



BERLIN CHURCH

Child Protection Policy

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I. Mission Statement

Our mission is to glorify God who is compassionate and just and to honor those who have been created by Him in His image. In order to fulfill this mission we have a two-fold purpose: to minimize risk of child abuse and to minimize risk of false allegations of abuse against workers and volunteers. These goals will be accomplished by adhering to the following protocol that works to prevent situations that allow, promote, or obscure potential emotional, verbal, physical or sexual abuse at Berlin Church. All of this is done in order to promote transparency, accountability, and joyful service throughout Berlin Church at large.

Additionally, knowing that the church is made up in part of survivors of abuse, we will also strive to create a safe and loving environment where said survivors know that the aforementioned abusive behavior will not be tolerated.

The Lord Jesus, the head of our body, is both our gentle Savior and our just King.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:9-10)

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:10-11)

II. Definitions and Terminology

Church: Berlin Church

Staff: Anyone who works for Berlin Church for salary or wages.

Berlin Church Child Protection Policy Committee (BCCPPC): meet on a semi-annual basis

Child Protection Policy: This document is subject to annual review, and may be amended at any time at the discretion of the Child Protection Policy Committee and Elders to address concerns that arise at other times.

Session: The Board of Elders which is composed of elected officers of the church who serve the church through leadership and teaching.

Child or Children: For the purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of 18 years or any individual under 21 with an identified developmental disability.

Worker: Any individual (teacher or helper) 18 years of age or older who works with children in any capacity.

Teacher: A worker who is directly involved in the teaching of children, is also a member of Berlin Church

Helper: A worker who serves in any capacity other than teaching. Includes nursery workers, hall/door monitors, and/or classroom aides.

Teen Worker: Any individual between 13 and 18 years of age who works with children in any capacity.

Abused Child: Any child who (1) is the victim of "sexual activity"; (2) is endangered; (3) exhibits evidence of any physical or mental injury or death, inflicted other than by accidental means; (4) suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare. (Ohio Revised Code 2151.031 (A-D)).

Child endangerment: Includes, but is not limited to: (1) torture or cruel abuse (2) corporal punishment or physical restraint in a cruel manner or for a prolonged period that creates a substantial risk of serious physical harm to the child; (3) entice or allow a child to participate in the production, presentation, dissemination, or advertisement of any material that the offender knows is sexually oriented matter, or is nudity-oriented matter (Ohio Revised Code 2919.22 (B) (2-3, 5)).

Neglected Child: Any child: (1) who is abandoned by the child's parents, guardian, or custodian; (2) who lacks adequate parental care...; (3) whose parents, guardian, or custodian neglects the child or refuses to provide proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical or surgical care or treatment...; (4) who because of the omission of the child's parents, guardian, or custodian, suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare (Ohio Revised Code 2151.03 (A) (1-6)).

Mandated Reporter: all professions listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 (A) (1) (b) as well as clerics and persons, other than volunteers, such as those “designated by any church...acting as a leader, official, or delegate on behalf of the church who is

acting in an official or professional capacity” are required to report reasonable suspicion of abuse to local authorities (Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 (A) (4) (a)).

This includes, but is not limited to, our paid staff and our sitting elders.

Reasonable Suspicion: the prerequisite for mandated reporting; that a reporter “knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect...that a child under eighteen years of age, or a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment, has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child”, (Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 (A) (1) (a)).

III. Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with children participating in our programs and activities will go through an application, screening, and training process before initiation of working.

All workers' lives should be characterized by:

- Loving children as Christ loves them.
- Desiring to disciple children in the Gospel
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives.

A. Application

Any person wanting to serve as a worker or helper with children in the church must fill out a form stating intent to work, as well as demographic information and permission to submit to background screening (below).

The Child Protection Policy Committee will answer questions any prospective workers and helpers may have.

B. Screening

All the following screening procedures must be completed/up-to-date prior to engaging in work with children in any capacity at the church. These requirements allow the Child Protection Committee to best evaluate the suitability for working with children. All final determinations will be made by churchSession.. In addition, should any new information regarding the screening process come to light, Session shall reserve the right to dismiss an existing worker.

Screening Process for Workers and Teen Workers

The screening process includes, but is not limited to:

- Review of application including:
 - screening questions
 - one personal reference, preferably a family member outside of your household
 - one professional or non-familial reference with knowledge of applicant's involvement with children
 - Preferably, references will include one non-family member and one member of the opposite sex.
- Enter name and information into Berlin Church criminal background check
 - Signed release required from applicant
 - Teen Workers will be exempt from background checks.
- Child Protection Committee interview
 - Mode (in person, phone call, interview form, etc) of interview is at the discretion of the committee
- Six-Month Rule: No applicant will be considered for any position involving contact with children until she/he has been involved with the church for a minimum of six months.
- Child Protection Committee approval
- Signed acceptance of Child Protection Policy

Disqualifying Offenses

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Child Protection Committee on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Session may also determine on a case-by-case basis to remove an individual from the children's ministry. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and/or any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

Any arrests or charges occurring after the approval of a volunteer must be immediately reported to the Child Protection Committee.

C. Training

All workers and teen workers must attend training on child protection policy and procedures before they are allowed to work with children. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing volunteers to update them on

procedures on an annual basis. All Elders and staff will be expected to receive training on child protection policy annually. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

Coverage

Training must include, but is not limited to information regarding the following topics:

- Prevention: Practical training on how to implement the policy
- Sexual Abuse Awareness: Spotting grooming behaviors; physical, emotional and behavioral indicators in children.
- Response: Supporting survivors; reporting internally and externally.
- Universal Precautions
- Restraint and Seclusion
- First Aid
- AED

Evidence

A signed Child Protection Policy Acceptance Statement (see APPENDIX) will be evidence of completion of training.

Responsibility of Implementation

The Child Protection Policy Committee is responsible for organizing annual training as well as individual training for new workers and teen workers.

IV. Child Protection During Supervision

A. Before Entering

For the safety of the children at Berlin Church, the following procedures will be followed without exception before entering the nursery or Sunday school classrooms.

Check-In Procedures

- In order to be admitted to a class, all children 6th grade and below must be checked in at the check-in desk. This includes:
 - Allergy information
 - Contact information
 - Exceptional needs
 - Medical alerts
- Before entering a classroom, all children must receive and wear the sticker indicating that the parents have completed the check-in

process. Parents will receive a matching sticker that will be used later to pick up children.

- Parents may register in Kid-Check other approved family members or friends (13 years of age or older) to pick up children in their stead prior to pick-up.
- All individuals approved to pick up children must bring stickers or keycards prior to check-out.
- Workers (in classes 6th grade and below) will check the app to ensure each child is checked-in to the appropriate class before children enter the room.
 - If a child arrives at the classroom and is not admitted for lack of check-in, they will be escorted by a Hall monitor to the welcome area to check in, and parents will be notified.

Restrooming

Parents and guardians of children who need assistance using the restroom in the preschool class and above are strongly encouraged to take their children to the restroom prior to the start of class.

B. During service

Visibility

CCTV will be installed in every room. Video will be kept for 60 days in order to review in the case of accusation or concern. In addition, classroom doors without windows will remain open at all times. Rooms with windowed or Dutch doors may be closed.

Rooms that are not in use during the service will be locked for the duration of the service as well as post-service activities.

Two Worker Rule

For all children's classes (6th and below) and nursery, at least two qualified workers must be present in each classroom at all times while children are also present.

Adult workers may be related, providing that there is an actively monitored CCTV system in place.

Workers, helpers, and teen helpers must never leave a child alone in a classroom.

Workers must not have one-on-one meetings with a child. When a meeting on the church premises is necessary, it must be done with at least one other adult present, and held with the knowledge and consent of the parents/guardians.

Exception: For classes fourth grade and above, one adult worker may be alone with a group of at least three or more children provided there is an actively monitored CCTV system in place. In cases where there are two or fewer children in the fourth through sixth grade class, the children will be escorted with the worker and hall monitor back to the service to be with parents.

Nursery Visitors

Parents and approved guardians of children checked into the nursery may enter the nursery room(s) to diaper, feed, comfort, etc. Other family members, off-duty workers, and church attendees must remain outside nursery rooms.

Restrooming

Nursery (0-3 years of age):

- Parents or guardians of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children prior to leaving children in the care of the workers and helpers.
- Workers are required to monitor the status of diapers throughout the time that children are in their care and change as needed.
- If parents or guardians choose to use cloth diapers, they will be called to change their child's diaper as needed for sanitary reasons.
- Both men and women are allowed to change dirty diapers.
- All diapering will take place in the presence of at least one other adult worker at the diaper changing station.
- Diaper changing stations will be placed in a discreet location away from the windows and CCTV.
- Secondary adults will screen children from the view of other children in care.

Preschool through Kindergarten Class:

- As previously stated, parents will be encouraged to take children to the restroom prior to the start of the service at the welcome desk.
- Bathroom trips are always in a group, never alone.
 - Workers will clear the restrooms to ensure that they are empty and prop open doors before allowing children to enter.
 - Workers will remain outside the restroom door while children are using the facilities.

- There must be at least two adults supervising restroom trips for any number of children.
 - Workers will never be alone with a child in the restroom with the door closed and will never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.
- If the child requires assistance for any toileting procedures, workers are not permitted to help, and will contact parents in a timely manner.
- Hall monitors will be present for all restroom trips to either be a second or third adult worker.
- If a child needs to use the restroom at a time other than a group trip, one adult worker in the presence of the hall monitor will follow the above procedures for restrooming. One adult worker must remain with the remaining children provided an actively monitored CCTV is in place.
- Hall monitors will stand watch in the hallway during bathroom trips.

First through Third Grade Class:

- As previously stated, parents will be encouraged to take children to the restroom prior to the start of the service at the welcome desk.
- CCTV will monitor the hallway with restrooms and hall monitors will stand watch in the hallway during bathroom trips.
- Should a child require to use the restroom, an adult worker will notify the hall monitor via walkie talkie who will then escort the child, clear the restroom, prop open the door, stand outside in the hallway until the child is finished, and then escort the child back to the classroom.
 - Children will wait and visit the bathroom one at a time.

Fourth through Sixth Grade Class:

- Children may use the restroom on their own, one at a time, at the discretion of the adult worker, and must return immediately to the classroom.
- Children must wait to use the restroom should another class be taking a group trip.

Discipline

It is the policy of the church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There must be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

In addition, it is the policy of the church not to engage in harsh verbal reprimands, name-calling, or any other language that is given in a severe tone of voice. Instead, workers are responsible for providing a loving and respectful environment by doing the following:

- Encouraging and praising positive behavior
- Redirecting negative behaviors
- Establishing an orderly environment that maintains a good routine, and mitigates behavior issues

Necessary correction should be discreet in order to preserve the dignity of the child.

If workers deem the removal of a child necessary, parents must be notified to come and take their child out of the classroom, and the child will be checked out of the system at that time. Workers are not to remove a child from the classroom.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Assault
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Repeated non-compliance
- Any activity that inhibits the safety or learning of other children

Acceptable redirections/corrections include:

- Shoulder touch
- Positive suggestions
- Removal from situation (i.e. sit by different children)
- Addressing actions, not personhood

Acceptable redirections/corrections must NOT include:

- Harsh tone of voice
- Name calling, i.e., “lazy,” “selfish,” “bad,” “nasty,” etc.
- Aggressive touch/grabbing
- Unnecessary restraint

Parent notification of unacceptable behavior:

- Minor issues should be handled within the classroom. If the behavior is persistent, however, workers should meet with parents to discuss the negative behaviors and potential solutions.
 - Workers will use supportive language that humbly seeks solutions to behaviors without placing unfair blame on parents or children.
 - Workers will not make harsh comments about the child.
- Any issues involving harm to self or other children that warrant an incident report, must be discussed with parents, and will be disclosed to the Child Protection Committee.

Administering Snacks and Food

Before giving snacks to children, workers must check all allergen information in the check-in system to ensure foods are safe for consumption for all children in the room. In addition, parents must be consulted prior to the initial dissemination of snacks. Allergens like peanuts must be avoided at all times in case of severe allergies.

Photo Release Permission

Photos are not to be taken of any child during class time without parental consent.

Appropriate Touch

When working with children, loving and appropriate touch is acceptable. Below is a list of encouraged touch:

- Comforting pat on the shoulder or back
- Allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean head on shoulder
- Side hugs (other hugging may be acceptable if initiated by child)
- High-fives, fist-bumps and hand shakes
- Holding a baby or toddler
- Lifting or gently restraining a child may be appropriate only when it is used to prevent a child from accident, injury, or harm to self/others.

C. Dismissal Procedures and After Class Guidelines

Dismissal

Children (3rd grade and below) will only be released to family or approved guardians 13 years of age or older. All approved guardians must be registered on the check-in system prior to the start of class each week. Guardians must present a matching sticker or keychain at the time of pick-up.

In rare cases, workers may positively identify parents at dismissal for child pick up and release the child into their care without an ID key card or sticker. This should be avoided in order to mitigate risk.

If a child is not claimed, the worker will notify the parent through the check-in system, and wait in the classroom until the child is claimed.

After Class

While workers clean up the classrooms, no non-related children will be allowed in the rooms.

All classrooms will be locked with the departure of the workers.

Playground and Outside Rules

We would ask that no child below first grade be alone outside without an adult or sibling 13 year of age or older to supervise.

Additionally we would ask that if children are permitted to play outside following the above rules, that a hall monitor is posted by the locked doors to allow for safe child reentry.

D. Exceptional events

Vacation Bible School

In order to simplify the process of recruiting volunteers for VBS, volunteers must simply submit to a background check prior to the start of VBS.

All aforementioned safety regulations (found under "Before Entering," "During Service," and "After Service") must be followed along with creating profiles for each volunteer and child in the check-in system.

V. Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

A. Dealing with Policy Violations

Berlin Church takes policy violations seriously. Any staff, worker, helper, volunteer, parent or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to report to the Child Protection Committee within 24 hours. Berlin Church expects all adults to practice bystander intervention when they see a policy violation.

It is allowable for staff members, workers, helpers, and volunteers to self-report when confronted with a policy violation. These workers must self-report within 24 hours of a personal policy violation. If a worker self-reports, the Child Protection Committee may follow up with witnesses (reported or suspected) on a case-by-case basis. If a witness to a violation does not hear from a Committee member within 24 hours, they are expected to make a report on the violation.

If the policy violation includes abuse or suspected abuse, workers should immediately report to the Child Protection Committee.

Any worker or helper suspected of abuse or neglect will be immediately removed from the class, and may be removed from attendance at the discretion of the Elders until a formal, outside investigation has been completed.

Berlin Church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse.

Church leaders will respond according to the following:

FIRST ASK

?

Does the violation fit the legal definition of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse? Does the violation raise suspicion of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse?

YES

Document the violation and report the abuse to an elder who will then report to the legal authorities.

NO

Ask,
Is the violation minor?
Has it occurred only once?
Has the individual been receptive to redirection and compliant thereafter?

Move on.

Escalate the response: Follow up with the person violating the Policy for further education.

From The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide

FOLLOWING UP



Has your meeting given you cause for increased concern?
Has the individual continued to violate the policy?
Is there a suspicion of child abuse?
Is there an allegation of child abuse?



YES
Report
(in case of abuse disclosure or suspicion) and/or remove the worker from childcare positions and potentially remove from church premises.

NO
Document, follow up with the case periodically.

From The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide

Elder Reporting Guidelines

As mandatory reporters all Elders must do the following:

In cases of immediate danger, contact the police at 911.

In cases of suspected abuse or neglect contact Children's Services:

- Delaware County: 740-833-2340
- Franklin County: 614-229-7000

Be prepared to provide demographic and personal data on the suspected individual and child.

Church Member Duties

Anyone in the church who suspects, witnesses, or has any reason to suspect abuse of a child at Berlin Church must contact a member of the Child Protection Committee immediately, or as soon as possible.

What to look out for:

- Flirtatious behavior,
- Massages or other intimate acts,
- Repeated unwanted touch,
- Tickling,
- Playing with hair,
- Corporal punishment,
- Showing or describing any pornographic material to children,
- Talking about inappropriate/intimate topics with or in front of children,
- Sexually or physically abusive touch, or
- Rubbing or touching thighs, stomach, buttocks, or chest.

Formal Documentation

An incident report shall be filled out by the reporting person(s) and the reporting Elder and filed for review by the Elders and Child Protection Committee.

Interviewing Victims/Suspected Victims of Abuse or Neglect

It is imperative that Berlin Church does not heap harm on victims. In that light we will respond in the following ways:

- Speak in a gentle, sensitive manner to determine how an injury or abuse occurred
- Avoid asking too much detail, which may be painful for the child
- Ask open-ended questions and do not suggest answers
- Assure the child that they are safe and trusted
- Do not ask the child to undress to show bruises or injuries that are not visible
- Unless extenuating circumstances preclude their involvement, include parent(s) in the child interview process.
- Interview with the child and parent(s) should take place as soon as possible
- Include all information in the Incident Report Form

Who Should Be Notified

Notification will be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to abuse or neglect.

- Elder supervising Children's Church or any Elder
- Child Protection Committee
- Parent(s) when applicable
- Police or Child Protective Services
- Insurance Agent

Adult Reports of Abuse from Abuse Occurring in Childhood Related to Berlin Church

Berlin Church will pursue the truth in any allegations. If the accused is no longer part of the church, Elders will consult legal authorities to determine the need for reporting to Police. Regardless of statute of limitation laws, Berlin Church will report the incident and proceed with care and diligence, offering access to a trained mental health professional outside the church.

Response to Child Pornography

If anyone is suspected of or admits to viewing, producing, or distributing child pornography, they will be immediately removed from all children's ministry related activities or programs.

Allegations and confessions will be reported to:

1. The authorities through mandated and/or permissive reporting to Ohio's Children's services department.
2. The Elders
3. The Child Protection Committee

B. Sexual Offenders in the Church

Knowing an Alleged or Convicted Offender Wants to Attend in Advance

Session will determine whether or not to admit him or her to church services or activities. Admission will be based upon factors such as prior convictions and willingness to follow the guidelines in this Policy. An Elder will contact him or her to inform him or her that he or she will be supervised at all times when on church property.

Discovery or Delayed Admission of Allegations or Convictions

He or she will be removed from any worker, helper, or volunteer positions immediately and may be removed from attendance as well at the discretion of the Session.

When a Sexual Offender Applies for a Worker Position

He or she will be denied by Berlin Church.

VI. Implementation of Policy

A. Dissemination

This Policy will be made widely available to the Berlin Church community in order to create a safe environment for all children. Specifically, current policies will be available:

- On the church website

- In the church office
- At the check in desk
- In all childcare rooms
- Inside new member packets
- In a link emailed initially and annually thereafter to church congregants

In the event that the Child Protection Committee makes amendments, elders will provide information from the pulpit.

B. Oversight

Berlin Church will form and maintain the Berlin Church Child Protection Policy Committee (BCCPPC) that is charged with reviewing and amending this Policy. They will meet on a semi-annual basis. In addition, they are responsible for conducting training on this Policy as well as overseeing the dissemination of this Policy to the church.

Appointment and Terms

Session will appoint no fewer than two members of the church to serve on the Child Protection Committee as well as one Elder.

Members of the committee are free to leave the post at any time in which case the Session will appoint a new member.

C. Review and Approval

Initial review and approval is the responsibility of the Session of Berlin Church. In addition, all future amendments must be approved by the Session before the revised Policy is implemented.

Session may make changes to this document at any time.

VII. Healthy Child Policy

A. Attending Class While Sick

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Berlin Church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up.

B. Accidental Injury

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, workers must follow these guidelines::

- 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, an ambulance will be called.
 - Once the child has received appropriate medical attention and parents have been notified, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional or caused by another person/child.

C. Pandemic Policy

In case of a national or global pandemic, childcare and children's church may be suspended for the health of the children and workers. During a pandemic, sanitization, personal protective equipment, and social distancing will be observed if childcare and children's church are active. Room capacity will be monitored to ensure proper social distancing during class times.

The church reserves the right to check temperatures of adults and children before entry to classrooms. We ask that any children or workers exhibiting symptoms related to dangerous illnesses not attend.

VIII. Emergencies

In cases of emergencies such as fires or active shooters workers may temporarily suspend any policy which undermines the immediate safety of the children under their care.

A. Fire/Tornado

Follow posted evacuation procedures. Bring a class list (on kid-check system) to headcount before and after exiting the building. If a worker does not have a device with 3G (or then current equivalent cellular

access) accessible outside the building, Hall monitors and Check-in volunteers will assist with accessing class lists.

Workers will close all doors and turn off lights after the room has been evacuated.

B. Active Shooter

Follow all guidelines for proceeding in the case of an active shooter. Workers will be kept apprised of all policies regarding active shooters by the Elders.