



THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT
WHITE STATION

Church of Christ at White Station

Children and Youth Protection Policy

Introduction

The Church of Christ at White Station is committed to being a safe place for children to grow and learn. It is our responsibility to be proactive in our recruiting and training of our volunteers. It is our goal to find people with the gift of caring for children and to protect those volunteers from false accusations. It is also our responsibility to oversee all programs involving children to ensure a safe environment and to have a plan of response in place should an accusation of misconduct arise.

Purpose

The Church of Christ at White Station's purpose for establishing a Children and Youth Protection Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth. It is also our intent to provide staff and volunteers with policy, procedures and training to protect the rights of our children.

Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith committed to ministry to and with children, we pledge to conduct all our activities and ministries in such a way that assures the safety and spiritual growth of all children and youth entrusted to us. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers and we will be responsible in overseeing our programs and events and in training our staff, so that they are able and equipped to minister to children in Jesus' name. We will report and respond to all suspected incidents of abuse as is required by state law and our moral conscience. We will be prepared to minister to the families of both the abused and the person(s) accused.

Screening and Recruiting

- a. All volunteers with children and youth will have completed an application listing standard contact information, their qualifications and gifts for that ministry, and 2 references that are not related to them.
- b. Reference letters must be submitted by mail or emailed to the church office before serving in these ministries. References may be contacted. Volunteers may be interviewed by the children's minister or youth minister and/or elder of these ministries before they begin serving.
- c. All volunteers must be a member of White Station for at least 3 months. In the event of an extended absence from service, volunteers may be asked to go through the screening and application process again.
- d. All volunteers will be required to undergo a Criminal Background Check and Sexual Abuse Safety Training.

- e. All forms and reference reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's confidential personnel file. All records will be kept secure via the Church of Christ at White Station's online files with Protect My Ministry. These personal files will only be available to ministers of children/youth, elders of children's ministry/youth and the administrative minister.

Supervision

- a. Two adult rule. There will be 2 adults in each classroom. In the event that one of the adults is not in the classroom there will be a roving teacher who moves amid the classrooms during the program period. A roving teacher is a planned part of every program period.
- b. No person shall supervise an age group unless he/she is at least 3 years older than the oldest student.
- c. No person under the age of 18 shall be considered as one of the adults.
- d. Each room shall have a window or window in the door.
- e. Training will occur once a year. Teachers/volunteers will be trained to recognize the signs of abuse, to adhere to prevention and protection standards, and to know our current policy and reporting procedures.
- f. Registration materials for activities in which children are outside direct supervision of their parents/guardians overnight shall require signed written permission forms that include essential health information.

Reporting

- a. The volunteer, helper, ministry team leader or member of COCWS who observes alleged abuse or to whom alleged abuse is reported is required to report the incident immediately to the children's minister, one of the youth ministers or an elder of children's/youth and will be required to write down what was observed or told to them in detail.
- b. The children's/youth minister or elder to whom the observed alleged abuse or to whom alleged abuse was reported shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information.
- c. The church administrator, elder of the children's ministry or elder of youth is to be informed immediately before or subsequent to the making of the report.
- d. Upon receiving such information, the elder of the children's ministry and/or the elder of youth will verbally notify the child's parent/guardian immediately before or subsequent to making the report to Child Protective Services, unless there is cause to believe that the parent/guardian may be responsible for the abuse.
- e. Upon receiving such information, the children's/youth minister, children's/youth elder and the reporter of alleged abuse will call Child Protective Services as required by TN state law to make a report if deemed appropriate. This line of reporting shall be followed in all such incidents.
- f. Upon making a report to Child Protective Services, the children's/youth minister will complete an incident report and inform the church attorney and liability insurance carrier of the incident.
- g. Any person who is the object of the report will be required to refrain from all children's/youth activities until the incident report is resolved.

- h. In any removal of a person from any children's/youth activities, care and confidentiality are to be taken to handle in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
- i. Any person who reports alleged abuse or assists in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of church membership or affiliation, or otherwise suffer discrimination. The church will take prompt disciplinary action in response to any retaliation or retribution directed toward any person who makes a good faith report of alleged abuse or participation in the investigation or reported abuse.
- j. While absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, every reasonable effort will be made to protect the privacy of the person(s) making the complaint. Information regarding the complaint will be disclosed only to appropriate persons on a "need to know" basis.

Response Plan

- a. The lead minister or designated elder is the only person/s authorized to make statements to representatives of the media.
- b. If the allegation is against a local church staff person, ministry team leader, volunteer or helper or if it occurred in the course of a children's/youth activity, the children's/youth minister/elder and the "Risk Management Review Board" shall be contacted immediately. (The RMRB will be made up of the lead minister, administrative minister, the elder of children's ministry and the elder of youth.)
- c. In the event that the allegation concerns activities or persons outside any relationship to a local church related event or activity, the same procedures shall be implemented. An example of this would be a child telling a teacher about abuse by a relative during the prior year. If this report were made to the teacher in the course of his or her duties as a teacher, then the incident report should be filed with the children's minister, one of the youth ministers or children's/youth elder.
- d. If the allegation is against a staff person, ministry team leader, volunteer or helper, the custodial parent will be notified immediately and a face-to-face meeting with the parent will be scheduled.
- e. In either case, counseling will be made available to all persons involved with the incident as indicated as counseling is currently made available to members in need. All persons involved would be shepherded through the process.
- f. In addition to counseling and pastoral services, referral to appropriate community resources will be made for all persons involved with the incident.

Church of Christ at White Station
Child Protection Policies

To volunteer for our Youth or Children's Ministry:

<https://www.ministryopportunities.org/cocws>

cocws.org

901.761.2007