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August 3, 2009

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Child Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures

I. INTRODUCTION

Crossroads Community Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the minor children entrusted to its training, teaching, and care. These Child Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures cover four major areas: screening, awareness, prevention, and reporting. Together they form a comprehensive program intended to prevent incidences of abuse.

II. DEFINITIONS - See APPENDIX A

III. SCREENING

- A. Screening of individual staff is a necessary and valuable tool which (1) Communicates the church's serious intention about preventing child abuse, (2) Assists the church by providing important information regarding an applicant's interest and skills, (3) Reduces incidents of child abuse by deterring offenders from applying, (4) Helps ensure that staff and volunteers are persons of integrity.
- B. The screening procedure may consist of four steps - (1) Application, (2) Reference Check, (3) Limited Criminal History Information, (4) Interview
- C. Application - All members and non-members serving in youth or children's ministry must complete an application, which will be kept in a confidential personnel file maintained by the Director of Ministry. **See APPENDIX G**
- D. Reference Checks -The Road Crew or its designee will perform reference checks for staff and ministry leaders. Reference checks need not be done on anyone who has served in Crossroads Children's ministry within five years from the date they last served. Responses to reference checks must be attached to the Application and remain confidential. **Limited Criminal History check will be required of staff, ministry leaders and teachers who are in a position of care-giver to children. See Application.**
- E. Interview - New staff must follow the process for hiring, which includes an interview.

IV. AWARENESS

A. Training / Education

- (1) All staff and volunteers involved in children's ministry, shall participate annually in the Abuse Prevention Training Session, directed at abuse, policies, and reporting obligations.
- (2) All staff and volunteers shall covenant to the reading of Crossroad's manual on Child Abuse Prevention.
- (3) All staff and volunteers shall read and sign the "Code of Ethics" -
APPENDIX F

B. Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse - See APPENDIX B

C. Supervision of children and children's activities should be by at least two adults.

V. PREVENTION

A. Children's Discipline Policy

- Specific policies reflecting children's ages or their developmental level will be included in the appendices to this manual.
- Discipline must reflect the age and level of comprehension of the child(ren) involved.
- Corporal punishment is not permitted. (Slapping, hitting, pinching, pushing, any action that leaves a mark, bruise or wound, or the use of a device or object to administer discipline.)
- Abusive verbal discipline is not permitted. (hurling insults, persistent yelling, or threatening)
- Parents are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction, or if a pattern of misbehavior increases.
- Use positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior from a child.
- When misbehavior in a class or other youth activity becomes an ongoing problem, additional parents or aides should be brought in to help supervise the class or activity.
- Teacher's expectations or class expectations must be clear and reflect their age and level of comprehension.
- Behavior expectations for the children must be stated and not assumed:
 - Children must refrain from hitting, kicking, or injuring anyone in the classroom.
 - Children are to use an inside voice and must take turns talking by raising hands.

-Children must be obedient and follow the teacher's instruction.

- Appropriate forms of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers/staff at the beginning of a new ministry season with periodic reminders as needed.
- Timeouts for young children should not last longer in minutes than the age of the child. (A three year old should not have to sit longer than three minutes in time-out).
- Whenever possible, try to avoid having to discipline a child by choosing one or more of the following options:
 - Distract the child with another activity
 - Help the child focus on another more acceptable behavior
 - Isolate the child from others if another volunteer is available to assist.
- When nothing seems to be working, volunteers should get help.

B. Volunteer Policy (This item TBD)

C. Children's Affection Policy

- Working with small children requires some bodily contact. Gentle, casual touching on a child's head, arms, and hands will be permitted.
- Kissing is inappropriate.
- Lap sitting is inappropriate for children over the age of two. Instead encourage children to sit next to you. To console a child crying uncontrollably and you are in sight of other adults; you may hold a child on your lap until the crying stops.
- Avoid body-to-body hugs. One arm hugs, side hugs or hand to arm hugs are permissible.
- Avoid giving or receiving back rubs.

D. Bathroom Assistance Policy

- Only approved adult staff may assist (take) children to the bathroom.
- The door must remain open while helping a child in the bathroom.
- If a child does not need assistance, the adult should stand by the doorway, while the child uses the bathroom.
- Re; nursery - diapers or clothes will be changed in the sight of another adult worker. If a parent has requested to be contacted and wishes to assist their own child, nursery workers will not be allowed to change diapers or assist with toilet needs.
- Children through First grade age will be escorted to the bathroom, even if a child does not need assistance. The adult will wait outside the open bathroom door.

- Children in Second Grade thru Fifth Grade may use the bathrooms without being accompanied by an adult.

VI. REPORTING

Signs and symptoms of abuse and reports of abuse of a minor need to be taken seriously (See APPENDIX B). A volunteer/staff person should not conduct an investigation of the matter. They should follow the established reporting procedure.

Crossroads Church will only assume responsibility for responding to abuse that occurs on church leased or owned facilities or at church functions. This does not mean that those people required to report abuse pursuant to state statute no longer have an obligation to do so, but that the church will not be involved in the reporting process. **(See Appendix D for clarification)**

If any member or non-member can provide information verifying that a volunteer or staff member have had formal charges filed against them for child abuse, the Head Pastor or one of his designees should be informed immediately.

A. Responding to a Report of Abuse

- Take the child seriously when he/she tells the story. Write down as much of the account as you are able to do as soon as you are able.
- Reassure the child. Remind the child that you care about him/her.
- Remain emotionally calm and even keeled in the presence of the child.
- Make no promises to the child that you will not tell what has been shared. Do not offer a reward for telling story. Do not tell the child he/she has been abused. Do not talk about police. Do not investigate the story. Repeat the story only to the Head Pastor (See Section E. for reporting policy).
- Remind the child that it was good to tell someone and that it was not his/her fault.
- Observe whatever is accessible without removing clothing. Do not ask the child for permission to check beneath his/her clothing.
- SEE APPENDIX C FOR GREATER DETAIL IN RESPONDING TO REPORT

B. Policy for Reporting Suspected or Alleged Abuse.

- All staff, leaders, or teachers are required to report any suspected or alleged incidence of abuse to the Head Pastor (ASAP) within 24 hours. In the pastor's absence (or if he is the accused), the report is to be made to one of the

directors. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person to substantiate or investigate the alleged or suspected abuse.

- The parent(s) / guardian of the victim must be informed, by the Head Pastor or his designee, of the information, immediately (without delay) that has come to light about their child(ren) in a face-to-face meeting. **See APPENDIX E.**
- The ART should handle matters as filing a report with authorities, informing the liability carrier, establish a care plan for the child and family, preparing for disclosure to the church in deemed necessary, etc.
- When the alleged or suspected victim is a minor child, the person receiving the report will be mandated to report this to the local CPS. It is our responsibility to comply with Indiana child protection laws.
- All volunteers and staff should be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse, whether abuse is emotional, physical and/or sexual. **See Appendix B**
- When a child reports an incident of abuse or a volunteer/staff person observes signs or symptoms of abuse, the volunteer/staff person must write a report indicating the specifics of the child's report, the specifics of the abuse, the date when signs, symptoms, or report as soon as possible.
- The Head Pastor (or Director) shall maintain the records of reported incidents and will keep such records confidential, accurately and completely documenting all efforts at handling the incident.
- The church will provide appropriate and necessary assistance to the victim, the offender, CPS, and local law enforcement agencies.
- So far as it is consistent with our legal duties as well as our spiritual concern for all involved, we will work to maintain confidentiality.

C. Policy Regarding Alleged Offenders

- If the child's parent/guardian is the suspected abuser, the CPS or police will be notified and will in turn notify the parent/guardian of their investigation.
- If staff or volunteer is the suspected abuser, the alleged offender must be informed of the allegations and must be suspended from participating in all service roles in the church until an investigation is done by the proper authorities.
- If the allegations are found to be false, the censure on service will be lifted. If the allegations are found to be true, the offender must continue under the censure on service and be dealt with by the pastor and Road Crew.
- If a paid employee is the alleged offender, salary and other benefits will be continued during the period of suspension and investigation. If the allegations are found to be true, salary and all other benefits will be discontinued immediately.

D. Policy Regarding Response to Media

- If an incident of abuse becomes a public matter such as at the time of arrest, the media has the right to report such incidents. This policy intends to assist Crossroads Church's leadership to thoughtfully prepare for and respond to the media's awareness of an abusive event, while protecting the victims of such attacks and facilitating the legal process.
- The identity of the victims or survivors of such circumstances ought to be held confidential, especially minors. Only an adult victim or adult survivor can give consent to release his/her name for publication.
- Any report of child abuse made to the police directly or to the police via Child Protection Services becomes a felony investigation. Information in the form of a media release, news conference, or prepared statement on a felony investigation must be prepared and released by the Police Department.
- Legal advisors, police department's media officer and other experts should be consulted before any statements are read or made.
- The Head Pastor (or his designee) will be the official spokesperson for Crossroads Church for any media responses. Statements to reporters or to the media may not be made by the church's staff or volunteers regarding any ongoing investigation of child abuse or neglect.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS FOUND IN THIS POLICY

- A. **Physical Abuse** - any intentional means of inflicting injury on another person whether a one-time event or a chronic pattern. Physical abuse may occur regardless of whether there is a cut, wound, mark or bruise.
- B. **Physical Neglect** - not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care, which interferes with or prevents a child's normal development.
- C. **Sexual Abuse** - sexual exploitation or forced sexual intimacy of a person regardless of age or circumstance, which may or may not include physical contact.
- D. **Emotional Abuse** - attempting to control a child's life through words, threats, and fear, destroying a child's self-worth through harassment, threats, and deprivation, which reinforce a sense of helplessness dependence on the abuser.
- E. **Child / Minor / Youth** - persons under the age of 18 years, unless legally emancipated through marriage or induction into military service.
- F. **Member** - having gone through required membership process and completed a written testimony of their spiritual journey and resultant faith in Jesus Christ as their savior.
- G. **Non-member** - have not gone through the required process of membership required by Crossroads CC.
- H. **Staff** - individuals paid hourly or salary by the church and serve in any area, which brings them into contact with minors within the context of direct contact or care and supervision.
- I. **Volunteer** - individuals who are not paid for serving in a child or youth program or who have direct contact with minors in their care or supervision.

APPENDIX B

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD ABUSE

Note: Children rarely exhibit just one sign that they are the victims of abuse. Some symptoms may represent typical developmental changes or the aftereffect of traumas in their lives other than abuse. Conversely, it is possible for abuse to be taking place without the appearance of noticeable symptoms because of the child's ability to mask or deny what would otherwise be very confusing and painful to acknowledge. Generally, several signs observed over a period of time suggest that a child may be suffering from abuse. This highlights the need for training among volunteers, staff and program leaders.

A. Infants and Preschool Children

1. Regression to an earlier stage of behavioral development, e.g. baby talk, thumb sucking, or bedwetting.
2. Change in social behavior that is not associated with normal development, e.g. excessive crying, clinging, becoming aggressive, withdrawn.
3. Physical manifestations, e.g. loss of bowel control, bedwetting, frequent urination, headaches, stomachaches, breathing difficulties, sore throats accompanied by gagging, stains, the child's undergarments.
4. Exhibiting signs of fear around a family member or a familiar person or fear of a familiar place or object.
5. Fear of being touched, shying away from physical contact. Resistance to being diapered or assisted in bathroom.
6. Use of explicit language or sexual behavior that is beyond the child's comprehension or life experience.
7. Attempting sexual behavior with other children or attending adults.
8. Unexplained injuries or bruises, repeated injuries blamed on carelessness, multiple bruises sustained in one event, bruises to child's midsection, back, head, or back of thighs; signs of scalding, burning, or distinctive bruising, such as in shape of a belt buckle; multiple bruises in various stages of healing.
9. Name calling toward other children, bullying behavior, sulking or brooding

10. Fascination with fires, playing with matches, lighter

B. School-age Children

1. Same as physical manifestations above coupled with complaints of pain, irritation, soreness, redness on the child's bottom, smearing feces on walls or objects.
2. Pattern of injuries, multiple injuries, injuries about the face or neck, failure to complain about or explain an obvious physical discomfort.
3. Unusual fears, e.g. a familiar person, a particular room, a particular object, or fear of new experiences.
4. Poor concentration in classroom.
5. Exhibiting adult-pleasing behaviors, striving for perfection, acting miserable if failing.
6. Engaging in self-injury, engaging in excessive masturbation, masturbation in public setting.
7. Acting enraged and out of control, expressing anger through destruction.
8. Shyness about physical touch.
9. Exhibiting sexual behavior beyond comprehension or maturity level, behaving in sexual manner with other children or adults.
10. Exhibiting signs of needing to be in control of others or situations, bullying others.
11. Hostility and distrust of adults, mood swings and irritability, violent disruptions.
12. Acting out, including hoarding food and toys, lying, stealing, assaulting.
13. Frequent absences from school or other scheduled events either because of being punished or to hide bruises.
14. Low self-esteem, particular sensitivity to criticism.

15. Hyper-vigilance, i.e. Excessive and suspicious watching of other people, easily startled.

16. Preoccupation with fire and setting fires.

C. Adolescents

1. Eating disorders, use of laxatives, unexplained and dramatic changes in weight.

2. Changes in sleep patterns, including excessive sleeping, sleeping during the day, or insomnia.

3. Performance in school plunges.

4. Perfectionist behavior, excessive self-criticism, attempting to please adults, overreacting to any form of criticism or complaint.

5. Sexually provocative or asexual behavior, denial of body changes and sexual development; for females, seeking affection from older males.

6. Experimentation with drugs and alcohol.

7. Self-abusive behavior including cutting self, preoccupation with danger and weapons, suicide attempts.

8. Truancy from school.

9. Cruelty to animals, bullying younger children.

10. Emotional numbness, inability to emotionally supportive of others.

11. Having few friends, changing friends often.

12. Depression and other signs of withdrawal and avoidance.

13. Pregnancy.

14. Refusing to attend to basic hygiene.

15. Rectal and vaginal infections.

16. Hyper-vigilance-excessive watching and suspicion of other people; easily startled.

D. Neglect

1. Appearing to be underfed, constantly hungry, underweight for size and age.
2. Begging for food, stealing food, hoarding food.
3. Lack of supervision, underage child supervising another child/children.
4. Chronic absenteeism from school, unattended educational needs.
5. Unattended medical and dental needs.
6. Consistent or frequent lack of hygiene, poor hygiene, or lack of cleanliness resulting in odors.
7. For infants, failure to thrive.

E. Parental Behaviors and Home Life

1. Not attending meetings about the child, not showing an interest in the child, Critical of child, uncomplimentary.
2. Constantly putting child down, using harsh words to describe child, using threats and unflattering language.
3. Describing child as underachiever, complaining that he/she lets people down, is unmotivated, achieve less than brothers and sisters.
4. Speaking of child in way that sounds too romantic, too grown-up, too sugary, too perfect.
5. Hostile, closed-minded, overprotective, isolating, doesn't let others in the house, won't participate in activities with other parents, makes excuses about failing to do tasks, talks about things not being good at home.
6. Reports of past/other suspicious behavior, reports that an older brother or sister may have been mistreated.

7. Chemical dependency by one or both parents.
8. Sudden and dramatic changes in family's financial security.

APPENDIX C

RESPONDING TO A CHILD'S REPORT OF ABUSE

- Take the child seriously when he/she tells the story.
- Avoid judgmental statements such as, "I think you just had a bad dream."
- Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child's story. This may cause the child to stop talking or to believe you are upset with the child.
- Do not try to convince the child that the story isn't true or that it did not happen the way the child reported it.
- Do not make promises to the child that you will not tell anyone what has been shared with you.
- Remind the child that whatever happened was not their fault.
- Assure the child that it was a good decision to tell someone what happened to him/her.
- Tell the child that you want to find help so it doesn't happen again.
- Do not offer a reward to the child for telling the story or promise a gift in the child tells another adult.
- Reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.
- Do not frighten the child by talking about police involvement or about medical examinations. Share that other people need to know about what happened and they will talk to the child later.
- Do not ask the child to show any bruises that are beneath underwear or clothing; only observe those bruises that are accessible.

- Do not investigate the child's story; rather listen to the story, and take notes immediately afterwards while fresh in your memory.
- Do not tell the child that he/she has been abused.
- Offer to support the child and remind the child that you care about him/her.

APPENDIX D

REPORTING ABUSE TO AUTHORITIES

State statute requires that any person, volunteer or staff, in the position of care-provider for children is considered a "mandated reporter." A mandated reporter must report child abuse or neglect if it is suspected.

If the victim is a minor child, the care-giver must notify the (CPS) Children's Protective Services themselves as a "mandated reporter" when:

- Symptoms of abuse or neglect are suspected outside of the church's setting (**APPENDIX B**).
- There is no danger of placing a child back into an imminently dangerous situation.

If the victim is a minor child, the care-giver as a "mandated reporter" must follow the church's guidelines for reporting if:

- The abuse is suspected to be happening within the setting of the church by staff or volunteers. (**See Section VI**)

If the victim is a minor child, notify the local police (911) department when:

- The care-giver needs to control an immediate or imminent conflict or incident regarding a child that can not be controlled by the care-giver, e.g. a child being taken by an unauthorized person, or a parent or guardian reacting immediately to a child in an uncontrollable manner.
- Placing the child in the custody of guardian, parent(s) will increase or continue the risk of abuse to the child.

Note: The police will respond immediately should the situation or information require that type of response. CPS is required by law to respond within 24 hours of reporting. CPS phone numbers:

- M - F from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. 881-6964, 881-6965, 881-6966
 - Sat., Sun., after hours, and holidays - 800-800-5556
- Schererville Police: 911 or 322-2121 (Ask for dispatch)

APPENDIX E

RESPONDING TO PARENTS WHO ARE NOTIFIED OF AN ABUSE REPORT

- Remain calm and nonjudgmental.
- Anyone who makes a report to the police or child protections services authorities is usually granted anonymity; do not identify the reporter unless you are given permission to do so.
- Do not share any statements made by the child with a parent or relative who is implicated by the child as an abuser. Do not share the child's statements with anyone other than the authorities until the identity of the abuser can be determined and authorities have determined whether or not the child can be protected from contact with that person.
- Do not attempt to convince a parent that the alleged abuse happened or did not happen. Do not attempt to discredit the child or cast suspicion on the alleged abuser.
- Do not investigate with a parent what may be happening in the home; and do not share information with a parent that has not been shared with the authorities.
- Do not make promises to a parent about the outcome of the investigation.
- Listen to any information a parent or guardian may offer about the incident and record it immediately after the conversation. Report additional information to authorities through the reporting procedure outline in Crossroads policy.
- Offer parents spiritual and emotional and prayer support.
- Suggest resources for parents including books or literature that you know may be personally helpful to them.
- Allow parents to express their disbelief, anger, and grief (parents may be in shock or denial at the mention of abuse allegations).
- Do not minimize the type of abuse or embellish the abuse, its impact on the child, or its harm to the child.

- Assure parents of the confidential nature of the report and the need to maintain confidentiality unless disclosure is necessary to protect the well being of other children.

APPENDIX F

CODE OF ETHICS FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF IN CHILD PROGRAMS

Believing that God is calling me to serve children in this congregation...

- 1) My first priority in teaching/leading children will be to seek the welfare of the children physically, socially, educationally, and spiritually.
- 2) I will also try to understand and respect the child's cultural background.
- 3) I will give the parents full information about the program I am teaching/leading and what time it begins and ends.
- 4) I will not do anything that will damage a child's trust. I will try to protect the child from all forms of abuse while he or she is in my care.
- 5) If I suspect that the abusive actions or attitudes of another person may hurt a child, I will report that suspicion according the guidelines of Crossroads Church so it may be investigated properly.
- 6) If I wish to talk to the child alone, it will be within the sight and sound of other people.
- 7) I will answer a child's questions openly and honestly.
- 8) I will work with the children to set some agreed guidelines for acceptable behavior within the group. I will expect the children to act on the basis of those guidelines, and if a child consistently breaks them, I will seek help from parents and others to assist me in responding to the child.
- 9) If a child is distressed, I will offer comfort and help. I will encourage the child to find the appropriate help for their needs.
- 10) I will pray for children regularly and let them know that I care about them.

Signature _____ Date _____

Volunteer/Staff Position _____ Supervisor _____

APPENDIX G

APPLICATION FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER

This Application is being used for the position of _____.

- Thank you for taking the time to let us know about yourself.
- The following information will be confidential accessed only by the Director of Children's Ministries.
- This application and the Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedure is being used to provide a safe and secure environment for all children in our programs and in our facilities as well as to protect all volunteers who work with the children.
- Please complete both pages.

PERSONAL

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Today's Date ____/____/____

Present Address _____
Number / Street City / State Zip Code

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ E-mail _____

YOUR PREFERENCE

Type of children's work you prefer and why: _____

Indicate the date you would be able to begin: _____

Indicate the minimum length of commitment you can make: _____

YOUR EXPERIENCE

Churches you have attend during the past five years. _____

List previous work involving children. _____

List training / education / other factors that qualify you for work with children.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a traffic violation? No. _____

Yes,(Explain)._____

Please List two references, including - Name, current telephone number, and their relationship to you.

1) _____

2) _____