

Bremen Church of the Brethren

Children's Protection Policy

September 1, 2017

Introduction

Each child is a special gift from God. We acknowledge the high value that Jesus placed on children during his earthly ministry. The Bremen Church of the Brethren seeks to make all our church activities and facilities safe, especially for children. It is our responsibility as adults to do all we can to protect children. By implementing the practices listed below, our goal is to protect the children of the Bremen Church of the Brethren from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term "worker" includes both paid and unpaid persons who work with children. The term "volunteer" means anyone involved in children's activities at the church or preschool which may include any overnight activities involving minors, in the counseling of minors or in one-on-on mentoring of minors.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will...

1. Be involved with the Bremen Church of the Brethren for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.
2. Sign and return the "Child Protection Covenant " each year.
3. Begin working with children and youth only after the approval of the Children's Ministry Director. The Director will provide mentoring for the first three months for those who are new to working with children in the congregation

No Person who has been convicted of any form of child abuse will be permitted to work with children or youth in any church sponsored activity

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at our church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to Pastor and the Children’s Ministry Director for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at the Bremen Church of the Brethren or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-800-5556), and the church will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.

5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. During that activity, sub-groups should try to follow the Rule of Three-- to always be in a group of at least three (two children with an adult or two adults with one child). Youth may serve as the "second adult" after completing training and signing a "Child Protection Covenant". **In the rare event when one adult must be alone with one child it must be observable and interruptible.**

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must have an adult accessible for supervision and never left alone with children in the building.

Overnight Rule

Approval for those who will accompany children or youth off sight overnight is contingent upon a Criminal Records Check and approval of the Children's Ministry Director. Both male and female adult chaperones must be present at all times for overnight events, if children or youth from both genders are participating.

Transportation:

Anyone transporting children or youth must be 18 years of age or older, hold a valid driver's license, have current insurance for the car being used and obey all traffic laws, including seat belts. The Rule of Three applies to transportation provided by the church. When that is impossible, parental permission may be necessary.

Dismissal

Parents or someone approved by the parents should pick up children after an activity or Sunday School class concludes.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at church.

Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours;
- Green or yellow runny nose;
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of the church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Children's Ministry Director to develop a plan of action.

Parents should sign an annual consent form to permit medical treatment for their child during church activities. Written parental consent should be obtained on a per event basis for off-site or overnight church-sponsored group activities.

Discipline Policy

No physical discipline shall be administered at any time. However, physical intervention to protect a child or youth from, harming self or others does not constitute physical discipline and may be necessary. Workers should consult with the Children's Ministry Director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. **Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.**

When escorting children to the bathroom, workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

The Bremen Church of the Brethren will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.