



# Child Protection Policy

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**Jubilee Community Church**

*Revised April 2020*

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## OUR VISION

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We love children! Our Lord loves children and chastises those who treat them insignificantly:

*And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God."  
(Mark 10:13-14)*

We learn from our children's trust of us what our faith ought to look like toward our heavenly Father. This is why ministry to children is not just a duty to us, but a heartfelt delight! We get to know more about our relationship with our heavenly Father through them! Therefore, thank you for the privilege of serving your children. Our earnest desire is to be faithful with their trust and do everything we can to protect them in their weakness and vulnerability.

Our vision is to help children grow in their love for Jesus:

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.  
(2 Tim. 3:14-15)*

## OUR MISSION

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Jubilee Community Church's children and youth ministries exist to honor God by:

- Maintaining a safe and secure environment for our children.
- Supporting and encouraging parents / guardians who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Encouraging children to learn to serve and to not just be served (Mark 10:43-45).
- Maintaining the highest ethical standards such that volunteers and teachers always live and serve above reproach, protecting the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Preparing children to one day walk with God as adults, which means getting them ready to be a part of the public services and Lord willing, one day, a fully participating adult member.
- Inviting Jubilee families to join us in pursuing the fatherless, unchurched youth of our neighborhood so they can be taught the Gospel through mentor relationships - with the hope and prayer of also reaching their parents.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

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Those who accept the responsibility of working with children at Jubilee Community Church agree to:

- Treat children with respect and dignity;
- Do their best to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children participating in activities;
- Not engage in or condone acts of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse;
- Comply with JCC's Child Protection Policy; and
- Report any abuse, inappropriate behaviors, or policy violations.

All members, visitors, and guests at JCC should follow this policy. The pastor who oversees Children's Ministry and the Children's and Youth Ministry Leadership Team shall assume responsibility for overseeing the Child Protection Policy. Such responsibility includes supervision and implementation of the policy as well as providing opportunities for education and training about the policy. The intention of the Child Protection Policy is to protect. The Policy is not intended to substantially interfere with the nurturing, teaching, and supervising of children.

## DEFINITIONS

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**Minor** — Any person under the age of 18. A minor may include any 18-year-old still enrolled in high school.

**Child** — Any minor from birth through fifth grade.

**Youth** — Any minor from 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. A youth may include any 18-year-old still enrolled in high school.

**Vulnerable adult** — Any person 18 years of age or older who is unable to legally consent, unable to comprehend the nature of certain actions, or susceptible to coercion or abuse. This may include individuals who are mentally or physically disabled and the elderly.

**Volunteer** — A person performing services or donating time or effort without compensation who is authorized to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

**Helper** — Minors assisting adult volunteers in children's ministry activities.

**Staff member** — A paid employee of the ministry.

**Worker** — A volunteer or employee authorized to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

**Church leadership** — staff members, pastors, elders, deacons, and ministry coordinators.

**Congregant** — A person who regularly attends Jubilee Community Church.

# **POLICIES GOVERNING CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

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## **CHILDREN’S & YOUTH WORKER QUALIFICATIONS**

1. All workers must be members in good standing at JCC or a like-minded church or educational institution, approved by both the ministry leader and pastor responsible for children’s ministry.
2. All workers must be regularly involved at JCC or a like-minded church or educational institution for six months or more before they will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with minors or vulnerable adults.
3. All workers must be eighteen years of age or older.
4. All workers must demonstrate godly character and a commitment to obey the Code of Conduct printed above.

## **VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCEDURES**

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a volunteer position that involves working with minors or vulnerable adults will complete and return an initial ministry application.
2. The ministry leader, or designee, will carefully review the application, ensuring that the candidate is an appropriate match for the ministry position. The ministry leader will store all application materials—the application form, background checks, reference checks, notes from interviews, etc.— in a secure location.
3. After a review of the application, the ministry leader, or designee, will conduct an interview with the candidate.
4. If the individual appears to be an appropriate candidate for the ministry position, the ministry leader, or designee, will check at least two references to confirm the information that the candidate provided through the application and interview. The ministry leader will also conduct a criminal background check through a reputable security company. The criminal background check will be renewed every three years.
5. When indicated by our screening procedures, volunteer candidates who pose a threat to minors or vulnerable adults will be removed from consideration for any ministry position involving minors or vulnerable adults.

## **STAFF & CHURCH LEADERSHIP SCREENING PROCEDURES**

1. The same procedures required for volunteers also apply to all potential employees, elders, deacons, and MLG leaders regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered.
2. All aspects of the screening process must be completed prior to the beginning of service or employment.
3. When indicated by our screening procedures, employment or leadership candidates who pose a threat to minors or vulnerable adults will be removed immediately from consideration for employment or leadership anywhere within our organization.

## **HELPER QUALIFICATIONS**

1. A helper is not required to be a member of the church, but must be known through regular church attendance or participation in children's ministry.
2. A helper must receive approval to serve by the ministry leader and/or pastor responsible for children's ministry.
3. A helper must be at least one grade level above the children or youth they are serving.
4. A helper must demonstrate godly character and a commitment to obey the Code of Conduct printed above.

## **HELPER SCREENING PROCEDURES**

1. If the applicant is a child, the ministry leader, or designee, will discuss the helper job description with the child's parents to confirm that the child demonstrates age-appropriate maturity, responsibility, and trustworthiness. If the applicant is a youth, the ministry leader will have this conversation directly with the applicant. Youth applicants will also complete a volunteer application.
2. If the applicant appears to be an appropriate candidate for the helper position and is over age 10, the ministry leader, or designee, will check at least two character references. These references may include family members, teachers, coaches, or other adults who know the child closely.
3. The applicant will then review and sign the "Helper Responsibilities & Code of Conduct" document with their parent or a ministry leader. The ministry leader will store all application paperwork in a secure location.

## **STATEMENT OF RESTRICTIONS**

JCC reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer's ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children.

Any volunteer, helper, staff or elder who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to the ministry leader and/or the pastor who oversees children's ministry. He or she is personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose such information to the authorities.

## **TRAINING**

1. Children's ministry volunteers and all staff members, regardless of position, are required to complete JCC's Child Protection training before they are allowed to work with minors. Parents / guardians with questions about our training procedures are welcome to attend these sessions.
2. All staff members and existing children's ministry volunteers are required to complete a Child Protection Policy refresher training on a yearly basis.

## **GENERAL SUPERVISION**

1. *TWO ADULT RULE*: At least two screened, unrelated adult volunteers must be present at every function or program involving children or youth at all times. This includes each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area. Closely related volunteers (spouses, siblings, or parents & children) may serve together only when there is at least one other screened, unrelated volunteer with them.
2. *RULE OF THREE*: In limited circumstances when the Two Adult Rule cannot be implemented, at least three individuals must be present, with at least one being a screened, adult worker. The Rule of Three may not be utilized to leave one adult alone with children under the age of 7. A ministry leader must be notified when the Rule of Three is utilized.
3. Helpers are always in addition to and supervised by the two adult volunteers. Helpers are never to be left alone with children.
4. A staff member or volunteer may take children out of the nursery or classroom only for a compelling reason, such as in cases of acute illness, emergency, or evacuation.
5. Children must be supervised at all times while checked into programming.
6. When children's and youth programs are in session, the interior doors and windows should allow for unobstructed views from the outside of everyone inside the room.
7. Areas of the church building that are secluded and unsupervised will be kept locked during events when minors or vulnerable adults are present.

## **SUPERVISION DURING TRANSPORTATION**

1. Volunteers and staff members who complete an additional level of screening and training will be designated as "approved drivers". When transportation is officially organized and/or provided by the ministry program, it will be provided by approved drivers who have the consent of the minor's parent/guardian and the ministry leader.
2. Whenever possible, it is expected that the Two Adult Rule be followed during transportation.
3. During transportation when the Two Adult Rule cannot be feasibly implemented, at least three individuals must be present in the vehicle, with at least one being an approved driver. Implementing the Rule of Three is not appropriate when transporting any child under the age of seven.
4. JCC will maintain a record of all trips that are officially organized by the ministry, including the names of all drivers and passengers.
5. JCC will not provide oversight of or take responsibility for transportation that is not officially organized and/or provided by approved drivers. Informal transportation arrangements are arranged at the sole discretion of the families involved.

## **SUPERVISION DURING OUTSIDE EVENTS**

### *Outings with Children (Grades K-5)*

1. Outings should be conducted in groups, following the Two Adult Rule.
2. Outings should occur only in public places.
3. All outings should occur with the knowledge and consent of the child's parent/guardian.
4. The ministry worker must **inform** the ministry leader or designee of any outing before it occurs. Workers should communicate the date, time, and location of the outing, as well as all adult and minor participants.
5. In limited circumstances, outings that occur in a non-public location or in a one-on-one setting will be allowed. In addition to obtaining parental consent, a ministry worker **must receive prior approval** from the ministry leader or designee before an outing of this nature occurs.

### *Outings with Youth (Grades 6-12)*

1. Group outings are encouraged, especially when developing new relationships with youth.
2. Outings should occur in public places.
3. All outings should occur with the knowledge and consent of the youth's parent/guardian.
4. The ministry worker **must inform** the ministry leader or designee of any outing before it occurs. Workers should communicate the date, time, and location of the outing, as well as all adult and minor participants.
5. In limited circumstances, outings that occur in a non-public location or in a one-on-one setting will be allowed. In addition to obtaining parental consent, a ministry worker **must receive prior approval** from the ministry leader or designee before an outing of this nature occurs.

## **CHILD-TO-ADULT RATIOS**

The following ratios are maintained during all children's and youth programs:

- Children 0–23 months: One adult for every four children
- Children ages 2–3: One adult for every five children
- Children ages 4–6: One adult for every eight children
- Children ages 7–12: One adult for every twelve children
- Youth ages 13–18: One adult for every twelve youth

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom until additional volunteers are added. If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, the ministry leader should be notified and asked for more volunteers in order to maintain these ratios. Whenever age-groups are combined, the ratio is determined by the age of the youngest child.



## **CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES**

1. Parents/guardians must complete the ministry's specific registration and/or sign-in process before leaving their children with ministry workers.
2. Parents/guardians must be available via phone or church paging system at all times while their child is with ministry workers.
3. Workers have the right to refuse any child at check-in. Reasons children may be refused include potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the child:adult ratio has been met, or any other reason that might impair the ability to maintain a safe and secure environment.
4. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or adult persons specifically authorized to pick up the child. Siblings under age 16 are not allowed to pick up a child.
5. At least two workers must remain at their post until all minors in their care have been picked up by an authorized adult.

## **RECORDKEEPING**

All ministry functions involving children and youth should maintain an attendance list for every function. Records should include the date of the function, along with the names of all workers and participants. Records should be kept in a secure location.

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND SIBLINGS IN THE CLASSROOM**

### *Nursery & Sermons for Saplings Policies*

1. Parents may enter children's ministry rooms briefly during check-in and pick-up times or to comfort a child or assist with diapering/toileting.
2. To ensure that only pre-screened adults are present in children's ministry areas, parents should stay in a children's ministry room no longer than 10 minutes.
3. Older siblings are not allowed to accompany younger children in the classroom.
4. Ministry workers may ask a parent to leave the classroom at any time, for any reason. (This does not restrict a parent from observing the classroom, but merely from having physical contact with the children inside.)

### *Jubilee Kids & Revive Policies*

1. Parents are allowed to join their children during programming in order to observe activities or help their child acclimate. Upon arrival, visiting parents must inform the ministry leader of their intent to remain with their child and sign in at the registration desk.
2. Visiting parents will not be given responsibility for other children attending the program at any time, with the exception of emergency situations.
3. If a visiting parent exhibits behavior that is disruptive to the program or interacts with other children in ways that are inappropriate or suspicious, ministry workers may ask the parent to leave.

## **BATHROOM PROCEDURES**

### *Nursery Policies (Ages 0-3)*

1. Diapers will be changed as needed by adult female volunteers. Diapers will be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.
2. If there is a bathroom in the nursery room, children who are potty-trained will be assisted as needed in the bathroom by an adult female volunteer. The door should be left open with a second screened worker nearby for accountability.
3. If the nursery room does not have a bathroom, the child's parent will be paged to take them to the restroom.

### *Sermons for Saplings Policies (Ages 4-7)*

1. Children should use the bathroom located in the S4S Room for bathroom trips.
2. Children who need assistance in the bathroom will be helped by an adult female volunteer. The bathroom door should be left ajar with a second screened worker nearby for accountability.

### *Jubilee Kids Policies (Ages 6-11)*

One adult worker may accompany two or more children to the bathroom. The worker should check to make sure the facility is safe, then wait outside the bathroom for the children. If assistance is required inside the bathroom, a second adult worker should be present whenever possible.

### *Revive Policies (Ages 12-18)*

Youth participants may use the bathroom independently. To prevent peer-to-peer misconduct, allowing two youth to use the bathroom simultaneously is discouraged.

## **SNACK & FOOD PROCEDURES**

### *General Procedures*

1. When applicable, parents should be informed when snacks will be offered to children during ministry programming or nursery care.
2. If a child should not receive a ministry-provided snack, parents must communicate this information to workers during check-in.
3. Workers should check for allergy information before offering snacks. If the information is unclear, no food should be given without clarification from the parent/guardian.
4. Workers should ensure that all snacks offered to children under the age of 5 are age-appropriate and do not pose a significant choking hazard.
5. Parents may provide an alternative snack for their child, provided that the snack does not pose an allergy-risk to other children in the classroom.

### *Food Allergies*

1. Parents are responsible for communicating with ministry workers during registration and/or check-in about their child's food allergies, signs of allergic reaction, and how to respond in the event of an allergic episode.
2. When applicable, allergy information for regular attenders will be posted in appropriate areas (classroom, kitchen, etc.)

## **ILLNESS AND INJURIES**

### *Communicable Illness Policy*

1. A person (adult or child) who is sick with a communicable illness will not be allowed to participate in any ministry activity.

Communicable illness is considered present when any of the following has been observed within the last 24 hours:

- Oral body temperature of +100 degrees
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea not related to medication or food reaction
  - Contagious or undiagnosed rash
  - Yellow or green discharge from nose or eyes
  - Constant cough not related to allergies or a wet cough producing yellow or green discharge
  - Lice
2. Workers have the right to refuse a child's participation if the child is clearly ill or presents any of the symptoms listed above.
  3. Parents will be notified and required to pick up their child immediately if a child develops any of the listed symptoms during programming. Workers should attempt to limit the child's contact with other children while waiting for the parents' arrival.
  4. No medication will be administered to a child without written permission and instructions from the child's parent/guardian.
  5. Workers and minors are encouraged to wash their hands frequently, particularly before eating and after contact with bodily fluids.

### *Injuries*

1. Basic First Aid material will be available in each children's classroom and in the Lower Level kitchen.
2. All participant injuries should be reported to the ministry leader, or designee, within 24 hours.
3. If a participant receives a minor injury during programming, ministry workers should provide basic first aid and notify the child's parent/guardian during pick-up.
4. If a participant's injury needs medical treatment beyond basic first aid or if internal injury is suspected, the child's parent/guardian should be notified immediately. If needed, emergency medical personnel should be called.

## **PHYSICAL TOUCH POLICY**

### *Worker-to-Minor*

1. Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children, develops a child's emotional security, and aids in communication and learning. Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of the child, not the adult.
2. Appropriate physical contact varies according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) is not be appropriate for grade school children.
3. Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to, coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploit the child's lack of knowledge, satisfies adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violates laws against sexual or physical contact between an adult and child, and any attempt to modify child behavior with physical force.
4. Touch should be limited to "safe" areas and for a brief time. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of the head. It is never appropriate to touch a child on or near any region that is private or personal, unless when necessary while assisting in a diaper change or restroom visit.
5. For further guidance, see Appendix 1.

### *Minor-to-Minor*

1. No minors should ever be alone together while serving or participating in children's or youth ministry activities.
2. Fighting will not be tolerated and any minor participating in violent action will be dismissed from a class/program and placed into his or her parent's care.
3. No inappropriate touching (as defined above and in the appendix) of any kind will be accepted. If inappropriate touching occurs, the perpetrator will be removed from the ministry activity immediately and the following individuals notified:
  - a. The parents of every minor involved
  - b. The ministry coordinator
  - c. The pastor who oversees children
4. Further actions will be determined by the pastor who oversees children, in consultation with ministry coordinators and leaders.
5. The church reserves the right to bar a minor from children's or youth activities when their behavior endangers the physical and/or emotional well-being of others.

## **APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE**

1. All workers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by proactive preparation, verbal encouragement, and when necessary, correction and redirection of inappropriate behavior.
2. Discipline/correction should be discrete, but within sight of other adults.

3. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline a minor or vulnerable adult. Physical restraint should only be used when it is necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming himself or another individual.
4. Workers are prohibited from using insults, belittling comments, threatening or harsh words, or any other verbal humiliation as discipline.
5. Parents/guardians should be contacted to immediately remove a minor if:
  - a. The minor physically harms or threatens to harm others
  - b. The minor harasses or bullies other minors
  - c. The minor does not respond to correction from ministry workers
6. After a minor is removed from children's or youth ministry, reinstatement is possible at the determination of the pastor who oversees children's ministry and the ministry leader. A minor may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced.
7. Further direction regarding age-appropriate discipline will be provided by leaders of each specific ministry.

## **VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES**

### *General Policies*

1. Volunteers should limit their use of personal devices while leading ministry activities.
2. Appropriate uses of personal devices during ministry activities include:
  - a. Communication with parents/guardians
  - b. Communication with other ministry workers or leaders
  - c. Any type of activity that supports the ministry activity (playing music during worship time, projecting visuals during teaching time, etc.)
3. Inappropriate uses of personal devices during and outside of ministry activities include:
  - a. Uploading, downloading, or viewing pornography
  - b. Sharing content (music, videos, social media posts, etc.) with sexual themes or sexually explicit material with minors
  - c. Private, one-on-one conversations with a minor via email, texting, social media platforms, or other virtual means
  - d. During ministry activities, any type of device usage that distracts or hinders ministry to the children or youth
4. Deliberate and repeated pornography usage is grounds for disqualification for children's and youth ministry.
5. Ministry workers who find themselves in disagreement with one another should engage in person, rather than over social media platforms, seeking to resolve matters with grace and without delay.

### *Children's Ministry Policies (Birth – Grade 5)*

Communication to children that is outside of programming time should always go through their parents/guardians. Ministry workers should never directly call, text, email or have any other type of virtual interaction with children.

*Youth Ministry Policies (Grades 6 – 12)*

1. **Interaction with accountability and transparency is encouraged.** Ministry workers and youth are allowed to interact directly through virtual means. For the sake of accountability and transparency, group interactions are strongly encouraged. Groups may include multiple youth, ministry workers, parents, etc.
2. **All private virtual communication must have accountability safeguards.** Private, one-on-one communication through virtual means is allowed when the following accountability safeguards are in place:
  - a. The ministry worker must obtain parental consent prior to engaging in any form of private virtual communication with the youth.
  - b. The ministry worker must regularly inform their ministry leader/supervisor of all private interactions. This includes allowing the ministry leader to view all forms of virtual exchange (texts, snaps, social media messages, etc.) as applicable.
  - c. Private interactions without accountability safeguards are strictly prohibited. Concealing private interactions with youth from others is grounds for removal from ministry with children or youth.
3. **Parent Partnership:** Ministry workers must first discuss virtual communication and social media use with a youth's parents before engaging with youth through technology or encouraging youth participation. Ministry workers are not allowed to utilize any form of virtual communication or social media that goes against the wishes of a youth's parent.
4. **Youth-Initiated Communication:** If a youth initiates a private interaction with a ministry worker through virtual communication, the worker is encouraged to respond graciously, serve the youth as needed, and shepherd the youth towards communication that abides by the policy.
5. **Social Media:** Ministry workers are allowed to publicly interact with students on social media platforms. As ministry workers represent living for Christ, everything they post and "like", as well as what they allow others to post on their platform must be edifying to young people. If a ministry worker witnesses virtual behavior by a youth that dishonors Christ, they are to shepherd the young person's heart. If they observe something that threatens the safety or well-being of a youth (ex. self-harm, suicidal thoughts or plans, substance abuse, desire to harm others and/or threats of violence, etc.) they are to immediately bring their concerns to the youth's parents and/or their ministry coordinator.
6. **Abiding by Platform Guidelines:** Almost all social media platforms require users to be thirteen years or older. No ministry worker is allowed to interact with a young person under the age of 13 on social media platforms.

## VIOLATION OF POLICY OR PROCEDURES

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*Jubilee Community Church takes policy violations and questionable behavior seriously. While not all policy violations indicate malicious intent, diligently addressing violations makes it easier for church leaders to identify suspicious behavior patterns and intervene before children are harmed. JCC is committed to creating a culture of proactive intervention and consistent reporting as a foundational piece of child protection.*

### **WITNESS INTERVENTION: A CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Every person in our congregation is responsible for the safety and protection of children while they are in our care. Therefore, any congregant who witnesses a policy violation is urged to intervene in the situation and report the incident.

#### *Steps for Witness Intervention*

1. **Name:** Calmly go to the individual who has violated the policy and name the behavior that is concerning.
2. **Explain:** Explain the violated policy rule to the best of your ability.
3. **Redirect:** Help the violating individual see a safer course of action and redirect him/her to that path.
4. **Report:** Report the violation to the Pastor for Children and Family Discipleship or another related ministry leader immediately.

Intervention can feel uncomfortable. However, responding to policy violations directly and immediately is essential for making this policy an active means of protecting children.

#### *Additional Responses to Policy Violations*

1. Every policy violation reported to church leadership will be documented using a Child Safety Incident Form and added to a central information database.
2. Church or ministry leaders who become aware of a policy violation are required to take all necessary steps to evaluate the situation and ensure future compliance.
3. A full description of response procedures is found in Appendix 2.

## REPORTING ABUSE & NEGLECT<sup>1</sup>

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*Protecting the children of Jubilee Community Church is a communal responsibility. We rely on each other's awareness to identify suspicious activity, and we rely on each other's bravery to report concerns. Please pray for the safety of our children, and if you see troubling behavior, do not keep silent. If you have witnessed abusive behavior, noticed warning signs of abuse or received concerning information from a child, contact the local authorities. If you are unsure what to do, trained screeners can help you determine whether or not your concerns should be officially reported.*

### *Reporting to External Authorities & Agencies*

1. All church leaders, employees, and volunteers who are subject to mandatory reporting guidelines are expected to fully comply and report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or signs of neglect to local authorities. In the state of Minnesota, all members of the clergy are mandatory reporters. At JCC, we interpret "clergy" to mean paid staff members.
2. Individuals who are not mandatory reporters are urged to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect to local authorities, in keeping with this policy's Code of Conduct and personal moral responsibility.
3. The pastor who oversees children is designated as JCC's initial point of contact (IPC) for all reports of suspected abuse or neglect. After contacting local authorities, volunteers and employees should inform the IPC of the situation as soon as reasonably possible. If the IPC is the suspected perpetrator, the information should be reported to the alternative IPC (the executive pastor). The volunteer or employee must then complete a Suspected Abuse or Neglect Report Form for internal church records.
4. The IPC must ensure that the minor's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or sexual misconduct has occurred, unless the parent or guardian is the suspected perpetrator.
5. If there is any question as to whether or not a report should be made to the local authorities, the IPC or the initial witness should contact Hennepin County Child Protection Services within 24 hours to consult with a county screener.
6. Church leaders must promptly notify the church's insurance carrier upon notice of abuse or sexual misconduct by an employee or volunteer, or that has occurred within the context of church ministry.
7. The church will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any person who has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect and reports in good faith.

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<sup>1</sup> Warning signs of abuse are found in Appendix 3. For guidance in discussing abuse with minors, see Appendix 4. Additional information regarding reporting, including local telephone numbers and the legal obligations of a mandatory reporter is found in Appendix 5.



### *Internal Reporting & Response*

1. After the IPC receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect, he is responsible for notifying JCC's entire staff and elder board within 48 hours.
2. The Child Protection Policy oversight group will maintain a confidential written record of all reports of suspected abuse or misconduct.
3. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to abuse or molestation will be terminated immediately consistent with the established employment practices of this church.
4. Volunteers subject to investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
5. Any employee, volunteer, or church attender under investigation is barred from participation in any ministry activity involving minors, pending completion of the investigation.
6. The church will permanently remove any employees or volunteers from their ministerial duties within this church if they are found guilty of abuse or molestation.
7. The JCC elder board may implement other responses or restrictions, as deemed wise, including:
  - a. Reporting allegations, self-admission, or criminal conviction to the full staff, deacons, and other ministry volunteers
  - b. Reporting allegations, self-admission, or criminal conviction to the congregation during JCC's public worship services or members' meetings
  - c. Requiring the individual to have an approved escort at all times while on JCC's property
  - d. Barring the individual from any and all church property
  - e. Removing the individual from membership in a public members' meeting by the congregation
  - f. Sharing information regarding allegations against any employee, elder, deacon, volunteer, youth helper, or JCC member with other churches or ministry organizations

## CARING FOR VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS

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JCC is committed to providing a compassionate response to any child or youth who has experienced mistreatment or abuse while in our care. Every allegation of mistreatment will be taken seriously. Policy guidelines for handling complaints will be followed diligently and exhaustively. Situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for all parties' privacy and confidentiality.

1. The victim and victim's family will be supported and cared for by the church in whatever way possible. This may include:
  - a. Identifying the family's practical needs (e.g. meals, childcare, and financial support for medical, legal or counseling costs) and with the family's consent, connecting them with appropriate resources
  - b. Connecting the family to legal resources, child advocacy centers, medical care, trauma-informed mental health agencies, and other community-based resources.
  - c. On-going emotional and prayer support
2. Offenders and, in particular, their families will also receive support and care from the church. This may include:
  - a. Identifying the family's practical needs (e.g. meals, childcare, and financial support for medical, legal or counseling costs) and with the family's consent, connecting them with appropriate resources
  - b. Connecting the family to legal resources, sex-offender treatment programs, counseling for family members dealing with shock, shame, grief, etc. and other community-based resources.
  - c. On-going emotional and prayer support

JCC commits to holding offenders accountable for their actions, even those who appear sincerely repentant. Although we believe in the Spirit's ability to transform sin-sick hearts and affirm the unparalleled forgiveness offered by the Gospel, we do not cheapen God's grace by denying there are no earthly consequences of sin. This may mean supporting a victim's family as they pursue legal action against the offender and/or enacting internal disciplinary measures against an offender (including expulsion from the church). To the best of our ability, we will work to create an environment where the abused and mistreated feel safe.

## SEXUAL OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH<sup>2</sup>

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*The following guidelines govern the participation of any known sex offender in the life of our congregation.*

1. Level 3 sex offenders will not be allowed to attend any services or ministries of JCC where children may be present. At the present time this effectively would include virtually all of JCC's ministries. We will lovingly direct Level 3 offenders to churches that have already established ministries focused on serving sexual offenders.
2. When a congregant or staff member is informed that an alleged or convicted sex offender (Level 1 or 2) is attending the church, JCC will take the following steps to manage risk:
  - a. The congregant or staff member will inform the executive pastor, who will gather more information about the individual. The executive pastor will gather as much information as reasonably possible (name, contact info, contacts in the church, etc.). It is understood that there may be factors that limit the amount of information that can initially be obtained.
  - b. The executive pastor will share the information he has gathered with the entire staff. Information will be recorded in the church's internal directory.
  - c. The executive pastor will develop and implement an action plan, assisted by other staff members, deacons, and/or a representative of the security team. The action plan will be reviewed and approved by the elders prior to implementation, and agreed to and signed by the individual. The plan may include but not be limited to:
    - i. Church staff will obtain a record of the individual's prior criminal convictions by conducting a background check.
    - ii. If the sex offender is on probation, the executive pastor or his designate will identify the probation officer and ascertain the conditions that have been imposed.
    - iii. The requirement that an approved sponsor escort the individual while on church property and attending church events. The sponsor must be a member in good standing at JCC whom the elders deem qualified in discernment, wisdom, holiness and leadership for the ministry assignment.
    - iv. Restrictions on certain parts of the building or ministries or activities with minors in the church.
    - v. A timetable for review of the plan, which may include changes in building/ministry access or supervision

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to have a basic understanding of the legal classifications of "convicted sex offender." In the state of MN, convicted sex offenders whose crime is predatory in nature are assigned a level based on their projected likelihood of re-offense. These are Level 1, 2, or 3. Public notification is required only in the case of a Level 3 offender. While unsettling, it is important to understand that Level 1 and Level 2 offenders are not necessarily required to notify the church.

3. In some cases, even for Level 1 and 2 offenders, exclusion of the offender from church is the only viable option. This option is advisable if (A) for any reason the conditional attendance option is not feasible or enforceable; (B) if the offender's crimes are so frequent or heinous that exclusion is the only appropriate option; or (C) one or more of the offender's victims attends the church. This will be a judgment call made by the elders.
4. The process detailed above applies to all individuals who have been accused or convicted of a sexual crime or are in the process of adjudication. The process detailed above applies to both adults and minors.
5. If the sexual offender is a minor, the church reserves the right to bar that minor from any children's or youth activities.
6. When a registered sexual offender seeks membership at JCC, the elders retain the right to refuse membership. If the elders offer membership to the individual, it will be conditional based on agreement to the following terms:
  - a. The individual will abide faithfully to his/her pre-existing security plan.
  - b. The individual will refrain from any form of communication, social fellowship, physical contact, mentoring, babysitting, or coaching of minors of the church or from participation in any activity for minors sponsored by the church, at any location.
  - c. The individual will abide by any other restrictions deemed necessary by the elders.
  - d. The individual will acknowledge that any violation of his/her security plan or the church's child protection policies may result in church discipline and being banned from the church facilities or any church-related programs or activities.
  - e. Information about the individual's criminal history and any other information deemed significant by the elders will be disclosed to all JCC members prior the membership vote.
  - f. The individual will agree in writing to the contents of his/her security plan and the terms listed above.
7. Convicted sexual offenders are not eligible for any volunteer or staff position at the church. Exceptions may only be made upon the approval of the elders, full disclosure to the congregation, and a congregational vote.
8. If a sexual offender does not disclose a former allegation, conviction, or adjudication, and it is later revealed, the individual will be removed from any paid or volunteer position immediately and may be removed from membership.

## APPENDIX 1: INAPPROPRIATE AND APPROPRIATE TOUCH

### Inappropriate Touch

- Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reasons.
- Squeezing the arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body.
- Tickling children over 5 years old. It is over stimulating and is considered by some professionals to be a deceptive device that could lead to inappropriate touching.
- Children sitting on the laps of adults is inappropriate for ages 6 and older.
- Holding or restraining children on the lap. However, holding a child under the age of 6 is appropriate for short time spans when the child needs comfort or the child's behavior is out-of-control or endangering other children.
- Touching a child in the genital areas except for younger and developmentally delayed children requiring a diaper change, bathing/washing or assistance with toileting procedures.
- Otherwise, touch in the genital area is only permitted by medical personnel in case of injury or suspected injury.
- Kissing of any kind is inappropriate. This includes kisses initiated by a child, as well as by an adult. Children may not kiss one another.
- Slapping a child on the behind, even when playing.
- Fondling children, even in non-private areas.
- Carrying a child on the back unless the child is unable to walk.

### Appropriate Touch

- A comforting pat on the shoulder or back or allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder is appropriate.
- Back rub to help comfort or put an irritable child to sleep is appropriate.
- High-Fives, handshakes, or fist bumps are appropriate and recommended touch, especially when interacting with older children.
- Holding hands is permitted with children 10 years and under when initiated by the child, or when helping a child to walk, climb stairs, etc.
- Holding a child firmly with your hands to restrain him/her is appropriate when it is used to prevent a child from an accident, injury, hurting self, others, or you.

**Some students, especially boys, enjoy roughhousing. However, this has the potential to be harmful. Before engaging in wrestling or similar activities with students, use these questions to guide your behavior:**

1. When it's all over, will the youth feel more acceptance and belonging or rejection and humiliation?
2. When it's all over, what would the youth's parents say if they were standing there?

3. Is this something you'd do to your own child? Better yet, how would you feel if someone else did this to your child?
4. Does this bring about more distraction, or get in the way of, what we are aiming to do in our ministry time?
5. Does this likely provide a situation where youth will be tempted to be out of control or hurt someone else, either intentionally or unintentionally?
6. Does this likely provide a situation where a mentor will be tempted to be out of control or hurt someone else, either intentionally or unintentionally?

## APPENDIX 2: CHURCH LEADERSHIP RESPONSE TO A DOCUMENTED POLICY VIOLATION

1. **Ask:** In reviewing the Child Safety Incident Form or any report of a violation ask these initial questions.
  - A. “Does the violation fit the legal definitions of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse?”
  - B. “Does the violation raise suspicion of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse?”
2. **Decide:** Use your answers to determine the next step.
  - A. If the answer is YES to either question: The violation must be reported to legal authorities.
  - B. If the answer is NO to both questions: Church leaders will discern the following:
    - a. “Is the violation minor?”<sup>3</sup>
    - b. “Has it occurred only once?”
    - c. “Has the individual been historically receptive to redirection and correction?”
3. **Act:** Once a decision has been made, church leaders will act accordingly.
  - A. If the incident merits reporting to the legal authorities, church leadership will:
    - a. Document the violation
    - b. Not meet with the individual in question
    - c. Report the incident to legal authorities immediately
    - d. Pray for the individual
  - B. If the answer is YES to all questions under 2B, church leadership will:
    - a. Document the violation
    - b. Pray for the person and for spiritual discernment
    - c. Meet with the individual, if it seems wise to do so
    - d. Move on without lingering concern as long as nothing gives pause
  - C. If the answer is NO to any of the questions under 2B, church leadership will:
    - a. Document the violation
    - b. Pray for the person and for spiritual discernment
    - c. Meet with the individual for further education and to discern if further actions are necessary

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<sup>3</sup> Minor violations may occur when an individual is unfamiliar with the policy to due inexperience or lack of training, has misunderstood certain terms within the policy, or disagrees with a certain term or policy rule.

## Further Education/Meeting Agenda

If church leadership determines that a meeting for further education is necessary, the meeting will be convened with the individual and at least two members of church leadership, always including at least one pastor/elder.

### *Meeting Agenda*

- Pray.
- Explain the reason for the meeting.
- List the specific instance(s) of observed inappropriate behaviors or policy violations.
- Ask the individual to respond to these observations.
- Listen for and record blame-shifting to the child and/or minimizing the violations.
- State explicitly that the behavior is concerning and why it puts children and risk.
- Give opportunity for the individual to correct his/her behavior (when no abuse is disclosed).
- Thank the individual for his/her ministry within the congregation.
- Explain that the meeting is to protect children as well as protect him/her.
- Review the policy rule that has been violated and ensure that he/she has copy of the entire policy .
- Ask the individual to agree in writing to abide by the JCC Child Protection Policy by signing the “Child Safety Incident” form. Provide a copy of this form to the individual and retain a copy for the church.
- Inform the individual of the specific people (decided ahead of time) who will be following up with him/her to make sure he/she abides by the signed agreement and the policy.
- Reassure the individual that as long as he/she abides by the agreement and the policy on the whole, he/she will be welcomed in the church.
- Provide examples of healthy and safe ways to interact with children and engage in church life.



### *Meeting Response*

Church leadership who have engaged in a meeting for further education will follow this procedure in response:

#### **1. Ask**

- A. Has the meeting given cause for increased concern?
- B. Has the individual continued to violate the Child Protection Policy?
- C. Was there admittance of intent to harm or of child abuse?
- D. Is there a suspicion of child abuse?
- E. Is there an allegation of child abuse?

#### **2. Decide and Act**

- A. If the answer is YES to 1a or 1b, enact a Limited Access Agreement
- B. If the answer is YES to 1c-e, REPORT the findings to legal authorities
- C. If the answer is NO to all of the questions under number 1, DOCUMENT the incident and follow up periodically

## APPENDIX 3: SIGNS OF ABUSE & NEGLECT<sup>4</sup>

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

### The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home

### The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

### The Parent and Child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, that these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

### Signs of Physical Abuse

*Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child:*

- 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

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<sup>4</sup> This is a reproduction of the factsheet "Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms" produced by the Child Welfare Information Gateway.

*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**

*Consider the possibility of neglect when the child:*

- Is frequently absent from school
- 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**

*Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:*

- 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**

*Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the child:*

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

## APPENDIX 4: WISDOM FOR TALKING TO MINORS ABOUT ABUSE<sup>5</sup>

**Do stay calm.** Panicking, or interrupting the child can lead to them determining they made a mistake in approaching you. In short, be prepared and approachable.

**Do take them seriously.** With your body language especially, indicate that you are interested, that you think this is serious, and that you are genuinely interested in hearing and helping them. This includes taking them at their word, even if you can't fully affirm that you believe them. If they've worked up the guts to speak up to you, they're more likely holding something back rather than fabricating.

**Do not assure them of confidentiality.** In fact, make it clear that you cannot keep it to yourself, but will have to bring in others ("There are some things I cannot keep secret"). In this, reassure them of the church's commitment to care for them and protect them.

**Do not ask leading questions.** "Is that why I see you acting so down in church?" "It feels like you're alone sometimes, yeah?" "I get the sense that..." "Is that true?"

**Do ask open ended questions.** "How would you describe his anger?" "How does the rest of your family respond?"

**Do give them a broad variety of equal options (especially if they're having trouble vocalizing things).** "Would you say he's angry once a month, once a week, once a day, more, less than that?"

**Do dialogue with patience.** Scattered thinking is a known symptom of those suffering from abuse. We have a great opportunity to display Jesus in our patience and longsuffering.

**Do ask clarifying questions.** "When he's angry, does he hurt you physically?" "Does it happen to others in the family?"

**Do reassure that you'll see this through and talk to appropriate people inside and perhaps outside the church.** "We won't leave you hanging..."

**Do remind them that we care for them and that God is the Amazing Shepherd and loves them perfectly.** These situations are always complex. We will not navigate them perfectly. However, Jesus is sovereign despite our mistakes. Though we have lack, Jesus' perfect shepherding has no lack!

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<sup>5</sup> This appendix is courtesy of Bethlehem Baptist Church, as found in the BBC Child Protection Policy (2020).

## **APPENDIX 5: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

### ***Legal Responsibilities of a Mandatory Reporter***

In the state of Minnesota, members of the clergy are considered mandatory reporters. Mandatory reporters have a **legal obligation** to report suspected abuse or neglect. At Jubilee Community Church, we consider “clergy” to mean all paid staff members.

Volunteers and congregants are not legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect but are *urged to do so* if they are concerned for a child’s safety and well-being.

The law requires mandated reporters to make a report if they know of or have reason to believe a child is being neglected or abused or has been neglected or abused within the preceding three years. Verbal reports must be made immediately (no longer than 24 hours). A written report must be submitted within 72 hours (weekends and holidays are excluded). Reports should be made to the local child welfare agency.

### ***Note on Certain Limitations***

Minnesota law may prohibit clergy (JCC staff members) from reporting suspected abuse or neglect if the staff member learns of the abuse through a confession or other communication made to them by any person seeking religious or spiritual advice, aid, or comfort, unless the person consents to such a report. Staff members who learn of suspected abuse or neglect through such a communication should immediately consult with Jubilee’s elder board or legal counsel to determine if there may be any limitation in their reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

### ***How to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect***

If at any time you know or suspect a child is in imminent danger, call 911 immediately.

If a child is not in imminent danger, contact Child Protection Services. CPS screeners will help you determine if an official report should be made and which local or state agency should receive the report.

**Hennepin County CPS: 612-348-3552**

**Ramsey County CPS: 651-266-4500**

### ***What information will you be asked?***

- Your name, phone number, your relationship to the family or child, and source of information (witnessed, heard, etc.)
- Name, address, age, and other identifying information regarding the alleged victim, siblings, alleged offender, other household members, or any additional witnesses.
- Specific description of allegations. When and where the alleged incident occurred and if a child is in immediate danger.
- Description of a child’s injuries or present conditions, and reporter’s understanding of the impact of the alleged maltreatment to the child.

- Presence of domestic violence, criminal activity, including prostitution or sex trafficking of children, weapons, or other dangerous activities in the home.
- Description of any action a school and/or other facility or agency has taken specifically in response to the incident.
- Family's awareness of reporter's contact with the agency.
- Reporter's awareness or knowledge of any immediate family/relative/ community resources willing to offer protection or support. What reporter is willing to do (or has done) to help the family.
- Reporter's awareness of a child's lineage to Indian tribes, and if so, which tribes, if known. Additional information regarding a child and/or family which may be helpful.
- Whether reporter would like to be notified of the initial disposition.