

Orinda Community Church

Child/Youth Protection Policy

MINISTRY PURPOSE

Orinda Community Church is a non-profit religious corporation and a member of the United Church of Christ. We are a community of believers who have joined together to meet the spiritual and academic needs of our greater community. Our organization promotes good and responsible moral behavior. Consequently, when interacting with our staff, youth, or children's ministry, you freely and willingly agree to the standards of behavior outlined in this policy. The standards included in this policy are not exhaustive; rather, they provide a guideline of conduct we believe is in accordance with biblical standards.

As representatives of **Orinda Community Church**, it is imperative that our actions are above reproach in all things. Consequently, the following standards of conduct shall apply to all staff and volunteers. Violations of these standards by employees are regarded as a serious breach of integrity and could result in discipline, up to and including termination. Violations of these standards by volunteers may result in your removal from volunteer team.

God's Word teaches us that certain attributes are desired, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-24). I will strive to seek, encourage, and demonstrate these attributes in my relationships and in working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Scripture further teaches us that every believer has a duty to protect the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of those most vulnerable among us. (Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 22:6, Mark 9:42, and James 1:27).

Orinda Community Church understands the responsibility placed upon our church by both God and parents who entrust children and the vulnerable to our care. Any person who may pose a threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be prohibited from working in any ministry involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This is non-negotiable. We desire to protect the vulnerable, and not lead susceptible persons into temptation.

As an employee, volunteer or administrator of **Orinda Community Church**, I agree to follow the standards of conduct of this ministry.

DEFINITIONS:

For purposes of this policy, the terms “**child**” or “**children**” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Youth Service Organization: **Orinda Community Church** has activities that involve the direct supervision of children and is considered by the State of California as a Youth Service Organization.

Vulnerable adult: Any person 18 years of age or older who is unable to legally consent, unable to comprehend the nature of certain actions, or susceptible to coercion or abuse. This may include individuals who are mentally or physically disabled and the elderly.

A **volunteer** is any volunteer who is 18 years of age or older and has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year.

Employees include all employees, whether they work with children or not, including seasonal, occasional, and part-time employees. Independent contractors are not employees.

Administrators include ministry leaders include clergy, HR administrators, board members and elders.

Mandated Reporters: California law requires that all administrators and employees are mandated reporters. Additionally, **Orinda Community Church** classifies all volunteers who supervise youth as ‘religious practitioners’ and are also considered to be mandated reporters.

SELECTION OF WORKERS:

All employees, administrators and volunteers who work with those under the age of 18 participating in our programs and activities will be screened.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a volunteer position that involves working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults will complete and return an initial ministry application.
2. The ministry leader, or designee, will carefully review the application, ensuring that the candidate is an appropriate match for the ministry position. The ministry leader

also will permanently store all application materials—the application form, reference check, notes from interviews, etc.—in a locked file cabinet or other secure location.

3. If the individual appears to be an appropriate candidate for the ministry position, the ministry leader, or designee, will check at least two references to confirm the information that the candidate provided on the ministry application.

4. Criminal Background Check Guidelines: Pursuant to Section 11105.3 of the Penal Code, all employees, administrators, and regular volunteers shall undergo a background check to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse or other convictions that have been determined by the FBI that would preclude them from working with youth.

Before a background check is conducted, all employees, administrators and regular volunteers will be asked to complete and sign an authorization form allowing **Orinda Community Church** to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the authorized Custodian of Records based on guidance provided by the FBI. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. Pursuant to privacy laws, the result of the background check will not be disclosed to any applicant. However, you may contact the FBI directly for your records [here](#).

The background check authorization form and results will be permanently maintained in confidence on file at **Orinda Community Church**.

5. After the ministry leader, or designee, contacts references and a background check has been completed, he or she will conduct an interview with the candidate.

6. When indicated by our screening procedures, volunteer candidates who pose a threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be removed from consideration for any ministry position involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. The same procedures required for volunteers also apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered.

2. When indicated by our screening procedures, employment candidates who pose a threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be removed immediately from consideration for employment anywhere within our organization.

WAITING PERIOD

All volunteer candidates must be regularly involved in our organization for six months or more before they will be considered for any ministry position involving contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

SUPERVISION:

Two Adult Rule: To the greatest extent possible, the presence of two unrelated mandated reporters when ministry activities involve contact with, or supervising, children. California does not consider volunteers to be mandated reporters. Nevertheless, **Orinda Community Church** elects to classify specific volunteers who supervise youth as ‘religious practitioners’ and are therefore considered to be mandated reporters who may fulfill the requirement of having two unrelated mandated reporters to be present during youth activities.

Spiritual Counseling/Mentoring of Youth: While adult workers should avoid being alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, some limited exceptions may be permitted for spiritual counsel/mentoring of a youth. Any one-on-one interaction must take place in a location where the adult worker and the youth are both visible to others. Any planned one-on-one meetings must be approved by a ministry leader, and the adult worker must obtain prior written approval from parents/guardians. The duration and frequency of approved one-on-one meetings are to be limited to no more than three occasions for no more than 30 minutes at a time.

Appropriate Behavior with Children: Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety—such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing, or embracing others, etc.

TRAINING ON CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING

Child abuse and neglect, as defined in CANRA, includes: physical abuse, sexual abuse (including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation), willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, and neglect (including both acts and omissions).

An administrator, employee, or regular volunteer of **Orinda Community Church** shall individually complete training in child abuse & neglect identification and training in child abuse & neglect reporting. This California-specific training will cover types of abuse & neglect, what the law requires of mandated reporters, how to spot evidence of child abuse, examples of different types of abuse, how to report abuse, what happens after a report is filed, and much more.

Prior to your employment or volunteering at **Orinda Community Church** this training must be completed. This can be completed by either:

- (1) Free, self-administered training is available at <https://mandatedreporterca.com/>. Prior to employment or volunteering with **Orinda Community Church** this must be completed and a certificate must be returned to Office Administrator.

Employees must complete the General Training (4 hours).

Clergy (those that are ordained, licensed or commissioned) must also complete the additional training specific for clergy.

Volunteers who are not considered to be mandated reporters are required to complete the two-hour training.

Employees will be paid for this training.

- (2) **Orinda Community Church** has subscribed to Mandated Reporter Training from ChurchHRNetwork. Prior to employment or volunteering, this 90-minute training specific to churches in California must be individually completed. You will receive an email with a link and instructions on how to complete the training. A certificate will be provided to you and **Orinda Community Church** will also receive a copy that will be retained by **Orinda Community Church**.

REPORTING ABUSE

Mandated reporters must report to a county child welfare department or to local law enforcement (police or sheriff's department) immediately by phone. A written report must then be sent within 36 hours by fax or electronically (if available). Written reports must be submitted on the California Suspected Child Abuse Form 8572. This form can be found here: https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss_8572.pdf

More information on mandated reporting can be found here:

<https://mandatedreporterca.com/about/faq>

INVESTIGATIONS

1. This ministry organization considers any allegation of abuse or neglect a serious matter. Each situation will be fully investigated first through civil authorities, then by ministry leaders following a consultation with qualified legal counsel. The ministry will not interfere with a pending law enforcement investigation.
2. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to the abuse or molestation will be terminated consistent with the established employment practices of this ministry.
3. Volunteer subjects of any investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
4. This ministry will permanently remove any employees or volunteers from their ministerial duties within the organization if they are found guilty of abuse or molestation. Whenever termination of employment is a factor, we also will consult with legal counsel.

DEALING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT, NEWS MEDIA

1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers of **Orinda Community Church** will cooperate fully with law enforcement or governmental agencies investigating abuse and neglect.
2. The leadership of this ministry will seek legal counsel as soon as possible after we receive notice of possible abuse or molestation within the organization and a report will be provided to our insurance carrier. Advice from legal counsel will be the basis for our response to the allegations.
3. One individual—a member of the leadership team, an employee, or our attorney will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. Our spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, doing so in a prudent manner to avoid compromising an ongoing investigation and to maintain the privacy of the individuals involved.

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.

RESTROOM GUIDELINES

Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, 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 he/she assists the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

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.

CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

1. Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes before a scheduled activity. They must remain at their assigned post until all people in their care have been picked up by an authorized person. No children or youth should be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation.
2. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up 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.

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 such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above (with the exception of a background check, which can't be conducted on minors).
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of two mandated reporters and must never be left alone with children.

INJURIES OR ILLNESS

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or a communicable disease that can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable worker—one who has been previously approved through our ministry screening process—must be used to take the place of a worker who is ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as the illness is discovered. If immediate return is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that allows an adult worker to monitor the participant until he/she can be returned to a parent or guardian.
4. Take reasonable steps to avoid contact with blood, saliva, or other bodily fluids.
5. Ministry coordinators and supervisors who become aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure that proper medical attention is given to the injured person and provide for continued monitoring of the remaining activity participants.
6. Persons who have received an injury that is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The individual's parents or guardians should be notified of the injury when they pick up the injured person.
7. Any injury that may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parents or guardians of the injured person should be

notified immediately, along with the ministry worker's coordinator or supervisor. If warranted by the injury, emergency medical personnel should be called.

MEDICATIONS POLICY

It is the policy of **Orinda Community Church** not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by the child's parent. 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 OCC's **Senior Pastor** to develop a plan of action.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the policy of **Orinda Community Church** not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with OCC's **Senior Pastor** if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

VIOLATION OF POLICY OR PROCEDURES

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator or supervisor when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.
2. Ministry coordinators, supervisors, and ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.