

Church of Jesus Christ
Oak Grove Restoration Branch

Child Protection Policy

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Approved by the branch on August 25, 2013

I. General Purpose Statement

The Church of Jesus Christ – Oak Grove Restoration Branch (OGRB) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of OGRB from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our volunteers from false accusations.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “volunteer” includes volunteer persons who work with children.

III. Selection of Volunteers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) **Three Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with OGRB for a minimum of three (3) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

b) **Written Membership Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must be a current member of OGRB in good standing.

c) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted branch membership or to work with children, at least one of the applicants' references will be checked. Any documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at OGRB.

d) **Temporary/Specific Exceptions**

The Presiding Elder may approve volunteers for temporary duties, such as supporting our summer Vacation Church School program, that do not meet the membership qualifications denoted above. These volunteer assignments will only be for short term or specific responsibilities and will require prior approval before any interaction with children.

IV. Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session, but those classes will be conducted in classrooms with monitor windows. We do not allow a minor to be alone with a volunteer on our premises or in any sponsored activity.

V. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Volunteers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care or teaching of children at OGRB becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Presiding Elder for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at OGRB or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation by the Presiding Elder.
3. If the Presiding Elder so determines, civil authorities will be notified and OGRB will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Any member of OGRB who becomes aware of the situation or is witness to the situation and already has a mandatory reporting requirement based on their field of employment (police, fire, etc.) will be encouraged to comply with their obligation. OGRB will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The Presiding Elder will be our spokesperson concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless the Presiding Elder is alleged to be involved, in which case the Associate Pastors will select an alternate spokesman. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

VI. Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

VII. Teenage Volunteers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for volunteers who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage volunteers:

- Must be at least age 13
- Must be screened as specified above
- Must be under the supervision of an adult
- Must never be left alone with a child

VIII. Discipline Policy

It is the policy of OGRB not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Volunteers should consult with the Presiding Elder if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

IX. Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, volunteers 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.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.