

# Child Protection Policy

## Guidelines for all Church Ministries



Child abuse has become one of the most significant and visible problems facing churches in America. As the problem grows, it becomes more obvious that local church bodies cannot simply assume that “it can’t happen here.” Our biblical obligation to care for our children and to hold forth a pure testimony of Jesus Christ demands that we take appropriate measures to safeguard the children of Clearcreek Chapel. Also, the legal climate in America, where courts award multimillion-dollar settlements to plaintiffs who sue inadequately prepared churches, adds urgency to the argument for a clear policy governing ministries to minors, for the protection of both the children and the ministry workers.

### 1. Aim and Purpose

These guidelines aim to reduce the risk of sins against children in or during the ministries of Clearcreek Chapel.

### 2. Scope

Any ministry sponsored or administered by Clearcreek Chapel, on or off property, where children younger than twelve (12) years of age are present are subject to these guidelines. See Two-Person Rule on page 3.

For legal purposes, “child abuse” is defined by the applicable sections of the Ohio Revised Code. These guidelines seek to reduce the risk of child abuse while not affirming or asserting that all child abuse defined therein is sin.

Sins against children include, but are not limited to, any sexual activity with the child, denial of needed medical care, intentional endangerment, injury or harm, providing alcohol, drugs or any medicine not intended for the particular child, and withholding discipline when required.

Properly administered correction and discipline are not sins against the child nor is it child abuse even if defined or interpreted to be so by the Ohio Revised Code.

### 3. Children’s Ministry Workers

Prior to participating as a leader in any children’s ministry, all workers must go through the screening and training processes as specified in this policy.

#### 3.1. Eligibility

All children’s ministry workers must be at least fifteen (15) years old, members of Clearcreek Chapel, and must not be under formal church discipline. No one will be considered eligible to work in any children’s ministry unless they have been a regular attendee for at least 6 months.

#### 3.2. Application

##### 3.2.1. Form

All members desiring to work in children’s ministry must complete the “Children’s Ministry Worker Application,” as attached. Additionally, a prospective worker in children’s ministry may be asked to agree to and complete the forms necessary to facilitate a check of police criminal records. The check of police criminal records is at the discretion of the Spiritual Formation elder and the respective Children’s Ministry Team Leader.

##### 3.2.2. Interview

Following the completion of the application, the applicant will be interviewed by one elder (usually but not necessarily the Spiritual Formation elder) and one Children’s Ministry Team (CMT) leader. The purpose of the interview is (a) to clarify any questions from the application, (b) to confirm the answers to the abuse questions and (c) answer any questions or concerns from the applicant. The applicant will be asked to briefly explain why they wish to be involved in children’s ministry, as well as details about their previous experiences working with children.

Notes from the interview will be taken on the back of the application and will be initialed by the interviewers.

If the applicant does not answer either of the questions or answers positively to the question regarding committing a sin against a child, the interview will also include an additional elder, preferably, the Elder for Counseling. Particular attention will be given to the determining whether the person is disqualified from children's ministry in view of the particulars of their past.

### 3.2.3. References

The references given by the candidate on the application may be checked by a member of the ministry leadership team. If either of the questions regarding abuse is answered yes, then references must be checked and the results documented. The questions to be asked include but are not limited to:

- What were this person's duties related to children?
- How well were these duties performed?
- Do you have any reservations about recommending this person for children's work?

### 3.2.4. Approval/Denial

The interviewers will be responsible to make the decision on the applicant.

- If application is approved, applicant and ministry leader are notified.
- No application will be denied permanently. Denial of application will be defined as suspension for at least one year, at which time the applicant will be interviewed again. If application is denied, the interviewing elder and Flock elder will meet with the applicant to discuss reasons for denial and alternative ministries for the applicant. The elders will agree on an approximate date for reconsideration of the applicant. This denial policy is in keeping with Biblical forgiveness and growth in grace. Concern for our children and testimony, and legal prudence, suggest that some applicants be denied. However, if one has truly become a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and shows evidence of this (during the suspension period), this applicant should be reconsidered.

The following criteria will be considered in the approval or denial:

- Application may be denied (suspended) if the candidate reveals via the application or interview that he or she was convicted of or involved in the abuse/neglect of a child, either prior to or since being saved.
- Application may be denied at the elders' discretion if the candidate reveals via the application or interview that he or she was convicted of other violent crime, either prior to or since being saved.
- Application will not necessarily be denied if the candidate reveals that he or she was a victim of child abuse while a minor. However, the interviewers should make an effort to determine whether the candidate has dealt with the incident biblically.

### 3.2.5. Filing

All applications and interview notes will be marked as Confidential and stored in a secure filing area. When possible, they will be scanned and electronically stored and secured.

### 3.2.6. Assent

All approved applicants will receive a copy of Clearcreek Chapel's policies and procedures regarding children's ministries. The applicant will sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the policies and procedures, and expressing intent to comply with them.

## 3.3. Training Classes

Training classes may be compulsory. Failure to attend required classes may result in suspension of participation in the ministry until the class is made up.

## 4. Worker Supervision.

Following are simple guidelines to be observed at all times by all ministries involving children. These policies are as much for the protection of workers against false charges as it is for the prevention of abuse.

### 4.1. Two-Person Rule

When children younger than twelve (12) years of age are in attendance, there must be two (2) certified children's ministry workers also present, one of whom is at least eighteen (18) years of age.

1. Present means no less than one in the room itself and one walking the hallways observing the rooms.
2. One-on-one meeting alone with children younger than twelve (12) years of age for counsel or correction may take place only with the written consent of the parent(s) or guardian(s).
3. Children are to be supervised at all times on all the church campus. Children are not to be in offices or classrooms without adults present.
4. Supervision by a parent of their own children meets the requirements above.
5. Supervision before, between and after scheduled services of the church is the parent's responsibility.

### 4.2. Ministry-Wide Application

Adequate staffing should be maintained at all ministry events in order to comply with the above.

## 5. Report of an Abuse Allegation.

If any ministry worker knows or suspects that a child may have been subjected to abuse, the following procedure should be followed.

1. Contact the Spiritual Formation elder immediately (day or night) and relay as much of the incident as is known.
2. The Spiritual Formation elder will set up a meeting with the worker who suspects abuse, the child, the parents, and one more elder. This meeting should take place within one day of the accusation. If the allegation is unfounded, no further action will be taken.
3. If any suspicion remains following the above meeting, an elder designated by the Elders will report the allegation to the local authorities immediately. The parents of the child will be invited to witness the filing of the report. Full cooperation with government authorities will be offered at all times during the investigation.

## 6. Implementation Responsibility

### 6.1. Screening and Selection of Workers.

The Spiritual Formation Team (SFT) will administer the process of screening and selecting children's ministry workers by giving applications to prospective workers and describing the process. The SFT will be responsible to schedule interviews and ensure that all applications are dealt with in a timely manner. The SFT will also be responsible to hold periodic policy and procedure training sessions.

### 6.2. Worker supervision

It is the responsibility of every children's ministry worker to observe the guidelines in the "Worker Supervision" statement of policy. It is the ministry team leader's responsibility to coordinate adequate staffing to support the policies.

### 6.3. Report of an abuse allegation

Each children's ministry worker is responsible to be on the alert for signs of abuse and to report such signs or allegations. The body of elders will be responsible for administering the process of hearing the allegations and determining, along with the parents, whether a report should be made to the authorities.

Policy Approvals and Amendments

Version	Submitted	Approved	Distributed
V2.2007.0401	April 10, 2007		

***Legal Definition of Child Abuse, Ohio Revised Code  
Provided as a reference only***

“Child Abuse” is defined herein as any of the following:

1. Engaging in sexual activity, as defined under Chapter 2907 of the Ohio Revised Code, with a child where such activity would constitute an offense under that Chapter.
2. Endangering a child as defined in Section 2919.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.
3. Denial to a child, as a means of punishment, of proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care, or other care necessary to a child for the child’s health.
4. Use of restraint procedures on a child that causes injury or pain.
5. Administration of prescription drugs or psychotropic medication to the child without the written approval and ongoing supervision of a licensed physician.
6. Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances to a child.
7. Commission of any act, other than by accidental means, that results in any injury or death to the child or commission of any act by accidental means that results in any injury or death to the child and that is at variance with the history given of the injury or death.
8. Infliction by any individual of physical or mental injury that threatens to harm the child’s health or welfare.

<b>Family Name</b>	
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# Children's Ministry Application

<b>Office Use Only</b>	
<b>Interview</b>	
Date:	
Interviewers: (Print names, sign on back of page2)	
Approved for Ministry: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Comments on Back	
Start Date:	
Assigned Ministry:	
<b>Records</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter
<b>Membership Ended</b>	
Date	By

This application is to be completed by all persons seeking to serve in any position (volunteer or compensated) involving ministry to children. This is not an employment application form. This form is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs. Please carefully fill in the following information. Type or print, using black or blue ink. Sign the completed application.

<b>General Information</b>					
<b>Last Name:</b>					
<b>First Name:</b>		<b>MI:</b>		<b>Nick Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Street:</b>				
	<b>City:</b>		<b>State:</b>	<b>Zip:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Home:</b> ( ) ( )	<b>Cell (Optional):</b> ( ) ( )		<b>Email:</b>	
	<b>Marital:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated			<b>Birth Date:</b>	
<b>Background Check (If Required):</b>	<b>Social Security Number:</b>	<b>Are you a U.S. Citizen?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Ever Convicted or Plead Guilty to a Crime?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please explain on last page	
	<b>Date Began Attending:</b>	<b>Membership Date:</b>	<b>Prior Church:</b>		
<b>Church:</b>	<b>Other Current Ministries (At the Chapel or elsewhere):</b>				

<b>Ministry Record</b> List Most Recent First, last 3 churches or last 10 years					
Church	Ministry/Position	Duties	Phone Number	Start Date	End Date

<b>Other Work with Children</b> Other than above, list ALL, most recent first					
Job/Ministry/Location	Ministry/Position	Duties	Phone Number	Start Date	End Date

<b>References</b> List three persons, other than relatives, who know your ministry experience and/or Christian character.		
Name/Title	Mailing Address	Phone

<b>Attestation</b> Response required.	
<p><i>If you prefer, you may opt not to answer the next questions here. You may discuss your answers in confidence with the Pastor for Spiritual Formation and/or another elder instead of answering on this form. Answering yes, or leaving the question unanswered, will not automatically disqualify you for children’s or youth work.</i></p>	
Were you a victim of abuse or molestation while a minor?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Answer in interview
Have you ever been involved, charged and/or convicted in the abuse of a child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Answer in interview

<b>Ministry Applying For</b> Please check the ministry or ministries interested in		<b>Ministry Use Only</b>																	
<b>Nurseries</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Crib <input type="checkbox"/> Walker <input type="checkbox"/> Toddler <input type="checkbox"/> Any Needed <input type="checkbox"/> All																		
<b>Children Ministries</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Ministry</td> <td>Beginner</td> <td>Primary</td> <td>Juniors</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sunday School</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Learning Lambs</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scripture Sowers</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Ministry	Beginner	Primary	Juniors	Sunday School				Learning Lambs				Scripture Sowers					
	Ministry	Beginner	Primary	Juniors															
	Sunday School																		
	Learning Lambs																		
Scripture Sowers																			
<b>Youth Ministries</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Team																		
<b>Other</b>	I am willing to serve in any ministry to children or youth. Please suggest one for me.																		
<b>Commitment</b>	Minimum length of time I am willing to make a commitment for:																		

**Authorization** Application must be signed prior to submitting

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Clearcreek Chapel, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. I further authorize Clearcreek Chapel to conduct a check of my police criminal records and agree that I will fully cooperate in providing all information and signing all documents necessary to conduct such a check.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the Book of Faith and Order, policies, and procedures of Clearcreek Chapel, and to refrain from unbiblical conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the contents thereof and I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Explanation of Criminal Offense(s)</b>		
<b>Charge</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Explanation</b>

**Additional Applicant Notes/Explanations**

**Interviewer’s Notes**

<b>Elder’s Signature(s):</b>	<b>Ministry Team Leader Signature(s):</b>
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