

CAMANO CHAPEL – POLICY FOR PREVENTION, REPORTING, AND HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE

Revised 3/21/2019

INTRODUCTION:

Camano Chapel places great emphasis upon its ministry to children and youth. Chapel leadership stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God. The Chapel stresses the importance of providing a safe and secure environment for children and youth entrusted to our teaching and care. We recognize that formal and written policies and procedures will help reduce the likelihood that abuse or molestation will occur. These policies and procedures are therefore adopted for the protection of our children and youth, our employees, our adult volunteers, and our church family as a whole.

POLICY:

It shall be the policy of Camano Chapel that child abuse as defined herein in any form, whether physical, sexual or emotional, will not be tolerated in connection with any ministry, activity or program of the Chapel.

In furtherance of this overall policy, it is further the specific policies of Camano Chapel that:

1. The risk of child abuse shall be avoided by proper hiring practices, worker training, background-checks, and proper fact finding and handling of possible incidents, complaints and allegations.
2. Any allegation of or complaint regarding suspected child abuse shall be taken seriously, fact finding shall be immediately and properly performed, and corroborated abuse immediately reported to the proper authorities, when appropriate.
3. All instances of alleged abuse shall be dealt with in accordance with both Scripture and applicable law.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS:

“And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” Matthew 18:5-6

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible.” Eph. 5:11-13

LEGAL BASIS AND DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE: *(Do these laws apply to ages 16 & 17?)*

Under Washington state law, the definition, reporting and proper handling of potential child abuse is contained in Chapter 26.44 of the Revised Code of Washington as amended. It is the intention of Camano Chapel to comply with the applicable provisions of this statute.

In accordance with Washington State law, Camano Chapel defines child abuse as: **any non-accidental injury, mistreatment or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child.** Physical discipline, within reasonable boundaries, is not considered abuse under Washington State law. Camano Chapel adopts those statutory boundaries.

Unreasonable Discipline or Restraint:

Certain actions of physical conduct involving discipline or restraint of a child are, however, considered per se “unreasonable” and therefore potentially abusive under Washington State law. Camano Chapel further adopts that description of unreasonable acts as follows:

The following actions are presumed unreasonable when used to correct or restrain a child: (1) Throwing, kicking, burning or cutting a child; (2) striking a child with a closed fist; (3) shaking a child under age three; (4) interfering with a child’s breathing; 5) threatening a child with a deadly weapon; or (6) doing any other act that is likely to cause and which does cause bodily harm greater than transient pain or minor temporary marks. The age, size, and condition of the child and the location of the injury shall be considered when determining whether the bodily harm is reasonable or moderate. This list is illustrative of unreasonable actions and is not intended to be exclusive. RCW 9A.16.100

OTHER APPLICABLE DEFINITIONS:

- “Child” is defined as any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- “Child abuse” is defined as: any non-accidental injury, mistreatment or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child. Child abuse can take several forms. The four main types of child abuse are physical, sexual, psychological, and neglect.
- “Child neglect” is defined as a deficit in meeting a child’s basic needs. It is the failure to provide basic physical health care, supervision, nutrition, emotional nurturing, education or safe housing.
- “Law enforcement agency” means the police department, the prosecuting attorney, the state patrol, the director of public safety, or the office of the sheriff.
- “Physical child abuse” is an act of another party involving contact with a child where that contact is intended to cause feelings of physical pain, injury, or causes other physical suffering or bodily harm [other than “transient pain or temporary marks” as used in RCW 9A.16.100 quoted above].
- Sexual child abuse” is defined as when an adult abuses a child for sexual stimulation. Sexual abuse involves a sexual act involving a child aimed at the physical gratification or the financial profit of the person committing the act. It includes asking or pressuring a child to engage in sexual activities (regardless of the outcome), indecent exposure of the genitals to a child, displaying pornography to a child, actual sexual contact with a child, physical contact with the child's genitals, unnecessary viewing of the child's genitalia without physical contact, or using a child to produce child pornography.
- Sexual exploitation” includes: (a) allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution; or (b) allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child.
- “Child or Youth Teacher” or “Instructor” is defined as any adult person the age of eighteen (18) years or older who either is a volunteer or paid leader, worker, or assistant involved in providing spiritual instruction, education or training to a child or youth under the age of eighteen (18) years. Examples include but are not limited to: kindergarten and preschool teachers and assistants; children’s or youth Sunday school teachers or assistants; “KABOOM” or “Centershot” program teachers and assistants; EYP program teachers and assistants; Capstone, Sunday School or Action Team teachers or assistants; and cell group leaders, and the like.

- “Child or Youth Worker” is defined as any adult person the age of eighteen (18) years or older who either is a volunteer or paid leader, worker or assistant involved in a child or youth ministry or program sponsored or conducted by Camano Chapel. Examples include but are not limited to: nursery workers; MOPs leaders, Mentor Moms, MOPs nursery workers or assistants; summer camp workers and assistants; and His Fishers youth derby or other youth program activity workers or assistants, and the like.
- Children’s and/or youth ministry “Helper” is defined as a person under the age of eighteen (18) years who is a volunteer involved in a child ministry program sponsored or conducted by Camano Chapel working under the supervision of an adult worker and/or the Director of Children’s Ministries.

AVOIDING CHILD ABUSE BY FOLLOWING PROPER HIRING AND PROCEDURES:

All child or youth workers, teachers or instructors shall be Christians who openly acknowledge that they have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Each such person shall be provided a copy of and agree and consent to the policies and procedures contained herein.

Paid Child or Youth Workers, Teachers and Instructors:

All applicants for paid positions involving work with or instruction of children or youth shall complete an Employment Application, and an Application for a Children/Youth Workers criminal background check, before being considered for employment by Camano Chapel. No person shall be employed before the Chapel has received and reviewed the applicant’s completed employment application, completed national criminal background check, and at least two qualifying references. The employment application, reference checks and completed background checks shall be placed in secure personnel files.

Unpaid (Volunteer) Child or Youth Workers, Teachers and Instructors, and Children’s Ministry Helpers:

As a condition precedent to volunteer work with children or youth, prospective volunteers shall have been a member or regular attendee of Camano Chapel for six (6) months preceding commencement of the volunteer work, unless this requirement is waived by mutual agreement of a combination of: the Children’s Ministry Director or one of the Youth Pastors, together with Church Administrator.

All prospective volunteer workers for children or youth ministries shall complete an Application for Children/Youth Workers form. The application shall include an Application for a Child/Youth Workers criminal background check as well as two personal references. A statewide criminal background check by Camano Chapel staff shall be performed and kept updated at least every five (5) years the volunteer remains active with Chapel youth ministry. The Worker or Assistant applications shall require review of and adherence to this Policy among other requirements. The Helpers applications shall require only review and adherence to the abbreviated Protective Policies for Children’s and Youth Ministries document.

When either the Child/Youth Worker or Assistant or the Children’s Ministry Helper applicant is a prospective volunteer whose background is either unknown to the staff person(s) overseeing the ministry or the applicant is a new resident to the State of Washington within the last two (2) years, a nationwide as compared to statewide background check shall be performed. All current volunteer workers are expected to have a criminal background check application on file. All information gathered shall be held by the church in a confidential file.

Criminal background checks shall be resubmitted as often as requested by Chapel staff but in any event no less frequently than every five (5) years.

Protective Policies for Children's Ministries

Camano Chapel is committed to the safety of our children and the protection of its workers. In order to accomplish this safety goal as well as to avoid any allegations of child abuse the following child care policies shall be followed:

- Background checks: All youth Volunteers/Workers/Helpers are required to fill out the Application for Children/Youth Workers and be subject to a background check by the WATCH-Washington Access to Criminal History and/or Washington State Patrol/SentryLink as described above in this section.
- Sexual interaction: Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction by any Staff/Volunteer/Worker/Helper with any student shall not be tolerated.
- Dating: Dating by Staff or adult Volunteers/Workers of any youth under (18) eighteen years old involved in a Chapel ministry in which the staff member or adult volunteer serves, including junior or senior high students, is forbidden.
- Physical Contact: Discretion must be used in physical contact with any youth. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. A hug around the shoulders is not considered sexual abuse, but a full body-to-body hug, stroking, massaging, or affectionate kissing may be abusive. Any overt display of affection, even including appropriate hugging, for example, is strongly discouraged in a private setting.
- Physical Contact by Youth: Unreasonable physical touching or sexual gestures or overtures to Staff/Volunteers/Workers/Helpers by youth should be reported to one of the ministry leaders or the youth pastor so that fact finding can occur and the matter can be properly evaluated and discussed with those involved.
- Co-ed Ministry Teams: Staff/ Volunteers/Workers/Helpers should form ministry teams composed of both male and female youth whenever possible.
- One-On-One Counseling: Only adult Staff/Volunteers/Workers should engage in counseling with students. To avoid any appearance of impropriety, one-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place. As a general rule, when counseling a member of the other gender, Staff and adult Volunteers/Workers are encouraged to involve another adult Staff/Volunteer/Worker of the same gender as the counselee to be an observer. When a situation arises when a member of Staff/Volunteer/Worker is alone with a student of the other gender, that situation should be quickly moved to a public setting. Any meeting with a youth of the opposite gender should be as brief as necessary to accomplish its purpose in accordance with Godly purposes.
- Riding in an Automobile: Driving or riding alone with a youth of the opposite gender in an automobile should be avoided at all times. For same gender situations, please get approval from your staff overseer and the student's parent.
- Romantic Attraction: Romantic or sexual attraction for a student by Staff/Volunteers/Workers/Helpers must be reported to a Pastor for prayer and guidance.
- Reporting: Any incident of abuse or neglect shall be reported immediately to the staff ministry overseer as well as either to the Senior Pastor or Church Administrator for further action, including the further reporting to the appropriate law enforcement agencies as may be mandated by state law. However, if a crime is in the process of being committed, 911 should be called immediately to report the crime to law enforcement.
- Horseplay: Wrestling or physical horseplay between Staff or adult Workers/Volunteers and youth of the opposite gender is strongly discouraged unless a necessary part of an appropriate and reasonable game or activity.

Protective Policies for Youth Ministries

Discretion by staff members' and youth ministry volunteers is fundamental to both spiritual integrity and appropriate spiritual ministry to youth and their families (Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-16). To perform successful youth ministry without any hint of sexual misconduct the following standards shall be kept:

- Background checks: All youth Volunteers/Workers/Helpers are required to fill out the Application for Children/Youth Workers and be subject to a background check by the Washington State Patrol/SentryLink as described above in this section.
- Sexual interaction: Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction by any Staff/Volunteer/Worker/Helper with any student shall not be tolerated.
- Dating: Dating by Staff or adult Volunteers/Workers of any youth under (18) eighteen years old involved in a Chapel ministry in which the staff member or adult volunteer serves, including junior or senior high students, is forbidden.
- Physical Contact: Discretion must be used in physical contact with any youth. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. A hug around the shoulders is not considered sexual abuse, but a full body-to-body hug, stroking, massaging, or affectionate kissing may be abusive. Any overt display of affection, even including appropriate hugging, for example, is strongly discouraged in a private setting.
- Physical Contact by Youth: Unreasonable physical touching or sexual gestures or overtures to Staff/Volunteers/Workers/Helpers by youth should be reported to one of the ministry leaders or the youth pastor so that fact finding can occur and the matter can be properly evaluated and discussed with those involved.
- Co-ed Ministry Teams: Staff/ Volunteers/Workers/Helpers should form ministry teams composed of both male and female youth whenever possible.
- One-On-One Counseling: Only adult Staff/Volunteers/Workers should engage in counseling with students. To avoid any appearance of impropriety, one-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place. As a general rule, when counseling a member of the other gender, Staff and adult Volunteers/Workers are encouraged to involve another adult Staff/Volunteer/Worker of the same gender as the counselee to be an observer. When a situation arises when a member of Staff/Volunteer/Worker is alone with a student of the other gender, that situation should be quickly moved to a public setting. Any meeting with a youth of the opposite gender should be as brief as necessary to accomplish its purpose in accordance with Godly purposes.
- Riding in an Automobile: Driving or riding alone with a youth of the opposite gender in an automobile should be avoided at all times. For same gender situations, please get approval from your staff overseer and the student's parent.
- Romantic Attraction: Romantic or sexual attraction for a student by Staff/Volunteers/Workers/Helpers must be reported to the youth pastor for prayer and guidance.
- Reporting Any incident of abuse or neglect shall be reported immediately to the staff ministry overseer as well as either to the Senior Pastor or Church Administrator for further action, including the further reporting to the appropriate law enforcement agencies as may be mandated by state law. However, if a crime is in the process of being committed, 911 should be called immediately to report the crime to law enforcement.
- Horseplay: Wrestling or physical horseplay between Staff or adult Workers/Volunteers and youth of the opposite gender is strongly discouraged unless a necessary part of an appropriate and reasonable game or activity.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

A primary responsibility of paid staff and ministry volunteers is to the potential victim of child abuse and neglect and his/her safety and well being. It is the policy of Camano Chapel that all potential abuse or neglect situations will be handled forthrightly and with due respect for the privacy and confidentiality of all persons involved. Confidentiality regarding the complaint and investigation shall be maintained to the extent possible.

Allegations or Incidents of Suspected Child Abuse Involving Camano Chapel Ministries or Programs:

In the event that an incident of child or youth abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected or alleged to have occurred at the church or during a Chapel-sponsored activity or ministry, the following steps shall be taken:

- Any incident of abuse or neglect shall be reported immediately to the staff ministry overseer as well as either to the Senior Pastor or Church Administrator for further action, including the further reporting to the appropriate law enforcement agencies as may be mandated by state law. However, if a crime is in the process of being committed, 911 should be called immediately to report the crime to law enforcement.
- The parent or guardian of the child or youth involved shall be notified immediately.
- The reporting staff person shall put into writing on the day of the incident a confidential exact account of the observation(s) and/or accusation(s).
- Upon notification, the Senior Pastor or Church Administrator shall take appropriate steps to initiate immediate fact gathering in accordance with Camano Chapel policy and state child abuse statutes and regulations.
- The incident shall be assessed in light of the definitions of abuse and/or neglect contained herein.
- The names and contact information of all potential witnesses, the reported victim as well as the potential perpetrator shall be ascertained.
- Any worker(s) alleged to be the perpetrator(s) of the abuse or misconduct shall be immediately placed on leave from working with children or youth pending the completion of fact finding.
- The District Representative of Village Missions shall be notified.
- The church's liability insurance company will be notified, and the church staff shall complete an incident report to the carrier. Thereafter, the church staff and leadership shall act in consultation with the Chapel's liability insurance company and/or appointed attorney
- The church staff and leadership shall also cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities.
- Care shall be used in interviewing and fact gathering to avoid compromising any further investigations by the Chapel's liability insurer and/or the public authorities.
- If it is found that abuse or misconduct has occurred, all person(s) responsible shall immediately and permanently be removed from any position involving contact with children or youth.
- A spokesperson shall be designated for dealing with the media concerning any alleged incident of abuse or neglect in accordance with the Chapel policy: "Guidelines for Staff Working with the Media – May 04. Any public statements shall be limited to a statement that "an incident involving misconduct is alleged to have occurred and fact finding is being conducted." All other staff shall refrain from commenting to the media.
- The Chapel family shall be informed, as deemed appropriate, if any complaint is publicly reported.

Observations of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Outside of Camano Chapel Ministries or Programs

In the event that an incident of child or youth abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected or alleged to have occurred to a child or youth outside of a Chapel sponsored activity or ministry, the following steps shall be taken:

- Any suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect involving children or youth shall be reported immediately to: (a) the Director of Children's Ministry, if the child is within birth through grade 5; (b) to the Pastor of Junior High and Young Adult Ministries, if the youth is within grade 6 through grade 8; or (c) to the Director of Senior High Youth Ministries, if the youth is within grade 9 through grade 12. However, if a crime is in the process of being committed, 911 should be called immediately to report the crime to law enforcement.
- If the Children's Director, Junior High Pastor and/or Senior High Youth Director is not available, it is the responsibility of the reporting staff person to provide the information directly to either the Senior Pastor, or Church Administrator.
- Thereafter, it is the responsibility of these pastoral and program directors to immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect on to either the Senior Pastor or Church Administrator for further action, including the further reporting to the appropriate law enforcement agencies as may be mandated by state law.
- The reporting staff person shall put into writing on the day of the incident a confidential exact account of the observation(s) and/or accusation(s).
- Upon notification, the Senior Pastor or Church Administrator shall take appropriate steps to initiate immediate fact gathering in accordance with Camano Chapel policy and state child abuse statutes and regulations.
- Fact finding related to the incident shall be conducted and assessed in light of the definitions of abuse and/or neglect contained herein.
- The names and contact information of all potential witnesses, the reported victim as well as the potential perpetrator shall be ascertained to the extent possible.
- The alleged victim's family shall be informed as deemed appropriate of the actions of Chapel staff. Staff shall endeavor to stay in contact with the family to express concern and to make the ministries of the Chapel available to them, including guidance and counseling, as necessary.

DEALING WITH REGISTERED OR ACCUSED SEX OFFENDERS

It shall be an additional responsibility of paid staff and ministry volunteers to report knowledge of registered or accused offenders attending Camano Chapel. It is the policy of Camano Chapel to handle such individuals in a manner which balances forthright accountability and the need to protect members of the Chapel family with Christian love and the respect the privacy and confidentiality of the individual involved.

Reasonable suspicion or knowledge that any registered or accused sex offender is attending Camano Chapel or its programs or ministries shall be reported immediately to one of the Pastors, Elders or the Church Administrator.

Either the Church Administrator or in his/her absence a Pastor shall immediately thereafter take appropriate steps to gather facts and alert the proper authorities and/or law enforcement agencies concerning the accused or registered individual.

Due to the sensitive nature of such issues, it shall be the practice of Camano Chapel to follow the protocol described below:

1. The Church Administrator or in his/her absence the handling Pastor shall contact appropriate law enforcement officials having jurisdiction and, as necessary, the Dept. of Social & Health Services for specific appropriate information and direction within 48 hours.
 - a. In cases of registered offenders –appropriate information includes: facts from the public record concerning the charges and boundaries established for the individual (i.e., restraining and/or no trespass orders, etc.).
 - b. In cases of accused offenders –appropriate information includes: facts learned from any fact finding or investigation by the public authorities and the nature of any charges or findings.
2. To protect the children and youth of Camano Chapel, at least two Elders shall meet with the registered or accused offender to:
 - a. Provide care, encouragement, and accountability to the individual.
 - b. Communicate a “no contact” boundary with children and youth at any on or off campus Chapel related event, ministry or program.
 - c. Name any specific and appropriate “all-church” functions remaining open to the individual to attend.
 - d. Offer and establish a mentor/small group relationship for purposes of ministry and accountability.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HELPERS:

Camano Chapel encourages and welcomes young people between twelve (12) and fifteen (15) years old to volunteer as youth leaders in training, known as Helpers, to assist other adult volunteers or ministry staff in children's ministries such as: KABOOM, Mini-Church, Children's Sunday School, Moppetts and the nurseries. Before, accepting applications for such Helpers, however, staff asks that in order to ensure the safety and well being of both all children involved in Chapel ministries and the Helpers, themselves, that each prospective volunteer, and their parent or guardian, review and agree to follow the below listed Protective Policies for Children's and Youth Ministry.

NOTE: Related Policies and Guidelines to be reviewed as needed:

- Background Check Procedure – May 2004
- Chapel Van Use and Personal Vehicle Use Policy – March 2009
- Guidelines for Hard Issues (for Home Group and Senior High Cell Group Leaders) – February 2013
- Guidelines for Staff working with the Media – May 2004