

Creekside Church

Child and Student

Protection Policies



The Spiritual Leadership Team 2024

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POLICY SECTION ONE: THE FOUNDATION

Governance Standard

These policies, which will be referred to as the “Policy” throughout this document, were drafted at the direction of the Creekside Church (“Creekside”) Spiritual Leadership Team (“SLT”). The Policy is drafted in accordance with the Creekside Statement of Faith (which can be reviewed at <https://creeksideak.com/what-we-believe>).

This Policy is directly governed and overseen by the Child and Student Protection Committee (“Committee”), which generally includes at least one member of the SLT, the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship, the Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship, and other congregation members as is deemed necessary by the SLT.

Definitions and Defining Abuse

For simplicity, this Policy may reference “child,” “children,” “youth,” or “student” and any of these terms will refer to a minor (i.e., person under the age of 18); “parent” means the parent or legal guardian of a child; and “Program” means any Creekside Church event where a child may be in the care of a volunteer or staff member (e.g., Sunday morning services for Creekside Kids, Wednesday evening services for Kids Connect and Creekside Youth; and any other program, including but not limited to Prodigals, Creekside Church sponsored bible studies within the church building, Vacation Bible School, Parents’ Night Out, and special programming like Good Friday service). Finally, this Policy may refer to child abuse and neglect as solely “child abuse.”

Definition of Marriage and Gender

In accordance with the Creekside Statement of Faith, we believe marriage is a covenant relationship between God, one man, and one woman (Genesis 2:21-25). We believe a “man” is defined as an adult male and a “woman” is defined as an adult female. Similarly, a “boy” is a male child and a “girl” is a female child. We believe there are only two genders—male and female (Genesis 1:27). These genders are immutable and remain constant from conception. We do not believe we can change our gender or select our own gender at will. We believe we are made in the image of God and He perfectly designed us (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-16).

Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect

It is important to understand what is child abuse and neglect, not solely from a legal definition, but also from the perspective of our Christian standards. Child abuse or neglect, as defined by Alaska Statute 47.17.290(2) means “the physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person under circumstances that indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby; in this paragraph, ‘mental injury’ means an injury to the emotional well-being, or

intellectual or psychological capacity of a child, as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function.”

Creekside expands this definition to include the following:

Sexual Abuse—Any occurrence in which an adult engages a minor in sexual activities is abusive. Sexual activity between an adult and a child is abusive regardless of whether the adult or the child is the initiator, whether the activity is forced or not, or whether the child understands that the activity is sexual in nature. Sexual activity between children can also be abusive, particularly if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or size; if one child is in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the other; if one child is unconscious; or if coercion is used.

Physical Abuse—Any physical assault, which may include kicking, punching, slapping, choking, throwing objects, or otherwise inflicting pain or fear of immediate injury to a child.

Emotional Abuse—Any occurrence where a child is repeatedly ridiculed, blamed, humiliated, or compared unfavorably with others. This may also include derogatory name-calling from parents, or persistent and deliberate coldness from their parent to the extent where the behavior of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired.

Neglect—Neglect may include physical, medical, educational, or emotional. Physical neglect may include failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision. Medical neglect may include failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment. Educational neglect may include failure to educate a child or attend to special educational needs. Emotional neglect may include inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs.

Spiritual Abuse—Spiritual abuse is often overlooked, but does occur, especially within the church environment. This type of abuse is abuse administered under the guise of religion and may include the use of religious ideology or tradition to harm a child; compelling a child to engage in religious acts against his or her will; abuse that occurs in the church; abuse perpetuated by a religious leader; or the invocation of divine authority to manipulate a child into meeting the needs of the abuser.

POLICY SECTION TWO: PROTECTIVE PRACTICES

Screening Process

All applicants for full-time or part-time employment or volunteer work at Creekside are required to provide, complete, and undergo a rigorous screening process, as follows:

- Written applications, with releases of information for references and background checks
- Background checks, which also includes review of Courtview and Social Media Accounts
- Reference Checks
- Interview

Child care staff and volunteers of Creekside prior to January of 2024 will be required to provide a written application and may be required to have a background check if the most recent background check was before January 2022. These same staff or volunteers will be grandfathered in for the purpose of any reference checks or interview processes.

Creekside requires a background check to be performed every two years for each adult serving in the child care ministries. Creekside will automatically run a background check every two years using the initial authorization for a background check.

In addition to background checks for applicants, Creekside reserves the right to review the applicant's social media accounts (e.g., Facebook), Alaska Courtview, and any other medium to assess whether the applicant is a safe person to be around children.

All child care volunteers of Creekside must be attending members of Creekside, and must have attended Creekside for the previous six months (i.e., the volunteer must have been attending Creekside for six months prior to volunteering in any child ministry).

Creekside will use prayer and discretion when interviewing an applicant, and reserves the right to decline an applicant. If an applicant is declined, he or she is still able to serve in other ministries of the church, so long as the ministries do not involve children.

Volunteer Waiting Period

A prospective volunteer is required to attend either Creekside Kids or Creekside Youth programming at least once per month, for a period of not less than 6 months. This volunteer waiting period, or "six-month rule" allows at least six opportunities to observe the prospective volunteer. During this volunteer waiting period, the prospective volunteer must shadow a Creekside Kids or Creekside Youth worker. "Shadow" for the purpose of this "Volunteer Waiting Period" section means to be within "sight and sound" of the prospective volunteer; the worker does not need to hover over the volunteer.

This volunteer waiting period may be waived with the authorization of the SLT and/or the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship or Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship, but only in limited circumstances and such waiver must be in writing with an explanation for waiving the requirement. A waiver may be offered to someone who was previously serving in a kids or student ministry in another like-minded church, AND has provided positive references from members of the pastoral staff from that previous church. The person should also have been “previously serving” immediately before coming to Creekside, i.e., serving in a kids or student ministries years in the past would not be acceptable.

Safe Behaviors

Creekside staff and volunteers who work with children will undoubtedly face many tough decisions and choices concerning what is appropriate and what is inappropriate behavior. This section on “Safe Behaviors” will outline what Creekside deems appropriate and inappropriate, with respect to a variety of situations. However, this section may not be exhaustive, and it is always encouraged to seek counsel or ask questions when in doubt.

Two-Person Rule

- The gold standard of child protection is there be two unrelated adults present in any church sponsored activity. Creekside requires the presence of two unrelated adult leaders in child programs to protect the children against situations in which abuse might occur, and to protect leaders against false allegations of abuse. If two related adults are serving together, they count as “one adult” and a third unrelated adult must be present, e.g., mother, mother’s adult daughter, and unrelated third adult.
- Creekside staff and volunteers should not, during any Creekside program, be alone with a single child where others cannot observe and interrupt the adult and child.
- In the event that two adult leaders cannot be present in a room, such that one adult is alone in the room with one or more children, a door must be left open. Where possible, the adult must not position him or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway cannot see him or her.
- During any counseling sessions with children, the door of the room used must remain open for the entire session. The session should be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.
- Each classroom for children should ideally have a door with an observation window or a half-door, such that the upper portion of the door may be remain open for visibility. If it does not, and two leaders are not present in the room, the door must remain open at all times.
- All classrooms and areas where child programs are taking place must be easily accessible. The area may be visited without prior notice by the Creekside SLT, staff, by other volunteers, or by parents. No windows may ever be entirely blocked so as to prevent observation into the classroom or area.

Adult-Child Ratio

Creekside follows the Alaska Administrative Code 7 AAC 57.707(c) for child to caregiver ratios. This administrative code relates specifically to child care centers, but best practices recommend churches use state licensing requirements as a benchmark.

Creekside will adhere to the following:

- 1 adult worker for every 5 infants (birth through 18 months)
- 1 adult worker for every 6 toddlers (19 months up to 36 months)
- 1 adult worker for every 10 preschool children (3- and 4-year-olds)
- 1 adult worker for every 14 kindergarten children (5- and 6-year-olds)
- 1 adult worker for every 18 school age children (7- through 12-years old)
- 1 adult worker for every 18 student age children (13- through 17-years old)

To the best extent possible and in accordance with the “Two-Adult Rule,” the maximum group size at any one time should not exceed twice the maximum number of children allowed per adult worker, as required by the ratios outlined above.

Interactions

In limited circumstances where an adult may be in a one-on-one situation with a child (e.g., counseling session), the interaction must be *observable* and *interruptible*. The more an interaction is both observable and interruptible, the better. When adults spend time with a child, the adults will inform both the child’s parent and their supervisor of the meeting (e.g., Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship will inform the Lead Pastor of any one-on-one counseling session with a high school or middle school child, and will also inform the parent of the child). The adult and child will meet at a time and place where the parent, or supervisor, can interrupt the time or observe the time from a distance. Furthermore, the meeting will take place at a public place with high visibility.

Safe Touch

Creekside understands that it is important for certain staff and volunteers to develop a relationship with a child. Creekside’s desire is to limit touching to what is appropriate, healthy, and fosters a deeper relationship with Jesus. Limitations on touching in no way are to limit affection toward the child. The following list includes examples of what is safe and acceptable touch:

- Light pats on the shoulder
- High five, fist bumps, special handshakes
- Sitting side by side
- Side hugs
- Carrying a small child on your hip

The following list includes examples of what is unsafe and inappropriate touch:

- Sexually or physically abusive touch
- Touching a child's thighs, stomach, or back
- Corporal punishment
- Any touch that is unwanted by the child
- Any touch that is secret
- Touch that sexually gratifies the adult in any way (which such adult should not be permitted around children)
- Lap sitting, unless the child is a toddler or younger (discretion should be used)
- Tickling
- Playing with hair
- Full frontal hugs
- Tapping a child's clothes bottom

Extra Attention

It is reasonable that some adults may develop a bond with some children, but not with others. However, Creekside staff and volunteers are not to show favoritism or give any single child extra, special attention. Extra or special attention may include secret gifts or inappropriate preferential treatment.

- Staff or volunteers are not to give gifts to individual children unless the gifts are:
 - Able to be given to other children at other times for similar reasons (e.g., gifts for graduating seniors; a new Bible for a student entering high school; end of the year "thank you" gifts to a teenage helper who has volunteered).
 - Given together with another employee or volunteer.
 - A personal gift from a staff or volunteer that meets social expectation and does not signify any preferential treatment.
- In situations where a staff or volunteer believes that a child would benefit from extra attention, then the staff or volunteer:
 - Should be able to articulate a clear reason for providing extra attention to a child that focuses on the child's needs, not their own needs.
 - Must receive authorization from a supervisor before providing extra attention to a child (e.g., if employee, then Lead Pastor; if volunteer, then Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship or Pastor/Director Student Discipleship)
 - When possible, organize a rotation of employees and volunteers so that extra attention is not provided solely by one individual.
 - If extra attention is necessary (e.g., counseling session), provide it in an observable and interruptible way, like in a public setting.

Sexual Language

Creekside acknowledges that sexual language is more than mere jokes, but a serious boundary violation. As such, the following are strictly prohibited:

- Sexually suggestive language, racy jokes, sexual innuendo, descriptions of sexual experiences or habits
- Music with sexually explicit lyrics
- Uploading, downloading, or viewing of pornography
- Music, video games, and movies with sexual themes
- Showing children any form of pornography

Technology and Social Media

All previously discussed rules concerning safe behaviors apply whether the adult is interacting with a child in-person or through technology and social media. Regardless where the adult is interacting with the child, whether at the grocery store or through Facebook, the adult interactions must strictly comply with this Policy. Specific examples of this, include:

- Online interactions should include two adults present or being observed and interruptible, i.e., Facetime, ZOOM, and similar forms of communication between a kid/student and adult should be observable and interruptible and should include two adults present.
- To the best extent possible, when texting or online messaging with the child, communication should be brief and factual, e.g., provide facts about an event (“Broomball is 2:00 pm on Sunday, February 1st”), minimize deeper communication (“How are things going with _____?”).
- Photographs or videos should not be posted anywhere (e.g., fliers, websites, Facebook, Twitter), without written permission from the parent of the child.
- To the best extent possible, adult communications with minors should be documented. Taking a screenshot of communications is one example of documentation.

Minor Worker Supervision

In any event where a minor (child under the age of 18) wants to assist as a volunteer in Creekside Kids, Creekside Youth, or any other Creekside child ministry, the minor child must adhere to the following:

- The minor must undergo a screening process, which will include a written application and an interview. The written application and interview will not be as extensive as the adult volunteer screening process, nor will a background check be performed until the minor turns 18.
- The minor will be supervised at all times by an adult, who has already undergone the screening process.

- For the protection of the children, and to protect against allegations made against the parent or the minor volunteer, minors will only be permitted to volunteer with his or her parent if a second unrelated adult is also volunteering in the same space, e.g., classroom.
- The minor must be at least in 6th grade to volunteer in Creekside Kids ministries.
- Minors cannot take children to the bathroom, change diapers, or carry unrelated children under 12 months old.

Minors do not assist in meeting the adult-child ratio; however, they can assist in meeting the needs of a classroom and are encouraged to be scheduled to serve in a classroom that already has 2 unrelated adults. It is best practice to schedule enough adults to meet the adult-child ratio, but minors can be scheduled to assist as long as there are 2 unrelated adults, even if the adult-child ratio is not met.

Routine Protective Measures

This “Routine Protective Measures” section applies primarily to Creekside Kids and NOT Creekside Youth students. If a section applies to both Creekside Kids and Creekside Youth Students, it will be indicated with an asterisk (*).

Registration

For the protection and safety of our children, no child may participate in a Creekside Kids program without registering in the Creekside database/check-in system. A complete registration must include:

- Parent information, including first and last name, email address, phone number, and gender.
- Child information, including first and last name, gender, date of birth, medical notes, e.g., allergies, special diets or needs.
- It is preferred to have parents pre-register prior to a program in order to automatically add themselves to the database. This registration is available on the Creekside website.
- In any event where the Creekside database/check-in system is not working or available, then a paper registration form must be filled out and collected for Creekside records.

Drop-off and Pick-up/Access Control for Creekside Kids

- For each and every drop-off, children must be “checked in” at the Creekside check-in system (“Kiosks”) prior to dropping the child off in his or her appropriate classroom.
- Upon checking in a child at the Kiosk, stickers will be generated containing a unique number for the child. One sticker must be placed 1) on the child, 2) one on the classroom clipboard so as to create a roster of who has been dropped off and should be inside that specific classroom, and 3) one for the person responsible for dropping off and picking up the child to hold and return when picking up the child.

- o Following the Program, the responsible person must present a matching sticker (with the same child information) in order to pick up the child. It is required that the person present the sticker to pick up the child. The classroom volunteers will not be permitted to release the child to anyone without the presentation of a matching sticker. Even so, if the sticker is presented, but the staff/volunteer does not recognize the person or if the person is a minor (specifically an unknown minor), the staff/volunteer has the right to ask for the person who was responsible for drop off come to do the pick up. The Pastor/Director has the right to ask for ID for an unknown household adult to pick up the child (i.e., if an adult is listed in the system as an adult in the child's household, but they are unknown to staff/volunteers, the Pastor/Director can ask that ID be presented).
- o If the child's parent wishes to limit authorized pick up persons, they can do so at the Kids Check In Desk. Those listed as authorized persons will need to provide ID (along with the sticker) if they are unknown to the check out staff/volunteers. However, in the case of a custody change (e.g., restraining order, court changes custody in a divorce), the parent will need to provide court issued documentation to remove a parent from the authorized list.

For drop off events (e.g., Kids Connect, Parents' Night Out), it is assumed that a parent, older sibling, or the person responsible for drop off will be picking up the child. If the parent/person responsible wishes for someone else to be pick up the child, it should be disclosed or the parent may be contacted. The Pastor/Director has the right ask for the ID of the person picking up.

Visitor Access Policy

- Parents with a child in the program are able to go check on their child at any point during the service. To remove their child from the classroom, they must present the matching sticker.
- Parents and visitors who wish to check out the space prior to checking in their child must be escorted by a volunteer and/or staff member. They must remain with the volunteer/staff member the entire time until they return to the lobby.
- Children and adults are expected to remain in the areas available for the program they are attending on the Kids/Youth/Multipurpose Side (“Old Building”).
 - Volunteers not serving as a Kids/Youth volunteer (e.g., Welcome Desk host getting an attendance count, safety officer, communion set up) can complete their duties in the Old Building (as their duties do not include working directly in kids/youth classrooms with kids/youth).
 - Children and adults attending specific programming should remain in the spaces designated for their program and use hallways/pathways as a thoroughfare.
 - Currently, the Kids Chapel is an open space, but should be treated like a classroom. The created pathway should be used as a thoroughfare. Children and adults who are not attending a program and/or do not have children participating in programming in the Kids Chapel should not remain in the Kids Chapel.
 - The Kids hallway can be used as a hallway for parents to walk with their littles (babies and toddlers) who are not checked in, as an alternative to the Wiggle Room or walking in the lobby. This is the hallway that is at the back of the Kids Chapel, the lobby outside the family bathrooms, and the connected there through the Fireweed Room (Room 201).
 - Children and adults that are found in the Old Building, but are not serving and are not attending specific programming and are not walking with their littles will be escorted back to the main lobby of the church. Staff, Spiritual Leadership Team members, safety team, Welcome Desk hosts, and Kids/Youth volunteers will all work together in monitoring this so as not to leave it to one specific person or role at any given time. I.e., as they are completing their tasks, if they notice someone out of place, they can approach the individual to provide assistance.
-
- Visiting family members of volunteers are not permitted to remain with the volunteer during their service time.

Parents may enter a room to help settle their children. However, they must only interact with their children and are expected to leave within a few minutes. Parents who wish to stay longer, must alert the

service coach (typically the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship) for approval. Parents who are approved Kids volunteers can remain in the classroom if the extra help is needed.

*Safety Team and Building Security **

The Creekside Church Safety Team shall be trained in this Policy, and is responsible to monitor the children areas during all Programs. The Safety Team should routinely monitor the outside and inside of the Creekside Church building before, during, and after program events. The Safety Team must confirm the only unlocked entrance and exit of the building are the front main doors and there is no other access point to the building. The Safety Team should also routinely walk the building during programs to ensure people are only in rooms designated for the program. The Safety Team must also report any suspicious activity to Creekside staff member, and cooperate in any investigation, if needed.

*Cameras **

Security cameras may be placed throughout the interior of the building. If and when cameras are installed in the building, signs will be posted indicating that a particular area of the building is monitored by cameras. Cameras will be used for visual recording; if audio recording is necessary, it will only be used pursuant to Alaska law. Cameras will not be installed in places where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., bathrooms, changing rooms).

Restroom and Diaper Changing

Policies related to toileting and diaper changes are sensitive issues and while Creekside understands there may be times when a volunteer or staff member needs to assist a child with either toileting or a diaper change, Creekside also understands such situations can create an unsafe environment. For this reason, the policies related to toileting and diaper changes are strict and must be followed carefully.

A single volunteer or staff member is not to enter a restroom when a single child is in the restroom, and any diaper changes must be in the presence of another unrelated volunteer or staff member. A volunteer or staff member may enter a restroom when more than one child or adult is in the restroom (e.g., one staff and two children or two staff and one child). Only under limited circumstances is a volunteer or staff member permitted to enter the bathroom stall with a child. If the volunteer must enter the stall, the door to the stall must remain open and a second adult must be present. In this event, a volunteer may instruct but is not to touch, e.g., help wipe. The parent must consent to any volunteer or staff member to assist their child with toileting and diapering. Ideally, if a child is not able to use the toilet alone, his or her parent should be called to assist. The doors of the restrooms must remain open during all Programs. During the registration process, each parent will be asked whether they consent to a volunteer or staff member assisting their child with the restroom or diaper changing.

The following is a list of suggestions volunteers may utilize to ensure protection and safety, as related to this policy:

- Bring children to the restroom in groups;
- Ensure the restroom is not occupied by an unknown individual before allowing children to use the facilities; and
- Line of sound instead of line-of-sight supervision is maintained while children are using the restroom (the volunteer should be able to hear the children but not see the children).

Program Activities Available to the Public

From time to time, Creekside may hold special events for the public (e.g., Easter Egg Hunt, Vacation Bible School). During public-access events where individuals from the community may participate in activities sponsored or hosted by Creekside, this Policy remains in full force and effect. “Individuals from the community” may be individuals who are not regular attenders or associated with Creekside. During these public-access events, clarification must be provided to inform the child’s parents when the parents remain responsible for their child or when Creekside is responsible.

Special events and activities for the public should have a formal registration process. Such process should reflect a similar process as outlined in the Registration process under Routine Protective Measures. All other provisions of this Policy should be followed during special events and activities to prevent abuse and protect against false allegations against employees and volunteers.

Special event and activities may require additional safety. Safety matters may relate to the building safety or the safety personnel. Any time a special event or activity is held for individuals from the community, Creekside should assess whether additional safety team members are required and all safety team members must follow the guidelines outlined in this Policy.

Offsite Ministry Activities *

The safety standards included in this Policy are applied to offsite activities when those offsite activities are approved by the SLT and/or the Lead Pastor. Parents retain responsibility for their children when an activity is not authorized.

Ministry Pre-Approval

For any offsite ministry where children may attend, the SLT and/or Lead Pastor must pre-approve the offsite activity. It is necessary the leadership of Creekside be aware of ministry activities taking place away from the physical church building, in order to prevent abuse and protect children, staff, and volunteers. Creekside will not be responsible for any offsite ministry

activities that are not pre-approved. Any offsite ministry activity without pre-approval means the parents are responsible for their own child's safety.

For any offsite ministry activity, it does require a written approval. The employee, volunteer, or leader, must seek approval and receive confirmation of approval, in writing, from the SLT and/or the Lead Pastor.

Parent Notification

For any offsite ministry activities involving children, parents will receive notification prior to the activity. Parents will be notified in writing, such as an email, with details about the event. Parents will be advised of risks, precautions, transportation matters, supervision, and other relevant information. Parents will also be required to sign a waiver and release of liability as part of the permission form, including medical information/permission, as needed. To the best extent possible, parents will be notified at least one week prior to any offsite ministry activity.

It is recommended that parents inform Creekside of any over-the-counter or prescription medications required for their child, prior to any offsite ministry activity. Creekside will not assist or dispense any medications to children; children will be required to manage their own medications, as directed by their physician. In the event of any medical emergency, parents will be immediately notified.

Document Accessibility

All documentation for offsite ministry activities will be held within Creekside pursuant to its Record Management policies, outlined in this Policy. Such documentation may include waiver and release of liability, medical forms, insurance cards, emergency contact information, etc.

Supervision

For any offsite ministry activities, this Policy requires that, to the best extent possible, provisions in *Policy Section Two: Protective Practices* be followed. Special arrangements may be required including line-of-sight arrangements if the offsite location does not allow for easy visibility into rooms or certain areas where children are present. Special supervision may also be required where the activity is an overnight activity.

Overnight Activities

Policies related to overnight activities are equally stringent and require the same care and concern as general on or offsite events. Policies related to overnight activities will comply with the policies already outlined, and additional policies to be considered and enforced.

The Adult-Child Ratio/Two-Adult Rule. The adult-child and two-adult rule must be followed during overnight events. This also includes that any mixed genders must be supervised by two unrelated adults, who are also of the opposite gender. It is ideal that at least four adults be in attendance for overnight activities, two of each gender.

For common sleeping areas, an appropriate number of screened adults, which should be at least two, should be assigned to each sleeping area. In this event, two unrelated men should supervise boys and two unrelated women should supervise girls.

At no time should an adult sleep in the same bed with a child, unless the adult is closely related to the child (e.g., mother and daughter).

Children Separation. Children should be assigned sleeping arrangements by gender (e.g., males with males, and females with females). This means children of the opposite gender should not be allowed in each other's rooms or lodging accommodations for any reason. Children should utilize the bathroom or shower facility of their gender. "Gender" means the biological sex assigned at conception.

Transportation

While parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up their student from Church related activities off campus, from time to time the Church may transport children to and from off campus events. Creekside requires staff and volunteers follow all rules outlined in this Policy related to protective practices. Creekside also requires staff and volunteers to specifically follow these rules, if not already outlined in these Policies:

- All insurance coverage requirements will be followed, according to Creekside's insurance carrier requirements and Alaska state law requirements.
- Children are not to be left alone in a vehicle and adults are prohibited from being alone in a vehicle with a single child not their own child (with the exception of medical emergencies).
- No fewer than two adults should be in each vehicle transporting children. Exceptions to this policy should only occur when the Committee is informed and preapproves, parents are informed, and there is more than one child in the vehicle.
- Driver's should have at least five years of driving experience and be in good standing as evidenced by their driving record.
- If Creekside's insurance carrier requires additional information from the driver, the driver will be expected to comply (e.g., documentation of driver's personal insurance coverage).

Missional Communities

Creekside encourages missional community groups to include the entire family and friends, who may not generally attend Creekside or church itself. It is important these groups maintain the policies listed in this Policy, to the best extent possible. It is understandable that some aspects of this Policy may differ slightly in a home setting, but it is important to recognize

that these missional community groups may include more unknown parents and children from the community. Considerations for missional community groups include:

- When families attend a missional community group with their children, the parent is responsible for the care and supervision of their children, whether the child remains in the same room as the parent or in the alternative location of the home.
- Either two child care workers should be available to supervise the children, or one worker supervises while a second periodically monitors during the event.
- Attention should be given to older children supervising or engaging with younger children.

Note: Many children are abused by another minor. The aspects of a home setting present an increased risk of abuse as the parents are often engaged in Bible Studies or other serious conversation, and children are not supervised to the same degree as they are in a typical church program. It is important to maintain the standards set in this Policy to the greatest extent possible when childcare is provided in a home setting for a Creekside Missional Community.

Record Management

Creekside will maintain a record of all applications, background checks, interview notes, training schedules, Affirmation of Child and Student Protection Policy signed by volunteers, Limited License Agreements, Incident Reports, notes related to reports to the authorities, and all other forms referenced in this Policy. These records will remain confidential and will only be accessed by the Creekside SLT or Child Protection Committee.

POLICY SECTION THREE: RESPONDING TO POLICY VIOLATIONS AND CHILD ABUSE

Policy Violations

It is not enough to simply have a policy related to child abuse, the Policy must be enforced and violations must be addressed. How seriously a church treats its policy violations and abuse disclosures determines just how effective its policy is at preventing the opportunity for abuse. Creekside takes violations of this Policy seriously and addresses any disclosure of abuse.

Policy violations will vary, from somewhat minor to serious enough to require reporting, as will be discussed in Section 3. Regardless of the how minor or serious the violation, all deserve a response. While Creekside wants to avoid a paranoid or unwelcoming culture, it still remains vigilant to abuse and disclosures of abuse.

Sometimes Policy violations results simply because an individual did not know it existed, was unaware of a particular term or misunderstood it, or the policy is new and they were not used to its terms. While still other policy violations were intentional and an indicator of harm. Creekside encourages *Bystanders* who are aware of the Policy, but not directly working with Creekside Kids or Creekside Youth (or any other child program), to raise awareness if they see a policy violation. Raising awareness may include redirecting the behavior or informing an employee of Creekside.

Documentation of Policy Violations

Some policy violations may require documentation, while others may not. Discretion should be used when determining whether to document the violation. An *Incident Report* should be used when a violation requires documentation, and the document should then be maintained according to the record keeping management practices in this Policy.

Education

Because abuse thrives on secrecy, speaking openly about Policy violations and unsafe behaviors will either educate a person who had no intention of hurting a child or place a potential offender on notice that he is being watched and help to minimize opportunities to abuse.

If an individual violates a term of this Policy, requiring the matter be raised to the SLT and/or Lead Pastor, then it is imperative to set an in-person meeting with the individual to discuss the violation and address it immediately. If after such meeting, Creekside believes the matter has been fully addressed and it is satisfied with the individual's response to the violation (e.g., he or she expresses appreciation for the seriousness of the violation and agrees to reform his or her behavior, is apologetic), then no more action may be required. If conversely, the individual does not provide a satisfactory response, then it is necessary to discern whether the individual

should be provided limited access to children, or if another form of removal from children is necessary.

Policy Exceptions

Policy exceptions should always be kept to a minimum; however, Creekside may, from time to time allow an exception in the event of an emergency or a pre-approved exception.

- Emergencies. Emergency responses often require a deviation from the Policy, which is acceptable (e.g., medical emergency and one adult needs to drive a child to the hospital). Generally, in an emergency situation, it is safer to deviate from the Policy than it is to follow the Policy. In these emergency situations, the parent should be notified immediately and so should Creekside. The emergency exception should be documented using the *Notification Form: Emergency Deviation from Policy* and stored according to the record management practices outlined in this Policy.
- Preapproved Exceptions. While it may be necessary to periodically request a pre-approved exception to this Policy, such pre-approval request should be submitted in writing to the Spiritual Leadership Team and/or Lead Pastor. The *Policy Exception Request Form* should be submitted well in advance of when the requesting individual desires to deviate from the Policy. Such exceptions should be limited and should articulate why an exception is needed, and how the safety of the child will still be maintained despite the exception. If any exception is preapproved, the children, including their parents, should be notified of such exception and given the opportunity to rearrange their plans to elect not to participate. If any exception has made preapproved by a Child Protection Committee member or an employee of Creekside, the *Policy Exception Request Form* should still be submitted to the SLT and/or Lead Pastor, for record management.
- Violations of Creekside Staff or SLT. If a staff member of Creekside violates the Policy, they will be formally warned and then terminated if the violation occurs again. Similarly, if a member of the SLT violates the Policy, they will be formally warned and then asked to resign if the violation occurs again.

Limited Access Agreements

Creekside utilizes Limited Access Agreements to clarify safe behavior around children for community members who have engaged in concerning or risky behaviors, violated the Policy repeatedly, or offenses that are not related to children (e.g., stealing, drug use, DUI). This is not an exhaustive list, and Creekside reserves the right to assess individuals on a case-by-case basis.

A Limited Access Agreement is a written and agreed-upon boundary between an individual and Creekside wherein it outlines specific concerns about an individual's behavior, details appropriate behavior toward children, and prepares a plan for ongoing accountability for the individual. Limited Access Agreements apply to members of a church community. Limited Access Agreements do not apply to known offenders or Creekside staff.

If a convicted sexual offender wants to join Creekside's community, the safety team will be alerted of that person's presence and will discreetly observe them and ensure they are in compliance with boundaries set within the Creekside child and student protection policy while they are in the building.

In no event will entrance to child designated areas be allowed if prohibited by a court order.

A non-parent/guardian sex offender is prohibited from entering child designated areas of Creekside when children are present. If the sex offender wishes to attend adult Sunday morning programming located in areas of our building that requires passing through child designated areas, he/she will be observed as he/she is going to the approved area.

A parent/guardian sex offender who has a child attending a Creekside Kids program is prohibited from entering child designated areas of Creekside when children are present and, except in the following instances:

- The parent/guardian may enter child designated areas with children present when dropping off or picking up his/her child. Outside of normal drop off/pick up times, the parent/guardian may enter child designated areas to address concerns specifically for his/her child(ren) but must be accompanied by the Director of Kids Discipleship, a member of the safety team, a member of the SLT, or a suitable person designated by one of the aforementioned individuals. The parent/guardian may not enter the classrooms beyond the drop off point and may not assist with other children. The parent/guardian may not linger in the child designated areas outside of assisting his/her own child.
- If the parent/guardian wishes to enter child designated areas with children present for another reason (e.g., Family Workshops, Fall Festival, Christmas party), he/she can submit a request form that the Spiritual Leadership Team will review, on a case-by-case basis, and provide written consent with parameters for approved Creekside Kids events.

Creekside Church's Spiritual Leadership Team shall have the discretion to refuse permission if it is reasonably believed that the parent/guardian's presence in child designated areas of Creekside Church with children present would be inappropriate or a danger to others, provided permission shall not be unreasonably withheld.

Similarly, if an individual has been credibly accused of child sexual abuse or any form of child abuse, but has not yet been convicted, Creekside reserves the right to seek professional and/or legal counsel to understand how best to proceed up to and including limited access to child designated areas.

Reporting

The abuse of children is not only a sin, but it is a serious crime. When adults report suspected child abuse to legal authorities, they may in fact be saving a child's life and rescuing them from serious physical, sexual, mental, and emotional abuse. Conversely, remaining silent about suspected abuse could bring indescribable pain and harm to victims and emboldens offenders. The authorities should be contacted immediately when a child discloses abuse, child abuse is witnessed, or when signs of abuse are observed. While adult volunteers at Creekside are

not mandatory reporters under Alaska law (as of the date of this Policy), Creekside takes child abuse seriously and will endeavor to prevent and protect children from and against continued abuse. Creekside will prevent and protect children, through reporting, as outlined below.

What should be reported?

Creekside takes the position that any and all child abuse or suspicions should be reported to the appropriate authorities, whether specifically required by law or not. Alaska Statute 47.17.010 states:

In order to protect children whose health and well-being may be adversely affected through the infliction, by other than accidental means, of harm through physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, the legislature requires the reporting of these cases by practitioners of the healing arts and others to the department. It is not the intent of the legislature that persons required to report suspected child abuse or neglect under this chapter investigate the suspected child abuse or neglect before they make the required report to the department. **Reports must be made when there is a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect** in order to make state investigative and social services available in a wider range of cases at an earlier point in time, to make sure that investigations regarding child abuse and neglect are conducted by trained investigators, and to avoid subjecting a child to multiple interviews about the abuse or neglect. It is the intent of the legislature that, as a result of these reports, protective services will be made available in an effort to:

(1) prevent further harm to the child;

(2) safeguard and enhance the general well-being of children in this state;

and

(3) preserve family life unless that effort is likely to result in physical or emotional damage to the child.

Refer to Appendix I in this Policy to review a list of what may indicate child abuse. If a Creekside staff member or volunteer is suspicious of any child abuse, he or she should notify the appropriate authorities.

Who should report abuse?

In addition to a Creekside staff member or volunteer, any person who witnesses or observes child abuse or neglect should notify the appropriate authorities.

Who is a mandatory reporter?

According to Alaska Statute 47.17.020, “child care providers” are mandatory reporters. A *mandatory reporter*, by Alaska Statute definition 47.17.290(4), in relevant part means “an adult

individual...or an employee of an organization, who provides care and supervision to a child for compensation....”

This means the Pastor/Director of Kids and Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship are mandatory reporters in Alaska, and have a legal responsibility to report. Specifically, if either director has a “reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm as a result of child abuse, [he or she] shall immediately report the harm to the nearest office of the department and, if the harm appears to be a result of a suspected sex offense, shall immediately report the harm to the nearest law enforcement agency.” (Alaska Statute 47.17.020(a)).

NOTE: Alaska Statute 47.17.020 does not prohibit any other person from reporting a child’s harm that the person has reasonable cause to suspect is a result of child abuse or neglect. This Statute also does not prohibit other mandated reporters in their nonoccupational capacities to report (e.g., school teachers or school administrative staff members, athletic coaches). Creekside may have otherwise mandatory reporters volunteering in children programs; these persons are not required to report, but are also not prohibited by the Statute. Creekside takes the position that all suspicions of child abuse or neglect shall be reported by the individual witnessing or observing the suspicion.

How should a report be filed?

To ensure the safety and protection of BOTH the child and volunteer, the table on the following page outlines the steps for reporting suspicions of child abuse or neglect AND must be strictly followed. This process for reporting suspicions does not apply solely to staff members of Creekside or volunteers, but to ANYONE who has suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Remainder of page intentionally left blank.

Reporting Procedure



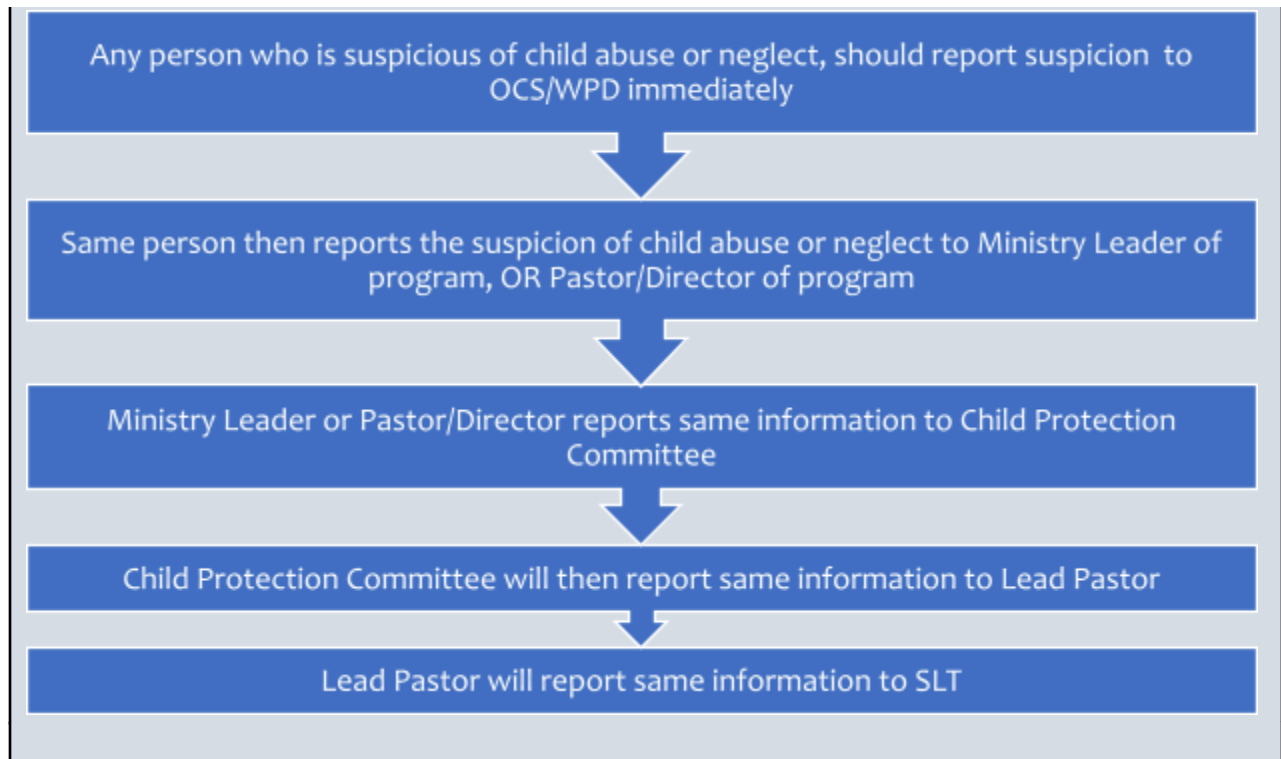


Table 1

The following protocol **must** be followed:

1. Any person who is suspicious of child abuse or neglect, should report suspicion to OCS/WPD immediately

When a Creekside staff member or adult childcare volunteer witnesses or observes child abuse (i.e., has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm as a result of child abuse or neglect), the person who witnessed or observed the abuse or neglect shall immediately report the harm to:

Alaska Department of Family and Community Services, Office of Children's Services (OCS). The nearest office is located at 695 E. Parks Hwy, Unit #3 in Wasilla. As of the date of this Policy, this OCS is located in the Carrs shopping center (as of February 2024).

Wasilla Office of Children's Services – (907) 357-9797

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-478-4444

Email: reportchildabuse@alaska.gov

Fax: 907-269-3939

Child Sexual Abuse must be reported to both the Office of Children's Services AND Law Enforcement.

If the harm appears to be a result of a suspected sex offense, the person must also report the harm to the nearest law enforcement agency. Assuming the suspected offense took place in Wasilla, contact the Wasilla Police Department.

Wasilla Police Department
801 N. Wasilla Fishhook Road
(907) 352-5401

Contact the local law enforcement agency assigned to the area where the abuse took place, if the abuse took place somewhere other than Wasilla proper. If it is unknown which agency to call or how to contact law enforcement, a locator map is available at: <https://dccc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fd93ecc4ae43457c85b84958f2dd2336>

If a bystander or another person, who is NOT a staff member or childcare volunteer of Creekside witnesses or observes child abuse, they are not prohibited from notifying OCS and/or a law enforcement agency.

2. Same person then reports the suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Ministry Leader of program, OR Pastor/Director of program

After the report has been made to OCS and/or the local law enforcement agency, the person who made the report, should immediately inform a ministry leader of the children program, OR the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship or Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship, depending on the age of the child. If reported to ministry leader, the ministry leader must report to the Pastor/Director.

3. Ministry Leader or Pastor/Director reports same information to Child and Student Protection Committee

After the report has been made to the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship or Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship, depending on the age of the child, it must then be reported to the Child Protection Committee. The Pastor/Director will be responsible to make the report to the Child and Student Protection Committee, but may request the original reporter be present when reported to the Committee.

Since the Committee is made up of several members, which may include the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship or Pastor/Director of Student Discipleship, a member of the Spiritual Leadership Team, and others, it is not necessary that all members of the Committee be present to learn of the report. It is only necessary that at least one *other* member of the Committee be made aware of the report, e.g., if the Pastor/Director of Kids Discipleship is a member of the Committee, he or she will then be responsible to inform a second member of the Committee.

4. Child Protection Committee will then report same information to Lead Pastor

After the report has been made to a member of the Child and Student Protection Committee, it must then be reported to the Lead Pastor.

5. Lead Pastor will report same information to SLT

The Lead Pastor will report to the SLT.

What happens after the Reporting Procedure has been followed?

If the report made alleges the offender is an employee or volunteer of Creekside, he or she shall be immediately suspended from any church related activity. Note, any alleged offender should have no contact with the victim or any other child. Since communication with the alleged offender could compromise the OCS or law enforcement investigation, it is necessary to communicate with both agencies concerning appropriate contact and communication with the alleged offender.

Creekside will fully cooperate with the investigation by OCS and/or the law enforcement agency. Creekside will NOT conduct any internal investigations and will rely fully upon OCS and law enforcement to investigate. A discussion on investigations will be addressed in the following Section.

Independent Reviews

While Creekside will not engage in any investigation, on its own, there are two primary circumstances when Creekside may initiate an independent investigation. First, when OCS or local law enforcement decline to investigate or prosecute alleged abuse; and second, when a district attorney elects not to prosecute because it is determined the conduct was not criminal. While conduct may not be criminal, it may still violate the Policy, be immoral, inappropriate, or unsafe. In these circumstances, Creekside may initiate an independent review. “Independent” means the reviewer does not have an affiliation with Creekside, thereby not calling into question the legitimacy of the review.

Creekside has determined that under the following circumstances, it will consult with a child protection expert to determine if an independent review should be pursued:

- When a suspicion of child abuse is reported to OCS or law enforcement and neither agency investigates or prosecutes the alleged suspect of child abuse.
- When a district attorney has not pursued legal prosecution because no suspected criminal behavior is reported; however, the Child Protection Committee believes the individual’s behavior might still violate the Policy, be immoral, be inappropriate, or be unsafe.

If any investigation is deemed necessary by the Child Protection Committee, Creekside will retain an organization that meets the following criteria:

- Completely independent of Creekside;
- Experienced in proper child abuse investigation techniques, which may include sexual abuse investigation; and,
- Will be experienced and up-to-date on child abuse research.

Clergy-Penitent Privilege

In some states, members of the clergy must maintain confidentiality of certain pastoral communications. This is called the “clergy-penitent privilege.” Alaska does not have a specific “clergy-penitent privilege” however, Alaska Evidence Rule 506 does seem to favor confidential communications with clergymen as privileged, with exceptions for communications to further crime or fraud. Conversely, “religious practioners of the healing arts” are considered mandatory reporters under Alaska Statute 47.17.020(a). While it may be required for a member of the SLT or a pastoral staff to keep *certain* communications confidential, Creekside adheres to the position that the SLT and pastoral staff would fall more appropriately under “religious practioners of the healing arts” with respect to child abuse, and thereby will follow a course that most effectively protects children and prevents abuse by reporting any suspicions.

POLICY SECTION FOUR: SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

Abuse Disclosures

Because children and adult survivors are often reluctant disclose abuse, Creekside acknowledges that abuse survivors who do choose to disclose abuse need our full support and encouragement.

When children disclose abuse, they almost always do so by accident, and may later recant even when there is proof the abuse did occur. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. When children disclose intentionally, children may first test the adult's reaction by pretending the abuse happened to a friend or supplying only a small piece of information. If a child discloses abuse, the following are helpful tips on how to respond to the disclosure:

- Stay calm
- Show love and respect for the child
- Thank the child for telling you and praise the child's courage
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting in trouble, reassure the child that no matter what happened he or she is not to blame
- If the child expresses concern about not being believed, reassure the child that you believe him or her
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat details, or probe for more details
- Use open ended questions
- Do not offer false promises like promising to keep the disclosure a secret
- Let the child know what to expect next and incorporate their input where possible
- Protect the child immediately from the suspected offender
- Report the abuse according the reporting section in this *Policy*
- Document the disclosure and your report
- Protect the child's privacy and/or avoid the urge to turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice

Ongoing Survivor Support

The purpose of this Policy is to prevent occurrences of child abuse. Yet we understand that no matter how hard we try to protect children, there may always be some individuals seeking to harm them. If Creekside becomes aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been abused, it will take the following steps to clearly communicate support for the child and the child's family.

Terminate/Suspend

Immediately suspend or terminate the alleged perpetrator of abuse from any church position s/he may hold, pending the results of an investigation. Assign a liaison to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator.

Support Person

A member of the SLT will be designated as a "Support Person" and will reach out to the child and the child's family within twenty-four hours of learning of the abuse to express the

church's support. Understanding that abuse can have ongoing impact on a child and a child's family, the Support Person will seek permission from the child and the child's family to continue offering support on an ongoing basis.

Mental Health Treatment

Creekside will offer to help the family find a qualified mental health practitioner with expertise treating victims of abuse and their family members. If the family requires assistance paying for mental health treatment, the church will offer to subsidize such treatment or connect the family to resources that may be able to assist in this regard.

Public Support

Creekside commits to protecting the privacy of all victims of child abuse. We also understand that sometimes victims are publicly marginalized while communities may protect the abuser. In the event the victim is publicly attacked or disparaged for the abuse or response to abuse, the Spiritual Leadership Team will—with the victim's permission—make a public statement and urge the community to offer support instead.

Creating a Culture of Ongoing Support for Victims of Childhood Abuse

Creekside desires to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse—both abuse that is known and unknown. Creekside will offer resources to assist victims in their healing and recovery, including:

- Create a referral list of local organizations and therapists who specialize in sexual abuse treatment;
- Post signs throughout the building about child abuse prevention and reporting; and
- Publicize the Policy and post contact information for church leaders who are available to answer any questions about child safety.

POLICY SECTION FIVE: LIVING THE POLICY

Training

Creekside will train all employees and child volunteers at least once per year. The primary purpose of any training will be to educate about the Policy and how to prevent, detect, and respond to child abuse.

Training will consist primarily of reviewing the terms of the Policy and providing intensive training for those who work directly with children. The intensive training will include the following:

- Prevention – practical training on how to implement the Policy and raise awareness within the congregation on prevent of child abuse and neglect.
- Detection – discussing indicators of child abuse and neglect and spotting risky behaviors in adults.
- Response – reporting suspicions of abuse or neglect and supporting survivors.

Dissemination

This Policy shall be disseminated to the Creekside community through training programs offered at least once per year, printed publications, and made available at the Creekside Connection desk. At least once annually, the Lead Pastor will address the Policy during Sunday morning service(s) to briefly explain and remind the congregation of the Policy and Creekside's position regarding child protection.

Creekside requires all staff, volunteers working with children, parents, and church leaders to sign an affirmation indicating that they have read and agree to abide by the terms of the Policy, as a precondition to engagement with the church or receiving access to children. Affirmations will be stored in the church office.

Evaluating and Updating the Policy

The Policy will be evaluated at least once per quarter during the first year of implementation (2024). During subsequent years, the Policy will be evaluated at least once every six months (e.g., January and July). The frequency of the evaluation may change over time as Creekside Church grows and develops its childcare programs. Evaluations will be scheduled by the Committee. Updates to the Policy will be completed by the Committee.

During the evaluation, the Committee should discuss concerning incident reports and policy violations; feedback from childcare workers, parents, and children; and employee evaluations. It may also be necessary to discuss the list of individuals who have a Limited Access Agreement, and whether an expert evaluation may be necessary.

APPENDIX I: Indicators of Abuse, Impact of Abuse, and People Who Abuse Children

Indicators of Abuse

Just as there are different types of abuse, there are also different indicators of abuse. It is important to know what signs indicate abuse. This section will outline behavior and emotional indicators, sexual and physical abuse indicators, and indicators of neglect.

Behavioral and Emotional Indicators

It is important to understand the behaviors that might indicate a child is being abused. With such understanding, Creekside Church will be in a better position to intervene to help a child. While there may be various signs of abuse, two important indicators to note are behavior and emotional indicators. These types of indicators are difficult to notice because they are not as reliable as physical indicators.

Some behavioral and emotional indicators include:

- Depression, emotional or passive behavior, withdrawal from family, friends, church, or school; exhibiting low self-esteem or self-loathing
- Lack of attachment to caregiver; displaying distrust or wariness at the approach of adults, caregivers, or specific people; fear of going home that may manifest by arriving at events early, staying late, or appearing frightened or upset when it is time to go home
- Being constantly watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Sudden changes in behavior, including academic changes
- Extremes in behavior, such as over-compliance, overachieving or demanding behaviors, extreme passivity, or behaving more responsibly than would be expected of a child that age
- Aggressive, destructive, demanding, or disruptive behavior; frequent and inexplicable anger, rebellion, or running away
- Self-degradation or self-injury
- Delays in emotional, cognitive, physical, or academic development
- Unwillingness to change or participate in certain activities such as gym night or swimming
- Being inappropriately adult-like or infantile
- Exhibiting high anxiety, including physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches
- Frequent, unexplained absences from school

Physical and Sexual Abuse Indicators

Children are prone to bumps and bruises and it is not uncommon for children to engage in normal childhood activities that lead to cuts, scrapes, and bruises. However, it is important to look for indicators of physical abuse and understand what those indicators look like.

Some indicators of physical abuse may include:

- Frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns)

- Is the child unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of the injury
- Injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments
- Pay attention to injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body

Some sexual indicators include:

- Placing mouth on sex part
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse
- Undressing others, especially if done forcefully
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls
- Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain
- Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets
- Making sexual sounds
- Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing

Physical signs of sexual abuse are uncommon, so when they are present it is a cause for concern. Just like with any indicator of abuse, an indicator does not mean the sexual abuse occurred, as there could be unrelated causes of the indicator.

Some physical indicators of sexual abuse may include:

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
- Discharge from the penis or vagina
- Injuries, itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Promiscuity and early sexual activity
- Pregnancy

Neglect Indicators

When determining whether a child is being neglected, it is important to consider what a reasonably prudent parent would do in a specific circumstance. For example, if a child is always dirty, or hoards food and is always hungry, this could be an indicator the child is neglected. While it does not necessarily mean the child is, it is important to note whether the need or condition of the child is commonly observed. Some indicators of neglect may include:

- Obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued
- Begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger
- Consistently dirty or has a severe body odor

- Lacks sufficient clothing for the winter
- Has an untreated illness, injury, or has an unmet health need
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other necessary medical equipment is broken or missing
- Untreated medical needs such as glasses or dental care
- Stays at school outside of school hours
- Inappropriately left unsupervised
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs

Impact of Abuse

Child abuse may be unobservable and hidden from the untrained eye, but the long-term impact may last a lifetime. It is important to understand how traumatizing abuse can be, and its lifetime impacts, to more adequately prevent and respond appropriately to any suspicion of abuse. Not every child will display the impact of their abuse and not every adult will experience the long-term consequences of their traumatic childhood experiences, but all are at increased risks.

Impact of Emotional Health

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study found that children who suffered one of the ten adverse childhood experiences surveyed were at an increased risk throughout their lifetime for: obesity, illicit drug use, alcohol abuse, marrying an alcoholic spouse, early initiation of sexual activity, unintended or teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, anxiety disorder, depression, attempting suicide, experiencing domestic or sexual violence, difficulties in academics, employment, or relationships, hallucinations, memory disturbances, or sleep disturbances.

Impact of Physical Health

The ACE study found that children who had experienced maltreatment were more likely to suffer from a variety of serious medical problems, including cancer, heart disease, lung disease, liver disease, autoimmune deficiencies, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and obesity as adults.

Impact of Spiritual Health

Spiritual injuries from child sexual abuse or child maltreatment might include negative shifts in victims' perspective of God, a ruptured relationship with God, disruptions of faith, decreased involvement in organized religion, and a decline in spiritual well-being and functioning. Children who have suffered sexual abuse often endure spiritual injury and may feel guilty, doubtful of God's existence or love for them, or they might believe God is unjust. Victims report a sense of enhanced betrayal when their abuser is a person they perceived as holy, and numerous studies have found that spiritual injuries are more pronounced in instances where the perpetrator is a member of the clergy.

People Who Abuse Children

People who sexually abuse children utilize authority, trust, and/or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetrate the abuse. These offenders' behavior is often repetitive and predictable. Understanding the behavior and the methods employed by those who sexually abuse children is imperative to implementing policies to protect children.

There are two necessary elements for any offender when sexually victimizing a child—they need access and control. There are three main types of abusers—the stranger, the acquaintance, and a member of the intra-familial. Each are described in detail below.

The Stranger

Stranger offenders are people that the child has never seen, or people with whom the child has had only minimal prior interactions. Stranger offenders secure access and control over children with authority, trust, and physical force/threats but most frequently utilize physical force/threats and are the smallest category of offenders.

The Acquaintance

Acquaintance offenders are non-family members—such as a family friend, clergy member, next-door neighbor, pediatrician, teacher, or church volunteer—who is acquainted with the child or child's parents. These offenders generally prefer to leverage trust to gain access and control. To secure this trust, the acquaintance offender grooms child victims by providing a variety of services and gifts, which may include attention, affection, kindness, privileges, recognition, alcohol, drugs, money, and pornography. The trust that develops as a result of the grooming process will often reduce the child's inhibitions and increase the offender's control over the child. The toxic trust eventually renders the child virtually helpless, creating an environment for ongoing abuse, while increasing the likelihood the victim will remain silent.

A Member of the Intra-Familial

Intra-Familial offenders are related to the victim and are people who usually, but not always, live in the same house as the victim. The intra-familial offender is generally considered the largest of the three child molester categories. Because of greater accessibility, intra-familial victims tend to be overall younger than non-familial victims. The primary challenge for the intra-familial molester is not access, but the ability to exert sufficient control in order to both abuse and silence the victim. A seemingly greater correlation and interplay exists between the use of trust, authority, and physical force utilized by the intra-familial offender.

APPENDIX II: FORMS

The following pages contain forms for use at Creekside Church, as referenced in the Child and Student Protection Policies.

- Adult Application for Volunteer
- Minor Application for Volunteer
- Child Safety Incident Report
- Notification Form: Emergency Deviation from Policy
- Policy Exception Request Form

Adult Application for Volunteer

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Social Security No.: _____ Driver's License State and No.: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Email address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____

Please list all addresses you have lived at for the past five (5) years, and your dates of residency: _____

Were you ever suspended, expelled, or formally disciplined at any post-high school academic institution for any reason? If so, please list the date of incident, type of discipline, and reason for the discipline. _____

WORK EXPERIENCE

Please list all previous work history and any and all experience working with children, whether paid or unpaid.

Experience 1

Employer/Organization: _____

Supervisor's name and phone number/email address: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Your roles/responsibilities: _____

Experience 2

Employer/Organization: _____

Supervisor's name and phone number/email address: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Your roles/responsibilities: _____

Experience 3

Employer/Organization: _____

Supervisor's name and phone number/email address: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Your roles/responsibilities: _____

Experience 4

Employer/Organization: _____

Supervisor's name and phone number/email address: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Your roles/responsibilities: _____

CRIMINAL HISTORY

Please list any and all criminal arrests or charges, including relevant dates, nature of the offense, conviction, sentence imposed, and any rehabilitation. _____

Have you ever abused or neglected a child? If so, please explain. _____

Has anyone ever accused you of neglecting or abusing a child or adult? If so, please explain. _____

Have you ever been part of a child protective service investigation or court proceeding in Alaska or another state? If so, please explain. Please attach supporting documentation. _____

Please list two references and their contact information. References should be individuals who have observed or supervised your work with children, who know you well and can attest to your character and work ethic.

Reference 1

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

What is this person's relationship to you? _____

How long have you known this person? _____

Reference 2

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

What is this person's relationship to you? _____

How long have you known this person? _____

Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.

I have received and read a copy of the Creekside Church Child and Student Protection Policy and agree to abide by its terms.

I agree to nurture and protect children and never to engage in behavior that may harm them. _____

I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children in church services and activities. _____

If I observe or hear inappropriate behaviors involving children or possible Child and Student Protection Policy violations, I agree to immediately report my observations. _____

I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and agree to report suspicions of abuse or known abuse to Creekside Church AND the proper authorities. _____

I consent to a background check prior to volunteering in any child ministry within Creekside Church and further consent to automatic background check conducted at least once every two years. _____

Signature

Date

To be filled out by Creekside Church

This *Adult Application for Volunteer* has been received by: _____ Date: _____

This *Adult Application for Volunteer* has been approved by: _____ Date: _____

Minor Application for Volunteer

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: ____ Grade: _____ Email address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____

High School Attending: _____

Have you ever been suspended or expelled from high school? If so, please list the date and reason for the suspension/expulsion.

Describe why you think you would make a good leader in the children's ministry. _____

Please list any and all experiences you have had working with or caring for children, whether paid or unpaid. This may include summer jobs, babysitting, volunteering, or caring for siblings.

Experience 1

Position: _____

Supervisor's name and phone number/email address: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Your roles/responsibilities: _____

Experience 2

Position: _____

Supervisor's name and phone number/email address: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Reason for leaving: _____

Your roles/responsibilities: _____

Please list two references below and their contact information. References should be individuals who know you well and can attest to your character and work ethic.

Reference 1

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

What is this person's relationship to you? _____

How long have you known this person? _____

Reference 2

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

What is this person's relationship to you? _____

How long have you known this person? _____

Signature

Date

To be filled out by Creekside Church

This *Minor Application for Volunteer* has been received by: _____ Date: _____

This *Minor Application for Volunteer* has been approved by: _____ Date: _____

Child Safety Incident Report

This form should be used to report to the Child and Student Protection Committee any violation of the Child and Student Protection Policy, boundary violations, disclosures of abuse, child safety concerns, or other behavior or allegations of behavior that might jeopardize the safety of the child. Proof or direct knowledge of a behavior or incident is not necessary to submit this form, and as such lines on this form may not be applicable to you. Provide whatever information you do have, and where extra space is needed, please continue below the line or attach an additional sheet.

Date(s) of incident/behavior, if known: _____

Name(s) and contact information of child(ren) harmed, potentially harmed, or otherwise adversely impacted by incident/behavior:

_____ Unknown _____ Known (fill out lines below)

Child 1 _____
Parent(s) _____
Email _____
Phone _____

Child 2 _____
Parent(s) _____
Email _____
Phone _____

Name(s) and contact information of individual(s)-adult or child-who accidentally and intentionally violated the Policy, or otherwise harmed or potentially harmed (the above) child(ren), or who otherwise engaged in concerning behavior.

_____ Unknown _____ Known (fill out lines below)

Individual 1 _____
Parent(s) _____
Email _____
Phone _____

Individual 2 _____
Parent(s) _____
Email _____
Phone _____

What Policy, if any, was violated? _____

Where did the incident/behavior occur? _____

Was there an ongoing activity at the time of the incident? If so, what? _____

Description of incident/behavior. _____

Did you witness the concerning incident/behavior firsthand? Yes [] No []

If not, how did you find out about it? _____

Who was present at the time of the incident/behavior? _____

What is their role in Creekside Church/Relationship to Child? _____

Which individuals, other than those listed above, know about this incident? Please include individuals in Creekside Church and beyond. _____

What is their role in Creekside Church, if any/Relationship to Child? _____

Please provide the following information for any law enforcement or Office of Children's Services agent who was contacted in reference to this incident.

Name of Agency 1 _____
Date(s) of contact _____
Means of communicating with the agency _____
Report No. _____
Name(s) of the individual(s) who contacted the agency _____

Name(s) of other individual(s) present when agency was contacted _____

Name of Agency 2 _____
Date(s) of contact _____
Means of communicating with the agency _____
Report No. _____
Name(s) of the individual(s) who contacted the agency _____

Name(s) of other individual(s) present when agency was contacted _____

Were any child protection professionals or experts, other than those listed above, contacted about this incident? If yes, please indicate the individual(s) or non-governmental agency contacted, the date of contact, and the result of the consult.

Date _____
Consultant _____
Result _____

What additional steps have been, or will be, taken to respond to this incident/violation?
(Anticipated) Date _____
Response _____

(Anticipated) Date _____
Response _____

(Anticipated) Date _____
Response _____

What, if anything, can be done to prevent future similar incidents/violations or improve response procedures? _____

Individual submitting this report:

Printed Name

Date

Signature

Please submit this form to office@creeksideak.com or hand deliver to a member of the Spiritual Leadership Team or Child and Student Protection Committee member.

To be filled out by Creekside Church

This *Child Safety Incident Report* has been received by: _____ Date: _____

Notification Form: Emergency Deviation from Policy

This form should be submitted to the Spiritual Leadership Team and/or the Lead Pastor if an individual has made an emergency exception to its Child and Student Protection Policy.

Date: _____

Date Exception Occurred: _____

Submitted by: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Relevant Policy Section: _____

Relevant Policy Language: _____

Please list any Policy deviations and explain the circumstances that necessitated these deviations: _____

Who else was present when this occurred? _____

Did anyone specifically object to the deviation? If so, please list their names below: _____

Please share anything else you would like the Child and Student Protection Committee to know: _____

Note: This form is different than the *Child Safety Incident Reporting Form*, where a third-party reports a violation of the *Policy* by another. Here, the individual who deviated from the *Policy* submitted the form himself or herself and explaining the reason why it was necessary to deviate. This sort of person-one who knows the *Policy*, understands when it needs to be broken, and alerts the Committee when it is-is not the person Creekside Church is concerned about.

To be filled out by Creekside Church

This Notification Form: *Emergency Deviation from Policy* has been received by: _____ Date: _____

This Notification Form: *Emergency Deviation from Policy* has been approved by: _____ Date: _____

Policy Exception Request Form

This form should be submitted to the Spiritual Leadership Team and/or the Lead Pastor if an individual is requesting Creekside Church to make exception to its Child and Student Protection Policy, or has previously made a request that was preapproved by a Child and Student Protection Committee member or employee of Creekside Church.

Date: _____

Date Exception Will Occur: _____

Submitted by: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Relevant Policy Section: _____

Relevant Policy Language: _____

Exception Requested: _____

Please explain why you believe this exception is necessary: _____

Is this request ongoing or time limited? _____

If time limited, please list the relevant date(s): _____

Request is for the following program(s): _____

Has anyone on the church's Child and Student Protection Committee pre-approved this request?

Yes []

No []

Who? _____

Date of preapproval: _____

To be filled out by Creekside Church

This Policy Exception Request Form has been received by: _____ Date: _____

This Policy Exception Request Form has been approved by: _____ Date: _____