

CORNERSTONE STUDENT MINISTRIES

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The Child Protection Policy is intended to protect children participating in events sponsored by Cornerstone Student Ministries (CSM). This policy applies to CSM employee/volunteers, whose job descriptions require supervision or custody of minors age 18 and below. This policy does not constitute a contract between CSM and its employee/volunteers or any other party. It is merely a statement of policy and general situation. CSM is not responsible for the individual acts of any employee/volunteer.

Scope

This policy applies to those working with children who are in 6th - 12th grade (approximately 11-18 years of age) who are participating in officially recognized activities on and off church property.

Requirements

Under Colorado statute CRS 19-3-304, "Any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately upon receiving such information report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department, the local law enforcement agency, or through the child abuse reporting hotline system as set forth in section 26-5-111, C.R.S." Everyone has a mandatory duty to report the suspected abuse to the authorities via the Childhelp USA® National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).

The Church does not condone abuse of any kind. This includes verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse as well as any form of neglect. No abuse will be tolerated towards anyone under the care of CSM. All workers are responsible to report known or suspected abuse of a child to the hotline.

If at any time a worker witnesses abuse occurring, he or she is to immediately: 1) stop the abuse, 2) ensure the safety of the youth, and 3) report the abuse to their supervisor.

If at any time a worker becomes aware or suspects, either through first hand or second hand knowledge, that a child is being abused outside CSM, he or she is to immediately report such suspicion of abuse to the authorities.

In addition to contacting authorities, the worker is to notify the Church Administrator, a pastor, or a ministry director and complete an Incident Report.

Definitions

CSM is defined as Cornerstone Student Ministries

Child, children, youth and minor are defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18).

Employee/volunteer is defined as any individual who is serving in any position involving the supervision or custody of minors, including those paid by CSM on a full or part-time basis or volunteering.

Worker is any CSM employee/volunteer, regardless of age, who has been approved by Cornerstone Church.

Child abuse shall be defined as any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- a) Physical abuse: any physical injury to a minor which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, biting.
- b) Emotional abuse: emotional injury occurs when the minor is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
- c) Sexual abuse: any sexual activity between a minor and an adult or between minors, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, pornography. Other forms of sexual abuse can include verbal comments, exposure to pornographic materials, obscene phone calls, allowing minors to witness sexual activity.

SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCESS

CSM believes that appropriate personal relationships between CSM adults and minors of the church foster the community of Christ. CSM will seek to prevent the abuse of minors when they are participating in church programs. Preventive measures include screening, training and supervision of all employees/volunteers and a commitment to eliminating opportunities for abuse within church programs. This screening includes the following:

a) Church Attendance

All individuals seeking to join the leadership team at CSM must attend Cornerstone Church for approximately 6 months before joining the leadership team.

b) Initial Interview

All individuals must have an initial interview with a Student Ministries Pastor before being considered as a candidate for the CSM leadership team.

c) Written Application

All individuals seeking to join the leadership team at CSM must complete a confidential application form and give written permission for a **criminal records check**, motor vehicle record check and have references

reviewed. The application will be maintained in confidence on file at CSM.

d) Training

Instruction and review of the CSM child protection policy for employee/volunteers will be offered initially upon joining the leadership team, and scheduled as needed or as policy revisions are made.

Background Checks on Teenagers

Because of the sealed nature of juvenile criminal records, teenage applicants will be required to answer the following questions via the Background Questionnaire for Teenage Applicants form:

1. Does the teenager have any current or past legal issues?
2. Has the teenager been convicted of a crime?
3. Has the teenager ever had a parole officer?

All answers on this form must be in writing and signed by the teenage applicant. If the applicant has/had a parole officer, the officer's contact information will be required. If any of the above stated individuals refuse to answer these questions in writing, and provide their signature, CSM will deny that teenager's application to work with children.

Any teenage worker who is being investigated for a possible criminal offense is to inform the CSM pastor of that situation. This is to determine if continued access to children will be allowed while the investigation is pending. Failure to report an active investigation will result in the worker being removed from service, regardless of the outcome of the Investigation.

SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

CSM has a zero tolerance for abuse in its programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every employee/volunteer to act in the best interest of all minors. The following requirements shall be applicable to all employee/volunteers at CSM.

a) Safety of children

It is the responsibility of employee/volunteers to promote the emotional and physical safety of minors giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists, they shall immediately take appropriate precautions to protect all minors.

b) One-on-one contact

A reasonable effort will be made to have two non-related employees/volunteers present in the room, or nearby, with minors during church activities. One-on-one contact between minors and employees/volunteers should be avoided. CSM recognizes that there will be times when an unaccompanied employee/volunteer may be present

with a group of minors or with a single minor. In those circumstances, (such as student services, mentoring or counseling) doors to the room will be open and windows uncovered or the activity will be conducted in a public space, in view of other adults or minors. Parental consent should be obtained before the contact if possible; if not, a report of the meeting should be conveyed to a CSM pastor. Meetings that regularly occur between one employee/volunteer and a group of minors or with a single minor (middle or high school small groups, mentoring, counseling, etc.) shall have parental consent from participants before the meeting occurs. CSM recognizes that a fundamental goal of the middle school and high school philosophy of ministry is to build relationships with students and families and to have regular, intentional contact with students. Meetings that spontaneously occur between one employee/volunteer and a group of minors or with a single minor are to be encouraged rather than thwarted by the scope of this policy. Therefore, employees/volunteers will be responsible to conduct these meetings in view of other adults and/or minors, to phone parents to receive verbal permission before the meeting occurs and to communicate a report of the meeting with their supervisor.

c) Ratio of employee/volunteers to minors

When supervising minors, a reasonable ratio of employees/volunteers to minors is to be maintained at all times. The supervisor overseeing the age group shall be primarily responsible for setting and maintaining a reasonable ratio of employees/volunteers to minors giving due regard to all factors present, including the number and age of the participants, the nature of the activities and the location where the activities are taking place.

d) Overnight procedures

Overnight activities will require a signed permission statement from the parent/guardian of the minors participating and must have a minimum of two employees/volunteers and maintain a ratio of at least one employee/volunteer per nine minors. An employee/volunteer may never sleep in the same bed as a minor. There must be both male and female employees/volunteers present at all co-ed overnights and at least two same-gender employees/volunteers on same-gender overnights. On campouts, no employee/volunteer may ever be in or sleep in a tent with minors.

e) No confidentiality

Employees/volunteers can never promise confidentiality to a minor. Employees/volunteers must report to the Pastor if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime or being abused.

f) Digital privacy

Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, digital devices and social media is prohibited. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in areas where privacy is expected by participants. Posting ANY images on the internet or social media is not allowed unless permission has been granted by the parents and approved by your supervisor. Private conversations and chats between minors and employees/volunteers on social media and other apps should be avoided.

g) Hazing and bullying

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited. Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited.

h) Controlled substances

The use of tobacco, vaping devices, alcohol, drugs and/or mind altering substances with minors is prohibited while on the job.

Physical/Non-Physical Contact

I. Permissible Contact

a) Limited physical contact with minors, such as a pat on the back or on the head, or a handshake, is permissible. Brief hugs are permissible within sight of others. Regular employees must avoid any prolonged hugs and must stop a hug immediately upon request of the minor. Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms, placing an arm around the shoulders, sitting beside minors, holding hands during prayer, high fives and hand slapping are all appropriate.

b) Gift giving

Accepting and giving gifts from/to minors is permissible when appropriate (Christmas, birthday) but is discouraged as a frequent practice. Report to your supervisor any gifts you receive that seem inappropriately given.

c) Close emotional relationships

Employee/volunteers need to avoid developing close emotional relationships with minors of the opposite sex and exercise extreme caution in dealing with minors of the same sex.

II. Prohibited Contact

a) Sexual abuse

Any physical contact between an employee/volunteer and a minor that would provide, or is intended to provide, any form of sexual gratification.

b) Physical contact

physical contact between an employee/volunteer and a minor that includes giving massages, kissing, prolonged embracing, and so forth.

c) Physical abuse

striking, spanking, shaking, slapping or other violent behaviors towards a minor

d) Pornography

Showing minors images that are pornographic is prohibited. Accidental viewing of pornography when in the presence of minors should be reported to your supervisor immediately. If an employee/volunteer becomes aware of the existence of child pornography in the hands of a minor, they should immediately report this to their supervisor.

e) Verbal/mental abuse

Language that is humiliating, degrading, threatening, sexual, personally intimate, related to body development or physique, or crude, regardless of how the communication was conveyed (e.g. text messages, email, phone calls, social networking sites, etc.)

f) Dating

At no time shall any employee/volunteer pursue a dating relationship with a minor and should be sensitive to minors with “crushes.”

III. Reporting

All employee/volunteers are to be responsible to immediately discuss with their supervisor any signs of possible violations of the above and/or victimization.

Discipline Procedures

- a) No form of punishment that involves pain or physical discomfort may be used. Minors may be restrained if they are in danger of hurting themselves or others. Disruptive minors may be removed from the group to another part of the room.
- b) Complete discipline procedures are available in the employee/volunteer training guide for working with minors.

Consequences of Violation of Child Protection Policy

Any employee/volunteer accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by CSM to be harmful to a minor, may be immediately suspended from participation in any CSM ministry for minors if applicable. Additionally, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from CSM.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior

- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

External Reports of Abuse

If at any time a worker becomes aware or suspects (either through first or second hand knowledge) that a child is being abused outside CSM, he or she is to report such suspicion of abuse to his/her supervisor.

Internal Reports of Abuse

If at any time a worker witnesses abuse occurring, he or she is to immediately: 1) stop the abuse, 2) ensure the safety of the child, and 3) report the abuse to church leadership.

In situations where abuse has allegedly occurred at CSM or at an outside sanctioned activity, the worker is to notify the church leadership. Once notified by the worker, the Church will:

1. Notify the child's parent or legal guardian.
2. Place the suspected worker(s) on leave pending the results of the authority's investigation.
3. Complete an internal Incident Report, and any external documents required by the authorities, detailing all information given by first hand witness(es).
4. Make pastoral staff available to assist in the needs of the family and to keep them as informed as possible within the context of the authority's investigation.
5. Cooperate fully and quickly with the authorities in their investigation of the alleged abuse.
6. Notify the Church's insurance carrier and forward any requested documents for their review.
7. Maintain confidentiality of all information while the investigation is pending. This prohibition is for the sake of the victim and the innocence of the alleged perpetrator until proven guilty.
8. Notify the congregation of the situation and relay all appropriate information to them in a timely manner.
9. If the worker has been found guilty of the alleged abuse, he or she will no longer be allowed to work with children at CSM in any capacity.
10. If the worker has not been found guilty of the alleged abuse, the Church will determine if the worker will be reinstated to work with children at CSM.

Prohibitions

It is the role of law enforcement and designated state agencies to conduct an investigation into any allegation of suspected child abuse. As such, no individual associated with CSM (regardless of position) is to conduct any form of investigation, interrogation, or examination into an

allegation of suspected child abuse. Because such interruptions can impact the effectiveness of an external investigation and negatively affect witnesses, at no time will workers act in the capacity of an investigator.

YOUTH LEADER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a leader for Cornerstone Student Ministry I commit to:

- Pursuing Jesus and having a desire to grow in my faith
- Keeping Students Safe
- Being teachable
- My emotional and spiritual health
- Living a lifestyle that is “above reproach” (eg sexual purity, good financial and time stewardship, drug/alcohol abuse, etc)
- Communicating regularly
- Working through conflict in humility with the end goal of restoration
- Prioritizing Student Ministry events and relationships (ie reaching out to students outside of Student Ministry functions)
- Being punctual
- Fostering a culture of encouragement and positivity

Safety/Ministry Protocol

- a) Connect with parents.

Try to say hello and shake the hands of parents every week. This goes a long way in developing your relationship with the family. And remember that sometimes our students come to church because of friends, which means their parents most likely are not believers. We can minister to parents as well.

- b) Develop detailed plans.

Even if many parents trust you implicitly and don't ask for the details, give them anyway. Let parents know where you'll be hanging out. Times, places, and activities should all be planned in advanced. Planning helps us consider the appropriateness of activities ahead of time, and keep us from doing less wise things on the spur of the moment.

- c) Avoid questionable appearances.

There are times when one-on-one contacts are appropriate. But generally speaking, ministry should be a group activity. Avoid being alone with students of the opposite sex. If driving a mixed group home, take a same sex student home last, even if it is out of the way. Be extra cautious about physical affection (no lap sitting, massaging or other extended physical contact, even with the same gender). This is to avoid any kind of accusations or any kind of temptation. It's for your protection and the students' protection.

- d) Be “all business” when it comes to transportation.

We don't need car-related fun. Given the risks and liability involved, we should be all business in this area. Keeping speeds down, no "Chinese Fire drills," no racing or letting kids drive and follow all normal traffic laws.

e) Take illnesses and injuries serious.

The safety of students needs to be your top priority. When a student gets sick or hurt, stop and give care, even if you don't think it's that serious. Take loving and appropriate action.

f) Take threats seriously.

If a student shares information about 1) someone hurting them (physical/sexual) abuse (past OR present), 2) they are going to hurt someone else, or 3) they are going to hurt themselves YOU MUST report this to Gabe or Amy immediately (or call 911 if it's an emergency). Please also write down all details pertaining to that conversation right away.

PRINT NAME _____ SIGN/DATE _____

LEADER COVENANT

Cornerstone Boulder: Leader Covenant

We believe that every leader should follow the example of Jesus as a servant leader. Servant leaders do not view their power of position as a privilege but rather a high calling to love, lead and serve. Our hope is to increase the number of servant leaders by continually developing people in their gifts and competencies.

Our leadership covenant is something we all enter into voluntarily, and it is meant to be a target we pursue together.

Below you will see a framework for that type of leadership using the word FAITH as an acronym.

1 - Faithful:

Faithful to Jesus: Worship and Obedience

Faithful to Godliness: Purity and Character

Faithful to the Cornerstone Community (connected, unity)

Faithful to Generosity: Time and Money

Faithful to Commitments and Responsibilities

2 - Alignment:

Alignment with Cornerstone's Vision* (God's Kingdom)

Alignment with Cornerstone's Culture

Alignment with Cornerstone's Elements*

Alignment with Cornerstone's Statement of Faith*

*See back for a detailed description

3 - Influential:

Influential in Leadership

Influential in Discipleship

Influential in Evangelism

Influential within the Community (outside of Cornerstone)

4 - Teachable:

Teachability with Peers (accountability)

Teachability with Leaders and Staff (coaching)

Teachability with Skills, Gifts, Beliefs (excellence)

5 - Health:

- Emotional Health (vulnerability, self-awareness)

- Spiritual Health

- Relational Health (conflict resolution)

PRINT NAME _____ SIGN/DATE _____