

MOUNT ZION CHURCH POLICY ON PREVENTION OF ABUSE TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

(Mark 10: 14 & 16)

“Now it is required that those who have been given trust must prove faithful.”

(I Corinthians 4:2)

The following policy reflects the commitment of the leadership of Mt. Zion Church to provide an environment which is as safe as possible for children and youth who attend any church-sponsored programs or activities, and to taking reasonable precautions to protect staff and volunteers from accusations or suspicions.

The following behaviors are prohibited for all paid and volunteer workers:

1. Threatening or either intentionally or negligently inflicting physical injury upon a child or youth, other than by accidental means.
2. Committing any sexual offense against a child or youth, or engaging in any sexual contact with a child or youth.
3. Making any kind of sexual advance, or making a request for sexual favors, or engaging in other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a child or youth.

A. CONVICTION POLICY

1. Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse should not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. Mt. Zion Church will not knowingly allow a person with a record of conviction for either child sexual abuse or physical abuse to work with children or youth.

B. SURVIVORS OF ABUSE POLICY

1. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of the Mt. Zion family. Our desire is not to again victimize those who have experienced abuse in the past, only to continue to provide safe environments for children and youth.
2. Individuals who have such a history, should discuss it and their desire to work with minors with one of the pastors prior to any volunteer or compensated service.

C. REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE

In an effort to create the safest possible environment, several abuse prevention measures will be utilized. These measures include screening of paid and volunteer workers, provision for regular training on child abuse issues to paid and volunteer staff members, use of the two leader rule, standards of appropriate classroom discipline and open classrooms.

D. TWO LEADER RULE

Leaders will be assigned in teams of two or more for all children or youth activities. If the group is divided and isolated, each isolated subgroup will have two leaders. If there are not two leaders available for each group, then either the group will be combined with another group to make possible the presence of two leaders or the activity will be canceled on that occasion. Spouses may not serve together in the same room. If any group stays overnight at the church, or if a church sponsored group leaves the premises overnight, two or more leaders must be present in each group or subgroup. If adequate supervision is not available, allowing strict adherence to the two leader rule, the activity will be canceled.

E. PAID WORKER POLICY

1. Must be a member of a church.
2. Must have been a member for one year.
3. Complete screening process:
 - a. Ministry Application
 - b. Employment Application
 - c. Background Check
 - d. Criminal Records Check
 - e. Interview with Pastor
 - f. Participate in ongoing training
4. Sign and comply with the written protection policy.

F. VOLUNTEER POLICY (ON-GOING SERVICE)

1. Ministry Leaders must be a member of Mt. Zion Church.
2. Ministry Assistants must be a regular attender at Mt. Zion, or a regular participant of a Mt. Zion ministry for a minimum of six months.
3. Complete screening process:
 - a. Ministry Application
 - b. Background Check
 - c. Criminal Records Check
 - d. Interview with Pastor
 - e. Participate in ongoing training
4. Sign and comply with the written protection policy.

G. VOLUNTEER POLICY (ONE-TIME SERVICE)

1. Must be paired with a Ministry Leader that is a member of Mt. Zion Church at all times and participate in ministry in group settings only.
2. Service is a one-time only event
3. Complete screening process
 - a. One-Time Serve Ministry Application completed before participating in event or leaving premises
 - b. Interviewed by pastor as necessary

H. REPORTING POLICY

1. Adult staff or volunteers should immediately report any behaviors that seem abusive or inappropriate to the Pastor in charge of the area they are working in.
2. If the Pastor for that area is unavailable, they should immediately report the situation to the Senior Pastor.
3. If the Senior Pastor is unavailable, they should immediately report the situation to the Church Administrator.
4. If the Church Administrator is unavailable, they should report to the President of the Consistory or other designated individual.
5. An Incident Report will be completed and kept on file.

DISCLAIMER:

It is impossible to provide by policy or procedure for every conceivable situation or circumstance which might possibly arise in the context of ministering with children and youth. It may be necessary to modify or depart from this policy in certain cases based on unique facts and circumstances, and Mt. Zion Church reserves the right to do so at its discretion.

Please sign and return.

As a church volunteer or staff member, I agree to observe all church policies regarding working with children or youth?

Signature

Date

Please print your full name