

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Revised 08/06/2018

Purpose and Commitment

OP Youth's purpose for establishing this Child Protection Policy is to demonstrate our absolute, unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and to the spiritual growth of all of our students.

Our commitment to this purpose includes the adoption and enforcement of this policy on child protection. This policy applies to all adult volunteers and student volunteers who work with students in any paid or voluntary capacity.

Application, Selection and Screening

We believe that appropriate personal relationships between adult leaders and the children and students of the Church foster the community of Christ. Common expressions of affection (e.g., hugs), affirmation (e.g., pats on the back), and support (e.g., prayer) are appropriate in our community of caring Christians. Care will be taken, however, to ensure that adults do not behave in inappropriate ways during any Church-sponsored activities.

One of three security level designations will be assigned to all volunteer positions that involve interaction with children and/or youth. Appropriate security requirements will be associated with each level based on the type of interaction the position holders would typically have with children and youth. Following are the descriptions and requirements for each level:

Level I – Includes non-supervisory positions and those which rarely, if ever, require the position holder to be alone with a student (e.g., Sunday morning or Wednesday night class helper). Following are the requirements for Level I positions:

Adults: (Defined as 18 or older)

1. Must submit an application form
2. Must sign the Agreement and Acknowledgement of Receipt form indicating understanding of, and agreement to, adhere to OP Church's Child Protection Policies and Procedures.
3. Are subject to criminal history checks and reference checks; therefore, applicants must provide written authorization for the church to conduct these checks.

OP Youth Students Volunteering in Children's Ministry:

1. Must be approved by a Children's Minister

Level II – Includes all supervisory positions and those that have regular and consistent interaction with students in onsite activities (e.g., teachers and Sunday morning class helpers). Following are the requirements for Level II positions:

Adults:

1. Must complete the requirements for Level I positions.
2. Must be a baptized believer.
3. Must have been a Missional Partner of OP Church for at least six months prior to beginning work and plan to remain an active Missional Partner of OP Church.

4. Will review and consider, on at least an annual basis, all child protection policies and any information regarding the implementation of those policies and procedures.

OP Youth Students Volunteering in Children's Ministry:

1. Must submit an application form.
2. Must be an active participant of the OP Youth youth group for at least six months prior to beginning work.
3. Both students and their parents must sign the Agreement and Acknowledgement of Receipt Form indicating understanding of, and agreement to, adhere to OP Church's Child Protection Policies and Procedures, and declare that there is no history of misconduct on the part of the student that would make their service unsuitable. Student and parents will review and consider, on at least an annual basis, all child protection policies and any information regarding the implementation of those policies and procedures.

Level III – Includes all positions which require interaction for extended periods of time and/or those who will be on overnight trips with children or youth (e.g., Small Group Leaders, camp counselors, and overnight trip chaperones). Following are the requirements for Level III positions:

Adults:

1. Must meet all requirements for Level II positions. These individuals will be subject to rechecking of references and background checks as often as deemed necessary.

OP Youth Students Volunteering in Children's Ministry: (restricted to sophomores, juniors, and seniors at this level)

1. Must meet all the requirements of Level II
2. Provide a Student Reference Supplement in addition to the standard volunteer application form.

Two Ministers may approve a waiver of the above requirements, if requested, after all background and references have been checked and cleared.

All paid staff are required to pass a criminal history check.

All applicant information will be kept confidential and in a secure location.

Procedures

Parental Responsibility – Parents are responsible for their students when they are at OP Church facilities or off-site events where no official student supervision is provided. Non-church sponsored activities, even if they occur on the OP Church property, or are sponsored by OP Church families do not fall under the scope of this policy. This would include life group gatherings, birthday parties, etc. Parents should refer to church communications (e.g., website, Remind, e-mail) for information about events and activities for which there is church provided supervision.

Precautionary Policies– All volunteers and employees are expected to avoid any situation in which they would be alone, unobserved, and uninterrupted with youth. Youth events that take place at OP Church will take place in rooms with an open door or where there is clear glass in the door, and nothing impedes vision through the glass.

Two-Adult Rule--For activities where continued observation is not possible, there should be two volunteers present. A married couple does not fulfill the two-adult rule; a 3rd approved adult should be included when a married couple volunteers.

Drivers and Travel Events – No fewer than three persons, one of them an approved adult, should occupy a vehicle traveling to an event unless expressed parental permission has been given beforehand. Only approved adults will transport youth. No student should ever drive another student, with the exception of a sibling, to any OP Youth sponsored event. Drivers will be expected to adhere to all traffic laws.

Appropriate Communication - All general communication with youth will be done with the consent of parents and under their ongoing supervision. All communication should be appropriate, spiritual, and encouraging. The social media profiles of all volunteers should be constantly self-monitored for inappropriate material. Whenever possible, communication on social media should be done publicly in a post rather than by direct message. Due to the disappearing content of Snapchat and the inability to leave an electronic trail, we advise volunteers to exercise extreme caution in the use of this social media platform.

Overnight Event Chaperones – It is the goal of the Church that every sleeping unit (hotel room, camp cabin, etc.) will have either two approved adults of the same gender as the youth, or no adults assigned to it. Sleeping units are subject to unannounced visits by a monitor. Adults are not allowed to share a bed with a student unless it is their own child.

Pick-up After Events – Upon return from a travel event, youth will be released only to their parent or guardian unless the person in charge of the event has been notified in advance by the parent or guardian.

Adult-Youth Ratios for Travel and Off-Site Activities – The following ratios are recommended for off-site activities and for events requiring travel:

Youth, grades 6-8	1 adult to 8 youth
Youth, grades 9-12	1 adult to 10 youth

Prohibited Acts

Prohibited conduct includes any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or mental abuse of a student. Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of sexual conduct towards a youth or child;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a protected minor;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an older child and a younger child;
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a minor;
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
- Possessing obscene or pornographic materials at any Church activity;

- Possession or being under the influence of any illegal substances;
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol, or giving alcohol to a youth, while leading or participating in a function of the Youth Ministry;
- Carrying any type of weapon while leading or participating in a function of the Youth Ministry.

Response Procedures

Reports of Child Abuse

- From the Department of Children’s Services website (dcf.ks.gov):
According to Kansas law, all persons (including doctors, mental health professionals, child care providers, dentists, family members and friends) must report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Failure to report child abuse or neglect is a violation of the law.
If you believe a child has been abused or neglected, call 1-800-922-5330 to report it.
- The first person to learn of an incident of misconduct toward a child during a Church – sponsored activity should first secure the safety of the child, children or youth and then immediately report this incident to the Minister in charge or to another OP Church Minister. This individual should not leave the child, children, or youth alone to report the incident and should not personally confront the alleged violator of the policy.
- The individual reporting the incident will be required to fill out an Incident Report Form as soon as possible – ideally, immediately after the initial, verbal reporting of the incident. This written report is extremely important - the information provided will be critical to the investigation of the incident.
- Two individuals - the person in charge and the Minister, or 2 Ministers – will respond to inform and support the child’s parents and family as needed.
- The person against whom allegations have been brought will immediately be suspended from all duties involving children or youth until a full investigation has been completed and a determination has been made.
- The incident must be reported to the Kansas Department for Children’s Services (DCS) as soon as reasonable suspicion has been confirmed. The Church Administrator should then contact the Church’s liability insurance carrier.
- All persons involved with the report and investigation shall keep the information in strictest confidence.
- The Church will cooperate with DCS and all other civil authorities in the investigation of an alleged incident of child abuse.
- Every effort will be made to keep all conversations and written records pertaining to the alleged incident of child abuse in strictest confidence. Documentation will be kept in a locked file.

Child Protection Policies and Procedures Agreement and Acknowledgement of Receipt

I have received, read and retained a copy of the OP Church Child Protection Policies and Procedures. I acknowledge that these policies and procedures are for the protection of our students and that my compliance with them is expected. Failure to comply may result in loss of privileges to serve the children and youth at OP Church. I am aware this policy is subject to change periodically and an updated copy is available for review at op.church

Name (printed) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

If under age 18, the signature of a parent is also required:

Parent's Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

And, unless otherwise provided, two NON-FAMILY references with email addresses and telephone #s are needed for the under 18 volunteer:

1. _____

2. _____