

PROPOSED --- CHILD PROTECTION AND ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Cherry Grove Friends Church

I. Background Principles

As a caring church, sensitive to the needs of our families, it is of utmost importance to establish a policy for all persons, paid or volunteer, who minister to/with children, youth or disabled adults under our care and supervision. Cherry Grove Friends Church will take necessary steps, both legally and morally, to protect and report the abuse of children with/to whom we minister.

This policy reflects Cherry Grove Friends Church's commitment to provide:

- A. Protective supervision and care for all children, youth and disabled adults.
- B. Guidance and protection for paid and volunteer workers who minister to/with children, youth or disabled adults.
- C. Protection for the various ministries of Cherry Grove Friends Church.
- D. Information and instruction regarding policies and procedures relating to the protection of children, youth and disabled adults, and the prevention of abuse.

II. Specific Policies

Cherry Grove Friends Church shall meet the requirements of Northwest Yearly Meeting's "Mandatory Abuse Prevention Standards". The policies below are how Cherry Grove intends to meet these requirements. In addition, Cherry Grove Friends Church intends to follow all appropriate laws.

A. Screening Requirements:

1. This section applies to Pastoral Staff, Clerks of the meeting, Elders, and Christian Education teams, Trustees, and any additional staff or volunteers who specifically work with or minister to at-risk individuals at Cherry Grove Friends Church. This section does not apply to individuals who, through attendance at or support of services or events at Cherry Grove Friends Church, may incidentally come into contact with at-risk individuals
2. Those serving in positions referred to above must fill out a "Screening Form for children and youthworkers" and an "Applicants Interview Form/Applicant Statement". They must also undergo a criminal history check through the appropriate state and/or local police departments and federal agencies.
 - a. Criminal history checks must be repeated every three (3) years.
 - b. Cherry Grove Friends Church will accept recently-run criminal history checks from other sources, but only if they cover items to a minimum of that checked for by Cherry Grove Friends Church.

3. Those serving in positions referred to above shall receive training regarding the detection of abuse (as specified by NWYM) and the implementation of this policy and its procedures. They shall also receive a copy of this policy for their records and for ongoing reference.

4. All individuals moving into the positions listed in A-1 above after the date of approval of this policy must additionally have an "Applicant Interview" conducted by an appropriate interviewer.

- a. All worker candidates will be interviewed with respect to this policy by an appropriate person designated by Pastoral Staff or Christian Education Committee.
- b. Senior pastor candidate interviews with respect to this policy will be conducted by the Clerk of Elders and reviewed by the Clerk of the Meeting.
- c. Any worker candidate may request that his/her interview be conducted by the Senior Pastor or a mutually agreed upon third party.

5. All volunteer candidates must be regularly involved at Cherry Grove Friends Church before they will be considered for any ministry position with at-risk individuals, or work with any ministry, program or event involving contact with at-risk individuals. Exceptions might be made for people who are well-known, for people with special expertise, or on a case-by-case basis as approved by the Christian Education Committee, Elders, or in compliance with church policies. Individuals granted exceptions shall be subject to the "Two Adult Rule" whenever serving at Cherry Grove Friends Church.

6. All staff and all volunteer workers who minister to/work with at-risk individuals must agree in writing that they have read, are familiar with, and agree to follow the abuse prevention policies of Cherry Grove Friends Church.

B. Restrictions:

1. Any person who may pose a threat to at-risk individuals, whether found through the screening process or by other means, will be prohibited from working in any ministry involving at-risk individuals.

2. Persons who have a founded report of abuse against another person of any age, have a criminal record which includes any crime of violence, or are under investigation for a crime of violence are NOT eligible for any type of volunteer or paid work specifically with at-risk individuals, in connection with Cherry Grove Friends Church.

3. If there is a previous conviction of another crime not including abuse against another person or any crime of violence, there must be a lapse of at least one year from the time of conviction before serving with at-risk individuals.

4. If there is more than one criminal conviction not including abuse against another person or crime of violence, applicants will need to be approved by the local Christian Education Committee, or Elders.

5. Exceptions may be made to items 2 and 3 above on an individual basis, but only with the following in place:

- Full documentation is available to Christian Education, Elders, and Pastoral Staff as to the circumstances of the events resulting in the founded report of abuse or criminal activity record.
- A minimum of five (5) years have passed since the activity in question.
- The individual has been regularly involved at Cherry Grove Friends Church for a minimum of five (5) years.
- Unanimous written approval to create the exception by Pastoral Staff, Christian Education team, and Elders of Cherry Grove Friends Church

C. Supervision: No adult is ever to be alone with an at-risk individual. It is the adult's responsibility to assure this requirement is met, whether by the Two Adult Rule or the Rule of Three.

D. Physical Contact: Adults working with at-risk individuals must use only appropriate physical contact. Appropriate touching takes into account the situation and location. For example, a hug may be appropriate in a public place, but not in a private location in the church. Under no circumstances are tickling or touching of private body areas acceptable.

E. Discipline: Adults working with at-risk individuals are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, threaten violence or otherwise physically discipline. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is deemed necessary to prevent harm. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the parent or guardian and/or appropriate coordinator or supervisor (if available).

F. Occasional Workers: It is the intent of Cherry Grove Friends Church that all individuals serving as a substitute to regular Volunteer Workers or Staff Workers have been previously identified prior to their service, and have been screened through the screening process listed above. However, there may be situations where Occasional Workers are required to fulfill a specific role with an at-risk individual without previous screening. In these cases, Occasional Workers may only serve alongside a worker who has been through the screening and training, or they must be accompanied by a previously screened individual in accordance with the "Two Adult Rule."

G. Annual Review: All policies, procedures and guidelines with respect to this Policy should be reviewed each year to make certain they are up to date.

H. Restroom Visits: If assistance is required for an at-risk individual to use a restroom, the screened adult will assist the individual with the door propped open so that a second screened adult can visually monitor the assisting adult. It is required that two screened adults be present when assistance is needed in the restroom. Diaper changing must follow the Two Adult Rule.

I. Nursery Policies: A sign-in-sign-out system for all nursery-age children will be implemented for attendance at the nursery of Cherry Grove Friend Church. Children will only be allowed to be signed out to individuals known to nursery workers.

J. Transportation:

Cherry Grove Friends Church may occasionally have events held away from the church grounds. When this occurs, and transportation is needed for at-risk individuals which cannot be provided by their parent/guardian, the following rules apply:

1. Drivers shall be limited to adults who have been screened through section II.A, above. Drivers shall have a current driver's license and proof of insurance. Drivers will carry permission slips for each at-risk individual that has been duly signed by parent/guardian. Permission slips should include liability waivers for activities. Permission slips may be valid for up to one year and kept on file at Cherry Grove Friends Church between uses.
2. Each vehicle shall comply with the Two Adult Rule, or the Rule of Three, at all times.

K. Sexual Offender Chaperone Policy: Cherry Grove Friends Church wants to be protective of our at-risk individuals, but also recognizes the power of redemption possible for all through Christ. With that in mind, if Cherry Grove Friends Church identifies that a Sexual Offender is attending a Service or Event, the following will occur:

1. If it is a one-time visit, the Sexual Offender will be shadowed by an individual who has been screened through this process, as if the Two Adult Rule was in effect between them, until the Offender leaves the property of Cherry Grove Friends Church.
2. If the Sexual Offender wishes to be regularly involved at Cherry Grove Friends Church, Pastoral Staff or designee shall do the following:
 - Obtain a record of the Offender's prior criminal convictions, and probation status.
 - If the Offender is on probation, written communication will occur with the Probation Officer specifying the conditions under which the Offender is eligible to attend church, if any.
 - The Offender's right to attend services and activities at Cherry Grove Friends Church will be governed by a signed "conditional attendance agreement" that imposes the following conditions:
 - Those outlined by the Probation Officer, if any.
 - The Offender will always be in the presence of a designated chaperone while on church property.
 - The Offender will not attend any youth or children's functions while on the church property, except for those involving his or her own child/children, and only in the presence of a chaperone.
 - A single violation of these conditions will result in an immediate termination of the sex offender's privilege to attend the church.

L. Social Networking Practices: If an at-risk individual, or their parent/guardian, reports inappropriate communication via social media or other form of communication from any adult, a report to Pastoral Staff should be made.

III. Training and Education

A. Church leadership shall be responsible to ensure adequate training and education is provided for all workers serving at-risk individuals to maintain compliance with this document.

IV. Reporting and Responding to Witnessed or Suspected Abuse

A. Adults working with at-risk individuals must immediately report to Pastoral Staff of Cherry Grove Friends Church any behavior that appears to be abusive or potentially inappropriate as soon as possible. This includes behavior by the reporting individual, or behavior witnessed by the reporting individual.

B. The church is obligated to follow and be in compliance with all local, state and/or federal reporting laws.

C. Adequate care and support for both the alleged victim and the accused shall be considered mandatory at all times.

D. In the case of an allegation of abuse against a worker serving in the ministry of the church, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The person(s) in charge of the program or activity shall document all efforts used when dealing with the allegation.
2. The allegation will be reported as soon as possible to Elders, Pastoral Staff, and to the Northwest Yearly Meeting superintendent.
3. The incident shall be reported as soon as possible to the applicable insurance company and/or attorney.
4. The accused shall be relieved of duties until the prompt investigation of said accusation occurs.

E. Follow the counsel of an attorney and/or insurance company representative when reporting to Child Protective Services or Adult Protective Services while following all state reporting laws.

F. The victim's parent/guardian/caregiver shall be notified as soon as possible.

G. If the accused is under the age of 18, his/her parents/guardian shall be notified as soon as possible.

H. All means must be taken to ensure confidentiality at all levels of this process. Disclosure of information regarding the abuse or suspected abuse is prohibited, except as required for reporting purposes.

V. Confidentiality

All documentation used to carry out this policy (Screening forms, Interview forms, abuse reporting, etc.) shall be considered confidential. Completed forms and other documentation will be stored in a locked file in an appropriate location with limited/controlled access. Access to these records will be restricted to:

1. The Senior Pastor or appointed designee.
2. The Presiding Clerk of the local meeting.
3. The Clerk of the Elders of the local meeting.
4. NWYM superintendent or his/her designee.

VI. Definitions

The following definitions will be used for the purposes of the Abuse Prevention and Protection Policy of Cherry Grove Friends Church:

A. Abuse - Any recent act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk or serious harm.

1. **Sexual Abuse** - sexual contact between an at-risk individual and an adult (or older, more powerful youth.

Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse: Advanced sexual knowledge or behavior, depression - often crying without reason, promiscuous behavior, withdrawal from activities, running away, walking or sitting difficulties, bruising/bleeding in the genital area, frequent headaches/stomachaches, or extreme fatigue.

2. **Physical Abuse** - intentional, deliberate behavior that causes bodily harm. It can take several forms including assault, shaking, kicking, choking, bone fractures or other non-accidental injuries, in general.

Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse: Hostile, aggressive behavior toward others, fear of parents and other adults, destructive behavior (self, others, property) , unexplainable bruises or fractures, burns, facial injuries (often reoccurring) .

3. **Neglect** – an at-risk individual who is without proper care and control, or subsistence, education, medical or other care or control necessary for his/her well-being because of the conduct or omission of his parents, guardian or other custodian.

Behavioral Indicators of Neglect: Depressed, poor impulse control, regularly displays fatigue, steals food, reports that no caregiver is at home, poor hygiene, lack of basic food and clothing, lack of education as required by law.

B. Child/Youth: An unmarried person under the age of eighteen (18) who is not an emancipated minor.

C. Disabled Adult: A person over the age of eighteen (18) with a cognitive, emotional, or physical impairment.

D. Staff worker: A person who is paid by the church to perform a specific function, e.g., assistant pastor, youth coordinator, children's coordinator, senior pastor, secretary or janitor.

E. Volunteer Worker: A person who does not receive pay and performs some sort of ministry or work, e.g. Sunday school teacher or small group leader.

F. Occasional Worker: A volunteer who does not have a regular assignment and serves as a substitute when needed.

G. Church Officer: Persons who are duly elected or appointed to fill an office in the church.

H. Two Adult Rule: Adults working with at-risk individuals should observe the "two adult rule" during all church sponsored events where feasible ("Rule of Three" if the "Two Adult Rule" is not feasible). This suggests that an adult is never with an at-risk individual without another adult being present, except in public places in view of others or with parental permission. It is recommended (but not required) that the second adult be of the opposite sex of the first adult.

I. Rule of Three: At least three individuals (at least one being a previously screened adult) must be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving at-risk individuals. Two of the three individuals may be at-risk individuals.

J. At-Risk Individual: Anyone who meets the definition of either B or C, above.

K. Regularly Involved: Attendance at church activities (Sunday Worship, Small Groups, Bible Studies, etc) for a minimum of six months, with an average of 3 attendances per month minimum.

L. Pastoral Staff: Employees of Cherry Grove Friends Church hired in a Pastoral role (Pastor, Senior Pastor, Lead Pastor, Youth Pastor, etc.). Neither administrative staff nor volunteers are considered Pastoral Staff.

M. Crime of Violence: "is a felony and has as one of its essential elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or an offense that by its very nature involves a substantial risk that such physical force may be used in the course of committing the offense". {18 U.S.C. section 924(c)(3)}

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