

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## GRACE FELLOWSHIP IN CHERRY VALLEY, CA CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (BIRTH TO AGE 18)

### CPP OBJECTIVE

The Child Protection Policy of Grace Fellowship covers all ministries involving children from birth to age 18. Its objective is to help all who serve in children's and youth ministries provide a safe and positive ministry environment.

The CPP provides basic guidelines and is not meant to replace wisdom and sound judgment. Not every situation is covered here.

### I. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided for clarity.

Children's Ministry	Any Grace Fellowship class or activity involving children from birth through 5th grade.
Youth Ministry	Any Grace Fellowship class or activity for students in 6th-12th grade.
CPP	Child Protection Policy
Early Childhood	A part of Children's Ministry that includes Infant through Preschool ages.
Elementary	A part of Children's Ministry that includes Kindergarten through fifth grade
Leader	Someone over the age of 18 who has been approved by Grace Fellowship staff or elders to teach or lead in children or youth ministry.
Assistant	Someone over the age of 18 who has been approved by Grace Fellowship staff or elders to assist leaders in children or youth ministry.
Youth Helper	A student between 6th-12th grade approved by Grace Fellowship staff or elders to assist in Children's Ministry.
Two Worker Rule	Children and Youth Ministry must have at least one approved Leader and one approved Assistant or Youth Helper of appropriate age for the group.
Gender Rule	Both male and female leaders should be present for any events that happen away from the church campus.
Minor	Any child under the age of 18 years. May also be referred to as "student," "child," "teen," or "youth."

### II. REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVING IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY

#### A. APPROVAL PROCESS AT GRACE FELLOWSHIP

1. You will receive a Volunteer Ministry Application, a copy of our Statement of Faith, and the Child Protection Policy.
2. Return the completed application in a sealed envelope to the church office.
3. Your application will be evaluated by a pastor and approved by the staff or elders after references are contacted.
4. A background check will be performed for all adult volunteers.
5. Once you are approved, you will be contacted by the appropriate ministry leader.
6. You will receive any relevant information related to your position to keep for your records
7. Prior to formal approval, a prospective Leader, Assistant, or Youth Helper may assist and observe in a class for two – four weeks under the direct supervision of an approved Leader provided that the approval process has begun during this time period.

**B. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS:**

1. Maturing follower of Jesus Christ
2. Regularly attend Grace Fellowship or have a child in a program at Grace Fellowship
  - a. NOTE: If you are not a regular attender but have a child in a church program, you can only be approved as an Assistant, not a Leader, and your approval is only valid for twelve months. You must still go through the normal approval process.
3. Complete the application and training process
4. Provide several positive references
5. Submit to a background check (not applicable for minors)
6. Agree with and support Grace Fellowship's Statement of Faith
7. Agree with and support Grace Fellowship's Child Protection Policy
8. Receive the recommendation of a pastor or elder at Grace Fellowship

**C. ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BIBLE TEACHERS:**

1. Demonstrate Biblical knowledge, and ability to communicate and apply Biblical truth
2. Understand basic classroom management skills
3. Engage in a pastoral interview about teaching

**III. BASIC GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

**A. CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES**

1. Classes and Activities are to be calendared and approved through the church office.
2. Children's Ministry must have at least one approved Leader and one approved Assistant or Youth Helper
3. Youth Ministry must have at least one approved Leader and one approved Assistant.
4. Additional supervision should be provided for larger activities.
5. Parents should receive regular written communication regarding Children and Youth Ministry. This communication may be made by way of email, flier, text, the church website, social media posts, etc..
6. Kids must be picked up by their parent/guardian, or another adult they have designated in writing. Older siblings in middle school or higher may pick up their younger siblings with parent permission.
7. Volunteers/staff may never take a preschool or elementary-age child to the restroom alone. They should be accompanied by another adult or child. Elementary Kids of the same gender may be sent to the restroom unaccompanied in groups of two, but Leaders should monitor them closely.
8. A Leader or Assistant may not date a student in the ministry they are leading.
9. Students may not bring any illegal items (knives, fireworks, alcohol, drugs, etc.) to any class or activity.

**B. SPECIAL EVENTS AND OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

1. A permission form that has been signed by a parent or guardian must be obtained from all children and youth for special events. These forms must indicate how the parent or guardian may be reached in case of emergency.
2. It is required that the Leader of an off-campus activity have a cell phone available and provide the parents with the cell phone number to use in case of emergency.

#### **C. DRIVERS**

1. Any driver for Children's or Youth Ministry activities must have prior approval from the church office. A current *Transportation Form* must be on file along with a copy of the DMV record, proof of current insurance and a valid driver's license.
2. Drivers are to be at least 21 years of age to provide transportation.
3. Drivers and vehicles are to carry their own insurance having minimum state liability coverage. The automobile owner's insurance is the primary insurance in force and the registered owner is to be willing to accept this liability.
4. Each passenger is to wear an individual seat belt.
5. No leader may drive alone with a minor without explicit permission from a parent or guardian.
6. For long trips, an itinerary must be provided to parents ahead of time and parents should be informed of any deviations.

#### **D. OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES**

1. If any children or youth are awake, a Leader should be awake to ensure safe behavior.
2. No mixed gender sleeping accommodations. Children and youth are to be supervised by Leaders of the same gender.
3. Sleeping attire should be appropriately modest.

#### **E. ENTERTAINMENT (TV, INTERNET, MOVIES, COMPUTER, & VIDEO GAMES)**

1. Kids in children's ministry may only view G or PG rated movies. Leaders should use discretion in their choice of films.
2. Youth may only view G, PG and PG-13 movies. Leaders should use discretion in their choice of films.
3. Leaders must use their discretion for all media use, and have the authority to limit the use of phones, computers, or other electronic devices at any church-sponsored activity.

#### **F. MEDICAL OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

1. If a child requires medication (either over-the-counter or prescription) during the time of the activity, please follow the written instructions provided by the parent or guardian.
2. Persons who have received an injury which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The person's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when they pick up the student.
3. Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. Contact 911 in the event of injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness, or other serious bodily injury. Do not move the injured person.
4. Notify the child's parents or the volunteer's family and the church office as soon as possible about serious injuries.
5. Keep yourself, the people around the scene, and the injured person as calm as possible. Speak calmly to offer assurance to all.
6. If in doubt in any situation, call the parents or family.
7. A written report is to be made to the church office in the case of serious injury. This report should include details of the injury, type of aid rendered, names of witnesses, date, time, and location of the incident, and any other pertinent details. This report should be submitted to church staff within 48 hours.

#### **G. PHYSICAL CONTACT**

1. Physical contact with children should be minimal and only in the presence of other adults. Appropriate touching should be limited to handshakes, high fives, brief hugs, or a brief touch on the shoulder.
2. No kissing, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom or private areas, or anything that makes a child feel uncomfortable. The only exception to this practice is when women are changing the diapers or clothing of infants, toddlers, or younger preschool children.
3. Any touching used to express power or control over another person is inappropriate, such as grabbing a person's arm or wrist, punching, slapping, or poking a finger into a person's chest to make a point.
4. Never use corporal punishment. Physical punishment is inappropriate in any church setting.

#### **H. ONE-ON-ONE MEETING OF A LEADER AND STUDENT**

1. It is acceptable for a Leader to meet with one of his/her group members of the same gender in a public setting. However, the following guidelines and discussion with the parent should occur before going on the one on one:
2. The parent or guardian is to approve the meeting.
3. The public location and nature of the meeting is to be disclosed.
4. The Leader is to have a working cell phone with them and provide their cell phone number to the child's parent or guardian.
5. The leader should have a phone number where they are able to reach the parent or guardian.
6. Parents, Guardians, and Leaders should agree on an appropriate time frame, agenda, and any limitations.
7. Any necessary cross-gender one-on-one meetings between a Leader and a minor should occur in the church office during regular hours, or on campus in a visible area during program hours. As an alternative the Leader may arrange to meet at the family's home with at least one parent present. No other off-campus cross gender one-on-one meetings should occur.

#### **I. BIBLE STUDIES AND GROUP MENTORING**

1. An approved youth leader may meet with students of the same gender for bible study or discipleship,
2. Parents must be informed ahead of time for each meeting.

### **IV. CHILD ABUSE INFORMATION**

#### **A. GRACE FELLOWSHIP'S STAND ON CHILD ABUSE**

1. Grace Fellowship believes that God's Word forbids the abuse and neglect of children. (Matthew 18:4-6) Child abuse usually falls into one or more of four general areas: physical abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and sexual abuse.
2. We will do everything we can to protect children and youth involved in our ministry.
3. Grace Fellowship will report any suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse.
4. Grace Fellowship will cooperate with the authorities in the investigation of child abuse.

#### **B. IN CASES OF SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CHILD ABUSE**

If you suspect that a child involved in any of the programs of Grace Fellowship has been abused or neglected, the following steps are to be followed:

1. Report the suspected abuse to any Pastor or Elder as soon as possible. Do not leave before reporting the suspected abuse.
2. Do not interview the child regarding suspected abuse. This will be conducted by a trained professional.
3. Do not discuss the suspected abuse with the other workers, parents, or anyone not directly involved in the incident. This is essential to protect our staff and children entrusted to us.

All information regarding the child should be kept confidential with the leadership and the proper authorities.

4. You will be asked to complete a *Suspected Child Abuse Report*. Confidentiality will be maintained where possible. This report is to be completed within twenty-four hours and submitted to the church office.
5. After the suspected child abuse case has been reported, proper steps will be taken to report the suspected abuse to the appropriate reporting agency.

Any allegation of child molestation occurring on the grounds of Grace Fellowship or at any church function will be immediately reported to the law enforcement department having jurisdiction. This will have no exception for any person or officer of the church. The elders will not conduct an independent investigation that could interfere with the investigation. The one who has had an allegation made against him or her, will be removed immediately from any church office or volunteer capacity pending the completion of the investigation.

### **C. SITUATION RESPONSE PLAN TO OUR COMMUNITY**

1. Victim and family - An Elder and/or Pastor will meet with the victim and family to ascertain how they can be supported.
2. The accused perpetrator - Any person who has been accused or is suspected of child abuse shall be removed from active service. An Elder and/or Pastor will meet with them to gather information, determine further action, and provide support.
3. Area workers (persons who may know a victim or accused perpetrator) - An Elder and/or Pastor is responsible to inform and support employees and/or volunteers in the case of abuse. Elders / Pastors are to:
  - a. Speak truthfully and with all possible candor and sensitivity
  - b. Protect the rights and feelings of victims and accused perpetrators
  - c. Encourage any questions to attempt to dispel false rumors
4. The whole of the Elders/ Pastors - The Pastor and/or Elder designated to the situation will report any abuse that may significantly impact the church or to the whole Elder Board and Pastors.
5. Church body - The Elders/Pastors will make statements as necessary to the church body.
6. Press - The Elders/Pastors will make statements as necessary. If for any reason the press would call, you are to say, "I'm not in a position to comment; please call the Elder or Pastor responsible to make statements, (to be designated)."