

Emmanuel Congregational
Christian Church



Preparing to Serve:

A Plan to Protect: Abuse Prevention for
Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults and
their Workers

Statement of Faith

Volunteer Application Form

Last updated: May 2018

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest and/or willingness to serve in ministry at Emmanuel Church!

Ministry takes place in the context of brokenness. Though we look forward to an eternity of perfection, this is not the reality we experience today. Even in churches bad things can happen. This booklet is designed to protect both the person who is ministered to and the person who is doing the ministry. Though we are required by our insurance company to have this plan in place, our greater concern is the wellbeing of the people involved.

This booklet consists of three (3) main parts:

- 1) Our 'Plan to Protect'
- 2) Our Statement of Faith
- 3) An Application Process

Please carefully read through this booklet, and complete the application process. Please remove the volunteer application form from the center of this booklet, complete it, and together with a completed Criminal Record Check and Child Abuse Registry Check, submit it to the pastor or Ministry Assistant

We look forward to sharing in ministry with you!

Sincerely,

Pastor Sweis

A Plan To Protect

Definitions:

Some initial thoughts about abuse:

- It can be physical, emotional or sexual
- All child abuse involves the misuse of power
- Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority of power they have over vulnerable people
- Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children

Physical Abuse is using physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child or youth. It is more than reasonable discipline. Sometimes injury is caused by over-discipline. Injuring a child or youth is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline.

Sexual abuse of a child is inappropriately exposing or subjecting the child to sexual contact, activity, or behavior.

Emotional child abuse is maltreatment which results in impaired psychological growth and development. It involves words, actions, and indifference. Abusers reject, ignore, belittle, dominate, and criticize the victims. Examples of emotional child abuse are verbal abuse; excessive demands on a child's performance; penalizing a child for positive, normal behavior, penalizing a child for demonstrating signs of positive self-esteem; and penalizing a child for using interpersonal skills needed for adequate performance in school and peer groups.

Child neglect is the failure to provide for the shelter, safety, supervision and nutritional needs of the child. Child neglect may be physical, educational, or emotional neglect.

Inappropriate touching: The clinical definition of child sexual abuse is inappropriately exposing or subjecting a child to sexual contact, activity or behavior. An easier way to think of it - and to teach children about it - is by contrasting "good touches" and "bad touches."

- A **good touch** can be explained as a way for people to show they care for each other and help each other. Examples you can give include parents hugging or holding their child's hand, or a parent changing a baby's diaper.
- A **bad touch** can be explained as the kind you don't like and would want to stop right away, such as hitting, kicking or touching private parts.

Improper discipline: The primary objective of child discipline should be to train him/her to develop self-control, orderliness, and efficiency. It is a process that helps children learn appropriate behaviors and make good choices. Positive discipline gives children a sense of security, protection and accomplishment.

Zero tolerance: Absolutely no tolerance will be granted to any occurrences of the above definitions by either paid or volunteer staff. Corporal punishment, inappropriate touching or any misuse of power will be dealt with immediately by the Elders Board and appropriate action, if necessary, will be initiated.

Where necessary and/or as indicated by law, the Elders Board or their designate, e.g. Sunday School Superintendent, will initiate the completion of an incident report (available at the church office), and that report will be forwarded under the direction of the Elders Board as soon as feasible to the

appropriate agency or agencies. This action will be carried out without prejudice to either the party accused or the accuser. Both parties will receive compassion and support, which will in no way indicate the church's siding with or for either party in any legal or moral sense. Any and all such allegations and investigations will be conducted and kept in strict confidence.

Without prejudice, any staff, paid or volunteer, will be suspended from unsupervised or compromising contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adult until the outcome of the investigation is determined.

The Elders Board will make the necessary consultations with legal counsel and with the insurance company as soon as practicable.

Our Commitment:

In order to protect and safeguard our children and workers; Emmanuel Congregational Christian Church is committed to the following:

- 1) All paid employees, including ministerial staff, and all volunteers who work with preschoolers, children or youth will be screened to determine suitability for such positions. This screening will be conducted in several ways, including an interview process under the direction of the Elders Board.
- 2) All workers, for any position involving work with preschoolers, children or youth will be required to have a criminal records check, a child abuse registry check and submit references regarding their suitability to be with children. Criminal record checks will have to be renewed every 5 years. The references will be checked by members of the leadership of Emmanuel. ***Anyone with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth.***

- 3) A training/refresher course will be required for all of our staff (paid and volunteer) working with preschoolers, children or youth. The process in place will provide understanding of the nature of child sexual abuse, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse including our clearly defined reporting procedures for suspected incidents.
- 4) The Elders Board will make sure these policies and procedures are followed on a regular basis to assure that they are enforced.
- 5) All workers will sign the Ministry Covenant, (located at the bottom of the Volunteer Application form) agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.
- 6) To lower the risk of child molestation, and to reduce the risk of false accusations of molestation, the Elders Board has adopted a “Transparency Rule”. This rule states that ministry will not be done behind closed solid doors nor without accountability provided by other leaders or hall monitors. In practice this means that a) the door of the classroom will remain open if there is only one ministry worker in that room, b) there will be at least one extra ministry worker in the ministry area (i.e. if there are 3 classes, there will be 4 workers), and c) that no immediate family members aged 12 or older will serve in the same room without another worker being present.
- 7) Volunteers will be permitted to work with preschoolers, children or youth only after they have been adherents/members of Emmanuel for a period of **six months**. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and prevents persons seeking immediate access to children. (Under special circumstances this provision may be examined on a case by case basis)

where the person is transferring in from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the pastor or Elders Board of that church and if the Board of Emmanuel is favorably persuaded, the six-month rule may be shortened or waived).

- 8) Emmanuel Congregational Christian Church discourages contact with youth/children at non-sponsored off-site events.
- 9) Any off-site events such as field trips and/or overnight activities will require signed parental consent (forms available at the church office).
- 10) Any incident in violation of the above policy shall be reported to the Elders immediately.

All staff, paid and volunteer, must sign a statement indicating that they have read and understood this policy and its implications for Emmanuel Congregational Christian Church.

Washroom Guidelines:

Parents are to be encouraged to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year, and through the year to newcomers.

Nursery Children

As a general rule, staff in the nursery will not be expected to change diapers. However, in the event that this becomes necessary the following rules will apply:

- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.

- Children must be 12 years of age or older, with appropriate training before being permitted to change infant's diapers.
- No child under twelve will be allowed to supervise in the nursery unless accompanied by an adult at all times.

Preschool Children

- For preschool children, parents/guardians will be responsible for the changing diapers or taking their child to the washroom.
- Please encourage parents to take their children to the washroom prior to ministry activity.
- Should the need arise, contact the hall monitor to notify the parent/guardian.
- ***Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom.***

Grades 1-6 and Youth

- A child seven years of age and younger should not be sent to the washroom alone, but should be accompanied by an adult volunteer worker or hall monitor.
- For children seven years of age and under, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom, and, if the washroom has more than one stall, prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom.
- The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
- ***Never go into a washroom cubicle with a child/youth and shut the door.***

Sign-in/out Procedures

As soon as practically possible, parents/guardians should fill out the ministry registration form for the specific ministry. These forms will be kept in a binder in the appropriate classroom/ministry space.

Nursery – All children will be signed in when arriving at the nursery and signed out when picked up.

Sunday School – With Sunday School beginning during the service, the child's attendance at class will signify the parent/guardians consent to the child being part of the class. Children 7 and under will be signed out when picked up.

Families w/a Future – All children will be signed in at the beginning of class, and children 7 and under must be signed out when picked up.

Statement of Faith

- 1) We believe that the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, is the divinely inspired and infallible word of God and the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.
- 2) We believe in God the Father, Maker and Sustainer of heaven and earth. We believe that He created man and woman in His image.
- 3) We believe there is one God, revealed in three persons, co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 4) We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His conception by the Holy Spirit, His birth of the Virgin Mary, His real but sinless humanity, His voluntary humiliation in life as a Man of Sorrows culminating in His death on the Cross for our Sin, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven

as the only and eternal mediator between us and God, and His coming again in power and glory.

- 5) We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God the Father and God the Son, to convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. We believe that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within every believer in Christ as an abiding helper, teacher and guide. He is the source of power from on high that is available to each committed believer in order to bear witness to Jesus Christ and minister in His name.
- 6) We believe that every human being who has not yet accepted God's love in Jesus Christ is separated from God and, apart from God, is sinful and lost. Our recognition of this condition, our repentance, and our regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for our salvation. Redemption is wholly by the blood of Christ, and salvation is by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7) We believe each person committed to Jesus Christ possesses eternal life now, and through the power of the Holy Spirit is enabled to live a Godly life.
- 8) We believe our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will return to claim His Church. His coming again is the fulfillment of the blessed hope set before the believer. Those who entrust themselves to Him will bodily rise to everlasting joy. Those who reject His love will be raised for final judgment.
- 9) We believe in the Church universal. The Church of Christ is not an organization but a living body composed of all believers in Jesus Christ. A local church is an expression in any locality of the Church universal. It is composed of believers gathered as a corporate testimony to the Lordship of Christ and their oneness under Him as the Body of Christ.