

Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse

INTRODUCTION: *Unfortunately, the number of sexual abuse incidents occurring within the church against children is increasing. No longer can church leaders say, "It can't happen to us" -- because it has occurred in many churches across America. In order to protect our children, teachers and our church, and in order to facilitate the prevention of child abuse, Rocky Mountain Christian Church of Niwot has instituted the following policies and procedures regarding child sexual abuse.*

Expected Volunteer and Employee Conduct

These guidelines have been established to avoid instances and allegations of child sexual abuse. They are to be followed by every volunteer and employee serving in RMCC Family Ministry.

AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF ABUSE -- Parents today are extremely aware of issues relating to children including risk of sexual abuse, and rightly so. Hundreds of cases have been aired in the media about "trusted" individuals who have taken advantage of a young child. This has led parents to question and suspect everyone -- including you. In general:

- ▼ Share disciplinary actions with your leaders.
- ▼ Avoid contact with children without the presence of a second adult.
- ▼ Share with parents and document any out-of-the-ordinary observations and conduct. Share documentation with Family Ministry Staff.
- ▼ Avoid even the appearance of evil.

FOLLOW GUIDELINES FOR TOUCH -- Touch is a powerful form of communication. It is exceptionally effective in getting a child's attention, comforting a child, or communicating approval. When abused, touch can leave scars in the life of a child. With this in mind, here are guidelines our volunteers and employees will follow:

- ▼ Use of touch must be non-demanding. This means that hugs and kisses should not be asked for by a volunteer, and they should not be forced upon a child.
- ▼ Use of touch must be gentle and passive, not aggressive. Never strike a child for the purpose of discipline or for any other reason. Touch must never be of a sexual nature.
- ▼ Use of touch should be conscious and not haphazard. The touch should be one that gently reminds a child in correction, quiets a child in pain, or affirms a child in a positive manner.
- ▼ Use of touch should be limited to placing a hand on a child's shoulders, hands, arms, head, upper back. Avoid holding older children (age 4 and above) on your lap, unless it is to comfort a crying child. Even then, take care to keep your hands on the child's back or shoulders.
- ▼ Never fondle a child. Inappropriate touch in the following areas is not permitted: chest, genital areas, upper legs, buttocks.

DON'T GO OUT OF BOUNDS -- Volunteers and employees of RMCC need to be careful not to find themselves in situations which do not appear to be above and beyond reproach from the perspective of an outside observer, a visitor or other church member. Therefore, our volunteers/employees will adhere to the following guidelines.

Behind Closed Doors -- Never place yourself in a position where you are alone with another child (other than your own) behind closed doors without a window. Doors without windows are to be propped open, or another adult should accompany you when alone with a child, e.g., restrooms, or when only one child is with you in the classroom, like the beginning or end of class time.

Special Circumstances -- In ministry, there may be times when a private conversation is necessary or desirable with a child or young person. Private prayer, discipline situations, or counseling opportunities may be such examples. In these situations, if no alternative meeting place can be identified other than one behind closed doors, follow the TEAM RULE or the PARENTAL PERMISSION RULE.

▼ TEAM RULE -- When needing to be alone with a child or a young person, find another adult who can be present (in visual contact) during your meeting or conversation. Preferably, this person will be the same sex as the child or young person you are meeting with. (*Church Law & Tax Report*)

▼ PARENTAL PERMISSION RULE -- If it is necessary to be alone with a child in an unsupervised situation, the child's parent or guardian must give permission prior to the meeting. If this meeting is to take place outside of planned ministry activity or off of the church campus, the volunteer must also notify the Director of Family Ministry and seek the director's approval prior to this meeting. The meeting must be in a public place.

Other options available to a volunteer or employee may include meeting with a child in the hallway. This allows for privacy away from the rest of the class while not placing anyone "out of bounds."

Bathroom Breaks -- Bathroom breaks are often a necessary part of Family Ministry. There are some general guidelines we should follow as a team to avoid the appearance of misconduct and to offer parents peace of mind.

Please keep the breaks to a minimum. Our children are in our care for a short period of time. If a break is necessary, try to schedule it instead of allowing spontaneous interruptions to class time. A scheduled break provides for a system of accountability between volunteers within a room. In this manner, volunteers and employees will need to keep track of fewer trips, and additional assistance may be available from another classroom volunteer. We know that scheduled breaks are much more of a challenge with younger children, and allowances will be made where appropriate.

When sending a child to the bathroom, be aware of who has already left, approximate return time, and send your assistant to check on children who are delinquent. You do not know what other children or adults may be in the bathrooms, so please keep track of your children. When accompanying a child to the bathroom, stand in the doorway to the bathroom with the door open if they only need your supervision. If they need your direct assistance, leave the bathroom door open by using the door stop, enter the bathroom and assist as required. Do not

close a stall door while you are in the stall with a child. Leave it ajar. Avoid touching the child's genital area when assisting the child. Ask another adult to be in visual contact if possible.

Further Supervision -- Any inappropriate conduct between a worker and child will be confronted and investigated immediately. Any violation may result in consequences ranging from a conference for heightening awareness to immediate dismissal.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN -- What if you are a witness to an action by a volunteer, employee or child which is inappropriate? What if you see or suspect that abuse has occurred to a child in your class? Whom do you talk to? What is your first step?

If you witness a violation of proper volunteer/employee conduct, your response as a representative of the church may vary greatly depending upon the situation. As a witness you will be asked to make a judgment on what you have seen or heard. This judgment will help you decide what your next step should be.

▼ If the violation appears innocent, immediately remind the employee or volunteer (by taking them aside for a moment) that the conduct witnessed is not appropriate and must not happen again. After class time clarify your concern and relate it to the policies and concerns we have as a church. Explain that we need to appear and behave in a manner that is above and beyond reproach. If you are not comfortable confronting the individual, immediately place it in the hands of the ministry coordinator or staff member. Explain the situation to them, make the confrontation together and make sure that the behavior stops. Always bring the action to the attention of the Family Ministry Staff. Inform as to what happened and make sure that proper follow-up education has been documented.

▼ If the violation appears to be intentional or criminal, ensure that the children are safe by removing them from the situation or by removing the violating volunteer/employee from the room. Then immediately find assistance to supervise the class and bring the situation to the attention of the Director of Family Ministry or a RMCC staff member. Be prepared to talk frankly and explain what you saw or heard.

▼ If you suspect an intentional or criminal violation had occurred to a child in our care but you did not witness the violation, bring the situation to the attention of Family Ministry Staff member or to one of the pastors.

PROCEDURE FOR SCREENING VOLUNTEER WORKERS:

▼ The volunteer is interviewed by telephone or in person.

▼ Each volunteer fills out an application which a Family Ministry Staff member reviews.

▼ References are contacted if the Director, other staff, or elders cannot be a source of reference.

▼ Criminal background checks will be conducted for all volunteers and for all paid childcare providers.

▼ Approval is based upon application, interview, references and criminal background checks. All information collected for Family Ministry is confidential and kept in a locked filing cabinet.

- ▼ Adults who have been convicted of physical and/or sexual abuse of children will not be allowed to serve in any church-sponsored activity or program for children.
- ▼ Volunteers working with children are expected to have attended RMCC for a minimum of 6 months. Sometimes exceptions are made with strong references from your previous church.

SUSPECTED ABUSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH -- What if you suspect abuse? Remember, not all abuse happens in the care of others. Unfortunately, abuse may be occurring within the family unit, by neighbors, "friends" or by acquaintances outside of the church.

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE? -- "Any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child. This abuse may be violent or nonviolent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions." (*Church Law & Tax Report*)

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. They may include but not be limited to:

Touching	Non-touching
fondling	verbal comments
oral, genital/anal penetration	exposure to pornography
intercourse	obscene phone calls
forcible rape	allowing children to witness a sexual activity

The full extent of child sexual abuse in our country is not known. Current conservative estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year. The possibility that the number is higher is likely because the greatest percentage of these cases go unreported. The latest national retrospective study on the prevalence of child sexual abuse found that one in three women and one in seven men claimed to have experienced some form of child sexual victimization. Over 25 percent indicated this occurred before the age of nine. (*Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis and Smith, 1990*). Who is the typical child molester:

- ▼ Over 80 percent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.
- ▼ Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship.
- ▼ The usual offender is between the ages of 20-30 years.
- ▼ 20 percent of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18. (*Church Law & Tax Report*)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR -- It is very important that caution and good sense be used in identifying and subsequently reporting child abuse. The following conditions are not always indicative of child abuse, but may be warning signals:

- ▼ Burn marks on the body.
- ▼ Bruises and blisters on arms, legs, back, face or buttocks.
- ▼ Child tells you someone is or has been hurting him/her.
- ▼ Repeated rubbing and scratching of private area.
- ▼ The child has to go to the bathroom frequently and urgently.
- ▼ Child is very edgy; sudden noises or movements cause him/her to flinch.
- ▼ Soiled and stained clothes worn regularly to class.
- ▼ A distinct and sudden change in personality.
- ▼ Seemingly unwarranted fear of certain people or places, such as restrooms.
- ▼ Sexual behavior that is inappropriate for the age of the child.
- ▼ Vehement over-reaction when child is questioned about whether he/she was touched.

Be aware that all Korean babies and some African-American or Hispanic babies have discolored skin pigmentation areas called "Mongolian spots." The number, placement and color intensity varies from child to child. A Mongolian spot is bluish/black in color and may resemble a bruise; however, the spots are permanent marks and are **not** sensitive to the touch (as bruises would be). **Mongolian spots do not indicate child abuse.**

TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION -- Volunteers and employees of RMCC Children's Ministries are encouraged to work with the ministry staff when confronting, reporting or responding to instances of neglect or abuse. It is mandated in Scriptures for the church to protect and care for those who cannot protect and care for themselves.

- ▼ Take care to evaluate your observations.
- ▼ Respond to and support the child's pain.
- ▼ Obtain: the name, address, phone of parent or guardian
name, address, phone, age of child victim
- ▼ Immediately contact your department coordinator or someone on the pastoral staff. Keep this information confidential. Disclose this information only to those who have a genuine "need to know."
- ▼ The RMCC staff will work with the child, his family, and possibly the one reporting when follow up is needed. The accused will be treated with dignity and support.
- ▼ The RMCC staff will immediately discuss any suspected abuse reported by our workers with an attorney.
- ▼ If any children's worker is accused of abuse, the RMCC staff will immediately contact an attorney, and the accused will be suspended or assigned to a position with no contact with children.

▼ If allegations of abuse occur, Rocky Mountain Christian Church will report such allegations and cooperate with state and local authorities in the investigation and possible prosecution of such allegations.

ARE YOU A MANDATORY OR PERMISSIVE REPORTER? -- Mandatory reporters face criminal penalties for not reporting abuse or neglect. These would include professional church staff, police officers, welfare workers, teachers, directors of schools, etc. The majority of the volunteer staff at RMCC are permissive reporters. Permissive reporters are permitted by law to report suspected abuse or neglect but are not required to do so.

BE CAREFUL ABOUT UNSUPERVISED ACTIVITY -- Any time children or young people are together in an unsupervised environment, bad things can happen. Typically, this will include injury from rough play, accidental damage to property, or simply creating a mess. On rare occasions something worse may happen including theft of property or inappropriate sexual behavior. It is each volunteer's responsibility to ensure that this circumstance does not occur on church property during children's programs with children who should be supervised.

Volunteers or employees of Children's Ministries will not allow unsupervised play at any time, in any location of the church while these children are in the care of volunteers or employees. Use the following guidelines to handle the situation:

- ▼ Children should be given immediate instructions to finish any activity, clean up and return to an area where supervision is available.
- ▼ Volunteers should take responsibility to see that all of the children involved in the activity are returned to supervised activities. If supervision is not available or not present, immediately seek the aid of the ministry coordinator.
- ▼ Don't ignore the activity or allow it to continue. This would be negligent.

Safety and Security Policies

It is our desire to provide a safe, secure and loving environment for children. In an effort to accomplish this we have several security measures in place to protect our children, their parents and the church.

GENERAL SECURITY

Children are not allowed to wander around the building unsupervised. If you see a child who is “ditching” class, please escort that child to class or contact a Family Ministry staff member, who may take the child to the Worship Auditorium to sit with mom or dad.

For security purposes, we do not encourage adults to wander through the children’s areas without permission. If you see an adult or teen hanging around our children’s classrooms, please contact a Family Ministry staff member. We will ask if we can assist them. If you can not find a staff member please ask if you can help point them in the right direction. Because of the size of our building, we depend upon you to help us make sure our children’s area is safe and secure. If you have questions about someone coming into your classroom, please contact a Family Ministry staff member.

SECURITY TAGS

When parents check in their children for Sunday school, they print out a stick-on nametag for each child, giving their location during both service times. Parents keep the claim stub with a number that matches the number on their child’s tag. In case of emergency, a teacher can locate parents in worship by phoning ext. 250; their child’s number will be displayed on the screens. If parents are in a classroom, your Classroom Facilitator or Area Coordinator will need to go find them.

Parents who are returning to pickup their children must give you the security claim stub matching the number on their child’s nametag. It is imperative that you return the child only to the parent or sibling with the security claim stub. There may be custody issues between parents that we are unaware of. If a parent has lost the security claim tag, or appears to be upset regarding the enforcement of this policy, please refer that parent to a Family Ministry staff member. Under no circumstances should you dismiss a child to anyone without the security claim stub until you have the approval of a Family Ministry staff member.

DISMISSAL FOR ELEMENTARY-AGE CHILDREN

Children in kindergarten - fourth grade must remain in their classroom until picked up by a parent or an older sibling with the claim stub. Even though children may say they are to meet their parents somewhere else, do not release them on their own.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

When the fire alarm sounds and evacuation is necessary be familiar with the following procedure:

1. Immediately line up your children by the classroom door. Count the children. Do not reenter the classroom to retrieve anything.
2. One teacher should go to the front of the line and lead the children outside, following the route posted on the building map beside each classroom door.
3. Another teacher makes sure all children are out of the room, turns off lights, closes doors and remains at the end of the line.
4. Walk; do not run, to the outer edge of the parking lot. Do not stop until you have reached the end of the parking lot leaving ample space for emergency vehicles. Count your children again.
5. Supervisors and department coordinators will check for children in bathrooms, work area or Resource Room.
6. Keep your children in line with you until an RMCC staff member gives the "all clear," or until parents come to pick up their children.
7. Reassure children of their safety.
8. Remain calm and in control.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

OUCH REPORT (sample)	
Child's name _____	
Date _____	Time injury occurred _____
What happened: _____	

Here's how we treated it: _____	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We feel your child is OK now <input type="checkbox"/> • Further medical attention is advised <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Classroom # _____	Hour _____
Teacher's signature _____	
Parent's signature _____	

Typically an injury can be treated with a little loving attention, a cool cloth, soap and water and a Band-Aid. A baggie with Band-Aids and protective gloves are located in each classroom. Please treat the child and complete an "Ouch Report" (copies are located in the Classroom Facilitator drawer in your classroom). When the parents arrive remember to let them know what happened and how the injury was treated. Ask the parent to sign the Ouch Report and leave it in your classroom tub. Keep in mind that we are not authorized to dispense any over-the-counter or prescription medications. In the event a child needs more attention than we can provide, the parent will be notified.

Serious injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury should be treated a follows:

1. Keep calm, and keep children and the injured person as calm as possible. Speak calmly to assure the child.
2. Do not move the injured child, and do not leave him/her alone.
3. Use the classroom telephone to call your department coordinator. Instructions are posted on the handset.
4. If needed, the coordinator or staff member will contact RMCC's MRT team (Medical Response Team) who will contact 911 if needed.
5. The coordinator or staff member will contact the parents and advise them of the child's situation and procedure being followed.
6. The staff member will refer to the parents for details on doctor or hospital preferences.
7. If the child is to be transported to a hospital and the parents cannot be located in time, the staff member will accompany the child.
8. The staff member will follow up with the parents as needed.
9. All volunteers and staff members involved in the emergency should write out a report of what happened immediately following the emergency.

INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

Diseases Requiring Special Precautions -- Infections such as diarrhea and Hepatitis A are primarily spread by a fecal/oral route, resulting in a higher spread among children who are in diapers. Infections such as serious forms of meningitis, influenza, chicken pox and most respiratory ailments are spread by contact with respiratory secretions. Infections such as pink eye, impetigo, scabies, lice, ringworm and chicken pox are spread by person-to-person contact. Fever blisters (Herpes) are spread by contact with saliva. Cytomegalovirus, a viral infection often without symptoms in children, but one which can cause birth defects in unborn babies, is spread through urine and saliva. Hepatitis B and AIDS are spread through intimate sexual contact, contaminated hypodermic needles, blood transfusions with infected blood, and to an unborn child through the placenta or birth process (and possibly to a baby through breast feeding). The risk of AIDS transmission in a nursery/daycare setting is so infinitely small it is immeasurable.

Normal infant mouthing behavior, drooling, biting and the necessity for diapering and close physical contact from caregivers exposes nursery children and their caregivers to a higher risk of infection. **Remember that blood, vomitus or other body fluids are potentially hazardous to the health of individuals coming into contact with it.** In order to minimize the spread of any infectious diseases within the Family Ministry, and to ensure the health and safety of all children and caregivers, we have adopted the following policies:

Specific Procedures --

1. Universal precautions for every child and caregiver should be taken with the handling of blood, urine, feces and vomitus. **Put on disposable gloves before touching any body fluid.** Remove gloves without touching bare skin to outside of glove. Dispose of gloves after each use into a lined wastebasket. (If an emergency precludes the use of gloves in contact with blood, urine or feces, cleaning of the skin should be done as soon as possible.) Gloves can be located in any greeter box in the first-aid kit.
2. Strict hand washing is of utmost importance in the prevention of the spread of infection. Caregivers are required to sanitize their hands after each diaper change, after accompanying a child to the toilet, after assisting a child to wipe his/her nose, after contact with blood (e.g., a cut or bloody nose), after toileting, after contact with his/her own nasal secretions, and before food preparation. Caregivers should make sure that a child's hands are washed after toileting, after use of tissues for wiping eyes and nose, and before eating. Disposable towels will be used after hand washing.
3. When an infant or toddler is seen to put an object into his/her mouth, the object should be cleaned with a disinfecting solution before being returned to the "clean toy" container.
4. A disinfecting solution should be used for wiping up all spills, blood, urine and feces, and for cleaning changing tables, equipment and toys.
5. All infant/toddler toys and equipment (e.g., cribs, swings, strollers) in the nursery area should be cleaned with disinfecting solution after each session.
6. Diapers are to be changed at the changing table on a non-porous surface which is sanitized after each use.

7. To clean up body fluids that have spilled onto the floor use Nilo gel. After sprinkling area with Nilo gel call the Facilities team to clean up and sanitize the area. Or call the Facilities team immediately to apply Nilo gel. The Facilities emergency cell phone number is 303-709-8834. Press 9 to reach an outside line before dialing the number.
8. All diapers and trash contaminated with spills of blood, urine, feces or vomitus must be placed in trash cans lined with disposable plastic, covered and placed out of reach of children.

Implementation -- To ensure that these guidelines are implemented, the Family Ministry staff will arrange for initial and periodic training in infection control procedures for paid caregivers and church workers in various activities such as Sunday school and MOPS. The coordinator of each individual program will be responsible for the day-to-day observance of these guidelines.

Parental Responsibility -- Parents should not bring their child to class if he/she has had a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, congested cough, pink eye, and/or green or yellow nasal discharge within the last 24 hours.

Parents are asked to bring disposable diapers for their child's use in the nursery. Bringing toys from home is discouraged.

If any child exhibits persistent biting behavior while in a nursery classroom, his/her parents will be asked by a Family Ministry staff member to remove that child from the nursery until such behavior ceases.

Confidentiality of Medical Information -- If information regarding a child who has an immunodeficiency, whatever the cause, is available to the Family Ministry staff, the staff will make this information available only to those caregivers who need to know in order to protect the child against other infections. This need to know, however, does not require the knowledge of HIV status. Parents of children enrolled in any Rocky Mountain Christian Church ministry will not be given any confidential medical information.

Biblical Standards for Christian Teachers and Leaders

A lack of clear moral guidelines in our society creates confusion that can extend even into the church. In an effort to bring some clarity, several biblical principles have been compiled for the selection, training and development of those who serve in the church. We want to be faithful to these standards yet avoid any appearance of being judgmental as all of us have sinned, with failings both public and private. At the same time, Christian teachers and leaders need to be able to say with Paul "follow me, as I follow Christ," which suggests that our leadership and lifestyles must demonstrate our beliefs.

Personal Faith: Those in Christian leadership should have a strong, Christ-centered faith that includes a personal grasp of basic Christian beliefs, an active, ongoing relationship with God rooted in prayer, obedience to Scripture, and a commitment to growth in love, holiness, service and fellowship. Christian leaders should not be recent converts. (*I Peter 1:5-7; I Peter 1:3-8*)

Integrity: The Christian leader shall be committed to the highest ethical standards in both personal and professional conduct. (*I Timothy 6:9-12; Matthew 5:13-16*)

Servants: Christian leaders are to be the servants of others, and be willing to help those in need. (*Matthew 18:1-6; Matthew 23:11-12; Mark 10:42-44; Luke 10:29-37*)

Commitment to Local Church: Christian leaders at RMCC are to be members of the congregation, regular in worship attendance and faithful to the extra commitments their positions require. (*Hebrews 10:23-25*)

Nurture: Christian leaders make spiritual growth a continuing priority, reflected in Bible study, fellowship, worship and involvement in Christian community. (*I Timothy 2:15-16*)

Speech: Christian leaders speak the truth in love. They are not to be quarrelsome. Their speech should reflect their commitment to Christ. (*James 1:26; 3:3-12; Ephesians 4:15*)

Sexual Behavior: The Christian leader is committed to faithfulness in marriage, celibacy in singleness and the avoidance of lustful attitudes. (*I Corinthians 6:9-11; Matthew 5:27-28; I Corinthians 7:10-11; Ephesians 5:1-6*)

True To the Word of God: Teachers and leaders are held to a higher standard. They must teach with sound doctrine, not mislead or be false. (*James 3:1; Titus 2:1, 7-8; Matthew 5:19; Luke 16:17*)

Stewardship: A Christian leader is to be generous in giving of his/her time, talents and financial resources. (*I Corinthians 9:6-12; Matthew 6:33*)

A Team Spirit: The Christian leader shall have the ability to work with others, exemplified by a cooperative attitude. (*John 13:14-17; I Corinthians 12:12-26; I Thessalonians 5:12-22*)

A Balanced Life: The Christian leader makes an ongoing effort to balance quality relationships at home with professional commitments and church responsibilities. (*Ephesians 5:22-33; I Peter 3:8-9; I Corinthians 10:31*)

Self Control: The Christian leader is to be committed to moderation and the repudiation of substance abuse (alcohol, drugs and other dependencies). (*I Timothy 3:1-3, 8-9*)

Leadership Training: The Christian leader is committed to training others, equipping them, and giving them opportunity to use their gifts. (*I Timothy 2:1-2; Mark 3:13-15; Exodus 18:18-23*)

Personal Responsibilities: The Christian leader is hospitable and is a good manager of his/her household. (*I Timothy 3:4-5, 12-13; I Peter 4:9-10*)

Distinctive Lifestyle: The Christian leader demonstrates the fruits of the Spirit in his/her life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (*Galatians 5:22-26*)

Concern for Others: The Christian leader has a heart for seeing people come to know Christ and cultivates an ability to share his/her faith. (*Matthew 28:19-20; I Peter 3:15; Colossians 4:5-6; Mark 10:13-16*)

Lordship of Christ: In short, the Christian leader is one who desires Jesus Christ to be Lord over all areas of his/her life. (*Philippians 2:1-11; Colossians 3:12-17*)