



Code of Conduct for Child Safety

What is a Code of Conduct?

All staff and volunteers who work with children are expected to interact with children in a mature, capable, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. This Code of Conduct describes how adults will interact with children and the boundaries they are expected to observe. By being vigilant in following the Code of Conduct, we will help protect children from abuse. The most effective way to reduce abuse of children is to be vigilant.

Accountability

All adult staff and volunteers are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain our high level of professionalism. As an adult working with children, you agree to interact with the children by observing these principles. It is our expectation that you understand your responsibility to observe the interaction between adults and children and when you see interaction that is questionable, inappropriate or crossing a child's boundaries, you will intervene on behalf of the child. Such intervention may include:

- Remaining present with the child in order to provide him/her a sense of security;
- Redirecting the child to join other children in a different area;
- Speaking to the adult and stating the boundary violation you have observed and reminding them of the responsibility to abide by this code of conduct;

In all cases violations of this Code of Conduct shall be reported to the director of children's ministry. Such a report shall be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality.

You also give permission to the other adults in our programs to take these intervening actions if you are seen crossing safe boundaries or violating this code of conduct.

Visibility

All work with children shall be planned and carried out in a way that minimizes risks as far as possible. This includes being visible to other adults when working

with children. Adults shall not be in a room alone with a child with the door closed, or in any area of our property that is secluded or hidden from view.

If a child with a disability is in need of assistance for personal hygiene or safety for the child or others there may be the need for the assigned “buddy” or caregiver to provide what the child needs. Such interactions should be as visible as possible. The adult should also inform a leader or another adult that they need to assist or care for the child and ask that someone remain nearby to provide as much accountability as possible.

Overcoming Isolation

To protect our children, staff and volunteers, at no time during a program may an adult be alone with a single child where others cannot observe the interaction. We expect all adults to reduce isolation by having a minimum of two children present, informing the child's parent of any meeting you wish to have with the child, and doing it during a time and/or in a location where your interaction with the child is visible to others. Isolation could be overcome, for example, by taking two or more children to the bathroom together rather than only one, dropping off siblings last in a carpool, or taking your own child or spouse along when providing rides. We expect an adequate number of adults to supervise youth events, especially overnight activities.

When ministry to a child involves one-on-one contact, the following procedures shall be followed, as applicable:

- Always be accountable to other adults regarding your interactions with youth or children by informing the ministry leader and or parents when, where and for how long your one-on-one interaction will be.
- The activity must be in a public place that is visible to others, never in a private or secluded location, such as a room with the door closed or in a home alone with the child or student.
- Counseling or other necessarily confidential meetings with children shall be done in an office with a window in the door and only when another adult is in close vicinity, aware that the meeting is occurring, and willing to stay in the vicinity until it is completed; and
- Parents and/or supervisors are to be notified beforehand of any activities with youth or children.

In an unexpected situation when you find yourself alone with a child, find someone to join you if at all possible, or notify any available adult.

Parent Involvement

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are at all times. Therefore, parents shall be informed of planned activities. Parents shall be encouraged to make unannounced visits to program activities as a way of reducing isolation and monitoring the interaction between adults and children.

Supervision

Supervision reduces risk. Program administrators and leaders shall periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together.

Technology

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. Volunteers and staff shall not engage in social networking, texting or any other means of private communication with children and youth without the permission of the parents or guardian. All electronic communication must not be erased or deleted and made available for review upon request by the ministry leader or Pastor.

Discipline

Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. It shall not include slapping, hitting, shaming, yelling at, or belittling a child.

Touch

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children, but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

- Touch shall be open rather than secretive.
- A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touch should always communicate respect for the child.

Adults should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including personal hygiene and bathroom breaks, dressing, bathing, etc.

Adults and other youth or children should not hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will, or otherwise assault children. Some children with special needs may exhibit more aggression than other children as part of their developmental progress. When such aggression is exhibited by a child with a disability the behavior is likely not intentional or willful. Care will be given in these situations to make sure all children are safe and cared for.

There may be the occasion when the “buddy” or caregiver of a child with a disability will need the structure and care that appropriate touch can provide. Such touch should be supportive, caring and with the intent of helping the child return to a safe, secure and calm state.

The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts: verbal praise, side hugs, shoulder to shoulder hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate). For smaller children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present.

The following behaviors between staff or volunteers and children are inappropriate and shall not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs; 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; any form of affection that is unwanted by the child; showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with any child; any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

Adult members shall monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted.

Showing Favoritism

Adults shall avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to a particular child or youth to the exclusion of others.

Adults shall not give gifts to any child or youth without requesting and receiving permission from a parent or legal guardian.

For children and adults with disabilities it is more natural that a child will form meaningful attachments to 1 or 2 individuals. The interaction or attention given by the adults a child has made a connection with could appear to be showing favoritism or singling out these children. When such attachments are created it is important to monitor those interactions to make sure proper boundaries are maintained.

Verbal Interaction

Words can also be used to support and encourage a child, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following: shaming, belittling, humiliating, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate the child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about the child.

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

Reporting of Abuse

When anyone has reason to suspect, receives a disclosure of, or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of Christ the King's work and ministry, he or she must make a report according to our Reporting Protocol. This includes abuse that happens while engaged in church activities or abuse that takes place outside the church, such as at school or a youth serving organization. The Reporting Protocol is attached.

Children with Disabilities:

Because our church is committed to ministering to children with disabilities, we have to take into consideration some of the challenges developmental difference creates for us. Therefore, we have to allow assigned "buddies" or caregivers the flexibility to address the need for care and safety when that time comes. For purposes of this Code of Conduct any such flexibility applies only to situations that involve a child who has a diagnosis of disability from a licensed professional. We understand that there will be occasions when caring for these children will require more individual interaction and attention. In some of those cases one person assisting the child may be the best way to help that child return to a safe, secure and calm state. There could be times when that interaction will be less visible for a brief period of time. When visibility may be restricted the adult must ensure a high level of accountability to others for the interaction. Those situations will be delineated throughout this document.

Approved by CTK Provisional Session 3/30/2021

Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to follow the Christ the King's Code of Conduct. I have read and agree to abide by the Christ the King's Reporting Protocol. In addition, it is my responsibility to read and comply with any future updates to any and all of our child protection documents.

I affirm that I have never engaged in any inappropriate activity with a child, including child abuse. I affirm that if I have been accused of and/or investigated for child abuse, I will disclose this to the ministry director or the supervising elder of the ministry and will provide documentation of the outcome of the accusation and investigation. I understand that this disclosure will be shared with the session as confidential information.

I agree not to engage in any such behaviors.

I further agree that as an individual who has engendered trust from a child, I will not tolerate physical, emotional or sexual child abuse or neglect.

I understand the importance of accountability to the other adults who work with children. Therefore, I give my permission for anyone who observes any inappropriate or questionable interaction between me and a child to speak to me regarding their observation. I will not take offense when approached by someone with concerns about my interaction, because I understand that the protection of each child must be my first priority.

I agree to immediately report to the appropriate leadership any reasonable suspicion of or disclosure of inappropriate behavior between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one has power over the other by virtue of age, development, or physical abilities, in accordance with our Reporting Protocol.

Kate Jarrard

10/12/2022

Name

Date

Position

Supervisor's Signature

Approved by CTK Provisional Session 3/30/2021
