

GREENLEAF FRIENDS CHURCH

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Board of Christian Education

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Board of Christian Education
(Revised January 2013)

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POLICY FORMS

GFC – Form 1	Application Screening Form for Children and Youth Workers
GFC – Form 2	Background Release Form
GFC – Form 3	Applicant Interview Form
GFC – Form 4	Reference Contact Form
GFC – Form 5	Incident and Suspected Child Abuse Report Form
GFC – Form 6	Accident Report Form

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GFC – Law Info 1	Idaho State Law 16-1619: Reporting of Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect
GFC – Law Info 2	Idaho State Law 18-8329: Adult Criminal Sex Offenders

GREENLEAF FRIENDS CHURCH

CHILD PROTECTION AND ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Board of Christian Education

I. Background Principles

Safeguarding the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of young people and other vulnerable individuals may be one of the most important responsibilities for ministry organizations. The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical, mental, and sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults has claimed the attention of our nation and society. We at Greenleaf Friends Church (GFC) are deeply aware of the responsibilities associated with caring for, teaching, and training children.

Abuse accusations within a ministry can demoralize everyone involved – the victim, the victim’s parents, the ministry and its leaders, the family of the abuser, and the community. The greatest impact is on the victim who has been abused. The trauma is potentially insurmountable.

As a caring church, sensitive to the needs of our families, it is of utmost importance to establish a policy for all persons, paid or volunteer, who minister to/with children, youth, or vulnerable adults under our care and supervision. GFC will take necessary steps, both legally and morally, to prevent and report the abuse of children to/with whom we minister.

This policy reflects Greenleaf Friends Church’s commitment to provide:

- A. Protective supervision and care for all children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- B. Guidance and protection for paid and volunteer workers who minister to/with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- C. Protection for the various ministries of GFC.
- D. Information and instruction regarding policies and procedures relating to the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults and prevention of abuse.

II. Definitions

The following definitions will be used for the purposes of the Abuse Prevention and Protection Policy of GFC:

A. **Abuse:** Any act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk or serious harm.

1. **Emotional Abuse** – threats, critical words, demeaning terms or names, or depriving a child of any sign of affection or other similar spoken or unspoken emotional cruelty. It conveys a message that the person is worthless and undeserving of love and care.

Behavioral Indicators of Emotional Abuse: Severe depression, withdrawal from activities, severe lack of self-esteem, threatens or attempts suicide, potential speech or eating disorders, high need for adult approval, extreme passive/aggressive behavior.

2. **Sexual Abuse** – sexual contact between a child/youth and an adult (or older, more powerful youth). A sexually abused person also may be physically and psychologically dependent upon the abuser.

Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse: Advanced sexual knowledge or behavior, depression – often crying without reason, promiscuous behavior, withdrawal from activities, running away, walking or sitting difficulties, bruising/bleeding in the genital area, frequent headaches/stomachaches, extreme fatigue.

3. **Physical Abuse** – intentional, deliberate behavior that causes bodily harm. It can take several forms, including assault, shaking, kicking, choking, bone fractures – non-accidental injuries, in general.

Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse: Hostile, aggressive behavior toward others, fear of parents and other adults, destructive behavior (self, others, property), unexplainable bruises or fractures, burns, facial injuries (often reoccurring), sexually transmitted diseases.

4. **Neglect** – meaning a child or vulnerable adult who is without proper parental care and control, or subsistence, education, medical or other care or control necessary for his well-being because of the conduct or omission of his parents, guardian or other custodian or their neglect or refusal to provide them.

Behavioral Indicators of Neglect: Depressed, poor impulse control, regularly displays fatigue, steals food, reports that no caregiver is at home, poor hygiene, lack of basic food and clothing, lack of education as required by law.

B. **Child/Youth:** An unmarried person under the age of eighteen (18) who is not an emancipated minor.

C. **Vulnerable Adult:** A cognitive, emotional, or physical impairment for a person over the age of eighteen (18).

D. **Staff worker:** A person paid by the church to perform a specific function (e.g., Youth Coordinator, Assistant Pastor, Children’s Coordinator, Senior Pastor, Secretary, or Janitor).

- E. **Volunteer Worker:** A person who does not receive pay and performs some sort of ministry or work (e.g., Sunday school teacher or small group leader).
- F. **Occasional/Emergency Worker:** A volunteer who does not have a regular assignment and serves as a substitute when needed.
- G. **Church Officer:** Persons who are duly elected or appointed to fill an office in the church.
- H. **Two Adult Rule:** Adults working with children should observe the “Two Adult Rule” during all church sponsored events where feasible (“Rule of Three” if the “Two Adult Rule” is not feasible). This suggests that an adult is never with a (single) child/youth or vulnerable adult, without another person being present, except in public places in view of others or with parental permission. It is recommended that the second adult person be of the opposite sex. A single adult with many children (more than 8) is permissible if the two adult rule is not possible.

III. Specific Policies

- A. **Screening Requirements:** In order to adequately protect our children and vulnerable adults, these are the procedures for screening paid and volunteer ministry staff.
 1. All NEW workers, paid and volunteer, who minister to/work with children or vulnerable adults must complete an “Application Screening Form for Children or Youth Work” (GFC – Form 1) to be filed in the church office or safe area. These forms are confidential and will be kept in a locked area.
 2. In addition to “A-1” above, all NEW workers who minister to/with children or vulnerable adults must have an “Applicant Interview” (GFC – Form 3) conducted by an appropriate interviewer (e.g., Christian Ed Clerk, Pastor, or AWANA Commander). The results of the interview will be kept in a locked file with the person's completed Screening Form.
 3. All volunteer candidates must have regularly (average 3 times/month) attended GFC for six months or more before they will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. (Exception: AWANA workers must have regularly attended a local Evangelical Christian Church for at least six months, must be screened by AWANA leadership, and must allow for criminal background checks as prescribed by this policy).
 4. All workers paid and volunteer, who minister to/work with children or vulnerable adults must agree in writing that they have read and agree to follow GFC abuse prevention policies.
 5. All volunteer workers who minister to/work with children or vulnerable adults, and all paid staff, even if they do not work with children, must agree in writing to allow GFC to conduct both state and federal criminal background checks (GFC – Form 2). Background checks will be performed every three years.

B. **Locked File:** Contents of the “locked file” should be kept CONFIDENTIAL AT ALL TIMES. Access to these records will be restricted to:

1. The Senior Pastor or appointed designee.
2. The Presiding Clerk of the local meeting.
3. The Clerk of the Elders of the local meeting.
4. The Clerk of the Education Committee.

C. **Restrictions:**

1. Any person who may pose a threat to children, youth or vulnerable adults will be prohibited from working in any ministry, program or event involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Persons who have a founded report of abuse against another person of any age, have a criminal record which includes any crime of violence, or are under investigation of either sexual or physical abuse are NOT eligible for any type of volunteer or paid work with children at GFC.

If there is a previous conviction for another crime not including abuse against another person or crime of violence, there must be a lapse of one year from the time of conviction before serving with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

If there are multiple previous convictions (not including abuse against another person) or if there are any crimes of violence against another person of any age, applicants will need to be screened for determination of risk and approved by the Clerk of the Education Committee and Senior Pastor before serving with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

2. Adults volunteering to work with any ministry, program, or event must have attended GFC for at least six (6) months before they will be considered for ministry to/with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Exceptions might be made for people who are well-known, for people with special expertise, or on a case-by-case basis as approved by the local Christian Education Committee, Elders, or in compliance with local church policies.
3. Current and prospective workers with children within GFC shall be screened as directed by this policy.

D. **Two Adult (Person) Rule:** Adults working with children should observe the “Two Adult Rule” (See II –H under Definitions).

If the Two Adult Rule is not possible, then the “Rule of Three” is mandatory (See section II-I under Definitions). When exercising this discretion, consideration should be given to special circumstances, such as overnight trips. The age and capacity of ministry participants should be considered when approving the Rule of Three.

Limited Exception: Limited exceptions to the Two Adult Rule and/or the Rule of Three include One-on-One Spiritual Counseling (e.g., Samuel School mentors and pastoral discipling) and Emergency Situations (e.g., isolation of a child during illness for the safety of the child and other children and workers).

It is recommended that One-on-One Spiritual Counseling sessions or meetings be done in a public place (e.g., at a café, restaurant, or coffee shop) or in a location near an accountable witness (e.g., in the foyer next to the office of a present secretary/pastor).

One-on-One Spiritual Counseling outside of public places (e.g., at a mentor or pastor's house) should only occur with prior written approval from the minor's parent or guardian and the advanced notification and consent of the ministry supervisor.

All Spiritual Counseling situations should be limited in duration (30-45 minutes) and frequency (3-4 sessions).

- E. **Physical Contact:** Adults working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults are required to use appropriate physical contact at all times, including, but not limited to, touching a child's hand, side rather than frontal hugging, and no touching of private body areas. Appropriate touching takes into account the situation and location. For example, a hug may be appropriate in a public location, but not in a private location in the church.
- F. **Discipline:** Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming himself or another individual. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the ministry activity coordinator and/or parent or guardian.
- G. **Immediate Reporting:** Adults working with children must immediately report to the specific program supervisor, any behavior that appears to be abusive or inappropriate. Any physical or mental injury in evidence on any child in their care must be reported as required by state and local laws. In Idaho, all suspected child abuse cases must be reported within 24 hours to law enforcement and/or the Department of Health and Welfare.
- H. **Occasional/Emergency Workers:** There may be situations where "occasional" volunteer workers are required to fulfill a specific ministry with children. Occasional workers may serve as a substitute worker though they may not have been through worker screening or training, but may only serve alongside a worker who has been through the screening and training. These situations are described in II-E and II-F under Definitions. Please refer to section II-H for the "two adult rule."
- I. **Annual Review:** All policies, procedures, and guidelines with respect to Child Protection and Abuse Prevention shall be reviewed each year in March to make certain they are up to date. This will be performed by the Christian Education Committee. It is vital that all church staff and previously screened children workers are informed by letter of all policy changes that occur. The Clerk of the Education Committee, or designated appointee, is charged with this responsibility.

J. **Classroom Observation:** It is strongly recommended that windows be present in all classroom doors or other areas used by children. Church leaders and/or Sunday School Superintendents are expected to regularly observe all activities and frequently visit all areas.

K. **Restroom Visits:** When taking young children to the restroom, be especially careful to give them as much privacy as possible. Unless unavoidable, only females should assist small children in the restroom or change diapers because of the statistical correlation between males and child molestation.

When using the restroom, children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall be accompanied by a screened adult to and from the restroom. Before any child, youth, or vulnerable adult enters the restroom, the screened adult will enter the restroom to make sure that it is safe. If assistance is required, the screened adult will assist the individual with the door propped open so that a second screened adult can visually monitor the assisting adult. It is recommended that two screened adults be present when assistance will be required in the restroom.

When restrooms are directly accessible to children from the room where children's activities are taking place and not accessible to the general public, children can be allowed to utilize the restroom alone.

L. **Nursery Policies:** All nursery workers will strictly follow a sign-in-sign-out system for all nursery-age children. Know the adults who will be picking up the children.

M. **Transportation:**

1. Transportation to church sponsored activities is to be provided only from the church to the activity and from the activity back to the church. Transportation between the home and the church is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to arrange.
2. Transportation is to be provided only by drivers that are authorized by the church. Drivers will carry permission slips for each child that has been duly signed by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). Permission slips should include liability waivers for each activity. These slips may be signed annually and kept in an appropriate file.
3. Each driver must complete a ministry screening form that will authorize a criminal background check. In addition, each driver will be responsible to have a current driver's license and proof of insurance. A CDL license is required to drive the church bus.
4. The "two adult rule" is especially important when providing transportation when feasible. It is advisable for two or more children to be present in each vehicle. A caravan of vehicles is a unique case where multiple screened adults are rotating drivers (e.g., 3 vehicles with 5 drivers).

N. **Sexual Offender Chaperone Policy:** In the event that a known registered sex offender is attending Greenleaf Friends Church, the following steps must be taken to manage risk (this should be executed by a team consisting of the Elders, Senior Pastor, Clerk of the Education Committee, and Presiding Clerk of the local meeting with the help of legal counsel):

1. Obtain a record of the sex offender's prior criminal convictions.
2. If the sex offender is on probation, identify his/her probation officer and assess the conditions that have been imposed. In some cases, sex offenders are not allowed to attend church. If the probation officer says the offender is free to attend church, ask the officer if he/she recommends the offender attend church, and if so, under what conditions. Obtain this information in writing or create a detailed written account of the officer's response.
3. Determine the sex offender's level of risk based on his/her conviction and decide if he/she will be allowed to attend GFC. If they are allowed to attend, determine who in the church needs to know that a sex offender will be attending church.
4. Condition the sex offender's right to attend church services and activities by having him/her sign a "Conditional Attendance Agreement" that imposes, at a minimum, the following conditions:
 - The sex offender will always be in the presence of a designated chaperone while on church property.
 - The sex offender will not attend any youth or children's functions while on the church property, except for those involving his or her own child/children, and only if in the presence of a designated chaperone.
 - A single violation of these conditions will result in an immediate termination of the sex offender's privilege to attend GFC.
5. If someone attending GFC has a friend or relative visiting, who is a known or registered sex offender, and that individual wishes to come to GFC for a worship service or during a time when children are present, then an adult from the host family shall act as the chaperone while the individual is on church property.

Note: All GFC buildings and properties are located within 500 feet of Greenleaf Friends Academy, a private accredited Christian school. The school often uses some of the GFC facilities during the school week. Under Idaho law, it is a misdemeanor for a registered sex offender to loiter within 500 feet of school grounds when children are present. (There is an exception for dropping off and picking up their children for school events and when written permission has been granted by a school principal/administrator). Therefore, sex offender attendance on church property will most likely be limited to Sundays, since the Academy schedules classes and evening activities throughout the school week and occasionally on Saturdays.

- O. **Social Networking Practices:** With the increasing number of people using new media communication over traditional forms, it is important to maintain healthy boundaries and practices for adults communicating with children/youth. If a parent or child reports inappropriate communication from any adult, a report to the Education Clerk or pastoral staff should be made.

IV. **Training and Education**

- A. The Clerk of the Christian Education Committee shall be responsible to ensure adequate training and education is provided for all children's workers at the local church level.
- B. All staff and volunteers who work in any capacity, directly or indirectly with children, youth, or vulnerable adults shall receive training regarding the detection of child abuse and the implementation of this policy and its procedures.
- C. All staff that work in any capacity, directly or indirectly with children and families, shall receive a copy of this policy and shall sign a statement attesting to familiarity with its directives.

V. **Screening Requirements**

- A. In order to adequately protect our children, the following procedures should be fulfilled for screening paid and volunteer children's workers:
 - 1. Complete the "Application Screening Form for Children and Youth Workers" (GFC – Form 1) and check applicant references (GFC – Form 4).
 - 2. Conduct both state and federal criminal background checks every two years (GFC – Form 2).
 - 3. Complete an oral applicant interview with the Christian Education Clerk or designee (GFC – Form 3).

VI. **Applicant Interviews**

- A. All worker candidates who expect to work with or minister to children, will be interviewed by an appropriate person designated by the Christian Education Committee.
- B. Senior Pastor candidate interviews will be conducted by the Clerk of Elders and reviewed by the Presiding Clerk of the local church. (This is in regards to the Abuse Policy)
- C. Any worker candidate may request that his/her interview be conducted by the Senior Pastor or a mutually agreed upon third party.
- D. All prospective employees of GFC will be screened, regardless of the position for which they are applying.

VII. **Applicant Interview and Screening Forms**

Applicant Interview Forms and reference contact information will be completed by the interviewer and labeled "CONFIDENTIAL." Any and all information gathered from the interview form shall be kept confidential except to the extent required for reporting purposes. Completed forms will be stored in a locked file in an appropriate location with limited (controlled) access.

VIII. Procedure for Reporting Child Abuse Suspected or Witnessed

A. Guidelines for Dealing with Child Abuse

If a child reports sexual abuse or improper touching:

1. Believe the child
2. Protect the child
3. Report the abuse (see the procedure below)

Note: If abuse is disclosed it is important to limit the amount of follow-up questions asked of the child, youth or vulnerable adult to not interfere with a further investigation by trained interviewers.

B. Who Should Report Abuse?

1. When a staff member or volunteer witnesses child abuse, or is told of child abuse by a party involved, that person must promptly contact the ministry leader and make a report, or cause a report to be made to the appropriate child protection services and local police agency. This is not to be discussed with the child in question. The state of Idaho requires abuse cases to be reported within 24 hours.
2. When a staff member or volunteer has cause to believe that abuse has occurred, but has not observed the abusive conduct, such as abuse by a parent, that person must report the information to the ministry leader. If the ministry leader concurs that abuse is suspected, a report will be made to the local authorities. Discussion with the child by the ministry leader or designated appointee should be kept to a minimum, and then only to confirm suspicions. The child's parents, or other suspected individuals, should not be contacted at this time.
3. The Senior Pastor must report all relevant information concerning suspected or observed abuse to the Northwest Yearly Meeting Superintendent.

C. How Should an Abuse Report be Made?

1. Witnessed or suspected child abuse shall be reported on the "Incident and Suspected Child Abuse Report Form" (GFC – Form 5).
2. The form shall be completed as soon as possible following the verbal report, and should be in as much detail as possible. Special attention should be given to time, place, what was witnessed or suspected, person making the report, indicators of abuse, family background, visible signs of any injury on the child, remarks by the child (without interviewing the child), etc.
3. All aspects of the report, verbal and written, shall be maintained confidential except to the extent required for reporting purposes to avoid mistaken accusation.

D. How Should the Written Report be Followed Up?

The written reports shall be maintained at the church office in a locked file. Only the Senior Pastor, Clerk of the Elders, the Presiding Clerk of the local meeting, and Clerk of the Education Committee shall have access to these reports.

IX. Responding to Allegations of Abuse

- A. Proper responses to allegations of child abuse can minimize the pain and liability for all parties involved in a given situation. It is the church's goal to respond to allegations in a manner that people's rights to privacy and confidentiality be maintained at the highest possible level. Adequate care and support for both the alleged victim and the accused shall be considered mandatory at all times.

- B. In the case of an allegation of abuse against a worker serving in the ministry of the church, the following steps shall be taken:
 - 1. The person(s) in charge of the program or activity shall document all efforts used when dealing with the allegation.
 - 2. The allegation will be reported as soon as possible to the Senior Pastor, Clerk of the Elders, and to the Northwest Yearly Meeting Superintendent.
 - 3. The incident shall be reported as soon as possible to the applicable insurance company and/or attorney.
 - 4. The accused shall be relieved of duties until the prompt investigation of said accusation occurs.
 - 5. Follow the counsel of an attorney and/or insurance company representative when reporting to Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.
 - 6. Parents of the alleged victim shall be notified as soon as possible.
 - 7. If the accused is under the age of 18, his/her parents shall be notified as soon as possible.
 - 8. The alleged victim must be supported by all the love and care that is reasonably possible.
 - 9. The accused must be treated with dignity, support, and Christian love.
 - 10. All means must be taken to ensure confidentiality at all levels of this process. Disclosure of information regarding the abuse or suspected abuse is prohibited, except as required for reporting purposes.

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