

Children and Youth Protection Plan

Santa Clara Church of Christ -- 2600 Belmont St. -- Eugene, OR -- 97404
541-689-2127 – www.santaclarachurch.com

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe it is our responsibility to protect the children and youth in our care. Children, youth, parents, and our community need to know that we have taken every reasonable step to ensure the safety of children and youth in our ministry.

We believe it is our responsibility to protect staff and ministry leaders in our ministry from being exposed to false accusations of sexual misconduct. To this end, we have screening and supervision policies in place to protect our ministry workers.

We believe it is our responsibility to protect our ministry. By requiring child and youth protection training, as well as implementing screening and supervision policies, we are modeling good safety procedures to others who look to our ministry as an example of a well-run ministry to children and youth. In order for our ministry to continue to function, we must protect every aspect of it, the most important being our children and youth.

WHAT WE REQUIRE

1. THE SIX-MONTH RULE

All staff and leader applicants must be 18 or older, and have been an active member of our church for at least six months. The purpose of this rule is to prevent predators from gaining quick access to potential victims, as well as allowing new members to become familiar with our church. Six months provides a threshold of time for individuals to become better known, and gives an opportunity to evaluate their suitability for serving within our ministries. In some cases, this length of time is reduced based on a person's ability to provide positive character references from other youth-serving organizations and from our ministry leaders, and a person's prior history working with children or youth in a previous faith community.

2. A WRITTEN APPLICATION

We require a written Ministry Leader Application before approving individual leaders for service in our children's / youth ministry. We want to be sure we're selecting the best candidates possible for our ministry programs.

3. BACKGROUND CHECKS

We conduct a criminal records check and a sex offender database check for all Elders, Staff, and Leaders who will have access to children and youth. If you will be driving as part of your ministry service with a minor, we will require you to complete a Driver's Application.

4. REFERENCE CHECKS

Once the written application is complete, we conduct reference checks. Applicants should indicate that they have been a member of the church for a minimum length of time, such as six months, and should list two or more prior service references, preferably from a youth organization, plus personal references from two or more church members.

5. A PERSONAL INTERVIEW

We use the interview time to explore more fully why a candidate wants to work with children or youth. We also review our ministry's policies and procedures regarding the supervision of children.

6. TRAINING/OBSERVATION PERIOD

All leaders must complete a two week minimum period of training and observation. The actual length of time will be determined as a part of the application process.

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WHAT WE EXPECT

TRAINING

We expect all staff and leaders to successfully complete our Child and Youth Sexual Abuse Prevention Training program, to attend regularly scheduled training meetings, and to work towards CPR and First Aid certification.

APPROPRIATE INTERACTION

We expect all interaction, whether it is physical, verbal, non-verbal, or digital to be appropriate.

No one should ever feel uncomfortable in the way they are being touched. Appropriate touching means offering a gentle touch on the shoulders, hands, arms, head, or back.

Inappropriate touching would include kissing, demanding kissing or hugs, touching of the chest, waist, stomach, bottom, or private areas, or any physical contact that feels uncomfortable or violating.

COMMUNICATION AND PROMPT RESPONSE

Open communication and prompt response are essential for a safe ministry. All staff and leaders should report any inappropriate or suspicious behavior to ministry staff or leader immediately. This includes reporting any suspected abuse being committed by another staff, leader, child or youth, as well as any child or youth who presents signs of abuse in or out of a church activity. No one will ever be in trouble for reporting suspected abuse. All injuries that occur during ministry events or activities must also be documented and reported.

Injury and Incident Reporting Forms are available at the welcome center and online, and they must be turned in as soon as possible.

FOLLOW SUPERVISION POLICIES

Our policies are designed to reduce isolation, increase accountability, and reduce the disparity of power between a staff or leader and a child or youth in our ministry. It is a requirement that all staff and leaders follow our Protection Plan and the supervision policies we have in place to accomplish these goals. Each area of ministry has its own specific supervision policies.

PRIORITIES

We expect all staff and leaders to put their relationship with God and their family above the needs of the ministry. It becomes difficult to holistically minister to children and youth when we aren't taking care of our God given priorities.

COMMITMENT

We expect those who have decided to serve as staff and leaders with children and youth to commit to what is required by these ministries. We want to strive for excellence in how we serve God.