



CHILD PROTECTION GUIDE

Youth
@WATERMARK

kids
WATERMARK
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Declaration of Intent

Watermark Church is concerned for the welfare and development of children. Watermark Church, its elders, senior pastor, staff, and leaders take responsibility for ensuring that children are protected and that appropriate procedures and policies for keeping children safe are in place and are implemented fully. This includes:

- Working towards providing **the best quality activities and services** for children
- Having a **policy** with procedures in place to safeguard children
- Practicing safe **recruitment procedures**
- **Training** staff and volunteers in safeguarding and promoting a code of practice so that all children's workers are aware of and understand the kinds of behavior which are encouraged, acceptable, and unacceptable.

1. DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Child abuse is a general term used to describe where a child (under 11 years) or youth (11-18 years) may experience harm, either by deliberate harmful acts, but more usually as a result of failure on the part of a parent/ carer or organization/community to ensure a reasonable standard of care or protection for that child or youth, and where that care and protection is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. Types of abuse include:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, suffocating, or otherwise causing pain or physical harm to a child or youth.

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child or youth to take part in sexual activities, which may involve inappropriate touching and penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts.

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child or youth such as to cause adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to children or youth that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or youth's basic physical and/or psychological needs in a way that is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse, but it usually has elements of one or more of the four previous categories identified. The bully can be an adult who pushes too hard or another intimidating child or youth. It should also be recognized that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Spiritual abuse happens when a spiritual authority, such as a pastor or teacher, seeks to control individuals and ensure obedience through manipulation and spiritual threats. It often, though not always, involves having children perform sexual or violent acts in the name of worshipping God.



2. CODE OF CONDUCT

YOU SHOULD

- ☑ Avoid inappropriate dress, including shirts that are too revealing and shorts/skirts that are too short.
- ☑ Avoid all questionable behavior, which can be misunderstood.
- ☑ Have two adults in a room at any given time when with a child that is not your own. If one teacher needs to exit for any reason, please message for assistance in the 'This Sunday' Whatsapp group for backup before leaving.
- ☑ Be visible to other adults when talking with children or youth. If you need to have a private conversation with a child or youth, do it with the door open or in a place that is visible to others.
- ☑ Respect each child's and youth's personal boundaries and right to privacy.
- ☑ Help children and youth be aware of what behavior is appropriate for adults to display when interacting with them, and help them know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.
- ☑ Be aware that children and youth have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances such as when they need medical attention.
- ☑ Be accountable. Create and maintain an open culture in which any issues or concerns that children, youth, or other adults have can be discussed.
- ☑ If a child or youth is in, or perceived by you to be in danger, you have a responsibility to report the danger to the Child Protection Officer ("CPO").

YOU MUST NEVER

- ☒ Spend time alone with a child or youth without parental approval. If you would like to meet with a child or youth outside of official Watermark activities, get permission from their parents before meeting with them for the first time.
- ☒ Message, email or communicate with a child or youth of the opposite sex on their personal phone or social media accounts with the intent of developing a more intimate and exclusive relationship.
- ☒ Act in ways that may abuse a child or may place a child at risk of abuse, including physical punishment, emotional abuse, verbally shaming, inappropriate touching, and leaving a child unattended.
- ☒ Develop physical or sexual relationships with the children, or relationships that could be deemed in any way exploitative or abusive.
- ☒ Expose children to inappropriate materials such as pornographic videos or literature.
- ☒ Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice which is inappropriate, flirtatious, offensive, or abusive.
- ☒ Excuse, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.
- ☒ Discriminate against, show different treatment to, or favor particular children while excluding others.
- ☒ Sleep in the same bed as a child or youth. If there is an overnight activity, there should be two or more adults sleeping in the room with the children. Children and adults of different genders should sleep in separate rooms.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

All media that is recorded by the public while children or youth are in public spaces is in the public domain, and not the responsibility of the church. However, those who are bound by this policy, including those taking photographs or media for church use, must abide by the following media guidelines when taking, sharing, or using photographs or media in relation to the church:

Photography

1. No camera phones, videos, recording devices and cameras inside toilets. 
2. All photos and media of children and youth should be respectful, appropriate, and relevant, and not in any way disparaging or humiliating.
3. Children and youth must be appropriately dressed when being photographed.
4. Obtain express parental consent to use a photo of their kids in promotional materials or social media.
5. For youth, direct consent should be received directly from the youth before using any pictures for churchwide purposes.
6. Photos may be taken during Sunday school, and the church has the right to use them in promotional materials or social media, only if the parents agree.

Social media and the internet

1. Never send children or youth inappropriate or sexually provocative messages/images. 
2. Review privacy settings on social media before posting pictures of children and youth, including their own. 
3. Personal information in a photo which can lead to a child or youth being identified should never be published or uploaded in any way.
4. The use of social media and the internet in relation to the church should always be respectful and appropriate, and should not in any way disparage or humiliate children or youth.

BATHROOM PROCEDURES FOR KIDS MINISTRY

Stream / River / Ocean / Rapids / Surf

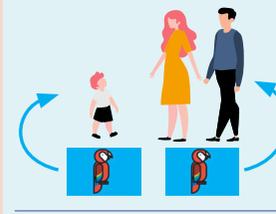
Before class begins...



- ☑ For Kids Ministry, all children are required to go to the bathroom before going to class. They are strongly encouraged to not take a bathroom break during class unless they are in Stream and River and truly cannot wait. When children arrive in class, teachers should make sure children have already been to the bathroom.
- ☑ If a child needs the bathroom and cannot wait until the end of class, then please message in 'This Sunday' Whatsapp group for assistance from another adult.
- ☑ Male teachers should only use the male bathroom with boys, and female teachers should use the female bathroom with girls. Do not enter a cubicle with a child with a closed door. Doors are to be left ajar if a child needs help, but always encourage the child to try on their own.
- ☑ If there are no male teachers, then boys can use a separate cubicle in the girls bathroom, supervised by a female adult.

CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

Stream / River / Ocean



- ☑ When children arrive in class, give them a tag and give the parents the matching tag.
- ☒ Do not dismiss children from class to anyone except the person who is carrying the matching tag for that child.
- ☑ Children are to be picked up from the classroom by their parents.
- ☒ Do not release children on their own to go find their parents.



- ☑ If a parent is late picking up their child, contact the Kids Ministry Staff and ask them to find the child's parent and send them to pick up their child.
- ☑ Remember, until the parents come to pick up their children, the children are in your care, and you are responsible for their safety.

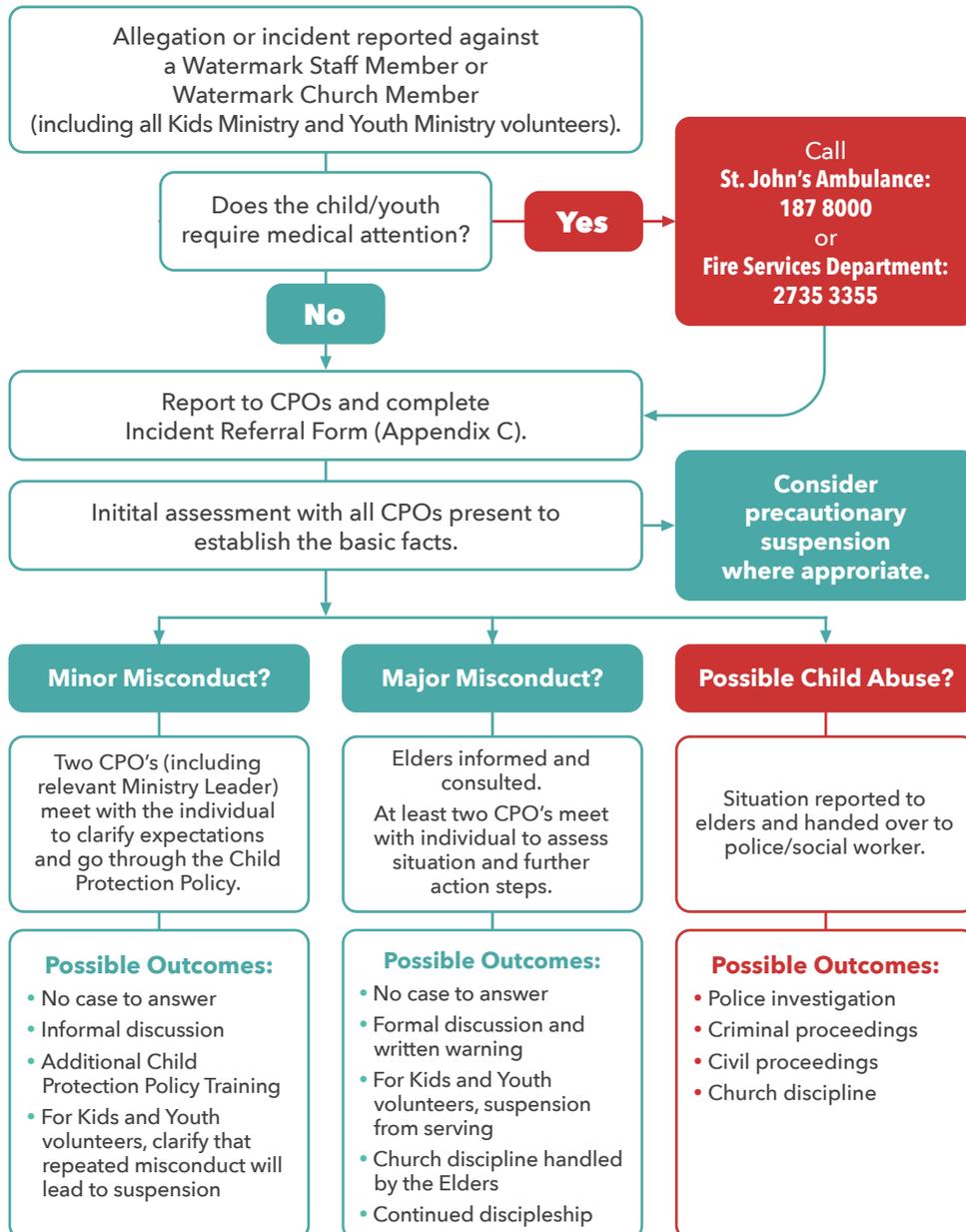
Rapids / Surf



- ☑ Unless parents specifically say otherwise, children can be dismissed directly from Rapids and Surf classes to go find their parents.
- ☒ Please do not dismiss children from class before service ends. We are responsible for watching the children until service ends.

3. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS AND INCIDENTS OF ABUSE

Child Protection Incident Reporting Instructions



4. RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

☑ Sex Conviction Record Check

All staff at Watermark Church, who attend services on Sundays in a working capacity, are required to get a Sexual Conviction Record Check from the Hong Kong Police Department and to renew the check according to the Police Department requirements.

☑ Declaration

A declaration form needs to be signed annually at the start of each new school year, stating that they have no sexual-related criminal record and that they have read and agreed with the Child Protection Guidelines.



WATERMARK
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This policy will be reviewed as needed by the CPO's

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