

Child Protection Policy Statement
final draft August 24, 1998

First Christian Church(Disciples of Christ) in Stillwater, Oklahoma believes the future of our church and our nation rest upon children and their development and potential. First Christian Church desires to be a safe place for all children who attend or use its facilities. We believe that preventative steps can be taken to promote the safety of our children and those who work with them in our church and in our society.

The following policies reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children, youth and those who participate in their activities. References to children and youth include all minors, people under the age of 18.

1. Child physical and sexual abuse are criminal actions which will not be tolerated in our church.

2. As a community we must work together to provide educational programs to instruct adults and children regarding the nature and impact of child abuse.
 - an annual awareness training will be offered to the congregation and required of the adults working with children and youth

3. All paid staff members (including ministers, office workers, custodial workers, and Preschool and Children's Day Out employees) and all Youth Sponsors are to have Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) screening. The cost of these screenings will be charged to:
 - A. The Preschool budget for employees of the Preschool or Children's Day Out programs other than the director.
 - B. The administrative budget for all other paid staff (including the preschool director).
 - C. The Youth Department in the case of youth sponsors.
 - D. The appropriate overseeing department or committee in the case of any other volunteers.

4. Every volunteer having regular contact with children or youth of FCC, including Sunday School teachers, Wednesday Night Fellowship leaders, Vacation Bible School

volunteers, youth group sponsors and any other teachers, directors, or leaders who are entrusted with the care or supervision of children, plus all paid staff will be expected to undergo an internal screening before they can officially start their term of service. The internal screening will consist of review of the confidential application and inquiries of the references.

5. The following entities will have responsibility for reviewing OSBI checks, applications, any screening and conducting reference checks:

- A. The Preschool Director will be responsible for reviewing screenings/references of all other Preschool/Children's Day Out staff.
- B. The Personnel Committee will be responsible for reviewing screenings/references of all other paid staff (including the Preschool Director).
- C. The sponsoring minister will be responsible for reviewing screenings, applications, references and OSBI checks for all volunteers in programs under their purview.

6. All screenings, whether OSBI or internal, should be completed before the person begins serving in any regular capacity with youth or children. At any given time the church will have the option to request additional screening.

7. We will strive towards having 2 adults, age 18 and over, supervise activities in which children or youth are involved. One of these should be an adult of at least 21 years of age.

8. No staff member or volunteer is to be alone with any child or adolescent outside the visibility of some other adult, *Except:*

A. life or health threatening situations

or

B. counseling situations in which another adult (preferably a minister) is in the building nearby and aware of the counseling situation.

Any other exceptions require the knowledge and consent of the child's parent or legal guardian, and whenever possible a ministerial staff member.

9. Under NO circumstances should a child (in this case we are referring to one who is in 5th grade or under) be removed from the nursery or his/her class without the consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

10. It is church policy to provide a hall monitor for the education wing during the Sunday School hour.

11. Violations of this Child Protection Policy should be reported to a minister or a member of the Personnel Committee. Violations will be dealt with seriously and documentation of the violation will remain in a confidential file for a period of at least 5 years. The consequence of violation of this policy, or falsification of the application may result in the removal of the person from their duties with children.

This policy was drafted by the chairs of the Youth Department, Christian Education Department, Vice-Chair of the Board, Director of the Children's Day Out program, a member of the Trustees and the Director of Youth Ministries.

We used as a basis for our document the policy drafted by Yale Avenue Christian Church, Tulsa Oklahoma.