Child and Youth Protection Policy Checklist

Churches

Here is a menu of items to be included in a child and youth protection policy for a church.

☐ Name of church – a policy can be modeled after another but should be unique to your church
☐ Definitions of abuse – specific to your state (https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/defining)

Training
For whom – indicate how often and what medium (online, video, in-person):
☐ Staff ☐ All adults ☐ Teachers ☐ Children and youth
☐ All volunteers who have contact with children and youth
Content:
☐ Types of abuse, including signs ☐ Risk and protective factors ☐ Response plan

Personnel
☐ Application, background checks, interview, references of all staff
☐ Application, background checks, interview, references of volunteers who work with children/youth
☐ Six-month church involvement before teaching or leading children/youth
☐ Read and agree to abide by the child and youth protection policy annually

Supervision of children and youth
☐ Two-adult rule: One adult should never be alone with one child
☐ Nursery ☐ Vacation Bible school
☐ Sunday school ☐ Youth group activities (especially any overnight activities)
☐ Children’s church ☐ Before and after church activities

Interactions with children and youth
☐ Constructive (nonviolent) and age-appropriate discipline
☐ Appropriate touch and consent

Church facility
☐ Windows in inside doors/walls
☐ Childproofed (e.g., cleaning supplies, outlets, knives in kitchen)
☐ Stocked first aid kit
Response to possible child abuse and neglect
- Plan for reporting to authorities (who, when, where to call)
- Plan for keeping children and youth safe
- Plan for notifying nonoffending parent(s)
- Plan for notifying others in the congregation

Response to individual with known sex offense history in congregation
- Assessment of congregation’s readiness to receive individual, to include training on sexual abuse prevention and signs as well as conversations with known abuse victims/survivors in congregation
- Assessment of individual’s readiness and appropriateness for participation in church activities, to include history, pertinent court orders, treatment status, motivation
- Written plan with individual and professionals in individual’s life, to include supervision plan and clear definition of role of individual in church activities (no access to children or youth)
- Plan to communicate with church community about the presence of and written plan with the individual
- Spiritual, emotional, and practical support for individual
- Spiritual, emotional, and practical support for survivors and victims in the church community

Other
- Social media and digital communication guidelines for volunteers and staff
- Include a child protection theme in worship – indicate how often
- Notify parents before a child or youth is transported
- Community referrals known and readily available: counseling for children and families, basic needs, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness

Community (beyond church community)
- Planned outreach for families and children at risk
- Awareness/collaboration with community agencies/personnel (for purposes of volunteering, referrals, services for families and children in church)

Policy
- Adopted
- Implemented – indicate who is responsible
- Accessible (e.g., posted on bulletin boards, website)

Resources
For adults:

Dove’s Nest trainings: https://dovesnest.net/events

Dove’s Nest’s Protection & Inclusion document:
https://dovesnest.net/sites/default/files/Protection_Inclusion_2018.pdf

Model (long and short versions) and sample child protection policies: www.DovesNest.net/policies

For children and youth:

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