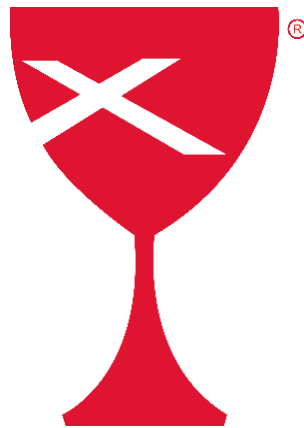


Safe Church Policy

Central Christian Church



Central Christian Church – Safe Church Policy

We have been entrusted with the care and spiritual nurture of the children and youth who attend Central Christian Church. Our goal is to provide a safe and sacred space for everyone.

To fulfill this goal in part, we have established this Safe Church Policy. All church staff members and volunteers who work with children and youth are required to do the following:

1. Read the Safe Church Policy.
2. Participate in a Safe Church training provided by Central Christian Church, to be repeated every three years.
3. Sign a Covenant of Safekeeping. (See page 13)
4. Undergo a criminal background check, repeated every three years for volunteers.
5. Complete the DCFS online Mandated Reporter training and have a certificate of completion on file with the church. (See page 11)

Policies and Procedures

1. Supervision of children and youth

- a. There will be a minimum of two adults (18 years or older) or two employed nursery staff (16 years or older) with children and youth (ages 0-17 years) in the care of Central Christian Church staff and volunteers, at all times.
- b. All adults and employed nursery staff providing care will be required to complete Central's Safe Church training every three years.

2. Behavior and Language of Central staff and volunteers

- a. All interactions with children and youth should be positive and affirming.
- b. Language should be appropriate to the church setting, respectful, and spoken in a calm and kind tone of voice.
- c. Physical interactions with children and youth should ensure their safety.
- d. Giving children hugs, pats on the back, and high fives can be encouraging and provide a loving connection with the adults who spend time with them. If a child is uncomfortable with any of these forms of touch, they must not be used.
- e. Do not touch a child in the “bathing suit zone” where a bathing suit would cover their body, unless changing a diaper or assisting a toddler in the bathroom.

3. Discipline

- a. The word discipline comes from the Latin word “disciplina”, which means to instruct and train. It does not mean punishment.
- b. The word disciple means one who follows and learns from their teacher, like the disciples of Jesus.
- c. All behavior is a way of communicating. When a child/youth is behaving in a way that is inappropriate, the work of the adult is to understand how to help them communicate their need in a safe way.
- d. When a child/youth acts in inappropriate ways, the following are appropriate actions to take:

- i. Remain calm and follow the child's lead. Be near the child or step back and give them some space.
- ii. Keep other children/youth safe.
- iii. Take some deep breaths yourself and offer a practice to the child of taking some deep breaths. One idea is to say, "smell the flower, blow out the candle" (breathing in and out).
- iv. Be quiet and listen. Talk with the child in a calm voice when they are ready. This may take some time.
- v. Engage in a calming activity with the child – coloring, playing with playdough, singing, etc.
- vi. If the child is very upset, contact the parents/guardians.
- vii. When you have concerns about a child's behavior talk with the Pastor for Families.

4. Medication

- a. No medication is to be given to children/youth by Central staff or volunteers, except for the following:
 - i. Diaper cream that parents/guardians have approved.
 - ii. Rescue emergency medication, such as, but not limited to an Epi pen, for relief of allergic reactions.
- b. If children/youth are participating in an extended activity sponsored by Central Christian Church and medication would be necessary, a specific permission form would need to be completed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- c. An AED with instructions is located in the west closet in the Friendship Center, just outside of the sanctuary.

5. Interactions with Parents/Guardians

- a. Be positive when interacting with parents.

- b. When appropriate, share with them something that their child/youth did.
- c. Use confidentiality in your role as a staff member or volunteer working with children/youth.
- d. Listen to concerns, ideas, and suggestions that parents/guardians have and share them with the Pastor for Families.
- e. If you have a question, concern, ideas, and suggestions to improve the program you are working with, share them with the Pastor for Families.

6. Transportation

- a. Only authorized persons with a valid driver's license, current insurance and registration cards may transport Central youth/children.
- b. Drivers must be 25 years of age or older to transport children/youth.
- c. There will always be two Safe Church trained adults in the vehicle.
- d. Seatbelts and child safety seats must be used at all times.
- e. While driving, no cell phone use is allowed by the driver of a vehicle transporting children/youth for Central CC.
- f. A signed permission slip must be completed by the parent/guardian of the child/youth being transported prior to transporting the child/youth.

7. Covenant of Safekeeping

- a. After reading the Safe Church Policy and completing the training, sign the Covenant of Safekeeping. This will be kept on file with Central Christian Church.

- b. Safe Church training will be repeated every three years, including signing a Covenant of Safekeeping.

8. Mandated Reporter

- a. Illinois law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the Department of Children and Family Services. All Central Christian Church staff members and volunteers who work with children/youth are considered Mandated Reporters by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.
- b. If improper behaviors or abuse are suspected, the first step is to communicate this concern to the Pastor for Families and the Senior Pastor.
- c. In addition to reporting this concern to the Pastor for Families and the Senior Pastor, staff members and volunteers are required to call the DCFS Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) or use the Online Reporting System <https://dcfsonlinereporting.dcf.illinois.gov/>.
- d. Please note: Telling the Pastor for Families and the Senior Pastor about suspected abuse or neglect **DOES NOT** fulfill the legal requirement of notifying DCFS.
- e. When calling DCFS, you may ask for assistance from the Pastor for Families or the Senior Pastor in making the telephone call.
- f. All employed staff and volunteers of Central Christian Church are considered Mandated Reporters and must complete the online Mandated Reporter training and provide a certificate of completion to have on file at the church.

Information About Abuse and Neglect

TYPES AND SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

When you think of child abuse, your first thought may be of a child with bruises or other marks that raise red flags. But the signs aren't always so clear. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional. She may be neglected, meaning her caregivers don't provide for basic needs, like food or safety.

What makes abuse even harder to stop is that most of the time, the abuser is someone the child knows. She may be reluctant to say something because she may want to protect that person or is afraid of what they will do if she speaks up. It's important to know how to recognize different types of abuse, and what you can do if you suspect it.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse happens when someone harms a child's body or emotional health, development, and well-being. There are 4 main types.

Physical abuse means that someone hurts a child's body or puts her in physical danger. It doesn't matter if the child gets seriously hurt or if it leaves a mark. Any harm is abuse. It includes when someone:

- Burns a child
- Hits, kicks, or bites
- Holds the child under water
- Shakes or throws the child
- Throws objects at the child.
- Ties up the child

Sexual abuse is any kind sexual activity with a child, not just physical contact. It includes when someone:

- Forces a child to take part in pornographic pictures or videos
- Has any sexual contact with the child, from kissing in a sexual way to having sex
- Makes phone calls or sends emails, texts, or other messages that are sexual in any way
- Shows the child someone else's genitals, as with "flashing"
- Shows pornography
- Tells "dirty" jokes or stories

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviors that harm a child's emotional well-being and development. This can mean when someone:

- Abuses others when the child is around, such as a parent, brother, sister, or pet
- Fails to show love and affection
- Ignores the child and doesn't give emotional support and guidance
- Shames, belittles, criticizes, or embarrasses
- Teases, threatens, bullies, or yells

Neglect is when a caregiver doesn't give the child basic care and protection, such as:

- Clothing, food
- Heat in cold weather
- Housing with clean living conditions
- Medical care

Neglect is also when someone leaves the child alone for long stretches of time or under dangerous conditions.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Abuse can be hard to recognize. Kids can get cuts and bruises or show signs of stress for lots of reasons that are a normal part of childhood. So it helps to know specific signs to look for, and trust your gut as you look at the whole picture of the child's physical and emotional health.

Signs of physical abuse may include:

- Bruises, welts, or other injuries that can't be explained or don't match with the child's story
- Burns, especially from cigarettes, that can't be explained
- Injury marks that have a pattern, like from a hand, belt, or other objects
- Injuries that are at different stages of healing
- Medical or dental issues that go untreated

Kids who've been physically abused may also:

- Avoid any kind of touch or physical contact
- Be afraid to go home
- Seem to always be on high alert
- Wear clothing that doesn't match the weather -- such as long sleeves on hot days -- to cover up bruises. Withdraw from friends and activities

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Avoiding a certain person for no clear reason
- Bloody, torn, or stained underwear
- Bruising or bleeding around the genitals
- Pain or itching around the genitals that might cause problems walking or sitting
- Pregnancy or STDs, especially for boys and girls under 14 years old
- Refusing to change clothes in front of others
- Running away from home
- Sexual activity or knowledge that people usually have only when they're older

Signs of emotional abuse may include:

- Constant worry about doing something wrong
- Speech problems or delays in learning and emotional development
- Depression and low self-esteem
- Doing poorly in school
- Extreme behavior, such as being way too obedient or way too demanding
- Headaches and stomachaches with no clear cause
- The child doesn't seem close to a parent or caregiver
- Showing little interest in friends and activities

Signs of neglect may include:

- Always looking dirty
- Being left alone or in the care of other young children
- Eating more than usual at a meal or saving food for later
- Doesn't get medical, dental, or mental health care
- Missing a lot of school
- Poor weight gain and growth

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SOURCES: KidsHealth: "Child Abuse." Queensland Government, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services: "What Is Child Abuse?"

Mayo Clinic: "Child Abuse." Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services: "Warning Signs for Child Abuse and Neglect." HelpGuide.org: "Child Abuse and Neglect." The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: "Child Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet."

Instructions for DCFS Online Mandated Reporter Training

1. DCFS Mandated Reporter Training website:
<https://mr.dcfstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action>
2. If you have a current certificate as a Mandated Reporter, please submit a copy to the Central Christian Church office to place on file.
3. If this is your first time to take the online training, “Register for a New Account”.
4. Create an account.
 - a. Name of Employer: Central Christian Church
 - b. Scroll to “clergy”, then “other” (only option), type in “church staff”
 - c. Reason for taking the training: “Mandated by my employer”
 - d. Click “NO, I do not have a VTC account.”
5. The training includes:
 - a. A pre-training assessment (13 multiple-choice questions)
 - b. 60-90 minutes of self-paced interactive training
 - c. A post-training assessment (13 multiple-choice questions)
 - d. A Certificate of Completion
6. SKIP the page instructing you to print the Mandated Reporter Form because one is provided for you in the Safe Church Provisional Policy.
7. Certificate
 - a. Choose “download a PDF”
 - b. Print a copy and submit it to the church office.
 - c. You may also choose to email a PDF copy of your certificate to central@cccdisciples.org. Please mark it Safe Church MR certificate.
8. Mandated Reporter training must be renewed every three years.
9. Please contact Central's Pastor for Families with questions. You can email central@cccdisciples.org or call 217-428-4336.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MANDATED REPORTER STATUS

I, _____, understand that when I am employed as a
 (Employee Name)

_____, I will become a mandated reporter under the
 (Type of Employment)

Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5/4]. This means that I am required to report or cause a report to be made to the child abuse and neglect Hotline number at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) whenever I have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to me in my professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected. I understand that there is no charge when calling the Hotline number and that the Hotline operates 24-hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

I understand that in an effort to help mandated reporters understand their critical role in protecting children by recognizing and reporting child abuse/neglect, DCFS administers an online training course entitled **Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters**, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I further understand that the privileged quality of communication between me and my patient or client is not grounds for failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect, I know that if I willfully fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect, I may be found guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. This does not apply to physicians who will be referred to the Illinois State Medical Disciplinary Board for action.

I also understand that if I am subject to licensing under, but not limited to, the following acts: the Illinois Nursing Act of 1987, the Medical Practice Act of 1987, the Illinois Dental Practice Act, the School Code, the Acupuncture Practice Act, the Illinois Optometric Practice Act of 1987, the Illinois Physical Therapy Act, the Physician Assistants Practice Act of 1987, the Podiatric Medical Practice Act of 1987, the Clinical Psychologist Licensing Act, the Clinical Social Work and Social Work Practice Act, the Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act, the Dietetic and Nutrition Services Practice Act, the Marriage and Family Therapy Act, the Naprapathic Practice Act, the Respiratory Care Practice Act, the Professional Counselor and Clinical Professional Counselor Licensing Act, the Illinois Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Practice Act, I may be subject to license suspension or revocation if I willfully fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

I affirm that I have read this statement and have knowledge and understanding of the reporting requirements, which apply to me under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

 Signature of Applicant/Employee

 Date

CANTS 22
 Rev. 5/2019

Office of the Director
 406 E. Monroe Street • Springfield, Illinois 62701
www.DCFS.illinois.gov

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Name (print) _____ Date _____

Covenant of Safekeeping Central Christian Church

I believe in the importance of safe environments at Central Christian Church and in every place where CCC might be represented.

I acknowledge the sacred gift of relationship God gives us. And I understand that in order to protect our God-given relationships, all relationships need space where they can be healthy.

I have read, reviewed, discussed, and understand the principles of safekeeping as presented in the Safe Church Policy of Central Christian Church.

I promise to maintain and uphold appropriate boundaries as they are identified within this Safe Church Policy. I understand that my failure to do so will result in my being unable to serve on behalf of Central Christian Church.

Signature _____ Date _____

Training led by _____

Signature of trainer _____