

**The Evangelical Free Church of Sycamore –DeKalb
Amended Child and Youth Protection Policy**

- A. **Church Position Statement on Protection of Children and Youth.** We seek to provide a safe, nurturing environment for members of our Church community, regardless of age. We are committed to develop and implement procedures specifically designed to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and youth who participate in our ministries. It is the duty of a person working with children and youth to help prevent abuse and to appropriately report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- B. **Definitions.** As used in this Policy, the terms listed below shall be defined and understood to mean as follows:
1. “Child Abuse” is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, household member, caretaker, or someone who works with or around children. The mistreatment must cause injury or harm, or put the child at the risk of injury or harm. Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.
 2. “Neglect” is the failure of a parent or caretaker to provide basic necessities for a child including adequate supervision, food, clothing shelter or medical care.
 3. “Church” shall mean the legal entity incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois as The Evangelical Free Church of Sycamore-DeKalb.
 4. “Worker” shall mean a person selected to serve in children’s or student ministry at the Church, not including paid employees of the Church.
 5. “Primary Worker” shall mean a Worker serving in a teaching and/or a classroom oversight capacity. A Primary Worker must be at least 18 years of age and a member of the Church.
 6. “Secondary Worker” shall mean a Worker serving in a non-teaching or non oversight capacity, such as a nursery worker or a person otherwise supporting a Primary Worker or a Student Worker.
 7. “Student Worker” shall mean a Worker who is allowed to teach and/ or supervise in an age appropriate children’s or student classroom setting having met the following criteria:
 - a. is between 16 and 26 years of age.
 - b. is a high school, college or graduate student not yet vocationally settled in the community and thus may not be prepared to make a church membership commitment.
 - c. has been carefully observed and evaluated by the Pastor of Student Ministries or the Children’s Ministry Director and thus determined to have the commitment, maturity and judgment needed to serve in a teaching or classroom oversight capacity of children or youth.
 8. “Elder” shall mean a duly elected member of the Church’s Elder Board, as set forth in the Church’s by laws.
 9. “Application Form” or “Form” shall mean the form attached hereto as Appendix A that requests background information on an applicant and gives the applicant’s consent for the Church to conduct appropriate reference checks, and to have a criminal background check performed if determined necessary.

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C. Effective Date/Applicability

1. This amended policy (“Policy”) supersedes in its entirety the prior Child Protection Policy of this Church which had an effective date of September 1, 1999.
2. This Policy shall become effective January 1, 2010 and shall continue until duly amended, replaced or discontinued by the Elder Board of the Church.
3. This policy applies to every Worker, and to every Worker applicant who desires to serve in children’s or student ministry. Individuals under age 18 who are not Student Workers and who desire to assist may do so, but only in an informal capacity and under the direct supervision of a Primary Worker, a Student Worker at least 18 years of age, the Children’s Ministry Director or the Pastor of Student Ministries.

D. Qualifications for Worker Selection

1. A Worker applicant must have attended the Church regularly for at least six months prior to being considered for children’s or student ministry (As a guideline, regular attendance is generally considered to mean having attended Church and/or an age appropriate Sunday school class or Church-sponsored small group at least 15-20 times over the six month period.) The purpose of this requirement is to ensure the Worker has established the strong supportive relationships necessary for effective ministry and to provide time for the Worker to become known and trusted by others in the Church. The applicant shall provide as at least one of the references on the Application Form the name of a Church member who knows the applicant and can verify his or her level of attendance.
2. In addition, a Primary Worker must have first been accepted into Church membership and be a member in good standing at the time of application. A Student Worker or a Secondary Worker is not required to have been accepted into Church membership prior to serving.
3. A Worker applicant shall have first submitted a completed Application Form before being considered for selection.
4. Any Worker applicant or Worker who has been convicted of Child Abuse shall be immediately and automatically disqualified from ever serving as a Worker.
5. The Elders, the Children’s Ministry Director or the Pastor of Student Ministries are not obligated to accept as a Worker an applicant who may otherwise meet the minimum qualifications specified herein for being selected as a Worker.
6. The qualifications and permitted activities for each type of Worker are summarized below:

Type of Worker	Required to Go Through Application Process?	Minimum Months Of Attendance To Apply	Minimum Age of Worker	Church Member?	Permitted to Teach?	Allowed to Supervise Classroom?
Primary	Yes	6	18	Required	Yes	Yes
Student	Yes, if age 18 or older	6	16	Not required	Yes*	Yes – if age or 18 older **
Secondary	Yes, if age 18 or older	6	Not specified	Not required	No	No

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- *Student Workers under age 18 must have present with them in the classroom either a Primary Worker, or a Student Worker 18 years of age or older.
- ** Student Workers must be 18 years of age or older to supervise a classroom

E. The Application Review Process

For Workers under Age 18:

2. An individual under the age of 18 who desires to serve in Children’s Ministry or Student Ministry as a Secondary Worker is not required to go through the application process. However, such a Worker may only serve with the approval of the Children’s Ministry Director or the Pastor of Student Ministries. The Children’s Ministry Directory and Pastor of Student Ministries shall maintain a list of all currently active Student Workers under their supervision.
2. Upon reaching age 18, a Student Worker or Secondary Worker who desires to continue to serve must submit a completed Application Form within one month of his or her 18th birthday and go through the application review process as detailed below.

For Workers Age 18 or Older:

1. Upon competing six months of regular attendance (see Section D.1), an applicant shall complete, sign and submit the Application Form. All required information shall be provided on the Form, including background references.
2. The application review process shall consist of the following steps.
 - a. Review of the applicant information in the Form. Completed Forms shall be reviewed by:
 - i.) In the case of children’s ministry Worker applicants, by the Children’s Ministry Director.
 - ii.) In the case of student ministry Worker applicants, by the Pastor of Student Ministries.
 - b. Contacting the two background references provided by the applicant. Reference contacts shall be made by the Children’s Ministry Director or the Pastor of Student Ministries.
 - c. Cross referencing the applicant’s name with the lists of known sexual offenders maintained by the State of Illinois. This step shall be performed by an Elder.
 - d. Upon satisfactory completion of the above parts of the review process, the applicant’s name shall be reviewed and voted upon by the Church Elder Board. The decision of the Elder Board shall be communicated to the applicant via the Pastor of Student Ministries or the Children’s Ministry Director.
3. If, during any part of the application review process, significant concerns or questions arise about an applicant’s suitability to serve as a Worker, such concerns or questions shall be referred to the Elder Board for evaluation. If necessary, further information may be sought by further questioning the applicant, contacting other background references and, if the Elder Board deems it appropriate, by undertaking a criminal background check using a professional, third party firm experienced in making such checks.

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4. The review process shall be completed, whenever possible, within two months (preferably one month) of an applicant's submission of the Application Form.
5. Once approved, the Elder Board reserves the right to revoke its approval of an applicant to serve as a Secondary Worker, Student Worker or Primary Worker, in which case the affected Worker applicant shall be duly notified, as well as the Pastor of Student Ministries or Children's Ministry Director as appropriate.
6. Application Forms submitted for review, and the information they contain, shall be considered confidential. Access to a submitted Form shall be limited to the Senior Pastor, Pastor of Student Ministries, the Children's Ministry Director and the Elder Board. Submitted Forms shall be kept in a confidential secure file in the Church office.

F. Worker Training

1. All Workers shall be encouraged to attend a Worker training session annually, which at a minimum shall include a review of this Policy and the responsibilities of Workers under this Policy.
2. These informational meetings shall be organized and scheduled by the Children's Ministry Director and/or the Pastor of Student Ministries.
3. In lieu of attending such a meeting, the Children's Ministry Director or the Pastor of Student Ministries may meet with a Worker to explain the Policy and related procedures followed by the Church.
4. Prior to first assuming ministry responsibility, and annually by September 1 of each year thereafter, each Worker must read and confirm by written signature his or her understanding and acceptance of the "Statement of Children's or Student Ministry Worker Acknowledgement of Responsibility" attached hereto as Appendix B.

G. Handling of Incidents of Child Abuse or Neglect

In general, it is the duty of Workers to help prevent Child Abuse and to appropriately report any Child Abuse or Neglect discovered, alleged or suspected. Appropriate response to incidents or alleged or suspected incidents of Child Abuse or Neglect depends on the circumstances surrounding the referral. As there are many different possible circumstances, the following general guidelines shall be applied with discretion.

1. **Medical Emergencies.** In the event of medical emergencies, if a child has been seriously injured, 911 should be called immediately.
2. **Confidentiality.** Allegations shall be handled as discreetly and confidentially as possible to protect the due process rights of all the those allegedly involved, with sensitivity to the potential impact on other children or youth.
3. **Immediacy.** Allegations shall be dealt with immediately after the alleged incident (within the same hour or day if possible) to minimize potential damage, to gather relevant information while it is still fresh and to underscore the Church's commitment to deal promptly with such incidents.
4. **Reporting Hierarchy.** Depending on the status of the Worker or other individual that first discovers or learns of an alleged incident of Child Abuse, reporting should proceed along the following hierarchy:

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Children’s Ministry	Student Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery • Sunday school through grade 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday School grades 6 through 12 • Junior and Senior High Student
1. Secondary Worker or Student Worker under age 18	1. Secondary Worker or Student Worker under age 18
2. Primary Worker (if none, then responsible Student Worker over age 18)	2. Primary Worker (if none, then responsible Student Worker over age 18)
3. Children’s Ministry Director	3. Pastor of Student Ministries
4. Elder (including Church Chairman)	4. Elder (including Church Chairman)
5. Elder board	5. Elder Board
6. Senior Pastor	6. Senior Pastor

5. **Team Response.** Whenever possible, two Church representatives not involved in an alleged incident should be present to listen to allegations. Appropriate Church representatives include Pastors, Elders, the Children’s Ministry Director and Primary Workers.
6. **Parental Involvement.** Except in a situation where evidence suggests possible Child Abuse or Neglect by a parent or guardian, the alleged victim’s parents or guardians shall be present when Church representatives meet with the alleged victim to clarify the circumstances surrounding the allegations.
7. **Objectivity/Impartiality.** Church representatives responding to an alleged incident shall avoid taking sides, rendering a judgment or admitting Church responsibility/guilt in the presence of the alleged victim, the parents/guardians or the alleged perpetrator. The Church representatives’ role is to establish and clarify the facts surrounding the allegations.
8. **Documentation.** Church representatives responding to an alleged incident shall promptly document their findings with a brief written summary of the facts as reported and observed, including dates, names of those involved and actions taken. The summary shall be passed to those to whom follow up is delegated.
9. **Delegation.** Once the immediate facts of an alleged incident are gathered, the Church representatives shall refer the incident to the Church Chairman or another member of the Elder Board, for appropriate follow up.
10. **Reporting Under State Law.** Upon its review of an actual, alleged or suspected incident of Child Abuse or Neglect, this Policy, and the Guidelines for Calling The Child Abuse Hotline attached hereto as Appendix C, the Elder Board shall as appropriate, and whenever required by State Law, designate a person to call the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). Before calling, the person calling the hotline should also review the Checklist for Mandated Reporters attached hereto as Appendix D.

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In addition to calling the abuse hotline, the Elder Board shall ensure that a written confirmation, using the form attached hereto as Appendix E, is sent to the appropriate DCFS field office within 48 hours of calling the abuse hotline.

Under Illinois state law, members of the clergy are mandated to make reports if they have reasonable cause to suspect Child Abuse or Neglect.

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**Appendix A
Worker Application**

Personal Data (please print legibly)

Name: _____ Date of Birth _____
Present Address: _____
Home phone: _____
Email: _____
Date you began to regularly attend this church: _____

Types of ministry you are willing to serve in (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery/Toddlers | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. High Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist/Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday School | <input type="checkbox"/> Sr. High Students | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Ministries Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Bible School/and or Backyard Bible Clubs | | |

Background/Reference Data

Dates/names/addresses/contacts of other churches you attended regularly during the last 5 years and your involvement in youth or children's ministry, if any:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Other (non church) types of child or youth work experience, if any:

Please supply the names and addresses of two people who can serve as references for your character and suitability to work with youth or children, including one reference who is a member of this church that knows you and can verify your attendance over the last six months.

	Reference #1	Reference #2
Name:	_____	_____
Address:	_____	_____
Phone:	_____	_____

(These lines for church use only) _____

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Confidential Information

(For review only by those responsible for application approval process)

Do you have any disabilities or other conditions that might limit you from performing certain types of activities for children's or student ministry? ___ Yes ___ No. (If yes, please describe.)

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation or physical abuse? ___ Yes ___ No (If yes, please explain briefly.)

Applicant's Statement

I _____ hereby state that the information provided in this application is correct and truthful to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the Evangelical Free Church of Sycamore-DeKalb (the "Church") to contact the references listed in this application in order to obtain information about me that is relevant to the responsibilities of children's or student ministry and my fitness and character to execute those responsibilities. I release all such references from liability should the information they provide negatively reflect on my fitness or character to serve in children's or student ministry. I waive any right I might have to inspect information about me provided by these references and any right to inspect comments on this form. I also authorize the Church to have conducted a criminal background check on me should the Elder Board deem it necessary to verify my suitability to serve in children's or student ministry and for this purpose only I provide my social security number as follows:

Should my application be accepted, I agree:

1. To be bound by the By-Laws of The Evangelical Free Church of Sycamore-DeKalb,
2. To refrain from all inappropriate behavior and misconduct, including sexual or other forms of abuse, in my relationships with the children, students or other ministry workers with whom I am associated in performing services on behalf of the Church.
3. To follow the procedures established by The Evangelical Free Church of Sycamore-DeKalb for preventing and responding to child abuse.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

(Lines below are for Church use only)

Date Application Received: _____ Date reviewed by Elders _____

Date Background Check Completed: _____ By: _____

Recommendations/Comments:

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**Appendix B
Worker Acknowledgement of Responsibility**

As a Primary Worker, Student Worker or Secondary Worker selected to serve in the Children’s or Student Ministries of this Church I hereby confirm that I have read and understand the Amended Child and Youth Protection Policy and agree to adhere to its terms to the best of my ability. I accept my responsibility to:

1. Help prevent Child Abuse and to appropriately report any Child Abuse or Neglect discovered, alleged or suspected.
2. Immediately call or have someone call 911 in the event of a medical emergency involving a child or student under my supervision.
3. Immediately report to the next available and appropriate person in the chain of responsibility any observed, alleged or suspected incident of Child Abuse or Neglect. The chain of responsibility and reporting is as follows:

Children’s Ministry	Student Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery • Sunday school through grade 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday School grades 6 through 12 • Junior and Senior High Youth
1. Secondary Worker or Student Worker under age 18	1. Secondary Worker or Student Worker under age 18
2. Primary Worker (if none, then responsible Student Worker over age 18)	2. Primary Worker (if none, then responsible Student Worker over age 18)
3. Children’s Ministry Director	3. Pastor of Student Ministries
4. Elder (including Church Chairman)	4. Elder (including Church Chairman)
5. Elder Board	5. Elder Board
6. Senior Pastor	6. Senior Pastor

4. Handle all such incidents discreetly and with confidentiality to protect the due process rights of those involved and the privacy rights of the alleged victim.
5. Cooperate with those who are responsible to report such incidents to state officials by providing facts about any incident to which I may be a witness.

I understand the meaning of the following terms as used in the policy:

- **Child Abuse** is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, household member, caretaker, or someone who works with or around children. The mistreatment must cause injury or harm, or put the child at the risk of injury or harm. Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.
- **Neglect** is the failure of a parent or caretaker to provide basic necessities for a child including adequate supervision, food, clothing shelter or medical care.

Signature

Date

Print Name

(Note: This form is to be signed annually by each Worker and permanently retained in the Church office).

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**Appendix C
Guidelines for Calling the Child Abuse Hotline**

Mandated reporters and other persons should call the Hotline when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. The Hotline worker will determine if the information given by the reporter meets the legal requirements to initiate an investigation.

Criteria needed for a child abuse or neglect investigation

- The alleged victim is a child under the age of 18
- The alleged perpetrator is a parent, guardian, foster parent, relative caregiver, paramour, any individual residing in the same home, any person responsible for the child’s welfare at the time of the alleged abuse or neglect, or any person who came to know the child through an official capacity or position of trust (for example: health care professionals, educational personnel, recreational supervisors, members of the clergy, volunteers or support personnel) in settings where children may be subject to abuse and neglect.
- There is a specific incident of abuse or neglect or a specific set of circumstances involving suspected abuse or neglect.
- There is demonstrated harm to the child or a substantial risk of physical or sexual injury to the child.

Information the reporter should have ready to give to the Hotline

- Names, birth dates (or approximate ages), races, genders, etc. for all adult and child subjects.
- Addresses for all victims and perpetrators, including current location.
- Information about the siblings or other family members, if available.
- Specific information about the abusive incident or the circumstances contributing to risk of harm – for example, when the incident occurred, the extent of the injuries, how the child says it happened, and any other pertinent information.

If this information is not readily available, the reporter should not delay a call to the hotline.

<p>Illinois Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-25-ABUSE or 1-800-252-2873 1-800-358-5117 (TTY) 217-524-2606 if calling from outside Illinois</p> <p>The hotline operates 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. Reporters should be prepared to provide phone numbers where they may be reached throughout the day in case the Hotline must call back for more information.</p>

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**Appendix D
Checklist for Mandated Reporters**

I. Alleged Victim(s)

Name(s) of victim(s):

Birthdate(s) of victim(s) or approximate age:

Address (or approximate address):

II. Alleged Perpetrator(s)

Name(s)

Birthdate(s) or Age(s) or some approximation so role of DCFS can be determined

Relationship to Victim(s)

III. Harms to Victim(s)

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Risk of Harm

Neglect

Death

NOTE: The Hotline worker will be able to put the allegation in the proper sub-category such as Physical Abuse/Cuts, Bruises, and Welts.

IV. Description of Incident(s)

Be prepared to give a brief description of the incident(s) of abuse. The description should include:

1. as much detail as you have about the actual incident
2. indication of intention (especially in physical abuse)
3. description of the time and place of the incident
4. information, if any, about possible witnesses to the abuse
5. evidence of abuse (physical evidence, behavioral indicators, disclosure by the victim, etc.)

Appendix E

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CANTS 5
Rev. 10/10

State of Illinois
Department of Children and Family Services

**WRITTEN CONFIRMATION OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORT:
MANDATED REPORTERS**

DATE: _____

ABOUT: _____
Child's Name Child's Birth date

If you are reporting more than one child from the same family please list their names and birth date in the space provided on the reverse side of this form.

Street Address City Zip Code

Parent/Custodian: _____
Name

Address (if different than the child's address)

This is to confirm my oral report of _____, _____, made in accordance with the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5 et seq). Please answer the following questions. (If you need more space, use the back of this page.)

1. What injuries or signs of abuse/neglect are there?
2. How and approximately when did the abuse/neglect occur and how did you become aware of the abuse/neglect?
3. Had there been evidence of abuse/neglect before now? Yes No
4. If the answer to question 3 is "yes" please explain the nature of the abuse/neglect
5. Names and addresses of other persons who may be willing to provide information about this case.
6. Your relationship to child(ren):
7. Reporter Action Recommended or Taken:

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE:

- I saw the child(ren)
 I heard about the child(ren) From whom? _____
I **have** **have not** told the child's family of my concern and of my report to the Department
I am **willing** **NOT willing** to tell the child's family of my concern and of my report to the Department.
I **believe** **do NOT believe** the child is in immediate physical danger.

(Name Printed) (Signature)

(Title) (Organization/Agency)

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Appendix E

INSTRUCTIONS

The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act states that mandated reporters shall promptly report or cause reports to be made in accordance with the provisions of the ACT.

The report should be made immediately by telephone to the IDCFS Child and Abuse Hotline (800-252-2873) and should be confirmed in writing via the U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, within 48 hours of the initial report.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

Mail the original to the nearest office of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Attention: Child Protective Services.

_____	_____
2 nd Child's Name (If Any)	2 nd Child's Birth Date
_____	_____
3 rd Child's Name (If Any)	3 rd Child's Birth Date

DCFS is an equal opportunity employer, and prohibits unlawful discrimination in all of its programs and/or services.