

1 Pacific Southwest District
2 Church of the Brethren
3

4 **Child Abuse Prevention Policy Statement**

5 Approved by the District Board of Administration on 8/3/97
6

7 **Mission Statement**
8

9 God embraces children with love, placing their nurture and care in our hands. We believe that
10 children should be safe from all forms of abuse and neglect. We, the Pacific Southwest District staff and
11 volunteers, will be advocates for children and establish clearly defined safeguards, policies, and procedures
12 for their protection.
13

14 **Worker Selection** *(The words "children" and "youth," refer to ages infant through high school graduate.)*
15

16 Our task is to create a safe haven for the children served by the Pacific Southwest District of the
17 Church of the Brethren. All of the suggested policies and procedures are directed to this end. No
18 organization that deals with children is immune from hiring individuals who are abusive to children. The
19 fact that we deal with children is a sure guarantee that we may attract persons who have sexual or other
20 inappropriate interests toward the children. The church and church institutions are no exception.
21

22 The following procedures will be implemented for Church of the Brethren Pacific Southwest
23 District sponsored activities to protect children from child abuse:
24

25 Whether paid staff or volunteers are to be in charge of children, these characteristics should be kept
26 in mind when asking persons to serve in district youth leadership capacities: a genuine interest and concern
27 for young people, dependability, self-confidence, self-awareness, good health and a high energy level, a
28 sense of humor and ability to relax, a cooperative team spirit, emotional stability, and the ability to tolerate
29 conflict.
30

31 An application and Affidavit Regarding Youth Leader Conduct and Youth Leader/Youth Contact
32 (attached) will be completed by all who wish to serve as leaders. The District Board will provide these
33 applications to youth leaders who will be responsible for their completion. Copies will be screened by the
34 District Board and kept in the confidential file at the District Office. Access to application files is limited
35 to District staff; members of the Nurture Commission of District Board; and parents/guardians of youth,
36 under the supervision of District Staff.
37

38 **Supervision**
39

40 Adequate adult supervision will be in place. The attached Discipline Policy will be implemented.
41 The District Youth Coordinator will confer with youth activity leaders to discuss policy, problems, and
42 potential problems.
43

44 All drivers for PSWD youth activities must be insured and over 21 years of age. Current medical
45 release forms are required for all overnight activities. Under no circumstances should one adult alone take
46 youth on an overnight event.
47

(The words "children" and "youth," refer to ages infant through high school graduate.)

1 An open door policy grants parents, pastors, congregational members the right to visit the activity
2 at any time unannounced, without disrupting program.
3

4 One on one interactions are sometimes necessary and appropriate, but care shall be taken that they
5 be conducted in an environment that provides visibility by other leaders. Another adult should have
6 knowledge of a staff member's whereabouts and with whom they are meeting. No staff member will make
7 secret "deals" with the children. All staff must understand that gifts are not to be given to individual
8 children/young people.
9

10 **Reporting Allegations**

11
12 **Who must Report?** All District youth workers are characterized as "child care custodians." As child care
13 custodians, under the law, they have a duty to report suspected child abuse.
14

15 **When to Report?** Once a staff member reasonably suspects that a child is being abused, he or she must
16 telephone a child protective agency. That person will be required to prepare and send a written report
17 within 36 hours (California law). The District Youth Coordinator and the District Executive will be
18 informed as soon as possible.
19

20 The identity of the person making the report is disclosed only between child protective agencies, country
21 counsel, the district attorney or, if requested by court order. Those persons legally required to report
22 suspected child abuse have immunity from criminal or civil liability for reporting as required (PC III72a).
23

24 **What to Report?** Child abuse includes physical injury, sexual abuse, and neglect of a child. Child abuse
25 also includes unlawful corporal punishment and injury. Child abuse does not include a fight between
26 minors or voluntary sexual conduct between minors where both are of a similar age. Such incidents would
27 be reported in staff meetings.
28

29 **Contents of a Report:**

- 30
- 31 1. Name of the person making the report.
- 32
- 33 2. Name of the child.
- 34
- 35 3. Present location of the child.
- 36
- 37 4. Nature and extent of the injury.
- 38
- 39 5. Other information requested by the agency, including why you suspect abuse.
- 40

Discipline Policy

"Children need limits. The church, believing in the importance of the growth of self-esteem and Jesus' love of children, can help children question and discover the most appropriate and effective ways of disciplining." — Elaine M. Ward

Guidelines for disciplining children in District youth activities:

1. Never yell at a child in anger.
2. If consequences are necessary, they should be immediate, short in duration, age appropriate and constructive in nature: damage requires repair, greed brings loss of privilege, and destructiveness necessitates restitution. Uncontrolled aggressiveness may need isolation and adult intervention. District youth leadership reserves the right to send a youth home at the parent or guardian's expense.
3. Discipline involves decisions. A youth may have goals for misbehaving, such as: to get attention, to get revenge, or to get power. Look for reasons causing the behavior.
4. Give quality time and attention to the youth. One method for behavior modification is to reinforce good behavior and give no attention to negative behavior.
5. Treat youth with respect. This will encourage receptivity to your ideas. Sarcasm creates victims.
6. Set limits. Be sure your standards of behavior are appropriate to the age of the youth with whom you are working. Maintain control of the group. Make sure the youth realize what inappropriate behavior includes.
7. A simple frown can be an effective method of disciplining a child. Use positive reinforcement for the child who is modeling appropriate behavior.
8. Never hit a child. The goal of discipline should be to help children learn to live with others in a caring way.
9. Speak and model your expectations. We get what we expect, so expect the best! Set limits.
10. Make sure you have the youth's attention. If necessary, repeat your instruction. Look in the eyes of the youth and speak slowly and distinctly.
11. Explain the natural consequences of the act. (Spilled milk is wiped up by the spiller.)
12. A warning may be helpful. Never issue threats. They do little to maintain discipline.
13. Make positive statements. Youth tend to hear the last part of your request. "Walk in the hall" is more appropriate for suggesting the kind of behavior you want than "Don't run in the hall."
14. A "time out" will give both you and the youth a few moments to get feelings under control. Isolation from the group can be an effective discipline.
15. Stay calm. Remember you are dealing with children. You may experience "growing pains" with a particular youth. Remember that people are not perfect.
16. Pray about the situation, for strength and guidance.

1 **Affidavit Regarding Youth Leader Conduct**
2 **and Youth Leader / Youth Contact**

3
4 **Guidelines for the Discipline of Children:**

- 5
6 ● I understand and accept the following:
7 ● Youth leaders may, under no circumstances, hit a child.
8 ● Youth leaders may not use abusive or derogatory language with youth.
9 ● A youth leader who encounters a particularly difficult child will seek the assistance of supervisory or
10 administrative staff.
11 ● In all dealings with youth, leaders should strive to respond as opposed to react to children.
12

13 **Guidelines for Youth / Leader Contact:**

14
15 **I understand and accept that when touching youth, the following guidelines will be followed:**

- 16
17 ● on the hand, shoulder or upper back;
18 ● never against a youth's will (unless in the case of clear and present danger to the youth);
19 ● never against a youth's discomfort, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally;
20 ● in the company of other adults;
21 ● never when it would have the effect of over-stimulation;
22 ● never in a place on a youth's body that is normally covered by a bathing suit, unless for a clear medical
23 necessity and then only with supervision by another adult.
24

25 **Youth Leader's Responsibility:**

- 26
27 ● I understand and accept that I am a caretaker of children.
28 ● I understand that there is a clear power difference between myself and youth (money, mobility,
29 authority, experience, knowledge, different set of rules).
30 ● I understand that inappropriate sexual contact with or physical abuse of a youth can have severe
31 emotional and psychological effects that can last a lifetime. These reactions can be so severe, they can
32 require intensive professional intervention which can be disruptive to the victim's life as well as time
33 consuming and expensive.
34

35 **State Laws Pertaining to Child Abuse:**

36
37 **I am aware of the following:**

- 38
39 ● definition of "mandated reporter"
40 ● purpose of law
41 ● clarification that a report is based on suspicion of abuse, not proven abuse
42 ● summary of procedure (time frame, reporting agency, information requested)
43 ● penalty for not reporting
44

Please keep this copy with you for reference purposes

Affidavit Regarding Youth Leader Conduct and Youth Leader / Youth Contact

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Signature

(sign both sides of this page)

Date

Please return this copy to: Pacific Southwest District Office, P.O. Box 219, La Verne, CA 91750-0219

(The words "children" and "youth," refer to ages infant through high school graduate.)

Youth & Children's Leadership Application

Name _____ .	Telephone (_ _ _) _ _ - _ _ _ _
Email _____ .	Cell (_ _ _) _ _ - _ _ _ _
Address _____	
City _____	State _____ Zip+4 _ _ - _ _ _
Name of church to which you belong: _____	
For how long: _____	If not a member, length of attendance: _____
Other churches you have attended regularly during past 5 years: _____ _____	
Previous church and/or non-church work involving youth/children: _____ _____	
What are your reasons for wanting to be a youth leader? _____ _____	
What skills and experience do you have that would be valuable as a youth leader? _____ _____	
Additional pertinent information: _____ _____	

I have read the attached statements (1) Child Abuse Prevention Policy, (2) Discipline Policy, and (3) Affidavit Regarding Youth Leader Conduct, and I agree to abide by them.

Signature

(sign both sides of this page)

Date

Please return to: Pacific Southwest District Office, P.O. Box 219, La Verne, CA 91750-0219