



# Christ Bible Church

## Child Protection Policy

### **Our Mission**

The children's ministry (CM) of Christ Bible Church (CBC) exists to glorify God by

- shepherding children to value Jesus Christ above everything else,
- maintaining a safe and secure environment that protects our children from misconduct and our staff from false accusations,
- teaching the whole counsel of Scripture in an understandable way with special emphasis on the gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Romans 1:16-17), and
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and interact with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1);

### **Definitions**

*Child abuse or neglect*- any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk or serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child (usually a person under the age of eighteen, but a younger age may be specified by CPS in cases not involving sexual abuse) by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.

*Child/Children*- includes all persons under the age of 18 years old.

*Worker*- includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. They must be at least 18 years old.

*Staff*- are the paid employees of the church. All church staff are required to receive a background check regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.

*Volunteers*- are those who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. Volunteers include classroom helpers, hall monitors, check-in system helpers, teachers, and anyone else who serves the children.

### **Expectations of all Workers**

All children's ministry staff and volunteers share a responsibility for loving the children as Christ loves them and for setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way they live their lives.

### **Training and Screening Procedures**

- All volunteers must be members of CBC to teach in a classroom. Volunteers who do not teach do not need to be members.

- All volunteers must fill out and turn in an application form (Appendix B) as well as pass a background check before serving in CM in any capacity.
- Volunteers must consent to social media checks and reference checks.
- Volunteers must be approved by the elders of CBC before serving in CM.

### **Expectations for Classroom Settings**

- *The Two-Adult Rule:* Every classroom must have a minimum of 2 adults who are not married to each other.
- *Visibility:* The classroom doors will remain locked during the service as long as there are windows on the doors for accountability.
- *Discipline:* CM volunteers will use prizes to motivate the children to sit quietly, raise their hand, and participate safely. If a child is not responding to the prize system and misbehaving in a way that could bring them harm or harm another person, the parents will be called and required to pick up their child. No corporal punishment will be administered even if the parents/guardian give permission.
- *Food and Drink:* Parents will be required to specify any allergies or food preferences in the check in system. Volunteers will check the notes from parents before offering food or drink to the children. Unless otherwise noted, 0-2 year-olds will be given water and goldfish crackers, and 3-12 year-olds will occasionally be offered candy and other snacks.

### **Protective Rules and Safety Guidelines**

*Safety and Wellness:* Only female volunteers will change diapers. Children with green/yellow runny noses, diarrhea, vomiting, eye/skin infections, communicable diseases/infections, or fevers will not be allowed into the classroom. Toys and equipment will be sanitized after all the children have been picked up.

*Check-in and Check-out Process:* CBC utilizes the Planning Center Check-In App. Parents can check in their kids through the Church Center app and then print stickers at the check-in table before CM begins. Parents must show their sticker to the check-out volunteer before picking up their children (The code on their stickers must match). If the sticker system is not working for some reason or a parent loses their sticker, they must show a driver's license or some form of ID to prove that their first and last name matches the name in the system. Parents must give permission for another guardian to drop off or pick up their children by adding them to the Check-In app. Under no circumstances can a child be checked out by someone not listed in their family's household information in the app. Children must remain in the classroom with the volunteers until the proper guardian properly checks them out.

*Restroom Procedures:* The Rule of Three is implemented when a student needs to use the restroom. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, a CM volunteer who is not in a classroom will be called to take at least two children to the restroom even if there is only one who needs to use it. The volunteer will make sure no one is currently using the restroom before sending the

children into the restroom. The volunteer will wait outside the door. Under no circumstances can a child in any of the CM classrooms go to the restroom by themselves.

*Emergency Response Plan and Evacuation Procedures:* In the case of an earthquake, the volunteers will have the kids sit under desks and tables until the shaking stops. Then, the students will follow the volunteers to the baseball field where they will wait to be picked up by their parents/guardian with the matching sticker. The check-in volunteer will have an attendance list for each classroom and will send that list to each volunteer. In the case of an active shooter, volunteers will keep their doors locked and use their phones to alert the police and other members of the church. If there is a fire, the volunteers will lead all the children to the parking lot or another safe place outside and call another CBC member to inform them of their location.

### **Prevention Plan for Child Neglect and Abuse**

CBC takes an active approach to preventing child neglect and abuse by having annual trainings where volunteers are equipped to recognize a potential predator. CBC also invites all parents to attend these meetings so that they can be trained in how to prepare their children to recognize and tell their parents about a predator. CBC will always prioritize the safety and well-being of the victim over the offender no matter how repentant the offender may seem. True repentance will accept the consequences of sin and invite accountability and boundaries to prevent future temptation.

### **Reporting and Response Plan for Child Neglect and Abuse**

Staff members or volunteers must report abuse or neglect as soon as there is reasonable suspicion. They should report it to any CBC elder.

The elder board will call CPS or LAPD within 36 hours of hearing the allegation and document the name of the officer they spoke to. The volunteer/staff member who reported the allegation to the elders will be encouraged to be present while the elders call the authorities.

- LA County Child Protection Hotline: (800) 540-4000
- DCFS in Chatsworth: (818) 717-4002

The elder board will connect the victim and their family to a counselor who specializes in abuse/neglect.

The elder board will assign a member of CBC to be an advocate for the victim and their family. The advocate will be responsible for mediating between the family and the elder board, check in on the family periodically so that they do not feel forgotten, schedule meals and babysitting in case the parents need to attend court hearings, etc.

The healing and freedom of the victim matters more to CBC than winning/avoiding a lawsuit. If it would help the victim in their healing process, the elders of CBC will publicly admit to any ways they mishandled a situation such that the abuse was perpetuated or the victim was belittled.

### **How the Church Handles Sexual Offenders Who Regularly Attend or Join the Church**

If a known offender attends CBC, they will be assigned a chaperone who shadows them as long as they are on the church campus. The offender will not be allowed to serve in CM under any circumstances. The elder board will contact the offender's parole officer and the local prosecutor's office to find out the specific terms of his or her probation and make it very clear to the offender that CBC will abide by the law. If the offender continues to attend, the parents of CBC will be informed through an email so they can decide what level of supervision is appropriate in protecting their children. The offender must agree to guidelines and prohibitions in order to continue attending the church.

### **A Duty to Warn Policy**

If an adult abuses a child at church, the elders will inform every school, church, and organization in which the abuser is involved.

# Appendix A

## Warning Signs of Emotional Abuse in Children

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.
- Acts either inappropriately adult-like (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums).

## Warning Signs of Physical Abuse in Children

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts.
- Is always watchful and "on alert" as if waiting for something bad to happen.
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.
- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.

## Warning Signs of Neglect in Children

- Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather.
- Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).
- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries.
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.
- Is frequently late or missing from school.

## Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse in Children

- Trouble walking or sitting.
- Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior.
- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason.
- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.
- A sexually transmitted disease (STD) or pregnancy, especially under the age of fourteen.
- Runs away from home.

# Appendix B

CM Application