



CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY
The American Church in Paris

This document, approved by the Council on 20 March 2012, constitutes the official Child and Youth Safety Policy of the American Church in Paris and is effective immediately.

The Senior Pastor of the American Church in Paris is responsible for the implementation of and adherence to this Child and Youth Safety Policy.

The original of this document will be kept in the ACP offices and in the archives of the ACP Council Secretary, but copies will be made available to staff, employees, volunteers, parents, general congregation public, and the general public in various formats as deemed necessary.



Approved by Council
20 March 2012

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This Child and Youth Safety Policy has been drafted by a team comprising:

- Youth Pastor (previous), Ginger Strickland
- Associate Pastor (previous), Laurie Wheeler
- Youth and Young Adults Director, Dan Haugh
- Interim Associate Pastors, Ken Stenman and Glen Thorp
- Senior Pastor, Scott Herr
- Human Resources Committee headed by Avril Lee for this project.

Purpose

As Christians, we are called to share the love of God with children and youth in our congregation. A central way that we obey Jesus' command (Matthew 18:1-6) to care for children is through our relationships with them. Sunday School teachers, youth volunteers, pastors, nursery workers, and many others are an essential part of the lives of the young people of this congregation. This Child and Youth Safety Policy of the American Church in Paris seeks to ensure these relationships are developed in a safe environment, and must be followed by all adults involved in ACP-affiliated worship services, classes, activities, and events catering to children and youth.

Definitions (for the purpose of this policy)

Child: anyone under the age of 11 years, including:

Infants: ages 0 – 18 months.

Toddlers: ages 18 months – 3 years.

Youth: anyone who is at least 11 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older, but still in high school.

Volunteer: those people who of their own free will offer to help, lead or provide care for children and youth at ACP-affiliated worship services, classes, activities, and events.

Employee: a paid employee of the church including pastoral staff.

Two or More Adults

1. A minimum of two adult employees or volunteers must be present with any single child or youth, or group of children or youth, at all times. The only exception to this requirement would be when the activity occurs in a public place outside the church (eg, coffee shop, library).
2. Additional adult employees or volunteers may be required, depending on the ages and number of children or youth as well as the nature of the spaces where their activities are taking place, to ensure safety and order.
3. The minimum of 2 adults is required and preferably 1 adult for every 5 children or 1 adult for every 10 youth for any church-sponsored activity taking place outside the building.



If a situation unexpectedly does not meet the three criteria of this policy, then volunteers and employees must take action in order to change the situation immediately.

Transparency

Every room being used for child or youth classes or activities, or infant or toddler care, must remain visible from the hallway. The doors of the activity rooms and nursery have or will have portholes, windows or toddler gates.

Restroom Use

Infants and toddlers:

Nursery workers should change diapers, etc. in the presence of another employee or volunteer.

Preschool age children:

Preschool age children will be accompanied to the restroom by their teacher who will wait at the door for the child. Another teacher must be informed of their destination on the way to and from the restroom. If a preschool age child needs assistance in the restroom, the teacher shall provide the assistance necessary, first encouraging the child to handle as much of the process as he/she can.

Elementary school age children:

Elementary school age children should choose a same sex “buddy” to accompany him/her to the bathroom. The teacher must be informed of their destination on the way to and from the restroom.

Sundays:

Sunday School children must only use the bathrooms on the first floor or the second floor on Sundays. Children in the care of the nursery must use the G14 bathroom and only this bathroom on Sundays.

Physical Contact

Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Contact with Children and Youth: Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries between adult employees or volunteers and the children or youth in their care.

Some **POSITIVE** and **APPROPRIATE** forms of affection:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Kisses on the cheek (“faire la bise” ie, the general French greeting)
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.



The following forms of affection are considered **INAPPROPRIATE** with children and youth in a ministry or other church setting and are **NOT ALLOWED**. The ACP understands that some of them can be well-meant and innocent, but in the interest of protecting our children and youth, as well as safeguarding our adult employees and volunteers from being misunderstood, the employees and volunteers must refrain from these expressions:

- Long hugs or embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth.
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- **Any form of unwanted affection.**

Disciplinary issues

If there are disciplinary issues, no physical punishment will be administered by any employees or volunteers of the ACP. Parents will be contacted immediately to discuss what is appropriate to maintain a safe learning environment for all of our children and youth, employees and volunteer personnel.

No Criminal Record

We request that every volunteer and employee sign a Declaration before working with our youth and children (see Schedule 1).

Training & Orientation

1. **All employees and volunteers** involved in children and youth activities for the church must undergo training on the Child and Youth Safety Policy of the ACP at least once each year. A pastor or the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Christian Education Committee or a member of the Human Resources Committee or other qualified trainers will conduct the training. A minimum of two trainers will be present.
2. **Existing employees** involved in children and youth activities will receive initial training on the Child and Youth Safety Policy in 2012.
3. **New employees** involved in children and youth activities will receive initial training on the Child and Youth Safety Policy when they are hired.



4. **Volunteers** involved in children and youth activities for the church will be trained at the beginning of the rentrée during each fall season, and during the year as the Christian Education Committee deems necessary.

Reporting

Suspicious or inappropriate activity must be reported in writing (see Schedule 2) to ANY member of the pastoral staff. The reports can be made by staff, employees, volunteers, parents, general congregation public, and general public. If the suspicious or inappropriate activity is initially brought to the attention of an employee or volunteer, that employee or volunteer must submit their written report (see Schedule 2) to the pastoral staff within 24 hours of being informed of the activity.

The report will be kept confidential by the ACP. Based on the report, and consultation with relevant parties as necessary, the Senior Pastor will assess the risk to current and future child and youth safety, and take necessary measures to ensure a high level of child and youth safety.
