

John 3:16 Mission Family and Youth Center KIDSAFE Policy



Abstain from all appearance of evil. 1Th 5:22

*Policy and Guidelines of John 3:16 Mission, Inc
To Ensure the Safety and Well-being of Our Youth and Children*

John 3:16 Mission desires to be a safe place for all youth and children who attend. This policy outlines preventive steps to be taken to promote the safety of children and those who work with them. John 3:16 Mission has adopted a prevention program called KIDSAFE to reduce the possibility of child abuse of any form occurring in this ministry. It employs both education and procedures to reasonably prevent the occurrence of abuse. Effective education will be implemented to safeguard children, youth, and workers. The guidelines and policies are part of the multi-faceted effort we utilize to protect our children. We continue to seek prudent policies, proven successful in other situations, to implement and improve our programs. The KIDSAFE policy is disseminated to workers and monitored by staff which work in these critical areas.

As a volunteer or staff member involved in the ministry of John 3:16 Mission Family and Youth Center I have read the attached polices, promise to fulfill all my duties to the best of my ability and follow all KIDSAFE policies. I realize that failure to follow these policies is serious and will result in the loss of my privilege to serve.

Worker Signature

Date

POLICY #1: ONGOING SUPERVISION OF THE CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

The Director of John 3:16 Mission Family and Youth Center will establish and supervise the child safety program. This program shall govern all ministry activities that involve custody of children and teens equal to or less than 18 years of age.

1.1 ANNUAL REVIEW OF SAFETY PROGRAM:

The Director of the Family and Youth Center will review compliance with safety policies and potential risks annually. The reports should include: A listing of any new programs or program changes and the additional risks these changes may incur. A brief summary of policy violations and the program leader's response to these violations should be noted. Any patterns of violations that suggest policy changes are needed should be identified. The Director will summarize the reports received from program leaders and submit an overall report annually for review to the Executive Director of John 3:16 Mission.

1.2 WAIVER and MODIFICATION OF POLICIES:

Safety policies may be waived occasionally for exceptional circumstances. The goal of John 3:16 Mission is to promote safety while maintaining practical flexibility in children's and youth ministry. Waiving of "KidSafe" policies will only be authorized by the Director of the Family and Youth Center. These policies may be modified or withdrawn by John 3:16 Mission at any time. These policies are not intended to create an implied or express contract with any person. They are not intended to create a legally enforceable or binding promise or representation.

1.3 ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THESE POLICIES:

All activities of John 3:16 Mission that require workers acting within the scope of their duties to have custody of persons equal to or less than 18 years of age shall follow these policies.

POLICY #2: OPERATING POLICIES FOR ALL CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

2.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

We believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well being of children is vital. This policy is intended to ensure that mission activities involving children are consistent with the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing vulnerable children. The primary purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of children and youth by providing clear instructions about the operation of children and youth ministries at John 3:16 Mission. The greatest priority of John 3:16 Mission's children's and youth programs is to help kids through the Gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this priority. Staff which oversee youth workers must keep this priority in mind.

A HIGHER STANDARD: As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every worker whether paid staff, volunteer adults or teens who serve at John 3:16 Mission must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. All workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

POLICY STANDARDS AND CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR: Workers in children's and youth ministry are expected to observe these policies and guidelines as well as other Christian standards of moral behavior.

2.2 CLASSIFICATION OF WORKERS ACCORDING TO THEIR DUTIES:

In order to screen workers appropriately to their responsibilities, John 3:16 Mission will categorize workers into two categories: **primary** and **secondary**. Please note that the terms primary and secondary do not refer to the ages of children served, but rather to relative levels of responsibility and risk.

PRIMARY: All volunteers, paid staff and employees in roles with greater responsibility or risk should be classified as primary workers and should meet the primary screening standards. Primary workers have greater interaction with and access to children, so extra care is taken in their screening process.

SECONDARY: Secondary workers are people who occasionally interact with minors and/or do so in less risky circumstances. For example, a volunteer who sees children only in a group setting, and with Mission staff present may be classified as a secondary worker. This category includes all teen workers who volunteer in Children's and Youth ministry.

2.3 SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY WORKERS:

Adequate Supervision of Youth Workers -- Staff and volunteers who supervise youth workers are charged with the diligent enforcement of these policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or loss of the privilege of volunteering in children's or youth ministry programs. Supervisors and all youth workers who suspect any unhealthy or abusive activities must discuss their suspicions promptly with the Children's Minister or Youth Minister and the Director.

WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS: Ideally at least two individuals, one which must be a primary worker, should be present in all interactions whether with one child or a group of children. **A secondary worker may not be alone with a child.** In some situations programs may be staffed by only one primary worker, preferably a staff member. In such cases another staff member or worker must be present and available in the building.

OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENT: All ministry activities will take place in rooms which can be viewed by random observation. Offices and activity rooms should have a window with an unobstructed view or the door will be left open during any interaction involving children and youth.

HOME VISITS: Visiting children and teens in their home environment can be a valuable relationship building tool. To avoid the appearance of inappropriate interactions, no one associated with John 3:16 Mission may visit in a child's or youth's home unaccompanied by another adult and one of these must be a primary worker. Home visits must be approved of in advance by the Director of the Family and Youth Center.

OFFSITE OUTINGS: Primary workers may occasionally take children or youth on trips or outings away from the building as part of their ministry duties. All such interactions must occur in a public place. Schedules and details of off site outings must be approved of in advance by the Director of the Family and Youth Center.

POLICY # 3: TOUCHING POLICY

The touching policy is implemented to safeguard our children while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children and youth. Hugging and other forms of appropriate physical affection between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in our ministry setting. Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or youth. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a four-year-old to sit in a worker's lap and give a kiss on the cheek, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and youth leader to behave this way.) Touching should be initiated by the child or youth. It should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need. Ideally, touching and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children's ministry or youth workers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misconstrued as such when two adult workers are present and the touching is open to observation. This is especially important when helping a young child change clothes or use the restroom. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should be above reproach. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child. Mission workers are responsible to protect children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others. Mission workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their ministry leader or a staff member.

Below are some touch boundaries to follow when interacting with children...

Appropriate touch is

- non demanding and gentle
- shoulders, back, head, hands, arms

- sitting child on your leg

Inappropriate touch

- kissing a child
- demanding or initiating hugs
- touching chest, genital region, upper legs, buttocks
- sitting child in the center of your lap
- corporal discipline

Behavior to avoid injuring a child

- never grab by any joint
- never spin a child by arms or legs
- never shake a child
- never toss a child
- never give “piggyback” rides

POLICY #4: DISCIPLINE POLICY

4.1 DISCIPLINE ROUTINES:

Each program supervisor will establish rules for behavior and a discipline routine for programs involving children and youth. Discipline measures will include a system of both positive and negative reinforcement. Volunteers and staff should follow and reinforce the discipline routine in the program where they are assisting. No punishment involving physical contact is allowed. All verbal warnings should be given firmly but respectfully. No verbal abuse, shouting or demeaning language may be used.

4.2 TIME OUT/LOSS OF PRIVILEGES:

If a child or youth does not obey the rules: He or she will get a verbal warning. “Time outs” may be used to reinforce discipline or they could forfeit recess/field trip. Students may be sent to “time out” in the office of the Director of the Family and Youth Center if they continue to fail to obey and their program supervisor has already attempted behavior modification through other methods.

4.3 DISMISSAL:

A child or youth who consistently disobeys the rules will be sent home and a parent meeting scheduled. If all measures fail to modify behavior and he/she is resistive to discipline, the individual will be not be allowed to participate in John 3:16 Mission activities.

POLICY #5: WORKER SELECTION AND SUPERVISION:

The following guidelines will be used as John 3:16 Mission reviews applicants for positions in children's or youth ministry:

5.1 MINIMUM AGE:

All primary workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but they may not take the place of adult workers.

5.2 INTERVIEWS:

All applicants for primary worker positions must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. Interviews will be conducted by the leader of the program in which applicant will work. KidSafe policies should be discussed during the interview.

5.3 APPLICATION FORMS:

Applicants must complete and sign a volunteer application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information.

5.4 SURVIVORS OF CHILD ABUSE:

Any applicant who is a survivor of childhood sexual or physical abuse needs love and acceptance. However, a person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as youth and children's ministry workers. Applicants who are survivors of abuse should

discuss this in confidence with the person who conducts the confidential interview. If an applicant is uncomfortable doing so, he/she may have the interview conducted by the Director of the Family and Youth Center. When evaluating candidates, the following factors will be considered if an applicant is a survivor of child abuse: whether the applicant has previously committed an act of child abuse or molestation (**anyone who has maltreated children may not serve in children's or youth ministry**); the extent of professional counseling the applicant has received; the opinion of references, especially professional counselors who have served the applicant; the opinion of leaders in other churches or youth organizations in which the applicant has been involved; how closely the Mission is able to supervise and monitor the position for which the applicant is applying.

5.5 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK:

Background checks are required for primary worker positions and are optional for secondary worker applicants at the option of the leader of the program in which they will work.

5.6 REFERENCES:

At least two references for each primary worker will be checked. The references will be done by phone, mail, or in person. Whenever possible, check three references and they should include: one person who has known the applicant well for an extended period of time, a former supervisor, and a member of the applicant's immediate family. Applicants for compensated positions should expect additional reference checks.

5.7 AUTO SAFETY:

A Department of Motor Vehicle driving record check will be conducted on all persons who will drive vehicles for conducting Mission business or transporting children on a regular basis.

5.8 FIRST AID TRAINING:

Mission employees who supervise young people must maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR. The Mission will pay expenses for this training. New employees must get this certification within 90 days of the start of their employment. Other workers are encouraged, but not required, to get training if they frequently accompany kids on offsite trips.

5.9 SIGNATURES ON POLICIES:

All applicants must agree by signature on their application that they understand the "KidSafe" policies and that they agree to abide by them.

5.10 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION:

All information received in the applicant selection process will be kept confidential. Selection information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to staff and others with a need to know.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Follow all KIDSAFE policies to insure children/youth in the program are in a safe environment. Key points to remember:
 - ☞ avoid being alone with a child/youth
 - ☞ secondary workers must have other adults present
 - ☞ follow recommended discipline routine
 - ☞ avoid inappropriate touch or language
- Follow policy guidelines to insure your personal safety. Key points to remember:
 - ☞ never give out personal information, (eg. phone numbers or address)
 - ☞ never give money or personal gifts directly to mission clients
 - ☞ stay with your program supervisors at all times, especially at off-site locations
 - ☞ use caution when entering and leaving Mission facilities, do not enter or leave unescorted at night
- Adhere to Christian standards of moral behavior avoiding even the appearance of inappropriate behavior.