the Anoka County Family Service Agency officials and the church's insurance representative.
4. Strict confidentiality will be maintained.
5. Written memoranda will document all steps taken and any pertinent observations or dialogue will be noted.
6. Necessary reports, as required by the State of Minnesota, shall be filed within the required time frame.

Upon allegation of sexual exploitation or physical abuse by an employee or volunteer, or any other person within the context of the Nowthen Alliance Church ministry, the following steps apply to the person accused:

1. The Senior Pastor and the supervisor of the person accused, in the case of an employee or volunteer, will inform the person of the accusation and discuss the matter with him or her. If an employee or volunteer, the alleged offender will be temporarily suspended.
2. If the allegations are found to be true, the employee or volunteer will be dismissed from service at Nowthen Alliance Church.
3. If found guilty, care will be taken to demonstrate a scriptural, restorative stance toward the offender. However, the church will fully support disciplinary measures, including criminal prosecution.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

Abuse or neglect may not have occurred for a student to need protection. It is not necessary to wait until a student has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated, and there are reasonable grounds to believe a student is in need of protection, it needs to be reported. If a volunteer or employee questions whether a specific incident constitutes a "reportable offense," they can place an anonymous phone call to the Anoka County Child Protection Agency at 763-422-7125. If the child is in immediate danger call 911 or the Sheriff at 753-427-1212.

Frequently asked questions about reporting child abuse

(Copied from the Anoka County Child Protection Web Site.)

Who do I contact if I suspect child abuse?

If the child is in immediate danger, call 911 or Anoka County 763-427-1212.

Intermediate danger - If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger (such as a recent sexual assault or a serious physical assault) or the child is abandoned, contact your local law enforcement agency right away.

No immediate danger - To report suspected abuse or neglect of a child living in Anoka county, please call 763-422-7125. You may also print the "Child Maltreatment Report Form" on this web site and FAX it to 763-422-6929. The identity of the reporter will be treated as confidential information.

Who must report?

Voluntary: Any one may voluntarily report suspected child abuse or neglect. Persons who work with children or families are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Mandated: Minnesota law mandates that any person whose job involves working professionally with children and who has reason to believe that a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused shall immediately report the suspected incident to local police or child protection agency. A verbal report must be made within 24 hours. For more information on mandated reporting, please see "A Resource Guide for Mandated Reporters."

What should I do if a child reports abuse to me?

First of all, be calm. Let the child tell you in his or her own words. Leave questioning about the details to authorities. Tell the child he/she is not in trouble and that it was the right thing to tell you about what happened. Let the child know you are going to get help. Report what the child told you to the police or Anoka County Child Protection.

What information do I need to report?

Report the child's name, age, and address or school, the reason for the report, and any other pertinent information you have. If known, report the alleged offender and relationship with the child, parents' names and address, and telephone number.

What protection do I have as a reporter?

Under Minnesota law, you are immune from liability if the report was made in good faith. Your identity is not disclosed unless you consent, or the court orders disclosure upon a showing the report was false and made in bad faith, or court rules require disclosure in a criminal proceeding.

Can I get into trouble for making a report?

If a report to authorities is made in good faith, Minnesota Statute 626.556, Subd. 4, protects them with immunity from liability.

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse is when a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care hurts a child, causing any physical injury, other than by accident. This includes any physical injury to a child that cannot reasonably be explained by the person responsible for the child's care, based on a history of injuries.

The following are conditions of physical abuse that should be reported:

-- Child has suffered an injury that appears to be non-accidental in nature.

- Child has suffered an injury and the parent or guardian seems unconcerned, denies anything is wrong, or gives unlikely or contradictory explanations.
- There is a strong possibility that the child is in immediate danger of physical injury based on the likelihood that excessive force was used. (i.e. choking, punching, shaking, biting, tying, caging.)

What is child neglect?

Harm to a child that results from what a parent or caretaker do NOT do is called child neglect. It differs from child abuse though both abuse and neglect may cause harm. For a Minnesota State definition of child neglect, see pp. 12-18 of the "Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines."

Child neglect is continued failure by parents or caretakers to provide a child with needed care and protection. Examples of what may constitute a report of child neglect are:

- Inadequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- Abandonment.
- Exposure to threatening or endangering conditions.
- Prenatal exposure to substance abuse. For more on this topic, see pp 17 and 18 of the "Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines."
- Child has suffered a physical injury as a result of hazardous conditions uncorrected by parent or guardian.
- Child suffers injury or risk of injury due to domestic violence.
- Exposure to, or involvement in, criminal activities.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse within the child protection system is based on Minnesota Statutes 626.556 and is defined as criminal sexual conduct with a child by a person responsible for the child's care, or by a person who has a significant relationship to the child. A description of sexual abuse can be found in the "Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines."

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse or maltreatment is consistently or deliberately inflicting mental harm on a child by a person responsible for the child's care. The treatment has an observable, sustained, adverse effect on the child's physical, mental or emotional development.