

Chinese Community Church of Indianapolis

Children's Ministry Policies & Safety Processes

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Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a general overview of policies and safety processes that Chinese Community Church of Indianapolis has established for its volunteers. However, it's obviously not possible to anticipate all situations that could arise in ministry or provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, the church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy or provision, with or without notice, as necessary or appropriate. However, at all times, the church will comply with all applicable laws. Nothing in this handbook creates a contract of employment.

Part I: Children's Ministry Policies

Background Checks

Volunteers at CCCI who work with children and youth (and other vulnerable groups) must submit to various screening procedures. CCCI's background check includes a U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database search and a Social Security number search. This check searches electronic criminal files and record databases of government agencies, including sexual offenders' registries. Manual records of some records may also be needed in states or counties that don't keep electronic records. A Social Security number search verifies an individual's name, state, and previous addresses; this prevents people from providing false identification. Other screening procedures by the church might include a motor vehicle report or a local police record check. All children's ministry volunteers should have an update of their background checks at least every 5 years. The results of all screening procedures are kept in strictest confidence. Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes cannot serve in any area of children's ministry.

Smoking

For the health of all who attend or visit CCCI, the facility is considered a smoke-free environment. No smoking is allowed inside the building.

Drugs and Alcohol

The goal of CCCI's policies regarding drugs and alcohol is to protect and help two individuals: (1) the volunteer, and (2) the individuals the volunteer serves. Of course, this general policy can't cover every possible circumstance. All cases involving alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or related problems will be handled discretely and confidentially.

1. All volunteers are unequivocally prohibited from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using controlled substances. Any volunteer violating this policy is subject to discipline, including termination.

2. Alcohol abuse is equally serious in nature because of the danger it can pose to both the drinker and to others. Thus, any volunteer who is convicted of driving while intoxicated/driving under the influence (DWI/DUI) or of violating a criminal drug statute must inform the church within five days. The church may take various actions after such a conviction, depending on the nature of the volunteer's ministry, and the individual's desire to battle and overcome the drug problem.

3. Out of a spirit of Christ-centered love for all people, including those who volunteer at the church, the church will work to help those who have a desire to combat their struggles with drug or alcohol abuse problems. In addition, the church may offer (or refer a volunteer to seek) rehabilitative assistance.

Sexual Harassment

CCCI is committed to providing an environment free of sexual harassment, as well as harassment based on factors such as race, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, and sex. We disapprove of any such harassment and will not tolerate it on the part of pastors, volunteers, children, or youth in ministry programs.

Definition: Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct that creates an offensive or hostile environment. Such conduct constitutes harassment when:

1. Submission to the conduct is a stated or implied condition for continued employment or ministry involvement.

2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment or volunteer position.

3. The harassment interferes with work or volunteer performance or creates an offensive, intimidating work environment.

4. Threatening reprisals result after a negative response to sexual advances. Prohibited unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to:

a. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments.

b. Visual conduct such as derogatory and or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures.

c. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or bra snapping.

d. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests.

e. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Process

If at any time you feel harassed at church or at a church-sponsored event, report the incident in writing immediately to the pastoral staff or Deacon/Elder you feel most comfortable reporting to. If

the accusation concerns this person, report it to another Pastor/Deacon/Elder. Every reported complaint will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and in a confidential manner.

Discipline

If the investigation establishes harassment, the violator of this policy will be disciplined. Discipline can range from verbal or written warnings, a meeting with a Pastor and a Deacon/Elder, or termination, depending upon the circumstances.

Violent Behavior

CCCI has an absolutely zero tolerance for violence. This includes even talking or joking about violence when it is perceived in a threatening manner. If a volunteer threatens or displays violence, he or she will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including verbal or written warnings, a meeting with a Pastor/Deacon/Elder, or termination, depending upon the circumstances. In addition, the volunteer may be subject to criminal proceedings, as appropriate. What is violence? Like many other areas, there's no way to anticipate every possible situation concerning violence. However, it generally includes physically or verbally harming another, including things like pushing, shoving, coercion, or intimidation. The church reserves the right to broaden this definition based on actual incidents or additional information. Thankfully, while instances of violent behavior are rare, volunteers can help prevent violence by reporting any incidents to your Volunteer Coordinator, Pastor, or Deacon/Elder of the church.

Policy against Child Abuse

Chinese Community Church of Indianapolis supports and maintains an environment free of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution or incest with children. It is against the law and against CCCI's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child. CCCI reserves the right to exclude from affiliation with CCCI Children's Ministry any person who is or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect of any child. CCCI will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically abusive behavior towards a child.
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to church activities.
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Reporting & Investigating Child Abuse Child Abuse is a serious crime and as a volunteer you are under the following obligations:

1. Reporting – All volunteers and employees shall immediately report and document any incident of abuse or violation which they have knowledge of or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

2. Incident of abuse defined – An “incident of abuse” means any occurrence in which any person:

- has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, youth, or vulnerable adult other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- commits or allows to be committed any sexual offence against a child, youth, vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- with respect to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.

3. Imminent Threat – in all cases where an imminent threat of continued or actual abuse or neglect exists, any witness shall immediately contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Associate Pastor, or Deacon/Elder to request that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing or with knowledge of the incident shall complete a written report and submit it to the Associate Pastor (or in his/her absence another Pastor or Deacon/Elder).

4. Obligation to report to law enforcement – In all cases where any volunteer or staff person has reasonable cause to believe that a child or youth, known to the volunteer or staff in a professional capacity, has been or may be abused or neglected (inside or outside of CCCI) the person shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency’s child abuse investigators. To report child abuse the 24/7 phone number for Indiana Child Protective Services is 1-800-800-5556. If the volunteer or staff member is in doubt regarding where a report would be made, he or she shall telephone the agency anonymously and discuss the situation with an investigator to determine whether the report should be made. The volunteer or staff member shall make a written record of the name and title of the investigator with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation made by the investigator and submit a copy of the written record to the Associate Pastor (or in his/her absence another Pastor or a Deacon/Elder).

5. Internal Reporting Procedure – The person reporting an incident of abuse shall contact the Associate Pastor (or in his/her absence another Pastor or Deacon/Elder). The report shall provide information regarding all relevant facts with respect to the incident. Upon receiving a report, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall complete a written report of the incident and submit a copy to the Deacon/Elder Board. In a case where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom the report should be made, he or she shall be considered absent for the purposes of

this reporting procedure and the report should be submitted to another appropriate CCCI representative (a Pastor or Deacon/Elder).

6. Responding to the report – When someone receives a report of an incident, he or she shall immediately take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, and after the report has been appropriately documented, the person receiving the report shall:

- a. Immediately contact the Associate Pastor (or in his/her absence another Pastor or a Deacon/Elder).
- b. The leadership of CCCI will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending an investigation.
- c. The leadership of CCCI will take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children pending the investigation.

Food Allergy Policy

Due to an increasing number of children with food allergies, we offer only goldfish and/or animal crackers with water during snack time in the toddler and preschool rooms. Cheerios are offered in the nursery. Please verify that there are no allergies to the snacks we provide. Please leave personal snacks at home. They make sharing too difficult and may actually be dangerous for those children with allergies.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy when it comes to the history, records, and conversations about the people CCCI serves. When working with children, volunteers are required to break confidentiality when a child or another volunteer is in danger of serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to self or others.

Part II: Children's Ministry Safety Processes

Check In Policy

Children will be checked in to the appropriate age group and given a nametag, and parents given a security card (and any take home information). Children should never be dropped off without a volunteer present.

Check Out Policy

Parents must pick up children from the designated area. Please make sure that the children stay in their classroom area and do not roam. A child is NOT allowed to leave with another parent unless a

provision has been made prior to the event and approved by a Volunteer Coordinator or Associate Pastor.

Bathroom Policy

A volunteer must accompany a child to the restroom. While the child waits outside the restroom, the volunteer must check the restroom prior to the child using the facility. While the child is using the facility, the volunteer must wait outside for the child; or a volunteer can take a group (3 or more) to the bathroom at the same time. If the child needs assistance the volunteer can go in the bathroom to assist while another adult volunteer waits outside with the door propped open. Again, the volunteer must check the restroom prior to the children using the facilities. If children are using a public bathroom that other adults may also be using, the volunteer should stand at the door and prop the door open with a hand or foot to be able to listen in case assistance is needed by the child. Volunteers must help a child use the restroom only if the child is four years or younger and the door can be propped open and/or another unrelated adult is present. **Please note:** Never be alone with a child in the stall of a restroom with the door closed.

Diapering policy

Any child wearing a diaper or pull-up is to be checked and/or changed during each service. Volunteers must use a different set of gloves with each diaper change or hand sanitizer.

Transfer of Children (from one ministry area to another)

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with two adults (or one adult if passing through a public area with other adults present). Children should be counted prior to leaving one area as well as upon arrival at the new area.

Appropriate touch

Appropriate touch is a part of a healthy ministry. The following are the guidelines for when, where, and how to use appropriate touch:

- i. An arm around a shoulder
- ii. Walking hand in hand
- iii. Carrying small children (or having them sit on a lap)
- iv. Short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- v. Brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- vi. Handshake and high-fives

Inappropriate touch

Never do the following:

- i. Touch a child in anger or disgust
- ii. Touch a child in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive

- iii. Touch a child between the bellybutton and the shin (except when a child is in physical danger or needs first aid attention and touch is necessary for their physical safety)
- iv. Touch a child's private parts (except during diaper changes)

Strangers

In the future, CCCI will work toward implementing the following safety measure:

Only parents, siblings, children's ministry volunteers, church staff, and children are allowed in the children's areas. All other adults should be asked to leave the area. If there are questions or concerns associated with a stranger in the area, a pastoral staff member or Volunteer Coordinator should be notified immediately.

Emergency Procedure

In case of an emergency, do the following:

1. **Medical Concerns** – Immediately report any medical needs or concerns to a pastoral staff member or Volunteer Coordinator. The notified person will decide if 911 should be called and send a runner to notify the nurse/EMT on call person. The volunteer should remain calm and divert the attention of the other children. Another volunteer should stay with the victim to keep them quiet and lying down (if appropriate).
2. **Weather alert** – If there is a fear of dangerous weather, volunteers should wait for a coordinator, deacon, elder, or Associate Pastor to instruct them what to do. In no way should a volunteer act in such a way as to incite panic among the children or other volunteers. In the event that the children need to be taken to a more secure inside location, the Volunteer Coordinator or Associate Pastor will notify the group and he or she will direct them to the Youth Room.
3. **Fire** – The first priority in any case of a fire is that all children and volunteers' safety is maintained. Any attempt by volunteers to put out a fire is absolutely forbidden unless judgment to do so is unquestionable and presents no possible danger to anyone present. In the event of a fire, an alarm may sound. Volunteers are asked to lead the children from the building through the nearest marked exit. Please stress the following rules: absolutely no talking, absolutely no running, follow the volunteer's lead. When evacuating, make sure to take the class roster to be able to account for all children.
4. **Missing Child** – In the event that a child is missing, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Associate Pastor should be notified. He or she should then notify other volunteers to continue the search, notify parents, or increase church awareness. All should remain calm and rational while moving in as timely a manner as possible.
5. **Media response** – In the event of a severe accident, incident or death, it is likely that the media will be on site to cover the incident. It is important that all volunteers not say anything that could be mistaken or misquoted by the interviewer. A CCCI Deacon, Elder, or their designee shall be the only

person to make any statement. If asked or called by a media member for a statement, please direct them to the CCCI Deacons or Elders.

6. **Intruder** – If there is a threatening person or intruder in the church: lock the classroom doors, check and make sure all your children are present, barricade the door with classroom furniture, guide children to areas of the room that are out of view of the door and windows, and turn off the lights. Only when the Volunteer Coordinator, Pastor, or Deacon/Elder gives the all clear signal do you unlock the door and turn the lights back on.

Discipline Policy

1. **Positive** encouraging discipline techniques should be used. Limited choices, redirection, and encouragement will go farther than punitive types of discipline. Some children need a positive reinforcement system.
2. **Corporal Punishment** (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate in Chinese Community Church of Indianapolis's activities. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested, or given permission for, corporal punishment. However, if a child is posing a physical danger to himself/herself or others, a volunteer may physically restrain a child until the danger has passed. Volunteers consult the Volunteer Coordinator or Associate Pastor if they need help with misbehaving children or discipline techniques.

Enforcement

The preceding safety processes will be enforced at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator, Associate Pastor, or Deacon/Elder.