

**CONROE CHURCH OF
CHRIST**

SAFE CHILD/YOUTH

POLICY

Revised 05/10

Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child / Youth Policy
Revised 05/2010

INTRODUCTION

The Conroe Church of Christ is committed to providing a safe, secure, and caring environment for children and youth. The goal of the policy is to protect children and youth from abuse and workers from false allegations. It applies to all church child and youth activities on and off premises. Every child and youth activity worker must become familiar with and agree to follow this policy. An effective safety policy for children and youth also protects workers against false allegations and the congregation against disputes and lawsuits. However, no policy is foolproof. A critical aspect of any child/youth safety policy is the commitment of caring people who put Jesus first and place priority on the nurturing of children and youth. The Conroe Church of Christ is committed to providing people who are devoted to following the teachings of Jesus Christ and are committed to providing an environment that protects our children and youth from abuse and harm.

1. Safe Child/Youth Committee:

Dustin Gist, Safe Child/Youth Coordinator

Steve Klovensky, Safety Deacon

C.E. Reed, Elder

Chris Allen

LuAnne Criswell

Laura Dodd

Tammy Loving

Doris Phelps

Starla Shinn

David Willy

Sara Grace Willy

2. Definitions:

2.1 **Abuse:** Generally any sexual contact with or exploitation between adult, caregiver and a child or adolescent even if the victim consents.

2.2 **Adult:** Any person 18 years of age unless they are still in the youth group.

2.3 **Background/criminal check:** Each individual involved with children or youth in any capacity during church planned events on and off campus will under go a criminal history check through an agency or a web site service authorized to do so by Texas law. This formal criminal history check is for the purpose of identifying worker applicants with a criminal history background.

2.4 **Child:** Any person from birth - 6th grade.

2.5 **Deacon:** A publicly identified leader of the Conroe Church of Christ. There will be a deacon assigned to the Safe/Child Youth Committee.

2.6 **Elder:** A publicly identified overseer of the Conroe Church of Christ. There will be an Elder assigned to the Safe/Child Youth Committee.

2.7 **Hall Monitor:** Workers who will be available by “walkie-talkies” each Sunday and Wednesday to help monitor hall activities and restrooms.

2.8 **Member:** A person who officially places membership at the Conroe Church of Christ.

2.9 **Negligence:** When a worker during an established times for class or scheduled activities leaves a child or youth in a situation where the child or youth would be exposed to substantial risk of physical or mental harm without arranging for the necessary care for the child or youth.

2.10 **Open Door Policy:** Doors to classrooms or facilities where children or youth are present with an adult(s) will be left open in times where the two adult rule is not possible.

2.11 **Parent:** The legal parent and/or guardian of a child or youth.

2.12 **Safe Child/Youth Committee:** The standing committee appointed by the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator to propose, implement and monitor the Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy.

2.13 **Safe Child/Youth Coordinator:** A person designated to have the supervisory responsibility for carrying out this policy and to maintain the integrity of the application and authorization process.

2.14 **Staff:** A paid employee of the Conroe Church of Christ.

2.15 **Three Month Rule:** The requirement that an applicant be a member of the Conroe church of Christ for at least three months before qualifying to serve as a worker in the child/youth ministry activities.

2.16 **Two Adult Rule:** Two adults will be in the classroom at all times when on campus. At least two adults at all off campus Church sponsored events involving children or youth.

2.17 **Vehicle:** Any van, bus, or personal automobile used in the transporting of children or youth.

2.18 **Worker:** A paid or volunteer individual who serves in a position that has them in contact with children or youth during a church planned event on or off campus.

2.19 **Worker Training:** All workers will be required to complete a Safe Child/Youth training seminar and to sign a statement that they will abide by the Conroe church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy

2.20 **Youth:** Any person from 7th - 12th grade under the age of 18.

2.21 **Youth Worker:** A High School student (9th - 12th grade) that has attended the Safe Child/Youth training course and has ten hours of service hours and has a reference from the Senior Student/Spiritual Development Minister and approval from Safe Child/Youth Coordinator or Safe Child/Youth Elder.

3. Worker Selection/Screening.

3.1 Conroe Church of Christ will conduct a screening process for all individuals involved with children and youth during planned events, on or off church premises. The purpose of this screening process is to establish an equitable and safe care giving environment. This process includes attending a mandatory training course provided by the Conroe Church of Christ, completing and submitting an application form and a full screening process. Each applicant will be required to sign a compliance form verifying they understand the Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy and have received a copy of the policy. A person who desires to work within children's or youth ministry must be a faithful member of the Conroe Church of Christ for at least three months.

3.2 **Selection/Qualifications of Workers**

3.2.1 *Submission of Worker Application.* Each full-time or part-time employee and/or worker, will be required to complete a worker application. This application will be completed according to the directions and will be submitted to the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator.

3.2.2 *Screening Process of an Applicant.* Each person submitting an application for child/youth work shall be subject to all or part of the following screening mechanisms:

- A. Reference check.
- B. Motor Vehicle record check.
- C. Personal Interview.
- D. Criminal History check.

3.2.3 No person who has been convicted of, placed on regular or deferred adjudication probation, received pre-trial diversion, plead guilty, or nolo contendere to any offense involving sexual contact or physical abuse with a child/youth may work with any child/youth.

3.2.4 Refusal to consent to criminal history check will disqualify any applicant from being utilized as a volunteer worker or paid positions that involve contact with children or youth.

3.2.5 A person's experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their suitability as a worker with children/youth. Any applicant who is a survivor of sexual or physical abuse is asked to share this information with the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator or Elder. This information will be held in the strictest confidence.

3.2.6 *Qualifications of Applicants.* All volunteer workers shall be members of the Conroe Church of Christ for a minimum of three months prior to working with children/youth.

3. *Identification Badge.* Once an applicant has finished the above procedures and is approved to work with children or youth, he or she will be required to wear an identification badge during all church planned events on church grounds that involve children, ages birth - 12th grade.

4. Guidelines for overnight events/host families.

4.1 Periodically, ministry activities require overnight stays for children and youth. They fall into three broad categories: stays in rented hotel/motel rooms, lock-ins, and stays in personal dwelling.

4.2 *Required Approvals.* A signed Parent/Guardian Permission Form will be required of each child/youth prior to the activity. These will be collected and approved by the group leader prior to the commencement of the activity. Following the activity, the forms will be provided to the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator.

4.3 *Rules for Overnight Stays.*

- A. All persons are to abide by the Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy at all times including the two adult rule
- B. None of the children/youth will be allowed away from the designated overnight area without prior permission of the group leader and the parents' signed permission.
- C. No child/youth is to be left alone in a room except the restroom.
- D. No two children/youth of the opposite sex are to be left unsupervised.
- E. No child/youth of the opposite sex will be allowed to sleep in the same room.
- F. No husband and wife will be allowed to share a room with a child or youth.

5. Rules/Guidelines for Supervision of Children/Youth.

5.1 *Two adult rule.* Every attempt will be made to have two workers with children or youth at all times during church activities, on or off campus.

- A. The two adult rule prohibits one worker from being in an isolated setting with a child or group of children without another worker present.
- B. In the case of child/youth activities and classes, two adult workers must be present. If not, the door must remain open.
- C. Observation of this rule serves not only to protect the child/youth, but also to protect the worker against the possibility of false accusation.
- D. There are exceptions to the two adult rule:
 - i. Child or youth supervised by own parent or guardian.
 - ii. Elder/Staff/Worker counseling a child.

5.1.1. To help ensure a safe environment for our younger children, Youth will not be allowed to work or visit in the nursery pod area before, during and after Bible classes and worship services when young children are present. Exceptions to this policy may be allowed during specific events such as Parent's Night Out and Vacation Bible School with the prior approval of the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator or the Elder in charge of Safe Child/Youth.

5.2 *Counseling Children/Youth.*

5. Counseling may be conducted by a single worker counseling alone in a room with a child/youth. The counseling must be done in plain view of an open door or of a window in a closed door.

5.3 *Restroom/Changing Procedures.*

5.3.1 Activities such as diapering and bath rooming of infants and young children which are sometimes performed in a restricted space must be performed in full view and hearing of another adult worker. Parents and guardians are urged to take small children to the bathroom before class or activities.

5.4 *Arrival/dismissal procedures.*

5.4.1 0 - 4 year olds Parents or guardians will take their children to the desk in the Nursery pod. The child will be signed in, given a name badge and taken to their classroom by a nursery worker. The parent or guardian will be given a claim ticket which must be returned to the nursery workers at sign-out. All children left in the nursery must have a care card on file completed by the parent or guardian. Parents and guardians are not allowed to come into the classrooms and are asked not to return to check on their child until they are ready to leave the building. Also, they may be picked up by a youth (7th - 12th grade) or older.

5.4.2 5 year olds - 6 year olds: Parents or guardians must indicate at sign in who will be picking up their child/ren. Pick-up person will be asked to show I.D. if they are not known by workers. Also, they may be picked up by a youth (7th - 12th grade) or older.

5.4.3 1st - 4th grade: Parents or guardians must indicate at sign in who will be picking up their child/ren. Pick-up person will be asked to show I.D. if they are not known by workers. Also, they may be picked up by a youth (7th - 12th grade) or older.

5.4.4. 5th - 6th grade may be dismissed from class without a parent if the parent has notified the teacher/helper at sign in.

5.4.5. Bible class doors must be locked at the end of Bible class by the teacher, helper, or Hall Monitor.

5.4.6. All class roll sheets will be picked up by the Coordinator of Children's Ministries and kept in a file cabinet.

5.5 *Reporting procedures for suspicion of abuse.*

5.5.1 Any possible child abuse will be taken seriously and receive immediate attention, including reporting to state authorities in accordance with state law (see referral help at the end of the Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy). This includes child abuse both outside and within the programs of the Conroe Church of Christ. If a worker suspects or observes child abuse or neglect, he/she must report it immediately to the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator and take the steps to report it to Child Protective Services.

5.5.2 The accused person will be removed from his/her position by the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator until the allegations are fully investigated and resolved. In the case of paid employees, he/she will be placed on involuntary paid leave until the allegations are

cleared or substantiated.

6. Transportation Procedures.

6.1 The following procedures are for providing safe transportation for children and youth traveling for activities with the Conroe Church of Christ.

6.2 *Vehicle Requirements:*

- A. All vehicles should have a current license plate, inspection sticker, and passenger restraints.
- B. All vehicles will have current insurance coverage as required by Texas law.
- C. No vehicle will be allowed to carry more than the passenger capacity as specified by the vehicle manufacturer.

6.3 *Qualifications of Drivers:*

- A. All drivers are considered workers as defined in the Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy.
- B. All drivers must undergo the application process including the background check that all children and youth workers must go through except charter bus drivers.
- C. All drivers must have current drivers license with no restrictions with classification required for the vehicle being driven.
- D. All drivers for church sponsored events must be at least 21 years of age if driving a rented vehicle.

6.4 *General Rules.*

- A. All drivers must obey all traffic laws. Failure to do so may disqualify them from driving for activities for the Conroe Church of Christ.
- B. Signed parent permission forms will be obtained from each child/ youth prior to being allowed in the vehicle.

7. Worker Training.

7.1 A training session will be conducted prior to the implementation of this policy for current child/youth workers and new volunteers. Subsequent training sessions will be conducted periodically throughout each year as the need arises to orient new workers prior to involvement with children or youth.

8. Miscellaneous.

8.1 Any deviation from this policy will require the approval of both the Safe Child/Youth Coordinator or the Elder in charge of Safe Child/Youth.

Policy revised 2 - 2009

Policy revised 9 – 2009

Policy revised 1 – 2010

Policy revised 5 – 2010

Information Release Form

I understand and agree that all information that I have provided may be verified by signing this form. I certify that the information I have given is true, complete, and accurate in all respects.

I hereby give my permission to the Conroe Church of Christ to obtain information relating to my criminal history through the appropriate agencies. The criminal history record may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications. I understand this information will be used to determine my eligibility for a worker (either employee or volunteer) position with the church.

Signature

Printed Name

This form is confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the office of the Conroe Church of Christ.

REVISED 01/10

COMPLIANCE FORM

By signing this form I certify that I have read, been given a copy of, had training on, and fully understand the Conroe Church of Christ Safe Child/Youth Policy.

I understand that I am required to fully comply with the policy and that failure to do so could result in my dismissal.

Signature of Applicant

Date

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List all previous non-church work (volunteer or paid) involving youth. Include approximate dates, organization names, addresses, type of work performed, name of supervisor and phone number if you know.

Organization/Supervisor	Type of Work		Date
Address	City, State	Zip	Phone Number
Organization/Supervisor	Type of Work		Date
Address	City, State	Zip	Phone Number
Organization/Supervisor	Type of Work		Date
Address	City, State	Zip	Phone Number

Three personal references not related to you:

Name	Address	City/State	Zip	Daytime phone/Evening phone
Relationship to You				
Name	Address	City/State	Zip	Daytime phone/Evening phone
Relationship to You				
Name	Address	City/State	Zip	Daytime phone/Evening phone
Relationship to You				

Your honest answers to the following questions will assure our church family, parents, and children of the finest care we can provide.

1. In what area of ministry do you wish to serve and why? _____

2. What gifts and experience do you bring to this ministry? _____

3. Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action, complaint, or allegations that you violated any employers or any organizations policy concerning sexual misconduct? **Y or N.** If yes, please explain. _____

4. Have you ever been arrested, charged, indicted, or convicted of any criminal offense (misdemeanor or felony) other than a traffic violation?

Y or N. If yes, please explain. _____

5. Have you ever had your Driver's License suspended or restricted for any reason? **Y or N.** If yes, please explain. _____

6. Have you ever been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse?

Y or N. If yes, please explain. _____

7. Were you a victim of sexual or physical abuse or molestation while a minor?

Y or N.

8. Other than the above questions, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would cause you or the church to have concerns about your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of minors? **Y or N.**

If yes, please explain. _____

Would you like to meet with the Elders regarding the issues listed above or for any other concerns? **Y or N.**

Because the Elders and Safe Child/Youth Committee of the Conroe Church of Christ cares for our children/youth and desires to protect them, we ask you to please answer the following questions. We understand the following questions are very personal, and we protect your privacy.

1. Is there any reason including those that are physical or mental health related that might keep you from effectively working with children/youth or that might cause a child/youth potential harm? **Y or N.**

2. Would you be willing to be fingerprinted? **Y or N.**

All information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the Conroe Church of Christ to obtain information from references, employers, and churches listed herein.

REVISED 01/10

All addendums below are inserted in the policy as of 01/2010

**Addendum to the
Conroe church of Christ
Safe Child/Youth Policy
April 21, 2009**

5.4 *Arrival/dismissal procedures.*

5.4.1 0 - 24 months (Cuddlers and Cradle roll): Parents or guardians will take their babies to the sign-in desk and sign the child in. Parents are asked not to come into the class and not to return to check on their child until they are ready to leave the building. Parents need to present a photo ID ***if*** they are not known to the nursery staff and must sign their child in and out. Parents should label all diaper bags, blankets, pacifiers, etc., with the child's name. Permanent, water-proof labels are preferred.

*5.4.2 5year olds - 6 year olds: Parents or guardians must indicate at sign in who will be picking up their child/ren. Pick-up person will be asked to show I.D ***if*** they are not known by workers. Also, they may be picked up by a youth (7th - 12th grade) or older.

***5.4.3 1st - 4th grade: Parents or guardians must indicate at sign in who will be picking up their child/ren. Pick-up person will be asked to show I.D. *if* they are not known by workers. Also, they may be picked up by a youth (7th - 12th grade) or older.**

***5.4.4. 5th - 6th grade may be dismissed from class without a parent if the parent has notified the teacher/helper at sign in.**

***5.4.5. Bible class doors must be locked at the end of Bible class by the teacher, helper, or Hall Monitor.**

***5.4.6. All class roll sheets will be picked up by the Coordinator of Children's Ministries and kept in a file cabinet.**