

## **Parish Child Protection Policy**

### **Christchurch Bangkok**

#### **Policy Statement**

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

- We will not tolerate any form of child abuse in our ministries for children.
- 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.
- We will play our part in the community effort to advocate for and protect children from abuse at home and other places of care.
- We will support the recovery of both victims and perpetrators of abuse.
- We will always act in the best interest of the child in all our decision-making.

#### **Definitions**

A child is defined as a young person up to the age of 18.

#### **Policy for Screening**

- The Parish office shall keep a register of all staff and volunteers working with children and their personal particulars.
- All Staff and Volunteers seeking to work with children must complete Form B: "Self-Declaration Form" and have two character references who can vouch for their suitability to care for and work with children and youth.
- Volunteers shall pass a continuous six month period of active attendance with interactions with ministry leadership before being approved to serve with children and youth. The character referees for volunteers should be members of the church.

## **Policy for Vigilance**

- All employees and volunteers shall be given a copy of this Child Protection Policy 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.
- 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.

## **Policy for Incident Management**

Staff or Volunteer who suspect abuse of a child while the child is attending a program in the Parish should report immediately to the Children/Youth Pastor or the Child Protection Representative, if the allegation involves either of the previous mentioned staff. They in turn will report the incident to the Parish’s Child Protection Representative.

If the alleged abuse took place in the Parish or during its sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

- The parent/guardian will be notified.
- 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.
- 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.
- If the alleged abuse is non –sexual 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 to the child, to find an appropriate conclusion to the incident.
- Regardless of the parents’ decision, the Vicar and the Wardens shall determine what disciplinary measures are appropriate for the person responsible.
- 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.

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.

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.

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. Remedial and preventive follow-up actions shall be carried out as required,

The Vicar or person designated by 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.

At the end of the whole process, a final incident report shall be submitted by the Vicar to the Diocesan Bishop through the Archdeacon.

## **Policy for Recovery and Rehabilitation**

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.

## **Policy for Safe Practices**

Our goal is to protect the precious little 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.

### **Accountability**

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.

### **Visibility**

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.

### **Minimizing One Adult-One Child Situations**

Most abuse happens in one adult-one child situations. We strive to minimize all of these situations because they are such high risk. As guideline, it is preferable for a minimum of two unrelated adult workers to be in attendance when children are being supervised.

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.

## **Appropriate and inappropriate Touch**

By God's design, appropriate touch is an important way for us to understand that we are loved. Appropriate touch is 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:

- Touch shall be open rather than secretive
- Touch should show care for the child rather than meet a need in the adult.
- Touch should be age-and developmentally appropriate.
- Touch should normally be initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child.
- Touch should immediately cease if the child is in any way uncomfortable.

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:

- Verbal praise
- Side hugs and shoulder to shoulder hugs
- High fives and fist bumps
- Pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate)

For smaller children, the following are generally appropriate with other adults around and within the guidelines above:

- Touching hands, shoulder, and arms
- Hugs
- Holding them when others are present

The following behaviors between employees or volunteers and children are inappropriate, or they may at least be perceived as inappropriate. Please refrain from:

- Touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs
- Full body hugs
- Kissing
- Tickling
- Showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child

- Sleeping in bed with a child
- Inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development
- Flirtatious or seductive looks
- Showing sexually suggestive content or playing sexually suggestive games
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child
- Any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature

Adults shall monitor each other, youth, and older children in the area of physical contact, helping each other follow these guidelines and pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

### **Appropriate and inappropriate Speech**

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. Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-color or sexual jokes, making sexual suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.

### **Discipline**

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.

### **Technology**

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.

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 **Primarily** over electronic media (text, IM, etc.), since this not open and observable. Any sexual conversation between an adult and a child over electronic media is abusive and is strictly prohibited.

It is preferable that all communication of any kind with children 12 years and below should be directed to their parent or guardian first. E.g. re outings, personal issues etc.

### **Rules Specific to Bathroom Use**

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.

If a child is potty training an adult 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.

### **Rules Specific to Tiny Tots and pre – school children in Lighthouse**

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. When changing diapers, inform another worker, and change the diaper quickly and with respect for the child. Diapers should only be changed in designated areas where we can maintain the boundaries of openness and observability.

### **Medication**

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.

Exceptions may be granted to parents of children with chronic conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) on a case-by-case basis.

### **Supervision**

Regular supervision helps reduce risk. Every activity is interruptible and we are all accountable to one another. Program supervisors shall frequently and randomly stop in to observe the nursery, classrooms, sand other areas where children and adults are together.

### **Reporting Child Sexual Abuse**

When anyone has reason to suspect or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of the church's ministry, he or she much repot it to vicar immediately. If the incident involves the vicar the report should be made to the Child Protection Representative.

### **Drugs alcohol, smoking**

To be consistent will Christ Church policy the use and abuse of drug and alcohol, on Church premises is not permitted. Nor is smoking (Please see Christ Church Rules and Responsibilities)

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 programs. If it becomes clear someone it's not abiding by this guidance the matter will be referred to the Child Protection Representative of Vicar to manage.

Sue Jones 12 August 2019