

Child Protection Policy and Agreement

Calvary Presbyterian Church seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment for the children who participate in our ministries and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of our church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior, while also protecting our staff and volunteers. Calvary Presbyterian Church will not tolerate any form of child abuse. We will respond to allegations of abuse in a swift and compassionate manner.

Screening of Staff and Volunteers:

All persons who desire to work with the children participation in our ministries and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

- Written Application
 - All Children's Ministry staff and volunteers must complete and sign a written application. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will ask about previous experience with children, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal accusations or convictions or abusive behavior. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at Calvary Presbyterian Church.
- Criminal Background Check
 - A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers
 - Those who are paid or act as volunteer in our Children's Ministry as a teacher, aide, camp counselor, on-site supervisor, greeter, or other role
 - Before a background check is run, prospective volunteers will be asked to sign an authorizations form allowing Calvary Presbyterian Church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign an authorization form, that individual will be unable to work with children.
 - Applicant can request a copy of the background check to be sent to them via email.
 - Background checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Calvary Presbyterian Church.
- LiveScan Fingerprinting
 - If adults are working directly with children as a long-term (more than 4 work sessions) teacher or caregiver, they must have fingerprinting done through LiveScan.
 - Calvary Presbyterian Church will provide the Certifix LiveScan form to applicant who can choose the Certifix location most convenient to them.
- Disqualifying Offenses
 - Actions that would keep an individual from working with children would be determined by the Children's Ministry Director and Pastor on a case-by-case basis in light of all of the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will prevent someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal accusation or conviction or abusive behavior on the application form will also disqualify the person from volunteering in Children's Ministry

Safe Boundaries: When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate; otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Calvary childcare staff, directors, pastors and volunteers to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth.

Appropriate love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs. Preferred hugs are side-to-side hugs, one-arm hugs and a-frame hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-Fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth

- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for huddles with small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (for example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities.)

The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children and youth in ministry settings.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children over three years old on the lap
- Any sexualized touching; touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as classrooms where there is no one present but adult and child/youth, bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth touching knees or legs of children or youth
- Wrestling with children or youth
- Tickling children or youth
- Piggyback rides or swinging child by arms or legs
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth
- Any form of unwanted affection or physical contact
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, “You sure are developing,” or “You look really hot in those jeans”
- Snapping bras or similar touch of underwear
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth
- Private meals with individual children or youth
- Private email or written communications with children or youth
- Private scheduled meetings, outings or events just with child or youth

Other harmful and inappropriate behaviors and interactions can be detected and stopped. Furthermore, some behaviors and interactions are potentially harmful to children or youth in and of themselves.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Using, possessing, distributing or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while serving as sponsors, participating or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.
- Dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
- Having sexual contact with a child or youth.
- Youth or children left unsupervised or given an inappropriate amount of responsibility.
- Adults sharing inappropriate jokes, stories or personal confessions with children or youth. This includes conversations about their own sexual activities, dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the internet with children or youth.
- Dancing, games, skits, or jokes that make fun of a person’s gender, ethnicity, socio-economic reality or sexual orientation.
- Possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a preauthorized educational program.
- Using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.
- Giving gifts or sending special or private emails or other communications to only certain children/youth. Outside of an appropriate mentoring relationship.
- Holding children over the age of three on the lap.
- Wearing clothing with alcohol or drug advertising. Clothing that is not practical to wear while working with children (low-cut or midriff-bearing shirts).

- Transporting children or youth alone.
- Leaving one adult alone with one child or youth at any time. (Even when waiting for a parent who is running late to pick up the child or youth.)
- Asking a youth to transport another youth or child. (Youth transporting youth should only be done with written parent permission.)
- Adults meeting alone with a youth or child in a private location, including a church room, a home, hotel room or cabin.
- Housing one adult with one child or youth at a camp, youth gathering or other overnight event.
- Programs for infants and children under six years old should have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
- Sleeping in the same bed, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the tent, hotel room or other room. It is preferred that even immediate family members have their own rooms. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleeping with multiple children or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.
- Dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth unless unavoidable.
- Using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.
- Using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management. Participating in our allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

Adult Leader Responsibilities:

Be sure the children and youth for whom the leader is responsible are always well supervised during church activities. There should never be an adult alone with a child or youth. Whenever possible, at least two adults should be present in the room at any scheduled event or activity. When this is not possible, a 2:1 ratio should always be maintained with at least two children or youth with an adult. Furthermore, all doors should be open and persons should remain in full view of the public.

Report evidence of child abuse. If a director, staff leader, volunteer leader, or childcare team member is accused of child abuse, a report will be made immediately to local law enforcement and the child's parent will be notified by Calvary Children's/Youth Ministry Director or Pastor. During the ensuing investigation, our program will follow the advice of law enforcement and our attorney regarding suspension or reassignment of the accused staff member to tasks unrelated to the care of children. Tell the director and/or adults if a child has been involved in an accident on or off campus. Get help. Call 911 if emergency. Write up an injury report. Director will contact parent(s). Attend training sessions or forums offered by Calvary Presbyterian Church dealing with abuse prevention, safe church policies and procedures, and appropriate boundaries.

Teenage Workers or Volunteers:

There will be times when teenagers can work with children (paid or volunteer) during ministries and activities at Calvary.

These guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14 (exceptions for youth aged 12-13 or mature children aged 10-11 may be made by the Children's Ministry Director).
- Must be screened as specified.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children or take children to the bathroom.

Covenant Agreement: Please read through and sign to show that you have understood the policies in place.

While working as part of a Calvary Presbyterian Church ministry, I agree to provide a safe and supportive environment for all persons who come together in this place. I will do everything within my power to minimize the possibilities of any kind of personal abuse and ensure the safety of those in my care.

In all of my church relationships I will seek to:

- Treat all children, youth, and adults with respect and consideration
- Respect everyone's rights to decline being touched or called on
- Maintain an attitude of respect, patience, courtesy, appropriate language, and maturity as a positive role model for children and youth

In situations in which I relate with children and youth, I will seek to:

- Use positive techniques of guidance, such as redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism
- To have age-appropriate expectations and establish an environment that minimizes the need for discipline
- Refrain from any behavior that could be considered abusive

I understand that abiding by these promises and policy guidelines is important and necessary to my participation with children and youth as part of Calvary Presbyterian Church's programs. If I fail to abide by them, I realize that I may be reassigned or relieved from my church-related duties at the full discretion of church leadership.

Signature

Date signed

Name Printed

Parent/Guardian Signature (If volunteer is under 18 years of age)

Date signed