

EAGLE RIVER CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH¹

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Pastor Michael Yost

GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. assure the safety of children, youth and the elderly while under the care and protection of church personnel during activities and programs;
2. assure the safety of children, youth and the elderly teachers, workers, helpers and other responsible persons; and
3. limit legal risk and liability to Eagle River Church of the Nazarene due to alleged or actual child abuse.

DEFINITIONS

Regular Attendee: an individual who is present at weekly church services unless encumbered by occasional illness or travel obligations.

Children/Youth Worker: an individual who regularly works with children and youth in church sponsored activities and programs on a consistent weekly or rotation schedule.

Occasional Children/Youth Worker: an individual who works with children and youth in church sponsored activities and programs on an occasional or sporadic basis.

Six-Month Rule: no person may work with children and youth until he/she has attended Eagle River Church of the Nazarene for at least six consecutive months.

Supervision Rule: all children, youth and the elderly workers will be supervised. Generally supervision is done by two adult workers or one adult and one teen worker present at all times with one or more children during a church sponsored activity or program, these workers will generally be people who have successfully passed the application and background check process. The purpose of this rule is to reduce the risk of child abuse in any form and avoid improper or false allegations.

POLICIES

1. QUALIFICATIONS OF WORKERS

All Children/Youth Worker Applicants, including Sunday School Superintendent and NYI President must successfully pass a criminal background check before being allowed to assume duties.

All prospective children/youth leaders and workers must be professing Christians who are regular attendees at the Eagle River Church of the Nazarene for at least six months before working with minors. The exception to this waiting period may be anyone in good standing who has transferred to Eagle River Church of the Nazarene from another local Nazarene Church.

REQUIREMENTS

Any individual wishing to be an occasional or regular children/youth worker must have successfully completed:

1. Six months of regular church attendance;
2. a *Ministry of Children and Youth Application*;
3. a face-to-face interview with the Pastor and or designated church leader;

¹ Approve by Board Action 12-10-2007

4. a criminal background check; and
5. must have read and signed a copy of this policy acknowledging acceptance and understanding of the stipulations contained herein.

APPLICATION PROCESS

(The application process may begin during the six-month waiting period. For those who have attended longer than six months, applications will be accepted at anytime.)

1. Candidate obtains *Ministry of Children and Youth Application* from church foyer or church secretary.
2. Candidate returns completed application to a designated place in the Church office.
3. Pastor and Sunday School Superintendent review application, schedules, and conducts a face-to-face interview with applicant.
4. Pastor calls character references and records results on designated form.
5. Pastor or designee orders background check if the Pastor and Sunday School Superintendent agree to enlist the applicant's services;
6. Pastor and Sunday School Superintendent follow up with candidate with any further questions or concerns.
7. Pastor communicates the final decision as agreed upon with the Sunday School Superintendent to the applicant upon completion of the above process.

PROCEDURES

The criminal background check will be completed as part of the application process at the church's expense.

Safe Churches will be contacted to perform the criminal background checks at a current cost of \$8 per search.

The six-month rule will apply to all new Children/Youth/Elderly Workers following the effective date of this policy.

Background checks will be repeated every five years for active Children/Youth Workers.

All personnel files, including completed application and forms, correspondence and interview notes, and all other related documents, will be kept in a locked cabinet in a secure area, accessible only to the Pastor and designated leaders.

2.SUPERVISION POLICY

The supervision rule will apply to all church sponsored children and youth activities, programs, and events. **Activities, events, and programs will be cancelled due to inability to comply with this rule.**

PROCEDURES

The Chairperson or designated leader of a given church-sponsored activity, program, or event will be charged with assessing applicable child/youth safety issues.

The Pastor or a designated church leader will maintain a record of contacts showing references and prior churches attended.

Any individual who reviews and/or screens the applications must sign a Statement of Confidentiality (see supplemental).

If any issues of concern are found in the application process, they will be referred to the Pastor for further direction.

3. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY

It is our intent to follow state regulations in the reporting of child abuse. Any parental complaints about suspected or alleged mistreatment/abuse of any kind are to be reported immediately to the Pastor. All suspected forms of abuse will be communicated **only** to the Pastor. **DO NOT** discuss the situation with anyone else.

In cases where reporting is deemed necessary, the Pastor from Eagle River Church of the Nazarene will work closely with the family and appropriate state agencies. Our desire is to protect the children and support the family.

Any suspected or alleged child abuse by leaders/workers will result in temporary or permanent removal from ministry, pending the outcome of an investigation. This would be done to protect both the child and the leader/volunteer.