

Upland Community Church Child Protection Policy

Policy statement

It is our responsibility to protect the children/youth in our care. Children (and parents) need to know that we have taken every reasonable step to ensure children's safety in our ministry.

It is our responsibility to protect staff and volunteer workers in our ministry from being exposed to false accusations of sexual misconduct. To this end, we have screening and supervision policies in place to protect our ministry workers.

It is our responsibility to protect our ministry. By requiring child protection training, as well as implementing screening and supervision policies, we are modeling good safety procedures to others who look to our ministry as an example of a well-run ministry to children and youth.

What we require

1. **A written application.** We require a written application before approving an individual for service in our children's/youth ministry. We want to be sure we're selecting the best candidates possible for our ministry programs.
2. **Reference checks.** Once the written application is complete, we conduct reference checks. Applicants must provide the names and contact information for three individuals who meet the following criteria: must be over 18 years old; must have seen the applicant work with minors and be able to speak to his/her ability to serve young people; must have known him/her for at least three years; must not be a relative.
3. **Background checks.** We conduct criminal records checks for all paid staff and clergy and all children's/youth workers who have access to children or who serve with minors. For all those who will be driving as part of their ministry service with minors, we conduct motor vehicle record checks.
4. **Trainings.** We require all staff and volunteers to successfully complete our ministry-specific training conducted by the individual program directors. All children's/youth workers are also required to successfully complete our Child Protection Training program conducted by the Safe Place Coordinator.
5. **Child Protection Policy.** We require all staff and children's/youth workers to review and confirm acceptance of the Child Protection Policy.

What we expect

- **Appropriate physical contact** - No one should ever feel uncomfortable in the way they are being touched. Appropriate touching means offering a gentle touch on the shoulders, hands, arms, head, or back.
Inappropriate touching would include kissing, demanding kissing or hugs, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom, or private areas, or any physical contact that feels uncomfortable or violating. Toddlers and older children should never be allowed to sit in your lap, covering your private area. Instead, have a child sit beside you or on your knee. School-aged children (and older) should always sit beside you.
- **Follow supervision guidelines.** Staff and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "two-adult rule", "three person rule", and "open door rule" at all times. The "two-adult rule" requires that all workers make every effort reasonable to avoid situations where one adult is left alone with children/youth. In the event that there is only one adult present, the "three person rule" is required. No adult is permitted to be alone with one child. There must be either two adults and one child or one adult and two children present. The "open door rule" requires the door to be open at all times or the activities to be visible through a window. Our guidelines are designed to reduce the risk of child abuse in our program by reducing isolation with a child/youth and increasing accountability for our staff and children's/youth workers.
- **Respond to inappropriate or suspicious behavior** – All staff and volunteers should report any inappropriate or suspicious behavior to a ministry leader or the Safe Place Coordinator immediately. This includes reporting any suspected abuse being committed by another worker, peer-to-peer abuse, or any child who presents signs of abuse. No one will ever be in trouble for reporting suspected abuse.