

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