



VCF KidVenture SAFETY POLICY

Please read and keep this form for future reference.

Only the signed Acknowledgment page is to be turned in.

Valley Christian Fellowship has adopted a Child Abuse Prevention Policy to protect children from incidents and our leaders from any false accusations.

All VCF volunteers and paid staff who work with children are mandatory reporters and are expected to become familiar with and follow this safety policy.

1. **All team members must have attended Valley Christian Fellowship a minimum of 3 months.**
2. **Anyone working with children is required to complete, sign, and turn in:**
 - a. *VCF KidVenture Children's Ministry Application*
 - b. *VCF KidVenture Safety Policy* (read & keep; turn in signature page)
3. **Anyone seeking to work with children will meet with a ministry leader.**
4. **References are checked for all applicants who have attended < 6 months.**
5. **Background checks are done on all team members aged 18 & over.**
6. **No person may be alone out of view with any child except their own** (volunteer/staff may ask a parent to wait in class until 2nd person arrives).
7. **No person may be alone in the bathroom with any child except their own** (another person must be present or one leader may wait outside the door for the child).
8. **Each classroom has a window or open door and are open to observation at any time.**
9. **Physical contact with a child is limited to shoulder hugs, high 5's, knuckle punches, & head pats. Younger children may be carried or sit on a worker's lap if visible by other people.**
10. **The dignity & safety of all children is ensured at all times.**
11. **Snacks with nuts are not served and special attention is paid to allergies or special needs.**
12. **Nursery toys are cleaned at the end of each service, and toys are checked regularly.**
13. **Anyone who is not a team member, but would like to observe in a classroom or stay with their child** must obtain a **"hall pass"** from the VCF KidVenture Welcome Station and give it to a leader upon entering the classroom.
14. **Open communication and partnership with parents is maintained.**
15. **All team members are "mandatory reporters" and must immediately report suspected abuse** (see symptoms below) or inappropriate conduct to the Director or an elder or pastor.
16. **Anyone who observes abuse of a minor** will immediately intervene and provide assistance.
17. **The director or elder or pastor** must immediately report suspected abuse to the Senior Pastor, who would **contact law enforcement as needed.**

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE:

1. *Sexual Abuse* is defined as the persuasion, enticement, or coercion of any minor 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 incest with a minor, 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.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE, cont.:

2. *Child Emotional Abuse* is defined as 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.
3. *Child Physical Abuse* is defined as any nonaccidental physical injury to the child" and can include striking, kicking, burning, or biting the child, or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child.

SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE:

Signs of physical abuse

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

Signs of neglect

- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is secretive and isolated
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

Signs of Emotional Maltreatment:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Constantly blames, belittles, berates, or overtly rejects the child
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems



VCF KidVenture SAFETY POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(sign & turn in to VCF)

Valley Christian Fellowship reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program 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 **Valley Christian Fellowship** or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the **VCF KidVenture SAFETY POLICY**.

I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and follow the **VCF** Child Abuse Prevention Policy.

Print Name

Signature

Date

This signed page is to be turned in with the completed *VCF KidVenture Children's Ministry Application* to the **KidVenture Welcome Station at church** or to church office at:

591 Alamo Pintado, Suite C
Solvang, CA 93463
Office phone (805) 688-5171
www.vcfconnect.org

Feel free to contact Connie Rice, the Director of Children's Ministry, at connie@vcfconnect.org or by cell at 661-618-2337.