

Christian Church of Pacific Grove

Safe Church Policy



CHRISTIAN CHURCH
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
Pacific Grove

Adopted July 18, 2017

Christian Church of Pacific Grove

Safe Church Policy

Policy

As a community of Christian faith, the Christian Church of Pacific Grove (CCPG) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, guests, staff, and volunteers can worship, learn, and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, bullying, and other forms of abuse or intimidation.

All persons associated with CCPG should be aware that such behavior is prohibited by the following Safe Church Policy. It is the intention of CCPG to take action to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this Policy and, if necessary, report violations to the appropriate social services and/or law enforcement agency.

Scriptural Foundation: I Peter 1:15-16 "...but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior, because it is written, "You shall be holy, because I am holy."

This Safe Church Policy shall be posted both in Jones Hall, the Swann Building, and on the CCPG and Blue Theology websites. The CCPG Administrative Board will be responsible for promoting and monitoring compliance with the Policy by all church members. The Administrative Board will review the Safe Church policy document as needed, and propose revisions as necessary.

Appropriate Conduct

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers – **all** employees, elected and appointed leaders, volunteers and other church participants are subject to this policy.

It is important that every member of this congregation be adequately prepared and educated for the manner in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of CCPG to encourage its members to nurture safety by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Sexual exploitation, sexual harassment or other forms of abuse by anyone associated with CCPG is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

Requirements for Employees, Leaders, and Volunteers

- Before beginning their duties, all employees and volunteers working with youth will be subject to a background check.
- The Pastor will attend all boundary workshops required by the Christian Church Northern California-Nevada Regional Church.

Additional Requirements for Child and Youth Ministries

CCPG is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love and the Christian faith. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministry to the church:

- We expect that those who volunteer to work with minors will be members of CCPG or be well known to the Pastor.
- All adults who regularly work with children and youth will receive orientation regarding this Safe Church Policy and all related procedures.
- It is the policy of CCPG to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities. In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two adults (persons 18 years of age or older) present with children.
- Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off of church property, and any overnight activities.

Definitions

Pastor: the called and ordained spiritual leader of the congregation.

Bullying: aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power. Most often it is repeated over time.

Companion Adult: A Companion Adult will accompany a registered sex offender while on the property of CCPG, while attending an event sponsored by CCPG, or while representing CCPG. A Companion Adult is an adult who does not have any criminal convictions and who has been approved by the Pastor.

Complainant: an individual who brings a complaint of a violation of the Safe Church Policy before the Safe Church Committee.

Elder Abuse: the infliction of physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, sexual, or financial harm on an older adult.

Ministerial Relationship: the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Minor: as used in this policy, the term "minor" means any child or youth under 18 years of age. The term "youth" generally means someone in Middle School, Junior High School, or Senior High School; the term "child" generally means those who are in fifth grade or younger.

Participant: a person authorized by CCPG to carry out its ministry, including elected or appointed leaders, employees, and volunteers, as well as the Pastor.

Respondent: an individual who is alleged to have violated the Safe Church Policy and as such responds to the review of the Safe Church Committee.

Safe Church Committee: a committee of the Christian Church of Pacific Grove (CCPG) with no fewer than three Board-appointed members including the Pastor, Vice-Moderator and one elder. Both male and female genders will be represented on the committee.

Sexual Exploitation: sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person engaged in a ministerial relationship with another person takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing or allowing that person to engage in sexual behavior

Sexual Harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity.
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, social media posts, or invitations;
- Verbal contact, such as sexual propositions or sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, or jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual topics;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, or coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.
- Continued expression of interpersonal or sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome.
- Using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another.

It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church.

It is impermissible to imply, grant or withhold support for an appointment, promotion, change of assignment, or performance report outcome based on their response to a personal proposition.

Safe Church Committee

A Safe Church Committee will be established each year to review any alleged violations of this Policy. The Safe Church Committee will be familiar with the terms of this Policy, as well as the established procedures of CCPG for dealing with a complaint.

Scriptural Foundation: Matthew 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses."

Any person who witnesses or experiences conduct in violation of this Policy is encouraged to report the incident to the Pastor or Moderator. Any person bringing a Safe Church Policy complaint or assisting in the investigation of such will not be adversely affected in employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise be discriminated against or discharged.

Several approaches may be taken in addressing alleged violations of the Safe Church Policy:

- The Complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual accused of inappropriate behavior, sexual exploitation, harassment or other form of abuse.
- The Complainant can report the incident to the Pastor or Moderator, in an effort to resolve the matter informally. Should the complaint involve the Pastor, the report should be made to the Moderator.
- If an informal resolution of the complaint by the Pastor or Moderator does not seem wise, appropriate, or possible, or does not succeed, the Complainant may request that the Safe Church Committee institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
 1. The Safe Church Committee shall advise the Pastor and Moderator of the receipt of all complaints and shall keep them apprised of ongoing steps and actions taken. If either the Pastor or Moderator is the subject of the complaint, this notice requirement shall not apply to that person.
 2. The Pastor shall gather statements and relevant information from the individuals involved in the alleged Safe Church Policy violation and from others who may have pertinent information such as qualified professional counselors/consultants, and present such information to the Safe Church Committee.
 3. The Safe Church Committee will review and evaluate all statements and materials presented by the involved parties to determine whether a violation of the Safe Church Policy has occurred and make recommendations to resolve the matter. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to

the totality of the circumstances including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred. The Committee may seek the advice of legal counsel or others in performing its functions.

4. If a violation of the Safe Church Policy is found, the Committee may recommend actions including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Issuance of a formal written reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
 - Recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
 - Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
 - Dismissal from employment, authorized volunteer position, affiliation with, or membership within the church.
5. A written summary of the Safe Church Committee proceedings will be maintained. All efforts to maintain appropriate confidentiality will be observed. The Pastor will secure all documents in locked file storage.
6. If unsatisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Safe Church Committee, both the Complainant and Respondent have the right to appeal to the Moderator. If the Moderator is the subject of the complaint, the Board may refer the matter to the Regional Minister. The subject of any such appeal to the Regional Minister shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this Policy were followed. The matter will not be reconsidered on the merits. The decision of the Regional Minister will be the final resolution on the matter. If the Regional Minister determines that the procedures of this Policy were not followed, (s)he will refer the matter back to the Safe Church Committee to consider the complaint in accordance with these procedures.

Child Abuse

If at any time CCPG has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child, the Pastor or Moderator will make a report to appropriate authorities. Any member or participant who becomes aware of facts or circumstances suggesting that child abuse or neglect has occurred in the church or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future, should immediately report such to the Pastor or Moderator so that CCPG may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

Elder Abuse

Any member or participant who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that elder abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that elder abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future should immediately report such to the Pastor or Moderator so that CCPG may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

Pastor

All allegations of behavior that call into question the fitness for ministry of the Pastor will be forwarded to the Recognition and Standing Committee of the Christian Church of California-Nevada Regional Church by the CCPG Administrative Board and/or Safe Church Committee.

Registered Sex Offender Policy

It is possible that a registered sex offender may attend (and perhaps unite in membership with CCPG. While not all registered sex offenders pose a risk to others, CCPG has decided to err on the side of safety and to protect the most vulnerable in our community of faith. Therefore, CCPG establishes these guidelines:

- All registered sex offenders should make that status known to the Pastor. This information is not confidential and will be shared by the Pastor with anyone he/she deems necessary, including, but not limited to, the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, and Chair of the Board of Elders.
- Anyone who is a registered sex offender will always be in the company of a Companion Adult (as defined above) while on the property of CCPG or while attending an event sponsored by CCPG in any capacity. It is the responsibility of the registered sex offender to schedule the presence of a Companion Adult when needed.
- Registered sex offenders may not work in any volunteer or paid capacity with CCPG children and youth ministry programs (e.g., Sunday School, youth groups, Blue Theology Mission Groups, confirmation class).
- A person convicted of committing a crime against children may, by recommendation of the Safe Church Committee and vote of the Administrative Board, be banned from participating in any church activity where children may be present, including worship services.

Transportation

Any person who transports minors in their cars as part of the ministry of CCPG must meet all requirements of the “Additional Requirements for Child and Youth Ministries” section of this Safe Church Policy. In addition, they must:

- Be at least 25 years of age;
- Sign a “Transportation of Youth in Privately-Owned Vehicles” form; and
- Provide CCPG with a copy of a valid driver’s license and proof of current automobile insurance.

The Church Secretary will create and maintain a list of people approved to transport minors in their cars.

Safety is the priority while transporting children and youth. Seatbelts must be worn by all individuals at all times. All laws regarding seatbelts, car seats, mobile phone use, speed limits, traffic laws, etc. will be followed.

Written consent of one parent or guardian will be required for each minor to be transported for church events by someone other than his/her own parent or guardian.

Sunday School and Youth Activities Discipline Policy

An orderly classroom is essential to learning in the Sunday School setting, just as it is in the academic school system. Similarly, behavior that fosters community and is respectful of others and self is important in youth fellowship activities.

If a CCPG employee, member or volunteer feels that a minor's behavior is disruptive or endangers the wellbeing of the minor or others, that person may return the minor to his/her parent or guardian or ask that the child be picked up. The CCPG employee, member or volunteer may work with the minor and minor's parents/guardians to allow for a safe return to the activities of the group at a future time.

Internet Safety Policy

CCPG has found electronic communications and the web to be vital tools for ministry. To establish a safe online environment, we establish the following guidelines:

- An adult must accompany any minor accessing the Internet on a computer owned by CCPG.
- Any person accessing inappropriate websites on a CCPG computer will be asked to exit the program and may be barred from using CCPG computers again. If inappropriate web content is accessed unintentionally, the user should alert the Pastor immediately.
- Photographs of minors may not be published on CCPG websites, social media pages, or in brochures or other publications without prior written permission from a parent/guardian. The Church Secretary, Webmaster, and social media page administrator(s) are responsible for securing release forms before publishing photos of minors.
- Any individual or any parent/guardian of a minor may request that pictures of themselves or the minor not be used on the CCPG website, social media pages, or other publications. CCPG staff will take steps to accommodate this request as quickly as possible.

Social Media Safety Policy

Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance discipleship, education, communication, and learning. It is expected that all church users of social media, when communicating or interacting with adults and/or youth, will do so in a manner that upholds the values of CCPG and this Safe Church Policy.

It should be noted that social media can be used in a hurtful or harassing manner. Special care should be taken when posting photos, videos, etc., from CCPG events on/via social media. All requirements/expectations of this Safe Church Policy apply to social media interaction. The CCPG social media page administrator and Webmaster will ensure that all posts on CCPG's social media pages are compliant with the guidelines of the Safe Church Policy.

This Safe Church Policy is meant to provide general guidance and may not cover every potential social media situation. Should any questions arise or if members have concerns, they should consult with the Pastor.

Bullying Prevention Policy

In accordance with above guidelines, CCPG is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which all people can learn about and experience God's love and the Christian faith.

Bullying can happen between people of all ages. Any bullying is inconsistent with Christian keeping. At CCPG, we are particularly interested in protecting our most vulnerable. To that end, CCPG establishes the following core principles regarding bullying prevention:

- Unsafe and unacceptable behavior will be addressed by the Pastor and/or appropriate church leadership.
- Positive behavior will be consistently acknowledged and rewarded. Appropriate nonphysical, nonhostile negative consequences will result when someone disregards expectations for safe and acceptable behavior.
- Parents of children and youth will be notified and involved in decision-making regarding bullying incidents.
- The church community will function as authorities and positive role models for children and youth.

Blue Theology

CCPG will provide all visiting groups a contract, an emergency contact form, and photo release forms to complete and sign. CCPG will request proof of liability insurance from all visiting Blue Theology groups. Additionally, all visiting adult sponsors and visiting youth will be asked to review and comply with our Safe Church policy.

Visiting adult sponsors will be responsible for the behavior of their visiting youth. Blue Theology volunteers will not discipline disruptive visiting youth. If a problem does arise, the visiting youth sponsors will be notified immediately. If the problem is not resolved, the CCPG Blue Theology Director/Pastor will be notified.

CCPG will ensure adequate supervision and safeguards for all youth activities. In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two adults present with children. No one-on-one time between CCPG adults and Blue Theology youth is permitted. CCPG adults are responsible for maintaining appropriate conversations with visiting youth and adults.

I Corinthians 12:24b-26 But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Policy Approved July 18, 2017, Christian Church of Pacific Grove Administrative Board