



General Purpose Statement

Redeemer Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Redeemer Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The terms “worker” or “volunteer” include both paid and unpaid persons who work with children.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) Six Month Rule

No volunteer will be considered for any regular, ongoing position involving contact with minors until she/he has been in attendance at Redeemer Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

Persons seeking to fulfill a childcare position for an individual event must be a regular member at a church and must provide a character reference from that church’s Children’s Director or Pastor.

b) Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete an application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file with Redeemer Church.

c) Character References

The applicant will also be asked to supply Redeemer Church with the contact information of two (2) non-family character references from individuals familiar with the applicant’s interaction with minors (i.e., past Children’s Directors or Pastors, employers). The Children’s Director will contact these references.

d) Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.



e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and volunteers ages 18 and older as defined above.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Redeemer Church on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Conviction or reasonable suspicion for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, or indecency will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file with Redeemer Church.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity.

Church Membership

A member of Redeemer Church must be present in each classroom. Classroom helpers may be members in-process.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.



- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Redeemer Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Children's Ministry Director for further action, including reporting to the church elders and authorities as may be mandated by state law.

Duty to Report

Section 261.101 of the Texas Family Code mandates: *"A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report."* The report may be made to (1) any local or state law enforcement agency; or (2) the Department of Family and Protective Services (contact information listed below.) Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential.

Reporting Abuse

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred **at** this Redeemer Church or **during** our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children, pending an investigation, and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Redeemer Church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Redeemer Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. A designated church elder will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.



To report abuse, contact:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

1-800-252-5400

www.txabusehotline.org

Training

Redeemer Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers. Please refer to the Redeemer Policies and Procedures Handbook for complete volunteer guideline and requirements.