

NC Children's Ministry UPCI

Interaction Policy for Minors

PURPOSE

In order to provide a wholesome, highly reputable, and spirit-filled learning environment for the children of NC, the children's ministry team has adopted the following Interaction Policy for Minors. Minors for the purposes of this policy and according to NC law are defined as any person under 18 years old who is not married, emancipated or in the military. Our children deserve a safe and protective learning environment, and the NC Children's Ministry will take every opportunity and measure to ensure the safety of our children. NC Children's Ministry leadership is committed to rigorous oversight of this policy and encourages all leaders and workers who serve and teach our children to follow the Bible's admonition to "always conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel." (Phil. 1:27)

NON-NEGOTIABLES

- All children's workers will be screened and approved by the Children's Director and/or ministry team before beginning any work or ministry with minors. Screenings will include an application and pastoral approval process containing contact information, experience working with children, previous churches attended and ministries served as it pertains to minors, and any legal convictions. A background check with fingerprinting may also be required at the discretion of the approval team.
- Random, unannounced checks may be conducted by ministry leaders of all activities, especially during activities at remote locations including but not limited to NC Jr Camp meetings, children's rallies, and teacher's training seminars where applicable.
- Adult workers will observe the "two adult" rule. This requires that an adult is never alone with minors without a second adult being present. Exceptions to this rule as it pertains to NC Jr Camp will be that no adult can be alone with a camper in an isolated place. Personal conferencing with minors should be held in the view of other adults. An additional exception would be in the event of a parent/child.
- All adult workers shall immediately report any behavior they observe that is considered, in their judgment, to be abusive or inappropriate to the Children's Director and the District Superintendent. They shall also immediately report any claims of abuse or neglect from a minor regardless of proof or evidence. The respective worker should prepare a written report of his or her observation within 24 hours of the incident and provide it to the Children's Director. In the event the Director or Superintendent fail to report the claims to the legal authorities, the adult worker will still have a legal, moral and ethical obligation to report the claim to child protective services within 24 hours.

- Adults who have been convicted of either sexual and/or physical abuse related crimes will not work with or participate in any church-sponsored activity or program especially designed for minor children.

WORKER SELECTION

- Primary screening is required for all children's workers prior to assignment of responsibilities. This means a screening form must be completed, signed, verified and submitted.
- Workers must complete basic information on an application that states who they are, where they have been attending or where they were church members previously. Form must be approved by the worker's licensed NC District Pastor.
- Whenever possible six months minimum involvement with the church is preferred before applicants will be considered for work with the children or youth.
- The NC Children's Director will be the final approval authority for all volunteers.

Adult to Minor Interaction Policy

- Lap sitting will not be allowed between minors and adults and bed sharing is only permitted between a parent and child.
- Hugs should only be given shoulder to shoulder, no full front hugs.
- When praying with minors, hands should only be placed at shoulder level and above.
- Exceptions to the team approach may be allowed in low risk situations but additional supervisory care must be taken. When class size requires one teacher or leader to work with children in a room with no visual access (window in interior door or wall), the door to the classroom should be left fully open.
- Minors needing special assistance with clothing adjustments or help in the bathroom should ideally be assisted by two adults, of the same sex whenever possible. If one adult must provide assistance, and if the same child needs assistance from time to time, a different adult should provide the assistance next time. Except in emergency situations, adults should never enter the bathroom stall or showers with minors. If additional help is needed the adult should leave the door open and coach the minor from the hallway.
- The privacy of adults and minors should be respected at all times. Adults should not dress minors. Adults and minors should not move about the housing area unclothed. The only exception should be in the event that the health and safety of the minor is in question.
- Adult volunteer workers are never to rough house, tickle, touch inappropriately or in any way engage minors in compromising positions where intimate body parts can be touched inappropriately whether accidental or intentional.
- Adults must remain in well lit areas with minors, never alone in a darkened room. If another adult worker finds an adult alone in a darkened room, they must ask them to return to a public area, then report the incident to the Children's Ministry Director or sectional team member.

- Additional care must be taken to ensure a proper environment free from offensive games and free from opportunity for inappropriate behavior. Carefully monitoring media devices is essential. Constant supervision must be provided.
- Workers are to never transport minors from campgrounds without completing a check out and approval process with camp officials.
- Minors must always be supervised by an adult in organized or unorganized activities to prevent peer on peer abuse including but not limited to bullying, cyberbullying, physical abuse, sexual abuse, harrassment, and hazing opportunities. Special care should be given to playgrounds, bathrooms and dorm rooms.
- Adult workers are never allowed to use corporal punishment on minors including but not limited to hitting, slapping, shaking, yelling, verbally abusing, or any action causing physical or bodily harm.

Minor to Minor Interaction Policy

- Bullying amongst peers will not be tolerated. Bullying for this policy is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group with the intent to do physical, emotional, or psychological harm, where the relationship involves an improper balance of power. Consequences for bullying will include disclosing the situation immediately to the Children's Ministry Director and/or ministry team. A clear account of the incident will be recorded, parents of all parties will be notified, separation and close monitoring of minors, and potential expulsion from Jr Camp with no refund at parental expense for pick up.
- Wrestling, rough housing, fighting, name calling, and physical aggression of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Minors will not be allowed to prank one another. Campers will be held liable for any property damage due to pranking and potential expulsion from camp with no refund.
- Stealing personal belongings will not be permitted and should be reported immediately to the Children's Ministry Director. Destruction of camp or personal property is also not tolerated.

Discipline Procedures

- Establish clear rules and expectations for dorm room and activity behavior. Make sure minors are aware of the rules and have been given a chance to correct behavior before consequences occur.
- When rules are broken, based on severity, implement a step up process beginning with a warning, reminder of rules, a time-out from activity, a restorative approach to fix the behavior, and coaching on more appropriate behavior options. See head counselor, ministry team and then Camp Director as appropriate for escalating or continued misbehaviors. Further consequences will be given as deemed appropriate by campus staff.

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

- Anyone who observes inappropriate behavior of children's workers must immediately inform the Children's Director of their observation. A written report must be prepared and submitted to the Children's Director within 24 hours of the alleged incident.
- The Children's Director will document the alleged incident in a confidential file and consult with the District Superintendent as soon as possible to determine a course of action.
- The Children's Director and the Senior Pastor will meet with the worker who was accused of inappropriate behavior to determine the facts of the matter.
- Resolution will follow in accordance with the extent of the offense. Documentation of all actions and discussions will be required and will be kept confidential among the fewest people necessary to resolve the matter. In cases where the law requires reporting to legal authorities, a report will be filed. At that juncture, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

- When an allegation is made it is important to gather facts and be non-judgmental. Collect as much information as possible about who, when, where, how, etc.
- All parties should not generalize about how the accused is such a good person and that he or she could not have committed inappropriate behavior. This may imply that the reporting party is not telling the truth. In order for the allegation to be treated appropriately, all parties must be listened to.
- The Board of Administration and Executive Pastor must be notified immediately and a special Board meeting called for the purpose of determining how best to meet the needs of the abused and the needs of the church as well. When the alleged incident report is deemed to be credible, the church's legal counsel must be contacted within 48 hours.
- The person accused of inappropriate behavior shall be immediately removed from all children and youth interaction or responsibilities until the situation is resolved.
- The alleged victim of the inappropriate behavior, and his or her family, will have access to counseling while the Board sorts out the details of the alleged incident.

THIS PAGE IS CONFIDENTIAL

I have received a copy of the NC Children's Ministry Minor Interaction Policy and have read the attached policy and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Please print name

Date

Signature

Administrative Acknowledgement for File

Date