

Child Safety Policy

I. Purpose

Chemung Christian Fellowship (herein referred to as CCF) is committed to ensuring that all children are treated with respect and cared for in a safe environment at all times.

The following policy is initiated for these reasons:

- A. Our belief that children are of great value, that they are vulnerable to abuse from trusted adults and that they should not be at risk from these trusted adults.
- B. The increase in the reported incidence of child sexual abuse in church's regardless of denomination.
- C. The belief that churches may provide pedophiles access to children.
- D. The increasingly litigious nature of our society.

This policy is initiated to assist in accomplishing (6) six things:

- A. To protect the children by providing a safe environment.
- B. To protect innocent staff, paid and volunteer, who work with children from false charges.
- C. To protect CCF from any unnecessary legal liability.
- D. To educate staff, paid and volunteer, in the area of child and sexual abuse awareness.
- E. To have a uniform procedure in the handling of accusations made towards staff members of CCF or disclosures that may be made to a staff member of CCF.
- F. To have a uniform procedure in screening potential applicants.

This policy does not constitute a contract between the church and its workers and/or volunteers or the church and any other party.

CCF makes no guarantee to any party that all aspects of this policy will be followed in any given situation. CCF is not responsible for the individual acts of any worker and/or volunteer.

II. Method

To support this commitment we adhere to a code of ethics. At all times staff members, whether volunteer or paid, are expected to serve as appropriate role models for our children.

Any violations of the behavior guidelines set forth in this policy will result in disciplinary action which may include, but is not limited to, immediate suspension

pending an investigation, dismissal as a volunteer at CCF, or, termination of CCF employment.

In addition, CCF will cooperate with legal authorities and will pursue prosecution of any staff member, volunteer or paid, who engages in an illegal activity with a child in this church or while on a church related activity.

III. Staff Policy

- A. Volunteers must have been regularly attending CCF for at least 3 months to be considered for working with children.
- B. All who work with children, both paid and volunteer, will complete an application form which will ask for previous experience in children's work and for references.
- C. These references and any other information provided on the application will be checked and verified by a member(s) of the Board of Administration or their designee.
- D. Persons who have been working with the children within CCF for at least 1 year during the preceding 2 years at the time of the inception of the policy will be allowed to continue in their position while their references, and any other available information, at the discretion of the Board of Administration or their designee, are checked.
- E. Interviews will be conducted with new personnel and with existing personnel whose reference or background checks suggest a need.
- F. Interviews will be completed by the Board of Administration, the designee, and the head of the Children Program Leader (ie. Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Group, Awana, VBS) in which the volunteer will be working. Following the interview, the Board of Administration will vote on whether to accept the applicant as a volunteer.
- G. An electronic background check, which will include Sex Offender Registry checks of the State the applicant resides and the Nation Sex Offender Registry, will be completed by the Board of Administration or their designee during the background process.
- H. All new applicants will be required to complete the Child Safety training, after which all staff members of CCF will be required to complete an annual Child Safety training.
- I. All applications and supporting documents will be kept secured in a locked cabinet in the Pastors office.

To avoid the isolation of children with adults, one (1) of the following three (3) must be adhered to:

- A. At least two (2) staff members, one of whom will be an adult, must be present in a room whenever children are present; or
- B. The door must have unobstructed window; or
- C. If there is no window in the door, then the door must be open

Use a “check-in/check-out” procedure for all kindergarten aged children and younger.

When children’s workers are transporting children to and/or from church activities, a situation where there is one child and one unrelated staff person alone in an automobile should be avoided, or, an exception allowed by a parent (or guardian) must be in writing so that CCF can reasonably rely upon the consent given.

In the event a disclosure is made of abuse or such abuse is witnessed the Pastor or an Elder of CCF must be notified by the person with whom the disclosure was made or act witnessed.

The parents or guardian of such child will be notified of such incident followed by Law Enforcement being notified.

Sexual abuse awareness will be a part of an annual safety program of the church and training of volunteers and staff. The dates of the training programs will be determined by CCF on a yearly basis.

The church will make every reasonable effort to conduct a fair and discreet investigation of all incidents of sexual abuse.