

What is a Child Protection Policy (CPP)? Why Adopt and Follow a CPP?

1. To protect children from potential abusers
2. To protect staff/volunteers from baseless and harmful claims
3. To demonstrate to our community, members, youth, and visitors that we take our youth's protection to heart

Child abuse can negatively affect children for years. Abuse can cause injury, STD's, spiritual damage, emotional damage, and more.

Unfounded abuse claims against volunteers and staff can inflict damaging affects on the person's career, relationships, family, and more.

A CPP will also make it clear who is responsible for what. People are often confused on what action to take when they suspect a child is being abused at home. A CPP clearly states who is a mandatory reporter, who is not, how to report, and what signs to look for.

Furthermore, a CPP will retain permission to obtain medical care for child/youth if they become injured during a church sponsored event.

Is there really a problem?

Some people always assume the best in our community and do not believe that a case of abuse could arise in our church. However, a CPP should not be adopted as a response to a perceived threat, but rather should be adopted to prevent any future situations. A CPP is a preventive, not prescriptive, measure.

Regardless, there are many registered sex offenders in our county. Abusers look for places (Internet and churches ... schools and libraries have already adopted CPP's) that allow them easy access to children and youth.

A CPP will lead to several changes in how our church operates. These changes only take place to protect our children, paid staff, and volunteer staff. They should be followed in all situations with all people. Some changes include:

1. Background checks on staff and volunteers
2. Better interviewing procedures
3. Background and, possibly, driving records checks for those that drive the youth
4. Children should not be left alone with only one adult or in confined spaces
5. Permission forms need to be used for all youth
6. Three month waiting period for new church members to work with youth

Components of a CPP

1. Permission forms for youth to participate
2. The policy guidelines
3. Job descriptions for the staff and volunteers
4. Brief training on CPP for all staff and volunteers
5. Information about abuse, including laws, definitions of abuse, and reporting specifics

6. Guidelines for working with youth

7. Process for screening all volunteers and staff including references, background check, and interview

**Louisa Christian Church
Child Protection Policy
Effective Time-Line of Guidelines**

While it is the desire and intention of Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA that these Guidelines be implemented and followed by the volunteer/paid staff of the congregation as soon as possible following their adoption, certain aspects of these Guidelines will, out of necessity, require a period of transition from previous church practices, or additional actions or effort by members and staff for their effective and meaningful implementation.

In recognition of this, the volunteer/paid staff of the congregation will be required to adhere to these Guidelines where reasonably possible throughout a transition period commencing upon the adoption of the Guidelines by the General Board of the church and ending June 30, 2007. However, full compliance with these Guidelines by all church staff, members, and volunteers will be required without exception following the transition period.

**Child Protection Guidelines
Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA**

As of January 2, 2007 Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA is committed to providing a safe and secure environment to promote the religious and social development of children and youth, and will strive to prevent the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of minors. In our quest to provide a healthy environment where children and youth are safe, and believing that the key to conducting safe programs lies in the quality of adult leadership, the following guidelines for volunteer/paid staff working with children or youth have been established.

Purpose

- To promote a safe and secure environment for the children and youth of our faith community
- To train and support volunteer/paid staff to achieve that goal
- To ensure compliance by the church and its volunteer/paid staff with all laws, rules, and regulations.

Paid/Volunteer Staff Guidelines

The key to child abuse prevention in any organization is its staff - both volunteer and paid staff. Careful selection, adequate training, and sufficient supervision reduce the likelihood of abuse or neglect. Our goal is to recruit the best people possible to work with children and youth.

In that effort, all volunteer/paid staff, nursery staff, drivers, Sunday School teachers, and youth sponsors must:

- Complete the church's Volunteer-Paid Staff Information Form
- Acknowledge (w/ signature on Volunteer-Paid Staff Information Form) receipt and understanding of these Guidelines and the church Code of Ethics
- Attend training programs prescribed by the church
- Give written permission to the church for it to conduct a background check through the ministers (This consent form will be retained indefinitely as required by the Child Protection Policy guidelines.)
- Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a Criminal Background Check or other background check, any of the following will automatically disqualify an applicant from any staff or volunteer position working with children or youth:
 1. History of alleged sexual abuse of children or voyeurism
 2. Conviction for any crime in which children were involved

3. History of any violent or sexually exploitive behavior, whether involving children or adults.
4. Any other charges or convictions for other crimes not listed above, unless waived in writing by the church's Senior Minister or Associate Minister following an investigation by that minister, taking into consideration:
 - § The urgency of and circumstances surrounding the conduct in question
 - § The age of the individual at the time of the offense
 - § The probability that an individual will continue the type of behavior in question
 - § The individual's commitment to rehabilitation and to changing the behavior in question
 - § Whether any recurrence of the conduct has occurred

The basis(es) upon which an individual may be denied a voluntary or paid position with the church need not be disclosed by the church to that individual.

- Any person with a dispute concerning information that appears on his/her criminal history record should first address the issue with the Senior Minister or Associate Minister. An investigation may, at the discretion of the church, that minister, or that individual, be conducted to determine the facts. This may involve submitting fingerprints to verify that the record is or is not the applicant's own criminal record. If the issue is so investigated and is not resolved to the satisfaction of the minister and that individual, the issue may be referred by the minister or that individual to the Worship Committee and then to the church General Board.
- Confidentiality / record storage: All records obtained as a result of the Criminal Background Check will be treated as confidential, limiting the number of people who have access to applicant information to only those who have a need to know (ministers and legal counsel of the church), provided that the church shall be entitled to disclose and use such information in its discretion in any legal proceeding between the church and such individual or if such information is part of the public record. If there is a dispute over findings, such information may be shared with the Worship Committee and/or the General Board at the request of the individual for a review.

Expectations for Training for Child and Youth Workers

- Any individuals desiring to volunteer in a youth ministry position that would leave them in sole responsibility of youth will be required to attend worship or Sunday School at Louisa Christian Church regularly for at least three months.
- Workers that have otherwise been cleared for hiring by the church or to volunteer for the church should attend an initial training session to be conducted by or for the church at its discretion, before beginning work with children or youth on behalf of the church. This training session will include a review of these guidelines and other information deemed relevant by the church. In the event that a worker is unable to attend a scheduled training session and that session cannot be made up at another time, he/she should meet individually with the Associate Minister.
- Approved workers should make every effort to attend additional training events or appropriate program workshops when offered. If they are not capable of attending, they should meet with the Associate Minister.
- All workers will receive a copy of the Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA Child Protection Guidelines and Code of Ethics and must acknowledge in writing that he or she attended the training session and received a copy of these Guidelines and Code of Ethics.

Youth Leadership

The church endeavors to provide opportunities for youth leadership experience and training. Realizing that the church has a responsibility to protect all children, including youth serving in the capacity of volunteer youth leader, the following guidelines are established:

- Prospective youth leaders are expected to attend appropriate training programs that may be provided by the church.
- The minimum age for youth volunteers assisting an approved adult volunteer/paid staff member is 6th

grade. (Exceptions may be made in the discretion of the minister or Worship Committee as part of a particular program.)

- When assigned youth leadership responsibilities, youth will be supervised by an adult leader who has likewise met the requirements of these Guidelines and is following the Code of Ethics.
- If a child must be disciplined, the adult leader will have the responsibility for administering appropriate disciplinary measures. In no event shall those disciplinary measures include corporal punishment or other physical contact with, or confinement of that child, which could reasonably be expected to embarrass or demean that child or to place that child in harm's way.
- Adults should monitor leadership techniques used by youth leaders to ensure that they are positive and not punitive.
- Volunteers must be 18 (and meet volunteer/paid staff requirements) to be assigned in a lead position working with children or youth. Exception: Youth under the age of 18, but no younger than 13, may serve as childcare providers for small group meetings where:
 - 1) Adults are meeting on church property; and
 - 2) Youth has attended the training session prescribed by the church for such activities
 - 3) Another approved youth or adult volunteer is present

Program Guidelines

The church will strive to provide age appropriate programming for children and youth that is designed to promote religious and social growth, while providing for the physical and emotional safety of the participants.

Classroom and event guidelines

- In order to plan age appropriate activities, the church will place children according to their school grade. (There is room for some flexibility on an individual basis where pre-school children are concerned.)
- At least one approved worker must be present with children at all times. However, the expectation is that there will always be two adults assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving children or youth.
- Periodic "spot checks" will be made by a minister, Worship Committee member, or recognized leader of the church where practical. This method will be in general use but especially if it is necessary to have only one adult present with a group.
- If private conversation is required, the youth and adult may move out of earshot of others, but not out of sight.
- If only one adult is able to be with the youth, the interior door must remain fully open.
- Adult leaders are expected to model Christian behavior.
- Adult leaders will not use bad or abusive language.
- Actions by adult leaders should be non-threatening and should not make the child/youth uncomfortable.
- Topical discussions should be appropriate to curriculum selected or approved by the church and to the setting and age of the children/youth.
- Adult leaders will respect the privacy of children and youth (particularly in overnight situations where changing clothes and showering are necessary). The reverse should also be true.

Information and Authorization

An Information/Authorization form must be on file for each child or youth. Forms will include the following:

- Permission to participate in events on and away from church property
- Transportation release
- Medical information and release

Forms will be reviewed annually and will be distributed to parents/guardians.

Guidelines for Drivers Transporting Children or Youth

All individuals who serve as an approved driver for children or youth must provide documentation or proof of:

- Being 18 years old or older, being currently licensed to operate an automobile and having been licensed to operate an automobile for at least one year.
- Meeting the minimum state required liability insurance coverage.
- The individual's driver's license and insurance card (copy will be kept on file).
- Using a safe, reliable, and licensed motor vehicle.
- Shall use child restraint seats when transporting any children (as prescribed by law).

Note: Drivers are to obey all traffic laws and are to make every reasonable effort to assure the safety of their passengers, including requiring that seat belts be worn by every passenger. Virginia law requires that every minor wear a seat belt. Each occupant will be expected to wear the seatbelt provided. Any youth 12 and younger must be placed in the rear seat of the vehicle, not front. Every reasonable effort will be made to insure that an approved adult driver is the provider of transportation for official church events, departing from the church. Drivers must be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and these Guidelines and sign acknowledgment that they have read it and will comply. They must also complete a background check, just as any youth volunteer would have to do.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Under laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, suspected child abuse is not required to be reported by ministers or general citizens. However, the church encourages all members of the congregation to report suspected abuse to the proper legal authorities as soon as suspected. Additionally, all members are strongly encouraged to also notify the Senior Minister or Associate Minister first. Employees and volunteers are required to notify the Senior Minister or Associate Minister of suspected child abuse. The Senior Minister and Associate Minister may assist any member or worker in reporting suspected child abuse to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- Reports of suspected child abuse that may have occurred inside the church or on a church sponsored event are to be made as soon as possible.
- If staff or a volunteer is reported, that person will no longer be considered an approved worker until the investigation has been concluded and the minister/s advise/s that the individual may continue as an approved worker.
- Reports of abuse must never be disclosed to anyone other than the perpetrators, ministers, or the authorities.

HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, you should call the state number for the Child Protective Services (CPS) agency or the CPS agency in the Commonwealth ... 800-552-7096 (in state) or 804-786-8536 (out of state). As you prepare to make a report, remember the following:

- If a toll free (800 or 888) number is available, it may be accessible only from within that state.
- Federal agencies have no authority to intervene in individual child abuse and neglect cases. Each state has jurisdiction over these matters, and has specific laws and procedures for reporting and investigating. In some states, all citizens are mandated reporters by state law and must report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect (not the case in Virginia).

If you need to report suspected abuse in a state other than your own, please call:

Childhelp® USA National Child Abuse Hot line

1-800-4-A-CHILD® - (1-800-422-4453) - TDD: 1-800-2-A-CHILD

A Word About Appropriate Affectionate Behavior in the Christian Community

It is widely known that "good touching" is important to life. Numerous studies have shown the importance of holding and touching for infants to survive. Likewise, children do not grow and thrive without the "good touches" of others. We have many examples in scripture where Jesus touched people to heal and to comfort

them. The Christian community has a rich heritage of sharing a loving hug, an arm around the shoulder or a squeeze of the hand to say, "You are loved... I care about you". With good touching, the child feels as if someone has given to them or has shared with them rather than taken from them. Children should not be forced to kiss someone they do not wish to kiss. Nor do all children wish to be hugged by persons outside of their family. It is always wise to ask, "May I give you a hug?" By asking this question, the child is given the permission to refuse if he/she is uncomfortable.

It is important in our concern about child sexual abuse that the importance of good touching is not lost. We need to continue to express Christian love in appropriate ways with children. The healing, comforting, and affirming aspects of good touch should be emphasized.

Code of Ethics for Paid/Volunteer Staff Working with Children or Youth Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA

Whether paid or volunteer staff, any person working with the children or youth of the church is a role model. While acting in this capacity the following Code of Ethics will apply.

1. Smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of children or youth is prohibited.
2. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances will not be tolerated.
3. Volunteer and paid staff shall not mistreat children or youth including, but not limited to:
 - A. physical: strike, spank, shake, slap,
 - B. verbal/mental: humiliate, degrade, threaten, or
 - C. sexual abuse: including inappropriate touching and exposure.
4. Volunteer and paid staff must treat children and youth of all races, religions, and cultures with respect and dignity.
5. Volunteer and paid staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than comparison or criticism.
6. Volunteer and paid staff shall not use or tolerate profanity in the presence of the children or youth.
7. Volunteer and paid staff will refrain from inappropriate display of affection toward others in the presence of children, parents, and other staff.
8. Volunteer and paid staff must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's or youth's health, including, but not limited to contagious diseases.
9. Volunteer and paid staff will portray a positive role model for youth and children by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and maturity.
10. Volunteer and paid staff will be expected to act and react with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
11. Volunteer and paid staff will be expected to safeguard and hold confidential any information gained through administrative duties involving supervision of children, youth or volunteers and/or any other information identified as being confidential.
12. Volunteer and paid staff will do everything in their power to avoid being put in a situation where they are alone with a child or youth other than their own.

Consent for Criminal Background and Driving Record Check Authorization/Waiver/Indemnity Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA

I hereby give my permission to Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA to obtain information relating to my criminal history and driving record. The criminal history and driving record, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for a volunteer/paid position with this organization. I also

understand that as long as I remain a paid/volunteer employee here, the criminal history and driving records check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history and driving records as received by Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history and driving record could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I, the undersigned, do, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, hereby remise, release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA, and each of their officers, directors, employees, and agents and hold them harmless from and against any and all causes and actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever (including claims for negligence, gross negligence, and/or strict liability of Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA) and any and all related attorneys' fees, court costs and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become a volunteer/paid staff member.

Signature of applicant

Printed name of applicant

Date

**Volunteer/Paid Staff Information Form
Louisa Christian Church**

Date: _____

Name: (last, first, middle) _____

In addition to the name listed above, list here any other names you have been known by as an adult.

Include maiden names and nicknames. _____

Date of Birth: _____

Driver's License # /Social Security #: _____

Address:

How long have you lived at this residence: _____

Home phone: _____

Occupation: _____

Place of employment: _____

How long have you been employed there? _____

Work phone: _____

Are you a member of Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA? _____

If so, how long have you been a member? _____

If not, are you a member of any other church or religious institution? _____

Church/ Religious Institution Name: _____

Minister's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Describe any formal or informal training you may have had in education, Christian education or other social or religious training.

Have you served as a volunteer at any other church? If yes, please give the name of the church and describe the nature of your responsibilities there.

Have you served as a volunteer at any civic organization? If yes, please give the name of the organization and describe the nature of your responsibilities there.

Have you ever been investigated by Child Protective Services? () yes () no
If yes, what was the outcome?

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of any criminal offense?
Do not include: A) Minor traffic violations for which the fine was less than \$200 B) Any offense which was settled in a Juvenile Court or under a Welfare Youth Offender Law.
() yes () no If you answered yes, please explain:

Have you ever had a civil lawsuit filed against you alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct?
() yes () no If you answered yes, please explain:

Have you ever been subject to disciplinary action , a complaint, suspended, terminated or asked to leave a position because of engagement in child sexual abuse or neglect, other unlawful sexual behavior or otherwise violated an employer's or organization's sexual misconduct policy?
() yes () no If you answered yes, please explain:

Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of young people?
() yes () no If yes, please explain.

Please, provide three references:

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____
Relationship: _____

2. Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone #: _____
Relationship: _____

3. Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone #: _____
Relationship: _____

In signing this form, I affirm that the information I have given is true and correct.

All information that I have provided may be verified. I agree to release from liability any person or organization that provides information about me. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA from any and all claims resulting or relating to any verification of this information.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and the Child Protection Policy of Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Information and Authorization Form for Children and Youth
Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA**

Child/ Youth Name and Birth date:

Address:

Email address:

Parent(s) / Guardian(s):

Phone numbers:

- (home)
- (business)
- (cellular)
- (business)
- (other)

I, _____, the undersigned parent or legal guardian of _____, hereby consent to his or her full participation in the activities of Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA whether on church property or away. I understand that

accidents do happen and hereby release Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA and its ministers, youth leaders, unpaid volunteers, and other employees, agents and representatives from any liability or other legal or financial responsibility for supervision of the above-named child, or for any such injury or damage suffered by that child or his or her parents, guardians or legal representatives by reason of such supervision or lack of supervision, or otherwise by reason of that child's participation in any event conducted or sponsored by that church, in each case absent the gross negligence or willful misconduct of that church. In the event of any such accident or other situation in which the above-named child may require emergency medical or dental care, I hereby authorize an adult representative of Louisa Christian Church, Louisa, VA, in my absence, to seek out and consent to any necessary medical or dental care for the above-named child, when either I or my assignee cannot be contacted after a reasonable attempt to do so. I understand that reasonable effort will be made to contact me before such action. I assume financial responsibility for such emergency care.

Signature of Parent / Guardian Date _____

Persons to contact in case of an emergency:

Name Relation to child:

Home Phone#

Other #

Physician Phone #

Medical / Hospital Insurance Carrier:

Policy / Group Number:

Allergies: Check all that apply

Animals Plants

Food Pollen

Insect bites/stings

Hay-fever

Date of last tetanus shot

Are activities restricted in any way?

If yes, please explain

No

Drugs

Other

Yes

Special Needs - any other information that will help us to better serve your child:

Transportation Release

I, _____, the undersigned parent/guardian of _____, hereby give permission for the above-named child to ride with an approved adult driver. No Yes

List those who your child may ride with:

(Every reasonable effort will be made to insure that an approved adult driver is the provider of transportation for official church events, departing from the church. If it becomes necessary for youth of driving age to transport one another to official events for scheduling or car pool reasons, that arrangement is between the parents of the youth involved. Likewise, if youth leave the church property for impromptu gatherings or events, the issue of transportation and youth drivers and riders is between the parents of the involved youth and/or the youth themselves.)

Signature of Parent / Guardian, Date _____

Criminal History Record Name Search (SP-167)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please carefully read the following.

This is the data entry page which collects the data necessary to create the form.

If non-required fields are Not Applicable, please leave them blank.

NAME INFORMATION TO BE SEARCHED:

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Maiden Name:

Name Suffix:

Sex :

Race :

Date Of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):

Social Security Number (XXXXXXXXXX):

Search Type:

Request Type:

Non-Profit Volunteer:

MAIL REPLY TO (AGENCY, INDIVIDUAL OR AUTHORIZED AGENT MAKING REQUEST):

Name:

Attention:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code (XXXXX or xxxxx-xxxxx):

