

Gaithersburg Chinese Alliance Church
Children and Youth Ministry Policy and Procedure
Revised and approved by GCAC Governing Board in February 2009

Part I: General Policy and Procedure

Classroom Arrangement

A glass window is installed in each Sunday school classroom door. When a part of the hall is used as a Sunday school classroom, there will be a viewing space between the dividers. The purpose of this setup will enable the C.E. director or designated church members or parents to observe what is taking place inside the classroom, without disturbing the ongoing process of teaching. Efforts will be made to eliminate dead corners or secret hiding places when teachers are interacting with children or youth.

Teacher-Student Ratio

To conduct a successful children's ministry, the classroom ratio will be maintained at 1:15 in elementary grade levels; 1:10 for preschool; and 1:3 in the nursery.

Teacher and Care giver Recruiting

- A. Any church member can recommend individuals to be Sunday school teachers, youth workers, or nursery care givers. These individuals need to demonstrate spiritual maturity in the character and behavior. They shall be screened and interviewed by the pastoral staff before assuming their responsibilities.
- B. Individuals working with children or youth (those under the age of 18) as a Sunday school teacher or youth group teacher, must have been a member of this church for at least six months or must have been baptized and have been attending this church regularly for at least one year. Members of other church may serve in this church by the approval of GCAC Governing Board.
- C. All teachers, youth group workers, or nursery sponsors must fill out the GCAC Teachers and Workers Application Form. The pastoral staff in charge of the children's and youth's ministries or the Governing Board member appointed to oversee this ministry shall (1) evaluate the completed teacher and youth worker information/application form; (2) interview the potential candidates; (3) obtain references from other church members, former church pastor or

members, or organizations; (4) have the candidates sign the form stating that they have read, understood, and are willing to follow the GCAC Children and Youth Ministry Policy & Procedures.

- D. Teenagers (ages 12-17) helping with the care of younger children (12 and under) shall fill out the GCAC Teachers and Workers Application Form. It is not necessary for them to go through the extensive interview process with the pastoral staff. They shall come under the direct supervision of the adult care giver or teacher and shall not act independently of that adult.
- E. Teaching assistants and nursery care givers will be asked to fill out the GCAC Teachers and Workers Application Form but do not need to go through the interview with the pastoral staff. They shall come under the direct supervision of the Sunday school teacher or nursery teacher and shall not act independently of their designated teachers. They shall be required to read and understand the policy and procedures of Children and/or Nursery ministries.
- F. Current teachers and youth workers who have not filled out the form shall go through the same process as stated in C.

Authorities of teachers and youth workers

- The teachers shall have full authority of carrying out biblical principles to shape a child's behavior. "... because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." (Proverbs 3:11-12)
- The teachers shall have full authority to stop a child's inappropriate behavior. (Proverbs 22:6)

Behavior of teachers and youth workers

- Teachers and youth workers shall ALWAYS conduct themselves in a godly manner, being role models of obedience, respect, and honesty to young believers.
- Teachers and youth workers SHALL NOT be involved in any of the following activities with the children ages 3-17 - extended hugging, kissing, sitting a child on one's lap, and inappropriate touching.

- Teachers and youth workers shall always conduct individual counseling sessions in an office that has a window on the door or in an open view space.
- Teachers and youth workers shall always AVOID being alone with children age 3-17. If a program runs into late evening, such as Friday night youth group, there should be at least two adults present until the last child has been picked up.

Specific Guidelines for Check-in Procedure

- A sign-in procedure for each child under 8 year-old shall be maintained. The child's name, parents' names and their location during the service shall be recorded.
- Parents are to list special needs of their children on the sign-in sheet.
- Names and addresses of parents and children shall be carefully maintained.
- A child must not be released to anybody except the child's parents or their designated legal guardians.
- Names of each nursery care giver shall be recorded on the sign-in list.

Diaper Changing & Rest Rooms

- Diaper changing shall always take place in the presence of another nursery worker.
- An adult will not be allowed in a rest room with a child or children. Another adult shall accompany them or be within visual contact. An adult may take a child or children to the rest room only if he/she stands in the open doorway.

Sick Children

- A child exhibiting symptoms of **unusual** fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose with yellow discharge, red eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and inflamed mouth or throat shall not be accepted into the classroom. The care giver has the authority to refuse a sick child for the health and well-being of other children.

Emergencies

- No medication will be administered by any worker. It shall be administered only by the parents. No medication shall be left in the classroom or with a worker or child.
- First aid kit shall be kept on hand and contents shall be checked and restocked quarterly.
- Emergency fire drill procedures shall be reviewed quarterly.

Parties and Field Trips

Whenever a special activity such as field trips, camping, ball games, etc. is planned outside the church facility, the following procedure must be taken:

- Secure a signed parental permission form.
- The presence of another teacher or adult not related to the one hosting the activity is required.
- The pastor or C.E. director shall be informed.
- The presence of another parent as an assistance would be desirable.

Part II: Policy and Procedures on Reporting Child Abuse

Church Policies

- A. If any case of child abuse is identified or suspected, it shall be immediately reported to the church committee which shall consist of at least three persons (the pastor, the C.E. director, the vice-chair of the Governing Board. In the event that the C.E. director and the vice-chair is the same individual, the Governing Board shall appoint another member from the Governing Board.)
- B. The committee shall respond quickly to gather pertinent facts and evidence and investigate the whole situation. The reference books and audio tapes suggested by some professional psychologists are listed in the Appendix (II).

- C. The committee shall be objective, careful, thorough, and unbiased in its investigation and interview of both the victim and the suspect. The investigation and findings shall be kept confidential.
- D. A person who is suspected of child abuse shall be asked to suspend his/her service in children/youth ministries of this church effectively and immediately. This shall be done in a confidential manner to prevent exposure of the reason of suspension.
- E. If the committee considers the complaint is of a serious nature, the committee shall report it to the district office of The Christian and Missionary Alliance and Montgomery County Child Welfare Service for further action. The reporting procedure is on file at church under the Children and Youth Ministries. The family law of Maryland regarding reporting of such incidents is also on file.
- F. If the offender is found guilty, the church will take disciplinary actions based on Matthew 18:15-17 and I Corinthians 5:11-13. (See Appendix I)

Appendix I

Scripture

Psalms 127:3-5 - Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

Proverbs 22:6 - Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Ephesians 6:4 - Fathers.... bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 - Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.

2 Timothy 3:15-16 ... and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Matthew 18:6 - But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

I Thessalonians 5:22 - Avoid every kind of evil.

Ephesians 5:3 - But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality ... because these are improper for God's holy people

Matthew 18: 15-17 - If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them,

tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

I Corinthians 5: 11-12 - But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

Appendix II Reference and Resources

"Recruiting Volunteers" An Alliance policy for recruiting church volunteers focusing on the prevention of child abuse. Published by the C&MA division of Church Ministries, Christian Education Office, P.O. Box 3500, Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3500

Dr. Dan B. Allender: "Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse" revised and updated edition, Navpress, Colorado Springs, Colorado. 1995

Audio Series: "Hope for Victims of Sexual Abuse" A conversation with Dr. Dan Allender, Family Life Today 1993, 1-800-333-1433

A Counselor's letter to a Sexual Abuse Victim, Chinese Today Volume 35, NO.1, January 1996, published by Chinese Christian Mission. (In Chinese)

The above references is available in Church Library.

The reporting procedure based on the resources of Montgomery County Child Welfare Service and the family law of Maryland regarding of reporting of such incident are filed with this Policy and Procedure at the church office.

Appendix III

Background and Purposes

Due to significant increases in the number of child abuse lawsuits, the Mid-Atlantic District's Alliance churches see the need for every church to develop a comprehensive child ministry policy to prevent the potential incidence of child abuse. This policy was formulated based on the original draft issued by the Mid-Atlantic District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). The district has encouraged us to revise and develop a policy that will suit our unique and individual circumstances and needs. Revisions were made to the original draft based on the following points: (1)Our children and youth are raised in an American culture and education system but most of the parents in our church hold onto Asian way of thinking and traditions. Some traditions and philosophies are worth keeping - for example, respect for teachers or youth workers, submission to and respect of authorities. (2)When the Christian Education director or the pastoral staffs invite certain adult church members to serve as Sunday School teachers or youth workers, they are mostly polite and reserved. They also evidence their faithfulness in serving the Lord. Our policy needs to be supportive of our teachers and to treat them with respect and courtesy. (3)Our policy also needs to seek protection of teachers from false accusations. Since a child's lie, intentional or unintentional, against an adult about possible child abuse can ruin an adult's life. (4)There have been incidents of child abduction cases happening in other churches. It is our responsibility to establish a guideline for releasing of infants and toddlers. (5)Since we are living in a pagan world, it has become imperative to develop our own policy to protect our children and teachers to ensure the best interest of our church.

The purpose of the Gaithersburg Chinese Alliance Church Children and Youth Ministry Policy and Procedure (referred from now on as this Policy and Procedure) is to protect the children from the harm of child abuse, especially sexual abuse, because Bible says "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him." (Psalms 127:3) The purpose of this Policy is to serve as a guideline for GCAC children and youth ministries. Therefore, we choose to use the name of " Children and Youth Ministry Policy and Procedure" instead of "Child Abuse Prevention Policy".

Appendix IV Definitions and Difference

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a non-accidental physical or mental injury or mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of the child's parents or caretakers.

Physical Abuse: Non-accidental physical injury to a child.

Physical Neglect: Failure on the part of the child's caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or supervision.

Emotional Maltreatment: Belittling and rejecting the child, not providing a positive emotional atmosphere.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual exploitation of a child done for the sexual gratification of the offender or another person.

Differences between this Policy and the C&MA Child Abuse Policy

We feel that the definitions as listed above do not suit the condition and purposes of our ministries. We would like to choose only a part of the "Definitions of **Physical Neglect & Emotional Maltreatment**" in our policy and procedures based upon the following arguments and rationale.

- 1) Most of our programs are focused on teaching biblical truth and fellowship. The length of the program is one and a half to two hours. We are not the primary care giver to the child or youth, therefore it is not the responsibility of the church to provide food, shelter, or clothing.
- 2) Food or snacks are sometimes provided during church-sponsored activities or retreats. Participation in these activities is at the parents' own decision. It is the parents' responsibility to communicate information regarding a child's food allergies and/or dietary restriction to the workers.
- 3) Most of our Sunday school teachers and youth workers are not professionally trained teachers. Within the Western culture, our expression of care and love may sometimes be perceived as a message of rejecting or belittling the child. The Bible has taught us to "be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2) in order to achieve our children/youth ministries' goals. The definition of

emotional maltreatment as applied to our teachers and youth workers should be taken carefully.

Classroom Ratios

The classroom ratio in this Policy is different from the C&MA draft for the following reasons:

- 1) The attendance of Sunday school is not predictable and fluctuates from Sunday to Sunday. The length of our program does not exceed two hours. We are not the primary care givers to children or Youth.
- 2) In order to conduct a successful child ministry, the classroom ratio has been maintained at one teacher to fifteen (1:15) children in the elementary level and one teacher to ten (1:10) for preschool children. This ratio when compared to the public school ratio of one teacher to twenty children is better than adequate.

Criminal Check

Most our church members or workers are first generation of Chinese American. As immigrants we have undergone extensive background as well as criminal check. Therefore, we find the criminal check to be time consuming and costly.

As stated in his book and the audio tape, Dr. Dan Allender, a Christian psychologist who specialize in helping sexual abuse victim; said that "statistics show that most sexual abuse were committed by professional white-collar workers, or someone who has well-established relationship with the child. "Therefore a criminal check has limited value in detecting the possible suspect."