

FCC Children's Safety Policy & Procedures



rev. July 2025

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member,

At Faith Community Church, we take our responsibility to protect children very seriously. This handbook is designed to help create a safe, welcoming environment where children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Inside, you'll find our policies and procedures for Children's Ministry. These guidelines exist to protect the children in our care—and to protect you and our church's mission as well. Please read carefully, and return the signed agreement form at the back.

With gratitude,
The Elders of Faith Community Church

FCC POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

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OVERVIEW OF THE FCC SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we love children and desire to protect them, Faith Community Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Screening

All staff and volunteers must complete the FCC screening process, which includes:

- Application (Employment or Volunteer Safety form)
- Face-to-face interview
- Reference checks
- Background check

Volunteers must either:

- Be involved with FCC for **at least 6 months**, or
- Complete an approved process for building trusted relationships (including supervised service and leader interaction)

Only then may a volunteer serve in roles involving contact with minors.

STEP TWO: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP THREE: Criminal Background Check

Faith Community Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

STEP FOUR: Agree to the FCC Code of Conduct

Faith Community Church requires that all staff members and volunteers sign our Code of Conduct agreement.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Abuse tolerance

Faith Community Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at Faith Community Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program. In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Children's Ministry Director, any pastor, or Elder.

MEDIA RESPONSE PROTOCOL

To ensure clear, accurate, and unified communication, Faith Community Church will appoint a designated spokesperson—typically the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Elder Board—to handle all media inquiries related to Student Ministry, allegations, or reportable incidents.

All other staff members, volunteers, and ministry workers are **strictly prohibited** from speaking to the media or posting online about any such matters. This includes sharing information on social media, blogs, forums, or other public platforms.

Any media contact should be promptly referred to the designated spokesperson.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Faith Community Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Children's Ministry Director or any pastor, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency. An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to the Children's Ministry Director or any pastor. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Children's Ministry Director, any pastor, or Elder.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Faith Community Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Faith Community Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children's Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Sr. Pastor and the Board of Elders.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

Reporting Violations of FCC Policy

To maintain a safe environment for our children, **every staff member and volunteer is responsible for reporting** any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that violates this policy.

This includes:

- Suspicious behavior
- Inappropriate conduct
- Suspected "grooming" behavior (pre-abuse conditioning)
- Any action that makes you uncomfortable or concerned

Reports should be made promptly to the **Children's Ministry Director, any Pastor, or an Elder**.

MANDATED REPORTING LAW IN PENNSYLVANIA

Under **Pennsylvania law (23 Pa. C.S. § 6311)**, all staff and volunteers who care for children are considered **mandated reporters**. If you have **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child is being abused or neglected, you are required by law to report it immediately.

HOW TO REPORT TO CHILDLINE

Mandated reporters must make a direct report to **ChildLine**:

- Call **1-800-932-0313**, or
- File a report online at **www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS**

This obligation exists even if the abuse is unrelated to a church activity. Reporting to ChildLine is a **legal requirement** and cannot be delegated to a supervisor.

INTERNAL NOTIFICATION (IN ADDITION TO CHILDLINE)

While direct reporting is required by law, **FCC asks that you also notify a church leader** (Children's Ministry Director, a Pastor, or an Elder) as soon as possible. This allows the church to:

- Ensure the child is protected
- Cooperate with authorities
- Provide pastoral care and communication

If you are unsure how to proceed, leadership can help—but does not replace your legal duty to report.

FILING AN INSURANCE CLAIM

In addition to legal obligations, **Faith Community Church will file an insurance claim** for any allegation of abuse involving a staff member or volunteer. This includes all allegations—**even if unsubstantiated**—to ensure timely support from our insurance carrier for:

- Investigations
- Media response
- Legal protection

If you become aware of such an allegation, notify the **Children's Ministry Director, a Pastor, or Elder**, who will initiate the claim.

Consequences of Policy Violations

Any person accused of a prohibited act—or any action deemed harmful to a child—will be **immediately suspended** from ministry involvement while the matter is investigated.

- If the accused is a staff member, the result may include termination.
- If the accused is a volunteer, they will be permanently restricted from future participation with minors if the report is substantiated.
- Failure to report a suspected violation is itself grounds for dismissal.

Church Response to Allegations

When a report is made, the **Safety Committee** will take appropriate action on behalf of the church. This may include:

- Internal investigation
- Cooperation with authorities
- Communication with parents and leadership
- Initiation of policy reviews or additional training

FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH SAFETY COMMITTEE

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Faith Community Church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

Mission statement

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable Faith Community Church Children's Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Composition

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. the Sr. Pastor
2. Associate Pastors
3. the Chairman of the Elders
4. the Children's Director
5. the Youth Director

Meetings

The Sr. Pastor will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

Responsibilities

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Faith Community Church policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Faith Community Church Board of Elders regarding safety issues.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES STAFF MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff members and volunteer interactions with children.

1. **The Sr. Pastor** meets with the Children's Director once monthly to discuss Children's Ministry.
2. **The Elder Board** meets with the Children's Director once each year to discuss Children's Ministry, including safety training and procedures.
3. **The Children's Director** conducts periodic, announced observations of ministry environments.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Children's Director will be responsible for ensuring that the children's classrooms are monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms. No child will ever be left unattended in a classroom or on church property during children's ministry programming or classes. Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone

with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.) On the children's playground, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to the areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints. Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

TWO ADULT RULE

Faith Community Church is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, every ministry will strive to maintain two approved adult workers at all times. If a ministry falls below two adults it is the workers' responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Children's Director. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately reestablish two adults.

DISCIPLINE

It is Faith Community Church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using timeouts and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

1. Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
2. If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("Jamie, you didn't stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.") In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold the child in time-out.
4. Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a "spot" to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
5. Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
6. Monitor the child through the enter time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child

- and keep them on task. ("Jamie, you're doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.")
7. Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Children's Director.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery children

Because nursery children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only approved nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only adult nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) No adult should enter a closed stall with a child.
- 5) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 6) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.")
- 7) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 8) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from Faith Community Church in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, the adult should remain outside the restroom door and may speak to the child through the door. If emergency assistance is required, the adult may enter the outer bathroom area only if another staff member or parent is notified, and must leave the stall door closed to preserve privacy. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Faith Community Church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children.

MEDICATION

Medication must be handed directly to a ministry leader by the parent or guardian. Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer with a doctor's prescription. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment/medication and insect bite cream, after a parent information sheet is signed by a parent or guardian.

NUDITY

Staff and volunteers in Faith Community Church's student ministry should never be nude in the presence of students in their care (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.).

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Staff members and volunteers should never be alone with a child in an unobserved, one-to-one situation while participating in FCC Children's Ministry. Another screened

adult must always be present. If an unplanned one-on-one interaction occurs (e.g., during pickup or restroom situations), the adult must move to a visible, public area or seek out another adult immediately. All interactions should remain observable and interruptible.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

1. Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
3. No drivers under age 21 may drive Faith Community Church owned or rented vehicles.
4. Ministry workers must never transport a child without prior parental permission and supervisor approval.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child in the care of Faith Community Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's Ministries programs.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child is involved at Faith Community Church. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their children's programs at Faith Community Church will be required to complete the Faith Community Church volunteer application and screening process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Faith Community Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, Faith Community Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministries while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministries programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be

immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Director, or the Sr. Pastor.

3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or children's staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Children's Director or the Sr. Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program. Violations will result in immediate removal pending investigation.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers in Children's Ministries at Faith Community Church are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children that are not a part of the approved curriculum. Violations will result in immediate removal pending investigation.

TOBACCO USE

Faith Community Church requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Faith Community Church activities or programs. Faith Community Church is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Staff and volunteers should speak to children in ways that are positive, kind, and encouraging. Our words should help children grow spiritually and feel safe, supported, and respected.

Never speak to a child in a way that could seem harsh, threatening, shaming, or demeaning. And avoid any swearing or inappropriate language—especially around children.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

When a child is left in our care, Faith Community Church is responsible for their safety until they are picked up.

Children should only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or someone the parent has authorized. If someone drops off a child, we assume they have permission to pick them up—unless there's reason to question it.

If you're not sure whether someone is allowed to pick up a child—or if the person appears intoxicated or impaired—do not release the child. Immediately contact your supervisor or the Children's Director for help.

SUPERVISION

Staff and volunteers in Children's Ministries are responsible for providing consistent, attentive supervision whenever they are caring for children during church programs.

Anyone serving in a supervisory or recurring classroom role must first complete all FCC volunteer screening requirements, including a background check.

No one may serve alone or unsupervised with minors unless they have been fully screened and approved.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Faith Community Church Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures. I understand the importance of these guidelines and agree to follow them while serving or working at Faith Community Church.

I understand that these policies may be updated, revised, or amended by the church as needed. I agree to review and follow any new or updated guidelines provided.

I have reviewed the duties related to my ministry position and agree to carry them out to the best of my ability. I understand I may end my employment or volunteer service at any time. If possible, I will give my supervisor at least two weeks' notice.

I understand that these policies do not represent an employment contract. If I am serving as a volunteer, I understand that I will not receive monetary compensation for my time.

By signing below, I confirm that I have received and understand the contents of this manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Date

[This page to **remain attached** to the Faith Community Church Policies and Procedures.]

Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Date

[This page to be **signed, detached and delivered** to the Faith Community Church Safety Administrator]