



## **Child Protection Policy**

### **General Purpose Statement**

Redeemer Community Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Redeemer Community Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “employee” includes only those persons paid by the church and serve in a capacity that gives them opportunity to interact with children. The term “worker” includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. The term “volunteer” means anyone involved in a children’s ministry, including but not limited to, teaching, supervising, mentoring or transporting.

### **Selection of Workers**

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

a) **Membership**

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors unless she/he has been accepted into the membership of Redeemer Community Church, or is the child of a member and 11 years old or older (refer to Underage Worker section below).

b) **Six Month Rule**

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been regularly attending Redeemer Community Church for six months. This could include the time of regular attendance before becoming a member. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees and all adult

volunteers as defined above. Background checks expire after 5 years.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she or he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the pastors of Redeemer Community Church on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency or any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file with access limited only to necessary deacons and elders.

## **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have a parent and their child, a husband and wife, or only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session. In these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult worker.

## **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

## **Underage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 11.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

## **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any act of sexual molestation or exploitation of a child committed by an adult or an older child that has permanent, temporary, or supervisory responsibilities of that child, or by any household or family member. Sexual abuse includes actual or attempted rape, incest, oral sex, intercourse, sodomy, fondling, and sex trafficking, as well as non-touching behaviors such as sexting, use of sexually explicit language, exposure to pornography, and voyeurism.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the pastors of Redeemer Community Church for further action, including reporting to authorities as is mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave and instructed to remain away from the premises until the matter is resolved by the appropriate authorities and the elders determine that it is right and wise for the individual to return to the church. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.

6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be permanently removed from their position working with children or youth.

## **Accidental Injuries to Children**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

## **FUTURE - Training**

**Redeemer Community Church** will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

Acknowledgement: this document has been revised from a document created by GuideOne Center for Risk Management © 2016.