

# North Point Christian Church

## Child Protection Guidelines

North Point Christian Church 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 volunteers and staff working with children or youth has been established. These guidelines are based on Matthew 18:1-10 in which Jesus is very clear that no one should harm children and woe to anyone who does.

### Purpose

- To promote a safe and secure environment for the children and youth of our faith community.
- To train and support volunteers.
- To reduce the legal risk and liability of the church, its staff and its volunteers.

### Definition

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years of age. In the section regarding Youth leadership, the term “youth” refers to individuals in middle school or high school.

### Staff and Volunteer Guidelines

The key to child abuse prevention in any organization is its staff – both employees and volunteers. 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.

### In that effort the following church staff and volunteers, nursery staff, teachers and leaders, must:

- (In the case of volunteers) Have been a church member for 6 months or supply an acceptable staff reference from their previous church.
- Complete a Volunteer Information Form
- Upon completion of the Volunteer Information Form the recruit will participate in an interview process to discuss suitability.
- Acknowledge (with signature on cover sheet) receipt and understanding of these Guidelines.
- Acknowledge (with signature on cover sheet) receipt and understanding of Code of Ethics (attached).
- Attend child protection training, provided and prescribed by North Point Christian Church.
- Give written permission for a background check through the Volunteer Center. (This consent form will be retained for three years as required by the Volunteer Center.)
  - o Reports will be received by a Volunteer Center trained individual appointed by NPCC leadership.
  - o Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of a Criminal Background Check, any of the following will automatically disqualify an applicant from any staff or volunteer position working with children:
    - History of sexual abuse of children.
    - Conviction for any crime in which children were involved.
    - History of any violent or sexually exploitative behavior.
    - Any other charges or convictions for other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the minister, taking into consideration:
      - 1) The recentness of and circumstances surrounding the conduct in question.
      - 2) The age of the individual at the time of the offense.
      - 3) The probability that an individual will continue the type of behavior in question.

- 4) The individual's commitment to rehabilitation and to changing the behavior in question.
- Any person with a dispute concerning information that appears on his/her criminal history record should first address the issue with the minister. An investigation will be conducted to determine whether or not an error has been made. This may involve submitting fingerprints to verify that the record is or is not the applicant's own criminal record. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, it will be taken to the Leadership Team of NPCC.
  - 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 attended the Volunteer Center training. All records pertaining to criminal background checks will be destroyed, following the guidelines mandated by the Volunteer Center, once a decision has been made regarding an applicant.

#### **In return, workers will be provided**

- Job description
- Guidelines
- Training and support

#### **Expectations for Training for Children Workers**

- Workers should attend an initial training session before beginning work with children. This training session will include a review of the guidelines and legal information. In the event that a worker is unable to attend a scheduled training session he/she should meet individually with the program director.
- Approved workers should make every effort to attend additional training events or appropriate program workshops when offered.
- All workers will receive a copy of North Point's Child Protection Guidelines and must acknowledge in writing that he or she attended the training and received a copy of the Guidelines.

#### **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, the following guidelines are set forward:

- Training will be provided for all youth interested in serving as childcare providers (either volunteer or paid).
- The minimum age for youth volunteers assisting an approved adult staff member or volunteer is 6<sup>th</sup> grade. (Exceptions may be made as part of a particular program.)
- When assigned responsibilities, youth will be supervised by an adult leader.
- If a child must be disciplined, the adult should have the responsibility for administering appropriate disciplinary measures.
- An Adult should monitor leadership techniques used by youth to ensure that they are positive and not punitive.
- Youth must be 18 (and meet adult staff/volunteer 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) said youth has attended the training session.

#### **Program Guidelines**

The church will strive to provide age appropriate programming for children 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.)

- Children should not be left unattended at any time.
- Two adults will be assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving children.
- Periodic “spot checks” will be made by a minister, children’s coordinator or elder. This method will be general use but especially if it is necessary to have only one adult present with a group.
- If private conversation is required, the child and adult may move out of earshot of others, but not out of sight.
  - o Adult leaders are expected to model Christian behavior
  - o Not use bad language
  - o Actions should be non-threatening, safe, gentle, kind, do not make a child uncomfortable
  - o Topical discussions should be appropriate to curriculum selected or approved by the church and to the setting and age of the children.
  - o Adult leaders will respect the privacy of children (particularly in overnight situations where changing clothes and showering are necessary). The reverse should also be true.

### **Discipline**

It is the policy of North Point Christian Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested it or given permission for its use.

### **Information and Authorization**

An authorization form must be on file for each child. Forms will include:

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

Forms will be reviewed annually and will be made available.

Any child who does not have a permission/release form on file and who is left to accompany a group on an “away” event will be allowed to participate that one time only. Every effort will be made to first meet with a parent before their departure in order to have them complete the form. Parents will be notified in writing that the child will not be allowed to participate again until a form is on file. The child will not be allowed to participate in an overnight event without a permission/release form on file.

### **Guidelines for Drivers Transporting Children**

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

- Being licensed to operate an automobile for at least one year
- Meeting the minimum state required liability insurance coverage
- A copy of the individual’s driver’s license and insurance card will be kept on file
- Driver must not have any convictions during the preceding three years for driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance. (Records will be checked through the Department of Public Safety.)
- Drivers are to obey all traffic laws and are to make every reasonable effort to assure the safety of their passengers, including a seat belt for every passenger. Texas law requires that every minor wear a seat belt.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure 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 sign acknowledgement that they have read it and will comply.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

Under laws of the State of Texas, suspected child abuse is required to be reported. The church encourages all child workers and 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. Employees are required to notify the children’s or youth minister. The children’s or youth minister may assist any member or worker in reporting suspected child abuse to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- All cases of suspected child abuse must be reported to the appropriate legal authorities.
- All such reports to the children's or youth minister are treated in confidence to the extent consistent with requirements of the law.
- Reports of suspected child abuse that may have occurred on church property or on a church sponsored event are to be made as soon as possible (but within 24 hours).
- 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 children's or youth minister advises that the individual may continue as an approved worker.
- Such reports must never be disclosed to any other person or organization than those directly responsible.
- Child Protection Services phone number is 1-800-252-5400 and the web site is [dfps.state.tx.us](http://dfps.state.tx.us).

### **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.

# North Point Christian Church

## Code of Ethics for Staff and Volunteers

### Working With Children

Whether paid staff or volunteer, any person working with children (persons under the age of 18 years) 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 is prohibited.
2. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children at any time will not be tolerated.
3. Volunteers and/or staff shall not mistreat children including, but not limited to:
  - A. Physical: strike, spank, shake, slap
  - B. Verbal/Mental: humiliate, degrade, threaten
  - C. Sexual Abuse: including inappropriate touching and exposure
4. Volunteers and/or staff must treat children of all races, religions and cultures with respect and consideration.
5. Volunteers and/or staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than comparison or criticism.
6. Volunteers and/or staff shall not use or tolerate profanity in the presence of children.
7. Volunteers and/or staff will refrain from inappropriate display of affection toward others in the presence of children, parents and other staff.
8. Volunteers and/or staff must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect the health of children, including, but not limited to contagious diseases.
9. Volunteers and/or staff will portray a positive role model for children by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy and maturity.
10. Volunteers and/or staff will be expected to act and react with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
11. Volunteers and/or staff will be expected to safeguard and hold confidential any information gained through administrative duties involving supervision of children, or youth volunteers and/or any other information identified as being confidential.
12. Volunteers and/or staff will do everything in their power to avoid being put in a situation where they are alone with a child other than their own.
13. Texas State law requires that all citizens report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to age 18 to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 1-800-252-5400.
14. Volunteers and/or staff will be expected to wear modest and appropriate clothing for teaching or activity.

#### **Responsibility for Addressing Improper Conduct:**

Any suspicion, observation or experience of any conduct deemed improper should immediately be reported to the highest authority present for investigation and evaluation.

I understand that any violation of this code may be grounds for dismissal as a staff or volunteer leader or assistant working with children.

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Signature

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Date

# Volunteer Information Form

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. Persons seeking a position in the church as a paid employee will be required to complete an employment application in addition to this screening form. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived at this residence? \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been employed there? \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of North Point Christian Church? \_\_\_\_\_

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

Minister: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: ( ) Married ( ) Single ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed

How many children do you have (if any)? Daughters \_\_\_\_\_ Sons \_\_\_\_\_

Have you personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and are you committed to having the character of Jesus live through you?

Tell us about your spiritual journey to date:

"I have chosen to volunteer to work with children at North Point because..."

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, dates 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, dates 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?  Yes  No

Do not include: a) minor traffic violations for which the fine was less than \$200 or b) any offense which was settled in a Juvenile Court or under a Welfare Youth Offender Law.

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 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 yes, please explain:

If there has been alcohol abuse, drug abuse, physical or sexual abuse in your family background, what steps have you taken to minimize the impact that those issues will create for you, both now and in the future?

Have you ever been concerned that you may have an addiction to drugs, alcohol, pornography, or any other addiction; or has anyone ever suggested that you may have a problem with any of the above?

If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been treated for a psychiatric disorder?

If 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:



**Personal References:**

List 3 adults you've known for at least one year, who are not related to you and have a definite knowledge of your character and ability to work with children.

1. North Point Staff, Leadership Team Member, Small Group Leader or Ministry Leader  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of Association: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Time Known: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Employer or Fellow Employee  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of Association: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Time Known: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Social Friend or Neighbor  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of Association: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Time Known: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Statement**

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 North Point Christian Church from any and all claims resulting or relating to any verification of this information. I authorize any references or churches listed in this form to give you any information (including opinions) that they have regarding my character and fitness for work with children. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by North Point, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that **I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT.** This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Child Protection Policy of North Point Christian Church.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if student helper is applicant)





## Background Verification Release Form

### Agency Information

Date:	Agency Name: North Point Christian Church
Contact Name:	
Agency's Main Phone Number: 972-221-5136	

### Applicant Information

Applicant Full Name (Last, First, MI)		Maiden or Other Name(s) Used	
Current Address			
City	State	Zip Code	County
Social Security Number	Date of Birth	Driver's License Number	State Issued
Position Applied For			
Gender ( ) Male ( ) Female		Race ( ) African American ( ) American Indian ( ) Anglo ( ) Asian ( ) Hispanic ( ) Other	

I hereby authorize VERIFY and or its Service Provider to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including but not limited to my Criminal History, Social Security Number Trace including a consumer report under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C 1681, Driving Record, Employment History, Military Background, Civil Listings, Educational Background, Professional License from any Individual, Corporation, Partnership, Law Enforcement Agency, and other entities including my Present and Past Employers.

The criminal history, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct as committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history as received by client/agency and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I further release and discharge VERIFY and their Service Provider and all of their Subsidiaries, Affiliates, Officers, Employees, Contract Personnel, or Associates, from any and all claims and liability arising out of any request for information or records pursuant to this authorization, procurement of an investigative consumer report and understand that it may contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable.

I understand that I have the right to make written request within a reasonable period of time to VERIFY for additional information concerning the nature and scope of the investigation. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily provided the above information for employment/volunteer purposes, and I have carefully read and understand this authorization.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature (if under 18 years of age)