

GRACE CHURCH OF ORANGE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (BIRTH TO AGE 18)

CPP OBJECTIVE

The Child Protection Policy (CPP) of Grace Church 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.

Activity	Anything involving children or youth that is sponsored, supervised, initiated, endorsed, promoted, or funded by Grace Church that does not require parent involvement and is over and above Sunday morning ministries.
Children's Assistant	Anyone 9 th grade and up approved by Grace Church elders to assist leaders in children's classes and activities.
Children's Ministry	Grace Church class and/or activity involving children from birth through sixth grade.
Class	Anything involving children or youth that is part of the regular Grace Church Sunday morning ministries.
CPP	Child Protection Policy
Early Childhood	A part of Children's Ministry that includes Infant through Preschool ages.
Elementary Kids	A part of Children's Ministry that includes grades K through six.
Gender Rule	Both male and female leaders should be present when an activity involves both genders, but is not necessary for a class.
Leader	Adult approved by Grace Church elders to teach and/or lead in children's and/or youth classes or activities.
Minor	Any child under the age of 18 years. May also be referred to as "student," "child," "teen," or "youth."
Student Helper	A student between 5th-8th grade approved by Grace Church staff to assist in children's classes and activities. (A student helper DOES NOT fulfill the two worker rule except in Early Childhood.)
Two Worker Rule	Children's and Youth Ministry classes and activities must have at least one approved Leader and one approved Assistant, as appropriate for the age of the group.
Youth Assistant	Adult (over age 18 and no longer in high school) approved by Grace Church elders to assist leaders in youth classes and activities.

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

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVING IN MINISTRY AT GRACE CHURCH

All individuals desiring to serve in volunteer ministry at Grace Church are required to meet certain character requirements as well as complete the approval process (explained below). The basic qualifications of both Leaders and Assistants include but are not limited to:

1. The person is a maturing follower of Jesus Christ.

2. The person demonstrates knowledge of and an ability to communicate and apply Biblical truth.
3. The person has been actively attending Grace Church for a minimum of six months.
4. NOTE: Parents who do not regularly attend GCO may help in the Awana ministry if they complete the approval process as well as provide a positive reference from the leadership of a local Bible-based church.

B. APPROVAL PROCESS AT GRACE CHURCH

1. A person expresses interest in volunteering or is contacted by a Leader to consider it.
2. The prospective volunteer is given a *Volunteer Ministry Application*.
3. The completed application is returned to the church office.
4. A Pastor reviews the application and contacts the prospective volunteer to conduct an interview.
5. References are contacted.
6. The name of the prospective volunteer is submitted to the Elder Board for review and approval.
7. Once the Elders approve the application, a background check is conducted.
8. Once everything is completed, a Pastor or Leader contacts the volunteer in order to welcome him into ministry at Grace Church and connect him to the appropriate ministry leader he will be serving under.
9. Prior to formal approval by the Elders, a prospective Leader or Assistant 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.

C. A LEADER IS TO BE CAPABLE OF:

1. teaching God's Word understandably and accurately
2. understanding the purpose and vision of an ongoing class or activity
3. facilitating an ongoing class or activity
4. mentoring an age and/or gender specific group
5. supporting and submitting to the church leadership

D. AN ASSISTANT IS TO BE CAPABLE OF:

1. supporting and assisting the Leader
2. understanding the purpose and vision of an ongoing class or activity
3. assisting in an ongoing class or activity with an age and/or gender specific group
4. supporting and submitting to the church leadership

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. Early Childhood classes and activities must have at least one Leader and one Student Helper present.
3. Elementary Kids and Youth Ministry classes and activities must have at least one Leader and one appropriately approved Assistant.
4. Additional supervision should be provided for larger activities.
5. Both male and female leaders should be present when an activity involves both genders.
6. Parents should receive written details of all classes and activities. This communication may be made by way of e-mail, flier, church bulletin, or postings to the church website.
7. Early Childhood is to be picked up in their classroom by their parents/guardians or another adult they have designated.
8. Elementary Kids K-3rd are to be picked up in the designated area by their parents/guardians or immediate family members Jr High age and up. Elementary Kids 4-6th are released after the class or activity ends.
9. Volunteers/staff may **never** take a preschool or elementary 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.
10. A Leader may not date anyone involved in the ministry they are leading.
11. 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 parent/guardian signed permission slip should be obtained from all students for special events. These forms are to indicate where the parent/guardian may be reached in case of emergency.
2. It is recommended 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 *Annual Event 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 seatbelt.
5. Unless written permission is received from a parent or guardian, a driver should avoid being alone in a car with one child.

D. OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES

1. On sleepovers - As long as any students 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. Elementary Kids may only view G rated movies and Leaders should use discretion in their choice of films.
2. Youth may only view G, PG and PG-13 movies and Leaders should use discretion in their choice of films.
3. Internet access and use should be supervised.
4. Television and movie viewing should be supervised.
5. Computer and video games should be carefully monitored and supervised.

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(s) or guardian(s).
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 (714-633-8867) 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 the Church Administrator 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 kisses, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom or private areas, or anything that makes the child feel uncomfortable. The only exception to this practice is when women are changing the diapers and/or clothing of 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

It is acceptable for a Leader to meet with one of his/her group members of the same gender. However, the following guidelines and discussion with the parent should occur before going on the one on one:

1. Parent(s), Guardian(s), or the Custodial Parent are to approve the meeting.
2. The public location and nature of the meeting is to be disclosed.
3. The Leader is to have a working cell phone with them and provide their cell phone number to the child's parent or guardian.
4. The leader should have a phone number where they are able to reach the parent(s) or guardian(s).
5. Parent(s), Guardian(s), and Leaders should agree on an appropriate time frame, agenda, and any limitations.

6. Any necessary cross gender one on one meetings should occur in the church office during regular hours, or on campus in a visible area during program hours, with other adults nearby in either situation. 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.

IV. CHILD ABUSE INFORMATION

A. GRACE CHURCH OF ORANGE STAND ON CHILD ABUSE

1. Grace Church 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 Church will report any suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse.
4. Grace Church 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 Church has been abused or neglected, the following steps are to be followed:

1. Report the suspected abuse to any Pastor or Elder.
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 Church of Orange 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:
 1. speak truthfully and with all possible candor and sensitivity
 2. protect the rights and feelings of victims and accused perpetrators
 3. 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)."