

**Keeping
Immanuel Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance
a
SAFE PLACE**

**Volunteer Screening Process
and
Abuse Prevention Guidelines**

Immanuel Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance

**800 S. Market Street
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055**

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INTRODUCTION

Over a thousand years before Christ, Moses preached a sermon on sexual integrity prior to leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 22:22-29). Hippocrates, the 5th century BC father of modern medicine, spoke of the appropriate ethical and moral boundaries to be observed by physicians. Boaz modeled moral integrity in his treatment of Ruth (Book of Ruth). The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy regarding the interaction between men and women and between younger and older persons (1 Timothy 5:1-2). It is entirely appropriate for us as a church to identify processes and procedures that will help us provide a ministry environment of ethical, moral and spiritual security.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THESE GUIDELINES

1Thessalonians 5:22

Avoid every kind of evil.

Ephesians 5:3

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality . . . because these are improper for God's holy people.

Matthew 18:6

But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Matthew 18:15-17

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Galatians 6:1-2

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Matthew 19:14

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

James 3:1

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

**SAFE PLACE POLICY
OF
IMMANUEL CHURCH
OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE**

**hereinafter known as
Immanuel Church**

**VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND
SCREENING PROCESS**

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

The mobilization of volunteers for ministry is essential to a healthy, growing church. Scripture teaches that every believer has been equipped by God for ministry in or through the church. When everyone in the church is doing his or her part, the church normally grows spiritually and numerically (Ephesians 4:16). Therefore, a healthy church utilizes a large number of volunteers in a variety of ways both within and outside the church. Encouraging believers to get involved in church ministries is a spiritual service. Church leaders have been given the assignment “to stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). Volunteers will be recruited by the nominating committee, the pastoral staff or volunteers helping to administer a particular program.

APPLICATION AND SCREENING PROCESS

VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL FORM

The volunteer personnel form must be completed for all positions deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders involving ministry to children, youth and disabled individuals. The form requests personal, spiritual and health-related information. Forms shall be kept at least one year after the conclusion of the volunteer’s participation in Immanuel Church. (Appendices A and B)

MEMBERSHIP

A volunteer worker must be a member of Immanuel Church in good standing or an adherent in harmony with the doctrines and principles of the church as stated in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Statement of Faith and the membership requirements stated in the Constitution of the C&MA Article III, and shall be a regular attendee for at least six months before being appointed to work with children, youth and disabled individuals unless approved by the Disciplemaking Ministries Committee.

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

The volunteer personnel form includes a statement that grants permission to pursue an Internet Background Check. Any records secured shall be marked confidential and placed in the volunteer’s file. In addition, a volunteer worker who shall be working with children, youth or disabled individuals shall complete an Internet Background Check (Appendix C), receive training in Immanuel Church’s Safe Place Policy and sign a document (Appendix A) stating they understand and will abide by the church’s policy. Records shall be kept at least one year after the conclusion of the volunteer’s participation in Immanuel Church.

Any person who has been convicted of or pled guilty to child abuse or has a criminal conviction noting child endangerment will not be permitted to work with children, youth and/or disabled individuals in any capacity under any circumstances.

We will not utilize, as a worker with children, youth or disabled individuals any person who is

known to be a previous child abuse or sexual abuse offender, and we reserve the right to not utilize anyone if there have been allegations of abuse or sexual abuse.

INTERVIEW

A personal interview may be conducted by the Pastor or other designated interviewer.

FINAL APPROVAL

All names of potential volunteers will be presented by the Disciplemaking Ministries Committee for final approval to the Governing Board prior to their appointment. If the Disciplemaking Ministries Committee has reason to believe that a person would not be suitable for a volunteer position, final approval or rejection of appointment will be made after further investigation. Prior to final approval, the applicant shall have completed the screening process.

CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers currently serving will be allowed 6 months from the implementation date of this policy to comply with the new requirements.

**GUIDELINES FOR WORKER BEHAVIOR
AND STAFFING ISSUES**

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES SHALL APPLY TO ALL WORKERS INVOLVED IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS

CODE OF CONDUCT

We at Immanuel Church are concerned for the safety of the individuals we serve. At the same time we are concerned about the safety and reputation of the workers who volunteer to make this ministry possible. Immanuel Church has developed this Code of Conduct in an attempt to prevent abuse.

Workers are expected to be clean, neat and appropriately attired. Workers shall always conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect and honesty to those in their care.

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:

- A. Meeting children at their eye level by bending down or sitting.
- B. Listening to individuals with your ears, eyes and heart.
- C. Holding the child's hand while listening or speaking to him or when walking to an activity.
- D. Putting an arm around the shoulder of an individual when comforting, quieting or greeting is an appropriate way to hug. This side-to-side hug should only be done in public.
- E. A light touch to a hand, shoulder or back when encouraging is acceptable.
- F. Holding a preschool child who is crying.

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

- A. Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
- B. Extended hugging and tickling, or prolonged physical contact of any kind.
- C. Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (exception: properly assisting a child in the rest room).
- D. Carrying an older child or sitting him or her on your lap.

DISCIPLINE

- A. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
- B. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the workers' coordinator/supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

Persons with inclinations toward sexual abuse or impropriety are less likely to obtain access to potential victims when barriers to the privacy needed for sexual impropriety are in place. Therefore, the following policies have been implemented:

1. Clear Glass Windows

Doors shall have clear glass windows that allow for an easy view of the classroom activities by monitors without disrupting the teaching process.

2. Monitors shall be in place to oversee the following:

- Checking classrooms to ensure the room is properly staffed and functioning well
- Monitoring hallways and exits to ensure that everyone is where they belong
- Assisting visitors and newcomers in finding appropriate locations
- Ensuring that unknown individuals are properly approached and monitored

3. Volunteer Age

The use of adult volunteers (18 years of age and older) is recommended. While youth should never care for children alone, it is beneficial to their spiritual development to allow youth (ages 12-17) to serve in appropriate team-teaching settings in ministry programs.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD/ELEMENTARY AGES

1. Volunteer Identification

All volunteers working with children will wear a name tag.

2. Volunteer Registration

Volunteer sign-in forms (Appendix E) will be in the nursery to record the name of each volunteer. These forms will be kept on file for one year.

3. Child Registration

Sign-in forms (Appendix F) shall be at the entrance of the nursery/pre-kindergarten classroom door. Parents shall record the child's name, their names, and their location during the service. Special needs of the child should also be listed. The sign-in forms will be collected weekly and kept on file for one year.

4. Releasing Children

The parent signing in the child should be the one who picks up the child or designates an approved alternate. A sign-out line for the parent to initial is included on the sign-in form (Appendix E).

5. Persons in charge of children's activities shall not leave until all the children involved in that activity have been picked up.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Well Child Policy

A child who is ill and could therefore expose other children and workers to illness should not be received into the nursery or classroom. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea or inflamed mouth and throat. (PLEASE NOTE: Coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes can also be symptoms of allergies. Be sure to check with parents as to the cause of the symptoms before denying the child entry into the nursery or class.) A health criteria policy will be posted. (Appendix G)

2. Medications

- A. Volunteers or staff are not to give or apply any medications. If a child needs medication, the parent must give it.
- B. No medication should be left in the classroom, with a worker or with the child.
- C. In extreme cases (allergies, asthma), arrangements for the administration of medication should be made with written instructions and permission from the parent. Medication should be in its original prescription package, which should have administration instructions and the child's name clearly indicated. Volunteers or staff will notify parents when they pick up their child that medications have been administered.
- D. Application of baby powder and ointment during diaper changing should be restricted to what the parent brings for such.

3. Responding to an injury, illness, or emergency.

- A. Separate the injured or ill student from other children.
- B. Isolate the area where any blood or body fluid may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc.
- C. Keep other students from having contact with the body fluid.
- D. Locate the first-aid kit and put on protective gloves and attend to the student.
- E. Clean the room following standard precaution guidelines.
- F. Place all soiled gauze, bandages and wrappers into a zip-closure bag. Remove protective gloves and place into the bag. Seal and dispose of the bag in a plastic lined trash container.
- G. Wash hands carefully with soap and warm water.
- H. When an injury, accident or medical emergency occurs, the parent(s) of the child involved should be contacted immediately.
- I. Any accident resulting in injury should be reported to the leader in charge. A completed accident report should be submitted to the Executive Committee in a timely manner. (Appendix H)

4. Housekeeping

All changing table surfaces, cribs, table tops, toys, etc. must be cleaned with a disinfecting solution at the conclusion of each session. Follow the established nursery procedures for nursery and 2-3 year old classes.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT POLICIES

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, plan social activities and involve pupils in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken in order for these activities to occur:

1. Field Trips and Special Events:

- A. Off-site activities should be pre-approved by church Disciplemaking Ministires Committee or Governing Board. The teacher/leader should submit a Church Activity Report Form (Appendix I) with sufficient time for Disciplemaking Ministries Committee or Governing Board approval.
- B. Parental Release and Consent Form (Appendix J) is required for each student participating. Forms must be kept in leaders' possession during the trips and events and kept on file for 6 months following the event. Parents should be well informed of the activities scheduled for each event.
- C. All trips and outings will be supervised by two approved adult leaders for up to ten and then another adult leader for every additional group of 1-5 students. Every leader should have an assigned group for whom he/she is responsible.

2. Overnight Events

In addition to the above, overnight events will require a Parental Release for Overnight Event Form (Appendix K).

3. Transportation

- A. All drivers transporting children during an activity must have valid driver's licenses and current automobile insurance.
- B. The number of occupants in the vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts. Seat belts must be worn and car seats must be used as the law requires.
- C. No adult should transport only one student alone.
- D. When possible, parents should transport their own children to and from activities.

REPORTING ALL SUSPECTED ABUSE

LEGAL DEFINITIONS

The following are taken from The Child Protective Services Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Title 23 Pa. C.S.A. Chapter 63)

DEFINITIONS:

Child Abuse is

- Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
- An act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
- Any recent act, failure to act or series of such acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
- Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide the essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.

Serious physical injury -- an injury that causes a child severe pain or significantly impairs a child's physical functioning either temporarily or permanently.

Serious bodily injury -- bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of function of any bodily member or organ.

Serious mental injury -- a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment that 1) renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or 2) seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

Sexual abuse or exploitation -- the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault or other form of sexual exploitation of children.

Perpetrator -- a person who has committed child abuse and is a parent of a child, a person responsible for the welfare of a child, an individual residing in the same home as a child or a paramour of a child's parent.

REPORTING PROCESS

WHO MUST REPORT

For reasons of liability and integrity, all Immanuel Church personnel, paid and volunteer, shall be required to report to the Senior Pastor or other member of the Executive Committee immediately any instance of child abuse they have reasonable cause to believe has occurred. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person or the paid staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions. The person receiving the report shall immediately notify the other members of the Committee.

WHAT TO REPORT

Abuse as defined in this document (See previous page). Some possible signs of abuse include:

- A. Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures or abrasions (often in various stages of healing)
- B. Consistent lack of supervision
- C. Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene or unattended medical needs
- D. Extremes of aggression or withdrawal
- E. Moves with discomfort and shies away from physical contact
- F. Wearing of clothing inappropriate for the weather in order to cover body
- G. Withdrawn, depressed, listless
- H. Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- I. Irritation of the mouth, genital or anal area
- J. Difficulty sitting or walking
- K. Inappropriate sex play, acting out seductiveness or promiscuity

HOW TO REPORT

Use the Suspected Abuse Report Form (Appendix L). Fill out the report form and submit it to a member of the Executive Committee immediately. In these matters it is important to keep the information confidential at all times. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to contact the local authorities.

RESPONDING TO THE STUDENT

When a student first comes to you with a report of abuse, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Do not deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the student. Give emotional support, reminding the student that he or she is not at fault and that he or she was right in telling you about the problem. Do not promise the student you will not tell anyone.

NOTIFICATION OF THE AUTHORITIES

The designated member of the Executive Committee will then report to the Cumberland County Children's Protective Services *and* Childline, the State Hotline at 1-800-932-0313). If the allegation is against a church worker, the Executive Committee should follow the guidelines outlined on page 13.

NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS

Unless the alleged perpetrator is the parent or the paramour of a parent of a student, the parents shall be notified of the allegation as soon as possible by the Senior Pastor or other designated member of the Executive Committee. (If done in person instead of by telephone, two members of the committee should be present. If the allegation is against a church worker, the Executive Committee should follow the guidelines outline on page 13.

RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE AGAINST A CHURCH WORKER

PRINCIPLES

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

1. All allegations need to be taken seriously.
2. Situations must be handled forthrightly, with due respect for an individual's privacy and confidentiality.
3. Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of the church's lawyer.
4. Appropriate care must be shown for the well-being of all alleged victims.
5. The alleged victim should not be held responsible in any way.
6. Maintain Adequate Records

The records of volunteer workers' applications, references and screening forms will be up-to-date. Records will be kept at least one year after the conclusion of a person's volunteer ministry.

PROCESS

DESIGNATED SPOKESMAN

The Senior Pastor or designated member of the Executive Committee shall be the spokesperson for the church. All inquiries should be referred to the Executive Committee. Problems of conflicting and contradictory statements can be avoided if only this one person is designated to speak for the church.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE

The Executive Committee shall do the following:

1. Immediately record the facts of the incident on a Suspected Abuse Report (Appendix L) if this has not already been done.
2. Document all of the church's efforts at handling the incident (Appendix M)
3. Report the incident immediately to the church's lawyer, insurance agent and denominational officials.

Lawyer: Doug Gent

Phone Number: 866-632-4040

Insurance Agent: Church Mutual Insurance

Phone number: 1-800-554-2642

Denominational Official: District Superintendent

Phone number: 717-985-9240

4. Following the guidance of the church's lawyer, contact the proper civil authorities (See page 11). Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals.
5. Notify parents of the victim as advised by the church's attorney (See page 11).
6. Take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family under the guidance of the church's attorney.
7. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a church worker, the person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished (see Galatians 6:1-2 and The Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, (sec. E-8).

8. Use the text of the prepared public statement (see below) to answer the press and to convey news to the congregation. Be careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

PREPARED STATEMENT

It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. Immanuel Church is aware of the problem of child abuse and the harm that is done to the victims. We have taken every precaution to protect the students entrusted to our care. Our paid staff and volunteers are carefully screened before beginning ministry in our church. Training occurs to inform our ministry staff about the various policies implemented to provide for the safety of our students. We have also reviewed with our staff what to watch for and how to report any suspicious behavior relating to the abuse of students. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the Cumberland County Children's Protective Services.

(Be prepared to explain the specific precautions, the screening process and the training that the church utilizes to provide a safe and secure environment.)

REPORT FOLLOW-UP

A confidential written report with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the designated member. Both the suspected abuse report form (Appendix L) when used and the follow-up report (Appendix M) will be kept in a confidential personnel file.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Immanuel Church will practice discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17 and in keeping with the policy on discipline of The Christian and Missionary Alliance as set forth in The Manual of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (section E-8).

SOURCES

The Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 Pa. C.S.A. Chapter 63, Department of Public Welfare, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The majority of the guidelines found in this policy were taken from:

Safe Place: Guidelines for Creating an Abuse-Free Environment. Marv Parker, Editor. (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, Inc.) 2002.

APPENDIX

YOUTH APPENDIX

Recognizing that normal Safe Place standards can hinder the ministry to youths (students in the sixth through the twelfth grade, aged 11-18), the youth ministry is subject to different guidelines with special checks in place to prevent abuse. The following guidelines apply only to students age 11 and older.

1. Special Events
 - a) At the beginning of each quarter, the Youth Coordinator, Director of Youth Ministries, or Youth Pastor will submit a blanket form that lists all possible activities that can take place during the normal 1-1/2 hour period that normal youth meetings (including small groups). This will be in lieu of form 1, the Church Activity Report Form.
 - b) Any other special event that will not take place entirely within the time of a normal youth meeting will be subject to Form 1, and must be submitted to the DMC at least thirty days before the event.

2. Small Groups – Small groups have become a key part of Immanuel Alliance’s Youth Ministry Program. This discipleship program requires just a single youth worker to minister to a small number of youths, usually less than five. Small groups are only available to students age 11 and older.
 - a) Because of the unique nature of small groups, it is impossible to ensure that there will always be two adults present, since small groups often take place in a youth sponsor’s home and having multiple leaders can spoil the confidential nature that small groups are supposed to have. In addition to Parental Release and Consent Form, students under the age of 18 will be required to have their parents sign a form acknowledging they are aware there will only be one adult present, and acknowledging that one-on-one discipleship, while not always necessary, is often a part of small group ministry. This form will be renewed annually.
 - b) Any small group events that take place outside of the regular meeting time must be approved by the DMC.

3. Travel – While the youth staff will make every attempt to avoid having only one student and one adult in a car, the church recognizes that this is sometimes inevitable.
 - a) In the rare event this does happen, the youth worker should be of the same gender of the student.