

THE VILLAGE CHAPEL

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

PURPOSE

- To provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment
- To protect our families from abuse and/or sexual misconduct.
- To protect our teachers, volunteers and staff from false accusations of abuse and/or sexual misconduct.
- To safeguard the ministry of the church and protect against the damage that can result from litigation.

DEFINITIONS

Physical abuse: Physical injury by other than accidental means, injury resulting from negligence or exploitation.

Sexual abuse: Any contact or interaction between a non-consenting person and another adult. It may or may not involve touching. Abuse can include offensive, suggestive or obscene language or gestures, pornography, coercion, or any related behavior that could cause physical and/or emotional harm.

POLICY STATEMENT

The policies of the Village Chapel are based upon Christian ethical principles and meet or exceed Federal and State regulations. Church leaders, including volunteers, are in positions of public trust and influence and are expected to carry out responsibilities in an appropriate manner. Church leaders are expected to abide by all laws and ethics related to personal misconduct and comply with this policy. Any form of abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual impropriety or sexual exploitation of another person (male or female) will not be condoned or tolerated.

RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS

Any church employee or other person acting under the authority of the Village Chapel who knows, or has reason to believe, that an incident of abuse has occurred is **obligated to report the allegation**. Reports of misconduct will never be taken lightly or disregarded, or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of all parties involved (accused, accuser, as well as the church). Reports will be held in the strictest confidence before, during and after they have been submitted for further investigation.

Approved by Board of Trustees 12/12/2006

REPORTING PROCEDURES

When an allegation of abuse is received, an investigation will be conducted promptly and objectively. The person receiving the report shall relate the information to the chairperson of the Personnel Committee. In order to determine the facts, the committee will conduct an investigation into the allegation by contacting the alleged victim, the accused, and any other person(s) with information or knowledge of the matter. **A written record of**

all proceedings of the committee must be kept. If the investigation reveals that the claim is unsubstantiated, the committee report, along with all other documentation, shall be kept in a confidential personnel file. If the claim is found to be substantiated or unresolved, it must be reported to the civil authorities. (see requirements below).

While the investigation is being conducted, the church has the right to place the accused party “on leave” pending the outcome of the investigation.

Anyone knowingly making a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A report of any type of abuse should include the following:

1. Name, age, gender and address of the victim
2. Name, age, gender and address of the alleged perpetrator
3. Relationship of involved parties with the church
4. Nature of the allegations made by the accuser
5. Date(s) and location(s) of the incident(s)
6. Response made by the accused (if any)
7. Other evidence that supports the allegation (witnesses, confession, etc.)

TRAINING

The church will provide education and training in order to explain the need for and contents of this policy. All persons (whether paid or volunteer) who work in a supervisory capacity or in a subordinate capacity will complete a formal application and submit to a criminal background check.

ADDENDA

Attached to this policy are the following documents:

1. Application for Employment/Application for Church Volunteers
2. Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry
3. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Village Chapel Youth Protection Policies

