

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

ADOPTED: April 10, 2013

REVISED: APRIL 2016

I. Statement of Purpose

Through all of their relationships at Community Presbyterian Church, children should see and feel the unconditional love of God. Church should be a place of safety, acceptance, and welcome. Therefore, CPC seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities by implementing the following practices. Our goal is to protect children and youth from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
I Corinthians 13:6 (NIV)

II. Definitions

“**CPC / Church**” – Community Presbyterian Church

“**DCFM**” - Director of Children's & Family Ministries

“**Child / Children** (6th grade & younger) / **Youth** (Jr High /High School)” – any person under the age of 18

“**Adult**” – a person 18 years of age or older;

“**Function**” – any ministry, party, class, childcare, activity, trip or other gathering specifically designed or planned for children / youth and sponsored or supported by CPC. This will include functions both on and off the property. *This does not include events where children are chaperoned by their own parents or guardians.*

“**Employees**” – any paid staff of CPC

“**Eligible Volunteer**” – unpaid personnel engaged in extended contact with children and youth (program leaders, Sunday school teachers, youth advisors, chaperones for overnights, host families, ongoing unpaid nursery workers, etc) who have completed the requirements of section III below.

“**Casual Volunteer**” – one-time or short-term contact with children and youth when other eligible volunteers are present (for example, drivers to and from youth activities, a last minute teaching or nursery substitute, or short term events) with the approval of the Pastor or DCFM.

“**Helper**” – a minor, who has been attending CPC for at least 6 months and is known to CPC personnel, but has not completed the eligibility requirements below

III. Requirements for Employees and Volunteers

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

A. Six Month Rule

Eligible volunteers and helpers must have attended CPC on a regular basis for at least six months with enough involvement to allow for a time of interaction between leadership and the applicant; if less than 6 months, they may be a ‘casual volunteer’ with a reference check and approval of the Pastor or DCFM.

B. Written Application (exhibit A)

All persons seeking to work with children / youth must complete CPC’s written application form, (exhibit A attached). The application will request basic information and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, references and employment information. Disclosure of any previous criminal convictions will also be requested. Once a casual volunteer has been called on, they will be encouraged to complete the application process and other requirements. Said application will be kept confidential between the Pastor, the personnel committee and/or Family Ministry Team.

C. 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 volunteer position.

D. Reference Check

A reference check will be required of all employees and of any casual volunteer who has been attending CPC less than 6 months. References should be of a ministry or personal nature as opposed to employer or family, preferably from churches or organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past.

E. Criminal Background Check

A criminal background check (CA only if a CA resident and active at CPC the last 10 years; national if less than 10 years), including finger printing and checking the pedophile registry, is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

1. Volunteers involved in child / youth programs
2. Those counseling minors
3. Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of minors

F. Understanding of, and Agreement to the CPC Child and Youth Protection Policy

Employees and eligible volunteers must sign and agree to adhere to the standards set forth in the policy. Everyone is strongly encouraged to take part in the on-line training which is available through our insurance company.

IV. Guidelines

A. Two Person Rule

It is our *goal* that a minimum of two unrelated eligible volunteers and/ or employees be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our functions. Often children's classes may have only one adult teacher (eligible volunteer / employee) in attendance during the class session; in these instances, the Open Door Policy (below) will apply. In addition:

1. At least one eligible volunteer /employee shall be at least five years older than the oldest youth participant.
2. Overnight Co-ed functions require co-ed supervision when using two eligible volunteers/staff members
3. Married couples will function as a single eligible volunteer and follow the Open Door Policy if an additional unrelated volunteer or helper is unavailable.
4. No child is to be alone with an unrelated eligible volunteer or employee on our premises or in any sponsored activity; should a child arrive for the event prior to the arrival of the 2nd volunteer/employee, follow the Open Door Policy.

B. Open Door Policy

When circumstances occur that only one eligible volunteer/employee is present with a group of children, classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or beside the door. Doors should be left open, even if there is a window, in the event that there is only one eligible volunteer/employee and only one child / youth in the room. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

C. No Child Left Unsupervised

Preschoolers, children, and youth who are participating in a church program and/or activity must always be under adult supervision.

D. Sign-in / Sign-out

For children in the nursery, a sign-in/sign-out procedure will be implemented.

E. Medication Policy

1. Employees and volunteers of CPC are not medically trained to deal with epi pens, inhalers, insulin, etc. if a child has these or other serious medical needs we will address them on a case by case basis.
2. Medications needed over the course of an over-night event, or mission trip of multiple days will be dealt with in the permission slip for that event.

F. Driving

When driving children or youth to local functions outside the church, there must be either two non-related eligible volunteers/employees or at least two children in the car at all times. Children should be dropped off and picked up at a central location rather than one by one at their homes.

Drivers must be 25 years of age, complete a driver information form, provide proof of insurance and a valid drivers license.

For trips out of town with more than one vehicle, cars should attempt to travel as 'buddy cars' within the bounds of safety with regard to traffic. This is to provide another layer of support in the case of an accident or vehicle malfunction.

G. Overnight functions

There shall be separate sleeping areas assigned for males and females; adults and youth should occupy different areas of the room.

H. Counseling

Since ministry often requires one-on-one counsel between a child/youth and an adult, it should be conducted in a public setting with parental consent, and an eligible volunteer or employee. Having said that, since ministry is often a spontaneous interaction, and not always with students regularly involved in the youth group, we recognize that prior parental/guardian permission may not always be possible. In that event, staff members /eligible volunteers shall meet with students one-to-one in a public setting.

I. Emails, Facebook, Youth cell phones

Contacting children/youth via their personal cell phone, Facebook, or their personal email should be done with the consent of their parents. This can be accomplished by a phone call which should be documented, or through the Kidz Count form (exhibit B).

J. Bathroom Policy

1. Eligible volunteers should not take a child alone to the restroom, if necessary, they must be accompanied by another volunteer/helper or other children. Children in grades 1-5 may be sent in pairs to the restroom without the supervision of an adult. Preschoolers should use the child's bathroom in the preschool area if available. Diapers are only to be changed in designated areas and in the presence of other workers. During Sunday Nursery Care, diapers are only to be changed by the parent/guardian.

2. Children should have as much privacy as possible. Eligible volunteers/employees should only enter a bathroom stall when absolutely necessary to assist the child, keeping both the stall and bathroom door ajar.

K. Appropriate Touch

Physical contact with children and youth should be affirming and only in the presence of other adults or children/youth. Common expressions of affection (brief hugs), affirmation (pat on the back), support (prayer), or physical care taking (diaper changing) are appropriate in the community of caring Christians. No touching of the areas covered by 'bathing suits' is allowed, except for physical care needs.

L. Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured during a church function the following steps should be followed;

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, first aid (Band-Aids, etc) will be provided as appropriate. The child's parent or guardian will be notified of the injury at the time the child is picked up.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, parents will immediately be contacted; 911 called when appropriate; and a Pastor contacted.
3. An incident report (exhibit C) will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

V. Outside Organizations (Boy Scout Troop, Overnight visiting youth group, etc.)

A. Outside Organizations

In any case where a visiting group will be conducting or sponsoring a function for or involving youth, an effort will be made to inquire as to their child and youth protection policy, and make them aware of ours. If they are incorporated or a non-profit entity, they must have their own liability insurance which includes sexual misconduct coverage. Their children must be supervised at all times, and they must have their own youth protection policy or abide by ours.

VI. Duty to Report

Adopting the broadest possible interpretation of 'mandated reporters' listed in Penal Code 11165.7, it is the policy of CPC that anyone involved in ministry to children or youth who suspects child abuse by a parent or other person responsible for the child's care, whether the abuse occurs during church-sponsored activities, in the home, or elsewhere, shall immediately report the incident, as outlined in section VII of this policy.

VII. Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

A. Suspected Abuse By A Parent Or Other Person Responsible For The Child's Care

In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at CPC becomes aware of suspected child abuse of a child under his/her care, this is to be reported immediately to the Pastor/DCFM for further action including reporting to authorities as mandated by California state law. A "Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse" (exhibit D) should be completed immediately by the individual suspecting abuse.

Maintain Confidentiality. The individual suspecting abuse may only discuss this with the Pastor/DCFM and/ or the Department of Social Services if you are contacted.

Parents **should not** be notified except by the Department of Social Services

Session will be notified, but no names or specifics should be given initially.

All investigation should be left to the Department of Social Services

B. Alleged Abuse by a Staff Member or Volunteer

In the event that an incident of child abuse is alleged to have occurred at CPC or during our sponsored function, the church staff will utilize the following procedure:

1. Report immediately to the Pastor/DCFM or if for some reason the report should not be made to the Pastor(s), it should be reported to the Clerk of Session.
2. The child will be removed from the situation, and the parents notified.
3. The incident will be reported immediately to the state authorities (including the police and the Department of Children and Family Services), to the insurance company and to the church Session.
4. The Pastor/DCFM will request that the staff member/volunteer remove him/herself voluntarily from his/her current position. The individual will be handled with dignity and respect. The staff member/volunteer may return to his/her position upon being cleared of all allegations.
5. The Pastor or his/her designee will complete the "Report of Suspected Incident of child abuse" form (exhibit D). **All actions pertaining to a specific incident must be carefully documented and kept confidential.**
6. All investigation of the alleged abuse will be conducted by trained law enforcement and/or CPS.

In the case of allegations of misconduct against a staff member/volunteer which occur outside the realm of the church or church activities, the accused staff member / volunteer will be temporarily suspended from working with children / youth at CPC. The suspension will remain in effect until the allegation has been deemed unsubstantiated.

EXHIBIT A

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Service with Children and Youth
Teacher Data Sheet

Thank you for your willingness to volunteer to serve our Lord by working with the children or youth of our church family. The completion of this information sheet is intended to provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the children the Lord has entrusted into our care here at Community Presbyterian Church. It is also intended to aid in protecting adult teachers and leaders from potential unfounded accusations or compromising circumstances that could impact their lives.

This data sheet is to be completed by each individual who wishes to serve with children or youth at Community as a teacher or staff member. The information you provide in the "Confidential Legal Questionnaire" section on page 2 of this data sheet is confidential and will be kept in a locked file. Only the appropriate staff persons (Pastor, Family Pastor and/or Director of Christian Education) will see this information. If you have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse, you should not offer to serve in any church-sponsored activity or program involving children or youth but should offer to use your gifts elsewhere in the church.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____
Last First Middle (Maiden)

If you have used other names, please provide complete names(s) and date in use:

Address: _____
Street City Zip Code

Home Phone #: _____ Work Phone #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ E-mail Address: _____

List any talents, training education, etc. that would help enrich the lives of our children and youth: _____

Describe any conditions that might restrict or hinder you from performing activities involved in the volunteer/staff position for which you are applying. _____

Please indicate the age group you prefer to work with:

_____ **Preschool:** _____ Newborn-2- year-olds _____ 3-year-olds _____ 4 and 5-year-olds

_____ **Children:** _____ Kindergarten- 2nd grade _____ 3rd-5th Grades

_____ **Youth:** _____ Middle School _____ High School

What is the length of the time commitment you can make? 6 months 9 months 1 year Unlimited

Please indicate the activity or activities you are willing to participate in:

__ Any Activity __ Sunday School at __ 9:00 or __ 11:00 __ Sunday Nights

CHURCH HISTORY

Have you made a public profession of faith, accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior? Yes No

Please provide a brief description of your faith journey _____

How long have you been worshipping at Community Presbyterian Church? _____

Are you a member at Community? Yes No

Please list the names and addresses of other churches you have regularly attended in the past seven (7) years other than Community Presbyterian Church? _____

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

List church experience with children and youth over the past seven years, giving the church's name, address, dates and contact person on staff: _____

List any work with children or youth over the past seven years, excluding church work, giving organization name, address, dates and contact person on staff: _____

CONFIDENTIAL LEGAL QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please answer the following questions. If you prefer, you may discuss these matters with the staff person responsible for the area of ministry in which you propose to serve.)

1. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor, except for minor traffic violations such as non-reckless speeding tickets)? You will need to answer "Yes" if you have entered into a plea agreement or a deferred sentence or deferred judgment arrangement in connection with a criminal charge. Yes No

2. Have you ever been arrested for or charged with a sexual offense, an offense relating to children, or a crime of violence (that is not covered in question 1 above)? Yes No

3. Have you ever been reported to a social services agency, law enforcement authority, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding abuse or misconduct involving children? Yes No

4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral behavior or conduct involving adults and children? Yes No

5. Have you ever been the subject of a complaint or disciplinary proceeding against you in a personal or professional capacity as a result of an accident or mishap involving children? Yes No

6. Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action (including discharge) or investigation by a church, by a religious or other organization, or by an employer? Yes No

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Below please list three references who are not related to you and who have knowledge of your character and ability to work with children/youth. One reference should be a member or staff person from Community Presbyterian Church that you've known for at least one year and the other two references should be individuals you've known for at least two years and can be an employer, fellow employee, social friend, neighbor, or previous church contact.

1. Community Presbyterian Church Member or Staff:

Name: _____ Length of Acquaintance: _____

Address: _____

Street

Zip Code

Nature of Association: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail Address: _____

2. Employer/Fellow Employee/Social Friend/Neighbor/Previous Church Contact:

Name: _____ Length of Acquaintance: _____

Address: _____

Street

Zip Code

Nature of Association: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail Address: _____

3. Employer/Fellow Employee/Social Friend/Neighbor/Previous Church Contact:

Name: _____ Length of Acquaintance: _____

Address: _____

Street

Zip Code

Nature of Association: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail Address: _____

INDIVIDUAL'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this teacher data sheet is correct to the best of my knowledge, and I authorize Community Presbyterian Church to check with the personal references listed above as well as the contact persons identified under my previous experiences. I authorize any of the individuals or churches in the personal references section and the contact people identified under my previous experiences to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children's and youth work. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations to you, provided they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf. I understand that a background check will be conducted.

I also agree to a state and/or national criminal background check, including finger printing and checking the National Sexual Offender Registry. I release Community Presbyterian Church and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims, or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

Should I be accepted to work with the children and/or youth of Community Presbyterian Church, I agree to be bound by the policies of Community Presbyterian Church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I further agree to teach according to the Church's Statement of Beliefs.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Social Security #: _____ Driver's License # (if different): _____

Print Name _____

Witness _____

Child Registration Card
Community Presbyterian Church

Thank you for helping us keep your kids safe and in touch with what is happening around here! The information on these cards will not be distributed or published elsewhere.

Name of Child: _____ Age: ____ Birth date: _____

Current Grade: _____ School: _____

Child's Cell number _____ Email: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Allergies or Medical Conditions: _____

Current Medications: _____

EXHIBIT C

Ouch Note

CPC Incident Report Form and Policy

Unusual Incident Report from State of California

Attached

Exhibit D

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Against _____

Date of Report: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Reported by:

Name and Title

Address

City, State and Zip Code

Telephone

Reported to:

Name and Title

Address

City, State and Zip Code

Telephone

Parents notified?

Yes No

Parents' names

Parents' address

Parents' telephone

Reported to Child Protective Services? Yes No Date _____

CPS Contact Person and telephone #

Reported to Police? Yes No Date _____

Police Contact Person and telephone #

Person suspected of misconduct:

Name and Title

Address

City, State and Zip Code

Telephone

Suspected victim:

Name, age and sex

Address

City, State and Zip Code

Telephone

Describe incident(s) of suspected abuse, including types of abuse/neglect, date(s), time(s) and location(s):

Identify eyewitnesses to the alleged incident, including names, addresses and telephone numbers, where available:

Other events going on during this time and other information that may be helpful to any investigation:

