

Thanks for your interest in ministering to our children and youth!

Our desire at Bethel is to minister to the children and youth in our midst in a biblically and culturally relevant manner. We also want to provide them with a safe environment while under our supervision. In order to do our best to accomplish these goals, we have developed a Child and Youth Protection Policy. It is designed for the safety of the children and youth entrusted to our care. It also has the added benefits of protecting workers from false accusations and of protecting the church's integrity.

State law defines child abuse or neglect to include the following actions by those responsible for a child's welfare:

- **Physical injury** that harms or threatens a child's health or welfare;
- **Failure to care for a child**, including neglect of the necessary physical (food, shelter, clothing, and medical attention), emotional, mental and social needs;
- **Sexual abuse**, including molestation or incest;
- **Sexual exploitation**, including permitting or encouraging prostitution;
- **Mental injury**--An injury to the emotional well-being, or intellectual or psychological capacity of a child, as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function in a developmentally appropriate manner; or
- **Maltreatment**--A child has suffered substantial harm as a result of child abuse or neglect due to an act or omission not necessarily committed by the child's parent, custodian or guardian.

Furthermore, child sexual abuse is defined as: "...any sexual activity with a child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim. Child sexual abuse may be violent or non violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action."

As you seek to work with our children our youth:

1. Please carefully read the attached policy, reporting procedures and doctrinal statement and keep them for your records.
2. Please fill out the application and the background check request completely before returning these forms to your ministry director or to the church office.
3. Please complete the "Reducing the Risk" video training with the help of your ministry director.

These measures help us to ensure that we provide the best environment for each student involved in our ministries at Bethel Church.

In His service together,

Mark Holmes, Youth Pastor
Brent Curtis, AWANA Commander
Sabrina Owsley, Children's Ministry Director
Amanda Miller, Nursery Director

CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Updated 7/24/2024

Bethel Church has adopted the following procedures in order to prevent sexual misconduct or the appearance thereof. Standards listed below shall be effective for any person who applies to work with minors as of September 1, 2013.

Article A. Screening Procedures for Employees and Adult Volunteers

- A. Prospective employees working directly with minors and adult volunteers wishing to work with minors in ministries or events that originate from Bethel Church must complete a volunteer application packet prior to their work with minors which contains:

A cover letter explaining the application process;

The Child/Youth Protection Policies and Reporting Procedures;

Bethel Church's Doctrinal Statement;

A ministry application that makes both general and criminal background enquiries;

A reference sheet that requires two separate character references; and

A criminal background check consent form.

- B. A national criminal background check through "Screen Now" and a National Sex Offender Public Website (www.nsopw.gov) background check must be completed for all "paid or unpaid employees" of Bethel Church whether they work directly with minors or not, as well as for adult volunteers who work directly with minors in ministries or at events that originate from Bethel Church.
- C. Prospective employees and adult volunteers working directly with minors must complete a training course which includes the viewing of the *Reducing the Risk* video (or another comparable video) and the clarification of protection policies and reporting procedures.
- D. Visiting parents are exempt from the above requirements and may observe their child(ren)'s class(es) or assist their own child(ren). Parents who have not completed the screening process shall not be counted toward the teacher or helper count.
- E. One-time adult helpers (as well as Bethel Church adolescent attendees who are ages 12-17 and serving as helpers) who are in a group setting with two or more qualified workers are exempt from the above requirements. Such helpers who have not completed the screening process shall not be counted toward the teacher or helper count.

Article B. Screening Procedures for Non-Bethel Church Ministries and Events

- A. Bethel church assumes no liability for child protection for ministries or events that originate outside of Bethel Church. Typically, any individual or group filling out a building use form (such as Bible Study Fellowship, Boy Scouts, home school groups using Bethel's facilities for testing, or individual birthday parties, etc.) shall be considered as using Bethel's facilities for a ministry or event that originates outside of Bethel Church.

Article C. Childcare for Church-Sponsored Events

- A. Childcare for any church-sponsored event that advertises that childcare will be provided must observe the guidelines in this document. Non-church sponsored childcare may be provided by families on site, provided that no paid church staff coordinate the childcare and that childcare workers are not compensated with church funds. Non-church sponsored childcare must be organized by the participants themselves.

Article D. Organizational Policies and Procedures

Prospective volunteers shall have six months involvement with Bethel Church or another Evangelical Christian church in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska prior to direct involvement with minors. Direct hires (e.g. Associate or Youth Pastors, Children's Ministry Assistants, etc.) shall be exempt from the six-month rule and shall be allowed to work with minors upon employment at Bethel Church.

Employees and volunteers are never to be alone with a single child. Similarly, no two related adults (immediate family members or those in a dating relationship) are to be the only supervising adults with a single child. Employees and volunteers shall endeavor to have two adults present whenever possible. Employees and volunteers shall not be considered to be alone with a single child while in a public place and visible to others. If a child needs to use the bathroom and only one adult is available to take them, that adult must take a group of children at the same time or stand outside of the bathroom until the child is finished.

Children's activities shall be held in visible locations to passersby.

Remote areas and closets should be locked.

In rooms containing no windows, doors must be left open. (If the door contains a window, then it may be closed.)

Children's activities should be randomly monitored by a supervisor (Nursery Director, Children's Sunday School Director, Education Pastor or similar).

Physical contact should be kept to a minimum and always in the presence of other adults.

Volunteers should follow the reporting procedures if they have suspicion of misconduct.

The National Sex Offender Public Website Background Check at www.nsopw.gov (not requiring the SSN of the volunteer) shall be re-checked every year if the employee or volunteer is still working with minors. Any employee or volunteer who has not had this check done within the past year shall not be allowed to work with minors.

Article E. State Reporting Laws

Bethel Church will comply with all state reporting laws.

Article F. Update of Prior Risk Management Policies and Procedures

Nursery Volunteers active prior to September 1, 2013, shall complete the application packet mentioned in No. 1 above, but shall be exempt from the requirements for two references and a personal interview.

Other employees or volunteers who have met previous standards of working with minors at Bethel Church prior to September 1, 2013, shall be considered children's workers in good standing and shall not have to re-apply for ministry or submit references with the exception that they must have the National Sex Offender Public Website Background Check checked every five years. The deadline for employees or volunteers who have met previous standards of working with minors to have their background re-checked shall be December 31, 2013.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

I. For Unpaid Volunteers

- A. Reporting procedures and response to allegations of abuse or misconduct by a church worker against a child/youth under their care during any church sponsored program or activity.

Treat all allegations seriously and set reporting and response procedure in motion immediately. Do not attempt to personally investigate.

An allegation of abuse must immediately (as soon as reasonably possible) be brought to the attention of the professional staff (a pastor or children's director) at Bethel Church.

- B. Reporting procedures and response to reasonable suspicions and/or evidence of any child abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian or primary care giver.

While unpaid Bethel Church volunteers are not mandated reporters according to Alaska state law, Bethel Church strongly recommends that any volunteer who witnesses or has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse by a parent, guardian or primary care giver to contact the nearest office of the Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services, as soon as possible.

Fairbanks Children's Services can be contacted by phone at (907) 451-2650 or at (800) 478-4444.

If the child is in immediate danger or if the Office of Children's Services is not available, it is strongly recommended that the volunteer immediately contact Fairbanks Police Department, or the nearest police agency, if applicable.

2. For Pastors, Children's Directors and Other Paid Staff

A. Reporting procedures and response to allegations of abuse or misconduct by a church worker against a child/youth under their care during any church sponsored program or activity.

i. The paid staff person shall immediately (as soon as reasonably possible) document the following details of the allegation with the accuser: 1). The names of the victim(s) and suspect(s). 2). The name and relationship of the accuser to the victim(s). 3). Names of possible witnesses of the allegation, and explain the process outlined below. The pastor/children's director or paid staff shall not take witness statements in order that the Office of Children's Services may conduct their subsequent investigation in an untainted and professional manner.

ii. Immediately (as soon as reasonably possible, no later than 24 hours after the allegation) the pastor/children's director or Bethel paid staff shall notify the nearest office of the state's Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services in regards to the abuse or neglect. Fairbanks Children's Services can be contacted by phone at (907) 451-2650 or at (800) 478-4444.

iii. Within 1 day the accused children's/youth worker shall be notified of the report, reminded of Bethel's policies and procedures regarding reporting abuse and temporarily relieved of their duties in child or youth work at Bethel Church pending the resolution of the allegation.

iv. If the accuser is someone other than the alleged victim's parent or guardian, at least one of the alleged victim's parents or guardians shall be notified that an allegation has been made, that the accused worker has been temporarily removed from their duties as a child or youth worker pending the resolution of the allegation and of Bethel's reporting policies and procedures for child abuse.

v. Within two days all available pastoral staff, lay Elders and Bethel's insurance carrier shall be notified of the allegation. Subsequent action(s) would be based on the advice and counsel of the insurance company and/or legal counsel.

B. Reporting procedures and response to reasonable suspicions and/or evidence of any child abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian or primary care giver.

Immediately (as soon as reasonably possible, no later than 24 hours) the pastor/children's director or Bethel paid staff shall notify the nearest office of the state's Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services in regards to the abuse or neglect. Fairbanks Children's Services can be contacted by phone at (907) 451-2650 or at (800) 478-4444.

BETHEL DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

I. GOD

There is one God who is the Creator and Ruler of all creation who has eternally existed in three co-eternal, co-equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is distinct in person and function, but one in essence.

2. GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father: one in essence with the Son and the Spirit. He is an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in all His attributes. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and sovereign Ruler of all things through His Son Jesus Christ.

3. JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is both the Son of God, equal with the Father, and the virgin-born Son of Man. He led a sinless life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins by dying upon a cross. He rose three days later to demonstrate His power over sin and death and as a declaration that He truly was the Son of God. He ascended to heaven's glory and will return again someday to Earth to establish His earthly kingdom and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God, equal to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make us aware of our need for Jesus Christ. He comes to live within those who have placed their trust in Jesus the moment they believe and seals their eternal destiny. He provides the Christian with power for daily living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He also gifts every believer for service within the Church. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.

5. THE BIBLE

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Protestant Canon, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

6. PEOPLE

People are the supreme object of God's creation created in the image of God. We were created to enjoy fellowship with God and fulfill God's will on earth. By an act of rebellion against the express will of God, the original pair became "infected" by sin, which resulted in all mankind inheriting a fallen nature. This inward inclination toward sin which always leads to acts of rebellion has alienated us from God, resulting in divine condemnation, spiritual death, and physical decay.

7. SALVATION

Salvation is the gift of God given to those who have placed their trust in Christ. Salvation is a gift because there is nothing we can do to earn it. No religious effort or good work ever qualifies us to receive salvation. Due to our inward inclination and actual acts of rebellion, we are deserving of God's judgment. But God the Father, because of his grace and mercy, sent God the Son to be the sacrifice for our sins by suffering and dying in our place. Those who trust in Christ are declared "not guilty" because their penalty for sin has been paid, and they become children of God.

8. THE CHURCH

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, His body, which is composed of all people who have placed their trust in Christ. We believe that this body expresses itself in local assemblies in which believers are in a covenant relationship. The Scriptures tell us to come together for edification, fellowship, worship, and prayer. The purpose of the Church is to make disciples of all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

9. THE FUTURE

Jesus will someday return bodily, personally, and visibly to earth to establish his rule and reign, the time known only to the Father. At the end of Christ's 1,000 year reign, all those who have ever existed will be judged. Those who have placed their trust in Christ will spend eternity in the presence of God. Those who have rejected Christ's offer of forgiveness will suffer eternal conscious punishment.

What ministry or specific position are you interested in? _____

MINISTRY APPLICATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Physical Address (No P.O. Box addresses allowed): _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home/Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Are you 18 or over? _____ Marital Status: _____

Questions:

1. Approximately how long have you been attending Bethel Church? _____

2. Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Please share your personal testimony in one or two paragraphs.

4. Have you read the Church's Doctrinal Statement? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(Attached)

5. Are you in agreement with all of the Church's doctrinal positions? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Please explain any disagreements: _____

6. In what ministries have you served in the past? (Include recent churches)

7. Have you ever worked with children/youth at Bethel Church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please indicate the specific ministry: _____

REFERENCES

Previous pastor or leader who has observed your interaction with minors in a working environment or in a volunteer capacity

Name _____ Relation _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

Leader or acquaintance at Bethel

Name _____ Relation _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. Are you using illegal drugs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Have you ever gone through treatment for alcohol or drug use? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

3. Have you ever been arrested and/or convicted for driving under the influence (DUI)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

4. Have you ever been hospitalized for a psychological illness? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

5. Have you ever been arrested and/or convicted of a crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

6. Have you ever had any sexual relations with any minor after you became an adult?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

7. Have you ever been accused or convicted of any form of child abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

8. Is there anything in your life or history that would call into question your being

entrusted with children? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so please explain: _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. Bethel Church may contact my references and appropriate government agencies as deemed necessary in order to verify my suitability as a children's or youth worker.

I understand that the personal information will be held confidential by the professional church staff.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Child/Youth Protection Policy
Acknowledgement

I have read, understood and received a copy of Bethel church's *Child/Youth Protection* policies and *Reporting Procedures*.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

(Print name)

Child/Youth Protection Policy
Reducing the Risk Acknowledgement

I have watched the *Reducing the Risk* child abuse prevention video.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

(Print name)

Child Safety Video Instructions:

1. Go to the Website:

- ☐ Scan the QR code or go to: <https://www.churchlawandtax.com/training/>



Login:

User Email: adam@bethelchurchak.org

Password: Bethe!8@ptist

2. Scroll Down and Watch:

- ☐ *Child Protection as the Foundation of Your Ministry* (Video 1)
- ☐ *A Victim's Story* (Video 2)
- ☐ *Supervising Scenarios: What Would You Do?* (Video 7)
- ☐ *Responding to an Allegation* (Video 8)
- ☐ *Taking the Next Steps* (Video 9)

3. Fill out the *Reducing the Risk Acknowledgment* on the preceding page of the **Child Worker Ministry Application**.

- ☐ PLEASE SIGN, DATE AND PRINT YOUR NAME ACKNOWLEDGING THAT YOU HAVE WATCHED THE ABOVE VIDEOS.

BETHEL CHURCH NATIONAL BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT

I hereby authorize Bethel Church to obtain information relating to my criminal history record. The criminal history record, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment or volunteer position with Bethel Church. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history records check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have the opportunity to review the criminal history and a procedure is available for clarification if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that, by law, I may see a copy of the transcript for its review, but may not receive a copy of the document in any fashion or form.

I, the undersigned, do for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, hereby remise, release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify Bethel Church and each of their officers, directors, employees, and agents harmless from and against any and all causes of actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims, demands, whatsoever, and any and all related attorney's fees, court costs, and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become a volunteer or employee of Bethel Church.

Full Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Maiden)

Physical Address (P.O. Boxes are not allowed)

Address _____

City, State, Zip code _____

Sex: (please indicate) ☐ Male ☐ Female

Date of birth: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Social Security # ____-____-____

(Once SSN is used for background check, it will be deleted from Bethel Church's records within 30 days.)

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are there any legal charges pending against you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain: _____

Signature _____ Date _____