



gracechapel

## Children and Youth Interaction Policy

### PURPOSE

In order to provide a wholesome, highly reputable, and spirit-filled learning environment at Grace Chapel, the Pastoral team and Advisory Council has adopted the following Child Interaction Policy. Children, for the purposes of this policy, are defined as senior high age and younger.

Our children and youth deserve a safe and protective learning environment, and Grace Chapel will take every opportunity and measure to insure the safety of our children. Grace Chapel's leadership is committed to rigorous oversight of this policy and encourages all leaders and volunteers who serve and teach our children to follow the Bible's admonition to "always conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel" (Phil. 1-27).

### NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. All children's and youth workers will be screened and approved by a pastor and/or Ministry Director before beginning any work or ministry with children and youth.
2. Random, unannounced checks will be conducted by church leaders of all activities especially during activities at remote locations.
3. Adult workers will observe the "two adult" rule. This requires that an adult is never alone with children or youth without a second adult being present. Exceptions to this rule must be approved in advance by a Pastor or ministry Director.
4. Adult workers shall immediately report any behavior they observe that is considered, in their judgment, to be abusive or inappropriate to a pastor or Ministry Director.
5. In the event the above leaders are absent or unavailable, the behavior should be reported to the Senior Pastor. The respective worker should prepare a written report of his or her observation within 24 hours of the incident.
6. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual and or physical abuse related crimes will not work with or participate in any church-sponsored activity or program designed for children and/or youth.

### WORKER SELECTION

1. Primary screening is required for all children's and youth workers prior to assignment of ministry responsibilities. This means a screening and criminal records check release form must be completed, signed, verified and submitted (i.e., back of application).
2. Workers must complete basic information on an application that states who they are, where they have been attending or where they were church members previously. Two personal references will be required if there is no previous church membership.
3. Completion of or commitment to attend the next *New Life in Christ* class or *Growing Deep Growing Strong* seminar is required before applicant will be considered for work with the children or youth.

### WORKERS SUPERVISION

1. Routine children's and youth activities such as Sunday school classes, Kids Church and Thrive gatherings will be conducted in assigned locations with normal leadership in attendance. Random, unannounced visits to classrooms and/or remote areas should be performed by Children's and youth leadership during the activity.
2. Changes in meeting place must be arranged with the respective ministry coordinator or other person responsible for the activity, prior to relocating.
3. All children and youth ministry activities shall use a team approach where there are always **two adults** working together.
4. Exceptions to the team approach may be allowed in low risk situations, but additional supervisory care must be taken. When class size requires one teacher or leader to work with children in a room with no visual access (window in interior door or wall), the door to the classroom should be left fully open.

5. When a small child needs a diaper changed or help going to the bathroom, this should be done by an approved nursery worker or the child's parent.
6. Non-nursery age children needing special assistance with clothing adjustments or help in the bathroom should ideally be assisted by two adults, of the same sex whenever possible. If one adult must provide assistance, and if the same child needs assistance from time to time, a different adult should provide the assistance next time.
7. Parents must know where their children and youth are, and in whose care they will be. There must not be last minute changes in plans that would cause the children to be someplace or do something that their parents do not expect.

## REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

1. Anyone who observes inappropriate behavior of children's or youth workers must immediately inform a Pastor or the appropriate ministry director of their observation. A written report must be prepared and submitted within 24 hours of the alleged incident.
2. The ministry director will document the alleged incident in a confidential file and consult with the Senior Pastor as soon as possible to determine a course of action.
3. The head of the ministry and/or the Senior Pastor will meet with the worker who was accused of inappropriate behavior to determine the facts of the matter.
4. Resolution will follow in accordance with the extent of the offense. Documentation of all actions and discussions will be required and will be kept confidential among the fewest people necessary to resolve the matter. In cases where the law requires reporting to legal authorities, a report will be filled. At that juncture, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

## RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

1. When an allegation is made it is important to gather facts and be non-judgmental. Collect as much information as possible about who, when, where, how, etc.
2. The Senior Pastor must be notified immediately and a pastoral staff meeting called for the purpose of determining how best to meet the needs of the abused and the needs of the church as well. When the alleged incident report is deemed to be credible, the church's legal counsel must be contacted within 48 hours.
3. The person accused of inappropriate behavior shall be immediately removed from all Children and/or Youth ministry interaction and responsibilities until the situation is resolved.
4. The alleged victim of the inappropriate behavior, and his or her family, will have access to counseling while the Pastoral staff and Advisory Council sorts out the details of the alleged incident.

## THIS PAGE IS CONFIDENTIAL

I have received a copy of the *Grace Chapel Child and Youth Interaction Policy*. I have read and understand the attached policy and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

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Please print name

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Date

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Signature