



CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN ARIZONA

POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUTH & CHILDREN



RATIONALE

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. Because regional staff and volunteers engage in ministries with individuals who may be emotionally and psychologically fragile or otherwise personally vulnerable, it is imperative that those leaders working with children and youth be healthy psychologically, emotionally and spiritually, and follow policies and safeguards to help create this environment.

PURPOSE

We will strive to prevent physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse of our young people by providing guidelines and training for leaders working with the children and youth of the congregations and the Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona or those who use our facilities and participate in our programs.

GUIDELINES

These guidelines will be implemented for PAID STAFF and for VOLUNTEER LEADERS.

1. Each person who works with the children and youth in the Arizona Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will need to submit a completed information form before working with our children and youth, and may be asked to go through a structured interview.
2. Leaders (Anyone working with youth as a volunteer or paid staff, including Directors, Counselors, Camp Staff, Retreat Sponsors & Drivers) will be members or active friends in an Arizona Disciple congregation related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada for at least three months.
3. Leaders will not be alone with a child or youth. A second leader should always be in view. If a one on one conversation is warranted, the director/minister will be informed prior to the conversation and/or parent permission sought, if possible.
4. In cases where traumatic personal experiences are shared with a leader, the director/minister will be informed to determine appropriate action. Confidentiality will be maintained.
5. Human sexuality is a gift of God. As leaders, we must determine what is appropriate touch, behavior and conversation with children and youth.
 - While appropriate boundaries in regard to touch, behavior and conversation vary with the age and situations of ministry to children and youth, certain guidelines are expected. Generally keep in mind that the head, arms, shoulders, and upper-back are appropriate areas to touch.
 - Leaders must ask children and youth before hugging them.
 - Leaders must encourage and expect similar permission seeking from children and youth.
 - Youth participating in Chi Rho (6th-8th grade) and CYF (9th-12th grades) Regional activities must not be permitted to sit on the laps of leaders.
 - Leaders must avoid sharing personal sexual experiences.
 - Sexual jokes or inappropriate sexual comments and innuendoes, providing pornography or viewing sexual activity is NOT ACCEPTABLE.
6. It is not acceptable for leaders to possess or use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances in designated youth settings such as youth meeting room, cars, retreat or camp sites while acting in the capacity of a leader with children and youth.
7. Please refer to the Children Guidelines for Regional Activities for further information.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

(Other forms of implementation will be considered as needed.)

1. All Regional camp personnel will be fingerprinted and have background checks at the Region's expense. Congregations are expected to consider this process for leaders and paid staff who work with children and youth.
2. Paid staff and leaders will be required to attend a training class about appropriate boundaries around touch, behavior and conversation before serving as a leader at a Regional camp.

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSPORTING CHILDREN/YOUTH WHILE AT REGIONAL EVENTS

All individuals who serve as an approved driver of children/youth for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona must meet the following criteria:

1. Current and valid driver's license for at least one year.
2. Being at least 21 (preferably 25) years of age (unless more stringent standards are established with respect to specific programs) and no more than 75 years of age.
3. Proof of current valid insurance.
4. No driving convictions for being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances during the preceding 5 years. (Prior to the last 5 years, an explanation needs to be made).
5. Drivers **MUST** obey traffic laws.
6. All passengers in vehicles **MUST** wear seat belts and they must wear them as intended by the vehicle manufacturer.
7. Drivers must remain alert to their driving responsibilities and avoid distractions such as talking on cell phones, loud music or turning to respond to misbehavior. It is preferred that congregations will arrange for two adults to be present in each vehicle when transporting youth to Regional events.
8. Drivers will be encouraged to carry a cell phone with them for emergency use.



*Adopted by the Regional Board, May 2000
Revisions by the Youth & Children's Ministry Team and Mission Focus Team, March 2006*



**CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN ARIZONA
STAFF/LEADER INFORMATION FORM**



Staff/Counselor Name & Address

Last First Middle

Address City, State, Zip

Name of Church _____

Social Security Number _____ Home Phone _____

Email Address _____ Cell Phone _____

My previous experience in the past five years (paid or volunteer) related to the ministry I am seeking to fill includes:
(if necessary attach additional page.)

Agency Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Name of church where I am currently an active member, or friend _____

I have been a member since _____ Or attended since _____

I have been found guilty, or plead guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge Yes _____ No _____

If answer, "yes", give a short explanation of the charge. (Please indicate the date, nature and place of the incident to the charge, where the charge was filed, and the precise disposition of the charge.)

A civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse has resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired. Yes _____ No _____

If answered, "yes", give a short explanation of the lawsuit. (Please indicate the date and nature of the incident leading to the lawsuit, where the lawsuit was filed, and the precise disposition of the lawsuit.)

In the past five years I have been charged with DWI "Driving While Under Influence" Yes _____ No _____

Give a short explanation of the conviction. (Please indicate the date and nature of the incident leading to the lawsuit, where the law suit was filed, and the precise disposition of the law suit.)

Please list two references:

Name _____ Name _____

Phone _____ Phone _____

Pastor's Recommendation and Signature _____ Date _____