

Child Protection Policy

5. Chairman of the Elder board will be Harvest's spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be permanently removed from their position working with children or youth and legal action may ensue.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Underage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to underage workers:

- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Restroom Guidelines

Workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the

workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.

For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, emergency medical services will be contacted.

Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

Harvest Evangelical Free Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.



General Purpose Statement

Harvest Evangelical Free Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Harvest Evangelical Free Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all children attending our programs nursery through 6th grade. The term "worker" includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children. The term "Harvest" means Harvest Evangelical Free Church.

Selection of Workers

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

A. Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application form to be supplied by Harvest. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at Harvest. The individuals background check will be done on line and will be managed through a federally compliant, secure Christian background check service, Shepard's Watch.

B. Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position. Interviews will be conducted by children's ministry leaders or elders.

C. Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, references will be checked. The preferred references would be from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file with Shepherd's Watch..

D. Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- Staff members and leadership;
- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in structured one-on-one

with children; and

- Those having occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as, church sponsored athletic team coaches and vehicle drivers).

To complete a background check, we will send the applicant an online consent form which will allow them to submit their own personal information and e-sign a release form, in an effort to protect the individual's personal data during the process.

If an individual declines to go online and provide information for a background check, he/she will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Elder or Pastoral staff on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization will be maintained in confidence on file with Shepherd's Watch.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some children's classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation in plain view.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.
- In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Harvest or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:
 1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
 2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
 3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Harvest will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Harvest will fully cooperate with civil authorities in the investigation of the incident.
 4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.