

Safety Policy

Bethel Christian Reformed Church

Purpose

Recognizing God's tender love and concern for all people and especially children (see Luke 18:16), we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect all participants in church activities from being physically or sexually abused while they are under our care. It is also our responsibility to guard our youth workers, volunteers and staff from being suspected or falsely accused of wrongful behavior toward a youth or any individual. Therefore, we have adopted the following guideline for screening and supervising all of our volunteers and staff.

Screening of Youth Workers, Staff & Volunteers

1. *Youth workers* are individuals who regularly supervise or have custody of minors, whether through pastoral ministry, or in the nursery, church school, Cadets, GEMS, Vacation Bible School, camps or other youth activities. *Volunteers* are individuals who serve in a child or youth program and/or who have direct contact with minors in their care or supervision. *Staff* are those individuals paid by the church to serve a child or youth program and/or to have direct contact with minors in their care or supervision. *Children, youth, or minors* are individuals under eighteen years of age.
2. All applicants for youth work shall complete the following screening process in order to be approved for youth work.
 - ! In order to serve as a volunteer youth worker, a person must be a member of the church who has been in regular attendance for at least six months.
 - ! Chairman of the Education Committee will submit all names for youth workers to the Council for approval.
3. A background investigation shall be conducted on all applicants for paid staff positions, and, at the discretion of the Council, may be conducted for any other applicant. 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 criminal record check in this state and, if feasible, in states where the applicant has lived during the past five years.
4. All information acquired during the screening process will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to others unless the church deems that limited disclosure is necessary to protect a child from possible harm.
5. Final approval to work with youth shall be made by the Council reviewing the information described above.

Procedures for Maintaining a Safe Environment

1. All youth workers should pray regularly for the children in this church, thanking God for the privilege of ministering to them and asking Him to protect them from any kind of harm; workers should also pray that God would give them wisdom and discernment so that they will be sensitive to ways to help and protect the children.
2. All youth workers must read this policy statement, including the sections describing signs of abuse and youth workers' responsibility to report inappropriate behavior. This policy statement shall be made readily available to all youth workers.
3. Whenever practicable, youth workers will work together in teams of at least two people.