

Parish Child Protection Policy

Christ Church Bangkok

1) Policy Statement

- a) Christ Church Parish shall respect all the laws of the Kingdom of Thailand, including the Children and Young Persons Act. We are committed to abiding by the Singapore Diocesan Child Protection Policy: 2003.
 - i) We will not tolerate any form of child abuse in our ministries for children.
 - ii) We will not permit any person with any record of child abuse, or who admits to having committed sexual abuse on a child, or who is known to have a propensity to act inappropriately toward children, to serve with our children or youth ministries.
 - iii) We will play our part in the community effort to advocate for and protect children from abuse at home and other places of care.
 - iv) We will support the recovery of both victims and perpetrators of abuse.
 - v) We will always act in the best interest of the child in all our decision-making.

2) Definitions

- a) A child is defined as a young person up to the age of 18. Young people over the age of 18 years are expected to attend church or adult groups.
- b) Physical Abuse
 - i) Any act that causes physical injury which is not accidental in nature to a child. It includes deliberately causing bruises, burns, cuts and broken bones by a range of actions such as beating, shaking and excessive discipline.
- c) Sexual Abuse
 - i) Any act where a child is used for sexual pleasure or is taken advantage of sexually. It also includes exposing a child to sexual acts or pornography. Sexual grooming is any act whereby a person gets close with a child to gain their confidence and trust, such as private text messaging of an inappropriate nature, spending private time alone with a child etc. setting the stage for abuse to take place without raising any alert. Sexual abuse can happen between a child and other children or young people or between a child and adult.
- d) Emotional Abuse
 - i) Any act that harms a child emotionally or psychologically. The acts may be repeated or be an isolated extreme incident. This may be verbal, coercive control type behaviors. It is highly likely that a child being physically or sexually abused is also being emotionally abused as a result.
- e) Bullying
 - i) Bullying is planned, intentional, unwanted, aggressive behavior between children and young people that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. This may be verbal or physical or both and be in person or online and is often repeated over time, causing much emotional damage. The impact on both the bullied victim and the bully can have long-term consequences.

3) Policy for Screening and Recruitment

- a) The Parish office shall keep a register of all staff and volunteers working with children.
- b) All Staff and Volunteers seeking to work with children and young people must complete the documents in the Volunteer Application pack, which includes;
 - i) Application for Volunteering Form
 - ii) Child Protection Consent Form
 - iii) Self-Disclosure Form
 - iv) Two character reference forms for referees who are church members and who can vouch for their suitability to care for and work with children and youth.
 - v) Request to provide a valid Passport or other ID document to confirm age.
- c) Following the interview and satisfactory forms are completed volunteers shall pass a continuous, up to six-month period, of active attendance as helpers, having interactions with ministry leadership before being approved to serve with children and youth as leaders.

4) Policy for Vigilance of new employees, leaders and helpers

- a) All employees and volunteers shall be given a copy of this Child Protection Policy and Keeping our Children Safe Document upon joining the ministry. They shall sign “Form A: Child Protection Consent Form” indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the Parish Child Protection Policy and Keeping Our Children Safe document.
- b) At the start of each year, the Child Protection Representative will conduct a briefing reiterating the importance of Child Protection and to remind all staff/volunteers on the parish procedures for Child Protection.
- c) All employees, leaders and helpers will make themselves available for training when offered.

5) Policy for Incident Management

- a) Staff or Volunteers who suspect abuse or neglect of a child while the child is attending a program in the Parish should report immediately to the Children and Youth Minister Leader or the Child Protection Representative. If the allegation involves either of the previous mentioned staff, they will report the incident to the Vicar directly.
- b) If the alleged abuse took place in the Parish or during one of its activities or programs the following procedure shall be followed:
 - i) The Parents/carers will be informed immediately
 - ii) The Child Protection Review Team comprising the Vicar, the Church Wardens, the Child Protection Representative and the Ministry Leader concerned. This team shall collate the pertinent facts of the complaint.
 - iii) If the nature of the accusation is sexual in nature, the parish shall refrain from conducting any interviews or investigations. The case will be reported to the police.

- iv) If the alleged abuse is nonsexual in nature and involves a church staff member or a volunteer, and the parents are deemed capable of protecting the child, the Vicar shall encourage the parents, in the best interest of the child, to find an appropriate conclusion to the incident.
- v) Regardless of the parents' decision, the Vicar and the Wardens shall determine what disciplinary measures are appropriate for the person responsible.
- c) If the alleged abuse, regardless of its nature, involves a church staff member or a volunteer, that person shall be suspended from any further ministry involvement until he/she is exonerated. If the alleged abuse is sexual in nature, the exoneration shall take place upon the advice of the police after their investigation is completed.
- d) If the alleged child abuse took place at home, the Child Protection Review Team shall assess whether the safety of the child at home is at risk due to the incapacity of both parents to provide adequate protection. If the child is deemed to be at risk at home, the case shall be referred to the Child Protection Services on police advice and necessary follow-up.
- e) The Vicar shall report all substantive complaints and reports of all age child abuse to the Archdeacon in an initial incident report as soon as possible.
- f) A thorough review shall be carried out by the Child Protection Representative and the Ministry Leader under the supervision of the Vicar and Church Wardens to ascertain if there have been lapses in the child-safe practices of the parish.
- g) Remedial and preventive follow-up actions shall be carried out as required.
- h) The Vicar, or person designated by the Vicar, will be the spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. He/She will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church must refrain from speaking to the media. Civil authorities may issue a gag order to protect the identity of the underage victim. Anyone who breaches this order through publication in any means, including any social media platforms e.g. Facebook, will be committing an offence.
- i) At the end of the whole process, a final incident report shall be submitted by the Vicar to the Diocesan Bishop through the Archdeacon.

6) Policy for Recovery and Rehabilitation

- a) In the event that abuse had indeed taken place, the Vicar and his team shall provide Pastoral care and support with referral to professional counseling agencies as required, both to the victim, the perpetrator and their families.

7) Policy for Safe Practices

- a) Our goal is to protect the precious ones that Jesus welcomes with open arms (Mark 10:14) Children are vulnerable and need protection. As adults it is our task to ensure that children are safe by abiding by the following Child-Safe Practices.
- b) Accountability
 - i) When it comes to protecting children, we all ought to be accountable to one another for our actions. It is our individual and collective choices that will determine whether our church is a safe environment for children. We honor the Lord when we hold each other accountable for the purpose of protecting children made in his image. All adults, whether an employee or volunteer, and all student volunteers are subject to this Guideline of Practice and Behavior.

- c) Visibility
 - i) As much as possible, ministry with children and youth ought to occur in highly visible areas. Observability is a key factor in minimizing the risk of abuse. This means utilizing open spaces, classrooms with big windows. And avoiding isolated areas.
- d) Minimizing One Adult-One Child Situations
 - i) Most abuse and alleged abuse happens in one adult, one child situations. We strive to minimize all these situations because they are such high risk. As a guideline, it is required, as far as is possible, for two unrelated adults (over 18 years-old), leaders and/or helpers, to be in attendance when children are being supervised.
 - ii) This does not mean there cannot be any private conversation between an adult and a child. However, these conversations need to take place in an open and observable area.
- e) Appropriate and inappropriate Touch
 - i) By God's design, appropriate touch is an important way for us to understand that we are loved. Appropriate touch should be observable by other adults. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. Touch should be welcome by the child. Any resistance by the child should be immediately respected. Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children, but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:
 - (1) Touch shall be open rather than secretive
 - (2) Touch should show care for the child rather than meet a need in the adult.
 - (3) Touch should be age and developmentally appropriate.
 - (4) Touch should normally be initiated by the child rather than the adult.
 - (5) Touch should always communicate respect for the child.
 - (6) Touch should immediately cease if the child is in any way uncomfortable.
 - ii) Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. The following signs of affection are considered appropriate:
 - (1) Verbal praise
 - (2) Side hugs and shoulder to shoulder hugs
 - (3) High fives and fist bumps
 - (4) Pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate)
 - iii) For smaller children, the following are generally appropriate with other adults around and within the guidelines above:
 - (1) Touching hands, shoulder, and arms
 - (2) Hugs
 - (3) Holding them when others are present
 - iv) The following behaviors between employees or volunteers and children are inappropriate, or they may at least be perceived as inappropriate. Please refrain from:
 - (1) Touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs

- (2) Full body hugs
 - (3) Kissing
 - (4) Tickling
 - (5) Showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child
 - (6) Sleeping in bed with a child (this applies if leaders and children and young people are on a residential trip)
 - (7) Inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development
 - (8) Flirtatious or seductive looks
 - (9) Showing sexually suggestive content or playing sexually suggestive games
 - (10) Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child
 - (11) Any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature
- v) Adults shall monitor each other, youth, and older children around physical contact, helping each other follow these guidelines and pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.
- f) Appropriate and inappropriate Speech
- i) Words are a wonderful way to build one another up. Words can give encouragement and impart grace to the hearer (Ephesians 4:29). We must speak words that give life, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and speaking the truth in love. At the same time, we must avoid words that harm. We will all commit to refrain from inappropriate verbal interaction such as: shaming, belittling, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate a child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about a child, this at its worst is bullying or emotional abuse. Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling of sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.
 - ii) The tone of voice we use in dealing with Children is important and can impact on how they respond to us and feel about themselves. “Children often forget what adults may say to them, but they rarely forget how we make them feel”
- g) Discipline
- i) Discipline ought to be corrective and not punitive. We do not permit anyone other than a parent to administer corporal punishment to a child. Furthermore, discipline should never include yelling, shaming, or in any way belittling a child. If there is a serious incident that requires discipline, it is always wise to involve the parent.
- h) Technology
- i) Any employee or volunteer working with children or youth is responsible to ensure that any technology is used appropriately. We must monitor any use of phones, social media, the Internet, TV, and movies when children are in our care. Technology can quickly be turned from a proper use into something that is used for exploitation.
 - i) All pornography and any other sexually explicit or suggestive content is strictly prohibited. Any bullying, online or otherwise, will not be tolerated and should be reported to parents and appropriate staff. Adults should refrain from developing a relationship with a child or youth over electronic media (e.g., text messaging), since this not open and observable. Any sexual conversation between an adult and a child over electronic media is abusive and is strictly prohibited.

- j) It is preferable that all communication of any kind with children 16 years and below should be directed to their parent or guardian first (e.g., regarding outings/field trips, personal issues).

8) Rules Specific to Bathroom Use

- a) Young children may be accompanied to the toilet for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed) A same aged peer buddy system may also be used.
- b) If a child is potty training, an adult, preferably the parent or carer, should ensure the toilet is safe before allowing such a small child to enter alone. Encourage the child to go on their own. If the child needs assistance in the toilet the stall door is to be left partially open. When assisting, allow for accountability while respecting the privacy of the child as much as possible.

9) Rules Specific to Tiny Tots and pre-school children in Lighthouse

- a) Small children are extremely vulnerable. We must ensure there is good visibility and adequate staff and volunteers to supervise them. We encourage women to change diapers unless the man is the father of the child. Leaders and helpers should not be involved in the changing of diapers, please alert parents/ carers to undertake this task. Diapers should only be changed in designated areas where we can maintain the boundaries of privacy.

10) Medication

- a) We should not administer either prescription or non-prescription medication to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home or on church premises.
- b) Exceptions may be granted to parents of children with chronic conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) on a case-by-case basis.

11) Supervision

- a) Regular supervision helps reduce risk. Every activity is interruptible, and we are all accountable to one another. Program supervisors, Child Protection Representative(s) and others from Christ Church Bangkok leadership shall frequently and randomly stop in to observe the kindergarten, Li Hall, classrooms, and other areas where children and adults are together.

12) Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

- a) When anyone has reason to suspect or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of the church's ministry, he or she must report it to the Vicar immediately. If the incident involves the Vicar, the report should be made to the Child Protection Representative(s).

13) Drugs alcohol, smoking

- a) To be consistent with Christ Church policy the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol, on Church premises is not permitted nor is smoking (Please see Christ Church Rules

and Responsibilities). [AS: not sure what this refers to]

- b) It is particularly important that teachers and volunteers are not under the influence of drugs, alcohol or tobacco when dealing with children and young people within Christ Church Bangkok programs. If it becomes clear someone is not abiding by this guidance the matter will be referred to the Child Protection Representative(s) or Vicar to manage.