

True Life Child Protection Policy

I. General Section

1) General Purpose Statement

True Life seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of True Life from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers.

2) Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years who are participating in our programs and activities. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

3) Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work for True Life in the programs and activities that are for our children will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) Six Month Rule

Excepting special circumstances, no applicant will be considered for work with children until he/she has been actively involved with True Life for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation of the suitability of the applicant for working with children. b) **Written**

Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the church. c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position. d) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at church. e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all adults seeking to work with children at True Life. f) **Parental Approval**

A parent will be required to complete the form “Verification of a Clear Criminal Record” for

their minor child who is seeking to work with children at True Life. Before a background check is run, prospective adult workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he/she will be unable to work with children.

An offense involving children will disqualify the person from working with children at True Life. Generally, convictions for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.

4) Scheduling Workers

At least two workers will always be scheduled for programs and activities with children. At least one of the scheduled workers must be an adult. True Life does not schedule programs or events in which a child will be alone with one worker.

5) 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, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In this event, he/she should report the suspicion immediately to the children's pastor or childcare supervisor 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 this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the accused shall be removed from the situation and the childcare supervisor shall immediately be reported to.

In the situation of either suspicion of abuse outside of the church or alleged report of abuse occurring during our programs or activities, the Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor or childcare supervisor and the worker who reported the incident will complete the Child Abuse Response Checklist.

6) 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.

7) Medications Policy

It is the policy of True Life not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the childcare supervisor before the program or event to develop a plan of action.

II. Children's Ministry Specific Policies Section

The policies in the following section apply only to the children's department and not the youth department. The children's ministry department provides programs and activities for newborns through sixth graders.

1) Check-in/Check-out Procedure

On Sunday mornings, every child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the "child check" in order to pick up the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," the children's pastor or childcare supervisor will be contacted. The children's pastor or childcare supervisor will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

2) Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at True Life. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

3) Discipline Policy

It is the policy of True Life 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. Workers should consult with the Children's Pastor if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

4) Restroom Guidelines

It is our policy to provide designated bathroom breaks during all of our programs and activities. Workers should escort children as a group to the hallway bathroom. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker will open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

It may be necessary for one worker to stay in the room with children who do not need to use the restroom and one worker to take a child/children to the bathroom. In this event, the worker remaining in the room should prop the door open until the other worker returns.

On Sunday mornings and select occasions, True Life will have hall monitors to assist the worker as needed in taking the children to the bathroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

5) Incident Report Forms

An incident report form will be completed by a worker after their shift in any situation in which the worker has reason to feel uneasy or be concerned about the child's welfare. Workers must always fill out an incident report form for any injuries that occur during our activities and programs.

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

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers 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 in addition to the worker's supervisor.

If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. At the end of his/her shift, the worker will fill out an incident report form and leave it in a designated place in the children's pastor's office.

III. Youth Ministry Specific Policies Section

The policies in the following section apply only to the youth department. The youth ministry department provides programs and activities for sixth graders through high school.

1) Incident Report Forms

An incident report form will be completed by a leader/worker after the meeting/event in any situation in which the worker has reason to feel uneasy or be concerned about the youth's welfare. Workers must always fill out an incident report form for any injuries that occur during our activities and programs.

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

1. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the Youth Pastor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
2. At the end of his/her shift, the leader will fill out an incident report form and leave it in a designated place in the Admin office.

IV. Attachments

See attached forms.

Incident Report Form

Complete this report under any of the following situations:

- A. A child becomes ill or receives an injury that requires First Aid or medical treatment while in your care;
 - B. A child receives a bump or blow to the head or other visible injury regardless of treatment;
 - C. A child is transported by ambulance from your facility;
 - D. An unusual or unexpected incident occurs that jeopardizes the safety of a child, such as a child left unattended, there is a vehicle accident (with or without injuries), or a child is exposed to a threatening person or situation;
 - E. There is an allegation or reasonable suspicion of abuse of a child.
- Important:** Also fill out Suspicion of Abuse Report Checklist

Date of Incident: Time of Incident:

Name(s) and Age(s) of Child(ren)
Involved:

Contact Information for Child(ren)
Involved:

Parent/Guardian: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email:

Nature of
Injury/Incident:

Location of Incident (Classroom and
Event):

Description of
Incident:

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Quote the child's words about the incident
verbatim:

Quote parent/guardian('s) words about the incident verbatim (if
applicable):

Was the above
information:

Reported to you by someone else? If so, who:

OR Directly observed/witnessed by
you?

Action(s) Taken: (Check all that
apply.)

Provided First Aid What/When _____

Call placed to 911 By Whom _____

Taken to hospital By Whom _____

Notified Parent/Guardian Who/When:

Notified Church Official Who/When: _____

Notified Authorities Who/When: _____

Other _____

Witnesses to
Incident:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Your Name/Position: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Church Official: _____ Date: _____

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Child Abuse Response Checklist

To Be Completed By Elder/Professional Staff
Persons

In the case of an allegation of child/youth sexual abuse (a person under the age of eighteen), the volunteer, elder or professional staff person who observes or to whom the information is given is required by True Life Fellowship and by Texas state law to complete the tasks listed below. This form is to be completed and submitted to state authorities and our insurance within 24 hours. Date and initial as each step is completed.

Date of Incident: _____ Location: _____

First responder steps:

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 1. If the first responder is a professional staff member or elder: Remove the accused from the situation and suspend the accused from duties involving children/youth.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ If the first responder is a volunteer or paid child care personnel: Remove the accused from the situation and immediately notify closest

available elder or professional staff person who will suspend the accused. If the elder or staff person is not the department director, the person reporting will inform the appropriate director as soon as possible. If the alleged victim is a child under the age of eleven (11) or if the incident took place during a children's ministry event, the children's pastor (Mikaela Cain) will be contacted.

If the alleged victim is a child between the ages eleven (11) and eighteen (18) or if the incident took place during a youth group event, the youth pastor (Christopher Johnson) will be contacted.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 2. The first responder will complete an incident report form, documenting everything done and said. If the responder is a volunteer or child care personnel, the elder/staff to whom the volunteer/child care personnel reported will assist to complete the incident report form.

Ministerial staff persons only:

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 3. Immediately notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim and respond to their questions and concerns.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 4. Immediately notify state authorities. Failure to report any suspected, alleged or witnessed abuse is a crime.

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Date: _____ Initial: _____ 5. Immediately notify the senior pastor.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 6. Immediately notify the church administrator (Laura DeMello) to begin the internal and pastoral care process:

Date: _____ Initial: _____ a. notify the insurance carrier of the incident immediately and comply with its investigation, if any;

Date: _____ Initial: _____ b. cooperate with legal and state authorities in their investigations, if any;

Date: _____ Initial: _____ c. prepare a written statement and designate a

spokesperson to respond to media inquiries;

Date: _____ Initial: _____ d. provide assistance to the alleged victim and his/her family in obtaining counseling or referral to a mental health professional, if needed;

Date: _____ Initial: _____ e. respond to the needs of the families of the alleged victim and the accused to seek a redemptive solution for all involved;

Date: _____ Initial: _____ f. inform the affected volunteer(s) and paid staff members of the need for confidentiality, and;

Date: _____ Initial: _____ g. consider and respond to the concerns of other parents.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 7. The department director will respond to the pastoral care concerns of persons within the department.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 8. Within five (5) days of the alleged abuse, the elder/staff who made the original report will make a written report and send one copy to the state agency and will give another copy to the senior pastor.

Date: _____ Initial: _____ 9. Make written reports of persons contacted and actions taken.

Name(s) and contact for persons completing this report:

Name: _____ E-mail:

Name: _____ E-mail:

Name: _____ E-mail:

Name: _____ E-mail:

Verification of a Clear Criminal Record

To be completed by a Parent or Legal Guardian of the youth applicant.

This form is for , who

(Youth name)

currently lives at ;

(Address of
residence)

who has applied to serve in a position at True Life Fellowship Church, 1600 E. Old Settlers Blvd., Round Rock, TX 78664.

By signing below, I verify that the person listed above is a youth participant (age 17 or younger) representing True Life Fellowship as a volunteer. I also hereby certify that the above person has, to the best of my knowledge, no criminal conviction (felony or misdemeanor) record of:

- Violence against another person
- Sexual crimes involving children, youth or adults
- Use, or distribution, of illicit drugs or controlled substances
- Property crime

Month and year when youth will turn 18:

(Signature) (Date)

(Printed Name) (Relationship to Youth)