

Cornerstone Church - Child Protection Policy

1. Vision and Mission of Children's Ministry

The Cornerstone Church (hereafter CC) Children's Ministry exists to glorify God by declaring His excellencies to the children of CC. This will be done by:

- Creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment;
- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching their children the truth about God (Ephesians 6:4);
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children, particularly as it is manifested in the gospel through the person of Jesus Christ (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17);
- Praying for 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 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, I Corinthians 11:1);
- Encourage children to serve rather than merely being served (Mark 10:43-45);
- Maintaining the highest ethical and safety 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 part of the public services and, one day, Lord willing, become fully participating adult members.

To accomplish those goals, we require a safe environment where clear guidelines have been laid for the protection of CC children. To that end, the following guidelines shall be followed.

2. General Guidelines

Child abuse most frequently occurs in isolation, and where accountability is lacking. Therefore, in practice, the overarching principles of this policy are to avoid instances where children are isolated with an adult or worker substantially older than them, and to maximize accountability and visibility.

3. Parameters of the Policy

This policy applies only to the period during any CC gathering (Sunday or otherwise) in which children leave the immediate supervision of their parents to participate in age-appropriate classes or activities outside the larger congregation that are led by CC volunteers that meet the qualifications of service described in this policy. This policy applies only to children's classes or activities specifically initiated and led by CBC (i.e. this applies to Sunday School (SS), but not to informal before- or after-church play time). The policy's applicability begins when the first child is checked into a class and ends that same day when the last child is checked out of the same class. While this generally occurs each Sunday from approximately the end of the singing period of the main service to the end of the main service at the Chumstick Grange, this would also apply to any CC gathering at any location for the time period in which children are out of the direct supervision of their parents and under the direct supervision of volunteers approved for such service by this policy.

4. Personnel Summary

The CC children's ministry does not have any paid or permanent staff. Therefore, everyone invited to participate in the ministry is a volunteer. However, there are two types of volunteers: "adult leaders" and "youth helpers".

"Adult leaders" are those who are at least 21 years of age and are approved to be one of the co-leaders of a CC children's ministry gathering. Adult leaders have direct contact with children and are responsible for organizing and leading the SS time. All adult leaders are required to undergo a background check.

"Youth helpers" are those under 21 years of age who help the adult leaders during SS or other children's activities. Youth helpers will not lead SS, but play a vital supporting role to the adult leaders. Youth leaders have direct contact with children, but always under the supervision of adult leaders. Youth helpers are not required to undergo a background check.

The term "volunteer" will refer to both "adult leaders" and "youth helpers" throughout this policy.

5. Expectations of All Personnel

All children's ministry volunteers share a responsibility for loving the children as Christ loves them, leading them to know and love Jesus, and for setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives.

6. Training and Screening Procedures

All volunteers will undergo the following:

- Application/Questionnaire

Each volunteer will complete an application/questionnaire, which will be reviewed by the children's ministry leader. The form is available upon request, and is posted on the Cornerstone website (www.cornerstoneleavenworth.com).

- Interview

A prospective volunteer must be interviewed by a CC elder. The interview will include questions related to the person's walk with Jesus, history in children's ministry, and other relevant topics.

- Background check

Each volunteer must undergo a background check before they are allowed contact with children as part of this policy. This is coordinated by CC, free of charge to the prospective volunteer. In addition, the background check may include a review of the applicant's social media accounts. In the event of troubling results, the elders will meet with the applicant and discuss the issues. All applicants are subject to future background checks, if deemed appropriate by an elder.

- Training

CC will provide training to the volunteer that trains them to identify abuse. This will be coordinated with the volunteer after the background check is complete.

Once the above screening procedures have been completed, the elders have the responsibility to approve or deny an applicant.

7. Expectations of Classroom Settings

a. The Two Adult Rule

Because abuse is more likely to occur when in isolation, CC requires two adult leaders to be present for SS to occur. As discussed above, both of these adults must have been approved as volunteers by the elders¹. Both adults must be present for the duration of SS.

¹ Adults that have not been approved as adult leaders may be downstairs to comfort their children as necessary, but should be encouraged to return to the main service as soon as that is feasible.

b. Gender and Age Requirements

Statistically, men are much more likely to abuse than women. To acknowledge this, at least one of the adult leaders must be a woman. Similarly, at least one of the student helpers must be a female, and male student helpers must be age 12 or under.

c. Adult:Child Ratio

The CC children's ministry will strive to achieve an adult:child ratio of 1:8 or less, or a volunteer:child ratio of 1:6 or less if this includes at least two adults.

d. Visibility

Due to the physical and logistic constraints of CC's current building (the Chumstick Grange), it is not feasible to leave the door to the stairs open as the noise disrupts the main service. However, it is our policy to maximize visibility of the children's services. All activities should occur in the main, open room (e.g., children and volunteers should not enter and remain in the kitchen area). Additionally, the swinging door to the bathroom should remain open at all times. The bathroom policy is discussed below.

e. Restroom

Appropriate privacy of the child is a priority. Additionally, restroom situations present an opportunity that could easily foster abuse. To that end, the goal of the restroom policy is to avoid one child being alone with one adult. If a child needs to use the restroom and needs assistance, visibility of the helper should be maximized, while privacy of the child should be maintained. Specific procedures are discussed below in 8c, under Protective Rules and Safety Guidelines.

f. Discipline

While it is always preferable for discipline to be administered to a child by the child's parent, there will be situations in which discipline must occur during children's ministry functions. However, under no circumstances should corporal punishment be administered by a volunteer to a child.

Situations in which discipline may be necessary include if a child is out of control, liable to harm themselves or other children, cause damage to property, or cause severe disruptions to the service. If discipline is necessary, it should be in the form of non-physical punishment such as "time out" or by summoning a parent of the child. Any correction necessary should be discrete

yet visible: in the classroom, not in the hallway or kitchen shielded from view, never in isolation. In the event that discipline is required, the parent(s)/guardian will be informed what transpired and how it was handled.

g. Physical Touch

i. Adult-to-child

Brief, gentle, appropriate touching for the purpose of comforting, encouraging, shepherding, or gentle correction is encouraged as warranted. Holding small children is also appropriate. Disciplinary touching (e.g. spanking, swatting, flicking, etc.) is both inappropriate and unacceptable. Outside of changing a diaper and assisting younger children in the restroom, touching of private areas is inappropriate for any reason.

ii. Youth helper-to-child

The same touching rules that apply to adults above also apply to youth helpers.

iii. Child-to-child

Child-to-child touching should be limited to gentle, kind touching in appropriate places (e.g. not in private areas). Forceful or unwanted touching is inappropriate. Obviously, hitting or other combative touching is inappropriate. Violations of this should be disciplined along the disciplinary guidelines discussed above, then reported to the child's parents at the end of the service.

h. Food and Drinks

Snacks are typically provided during SS. Only the snacks provided by the adult leaders are allowed in SS. If a child has food allergies, it is the parents' responsibility to report this to the adult leaders, and to ensure that the day's snack meets the child's dietary restrictions or provide suitable snacks.

8. Protective Rules and Safety Guidelines

a. Sickness

- i. Sick child – CC trusts parents to exercise discretion regarding whether a child is healthy enough to bring to SS. Ideally, parents should only bring a child to SS if the child has not displayed symptoms for at least 24 hours prior to the start of SS (e.g. Saturday morning). If a child is brought to SS and is clearly displaying symptoms such that the adult leaders are concerned for

the health of other children, the leader should discretely discuss this with the child's parent.

- ii. Handling of bodily fluids – If a situation arises where bodily fluids (e.g. vomit, urine, blood, etc.) are spilled and must be cleaned up, adult leaders should:
 1. Secure the area from other children;
 2. Put on latex gloves from the supply cupboard;
 3. Use paper towels as appropriate to absorb fluid;
 4. Treat the area with disinfectant from the supply cupboard;
 5. Notify the child's parents, if warranted.

b. Check-in and Check-out Process

- i. One parent/guardian shall check in a child to children's church by signing his or her name and the child's name on the roll that is present on the table at the entry to the children's church room. The check-in/check-out table shall be manned by one of the adult leaders until all children are checked in. The child and the adult shall both wear matching identification tags that include a unique identification number, which is also present in the sign-in roll.
- ii. At the conclusion of church (within five minutes or so), the parent shall return with their identification badge to pick up their children. Children's church workers must only release children to the parent with the identification tag that corresponds to the one worn by the child.
- iii. If the identification badge is lost, workers may release children to the parent if they are well familiar with the parent. Discretion and common-sense should be used.
- iv. Children should not be released to an unknown adult if the adult does not possess the child's identification badge.
- v. If someone other than the parent/guardian who checked a child in will be checking the child out, the parents should notify the SS workers in advance.
- vi. If the adult cannot identify themselves as a parent or guardian, CC workers should not release the child to the adult without the identification tag.

c. Restroom Procedures

- i. These procedures aim to minimize isolation of adult with child, maximize visibility, and protect a child's privacy to the extent practicable given the particulars of the facility. The procedures described below relate specifically to the basement of the Grange. Adaptations of these guidelines should be implemented when CC is meeting elsewhere.
 1. When a child must use the restroom and requires physical help in the process, the best situation would be for that child's parent to accompany the child. However, as one of the purposes of CC is to allow parents to hear the sermon with fewer distractions, it is not recommended to summon the parent to accompany the child, unless the parent or child requests this.
 2. When a child needs assistance and their parent is not available, the adult female worker shall assist the child. Adult male workers or male youth helpers shall not directly assist the child in the restroom.
 3. To maximize visibility, the restroom doors (the swinging door and the main restroom door) should remain open during the restroom use; if the adult must enter the stall to help the child, the stall door should remain open as well if appropriate privacy for the child can be achieved.
 4. The adult female shall accompany and assist the child. If necessary, one of the student helpers (also a female) will position themselves at the main bathroom door. The other adult leader should be able, to the extent practicable, to look down the hall into the bathroom and see the student helper. This visibility will protect the privacy of the child (as the stall inside the bathroom will screen the child from view of the rest of the children) as well as minimizing isolation to the extent possible.

d. Diaper Policy

- i. If a child needs a diaper change in SS, a female adult leader will change the diaper unless the parent/s of the child requests that one of the parents change that child's diaper.
- ii. If requested, a youth helper will come and alert the parent in the main service of the need for a diaper change. However, in general, this should only be done if there is urgent need.

- iii. Male adult leaders will not change diapers, unless it is his child needing a diaper change.
- iv. Youth helpers will not change diapers, unless the child needing a diaper change is a sibling and only if the parent expressly approves beforehand.
- e. Off-site or Out-of-Town Guidelines
 - i. When CC meets somewhere other than the Grange, the same guidelines shall apply: isolation of a child or children with an adult that is not their parent should be avoided.
- f. Emergency Response Plan and Evacuation Procedures
 - i. In the case of an emergency, the adult leaders shall lead the children and student helpers to either exit the building through whichever door seems safest and gather in a safe place outside the building, or shelter in place as appropriate.
- g. Prevention Plan for Child Neglect and Abuse
 - i. Definitions:
 - 1. Neglect is generally defined as withholding from a child what is necessary for health, welfare, and safety. Abuse is generally defined as inflicting physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual harm on a child.
 - 2. This policy adopts the State of Washington definitions of child abuse and neglect, found in WAC 388-15-009.
 - 3. These definitions of "abuse" or "neglect" do not include reasonable and moderate corporal punishment by a child's parent or caregiver.
 - ii. Prevention
 - 1. The guidelines discussed above in this plan should be applied.
 - 2. As discussed above, isolation of one child with one volunteer shall be avoided.
 - 3. All adult leaders shall submit to background checks.
- h. Reporting and Response Plan for Child Neglect and Abuse

- i. It is CC's policy that any cause to suspect that child abuse has occurred or is occurring will be investigated and dealt with immediately, as the law of the land and as scriptures require.
- ii. CC will provide training that will equip volunteers to identify abuse.
- iii. Signs of potential abuse observed on a child at CC:
 1. If any volunteer observes any signs of potential abuse (e.g. physical markings, bruises on the child, or remarks made by the child to the effect that something such as abuse may have occurred), the volunteer is obligated to follow up on these observations by, immediately following conclusion of the service, alerting two or more of the CC leadership team (elders or deacons).
 - a. The elders will address the observations with the parents of the child, while keeping the identity of the primary observer confidential;
 - b. If there is cause to suspect that abuse has occurred, the elders must report this to authorities at 1-866-ENDHARM, or the Chelan County sheriff. The elders will inform the parents of the suspected abused child of their intent to report prior to alerting authorities.
 - c. The elders will continue to shepherd the parents through this situation.
- iv. Allegations of abuse occurring at CC:
 1. If anyone has cause to suspect that abuse has occurred, whether in CC or outside, they are strongly encouraged to make this known by:
 - a. Immediately alerting two or more of the CC leadership team (elders or deacons) of the observations;
 - b. The elders will investigate the observations by speaking with the child's parents, the accused SS volunteers that day, and anyone else who may have had sufficient interactions with the child as appropriate, while keeping the identity of the primary observer confidential;

- c. If there is cause to suspect that abuse has occurred, the elders must report this to authorities at 1-866-ENDHARM, or the Chelan County sheriff. The elders will indicate to the parents of the suspected abused child prior to alerting authorities.
- i. Guidelines for How the Church Handles Sexual Offenders Who Regularly Attend or Join the Church
 - i. It is the policy of CC that anyone registered as a sexual offender, while welcome to fellowship at CC, shall not serve in the CC children's ministry.
- j. A Duty to Warn Policy
 - i. If someone confides in one of the adult leaders of SS by confessing to crimes against children that have not been brought to the attention of the law, it is the duty of the SS leader to report this. The SS leader should inform the offender of their duty to report this—either by the offender self-reporting, or by the SS leader reporting the offense.
 1. The SS leader should first report this to at least two of the CC leadership team (elders or deacons).
 2. In the interest of encouraging the offender to deal with his/her sin before the Lord and the law, the SS leader should then encourage the offender to self-report their crime to the authorities.
 3. If the offender will not report this to the authorities, the SS leader or the CC leadership team should report the crime to the authorities at 1-866-ENDHARM or the Chelan County sheriff.