

Safe Sanctuary Child Protection Policy

Christian Community Church of Mars
558 Pittsburgh Street
Mars, PA 16046

Effective Date: September 1, 2007

Christian Community Church of Mars is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which all people can learn about and experience God's love together as a family. The focus of this policy is the protection of children and youth from physical, emotional and sexual abuse by adults working with them during official church related activities. This policy also recognizes the vulnerability of adult workers and volunteers to false accusations of wrongdoing. This policy seeks to protect our children first, with the secondary objective of encouraging adult workers and volunteers to participate fully and without fear in the children and youth related programs and activities of the church. Therefore, Christian Community Church of Mars has established the following procedures and guidelines to effectively safeguard our children, youth and their leaders. For the purposes of this policy, children and youth are defined as those seventeen years of age and younger.

Guidelines and Procedures

Application for ministry with children and youth:

All adults who volunteer to work with children and/or youth are required to:

1. Complete the Application Form
2. Be a member of CCC of Mars and have attended regularly for at least six months.
3. Submit the names and contact information for at least three character references
4. Submit to the appropriate background, abuse and reference checks as outlined in this policy
5. Read and sign a copy of the Ministry Covenant of CCC of Mars

The elders shall review and approve applicants for volunteer participation. Background, abuse and reference checks will be made and reviewed by the eldership. All application forms and the results of background, abuse and reference checks will be regarded as confidential. Confidential information will only be available to the eldership and appropriate ministry heads as determined by the eldership. The standard for release of confidential information to ministry heads is the need to know in protection of children and youth. Release of confidential information shall not be made to any other party without specific written authorization of the applicant or pursuant to court order.

Background, abuse and reference checks:

All adults who volunteer to work with children and/or youth will undergo the following four background, abuse and reference checks. The eldership reserve the right to periodically perform any or all of these background, abuse and reference checks.

1. Act 34 Pennsylvania Criminal Background Check
2. Act 151 Child Abuse Clearance
3. A check of the United States Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Registry
4. Three personal character reference checks

Information contained in the background, abuse and reference checks will be deemed confidential and available only to the eldership as described above. Opportunity will be given for a self disclosure by the applicant of any history they feel necessary to share. This information on the self disclosure form will also be deemed confidential and treated as described above. When confronted with information about the applicant's previous record, arrest or offense, the eldership will:

1. Consider the nature and gravity of the offense.
2. Consider how long ago the offense was committed, especially in relation to Salvation.
3. Consider the nature of the ministry position and it's relationship to the offense.
4. Approve or disapprove the applicant for ministry service among the children and/or youth of the church.

Guidelines for Official Church Activity:

These guidelines reflect desirable practices. Deviation from these practices is permissible only after consultation with and approval by the eldership.

1. All children and youth activities will be supervised by at least two adults.
2. Overnight or off-campus activities involving children or youth must have at least two adults. (Married couples count as one adult in reference to this guideline.) Overnight or off-campus activities involving children and youth when both sexes are present should have at least one male and one female adult.
3. The ratio of children or youth to adult should not exceed 12 to 1.
4. If one-on-one interaction is required between an adult and a child or youth, this should be done in an observable area and preferably with the knowledge of another adult.
5. Doors to rooms where children and/or youth activities are taking place should have windows or remain open.
6. All drivers will be licensed and be 21 years or older, unless written permission given by a parent or guardian of the child or youth to ride with someone younger.
7. Only female child care workers will be permitted to volunteer in the nursery including toileting or changing the diapers of an infant or toddler.
8. All workers with children or youth should actively guard against becoming involved in situations that could give rise to the perception or appearance of inappropriate behavior.

Prohibited practices:

The following practices are prohibited and may be deemed as reason for removal of individuals from ministering with children and youth:

1. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an adult and a child or youth
2. Physically abusive behavior toward a child or youth
3. Verbally abusive behavior toward a child or youth
4. Using profane, vulgar or obscene language or gestures
5. Possessing obscene or pornographic materials in proximity to youth
6. Possessing, using or being under the influence of any illegal drugs
7. Possessing, consuming or being under the influence of alcohol in proximity to children or youth
8. Failure to follow the Guidelines for Official Church Activity as defined above

Concerns about violations concerning abuse of children/youth or deviations from the guidelines above should be directed to the eldership.

Guidelines for reporting suspected incident of child abuse:

In the event anyone witnesses or is told by a child and or youth of an incident of abuse, the following actions should be taken as deemed appropriate under the circumstances:

- Personally and immediately secure the safety of the child or youth and any other children or youth that may be at risk – do not leave the victim alone to go and report the incident
- Immediately inform the eldership
- If appropriate, the eldership may advise informing local law enforcement
- Along with the eldership, fill out the Suspected Abuse Incident Form
- Do not discuss the event with anyone else or confront the suspected abuser
- In the event that such an event occurs and an adult is accused of suspected abuse, then he/she will be removed from their ministry with children or youth and any or all other activities involving children and youth pending the results of an investigation. A favorable result of the investigation will be cause for immediate reinstatement. An unfavorable result will be cause for permanent suspension of volunteer or paid work with children and youth.
- All responsible efforts to protect the reputation of the accused adult will be exerted while the investigation is conducted.