



Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta Child Safeguarding Policy Manual

Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta desires to be a place where everyone (children, adults, past survivors of abuse, etc...) can feel safe, rest, and enjoy hearing of the liberating power that can only be found in Jesus Christ. As a church we desire to be leaders, not laggards, in the movement to protect children from abuse.

"A Christian response to child sexual abuse can only occur when all of us in the Christian community take concrete steps to protect our children and respond to this deadly sin in a manner that draws survivors into the arms of Jesus." - Basyle T.

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of Heaven." - Matthew 19:14

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I. Section One: The Foundation

Core beliefs: Promote, Protect, Prevent

- We believe in **promoting/preserving** rich, healthy inter-generational relationships between adults and children in the family of God and Christ the Redeemer
- We believe that **protecting** children is an adult responsibility
- We believe in **preventing** and **responding** to abuse with accountability, training, a code of conduct, policies and procedures

It is these core beliefs that guide our child safety principles, interaction guidelines, procedures and policies.

Guiding Principles:

- **Promoting/preserving** an inter-generational church is God's covenant plan: Christ the Redeemer highly values the role that loving, Godly adults have in teaching and nurturing children, and how children in turn bless the adults in the church. Our congregation vows, at each child's baptism, "to love, encourage, and support {these children} by teaching the gospel of God's love, by being an example of Christian faith and character, and by giving the strong support of God's family in fellowship, prayer, and service."
- **Protecting** children honors Christ: Christ, as the head of the global church and of Christ the Redeemer, holds us accountable for protecting our children and calls us to follow His lead in loving children. Good policies, procedures and structures facilitate accountability as we submit to Christ.
- **Protecting** children is proactive and progressive: **Preventing** and **responding** to child abuse takes a heavy investment of time, money and resources. However the spiritual, emotional, physical and financial toll of child abuse is far greater if passively allowed. We understand that any setting where children are present may be sought out by those wishing to harm them; therefore, we aspire to be a place where parents walk in and sense that their children will be loved and safe. Churches that practice good child protection procedures protect children as well as adults who serve children because training and accountability will build trust among parents, volunteers, and church staff. We intend to follow the most up-to-date laws and aspire to remain on the leading edge of research about child abuse and abuse prevention.
- **Preventing** child abuse and **protecting** children requires humility: As Christians, we confess our spiritual brokenness and sin. We want to be a church that is safe for hurting, broken, sinful people - including those who have been the victims *and* the perpetrators of sexual abuse - to come and find grace, hope and healing. Therefore, we must all humbly submit to boundaries established around children. Prioritizing child protection creates an environment of accountability where such healing can take place.

Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta Child, Youth and Worker Protection Definitions:

The following are definitions of various forms of child abuse and potential indicators of abuse. The Bible says to be "as wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We intend to use this policy to educate, prevent, identify, and respond to instances of child abuse within our circle of influence, being ever mindful of the Holy Spirit to direct our steps.

Child abuse (Georgia Code O.C.G.A. 19-15-1):

- Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, that physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
- Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof;
- Sexual abuse of a child
- Sexual exploitation of a child
- However, no child who in good faith is being treated solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly accredited

practitioner thereof shall, for that reason alone, be considered to be an “abused” child. (Georgia Code O.C.G.A. 19-7-5)

1. Physical abuse: the non-accidental injury of a child or conduct intended to cause physical pain or injury

Possible indicators of physical abuse:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or other adult caregiver

In Georgia, Corporal Punishment is legal. Abuse is not.

Corporal Punishment is any physical punishment of a child to inflict pain as a deterrent to wrongdoing. It may produce transitory pain and potential bruising. If pain and bruising are not excessive or unduly severe and result only in short-term discomfort, this is not considered maltreatment.

2. Neglect: the failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs

a. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision. This also includes the failure to protect a child from harm/danger.)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Educational (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special needs educational requirements)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)

b. Possible indicators of neglect:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

c. There are more reports and substantiated cases of neglect in Georgia and in the U.S. than all the other types of abuse combined.

3. Emotional abuse: a pattern of behavior that impairs or has the potential to impair a child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development or sense of self-worth

a. Emotional abuse frequently occurs as verbal abuse, but might include and is not limited to *patterns* of:

- Restricting a child's movement
- Discrimination (e.g., serving snack to all the children in a youth group except for one child or one group of children)
- Blaming
- Belittling, denigrating, ridiculing or humiliating
- Threatening or scaring
- Unrealistic expectations and demands

- Other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying
- Rejection
- Terrorizing
- Shameful forms of punishment
- Withholding physical and emotional contact
- Developmentally inappropriate expectations

b. Possible indicators of emotional abuse:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity or aggression
- Inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

c. Emotional abuse can also include bullying. Bullying is defined as any form of harassment that one should reasonably expect would demean, threaten, or hurt (physically or emotionally). Both adults and children can be bullied or be the bully.

4. Spiritual abuse: abuse administered under the guise of religion

a. Spiritual abuse includes harassment or humiliation and possibly results in psychological trauma or spiritual injuries. Spiritual abuse may include misuse of religion for selfish, secular, or ideological ends. Spiritual abuse can occur when a perpetrator incorporates religion into the abuse of a child.

b. Examples of spiritual abuse include:

- Use of religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm a child
- Compelling a child to engage in religious acts against his or her will
- Abuse that occurs in a religious context
- Abuse perpetrated by a religious leader
- Invocation of divine authority to manipulate a child into meeting the needs of the abuser

5. Sexual abuse: a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not such person's spouse to engage in any act which involves any of the following

- Sexual intercourse, including genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex
- Bestiality
- Masturbation
- Lewd exhibition of the genitals or public area of a person
- Flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude
- Condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained on the part of a person who is nude
- Physical contact (touching, grabbing, patting, slapping, pinching, rubbing, fondling, groping, poking) in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification with any person's clothed or unclothed genitals, groin area, pubic area, upper thighs, stomach, lower back, buttocks, or with a female's clothed or unclothed breasts
- Defecation or urination for the purpose of sexual stimulation
- Penetration of the vagina or rectum by an object except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure

a. Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting

- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

b. Any occurrence in which an adult engages a minor in sexual activity is abusive; however, up to fifty percent of those who sexually abuse children are under the age of eighteen. Sixty-seven percent of all sexual abuse reported to law enforcement in the United States each year is perpetrated against children. **Approximately one in four women and one in six men were sexually abused before the age of eighteen.**

c. "Sexual activity" may include but is not limited to:

Contact behavior:

- touching with any part of one's body another's genitalia, buttocks, breasts, or surrounding areas (e.g., thighs, stomach, lower back), except as necessary for caregiving (such as changing an infant's diaper) or medical purposes (such as administering an EpiPen to a child's buttocks)
- using one's own genitals, buttocks, breasts, or surrounding areas to touch another's body (e.g. rubbing one's penis against a child's back)
- kissing, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal, anal, or other orifice penetration by a penis, finger or other object
- exploiting a child by engaging the child in prostitution or the production of pornography

Non-contact behavior:

- sexual communication (whether verbal or written, including by telephone, text message, email, or social media)
- voyeurism (spying on private or intimate behaviors, such as those involving undressing, nudity, or sexual activity)
- exposure to pornography or other sexually explicit material
- exhibitionism (exposure of part or all of an adult's naked body)
- exposure of part of all of a child's naked body (except as necessary for caregiving or medical purposes)
- any activity intended to abuse, degrade, arouse, or gratify sexual desires
- instruction from an adult for a child to engage in sexual activity alone or with a third party
- photographing, videotaping, or making any visual, descriptive, or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body
- displaying to another any writings, photograph, videotape, or other visual or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body

6. Sexual exploitation: conduct by any person who allows, permits, encourages, or requires a child to engage in:

- Prostitution, as defined in Georgia Code Section 16-6-9
- Sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct, as defined in Georgia Code Section 16-12-100
- the buying, selling or trading of sex acts with a child

a. Possible indicators of commercial sexual exploitation of a child:

- Branding or tattooing: victims branded by their pimp with tattoos that include a male name or initials, street name, gang or money symbols; these are often found on legs, neck, chest, hands or arms (this is one of the ways that pimps maintain physical and psychological control over emotionally vulnerable girls)
- Withdrawn and uncommunicative
- Possession of large amounts of money (girls turn money over to the pimp)
- Poor personal hygiene and/or inappropriate dress

- An older boyfriend or male friend or relative
- Runaway or lack of adult supervision/support

b. An estimated 300 girls are commercially exploited in Georgia every month. Atlanta has been identified by the FBI as one of 14 cities with the highest incidence of commercial exploitation of children. However, victims of exploitation come from all over the state and 45% of those referred to Georgia Care Connection lived outside of Fulton and DeKalb counties.

7. Other definitions of terms used throughout the Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta Child Safety Protection Manual:

- Children: Any minor under age 18
- Adult: Any individual age 18 or over
- Staff: Any employee of the church
- Babysitter: Any contracted paid childcare worker serving with children
- Adult Volunteer: Any unpaid childcare worker serving with children
- Student Volunteer: Any unpaid minor (under the age of 18) who is serving with children

Section 2: Protective Practices

1. Screening

Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta aims to hire employees and recruit volunteers to work with children who fit our core values and beliefs.

In keeping with our value of protecting children in our care, as we hire employees or recruit volunteers, Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta will require all of the following for each individual who serves with children or youth:

- Completed Background check
- Completed online safety training
- Signed copy of child protection policy

Note: These steps will be required of all adults, inclusive of chaperones and hosts, who will be participating in any overnight event where youth will be present.

Note: Student volunteers under the age of 18 will not have to submit an application for a background check or complete the online safety training. However, they must always be in the room with two adults (they do not count towards the 2-person rule) and must sign a code of conduct before serving and adhere to the code of conduct every time they serve. Student volunteers will be held to the same code of conduct as adult volunteers.

a. Students Serving in Our Children's Ministry

- You are very intentional in your focus: To serve God by being a servant-leader with our church's children.
- You are a role model. Children are watching everything you do!
- No cell phone use.
- No bad language (including the use of God's name)
- No tickling
- No playing alone with a child
- No lap-sitting or piggyback rides
- No wrestling or roughhousing
- Do **not** take children to the restroom. Notify a volunteer, sitter, or church employee if a child needs to use the restroom.
- You can NEVER be alone with a child. You **must always** be in the room with two other adults at all times. You are not an adult so you do not "count" toward our 2-Person rule.

b. For all paid staff employees (full-time or part-time, including weekly paid childcare workers), we require the following of each individual:

- Completed online application (available on Protect My Ministry)
- Completed background check (through Protect My Ministry)

- Completed online safety training (through Protect My Ministry)
- Signed copy of child protection policy
- Internet search of social media accounts
- Two reference checks (previous employers)
- Interview

A background check will include the following information:

- National criminal database search
- Criminal search (county or statewide)
- SSN verification and address history
- National sex offender registry

An interview will explore a candidate's written application and introduce the child protection policy to the candidate.

If the screening process yields information that an individual abused a child in any way or has been convicted of a violent and/or sexual crime, that individual may not work with children in any capacity and Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta will contact a GRACE Certification Specialist (or a similar child protection expert) about how to proceed. If the screening process shows that a candidate has ever been accused (but not convicted) of a violent and/or sexual crime OR charged or convicted of any other type of crime, Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta will consult with a GRACE Certification Specialist (or a similar child protection expert) to assess the situation.

2. Interaction Guidelines

Because most child abuse happens in isolated situations, and because most adults seeking to harm a child prefer to do so in private, our church requires two, unrelated adults to supervise all childcare including but not limited to Sunday morning nursery, preschool, elementary childcare, and small group childcare.

If an adult is alone with a child in a classroom or common area, all interactions must be *observable and interruptible*. For example a babysitter might be in a classroom with just one child during the five- to ten-minute time frame when volunteers are dropping off their children in their classes so they can leave to volunteer in their scheduled classroom. During these short-term situations, the adult must remain in the doorway so they are in sight of anyone passing by at all times until another adult arrives. If an adult is alone with one child for more than ten minutes, he/she must contact a staff employee to act as the second adult until your volunteer arrives.

Supervision also reduces risk. Program administrators shall periodically and randomly inspect classrooms, offices, work areas, and other areas where children and adults are together.

For student events, an adult can never be alone with a student and this includes: Sunday morning youth group, Redeemer Youth, fellowship events, retreats (including sleeping arrangements), car rides to and from events and retreats, and discipleship.

Because some events, such as discipleship, require one adult to focus on the attention of a student, if an adult spends time with a student, the adults will inform both their supervisor and the child's guardian of each meeting. The adult and student will meet at a time and place where either: 1) the meeting will take place at a public place with high visibility or 2) the guardian or supervisor can observe from a distance.

a. Fellowship Events

At certain church events such as a church wide picnic or youth retreats, it will not be possible to apply the guidelines set forth in this manual. We will trust in other safeguarding measures (screening, training of congregation, etc.) and kindly ask parents to supervise their children.

b. Physical Interaction

Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:

Healthy touch is:

- In response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult

- Age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult
- Open rather than secretive
- With the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected
- Communicating respect for the child and concern for the child's well-being

The following types of touch are generally appropriate:

- Brief, side hugs
- High fives
- Pats on the shoulder or upper back
- Holding smaller children when others are present and both hands are visible

The following behaviors between adults and children are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate and shall not be engaged:

- Touching buttocks, chests, genital areas or thighs
- Lapsitting
- Full frontal hugs
- Showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child
- Sleeping in a bed with a child
- Flirtatious or seductive looks
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child
- Showing sexually-suggestive videos or playing sexually suggestive games with a child

c. Verbal Interactions

Positive verbal interactions include:

- Encouragement
- Kind words
- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes

Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta acknowledges that sexual language is more than mere jokes but a serious boundary violation. As such, the following is prohibited:

- Sexually suggestive language, racy jokes, sexual innuendos, descriptions of sexual experiences/habits
- Uploading, downloading, or viewing of pornography
- Music, video games, and movies with adult sexual themes
- Inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development

d. Virtual Interactions

Communication from youth worker (volunteers or staff) to youth should be public and visible. Leaders can use an app like "Remind" or another similar app to spread general information to the group. Texting one on one should not be done. If a student needs to be texted, another youth volunteer or a parent should be copied on the text.

Other social media should be used responsibly. Any app (Ex: Snapchat) that is not public or observable should not be used.

Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. For example, no pornographic content may be downloaded from or uploaded to the Internet and appropriate safeguards to prevent such actions must be used on church property or at church events. All staff and volunteers must make every effort to prevent children from having access to inappropriate communications via emails, text messages, internet content, or movies. Requirements must be followed whether interactions with children or students occur in person or through technology.

3. Routine Protective Measures

a. Security

In order to keep Redeemer Kids a safe and secure environment for parents and children, the following security measures are constantly in effect:

- Only the scheduled volunteers, paid childcare workers, and/or staff employees are allowed in classrooms on Sunday mornings when children are present.
- No adult is allowed to work in an environment without completing online volunteer safety training and reading and signing the child safeguarding policy manual .
- Every adult working in classrooms must complete a background check.
Volunteers will be rescreened annually.
- Every classroom or environment will have two adults present at all times. No adult is to ever be alone with a child.
- All classroom doors must be kept open at all times.

b. Safe Check-In

- Parents proceed to their child's classroom to get a 2-part security tag for their child from the sign-in table outside of their child's classroom. One half of the tag goes on the child's back and the other half will go with the parent. Parents will also need to initial next to their child's name under today's date on the attendance sheet.
- First time visitors will need to fill out some information about their child (phone number to contact if there is an emergency during church, if your child has any food allergies) on the visitor's sheet.

c. Safe Pick-up

- Parents proceed to their child's classroom to retrieve their child.
- Parent gives matching security tag to the adult in the doorway. Only adults are allowed to pick up children, and they must have the matching security tag to pick up.

d. Diapering Policies

The person changing diapers will be a female (and preferably a paid childcare worker).
A child's diaper can only be changed when two adults are present in the classroom.

e. Bathroom Policies

We observe the following procedures when taking children to the bathroom:

If a child (toddler through 5th grader) needs to use the restroom during church, here is what to do:

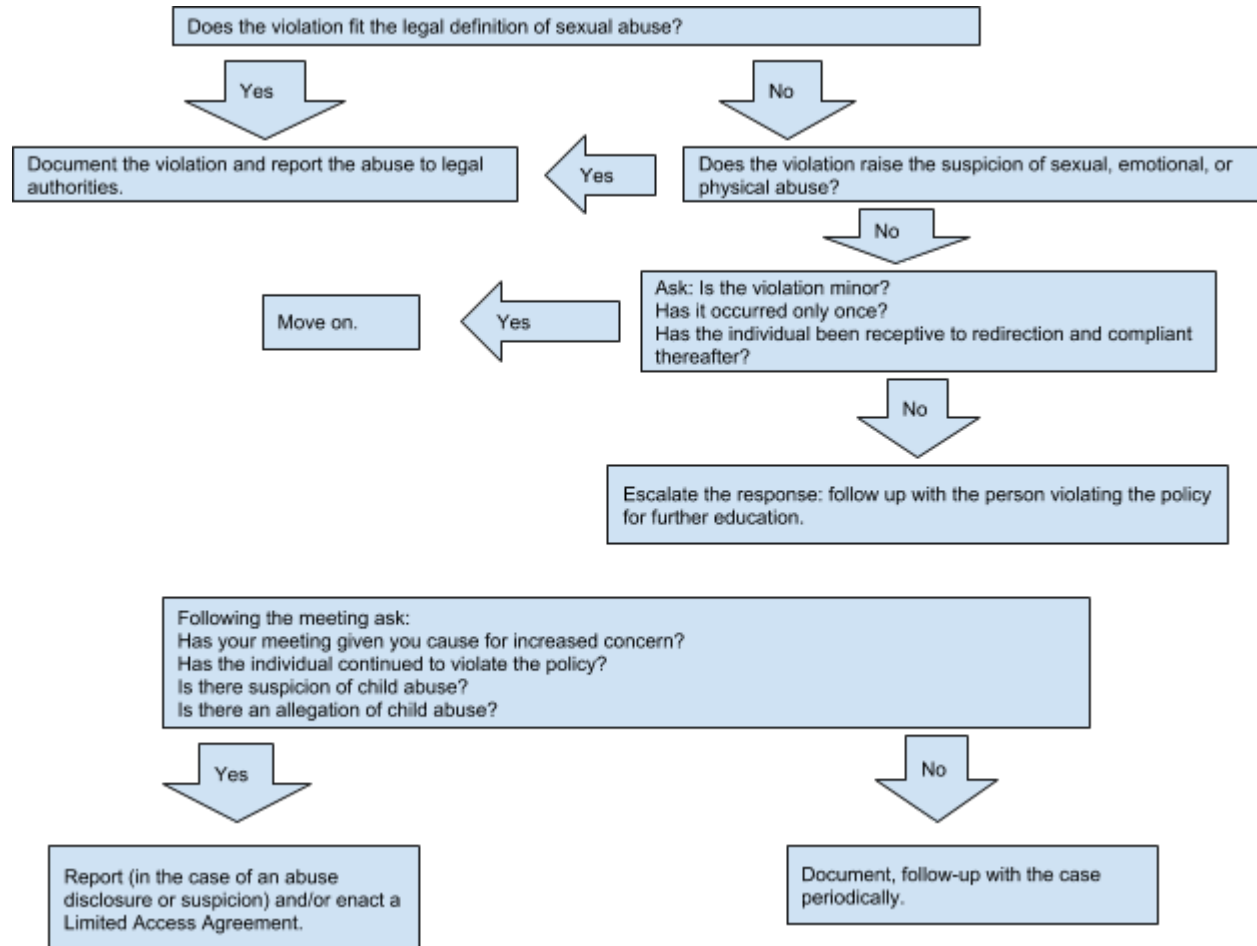
- Two people must be in the classroom at all times with the children.
- You will need to text a front desk volunteer if a child in your class needs to use the restroom. Contact information for each Sunday can be found posted in your classroom.
- Elementary students will use the main restrooms near the sanctuary. Due to an exterior exit being near the restrooms, students are not allowed to go to the restroom by themselves. Two front desk volunteers, classroom volunteer, and/or Sunday sitter must accompany each child.
- If a child needs to use the restroom after 11:15, please encourage the child to wait until their parent comes at pick up time. Be sure to tell the parent so they know to make a quick pit stop before heading home.
- Please note front desk volunteers can only take 2-3 children of the same gender to the bathroom at the same time. Men cannot take girls to the restroom (will need to swap places with a sitter/volunteer).
- Two front desk volunteers will take the children to the restroom at the same time to follow the two-person rule. You can NEVER be alone in the restroom with a child. The bathroom entrance door must remain propped open if there is only one volunteer available to take the child. Stand with one foot in the restroom and one foot in the hall so you can be seen by anyone passing by.
- Do **not** enter the stall unless there is an emergency. Encourage the child to do everything themselves (including wiping) even if they request help.
- Have the child flush the toilet and wash his/her own hands with soap and water. Then return the child to their classroom and make sure the sitter/volunteer is aware the child has been returned.
- If a child has an accident, explain everyone makes mistakes and encourage them to let you know the next time they have to go the bathroom.

Section 3: Response

1. Policy Violations

Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta takes Policy violations seriously. Any staff, volunteer, parent, or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to respond in an appropriate way.

Looking at the documentation, first ask:



Policy exceptions should be rare. Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta allows Policy exceptions that are pre-approved or for emergencies.

- Example: a policy should prohibit staff from giving rides to children in their vehicles as this is an isolated, one-on-one environment. However, during one church's children's program, a child had a medical emergency. Because an ambulance would not arrive for 20 minutes and the child needed immediate medical care, an adult drove the child to the hospital in 10 minutes. The adults responding to this situation had the freedom to seek the necessary medical care for the child. Even though they violated the Policy, these adults were right to drive the child to the hospital.
- All exceptions should be documented.

2. Limited Access Agreements

a. Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta utilizes Limited Access Agreements to clarify safe behavior around children for community members who have:

- engaged in concerning or risky behavior and/or
- violated the policy repeatedly and/or
- offenses that are not related to children (stealing, drug use, DUI, etc...)

b. A Limited Access Agreement is a written and agreed-upon boundary between an individual and Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta wherein we outline specific concerns about an individual's behavior, detail appropriate behavior toward children, and plan ongoing accountability for the individual. Limited Access

Agreements apply to members of the church community. They do not apply to known offenders or church staff members.

c. If a convicted sex offender wants to join Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta's community, we will contact our GRACE Certification Specialist (or equivalent child protection expert) on how to best interact with a known sex offender. Similarly, if an individual has been credibly accused of child sexual abuse or any form of child maltreatment but has not yet or was not convicted, we will contact our GRACE Certification Specialist (or equivalent child protection expert) on how to best proceed.

d. If a staff member violates the Policy, they will face disciplinary action up to and including termination for a first offense and automatic termination for a second offense (the offenses do not have to be the same).

3. Reporting

a. The abuse of children is not only a sin; it is a serious crime. When adults report suspected child abuse to the legal authorities, their report could save a child's life. In contrast, silence about suspected abuse brings incredible harm to victims and emboldens offenders. Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta encourages its members to contact the authorities immediately when a child discloses abuse, when they witness child abuse, or when they observe signs of abuse.

b. The State of Georgia (O.C.G.A. 19-7-5) mandates the following to be reporters: church staff, paid workers or volunteer workers providing care to children.

c. Reports should be made to Cobb County DFCS 404.651.9361 (after hours 1.855GACHILD)

d. If reporters want assistance in making a report, they can contact a member of the Child Safeguarding Committee.

e. After a church member has reported abuse, they should contact an elder of the church.

4. Independent Investigations

a. Under the following circumstances, Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta will consult with GRACE (or equivalent child protection expert) to determine if an independent review should be pursued.

- When suspicion of child maltreatment is reported to the civil authorities, and they decline to investigate or prosecute the alleged abuses.
- A district attorney has not pursued legal prosecution because no suspected criminal behavior is reported; however, the Child Safeguarding Committee believes the individual's behavior might still violate the church's policy, be immoral, be inappropriate, or be unsafe.

b. If an investigation is deemed necessary, Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta will retain an organization that is independent of our church, is experienced in proper investigation techniques, and is up-to-date on child maltreatment research.

Section Four: Supporting Survivors

1. Abuse Disclosures

Because children and adult survivors are reluctant to disclose abuse, Christ the Redeemer acknowledges that if survivors choose to disclose their abuse, they need our community's utmost support.

- a. Abuse disclosure from a child
- When children disclose, they almost always do so by accident and may later recant even when there is proof that the abuse occurred. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. When children disclose intentionally, children may first test the adult's reaction by pretending that the abuse happened to a friend or by supplying only a small bit of information. Disclosures by children are rarely direct, all at once, or done in a coherent, linear fashion.

If a child discloses abuse to you, the following guidelines will help you respond appropriately in the moment:

- Stay calm and maintain a caring tone when speaking with the child.
- Thank the child for telling you and praise their courage.
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting in trouble, reassure the child that no matter what happened, he or she is not to blame.
- If the child expresses concerns about not being believed, reassure the child that you believe him/her.

- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat words, or probe for details. Use open ended questions such as “What happened next?” or “Is there more?”
- Do not offer false assurances, such as promising to keep the child’s disclosure a secret.
- Immediately protect the child from the suspected offender. If there is an immediate threat to the child’s safety, keep the child with you and take action to protect other children, alerting a staff member if necessary.
- Report the abuse to authorities and your supervisors/church leaders. (See Chapter 10 on Reporting.)
- Document the disclosure and your report. (See Appendix B: Abuse Reporting Form)
- Protect the child’s right to privacy and do not turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice. Instead turn to professionals experienced in handling cases of child sexual abuse and to carefully selected individuals who can provide assistance and support to the child and to you.

b. Abuse disclosure from an adult

Receiving an adult’s abuse disclosure is an honor, not a burden; it is a sign of trust. Victims often choose to disclose their abuse years, even decades after it occurred. Christ the Redeemer encourages anyone receiving an adult’s abuse disclosure to be guided by the following responses:

DO Say:

- Thank you for telling me.
- I’m glad you’re safe now.
- You did the right thing asking for help/telling me/reporting the abuse.
- I’m glad you’re talking with me.
- I’m sorry this happened to you.
- How can I help?
- Take as much time as you need.
- Things may never be the same, but they can get better.
- I am here.
- I stand with you. This congregation stands with you.

The following should only be said if the victim indicates these concerns are on his/her mind.

- It is OK to be angry.
- It is okay to still love your abuser.
- It’s understandable you’re feeling that way.
- Your reaction is not an uncommon response.
- You’re not going crazy. These are normal reactions following an assault.
- I believe you.

DON’T Say:

- Why are you telling me this?
- Why didn’t you _____ (scream/stop it/etc.)?
- What do you mean when you say he abused you?
- What exactly did he do?
- Tell me more details about what happened.
- Why did he do that to you? Had you done something to make him think that was okay?
- You need to forgive and move on.
- Don’t worry, it’s going to be all right.
- It’ll take some time, but you’ll get over it.
- Calm down and try to relax.
- Try to be strong.

- It was so long ago, why are you still letting your abuser win by hanging on to it? Let it go.
- You should get on with your life.
- Time heals all wounds.
- Out of tragedies good things happen.
- You're lucky that _____ didn't happen.
- It was God's will.
- I know how you feel.
- Perhaps you misunderstood.

2. Victim Support

a. Action Steps - If Christ the Redeemer becomes aware that a child has been, or is suspected to have been abused, the church will take the following steps to support the child and the child's family.

- The alleged perpetrator of the abuse will be immediately suspended or terminated from any church positions she/he may hold (volunteer or paid), pending the results of an investigation.
- If the alleged perpetrator attends Christ the Redeemer, the church will contact GRACE for guidance, and a Limited Access Agreement will be implemented.
- A liaison will be assigned by the child safeguarding committee to maintain contact with the alleged perpetrator.
- The privacy of the victim will be protected.
- A support person from among the church leadership will be assigned by the child safeguarding committee to the victim and his/her family. This individual will contact the family within 48 hours of learning of the abuse. The support person will express the church's support at the onset, but will seek permission from the family to continue offering support on a continuing basis. Support may include listening, affirming, accompanying the victim/family in filing a police report, meeting with Child Protective Services, and attending interviews, meetings, or court hearings as requested by the victim/family. The support person must also understand the limitations of their role, and not attempt to function in a therapeutic, legal, or other expert capacity.
- The church will assist the victim in finding a therapist and if needed, will help the victim access financial support to cover the cost of therapy. A list of referrals to qualified, licensed therapists will be maintained and annually updated.
- If the abuse has occurred at church, a church function, or by a church employee or volunteer, the church will cover the cost of therapy with a therapist chosen by the victim.

b. Creating a Culture for Ongoing Support for Victims of Childhood Abuse

Christ the Redeemer aims to create a space that is safe for all victims of childhood abuse – both those we know about and those we do not. To this end, the church will:

- Create and annually update a referral list of local organizations and therapists who specialize in sexual abuse prevention and treatment.
- Publicize our Policy, communicating that our church takes child protection seriously and does not tolerate abuse.
- Speak about child abuse publicly and regularly through sermons, communal dialogue, and regular trainings on abuse and prevention/response. Advanced notice will be given to the congregation before these public discussions.

Section 5: Living the Policy

1. Training - As part of the training of our new policy, we will have all pertinent groups trained so that they understand the updated procedures and the differences from what is being used currently. This training's goal is to ensure that the children in our church are safe and that child safety becomes something that our staff, volunteers, and general congregation know and understand and make part of everyday church life.

a. Roll Out Training

The initial roll out will consist of the following forms of training with the groups for each type of training listed.

- Mandatory formal training reviewing updated policy – the below groups will be required to attend this training (this training to be completed within 3 months of policy rollout).
 - Staff
 - Elders

- Voluntary formal training reviewing updated policy (this can be done in conjunction with training for staff and elders).
 - Church volunteers
 - Parents (with school age children)
 - Teenagers can attend a training tailored specifically to them (likely during one of their weekly youth group sessions). Alternatively, training materials will be provided by Redeemer for parents to use at home
 - Young children can attend a session related specifically to them (with a parent). Alternatively, training materials will be provided by Redeemer for parents to use at home.

b. Ongoing Training

Annual mandatory formal training – This will serve as an annual refresher course for the following groups. This training can be completed internally or by an outside committee to be determined by the Child Safeguarding Committee 90 days prior to training date.

- Staff
- Elders

New Staff / Elder / Volunteer training – As new staff, elders, and volunteers start with Redeemer, they will be required to participate in either an online training (and meeting with staff member) or attend the annual refresher course (if the timing coincides).

Signature Document – Church staff, elders, volunteer leadership, and volunteers working with children should sign off that they understand the policy and are willing to abide by its terms.

2. Dissemination

a. Hard Copies – Printed copies of the policy will be available in the following manners:

- Placed in appropriate areas in church
- As part of the new member packet

b. Posters – Posters with summary points to be hung in each of the child / teen classrooms (these are just meant to give appropriate behavior similar to what is currently being used)

c. Electronic Media

- Website – Policy loaded on website for viewing
- Church email newsletter – Link should be included at set intervals to the policy on the website. Small sections of the policy could also be included at set intervals in the newsletter.

d. In person reminders – As opportunity arises and at appropriate intervals, various groups within the church should be reminded of the policy and where copies of the policy can be found both in print and electronically. The times where this could take place are during:

- Staff Meetings
- Elder Meetings
- Small Groups
- Volunteer Meetings

e. Specific Feedback Contact – To understand and address the concerns of the members of Redeemer, we will setup a means for feedback specifically to the Child Safeguarding Committee via a group email.

3. Updating

a. Meeting Cadence – Once the policy is approved, the Child Safeguarding Committee should meet once per quarter, if needed, for the first year and twice per year every year thereafter to review feedback from congregants and discuss any edits or updates that may be required for the policy.

b. Changes to Policy – Changes should only occur on an annual basis unless there is a glaring error / omission. Approval for updates should follow the same approval process as the original policy.

Appendix A: Sexual Offenders

People who sexually abuse children utilize authority, trust or physical force/threats to gain access and control over children so they can perpetrate the abuse. Child sex offenders can be anyone - male or female, young or old - and are almost always someone the child knows. There are three primary categories of people who sexually abuse children: the stranger, the acquaintance, and the intra-familial offender.

1) *Stranger offenders* are people that the child has never seen, or people with whom the child has only had minimal prior interactions. Stranger offenders secure access and control over children with authority, trust, and physical force/threats but most frequently utilize physical force/threats and are considered the smallest group of offenders.

2) *Acquaintance offenders* are non-family members - such as a family friend, clergy member, next door neighbor, pediatrician, teacher or church volunteer - who is acquainted with the child and/or the child's parents. Acquaintance offenders generally prefer to leverage trust to gain access and control. To secure this trust, the acquaintance offender grooms child victims by providing a variety of services and gifts, including but not limited to attention, affection, kindness, privileges, recognition, alcohol, drugs, money, and pornography. Often the offender will also groom the victim's family and develop a friendship with them in order to gain their trust. This trust will often reduce the child's inhibitions, as well as their family's, and increase the offender's control over the child. This toxic trust eventually renders the child virtually helpless, creating an environment for ongoing abuse, while increasing the likelihood that the victim will remain silent. Forty percent of offenders reported sexually abusing a child who was known to them but not in their family, according to one study.

3) *Intra-familial offenders* are related to the victim and are people who usually, but not always, live in the same house as the victim. Intra-familial offenders are generally considered the largest of the three child molester categories, with one study finding that sixty-eight percent of the admitted offenders sexually victimized a child within their family. Because of greater accessibility, intrafamilial victims tend to be overall younger than non-familial victims. The primary challenge for the intra-familial molester is not access, but the ability to exert sufficient control in order to both abuse and silence the victim. A seemingly greater correlation and interplay exists between the use of trust, authority, and physical force utilized by the intra-familial offender.

Appendix B: Christ the Redeemer of Marietta Suspicion of Abuse Reporting Form

Before completing this form, please be sure that you have already reported the suspicion of abuse to the Cobb County Department of Family and Children Services at 404-651-9361 (After hours, call 1-855-GACHILD) AND notified a church staff member. Complete the form with as much detail as possible. Turn into church office.

Your Name:

Victim's Name:

Victim's Age/Date of Birth:

Date/Place of initial conversation with/report from victim:

Victim's statement of abuse or signs of abuse observed (Give detailed summary here, using back of form if necessary):

Name of person suspected of abuse:

Relationship of accused to victim:

Was this reported to DFCS? Yes () No ()

If Yes,

Date/Time of report:

Method of report:

Caseworker Name:

If No,

For assistance in fulfilling this legal obligation, please contact the church at _____ and ask for _____. If you are unable to reach a pastor, it is still your legal obligation to report to DFCS within 24 hours.

Was this abuse reported to a pastor? Yes () No ()

If Yes,

To whom did you report?

When and how did you report?

Summary of the conversation:

I understand that confidentiality in this matter is of the utmost importance, and I agree not to speak of the details written in this form with anyone except legal authorities and the ministry leadership of Christ the Redeemer Church of Marietta.

Name of person making this report: _____

Signature: _____ Date and Time: _____

-----FOR MINISTRY STAFF ONLY-----

Call to parent/guardian-

Date/Time:

Spoke with:

Summary of conversation:

Any other actions taken:

Appendix C: List of references:

1. GRACE. *The Child Safeguarding Policy Guide for Churches and Ministries*. New Growth Press, 2017. Print.
2. 19 Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Ch. 15. *law.justia.com*, 2016. Web. 20 Aug. 2017.
3. Georgia Department of Education. *Looking Out for Georgia's Youth: Education Can Make a Difference*. Web. 20 Aug. 2017. <www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/Child%20Abuse%20Prevention%20Handouts.pdf>