

CrossWay Community Church, Inc. Child Abuse Prevention Policy

Purpose: Recognizing God's tender love and concern for children (see Luke 18:16), we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect the children of this church from being physically or sexually abused while they are under our care. It also is our responsibility to guard our youth workers from being falsely suspected or accused of wrongful behavior toward a youth. To reduce the risk of these problems, we have adopted the following guidelines.

Youth Worker Screening Policy:¹

1. A "youth worker" is any individual who regularly supervises or has custody of minors in our church, such as a volunteer for Youth Group, CrossWay Kids, the preschool class, or the nursery. For purposes of this screening policy, all elders and pastors shall be considered youth workers as well.
2. All applicants for youth work shall complete the following screening process (unless the Elder Board grants a special waiver):
 - a. **Member/Six month rule:** In order to serve as a volunteer youth worker, an applicant must be a member or regular attender of the church and have been in regular attendance at CrossWay Community Church for at least six months.
 - b. **Application form:** Applicants must complete an "Application for Youth Work" form.
 - c. **Personal references:** Applicants must also obtain satisfactory references from at least two people who are not relatives or employers (unless the employment involves working regularly with children). References will be interviewed in person or by telephone by the elder in charge of the screening process or his designee.
 - d. **Public notice:** Through an announcement in the church bulletin other members of the church will be informed of applicant's desire to work with youth, and they will be invited to let the elder responsible for screening know if they have any concerns about any applicant's qualifications for this ministry.
3. A background investigation shall be conducted on all applicants. This investigation may include: (1) contacting churches or other organizations where the applicant has served; (2) contacting employers for whom the applicant worked within the past five years; and (3) requesting a nationwide criminal record check.
4. All youth workers shall agree to be subject to the bylaws of CrossWay Community Church.
5. The elder board shall appoint an elder to be in charge of the screening process.
6. All information acquired during the screening process will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to others outside the Elder Board unless the elder in charge of

¹ The purpose section above, and the Youth Worker Screening Policy, are adapted from Peacemaker Ministries' Model policy for Screening Youth Workers, available at http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIPH/b.1315137/k.173C/Model_Policy_for_Screening_Youth_Worker_s.htm (last accessed May 12, 2013).

screening or the Elder Board deems that limited disclosure is necessary to protect a child from possible harm.

7. Applicants also need to talk with the leader of the particular youth ministry in which they wish to be involved to discuss the applicant's gifts and qualifications, and to decide how the applicant might serve in that ministry.
8. Final approval to work with youth shall be made by the elder responsible for overseeing the screening process. Approval to work in a particular youth ministry shall be made by the leader of that ministry.
9. A new background check shall be performed on all youth workers in every even numbered year, preferably in August or September.

Abuse Prevention, Reporting, and Investigation

1. **Physical Contact:** No youth worker may touch a minor in a manner that could be deemed sexual, threatening, or harmful to the minor. Any questions regarding this should be directed to an elder or the senior pastor.
2. **Two Adult Policy:** There shall always be at least two adults present with any minor. Exceptions may be made by the elder board in advance for legitimate counseling or mentoring activities. In these cases, the written consent of the minor's parent or guardian shall be obtained in advance.
3. **Reporting Policy:** Any suspected incident of child abuse occurring at any CrossWay Community Church activity shall be immediately reported to the Senior Pastor or any member of the elder board. Further, all parties shall comply with Florida Statute § 39.201 which requires that suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment be reported to the Florida Department of Children and Families.²
4. **Investigations of Suspected Abuse:** The Senior Pastor and/or the elder board shall insure that an appropriate investigation is conducted into any allegations of suspected child abuse occurring at any CrossWay Community Church activity, and shall cooperate with any investigation that may be conducted by the Florida Department of Children and Families and/or any law enforcement agency. The investigation may, in appropriate circumstances, be left to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The parent or guardian of the alleged victim shall be notified immediately (unless the parent or guardian is the accused). During the investigation the accused shall no longer work in any youth activity at CrossWay Community Church.
5. **Disclosure of Arrests or Investigations:** Any youth worker who is arrested shall report that arrest to the Senior Pastor or any elder as soon as practicable. Further, any youth worker who knows that he/she is under investigation for any incident of child abuse or neglect shall also report this to the Senior Pastor or any elder as soon as practicable.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the elders on June 3, 2013.

² Suspected child abuse, child neglect, or abandonment can be reported to the Florida Department of Children and Families by calling 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).