



GUIDELINES

for Ministry Workers

Children and Youth Workers' Sample Policy Manual

Important Information

This booklet contains sample documents only. Your organization is responsible for complying with all applicable laws. No portion should be used without prior legal review, revision, and approval. No liability is assumed by those who have prepared or distributed this booklet of sample forms.

Contents

Policy Statement.....	3
Volunteer Worker Screening Procedures	3
Employee Screening Procedures	4
Waiting Period	4
Supervision	4
Work Restrictions	5
Discipline	5
Injuries or Illness	5
Record-Keeping	6
Notice of Injury, Abuse, or Molestation	6
Violation of Policy or Procedures	7
Internal Investigation	7
Dealing with Law Enforcement or Media	8
Annual Employee/Worker Review	8
Revision of Policy/Procedures	8
Resources	9

Sample Forms

1. Children/Youth Work Application
2. Children/Youth Work Renewal Application
3. Reference Response Information
4. Notice of Injury

Introduction

The sample documents in this booklet have been created by Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company for the benefit of your ministry and for the protection of individuals involved in your ministry. The threat of physical and sexual abuse is a genuine source of concern for all religious and not-for-profit organizations, particularly those that supervise or interact with children, youth, or the disabled. It is an unfortunate fact that physical and sexual abuse can and does occur in connection with religious and charitable ministries. The results can be devastating to the ministry as well as to the individual victim. It is for this reason—the protection of your ministry and those in its care—that we have developed this resource.

The sample policy and related documents in this booklet are not intended as a final product. They are instead a template for you and your legal counsel to use in developing your own customized program. We recognize that every ministry is different, and its policies and procedures must address the particular needs of the organization. We believe that you will find the materials in this booklet valuable either as a starting point in developing a new program, or in reviewing and updating an existing program.

As with all documents of this nature, it's important that you ask an attorney in your area to review the policy prior to implementation. This step will help ensure that the documents have been properly drafted and that all relevant legal considerations have been properly addressed. Your legal counsel should also review the policy on a regular basis after implementation to make certain that it remains current with changes in the legal environment.

We commend your organization for taking steps to safeguard those in your care, and are hopeful that the material in this booklet will be a valuable resource in the protection of your ministry.

Policy Statement

In order to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry's and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

Volunteer Worker Screening Procedures

1. Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children, youth, or the disabled will complete and return an initial ministry application (see Sample Form #1).
2. The ministry application will be carefully reviewed by a ministry leader or designee to make certain that the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based on the information provided.
3. If the person appears to be appropriate for the ministry work, then at least two of the references will be checked to confirm the information provided on the ministry application (see Sample Form #3).
4. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry position with this organization.
5. A criminal background check may be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children, youth, or the disabled.

Employee Screening Procedures

1. The same procedure set forth for volunteer workers will apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered (see Sample Forms #1 and #3).
2. In addition, a criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to all candidates for employment.
3. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment with this organization.

Waiting Period

No volunteer worker candidate will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children, youth, or the disabled until the candidate has been regularly involved in our local organization for six months or more.

Supervision

1. At least two adults (at least one over the age of 21) should be present at every function, and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area, during every child, youth, and disabled ministry program. (For large groups of children, the number of adult supervisors will be increased in accordance with state student/teacher ratio requirements. Check with your attorney for this information.)
2. During services/events, at least two adults (who have been approved as volunteer workers through the above screening process) will be appointed to supervise activity on the premises outside of the room where the service/event is held.
3. Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person. Do not send children out to find their parents, and do not release any child or youth to await transportation.

Work Restrictions

1. For children over the age of five, at least one adult female should take girls to the restroom, and one adult male should take boys to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe, and then wait outside the restroom until the children come out.
2. Children five years of age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
3. Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
4. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.
5. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the person.

Discipline

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the workers' coordinator/supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

Injuries or Illness

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or having a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.
4. Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids of any kind.

5. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
6. Persons who have received an injury which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The person's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when they pick up the injured person.
7. Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with the worker's coordinator/supervisor. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

Record-Keeping

1. An attendance list should be kept for all of the ministry's functions involving children, youth, and the disabled. The date of the function, along with the names of all participants and coordinators/supervisors should be recorded.
2. A written incident/notice of injury report should be prepared by workers whenever an injury should occur during a ministry function (see Sample Form #4). The incident report will be forwarded to the worker's coordinator/supervisor promptly upon completion.

Notice of Injury, Abuse, or Molestation

1. Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform a ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation and will complete a "Notice of Injury" form (see Sample Form #4).
3. Any ministry leader who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a participant will ensure that the participant's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The ministry leader will also see that an attorney is promptly contacted to provide a written opinion as to whether the organization should report the abuse or molestation to law enforcement authorities. The written opinion should be obtained within 24 hours of when the ministry leader first becomes aware of the abuse or molestation, and the attorney's advice should be followed. If the attorney recommends that an incident be reported, the advice should be acted upon immediately.

4. Upon notice of abuse or molestation, the ministry's insurance carrier, (general or professional liability insurance) must be promptly notified, as well as any organizational entity (e. g. denominational office) to whom the organization has a duty to report such allegations.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Workers must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

Internal Investigation

1. Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously and will be investigated by ministry leaders.
2. Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with organizational employment practices).
3. Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
4. Any person who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children, youth, or the disabled within the organization. The church will consult with legal counsel for advice if termination of employment is indicated.

Dealing with Law Enforcement/Media

1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities of the organization.
2. Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance as soon as possible after the organization receives notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection with organization activities. Decisions concerning the ministry's response to the allegations will be made in accordance with such advice.
3. A single organizational leader will be designated as spokesperson following notice of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, and (to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation) will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances.

Annual Employee/Worker Review

1. This policy and procedures will be conveyed for review annually to all workers, employees, coordinators, supervisors, and leaders to whom it applies.
2. All ministry employees will complete a brief renewal application once each year (see Sample Form #2). A renewal application will also be completed annually by all volunteer workers associated with the organization who will be working in any capacity with children, youth, or the disabled.
3. Should the renewal application show that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children, youth, or the disabled, they will be immediately removed from their current position, and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children, youth, or the disabled.

Revision of Policy/Procedures

This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and can be modified in accordance with the bylaws of the organization. Any such modification should be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.

Resources

The following organizations may be able to provide additional information on protecting your ministry's children and youth:

Christian Ministry Resources
P.O. Box 2301
Matthews, NC 28106
704.821.3845
www.iclonline.com

Prevent Child Abuse America
1-800-CHILDREN
www.preventchildabuse.org

Children/Youth Work Application VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

Personal

Name: _____ Daytime telephone: _____

Address: _____

Age range: under 18 18–25 over 25

In which children/youth program(s) are you seeking to become involved? _____

What skills would you bring to the children/youth program? _____

What other children/youth work experience do you have? *(Please list)*

Organization	Program	Dates	Contact
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Have you at any time ever:

- Been arrested for any reason? Yes No
- Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, any crime? Yes No
- Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation, exploitation, or abuse? Yes No

Are you aware of:

- Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others? Yes No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," please explain in detail: _____

(Please attach additional pages if more space is needed)

(over)

Church Activity

What church or churches have you attended in the past five years?

Church name	Pastor's name	Years attended
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

References (Other than relatives)

Name /Relationship	Address	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Applicant Verification and Release

I recognize that the organization to which this application is being submitted is relying on the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize the organization to contact any person or entity listed in this application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide the organization with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release the organization and any such person or entity listed herein from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize the organization to conduct a criminal background investigation if such a check is deemed necessary.

I have carefully read the policy and procedures of the organization, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth at all times.

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

This is a sample document only. Your organization is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws. Accordingly, this form should not be used or adopted by your organization without first being reviewed and approved by an attorney. No liability is assumed by those who have prepared or distributed this sample form.

Children/Youth Work Renewal Application

VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

Name: _____ Daytime telephone: _____

Address: _____

Age range: under 18 18–25 over 25

In which children/youth program(s) are you currently involved? _____

In what other children/youth program(s), if any, do you plan to become involved? _____

Have you at any time ever:

- Been arrested for any reason? Yes No
- Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, any crime? Yes No
- Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation, exploitation, or abuse? Yes No

Are you aware of:

- Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others? Yes No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” please explain in detail: _____

(Please attach additional pages if more space is needed)

Applicant Verification and Release

I recognize that the organization to which this application is being submitted is relying on the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I agree to abide by all policies and procedures of the organization, and to protect the health and safety of the children/youth at all times.

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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Reference Response Information

To: _____
Name of Ministry

From: _____
Address

Regarding _____
Name of Worker Candidate

To Whom it May Concern:

You have been listed as a reference by the above individual, who has expressed an interest in working with children or youth in our ministry. In order for our organization to properly evaluate the qualifications of this worker candidate, we would like you to complete this form with your honest opinions and impressions of the candidate.

Once completed, please return this form to our organization in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

1. How long have you known the above individual? _____

2. In what capacity have you come to know this individual? (i.e. coworker, neighbor, friend, etc.) _____

3. In your opinion, is the above worker candidate fully qualified to work with children and youth?
 Yes No (If no, explain below)

4. What concerns, if any, would you have in allowing this individual to work with children or youth? _____

5. Are you aware of anything in the candidate's background, personality, or behavior that could in any way pose a threat to children or youth?
 Yes No (If yes, explain below)

Additional comments or explanations: _____

The above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Please return this form at your earliest convenience to: _____

Thank you.

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