

# **NEW VISION BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH**

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **PURPOSE**

Encouraging believers to get involved in church ministries is a spiritual service. Church leaders have been given the assignment to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” Scripture teaches that God has equipped every believer for ministry in or through the church. When everyone in the church is doing his or her part, the church normally grows spiritually and numerically (Ephesians 4:16). Therefore, a healthy church utilizes a large number of volunteers in a variety of ways both within and outside the church.

This policy is designed to assist church leaders in recruiting a core of volunteers and to provide, to the greatest extent possible, for the safety of children and youth who are served by our congregation.

The Gospel of Mark records that when people brought little children to Jesus, He took them in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them. It is our desire to bring children to Jesus, too.

### **REGISTRATION**

Parents need to complete a registration card annually for each pre-school child. Visitors should be encouraged to fill out a registration card for their child on the first visit to the class. These cards will be kept on file in the church office under the supervision of the appropriate staff person.

### **NURSERY**

1. Two workers should be in the nursery when it is open.
2. The adult nursery attendant is in charge of the nursery at all times. Helpers need to assist the adult.
3. Parents dropping off a child in the nursery should leave as soon as the child is settled into an activity or is in the care of the attendant. No child should be in the nursery without the attendant present during scheduled nursery times.
4. Only the nursery attendant and helper should be in the nursery. Parents who want to stay in the nursery should be encouraged to schedule volunteer time in the nursery (background screening of all helpers is required). Extra people in the nursery are distracting for the children and may allow children to leave the nursery area unattended.
5. Diaper changing should always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed as well as other children and workers in the room.
6. Parents should not enter the nursery until they are ready to pick up their child. Parents should be informed that they are always welcome to observe the nursery through the one-way mirror in the nursery door. In order to ensure the safety of children in the nursery, each child will wear a wristband that matches

one worn by the parent. Only the parent with the matching wristband should be allowed to take the child from the nursery.

## **BATHROOM POLICY**

**We strongly encourage parents to take their children to the bathroom prior to each class.**

Volunteers must follow these guidelines:

1. Avoid being alone with a child in a bathroom
2. Never go into a bathroom stall with a child and shut the door.
3. No minors (age 17 and under) shall help children in the bathroom unless the child is their own sibling.

### For Preschoolers, Kindergarteners, and Special Needs Children

A teacher should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. It should be the aim to always go as a group. Avoid taking a child to the bathroom alone. If, for some reason, this is not possible and just one child must go and needs assistance, the teacher must prop the bathroom door open.

### For Children in Grades 1-6

Remember, **never** be alone with a child in an unsupervised bathroom and **never** go into a bathroom stall with a child and shut the door.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS/OVERNIGHT POLICIES**

Off-campus activities **must** have prior approval by the parents. Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in off-campus activities. These forms are distributed through the church office. The supervisor of the activity will complete and submit to the church office a Special Events Checklist, including a list of the drivers.

When an activity involves transporting children, all drivers must be 19 years of age and have a valid driver's license, current automobile insurance, and proof of current liability coverage from their insurance company. The number of persons per vehicle should not exceed the number of seatbelts.

All trips and outings will require a minimum of two approved adult leaders. The leaders will be responsible for an assigned group of children during the duration of the event. The following staffing ratios must be followed:

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| Preschool    | 1 adult leader to 5 children |
| Grade School | 1 adult leader to 8 children |
| Youth        | 1 adult leader to 10 youth   |

The following guidelines must be followed for any overnight activities sponsored by New Vision Brethren in Christ Church:

1. All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the parents.

2. There will be no overnight activities for children younger than 6<sup>th</sup> grade unless parents are specifically included in the event.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS CHILDCARE**

When childcare is required for a church-sponsored event not defined as children's ministry (i.e. congregational council, missions conference) and church facilities are used, an appropriate adult must be present in an effort to apply child protections policies relevant to the situation.

### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All adult workers must sign a background check consent form. The following background checks are completed for all pastoral staff, church board members and those working with minors:

1. Social Security screen
2. National criminal file search
3. Sexual offender search
4. Motor vehicle record screen

### **WORKER BEHAVIOR (FOR BIRTH THROUGH 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)**

Workers should always conduct themselves in a good manner, being role models of obedience, respect, and honesty to young believers. Touch is an essential part of nurturing. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. Be aware of and sensitive to differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. The following guidelines are to be promoted for pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love:

1. Hugs: One-arm side hugs or hand-to-arm hugs are positive contact. Avoid initiating full contact, body-to-body hugs or kisses.
2. Lap Sitting: Sitting on laps is appropriate for children age 5 and younger. Discourage lap sitting with school age children. Rather, encourage them to sit next to you.
3. Casual Touch: Gentle contact to children's heads, shoulders, arms, and hands during activities is appropriate. Physical discipline, including but not limited to, striking a child with a hand or object on any part of the body should never be used by church workers on church children in their care.
4. Back Rubs: Anyone working with children and youth should refrain from giving back rubs.

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY (FOR BIRTH THROUGH 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)**

All interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, training, and correction. Physical punishment will not be used. Spanking is a parent's prerogative. Teachers are instructed to follow these basic guidelines:

1. Direct teacher intervention and verbal instruction.

2. Verbal correction and instruction given a second time along with the appropriate time out and parent notification.
3. The student will be removed from the classroom and returned to the parent's custody.

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY**

1. Driving: When a youth ministry worker is driving students home, they should never be alone with a student of the opposite sex unless there is written parental consent.
2. Meals: One-on-one meal appointments with the opposite sex should only be made if separate transportation is used. Eat in public places.
3. Dating: At no time shall anyone working with youth pursue a dating relationship with a student. Workers should always be sensitive to students with "crushes."
4. Open Door Policy: At no time should any youth ministry worker have a one-on-one meeting behind closed doors. For your protection, keep the door at least partially open.

### **EMERGENCIES**

Workers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medication, the parent must give it. No medication will be left in the classroom or with a worker or child.

First aid boxes will be kept on hand and all workers are to review the location and content yearly. Accident/incident reports need to be completed by the teacher or supervising worker and turned in to the church office.