

Policy Statement for Reporting and Minimum Staffing

Chinese Church in Christ Tri-Valley, Pleasanton, CA

Policy and Procedures Addressing Child Abuse and Neglect Required Reporting and Minimum Supervision Requirements

Preamble

Chinese Church in Christ Tri-Valley opposes any form of sexual misconduct by pastors, lay staff, employees, and volunteers. This policy applies equally to pastors, lay staff, employees, and volunteers. Unless otherwise specified, the words “pastor” and “pastoral” include all rostered persons including all ordained or consecrated pastors, all accredited and licensed pastors, and all ministry workers both paid and volunteers. It is understood that misconduct, abuse, or neglect can also be the result of actions witnessed or discovered by employees and volunteers that has been perpetrated on children or youth who attend the children’s or youth programs. Regardless of the source of abuse, that misconduct is never tolerated. This policy shall put in place guidelines required under AB 506 for reporting of instances to outside authorities and for setting minimum standards for supervision for all children’s and youth programming.

Defining Child Abuse and Neglect

The purpose of child abuse reporting laws is designed to be a deterrent to abuse and to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect from whatever source. Abuse is usually found in one or more of 4 forms: Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and/or Neglect. Physical abuse can be unlawful corporal punishment or injury, or willful harming or injuring of a child, unjustifiable physical pain, or endangering a child. Emotional Abuse is unjustifiable mental suffering, extreme emotional cruelty, or exposure to serious domestic violence. Sexual Abuse is any sexual assault that would include any sexual touching or sexual exploitation in the form of child pornography, sexual slavery, or commercially sexually exploited children. Neglect is typically evidenced in severe cases as malnutrition or failure to thrive; or in more general cases as failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision; or could be evidenced by failure to protect a child from harmful actions of others.

Required Reporting

Any mandated reporter (Paid church worker who has any role in children's or youth ministry) shall make a report to an agency specified whenever the mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows, or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. For purposes of this policy reasonable suspicion means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. Volunteers (not legally mandated reporters) working in the youth ministry should also report to their paid staff leader or Pastoral staff any knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse. That reporting needs to be immediate by phone to the Police, Sheriff, or County Welfare Department. If your county has a Child Abuse Hotline reporting can also happen through that hotline. Secondly within 36 hours a written report must be made using form SS-8572. The mandated reporter understands that there are both criminal and civil penalties for failure to report. If the misconduct was on the part of an employee or volunteer, the child abuse reporting law overrides any contrary church policy or procedure. This means if the suspected abuser is a church employee, volunteer, or member, the church's duty to promptly report suspected child abuse to the civil authorities must be followed before the church conducts any internal investigation required by church personnel policies.

Mandatory Staffing for Children's & Youth Events

Due to the nature of the reporting requirements and to do everything possible to prevent any abuse from occurring with employees, and volunteers, it shall be the policy of Chinese Church in Christ Tri-Valley that no single individual employee or volunteer shall ever be in the classroom with a single child/youth. Whenever possible, there shall be 2 individuals who are mandated reporters. Additionally, having one male and one female employee or volunteer when there are both sexes present in the children or youth meeting would be the preference.

(Other Policies that may be contained elsewhere in Church Policies)

Mandatory Training for Child Abuse and Neglect Identification and Reporting

Each individual who serves in the children's or youth ministry shall attend a training class suitable for their participation and level of contact that will be administered by the Church leadership or made available through third party sources. No individual can serve without first attending this training.

Mandatory Background Checks

All individual paid or volunteer will undergo a background check that meets the requirements of including the applicants fingerprints to check for prior child abuse. If that background check shows prior abuse, that individual shall not be allowed to serve in any children's or youth ministry capacity.