

**GRACE CHURCH OF ORANGE
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2025-2026
(BIRTH TO AGE 18)**

CPP OBJECTIVE

The Child Protection Policy (CPP) of Grace Church covers all ministries involving minors. Its objective is to help all who serve with children to 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 that is not Sunday School classes that is sponsored, initiated, promoted, or funded by Grace Church of Orange.

Adult Volunteer: Any person 18 years of age or older who has been approved by filling out the adult volunteer application with a background check.

Children's Assistant: Anyone 9th grade and up approved to assist leaders in children's classes and activities.

Class: An organized time of providing instruction for 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 Children: A part of Children's Ministry that includes grades K through six.

Leader/Teacher: An adult approved by Grace Church elders to teach and/or lead in children's or youth classes or activities and is a member of Grace Church.

Minor: Any person 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 to assist in children's classes and activities. (A student helper only fulfills the 2 worker rule in early childhood classes.)

Young Adult Volunteer: An approved volunteer who is between 9th grade and 17 years old fills out the student helper/young adult application.

Two Worker Rule: Children's and Youth Ministry classes and activities must have at least two workers in the class at all times, one of which must be an approved Adult Lead to supervise, instruct, and help as appropriate for the age of the group along with an approved assistant.

II. SERVING IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY

A. REQUIREMENTS

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, attending worship services regularly.
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. The person must agree with and support the Statement of Faith and Child Protection Policy.
5. To serve in Jr. High, a leader must no longer be in High School. To serve in High School, a leader must be four years out of High School.
6. NOTE: Parents of children who attend Adventure Club but do not regularly attend GCO may help or assist in the Adventure Club ministry if they complete the approval process as well as provide a positive reference from the leadership of their local Bible-based church.

B. GENERAL 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 directed to the online *Volunteer Ministry Application*.
3. The online application is submitted.
4. The application is evaluated by a pastor.
5. References are contacted and a background check is submitted for adults. No person under the age of 18 will undergo a background check. Once a youth volunteer reaches the age of 18, they must fill out an Adult Volunteer application and then undergo a background check.
6. Once the volunteer is approved, a Pastor or ministry leader will contact the volunteer to welcome him/her into the ministry at Grace Church and connect him/her to the appropriate ministry leader he/she will be serving under.
7. Prior to formal approval, a prospective Leader or Assistant may assist and observe in a class up to four weeks under the direct supervision of an approved Leader provided that the approval process has begun during this time period.

C. ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

- a. Is a member of Grace Church.
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to apply and communicate Biblical truth.
- c. Understand basic classroom management skills.
- d. Engage in a pastoral interview about teaching.

D. A LEADER IS TO BE CAPABLE OF:

1. Maintaining order and structure in a classroom or group setting. A volunteer can be a leader but not a teacher.
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

E. 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. Early Childhood classes and activities must have at least one Leader and one Student Helper present. (two worker rule)
2. Children's and Youth Ministry classes and activities must have at least one Leader and Assistant present at all times.
3. Additional supervision should be provided for larger activities.
4. Both male and female leaders must be present when an activity involves both genders.
5. 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.
6. Parents must check in children (birth-6th grade) at the check-in stations before dropping them off to class. They will need to present the ticket with matching security code when they pick up their children. A picture of the ticket is also acceptable. If they do not have the ticket, their phone number can be used or a pastor or ministry director must be responsible for releasing them to their parent or guardian.
7. Early Childhood is to be picked up in their classroom by their parents/guardians or another adult they have designated.
8. Volunteers/staff may **never** take a preschool or elementary child into 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.
9. A Leader may not date anyone involved in the ministry they are leading.
10. Students may not bring any illegal items (knives, fireworks, alcohol, drugs, etc.) to any class or activity.

B. RATIOS FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CLASSES

1. Adult/Child ratios in classrooms should not exceed the California Title 22 Guidelines for Health and Safety which are:
 - i. Infants- 1:2 ratio
 - ii. Walkers to 2 years - 1:4 ratio
 - iii. 3-5 years - 1:12 ratio
 - iv. 6-14 years - 1:15 ratio
2. If the adult/child ratio ~~ever~~ exceeds the Title 22 guidelines, or ~~if a room~~ exceeds its maximum capacity, a director or pastor should be contacted regarding further action.

C. 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 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.

D. DRIVERS

1. Any driver for Children's or Youth Ministry activities must have a current *Annual Event Transportation Form*, a copy of the DMV record, proof of current insurance, and a valid driver's license on file with the office.
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. For long trips involving a lot of driving, an itinerary must be provided to parents ahead of time and parents should be informed of any deviations

6. All drivers must value safety above fun and speed. Drivers should be prepared to pay attention to the road rather than the people in their car. No laws should be broken.
7. No leader may drive alone with a minor who is not a member of their family

E. 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.

F. ENTERTAINMENT (TV, INTERNET, MOVIES, COMPUTER, & VIDEO GAMES)

1. Elementary Kids 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 and Leaders should use discretion in their choice of films.
3. Television and movie viewing should be supervised.
4. Computer and video games should be carefully monitored and supervised.

G. 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 as soon as is practical.
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 unless they are in a life-threatening situation.
4. Notify the child's parents or guardian 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 guardian
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 office within 24 hours.

H. 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.

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 without exception. The Elders will not conduct an independent investigation that could interfere with the investigation. The one against whom an allegation is made 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)."