

TRAIL LIFE/
AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS
MINISTRIES
CARE POLICY & PROCEDURES

TRAIL LIFE AND AHG MINISTRY CARE PROCEDURES

Christ Covenant Church (CCC) recognizes that *children, youth, and vulnerable adults are entrusted to the care of adults who lead church programs both on and off CCC campus. CCC is committed to maintaining an environment where children, youth, and vulnerable adults are protected from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and in which church staff and volunteers are protected from potential false allegations of abuse.

*Children/Youth/Minor: Any person under 18 years of age involved in programs provided at or sponsored by CCC.

Vulnerable adults: Any person 18 years of age or older who lives in or receives services from a licensed facility such as a nursing home, hospital, or treatment center for chemical dependency; has developmental delays, mental illness, or physical disabilities; or is in a family setting and would not by himself/herself report abuse or neglect because of impaired physical or mental function or emotional status.

In order to achieve these goals, CCC has developed the following procedures for staff and volunteers in the following four areas:

- Screening
- Training
- Supervision
- Reporting

Step One: Screening Process (CARE Paperwork)

- Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children, youth, or vulnerable adults are required to complete the CARE screening process (repeated every 5 years) which includes:
 - **Form A: Primary Screening Form** (volunteers) or **Employment Application Form** (employees)
 - **Form B: Agreement to Comply**
 - **Form C: Confidential Background Information**
 - **Form D: Notice to Consumer of Intent**
 - **Follow-up Quiz** with appropriate training for area of ministry
 - **A copy of your driver's license**
- In years 2, 3, and 4, complete one form:
 - **Annual Worker Renewal Form**
- All applicant forms shall be maintained in secure files and all information will be kept confidential. The Confidential Background Information form shall be kept in a sealed envelope, accessible only to the pastoral staff.
- Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse are not permitted to work with minors and/or vulnerable adults in any church sponsored activity or program.
- Special approval is required for non-member participants on an exception basis.

Step Two: Training

- Training required for each new volunteer includes:
 - Protection of minors or vulnerable adults in CCC programs
 - Protection of providers from exposure to “high-risk” situations and false accusations
 - Awareness of the symptoms of abuse
 - Understanding of the reporting procedures and the procedures for responding to abuse or suspected abuse (see definitions on next slide)

Opportunities for further training will be offered periodically to ensure CCC’s adherence to current best practices. All volunteers are encouraged to attend training updates as offered through CCC.

Step Two: Training (Cont.)

- Abuse as referred to in this document includes emotional, physical and sexual abuse:
 - **Physical Abuse** includes any non-accidental physical injury caused or allowed to be caused by the youth's parent or caretaker. It is not, necessarily, the intent of the parent/caretaker to injure the youth. Physical abuse may result from over discipline or from punishment that is inappropriate to the youth's age or condition. Signs of physical may include, but not be limited to: unexplained bruising in various stages of healing, welts, fractures or burns in various stages of healing or in the shape of an object (rope, belt, restraints, electric burner), bed sores, weight loss or dry skin and lips, clothing inappropriate for weather condition, inadequate shelter or medical care, deliberate confinement of an adult in a dangerous environment.
 - **Sexual Abuse** as defined by North Carolina law is: "Any person or caretaker who has the care of a child commits, permits or encourages the commission of vaginal intercourse, any sexual act, the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child in those acts for commercial or non-commercial usage or any other offense against public morality and decency provided by wherein Article 16. Chapter 14, by, with, or upon a juvenile in violation of law; commits, permits, or encourages any act of prostitution with or by the juvenile." Signs of sexual abuse may include, but not be limited to: exhibiting sexual behavior not appropriate for the child's age, detailed and sophisticated understanding of sexual behavior, reversion to bedwetting, speech loss and thumb sucking, sleep disturbances, pain/itching/bruising/bleeding in the genital area, venereal disease, frequent urinary tract or yeast infections, signs of depression, self-injury, aggressive behavior.
 - **Emotional Abuse** is characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, withdrawal, aggressive behavior towards him/herself or others, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Signs of emotional abuse may include, but not be limited to: speech disorders, delayed physical or emotional development, habits disorders such as rocking/sucking, unduly passive or undemanding, anti-social, destructive attitude, depression or suicidal thoughts, attention-seeking activities and delinquent behavior (especially in adolescents).

Step Three: Supervision

- In order to provide an environment that is safeguarding against abuse, CCC will maintain the following supervision practices:
- **Safety Committee**
 - The safety committee will be composed of, but not limited to, the Senior Director of Church Administration, Director of Children's Ministry, Senior Associate/Executive Pastor, Pastor of Youth Ministries, and CARE Coordinator. The committee will monitor the need to add additional committee members.
- **Staff Monitoring Plan**
 - Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with minors and vulnerable adults.

Step Four: Reporting

- CCC has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and related activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer of CCC to act in the best interest of minors and vulnerable adults in every program.
- In the event that a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, sexual, or emotional), it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report his/her observations to the **appropriate supervising CCC staff member**.

Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

- CCC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for minors, vulnerable adults, and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law to the Department of Social Services of Mecklenburg County.
- Because sexual abusers “groom” minors and vulnerable adults for abuse, it is possible for a staff member or volunteer to witness behavior intended to “groom” a minor or vulnerable adult for abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report “grooming” behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the appropriate supervising CCC staff member. ***Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.***

Step Four: Reporting – Cont.

- **Enforcement of Policies**

- CCC staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all CCC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Safety Committee.

- **Reporting Suspicions of Abuse to Law Enforcement Agencies**

- North Carolina law requires mandatory reporting by any person or institution **with cause to suspect that any minor or vulnerable adult is abused**. Incidents of abuse or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse shall be reported immediately to the **appropriate supervising CCC Staff Member**. It will then be reported to the **Manager of Campus Safety & Security** and the **Senior Director of Church Administration**. Incidents of abuse must be reported within 24 hours to the Director of the Department of Social Services of Mecklenburg County. Ministry Staff and Security Staff will work with appropriate, involved personnel in making a report. DSS is notified by the Christ Covenant Security Staff.
- North Carolina statutes provide protection from civil or criminal liability for any person making a report in good faith.
- The reporter's name remains confidential unless DSS is court ordered to release that information.

Step Four: Reporting – Cont.

- **Consequences of Violation**

- Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a minor or vulnerable adult will be immediately suspended from participation in all ministries of Christ Covenant Church. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective Agencies.
- Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving minors or vulnerable adults at CCC. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from CCC.
- **Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee.** Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving minors and vulnerable adults at CCC.

- **Reference Telephone Numbers**

Trail Life:

Elder	Steve Onxley	704-608-7832
Elder	Tripp Gabriel	704-477-9505

American Heritage Girls:

Children's Ministry Director	Amy Wallace	704-814-1026
Troop Coordinator	Lisa Newman	704-750-0860

- Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

Child Protective Services	980-314-7700
Adult Protective Services	704-366-CARE

Bathroom Policy

- Staff and volunteers should never enter a restroom alone with a child.
- Leave exterior door open when entering bathroom and seek to verbally assist while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

Commitment and Behavior

Expected Staff, Adult, and Youth Volunteer Behavior

Appropriate Behavior

- Show respect to others – including adults, youth volunteers, and peers.
- Listen carefully.
- Participate fully.
- Obey policies and procedures.
- Speak appropriately. Refrain from swearing or speaking to a minor in a way that is harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Recognize an individual's physical and mental well being and act accordingly.
- Behave with another person's safety in mind.
- Maintain appropriate physical contact at all times.

Inappropriate Behavior

- Illegal activities
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, electronic cigarettes (including VAPING and JUULING, but not limited to), and/or illegal drugs
- Use of firearms or weapons
- Inappropriate contact of a sexual nature
- Any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Anything in violation of the current policies and procedures

Commitment and Behavior – Cont.

- Sexually Oriented Conversations:
 - Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any minor.
- Sexually Oriented Materials:
 - Staff and volunteers are prohibited from possessing or transmitting to minors any sexually oriented materials including those in electronic form.

Discipline Policy for Children

Expected Behavior

- Showing respect to others – including adults, youth volunteers, and peers
- Showing respect for space – treating materials and toys well
- Obeying all directions

Inappropriate Behavior

- Disobeying adults or youth
- Disrespectful speech — to an adult, youth, or peers
- Distracting or disruptive behavior during any teaching or small-group time
- Not following directions
- Running, wrestling, or horseplay
- Refusing to participate in classroom activities

Electronic Communication

- The content of any electronic communications should be readily available to share with the student's family.
- EMAIL and similar electronic communications:
Staff/volunteers and youth/vulnerable adults may use email to communicate. Emails from a staff/volunteer to a youth/vulnerable adult should include a copy to youth/vulnerable adult parents/guardians. Email communication is only allowed during the hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- TEXTING and similar electronic communications:
Texting is only allowed between staff/volunteers and students with the following caveats. Texting communication is only allowed during the hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., unless there is an emergency. Text messages with groups are encouraged rather than individual messaging. If a staff/adult volunteer receives a one-on-one text from a youth, the staff/adult volunteer must follow the “**3 text rule.**” This means the staff/adult volunteer may respond TWO times (with short texts), and then another staff/volunteer, parent, or student must be added to the messaging stream, OR the text conversation should be discontinued.
- REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE:
The parent/guardian may request in writing that their youth or vulnerable adult not be contacted by staff/volunteers through any electronic communication or that photographs or videography may not be posted on ministry or ministry associated websites.

Electronic Communication (Cont.)

- **SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS & APPS SUCH AS FACEBOOK/BLOGS/TWITTER/SNAPCHAT/INSTAGRAM** and similar sites:
 - Staff/volunteers are reminded that their presence on Social Media represents Christ Covenant Church and Christ himself, and their posts and interactions should reflect that truth.
 - Staff/volunteers and students may join a personal social media page and “follow” each other.
 - Staff/volunteers may not “retweet” or “repost” student message posts & photos, unless it is of a CCC group event. Interactions with personal pages that can be publicly sent are acceptable.
 - Staff/volunteers are not permitted to have private one-on-one communications via social media platforms and apps with minors. No “direct messaging” with minors.
- **ELECTRONIC IMAGERY:**
 - Digital photos, videos and other publicly obtainable images may be taken and used for instruction, ministry related videos, and ministry associated websites, or they may be offered to the families. Electronic imagery is allowed as long as the students are in public view, and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the student and church.
 - Parents will be given the opportunity to sign a photo release form to “opt-out” of having their child’s photo used for church purposes.

Electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drugs or alcohol use
- Sexually oriented conversations, sexually explicit language, or sexual activity
- Inappropriate information regarding an adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship, or family issues
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures

Individual Meetings

- Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interactions with minors or vulnerable adults while participating in Children's Ministry activities or programs.

Physical Contact Policy

- Only forms of appropriate physical affection that are generally suitable in the church setting between staff, volunteers, and minors are allowed.
 - What's OK?
 - Holding Hands
 - Side Hugs
 - Sitting on your lap for ages 5 and under
 - Wiping off dirt and applying a band aid
 - Any inappropriate touching and displays of affection should be immediately reported to a team leader, Ministry Director, or Executive Pastor.
 - What's NOT OK?
 - Kissing (Even Boo-boos)
 - Piggy Back Rides
 - Spanking/Swattling Bottoms
 - Lap sitting for ages over 5
 - Wearing inappropriate or revealing clothing
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other students/staff/volunteers.
- **Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant student.**