

OPEN DOOR FELLOWSHIP

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

ADMINISTRATION & IMPLEMENTATION

The administration and supervision of the Child Protection Policy for the Church shall be the responsibility of the Child Protection Administrator (CPA). Working with the Pastor, elders, and volunteer leaders, the CPA will insure that the requirements of this policy are followed in all programs sponsored by the Church.

As required in the Child Protection Policy of the Church, all employees and volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer background application form. These application forms shall be considered to be active for a three (3) year period. Volunteers will be required to renew the form at the end of the 3 year term. The CPA shall review the list of all volunteers and youth workers on an annual basis to insure that completed applications are on file for each worker.

All applications will be permanently retained in a secured personnel file under the direction of the CPA. When a person is recruited, **or** when a person volunteers for a particular position that is governed by this policy, the name of that individual will be submitted to the CPA. The CPA will then complete a background application and approve or reject the applicant based on the findings on the application.

In the event that the CPA chooses to reject the background application after it has been reviewed, (s)he shall contact the applicant and offer the applicant the opportunity to clarify or refute the information gathered during the verification process. The applicant will also be given the opportunity to meet with the Pastor and/or Elder(s) to discuss any negative reporting on the background application and a decision will then be made to determine if the candidate is able to volunteer in our Children's Ministries. If at that time, a determination is made that the candidate should not be allowed to volunteer, the CPA will notify the Childrens Ministry Team Leader that the application has been withdrawn. No other explanation or information will be disclosed, and the reason for the rejection will only be discussed between the applicant, CPA, Pastor and Elders.

All current volunteers at the time of the implementation of this policy will be expected to attend a training session and complete a background application form. Training will be scheduled on an annual basis, or as required for needed volunteers. Volunteers will be asked to sign a statement agreeing that they have completed a background application according to the Child Protection Policy.

PREVENTION OF ABUSE

It is the policy of this church to provide a safe environment for all children. A place where they can be free from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Such activities will not be tolerated at Open Door Fellowship.

All persons who work/volunteer with children or adolescents will comply with the following procedures:

- ✓ Attend a special training session to recognize signs of abuse and proper reporting standards.
- ✓ Applicant must be in good standing in this congregation for at least six (6) months.
- ✓ Background applications that have not been completed by Protect my Ministry as "record clear" will be reviewed by the CPA and pastor.
- ✓ Required to renew their application every year.
- ✓ New applications will be screened annually.
- ✓ No adult who has been previously convicted of child abuse shall work with children or adolescents.
- ✓ Receive periodic, unannounced, random visits by the CPA or pastor during worship service.
- ✓ Each class should have at least 1 adult & 2 middle/high school volunteer present to supervise activities involving children or adolescents.
- ✓ If possible, no adult shall spend unsupervised time with any child/adolescent without the awareness and consent of that child's/adolescent's parent or guardian.
- ✓ The CPA shall have the responsibility to ensure that all baby sitters for church programs or programs sponsored by the church and all church personnel working with any youth programs have completed an application.
- ✓ The CPA shall have the responsibility to ensure that any volunteer working with children under age eighteen (18) submit an application.

IN THE CASE OF CHILD ABUSE: RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

The Church desires to be a safe place to worship for all who attend. We have been working together to help eliminate the problems of child abuse

Child sexual abuse robs our children of their innocence and dignity. It robs them of healthy emotional and sexual development. It can destroy the trust of the people they respect and it can lead to a destruction of their faith in God. We will do our part to help eliminate this destructive force to our children.

Child sexual misconduct occurs when an adult has sexual activity with a minor. This sexual abuse creates emotional pain and confusion to its victim. It is always wrong and it is illegal and criminal in every state.

We take seriously, any allegations that are made. We will fully cooperate with the local authorities in the investigation of any allegation. We will also extend the warmth of Christ's love and healing power to the victims of any such occurrence. We have implemented a Child Protection Policy in 2000 to create a safe place to worship.

In the event an allegation is made:

1. Document all efforts in handling the case: Documentation should include the following.....
 - A. All individuals involved in the allegations.
 - B. All addresses and telephone numbers
 - C. Date of occurrence
 - D. Time of occurrence
 - E. What activity occurred
 - F. Any witnesses to the activity
 - G. All conversations regarding the occurrence
 - H. When the authorities were called and the name of the person You spoke with
 - I. Write down anything, even remotely involved with the case
2. Do not prejudge the situation.
3. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child/youth is secured.
4. Take all allegations seriously and reach out to the victim.
5. All questions or responses from the media should be channeled through the Children's Ministry Leader and/or pastor and elders.

OPEN DOOR FELLOWSHIP REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

It must be understood that confidentiality in regard to child abuse does not apply to any relationship with a child, whether professional, parental or other. All forms of confidentiality otherwise provided under Indiana law is subordinate to the paramount importance of protecting the child.

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that child abuse has occurred, the following procedures shall be implemented:

1. Notify the Child Protection Administrator and/or the pastor. In the event they cannot be reached one of the Elders will handle the report.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the CPA, pastor or appointed person to:
 - A. Contact "911" if this occurs by a staff member. If this is a family situation, Child Protection Services (CPS) at 462-7555 or 1/800-800-5556 should be called. If the child is from outside Porter County, it should be reported to the county in which it occurred. (The 800 number rings into the county office in which the call is being placed.)
 - B. Inform the child/youth's parent or guardian of the situation. If alleged abuse is by a family member in the home, do not place the child back into their custody.
 - C. The Pastor will contact the church's attorney for legal assistance.
3. After consulting with the appropriate county's CPS and the church's legal representative, the CPA or pastor or will serve as a liaison with the CPS.
4. The CPA or pastor shall coordinate the efforts to obtain qualified counseling and support for all involved parties.
5. As defined in Indiana law governing child abuse, a child is a person under the age of 18.

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

Should my background application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the by-laws and policies of this church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of this church.

I will especially guard my conduct in consideration of the convictions and consciences of the people with whom I minister, and the role I have as a model.

VOLUNTEERS SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
of
OPEN DOOR FELLOWSHIP**

NAME: _____

CHILD RELATED AREA OF SERVICE IN THE CHURCH: _____

I acknowledge and certify that I have completed the background application and training provided by Protect My Ministry and have read the policies and procedures contained within this document.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

