

NEXTGEN

MINISTRIES

POLICIES FOR SAFE & HEALTHY MINISTRY



kids



students



young
adults



parents

THE EVANGELICAL
COVENANT CHURCH
OF BEMIDJI

a place to call home

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INTRODUCTION

Child abuse affects the lives of thousands of kids every year in North America. Churches have long been seen as organizations, which are lax or negligent in the screening, education, and training of their kids' and students workers. The result has been embarrassing false accusations, or missed opportunities to protect a child in need. Churches have a responsibility for their ministry programs and for the actions of the volunteers that staff them. Court decisions throughout the nation are holding churches liable when they can prove that the church did not properly screen their volunteers, educate their workers, or provide adequate supervision. Much can and should be done by churches in North America to make their kids' workers more aware of the seriousness of child abuse and the procedures that the church can and will implement to protect their kids from being abused.

I. Our Response

We desire to respond in earnest to make our facilities and programming a safe place for all kids, students, and adults involved in the NextGen Ministries of the Covenant Church through implementation of the NextGen Policies for Safe and Healthy Ministry. The physical condition of our facilities must continue to be evaluated for safety and effectiveness in ministry. Where necessary, remodeling or updating may be required. Steps must be taken proactively to screen and to train kids' and students' workers. Precautionary measures must be communicated by providing guidelines and procedures that offer assistance to parents and leaders. Through increased awareness and supervision, we hope to prevent any incidents from occurring, and hence support effective, caring ministries, which continue to further the cause of Christ and lead individuals to a personal relationship with him.

II. Definitions

The term "kids," "children," or "child" refers to anyone from birth through 5th grade or their equivalent.. The term "students" or "youth" refers to anyone in 6th grade through 12th grade or their equivalent. The term "leaders" refers to any adult serving in any official role within NextGen Ministries who have been formally accepted into that role after having completed the interview and placement process including national criminal and public records background check. The term

“authorized adult” refers to any adult or teenager 16 years of age or older to whom the child’s parent or legal guardian have given the authority to check in or out of our programs. The term “Director” refers to either the Ministry Director for Kids or the Ministry Director for Students. The term “Pastor” herein refers to the Pastor responsible for overseeing NextGen Ministries.

III. Purpose

The main purpose for this document, NextGen Policies for Safe and Healthy Ministry, is to protect kids and students and to foster an environment that provides healthy ministry.

This purpose is accomplished in part by educating and training leaders on issues, which may contribute to dangerous and unsafe conditions affecting kids and students. These issues include how best to avoid neglect and abuse. Individual members and friends of the church are encouraged to act responsibly not only in caring for kids and students, but also in caring for each other (Matt. 19:13-14; John 15:9-17).

We will develop guidelines and procedures to address concerns and/or allegations concerning safety, wellness, and abuse. The Leadership Team will assume responsibility for evaluating the conditions under which the church ministries are carried out and for investigating charges and reporting misconduct.

If charges against a leader are substantiated, the goal of the church will include the safety and well-being of the victim (see page 12) and the pursuit of reconciliation and restoration to the fellowship of Christ. (Matthew 18:15-35; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11).

(Adapted from A Letter of Introduction—Northwest Covenant Church, Mt. Prospect, IL. Used with Permission.)

STAFFING

I. Qualifications

Every volunteer and staff person who works with kids and/or students shall:

1. Confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior
2. Adhere to the Covenant Affirmations
3. Either be a member in good standing or a regular attendee
4. Have no history of being an abuser

II. Procedures

Every volunteer and staff person who works with kids and/or students shall:

1. Meet with a person(s) designated by the Pastor to discuss and pray about his/her role in the NextGen ministries of the church.
2. Agree to following the NextGen Policies for Safe and Healthy Ministry
3. Provide addresses for residences in the last 7 years
4. Provide personal references.
5. Authorize the church to conduct a national criminal background check

III. Education

The Pastor designated to oversee the NextGen Ministries will be responsible for ensuring the education of volunteers and staff on the abuse prevention policy.

1. Annually, all volunteers who work with kids and students will attend training to educate them on the policies and procedures for reducing the risk of abuse, injury, and illness.
2. Annually, all church staff members will review together the policies and procedures for reducing the risk of abuse, injury, and illness.
3. All church staff will have a copy of “NextGen Policies for Safe and Healthy Ministry” in print form.
4. Copies of the policy will be available for any church member through the church office.

**A. SAFE:
ABUSE, EXPOSURE,
INJURY, AND ILLNESS**

I. Abuse

1. Definition

The Minnesota Department of Human Services defines abuse and neglect in the following ways.

A. Neglect

Neglect is the most common form of maltreatment; over 60 percent of all reports in 2009 were allegations of neglect. Neglect is usually involves the failure of the child's caregiver to:

- Supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical or mental health care, or appropriate supervision
- Protect the child from conditions or actions that endanger the child
- Take steps to ensure that a child is educated according to the law.

Exposing a child to certain drugs during pregnancy and causing emotional harm to a child may also be considered neglect.

B. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any physical injury or threat of harm or substantial injury, inflicted by a caregiver upon a child other than by accidental means. The impact of physical abuse can range from minor bruises to severe internal injuries and death. Physical abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child that does not result in an injury.

C. Mental Injury

Mental injury is harm to the child's psychological capacity or emotional stability evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment of the child's functioning.

D. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the subjection of a child to a criminal sexual act or threatened act by a [any] person [including one who is] responsible for the child's care or by a person who has a significant relationship to the child or is in a position of authority. Furthermore, the following actions are considered abusive.

1. Abusive Touching

- a. Fondling—touching the body on private parts
- b. Inappropriate kissing
- c. Intercourse (consensual or nonconsensual)
- d. Oral or anal intercourse

2. Abusive Non-touching

- a. Sexual remarks

- b. Showing pornography
- c. Watching any sexual activity
- d. Exhibitionism

2. Prevention

A. General Security

We will strive to provide safety-trained volunteers at each of our main entrances during the prime times of our midweek programs.

While all leaders are encouraged to keep their room doors open, each door does have a window installed to allow for observation. Meeting with kids or students in spaces without windows or some other means of outside observation is prohibited.

B. Check-in/Check-out

1. Parental

Consent

The parent or legal guardian will fill out a registration form for each child or student who will be participating in the ministries of the church. These forms will be kept on file in the church office.

2. Guidelines

Justification: A class release policy for kids from church programs will help to reduce the opportunities for both abuse and abduction.

a. Nursery

An authorized adult will check kids in and out of the nursery and will provide their contact information and where they will be in case of an emergency. No child will be released from the nursery except into the care of the authorized adult who checked him/her in, unless noted at the time the child is checked-in that another (named) authorized adult (with picture identification) will be picking the child up. If a leader has need to remove the child from the nursery, they must remain in open public spaces in the church building.

b. Pre-K and Elementary

An authorized adult is required to check his/her kids (and designated age of child) in and out of any of our programs at one of two central check-in locations. We do not allow child self-checkins. The authorized adult will also provide their contact information and where they will be in case of an emergency. No child will be released or removed from the program area except into the care of an authorized adult (with picture identification if needed). If no one comes to pick up a child the leader will take the child to the South check-in station where the child will stay in the company of an adult leader until they are picked up by an authorized adult. If a leader has need to remove the child from the kids area, they must remain in open public spaces in the church building.

c. Students

Students will be released at the previously agreed upon time, to help ensure the parent understands where their student will be at any given time. No check out is required; however, it is understood that once release time has occurred, the parent assumes responsibility.

C. Teenaged Volunteers

There may be times when it is necessary or desirable for volunteers who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for kids during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

1. Teenage volunteers must be at least 5th grade or the equivalent for working in the nursery and 7th grade or the equivalent for working in any other kids' programming.
2. Teenage volunteers must be screened as specified above with exception of background check prior to serving in any role in with kids.
3. Teenage volunteers must be under the supervision of an adult.

D. Touch

Touching is a difficult area because touch can be very positive and it's important for kids to understand and receive positive touch. Context and situation must always be taken into consideration. It is quite appropriate to hold and comfort an infant, toddler, and young child or one who is in discomfort. In the same way it can be appropriate to hug kids or students who are grieving or hurt or when a child initiates the hug. Ask kids for permission before hugging them and respect the child's right if they say "no."

It may be best to consider the types of touch that are okay to initiate and not okay to initiate. Below are some examples of both.

1. Appropriate to initiate in proper context
 - a. Celebrating: high fives, handshakes, side hugs
 - b. Circle prayer: holding hands, hands on shoulders
 - c. Comfort and redirection: a hand on the shoulder, side hugs
2. Inappropriate to initiate
 - a. Wrestling, sitting on laps (for 1st grade and older), caressing, grabbing, slapping, hitting, or spanking
 - b. In a family situation, wrestling, and tickling can be just fine, but in ministry settings it's best to avoid it especially as kids move toward adolescence.

E. Sexual Misconduct

Discretion in your personal life is fundamental to both spiritual integrity and to continuing to do spiritual ministry among kids, students, and young adults (Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-16). To live wisely and without any hint of sexual misconduct, we keep the following standards:

1. Any verbal or nonverbal flirtatious or sexual interaction with any child, student, or young adult is prohibited.

2. No Adult leader will ever date any student or young adult in our ministry.
3. Discretion must be used in physical contact with any kids, students, or young adults. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. A hug may be healthy but a lingering hug, stroking, massaging, or kissing are inappropriate. Any overt display of affection, appropriate hugging, for example, should be made in a public setting in front of other group members.
4. Sexual gestures or overtures to an adult leader by a kid/student/young adult or to a child/student/young by an adult leader should be reported to the Pastor so that discussion can be held with the responsible party.
5. One-on-one adult-to-child/student/young adult counseling should always occur in a public place, never alone in a private place. Please use caution/wise discretion when meeting with a child/student/young adult.
6. When a situation arises where an adult is alone with a child, student, or young adult of the other gender, quickly move that situation to a public setting. Make the meeting as brief as necessary to accomplish God's purpose.
7. An adult driving alone with a child, student, or young adult of the other gender or of known same-gender attraction should be avoided as much as possible. If such situation seems unavoidable, the adult must inform the Director or Pastor of such arrangements immediately upon departure and immediately upon drop-off. Extended conversation after arrival should be avoided. If it is a staff person driving, he/she should be in communication with another staff person.
8. Romantic or sexual attraction for a child, student, or young adult by an adult leader should be brought up and discussed with the Pastor for prayer and guidance.
9. All suspicions of child or sexual abuse must be reported to the Pastor.
10. Any knowledge or suspicion of any adult leaders or church staff having an inappropriate relationship with a child, student, or young adult must be reported promptly to the Pastor. If the person in question is the Pastor, the report should be made directly to the Lead Pastor.
11. No wrestling or physical horseplay should ever occur between adults and kids, students, or young adults.

Transporting kids and students

1. Drivers must be at least 20 years of age or older, with a valid drivers' license, and proof of insurance, no outstanding violations, no DUI, no reckless driving charges, and no chronic history of speeding. Persons should also refrain from driving if they are on medication or have a physical condition that could impair their driving.
2. Always leave locations, including the church, as a group and travel as a group and do not make stops while en route apart from the group.

3. Detection

Most cases of sexual abuse go undetected. There may be no apparent physical signs, or there may be physical signs detected only through medical examination. The cases that are reported

are generally reported by abused children to their parents, siblings, or other caretakers—often in the form of casual remarks that lead the listener to query further. Most students say nothing. Younger students may not realize that what was done to them was wrong. Or they may be too embarrassed or frightened to speak up. They may not want to get the offender in trouble—especially if a friendship has developed between offender and victim.

In some cases, telltale physical or emotional signs may arouse your suspicion. In its publication *The Educator's Role in the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect*, the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect outlines certain indicators of sexual abuse, as follows

Physical indicators

1. Difficulty in walking or sitting
2. Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
3. Pain or itching in the genital area
4. Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal area
5. Venereal disease, especially in preteens
6. Pregnancy

Behavioral indicators

1. Unwilling to change for gym or participate in physical education class
2. Withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior
3. Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge
4. Poor peer relationships
5. Delinquency or running away
6. Reports sexual assault by caretaker

These signs can be indicative of other problems and are not exclusively tied to sexual abuse. But the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the presence of several indicators warrants further investigation.

4. Reporting

Reporting Obligations

Volunteers or staff are to immediately report any behavior, that seems abusive or inappropriate, or any incident reported by a child or adolescent. According to Minnesota Statute 626.556 Subdivision 3 Paragraph 1, a mandated reporter is defined as

“a **professional** or **professional's delegate** who is engaged in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, education, correctional supervision, probation and correctional services, or law enforcement.”

In our context, the Pastor is the “professional” and supporting staff and volunteers are the “professional’s delegates.” Therefore we practice a form of corporate reporting in which the delegate and the professional report together. There is a separate definition for “clergy” (626.556 Subd 3 Par 2) which addresses mandated reporting for the Pastor as it relates to “confession” which is not relevant for volunteers.

What to Report to the Pastor

Remember to never promise complete confidentiality. There are “3 Hurts” which must be reported to the Pastor within 24 hours. These are:

1. **Being Hurt** - This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse (mental injury). These injuries will be reported to Child Protection Services.
2. **Hurting Others** - This includes physical assault, incest, sexual molestation, and bullying. The Pastor will help discern what needs to be reported to local law enforcement and what should be addressed internally.
3. **Hurting Themselves** - This includes suicidal ideation and attempts. It also includes any self-injurious behavior (deliberate, repetitive, impulsive, non-lethal harming of oneself such as cutting, burning, hair-pulling, ingestion of toxic or harmful substances or objects) as well as substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, etc.) and eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, etc.). All staff and volunteers must report imminent suicide and danger immediately to law enforcement. Then report to the Pastor. All other matters of self-harm should be reported to the Pastor who will then discern next steps to take. In most cases, parents will somehow be informed. In cases where the parent is deemed to be “unsafe” by the Pastor, other professional help will be sought out.

Reporting Procedures

1. If a child/student is observed to have signs of physical abuse (bruises caused by hitting, unexplainable injuries, etc.), leaders should call these things to the attention of the Pastor immediately.
2. If a child/student verbally accuses a family member or other person of abusing them in some way, the volunteer staff member should ask appropriate questions in an attempt to determine the veracity of the claim and the imminence of danger. If the truth of the claim seems clear, the matter should be immediately brought to the attention of the Pastor. If the truth of the claim seems questionable, the claim should still be brought to the attention of the Pastor on the same day that the claim is expressed.
3. Whether clearly true or questionable in the estimation of the volunteer staff member, the allegations or observations should be put in writing on the day of the incident, including a verbatim/exact account of the observation and/or accusation. Every detail of the events—including date, time of day, names of persons involved, etc.—should be included in this report. The person making the report should keep one copy, and one copy should be given to the Pastor. These reports must be kept safe and confidential. The Pastoral staff member will be responsible for making a determination as to the appropriate actions to be taken as follow-up to these observations/accusations.

Line of Reporting

1. Leaders shall report directly to either the Director or Pastor, whichever is most expedient.
2. Directors shall report immediately to the Pastor who will then inform the Lead Pastor.

3. If the allegation is directed toward a Pastoral staff member the report should be made directly and immediately to the Lead Pastor.
4. The Lead Pastor (or the Pastor as directed by the Lead Pastor) will report directly to the police department or Child Protective Services within 24 hours for any allegation of abuse.

5. Response (subject to change as determined by the Leadership Team)

1. Any allegation of abuse must be brought to the attention of the Lead Pastor. An Incident Report Form (p 39 for volunteer or p 41 for staff) will be completed.
2. The incident must be reported to local law enforcement or Child Protective Services within 24 hours of notification of the incident. CPS will conduct the investigation. The Church will not conduct the investigation. Rather, it will cooperate, as requested with CPS and local law enforcement.
3. The Pastor, Lead Pastor, and Leadership Team will meet to establish a pathway for communicating with the appropriate individuals and groups.
4. If the victim is a minor, the Pastor should immediately meet with the child's parents, notifying them of the incident and the steps that are being taken, as well as offering support and prayer. Written notes must be taken during this meeting.
5. The Pastor/Church will provide sustained support and prayer through the entire investigation.
6. If the accused is a volunteer, the Pastor will:
 - a. Attach the Incident Report to the volunteer's confidential file in the office.
 - b. Inform the volunteer that he/she may not participate in ministry leadership until the investigation into the allegation is complete. Written notes must be taken during this meeting.
 - c. The Pastor will assign another adult to always accompany the accused anytime he/she is on the church campus.
 - d. Arrangements will be made with both the victim/victim's family and the alleged perpetrator to not be on the church campus at the same time. This may require determining which service to attend and at what times to arrive and depart so as to not risk crossing paths.
 - e. Provide sustained support and prayer through the entire investigation.
7. If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member, then the Lead Pastor:
 - a. Attach the Incident Report to the volunteer's confidential file in the office.
 - b. Meet with the staff member to
 - Notify him/her that an allegation has been made and will be investigated by local authorities
 - Inform him/her that suspension from all work and participation in church related activities is effective immediately until the investigation is completed.
 - Offer support and prayer during the investigation.
 - Written notes must be taken during this meeting.
 - c. Notify the following:
 - The Superintendent of the Northwest Conference who will then contact
 - The National Executive Minister, Ordered Ministry

- The Church's insurance company
8. Written records can be subpoenaed.

Exposure

Another way of protecting our kids/students is by guarding their exposure to content that is either more mature than what they're ready for or inappropriate. Therefore we ask our leaders to adhere to the following policies.

1. Movies

Any movie that is shown for a Covenant Church sponsored activity or watched by children or students at a Covenant Church sponsored activity or watched by students at a Student Life sponsored activity must have a MPAA rating of no higher than G for kids (up to grade 5) or PG for students (grade 6 through grade 12). Any other movie rating (PG-13, R, Unrated, etc.) is prohibited or must gain approval from the Director. In all cases, movies must be previewed before showing at a youth activity. When in doubt (even about PG or G rated movies), please consult with the Director or Pastor. In cases when a leader wants to show or attend a movie of a higher rating with students, approval from the Director or Pastor must be given permission from parents will be attained.

2. Video Games

Any video game that is played by kids, students or adults during a Covenant Church sponsored activity must have a rating of E10 or lower. Use of any other video game is prohibited and must gain approval from the Director or Pastor.

3. Alcohol/Substances

Along with entertainment choice, the use of substances by a leader can model negative behavior to students. Since the number one substance abused by teenagers is alcohol, all leaders will abstain from the use of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages if under age or, if of age, will abstain from their use in the presence of kids and students from the Covenant Church during church sponsored events and gatherings. Exceptions may include private gatherings of personal friends. However, healthy moderation is expected.

Injury

1. Accidental Injuries

Each Ministry Director will ensure the placement and maintenance of an appropriate First Aid Kit in each of the following locations:

1. Nursery
2. FLC Kitchen
3. Main Kitchen

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

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide first aid as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid, the authorized adult and parent/guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the Director. If warranted by circumstances, the Director may discern that an ambulance should be called.
3. Once a child has received appropriate medical attention, an Accident/Injury Report Form (see page 37) will be completed and kept on file at the church.

2. Lost Child

Thankfully we have never truly "lost" a child. But there have been a few times where a child has gotten away from their parents in a crowded hallway or the courtyard. This can be very concerning, especially when we remind ourselves of the potential dangers of not taking the situation of a lost child seriously.

Possible Reasons

- Abducted child . . . take immediate action. Yell and try to get everyone around you to stop the person.
- A child has wandered from one room to another room and they are now missing.
- A child has wandered away from a parent or authorized adult without supervision or permission.

In all instances – FIRST notify the nearest Director or Pastor. They shall enact the lost child procedure.

Procedures

If the child is missing from the environment follow these procedures before assuming the worst:

1. Put a team member at every main exit door
2. watching for the child.
3. Send people to search all logical locations
 - a. If child was lost from the Kids Area
 - i. Double-check all classrooms
 - ii. Check Gym
 - iii. Check Assembly Room
 - iv. Check Nursery
 - v. Check bathrooms
 - vi. Check Playground
 - b. If child was lost from the main building (courtyard, worship center, etc.)
 - i. Ask parent to remain in the courtyard, with a staff member, where child could easily find them.
 - ii. Send someone back to check the rooms in the kids area.
 - iii. Check bathrooms
 - iv. Check Worship Center
 - v. Check Youth Room
 - vi. Check other classrooms
4. Check family vehicle.
5. If you have looked at all above locations and still cannot locate the child (2-5 minutes) then the Director/Pastor will decide to lock down the building.

Instructions

Instructions to lock down building. Directors and Pastors are the only ones who can go to this step!

1. Send one staff person directly outside to the road exit at Hwy 2 stopping all traffic from leaving the campus. Prepare them to explain (calmly) why traffic is stopped and to calmly but firmly ask for cooperation. If any vehicle chooses to ignore this request, take mental note or take a picture of the vehicle/license plate.
2. Assign one staff person to recruit and direct nearby team members, staff, or other adults to every exit in the building. There are **12 exits in the main building** and **6 exits in the Family Life Center. Do not let any child leave the building.** Prepare them to explain (calmly) why doors are shut. Staff may have to stand on chair, speak loudly or use a microphone, and ask for attention of all who are present. Explain what we are doing and share child's name and calmly but firmly ask for cooperation
3. Send note to control booth in Worship Center to put a message up on the screen.
4. Notify all staff and leaders of missing child.
5. Look in all logical places – **again!** See list above.

6. If child is not found, consult Pastoral staff to make the decision to call police. These steps may seem too methodical and time consuming. But in fact, these steps are happening immediately and even simultaneously. If there is a true emergency, core staff would gather and quickly be making these decisions together either face to face or through the use of radios.

3. Kidnapping / Custodial Violation

If an observed abduction has taken place:

1. Immediately call 911, Emergency Personnel, and notify a Pastor or Director.
2. Volunteer/ Staff: Do not place yourself or other students in harm's way and maintain control of children.
3. A Pastor or Director will determine if a Lockdown is necessary. If so, then Lockdown Procedure is followed.
4. Parent/guardian should notified.
5. Await arrival of police.
6. When situation is resolved, complete an Incident Report.

4. Cold Weather Cancellations

1. **Cancellation.** All NextGen programs will be cancelled if the following conditions are met
 1. The public schools close or release early.
Note: The cancellation of late activity busses does NOT trigger our cancellation.
 2. Statements issued from the State of Minnesota's Governor's office will be considered case by case.
 3. The forecast during program times includes
 1. A natural temperature of -35°F or
 2. A wind chill ("feels like") temperature of -55°F
 3. According to the Weather Channel (weather.com)
2. **Permission to Stay Home.** All volunteers and leaders will be given permission to stay home if the following conditions are forecasted during the program times.
 1. Natural temperature of -25°F or
 2. Wind chill ("feels like") temperature of -40°F
 3. According to the Weather Channel
3. **Decision & Notifications**
 1. The decision will be made by 12:00PM on Wednesdays and 7:00AM on Sundays and will be announced via
 1. SMS (text message)
 2. Email
 3. One Call Now
 4. Website

2. Each winter, we'll send out a first notification of this policy by SMS (text message) to all NextGen Families when the forecast predicts a natural temperature of -25°F or a wind chill temperature of -30°F
3. All subsequent notices will go out by SMS (text message) if the forecast includes natural temperatures of -30°F or wind chill temperatures of -40°F

4. **Wording of Notices**

1. **Cancellation** - From the Covenant Church: All programs for kids, students, and young adults are cancelled tonight/this morning. Our cancellation thresholds are a natural temperature of -35°F or a wind chill temperature of - 55°F according to the forecast by the Weather Channel at 7:00AM Sundays and 12:00PM Wednesdays.
2. **First Notice and Warning Notice** - From the Covenant Church: Our cancellation thresholds are a natural temperature of -35°F or a wind chill temperature of - 55°F according to the forecast by the Weather Channel at 7:00AM Sundays and 12:00PM Wednesdays.
3. **Volunteer Permission** - From the Covenant Church: Our cancellation thresholds are a natural temperature of -35°F or a wind chill temperature of - 55°F according to the forecast by the Weather Channel at 7:00AM Sundays and 12:00PM Wednesdays. However, please feel released from your volunteer duties if the current conditions feel unsuitable for you. We'll be just fine. □

5. Severe Weather Procedure

Shelter Areas

In the event of severe or threatening weather those at the building will remain there and take shelter. A Pastor or Director will monitor the weather conditions and communicate to the staff and other adult leaders to have them prepared to take shelter. The following locations have been designated as “Shelter Areas”:

1. Hallways
 - i. Restrooms
 - ii. Youth Room North and South
 - iii. Family Life Center
 - iv. Staff
 - v. TV Storage
2. Youth Supply Room
3. The Great Room
4. The Study
5. The Jungle Room (Kindergarten and 1st Grade)
6. The Northwoods Room (4th Grade)

If needed, alternative areas such as below may be used but precautions must be taken to avoid being near windows.

1. Youth Room (east end, close dividers)

2. Music Room
3. Seaside Room (3rd grade, close dividers)
4. Farm Room (Pre-K, east end, close dividers)

Sundays or Wednesdays

Tornado Watch – Conditions exist for the development of tornadoes

1. The Pastor or Director will designate someone to alert anyone in the Garage. They will evacuate to the Courtyard in the main church building.
2. The Pastor or Director will communicate to a speaker or leader (whoever is not on stage) and will inform them of the time of watch and safe place of students to be communicated.
3. At the end of a service if a Tornado watch remains, Speaking Pastor or Worship Leader will announce ...
 - a. The National Weather Service has issued a Tornado Watch until (time). Please be aware. There has been no tornado sighted, this is only a watch.
 - b. First Service Only: Students in the Garage have been evacuated for their safety and are now in the Courtyard. This has been done only as a precaution. Please meet your student there after service. Children and students in the main building will remain in their classrooms until you check them out.
 - c. You are welcome to stay here at the church until the Tornado Watch has passed.

Tornado Warning– A tornado has been sighted in the area.

1. A Pastor or Director will communicate the latest weather information to Speaking Pastor/Worship Leader (whoever is not on stage) and they determine course of action.
2. Speaker/Worship Leader will communicate the following to the congregation:
 - a. The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning.
 - b. Please remain calm and follow these directions.
 - c. The following locations have been designated as “Shelter Areas.”
 1. Hallways
 - a. Youth Room North and South
 - b. Family Life Center
 - c. Staff
 - d. TV Storage
 2. Youth Supply Room
 3. The Great Room
 4. The Study
 5. The Jungle Room (Kindergarten and 1st Grade)
 6. The Northwoods Room (4th Grade)
 - d. Please let parents exit the worship center first to get their children and proceed to one of these Shelter Areas.
 - e. After parents have left everyone else, please calmly proceed to one of these “Shelter Areas.”

- f. Repeat the above list of shelter areas.
3. Adult leaders for Kids and Students: Leaders will be notified by staff. Leader should remain calm and use discretion when giving weather information to kids and students. Staff will direct parents, kids and leaders to the closest designated shelter area marked on maps by door in classrooms.

Between Services

A Pastor or Director will attempt to communicate with all people in the building and direct them to go to one of the designated shelter areas.

Event Procedure:

In the event of severe or threatening weather during a large or small event at the church: remain at the building and take shelter.

Event leader will monitor the weather conditions and will attempt to communicate with all people in the building and direct them to go to a designated shelter area.

If the Garage is being used, a leader will evacuate them to the main building.

6. Building Evacuation

The Evacuation Procedure should be used for a fire alarm, a bomb threat, and any other times deemed necessary by the Pastor or Director.

Sundays or Wednesdays

Worship Center

1. When building needs evacuated, speaker gains attention and communicates:
 - a. Remain calm and follow instructions.
 - b. Parents: your children have been evacuated to the softball field on the north side of the building. Look for the flag with your child's grade number
 - c. Everyone is to exit and proceed to the farthest edges of the parking lot.
2. Ushers start dismissing the auditorium by section in a speedy but calm and orderly manner.
3. Ushers and staff will assist with the evacuation of the building, moving all people out and away from the building to the farthest edges of the parking lot.
4. A Pastor or Director will ensure that the building has been evacuated and establish a position visible for emergency personnel. They will communicate the details of the incident to emergency personnel and will remain until the situation has concluded.

Classrooms:

1. Leaders/Volunteers follow evacuation routes provided by the door in each classroom. Leaders ensure everyone is out and close the door after exiting the room.

2. Kids' Classrooms– See Kids and Students Evacuation Procedure below.

Events

If the building needs evacuated, volunteers and staff at the event should follow procedure and evacuate.

1. Event Leader follows posted evacuation routes, is the last one to leave, closes the door, and exits the building.
2. Event Leader contacts Emergency Personnel and communicates with Emergency Personnel.
3. In as much as is possible, the Event Leader should account for every person attending the event.

Kids and Students

The Evacuation Procedure should be used for a fire alarm, a bomb threat, and any other times deemed necessary by the Pastor or Director.

Nursery:

1. Place all children in evacuation cribs and evacuate.
2. Adult Leader grabs the Evacuation Bag and leads children to the assigned area. An adult volunteer is last to leave and closes door.
3. Adult Leader gathers kids and they either sit on their tarps if possible or remain in the evacuation crib.
4. A volunteer holds their Flag so staff and parents can easily locate them.

Pre-School Classrooms:

1. Adult Leader lines up and counts kids. Adult volunteer grabs the Evacuation Bag, gets out the ropes, instructs the children they must hold the rope and leads the children out of the classroom to the assigned area outside. An adult volunteer is last to leave and closes door.
2. Adult Leader gathers kids and they sit on their tarps if possible.
3. A volunteer holds their Flag so staff and parents can easily locate them.

K-5th Classrooms:

1. Adult Leader lines up and counts kids. Adult Volunteer grabs the Evacuation Bag and leads the children out of the classroom to the assigned area outside. An adult volunteer is last to leave and closes door.
2. Adult Leader gathers kids and they sit on their tarps if possible.
3. A volunteer holds their Flag so staff and parents can easily locate them.

Middle School & High School

1. Adult Leader lines up and counts kids. An adult volunteer is last to leave and closes door.

2. Adult Leader gathers kids and proceeds to their designated area as indicated by the sign on their door.

All Children Dismissal Procedure for an Evacuation

1. Assigned Evacuation Areas:

NURSERY	HOME PLATE	CRIB
PRESCHOOL 1ST BASE		BLACK
K	2ND BASE	SILVER
1ST	2ND BASE	RED
2ND	2ND BASE	YELLOW
3RD	3RD BASE	GREEN/CAMO
4TH	3RD BASE	ORANGE
5TH	3RD BASE	BLUE
MIDDLE SCHOOL	LEFT FIELD	
HIGH SCHOOL	RIGHT FIELD	

2. Parents look for flag with their child’s grade number stand in one line and patiently wait for their child to be dismissed.
3. Leaders dismiss children to parents by making one line with Staff or Check-out Team, checking cards and releasing children. Parents should have their pick up card, if not, follow normal procedure.
4. The Pastor or Director will make decision if children need to be moved and communicate to staff.

7. Shooter

In cases of an on campus shooter or other imminent threat, all staff and leaders are to yell “Shooter!,” then as calmly as possible, direct kids, students, and adults through the following steps and call 911 as soon as possible.

1. **RUN** - The first step is to try to get out of the building as fast as possible. Gather children and students under your care and help them find the nearest exit.
2. **HIDE** - If you cannot get to an exit for fear of safety, then gather children and students into a room or place of covering and hide. Each room’s door is already locked. Do the following:
 - a. **Pull** - Pull the plastic tab that is over the door’s latch plate and securely close the door behind you.

- b. **Push** - Push the doorstopper on the floor under the door as hard and tight as possible.
 - c. **Wrap** - Take the looped strap hanging next to the doorway, put the loop around the triangle-looking door closer and tightly wrap it several times around, and tie it in a knot down through and around the triangle.
 - d. **Cover** - Cover any doors and windows through which the shooter might be able to get to you or see you with blinds, desks, chairs, cabinets, etc.
 - e. **Get Out** - Get out of the building through any exits or windows available to you. Use a chair to break glass, and lay towels, jackets, or any other materials over the broken glass for exiting.
3. **FIGHT** - If you are unable to run or hide and the shooter appears, start throwing things at the shooter. This can be shoes, books, chairs, anything. Do whatever you can to distract or even stop the shooter while others run for safety.

To assist us with communication, we ask that all leaders

- 1. Make sure to register their cell phone numbers with their Director and
- 2. Keep their phones nearby with an audible ring-tone (not on silent) during emergencies such as this.

8. Lockdown

In cases of an emergency requiring lockdown (such as a non-lethal physical threat), a Pastor or Director will announce that a lockdown is in effect in one or more of the following ways.

- Shouting/Sound System
- Radio
- Phone messaging

For this reason, we ask that all leaders

- 1. Register their cell phone numbers with their Director and
- 2. Keep their phones nearby with an audible ring-tone (not on silent).

In a lockdown, **NO ONE MOVES**: the situation is unstable, and the risks are too great to have anyone moving about the church until lockdown is lifted.

Sundays or Wednesdays

- 1. A staff member will call 911 and notify the police of the emergency.
- 2. Staff members check hallways and pull children out of the hallways and into the nearest classroom. Adult Leaders will shut the classroom door and pull the acrylic lock tab. Doors will automatically lock when this is done. Stay as far away from windows as possible. No one is to leave the classroom until a staff member unlocks the classroom door with a key and announces the lockdown is lifted.
- 3. A staff member will advise if we need to evacuate the building.

Before/In Between/After Services

Adults and Children – All people will be directed into classrooms where an adult leader is present in the room. The adult leader will shut the door as soon as the halls are clear and follow above procedure.

Lifting Lockdown

1. A Pastor or Director will lift the lockdown.
2. Staff members with permission from Director or Pastor will unlock all classrooms with key and communicate to leaders that the lockdown has been lifted.

Illness

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the kids in our care.

1. Awareness

The registration of child and student shall include awareness of any persistent medical conditions or mental health needs as well as instructions for providing care and assistance as needed.

2. Prevention

Leaders

We ask that our leaders

1. Wash their hands before going to their classrooms and environments
2. Disinfect our environments and toys after each service
3. Separate child from other kids and summon the authorized adult to pick up their child if any of the symptoms below are observed

Children's Symptoms

Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other kids when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, kids with the following symptoms should not be dropped off:

1. Fever of 100° or above, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours
2. Sore throat, green or yellow runny nose
3. Persistent cough, headache, significant body aches, chills, fatigue
4. skin infections, any unexplained skin rash (must be on medication for minimum of 24 hours)
5. Eye infections, red, watery
6. Other symptoms of communicable or infectious or typical childhood diseases

When in doubt, please observe the “Golden Rule.” Adherence to this policy is important to protect the health of all kids in our ministries.

3. Medication

It is the policy of the The Covenant Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medication to kids under our care. Medications should be administered by parents at home. Parents should also be notified of the Sick Child Policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted by parents or legal guardians for kids or students with potentially life-threatening conditions (e.g., asthma or severe allergic reactions) or for those attending overnight activities or trips. Parents or guardians of such kids should address their situation with the Director for kids or students to determine a plan of action.

4. Nursery

1. Eliminate any toys or objects that may present a choking hazard.
2. Always strap child into the changing station and never leave a child unattended.
3. After each session, please do the following;
 - a. Clean and disinfect toys in the nursery after each session.
 - b. Change bedding for each child and wash bedding at the end of day.
 - c. Disinfect changing station after each changing, dispose of dirty diapers in a closed container that kids cannot get into, then wash hands.
 - d. Pick-up the room, wash counters and tables.
4. For infants under 12 months of age, follow these practices to reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) and prevent suffocation:
 - a. Place baby on his/her back in a crib with a firm, tight-fitting mattress.
 - b. Do not put pillows, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, pillow-like bumper pads or pillow-like stuffed toys in the crib.
 - c. Consider using a sleeper instead of a blanket.
 - d. If you do use a blanket, place baby with feet to foot of the crib. Tuck a thin blanket around the crib mattress, covering baby only as high as his/her chest.
 - e. Use only a fitted bottom sheet specifically made for crib use.
5. Cribs - We use only cribs that meet current safety standards set by the Consumer Products Safety Commission.
6. Outlets - We cover all outlets.
7. Mesh Cribs
 - a. Mesh less than 1/4 inch in size, smaller than the tiny buttons on a baby's clothing.
 - b. Mesh with no tears, holes, or loose threads that could entangle a baby.
 - c. Mesh securely attached to top rail and floor plate.
 - d. Top rail cover with no tears or holes.
 - e. If staples are used, they are not missing, loose. or exposed.

5. Preschool Bathroom Procedures

1. Responsibilities of Parents
Parents should toilet their kids immediately prior to a scheduled church activity.
If the child is not toilet trained, call the authorized adult to change the child.
2. Responsibilities and Restroom Guidelines for Volunteers

1. Never be the only adult alone behind closed doors with a child.
2. Spend as little time as possible in the bathroom.
3. A child is escorted to the bathroom only upon their request or if the child shows obvious signs of needing to go. When possible, a restroom break may be considered, allowing several kids to go at the same time.
4. When a child is being escorted to the restroom, the other qualified worker(s) must supervise the class.
5. Spend as little time as possible in the bathroom.
6. The adult or teenage worker escorting the child is not to enter the child's stall unless absolutely necessary. When modesty permits, the worker should stand in the hall or at the hall door entrance with the door ajar. Kids should be encouraged to help themselves with procedures.
7. If the child requests a worker's help in the stall, the worker should explain to the child how to help himself. If the worker's help is essential, the worker should avoid direct contact with the child, and keep the stall door open. Use the "hand-over-hand" method. This technique enables the worker to place his/her hands over the child's hands in helping with fastening clothes, wiping skin, and the like. The parent(s) should then be informed that extra help is needed at home teaching the child to use the facilities independently.
8. Both worker and child should wash their hands thoroughly after toileting.
9. Worker and child should return promptly to the classroom, spending as little time in the bathroom as possible.

6. Food Allergies & Other Health Conditions

1. At registration, parents will provide all necessary information regarding their child's/student's food allergies or health conditions (e.g., asthma, epi pens, etc.)
2. These allergies will be made clearly available to each leader working with that child/student or preparing snacks in any way.
3. Any instructions regarding health conditions will be provided by the parent and made available to each leader working with that child/student.
4. Each week, the day's or night's snack will be visibly posted at each Check-in point for authorized adults to request a different snack for their child/student.
5. As a general policy we will avoid serving any nuts (including peanut butter) or shellfish and will provide dairy alternatives whenever possible.

Facilities

1. All classrooms have windows in either walls or doors.
2. Each room will have lock-down tabs installed.
3. Each room will have evacuation and severe weather procedures posted.
4. Each single person bathroom will have door stops installed.
5. Nursery and Pre-K rooms will have outlets covered.
6. Doors will be kept open unless there is a window into the room.
7. Every room has access to least two exits in case of fire.
8. The Nursery will have at least one evacuation crib.
9. Diaper changing stations should be equipped with straps.
10. First Aid Kits stocked by the
 - a. Director for Kids Ministry and will be located in the FLC Kitchen, Kids Supply Room, and the Nursery.
 - b. Director for Student Ministry and will be located in the Main Kitchen and Student Supply Room.

HEALTHY:

Behavior
& Leader Expectations

Management

Care & Behavior Management

We want to provide a safe and positive experience for our students and an enjoyable, fulfilling ministry experience for our adult volunteers. Therefore, extreme behavior can not be tolerated and adults must enforce our expectations for students and commit to following our plan for behavior management.

1. Ratios

The following ratios will be observed in order to provide the best care and healthiest ministry possible. For ratio purposes, a “leader” is defined as 6th grade and older and an “adult” is defined as anyone 18 years and older.

LEADER : CHILD RATIOS

Wednesdays (Small Group Model) AND Trips

1:8 for students in grades 6-12 (minimum leader age of 18 with two years of separation)

1:8 for kids in grades 3-5 (minimum leader age of 9th grade)

1:6 for kids in grades K-2 (minimum leader age of 9th grade)

1:6 for kids ages 3-4 (minimum leader age of 8th grade)

1:4 for kids ages 0-2 (minimum leader age of 6th grade)

Sundays (Classroom Model)

1:25 for students in grades 7-12 (minimum leader age of 18 with two years of separation)

1:15 for kids in grades 3-6 (minimum leader age of 9th grade)

1:10 for kids in grades K-2 (minimum leader age of 9th grade)

1:6 for kids ages 3-4 (minimum leader age of 8th grade)

1:4 for kids ages 0-2 (minimum leader age of 6th grade)

ADULT : CHILD RATIOS

Assuming “leader” ratios above are met

1:24 for age 3 to grade 12

1:6 for Nursery

2. Child/Student Expectations

Engage.

Do: Listen to speakers, teachers, and small group leaders. Play the games. Participate in activities. Join in discussions.

Don't: Talk with friends during teaching, instructions, or group discussions. Send or read text messages. Listen to a music player. Sit, stand, or wander off alone or away from the group.

Respect.

Do: Listen to adults or other students when it's their turn to talk. Throw your garbage in trash cans. Be careful with furniture, games, equipment, etc. Tell an adult if you break something. Keep what you hear confidential. Use kind and honorable language.

Don't: Talk with friends when it's someone else's turn to talk. Run in the hallways. Wrestle on church campus. Be loud in the courtyard or hallways. Gossip with other friends about what you hear. Engage in teasing, bullying, or fighting. Use foul language. Show public displays of affection with a boyfriend or girlfriend.

3. Leading a Large Group

It is the responsibility of a speaker/leader to *gain and* retain the attention of the students. It can not be expected that students will automatically grant attention to the speaker/leader. If the speaker/leader does not have the attention of the students then he/she must respectfully employ a strategic means of gaining and retaining their attention such as:

1. "In just moment I will count to 3 and when I get to 3 I want everyone's attention to be on me with no talking to your friends. Ready? Here we go...1...2...3."
2. "If you are not talking with your friends and are paying attention to me, then raise your hand. As soon as everyone has their hands raised, we will continue."
3. Think ahead and come up with your own strategic means of gaining attention.
4. Be clear and concise with any instructions. Plan ahead, prepare what you are going to say.
5. Use stories, creativity, and variance in vocal inflection.
6. Earn and keep their attention...never demand it.

4. Leading a Small Group

Your primary focus is relationships before content. Students (and adults alike) have a tendency to stray from the topic at hand very easily. Sometimes that's good. Go with what's important to them and their spiritual formation. And, it's okay to give them a little space once in awhile. But, it is important to try to keep them on topic as much as you can. Like a skilled fisherman, a small group leader should try to reel them in gently but firmly while giving them some slack now and then so as not to snap the line. It is also usually very helpful to have a set method of taking turns or managing the discussion such as:

1. "Shark bait!... Ooo ha ha!" (a reference to the movie *Finding Nemo*), "Squirrel!" (a reference to the movie *Up*)
2. "While we discuss these questions we will go around the circle to hear each person's answer to the questions."

3. “Please raise your hands if you have a response to this question.”
4. Taking a cue from the old movie “Lord of the Flies”, find a “conch” of some sort (a shoe, a hat, tennis ball, or even a real conch) to use as the symbol of the power to speak. Whoever has the “conch” has the power to speak. All others must listen.

5. Leading Individuals

1. Each small group leader is responsible for the management of his/her own students’ behavior during every part of the night.
2. Each small group leader should be near the students of his/her small group during every part of the night. (Note: This includes sitting near them on the floor during large group teaching time.)
3. Leaders should communicate together. We’re a team. If any leader has to manage the behavior of any kid/student, he/she should let that kid’s/student’s small group leader know.
4. We have adopted four steps for Behavior Management. All small group leaders must commit to following this process. All four steps absolutely must be done with the utmost care, patience, kindness, and respect for the student’s dignity and your respectability.
 - a. **Request**—Ask the student to quiet down, pay attention, calm down, and so forth.
 - b. **Reset**—Move the student to a different area, or move yourself into their space.
 - c. **Remove**—Take the student out of the room. It should be the last resort and done without anger or frustration, with the intent of talking with the student about what is going on. Please inform the Director of this step taken at the end of the night. The Director will call and inform the parents.
 - d. **Release**—Take the student to the Pastor’s office until the Pastor can take over. Parents will be called and the student will be released to their parents/authorized adult for the day/night.
5. As you’re following these steps above please be sure to also ...
 - a. **Be clear on what they’re doing wrong**
Address the problem directly. If it is causing a problem with the whole group, help the student to see how his or her actions are distracting everyone. Usually a student will know, but some are so self-absorbed, they don’t realize how they are affecting those around them.
 - b. **Show grace.**
Be quick to show grace in this situation. You did it—you initiated the conversation and asked them to make the change. Be strong and firm, but followed quickly by love, mercy, and grace. The more seasoned the youth worker, the easier it usually is to show grace. If you are new to youth ministry, carefully temper your response. A line I used last night that had an immediate and positive response was, “You will never do that again.” Sometimes solving a behavioral issue will be that simple.
 - c. **Look for and encourage correct behavior**
Be on the lookout for when the student follows your rules—when you see it, make sure you comment on it and encourage the student when he or she has a good night. Your affirmation will be meaningful and restorative.
 - d. **Follow up later after a set amount of time**
If appropriate, set a follow-up date to make sure that the student has made the appropriate changes. Use this time to build a stronger relational connection with your

student—the bond will prevent it from happening again—or if it does happen again, you'll have an open door to correcting the behavior.

- e. **Discuss the matter with the Director.**

Leader Expectations

In order to maintain integrity of the ministry and the unity of the team, it is important for certain expectations to be clearly defined and communicated. Please carefully read and commit to the expectations listed below.

1. Spiritual Life

Attention to your spiritual health is of most importance. The heart of a true leader is a prayerful one. The mind of a godly leader is a biblical one. We encourage the following:

1. Prayerful Dependence on God. Daily prayer each morning sets your heart in the right direction. We encourage you to model your daily prayer after the prayer of Jesus (Matthew 6:9-13)
2. Reliance on the Word. Filling your mind with the Word of God will help you understand the world around you from God's perspective.
3. Adoration of God. Give honor and worship to God in a variety of ways throughout your day and week. He deserves our gifts of praise and not just our requests for help.
4. Church Community. Meet regularly with other believers for worship, learning, and spiritual support. You can't do it alone!

2. Appearance

"People look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart." The first phrase is not the heart of the verse, but it's the truth. Students and adults will base their impression of our ministry on their impression of us. For this reason, please wear clean appropriate clothing suitable for the activity.

4. Dating

Acknowledging that one of the most fulfilling relationships in Scripture and life is the one that a man and woman share, we recognize that a leader may establish a relationship with another leader of the other gender. We also recognize the greatest visible destroyer of ministries is sexual immorality. The following policies should be understood in that light.

1. Our focus is to be on the Lord and the students. Leaders involved in a dating relationship should model appropriate behavior. Particularly during church functions.
2. No adult leader will ever date a student.
3. In the case of premarital sex, extramarital sex, or a homosexual incident by those who are classified as "small group leaders," "teachers," "communicators," "coaches," "directors," or "coordinators," as well as those who serve on "development teams," or "alignment teams," suspension from ministry leadership MAY occur according to the

prayerful and careful discretion of the Pastoral Staff. All other positions will be considered on a case by case basis.

4. Remember, if charges against any leader are substantiated, the goal of the church will include 1) the safety and well-being of any victim (see page 12) and 2) the pursuit of reconciliation and restoration to the fellowship of Christ for any perpetrator (Matthew 18:15-35; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11).

5. Character expectations

1. **To keep our integrity**

The motives, attitude, and actions of staff should be completely transparent to any observer. Our honesty should be testable by Luke 16:10-12.

- a. Faithfulness in little things—being on time, keeping our word, filling requests on time, following through with students and other responsibilities.
- b. Faithfulness in money—turning in receipts, being very cautious with event cash and petty cash, remembering people have sacrificially given that dollar.
- c. Faithfulness in that which belongs to another—treating all the church equipment and property with utmost respect.

2. **To be teachable**

Nobody is perfect. We must maintain an attitude of humility with a desire to grow in our faith and abilities as a leader. Therefore we ask that all our leaders attend worship services, team meetings, and training sessions, as well as continue to read and learn from others with a teachable spirit.

3. **To be an appropriate role model**

Leadership responsibilities naturally require frequent interaction with students and their families, as well as the community. Leaders come into Christian ministry from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs—especially in the gray areas of Christianity. Because leaders are role models, they must use careful discretion when choosing movies, music, etc., for ministry activities. Please see the policies set on page

4. **To develop a servant's heart**

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant...He humbled Himself, and became obedient...even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:3-8).

6. Communication

Communication between team members and with the church staff is very important. Moreover, the right kind of communication and the correct process of communicating are just as important. The Director is responsible for communicating with leaders and teachers regarding general ministry plans and schedules. Each leader and teacher is responsible for communicating with the Director regarding all serious ideas before concrete plans, and schedules are made.

7. Childcare During Leader Meetings

11/02/2015

Regarding child care and or supervision for youth during leader meetings:

1. The Directors will always offer childcare and/or supervision for the children/teens of our volunteers during our monthly leader meetings for Student Life, Covenant Kids.
2. Child care and supervision will consist of at least one screened adult.
3. All adult providers must be screened.
4. The Directors will first seek to fill this role with volunteers. However, if it proves too difficult, they can hire someone if necessary and charge the expense to the NextGen Leadership Development budget.
5. We will always ask for RSVP but will provide no matter what. If there are no children, the provider will be released early with payment in full for the amount of time arranged.
6. Teenaged volunteers can assist as well consistent with the policy described in Section A.I.2.C on page 9.
7. We will Parent in the classroom is okay. Must get background check.

8. Parents in Room

11/02/2015

Regarding parents who wish to remain in the room with their child:

1. We recognize the reality of separation anxiety for many children and parents and want parents to feel completely welcome to remain in the room with their child.
2. If the parent wishes to continue doing so after four weeks of remaining in the room with their child, the parent will be asked to submit to a background check.
3. If they decline, they will be asked to no longer remain with their child.

9. Kids Participating on Stage during Worship Services

Draft

01/12/2016

(Under

Review)

Regarding the engagement of kids in the main worship services, here are some guiding principles for the involvement of kids or students in weekend worship services.

1. Anything related to kids being on stage during the worship service must gain the full support of the Director and of both the NextGen Pastor and the Lead Pastor. Pastoral staff meetings are Tuesdays, 8:30am. This includes:
 - a. Names of Scripture readers, musicians, scripture readers, and communion helpers
 - b. Names of soloists and small group ensembles along with their songs and the date on which they'll sing
 - c. Skits and videos
 - d. Dates and song selection of large group performances
 - e. Final approval always comes from the Lead Pastor
2. Families need plenty of advance notice to allow for proper calendaring and rehearsal

- a. Rule of thumb: 1 month notice minimum. This will require that the song must be chosen and prepared prior to notification. This includes
 - i. Actions video
 - ii. Printed lyrics and (if applicable) lyrics video for kids
 - iii. Access to rehearsal audio/video
- b. Preferred: Quarterly or even annual notification

I, the undersigned, signify that I have read the entirety of the NextGen Policies for Safe & Healthy Ministry for The Covenant Church (The Evangelical Covenant Church of Bemidji) and am responsible for knowing the contents thereof. I agree to abide by these policies.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

This document,

“NextGen Policies for Safe and Healthy Ministry,”

written to govern the practices of the
NextGen Ministries of
The Covenant Church
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www.bemidjicovenant.com
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is an adaptation, with permission, of

“Making Churches Safer” by



The Evangelical Covenant Church

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Revised September 12, 2013
8303 W Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631
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and

“Youth Ministry Management Tools”
by Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot, Mike Work

and includes the influences of

“Emergency Procedures of Grace Church: Bath Campus”
Grace Church
211 N. Cleveland-Massillon Rd., Akron, OH 44333
www.GraceOhio.org

“General Policies: Construction Zone Policies and Procedures 2011”
Bear Creek Bible Church
1555 N Tarrant Pkwy, Keller, TX 76248
www.bcbc.org

“Northpoint Child Wellness Policy,” and “Northpoint Lost Child Policy”
Northpoint Community Church
4350 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30022

www.Northpoint.org

www.InsideNorthpoint.org

FORMS

Standard Interview Questions

Become blameless and pure, kids of God...In which you shine like the stars in the universe. Philippians 2:15

Before an interview, the volunteer should have filled out both the application and informed consent form and the policy for reducing the risk of abuse should be clearly explained.

Welcome each server of the Lord with a pure heart, helping him/her to understand who you are, the ministries at work, and what your vision is for the future of the church, in order that each of you can work together towards one goal.

Spiritual Background

Briefly describe your relationship with Christ and how it impacts your life

How do you keep your spiritual life fresh?

Church Experience

What brought you to this church?

How long have you been attending this church?

Are you a member here?

Ministry Experience

How did you hear about this ministry?

Why are you interested in serving in this ministry?

Describe your experience in related ministries or service.

What do you believe your spiritual gifts are?

Where do you believe you can best serve?

Are you currently involved in any other ministries?

Is there anything about our procedures or the application you wish to discuss or have clarified?

Standard Reference Contact Form

Please fill out a copy of this form for each reference. Four references are recommended.

Person Making Contact:

Name of Applicant:

Name of Contact:

Title of Contact:

Name of Church (if applicable):

Date and Time of Contact:

Method of Contact (e.g., phone, letter):

Questions:

1. How long have you known [name of person]?
2. Describe this person's character.
3. Share any experience you have had with this person in a similar ministry.
4. Do you have any concerns to share with us?

Accident/Injury Report

Report any accident or injury as soon as possible

Name:

Grade:

Address:

Date of Birth:

Date and Time of Injury:

Phone:

Who Was Notified (include phone number):

What Happened:

Treatment Required:

Follow-up Needed:

Filled Out By: Date:

Incident Report Form

Reason for report:

Date of incident:

Time:

Place of incident:

Name of Reporter:

Title:

Child Protective Services Case Number and contact:

Name(s) of Child(ren)/students:

Age:

Age:

Briefly describe what happened:

What action did you take?:

Has the incident been resolved? Yes No

Explain:

Were there any witnesses? Yes No

Insurance Company Informed:

Date:

Conference Superintendent Notified:

Date:

Names:

Signatures (if possible):

Report submitted to:

Date:

Incident Report Form for Staff

Date contact made with complainant's/complainants' family(ies):

Name of staff person:

Title:

Name of caregiver:

Briefly describe what complainant(s) says/say happened:

Is additional investigation needed? Yes No

Explain:

Was the incident reported to local authorities? Yes No

By whom:

Date:

Date contact made with accused:

Name of staff person:

Title:

Name of caregiver:

Briefly describe what accused says happened:

Reported to:

Time:

Date:

Investigating Police Officer:

Star/Badge #:

Police Case Number:

Child Toileting Parental Consent Form

Because the Covenant Church seeks high safety standards to protect the kids who participate in our programming, we are requesting your informed consent regarding your child's restroom or toileting needs when he/she is under the care of the nursery/toddler room or preschool staff. The members of the staff of these rooms have been instructed and trained according to the Restroom Guidelines that are on the reverse side of this form. The staff and volunteer workers will take every reasonable precaution to provide a safe and healthy environment for all kids while they are involved in the ministries of the church.

Permission for Diaper Changing Care

I give permission, when necessary, for one adult or teenage worker to change my child's diaper under the Nursery Guidelines of appropriate care and hygiene.

Name of Child (kids):

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Permission for Restroom Care

I give permission, when necessary, for one adult or teenage worker to escort my child to the restroom. I understand that my child should be capable of independently caring for his/her restroom needs, but if requested, the worker may assist with basic tasks of care and hygiene.

Name of Child (kids):

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

