

Clonmel Bible Church Child Protection Policy - 2009

General

Clonmel Bible Church values the worth of children. We believe that children are made in the image of God. Gen 1:26 and are gift from God to their parents. Psalm 127. We believe that children are to be nurtured and encouraged to love, serve and honour the God who created them. Matthew 22:37, Ephesians 6:4. We endeavour to provide a safe environment whereby children can express their faith in Christ. Matthew 19:14.

1. Goal

It shall be the goal of the Clonmel Bible Church to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well being of all children participating in all Fellowship activities. The Fellowship's goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities.

Furthermore the definitions, policies and steps in this policy are also for the protection of Clonmel Christian Bible Church, it's child workers and to ensure the integrity of the gospel.

Future revisions to this policy may be made with the authorization of both the Pastor the leadership and official membership.

2. Definition of "children"

The term "child" or "children" shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection and Screening Process

3. Pre-employment procedures for paid and volunteer workers

It is the goal of Clonmel Bible Church Fellowship (herein referred to as "Fellowship") to adequately screen the applications of persons desiring to work with children participating in all Fellowship programs, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs.

4. Volunteers must be members of the Fellowship

All volunteers who work with children must first be members of the Fellowship. Under certain circumstances, the Pastor or the leaders may authorize an exception to this rule for a specific planned event e.g. a youth Rally, Kids Clubs where outside help from other Fellowships might be needed.

5. Classification of workers

The ministerial staff will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. These terms refer to the relative levels of responsibility and risk, not to the ages of the children being served.

Primary volunteer workers: Includes all paid staff members plus those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk are classified as primary workers and should meet the primary screening standards.

Must be eighteen (18) years of age and members of good standing of Clonmel Bible Fellowship or approved by their local Fellowships in the case of visiting aid for special events.

Secondary volunteer workers: Persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances. i.e. Volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on Fellowship premises, or who interact with children in the presence of an approved primary worker are classified as secondary workers. This category may also include parents of participants who help supervise

activities. All volunteer workers under the age of eighteen (18) will be considered secondary workers.

6. Minimum age. All primary volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers. The Fellowship may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

7. Six-month rule

No volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been an active and participating member of the Fellowship for a minimum of six (6) months. The applicant must have been a regular attendee and involved in Fellowship activities for that period of time. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

The six-month rule may be waived with the authorization of the leadership as in the case of a new staff member. If waived, Clonmel Bible Fellowship must take additional steps to screen the applicant.

8. Volunteer applications

Volunteer applicants must complete and sign an Application For Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children.

The Fellowship keeps confidential all information received in the applicant selection process. Such information will be stored with access afforded only to appropriate Fellowship staff on a need-to-know basis.

If the Fellowship learns of false, misleading or amended information on an application that could cause potential danger to children or liability to the Fellowship, that person will be terminated.

9. Survivors of child abuse

Survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of the Fellowship family. Their experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their work with children. Survivors of abuse may, if they choose, request confidential counselling either from the pastor or from a professional counsellor. It will not necessarily disqualify them from service. The desire of the Fellowship is to assist and care for survivors of abuse as well as fulfil our obligation to protect the children left in our care.

10. Confidential interviews

All applicants desiring to work with children must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. The ministry leader of the program in which the applicant will work conducts interviews. A team of interviewers may be used. Fellowship policy concerning prevention and response to child abuse and neglect must be discussed during the interview.

11. Criminal background check for full time staff.

A criminal background check and child abuse registry check shall be required for all children's worker positions, both employee and volunteer workers. No one who has been convicted of a crime involving misconduct with children will be allowed to work with children. Completing the Application for Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children authorizes the Fellowship to conduct these checks. Background checks will be kept confidential in a locked file with access afforded only to appropriate

Fellowship staff on a need-to-know basis.

The designated Fellowship representative will conduct criminal background checks notifying the leadership if a negative report is received.

12. Vehicle safety

Persons who drive Fellowship owned or privately-owned vehicles for conducting Fellowship business or transporting children on a regular basis must maintain a current valid Irish drivers license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the Fellowship and comply with all other Fellowship transportation policies.

13. First aid training

Volunteer workers are encouraged, but not required to get training if they frequently accompany children on activities such as recreational activities, camps, retreats, mission trips or any other activity with an element of risk.

14. Identification of workers

All employees or volunteers who are engaged to work with children must be photographed with copies of those photographs kept in their personnel file.

15. Identification badges

All Fellowship employees and volunteer workers, both primary and secondary, who work with children, are required to wear a photo identification nametag whenever they are supervising children. These tags will be provided by the Fellowship and will show the worker's name and their picture.

16. Acknowledgement of Fellowship policies

All applicants must acknowledge in writing that they understand the Fellowship's policies pertaining to the protection of children and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign the Acknowledgement of Receipt form.

17. Supervisory Requirements

It is the policy of the Fellowship to provide adequate supervisory control of persons working with children participating in all Fellowship programs, including daily or temporary childcare programs of the Fellowship. The following regulations shall be applicable to all primary and secondary workers having contact with children participating in all Fellowship programs:

18. Safety of children

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in Fellowship programs to promote the emotional and physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists; such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other Fellowship policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve

persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

19. Identification system

To reduce the possibility of kidnapping, the Fellowship will have in place an identification system so that the adults who drop off a small child are the same adults who pick the child up. The leader in charge shall maintain the system to identify persons authorized to pick up and take responsibility for preschool children leaving a Fellowship activity. The identification system will not be necessary for children above the grade of kindergarten unless a parent specifically requests it in writing.

20. Two-adult rule

It shall be the procedure of the Fellowship that a minimum of two workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a Fellowship activity regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. At least one of these must be a primary worker. These two adults cannot be related to one another.

Some Youth Sunday School classes may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, doors to the classrooms will be either removed or will remain open. Windows may be installed between these classrooms for full visibility. At no time should an adult ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with a child.

21. Observation of children

Fellowship activities for children should be scheduled in areas visible from adjoining areas. Such visibility will be maintained by leaving curtains and blinds open and, wherever possible, by leaving the door to the room open. Reasonable exceptions to this rule may be made by the minister in charge where seclusion is necessary for rest, provided two unrelated workers are present in the room at all times.

At no time will an adult meet alone with a child in any room where the door is closed or in an area where they cannot be seen. A clear glass window will be installed in the door of all rooms typically occupied by children and into the door of all offices in the Fellowship.

22. Ratio of workers to children

It is required that a reasonable ratio of adults to children is maintained at all times involving the supervision of children. The ministerial staff member responsible for the division shall be primarily responsible for setting and maintaining a reasonable ratio of workers to children giving due regard to all factors present, including the number and age of the participants, the nature of the activities and the location where the activities are taking place.

23. Worker training

Each new worker will be given a copy of the Fellowship's Child Protection Policy. They must sign a statement indicating they have received and read both before they can begin working with children.

24. Ministerial and staff oversight

The leader responsible for each division shall coordinate with the respective ministry coordinators to

ensure ongoing supervision of all workers. This should include regular unannounced visits into classes and other program sites.

25. Awareness of Fellowship policy

The minister responsible for each division shall periodically review the definition of child abuse and neglect as defined by law and the Fellowship's policy concerning these crimes. These reviews can be conducted either with the workers individually or in groups, at least once a year and following each change in or addition to such policies. Each worker shall acknowledge receipt of a written copy of the policy prior to the time they commence working with children and after each change to such policy. Each worker shall acknowledge participating in the periodic review of the Fellowship's policies and procedures. The signed acknowledgements shall be retained in the personnel file of the worker.

26. Children's pickup

Children who are six years old or older are permitted to leave the area of the Fellowship activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity without further supervision of the workers unless otherwise instructed by the parent or guardian. If their parent or guardian does not pick up a child younger than six on time, the child will be kept by their teachers in the children's area where safe supervision can be continued until the parent or guardian is located. A child of twelve years or younger shall not be taken from or allowed to leave Fellowship property, either unattended or in a group without specific parental permission.

27. Release of claims

Prior to any activity away from the Fellowship, a Release of Claims will be necessary to be signed by the child's parent or legal guardian. Without the form signed and in the possession of the Fellowship, the child will not be allowed to participate in the away activity.

Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

28. Reporting policy

It is the policy of the Fellowship to report any incident of child abuse or neglect toward any child in the Fellowship. This would include participants in temporary childcare programs.

- a. Do not treat any suspicion as frivolous.
- b. Notify the pastor or leadership immediately. Commence the investigation right away.
- c. The pastor or leadership in charge should suspend the accused person from the performance of duties involving children until the official investigation has been completed.
- d. Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials.
- e. The pastor or leadership will inform victim and victim's family of the steps that are being taken, and continue to keep them advised of the status of the investigation. If child abuse is confirmed, ask the victim and the victim's family what action they would like to take in the matter and fully cooperate to address their requests within the bounds of a legal and prudent response. (Fellowship legal counsel should assist in this determination.)
- f. In an instance where child abuse is confirmed, the Fellowship will immediately dismiss the worker from their position.
- g. In instances where evidence is inconclusive, the Fellowship should take action with the advise of legal counsel in consultation with law enforcement officials depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration of the victim and the victim's family's requests.

h. The pastor or leadership, in consultation with legal counsel, will determine the amount of information they believe is appropriate to relate to the congregation. Usually commenting in detail on an ongoing investigation is not wise.

29. Reporting obligation

By Irish law, anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being physically abused, sexually abused, neglected or is dependent is required to report this information. If you suspect abuse, you should contact;

Clonmel Garda Station, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Tel: +353 52 6122222

Department of Health and Children, Hawkins House, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2, Ireland Tel: 01 6354000

Crime Victims Hotline: 1850 211 407

Fellowship leadership should also be informed immediately of any suspected child abuse.

30. Reports required

Any worker of the Fellowship who has cause to believe that a child's physical or emotional health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report that belief according to the following procedure:

a. The worker shall report such belief to the pastor, a member of the Fellowship staff and/or Fellowship leadership.

b. The pastor or staff member will immediately report to one of the following: the local Garda or a Department for Community Based Services or a the Child Abuse Hotline or any local law enforcement agency.

c. The pastor or leadership will notify the parents of the child (unless the parent is the person responsible for the abuse or neglect).

d. The pastor in consultation will notify the appropriate legal counsel.

e. The pastor will notify the Fellowship's insurance agent that an abuse report has been filed with the appropriate local or state agency.

31. Incident report

The person making a report should identify:

a. The name and address of the child.

b. The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child.

c. Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

32. Confidentiality

All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the Fellowship shall be cause for immediate dismissal. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other children from harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

33. Investigation of alleged abuse or neglect

No person shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation either through examination or

interrogation of the child, the accused person or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected. Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the Fellowship in an official capacity. All employees and volunteers of the Fellowship shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

34. Suspension of Fellowship related duties

A person accused of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from all Fellowship related duties involving children. This would include all childcare, teaching, transportation or sponsorship duties. If the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, the employee can be returned to their prior position.

35. Preservation of records

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the pastor or his agent. They will review them to determine if the documents are complete in accordance with Fellowship policy. If any documents are missing, they shall make a written notation and transfer the documents to the Fellowship business administrator who shall retain them until advised that all criminal and civil investigations and actions have been completed.

36. Ministerial care

The pastor and the leadership staff shall encourage and assist the child and the parents in securing appropriate counselling, care and support. In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the Fellowship, the staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counselling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest. All persons shall act towards the child, the parents and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.

37. Liaison with the community

The pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the Fellowship's sole access to the media. The Fellowship should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.

Acknowledgement of Receipt Clonmel Bible Fellowship

Child Protection Policy Statement

I have been given a copy of the Clonmel Bible Fellowship's Child Protection Policy. .

I have read and understand the documents. I understand that my services as an minister or as a volunteer worker who works with children at Clonmel Bible Fellowship is dependent on my strict adherence to these policies.

NAME (please print):

Signature: _____

Witness: _____

Date _____

Release of Claims Form

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN (please print):

ADDRESS:

CHILD'S NAME:

ACTIVITY:

DATE(S) OF ACTIVITY:

I hereby affirm that my child shall be participating in the above named activity and certify that I am cognizant of the inherent dangers associated with participation in the Activity and with the fact that participating in the Activity may take place outside of, or off of, Fellowship premises.

I understand and agree that neither Clonmel Bible Fellowship, not its trustees, representatives, instructors or agents may be held liable in any way for any occurrence in connection with my child's participating in the Activity which may result in injury, harm or other damages to me or my family.

As a part of the consideration for being allowed to enrol and participate in the Activity, I hereby personally assume all risks in connection with my child's participation in the Activity.

I further release Clonmel Bible Fellowship, its trustees, instructors, agents and representatives for any injury or damage which may befall my child while my child is enrolled in or participating in the Activity. I further agree to save and hold harmless Clonmel Bible Fellowship, its trustees, instructors, agents and representatives from any claim by me or my family, estate, heirs or assigns arising out of my child's enrolment and participation in the Activity.

I also authorize Clonmel Bible Fellowship to render or obtain such emergency medical care or treatment as may be necessary should any injury, harm or accident occur to my child while participating in the Activity.

I further state that I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this affirmation and release; that I understand the terms herein are contractual and not a mere recital; and that I signed this document of my own free act and volition.

I further state and acknowledge that I have fully informed myself of the contents of this affirmation and release by reading it before I have signed it.

I have executed this affirmation and release on the

Date ___ day of _____ 20___.

Signature _____

Application for Volunteer Workers Who Will Work With Children

This application is to be completed by all applicants for positions involving the supervising or custody of children. It will assist the Fellowship in providing a safe and secure environment for all preschoolers, children and youth.

The term "child" or "children" includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Date: _____

Full Name: _____

Address _____ City _____ County _____

Country _____

Home Phone _____ Mobile Phone _____ Business Phone _____

Driver's License _____ Expiration Date _____

Date of Birth _____

Position applying

for: _____

Date you would be available _____ Days of the week available _____

When did you make your profession of faith in Christ? When baptized?

Are you a member of this Fellowship? Yes ____ No ____

Please list the names and locations of other Fellowships that you have attended regularly within the last 10 years.

Please list the names of three other members of the Fellowship who know you:

List the names and addresses and phone numbers of three personal references

Because we care for our children and desires to protect them, we ask you to please answer the following questions. We understand they are personal and we will protect your privacy.

Have you ever been known by another name?

Yes ____ No ____ . If yes, please explain:

During your lifetime, have you ever been arrested for molesting or abusing a child, accused of physical assault or a sexual offense of any nature?

Yes ____ No ____ . If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been prosecuted for child abuse or molestation?

Yes ____ No ____ . If yes, please explain:

Are you willing to be photographed for the confidential Fellowship personnel records?

Yes ____ No ____

Are you willing to wear a photo identification nametag whenever you are supervising children?

Yes ____ No ____

Applicant Statement

I hereby certify that I have read and completed the above application. My answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

I give permission for the Fellowship to maintain my photograph on file and to conduct a criminal-court background check on me now and at regular intervals. If allowed to work with children I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of Clonmel Bible Fellowship.

I hereby authorize all persons, schools, organizations and law enforcement agencies to supply Clonmel Bible Fellowship with any information concerning my character or background in connection with working with children and I hereby release them from liability or damages which may occur as a result of their response to this request.

I authorize Clonmel Bible Fellowship to supply my service record, in whole or part, to any prospective or future organization or agency with a legal and proper interest in them. I understand that if allowed to serve, that any misrepresentation made by me in this application shall be considered sufficient cause for my dismissal without advance notice. I have been appraised of and support the Fellowship's position regarding the problem of child abuse and neglect.

Signature: _____ Date: _____