

**MINISTRY PARTNER SCREENING AND APPLICATION FORM**  
Faith Community Church

Every person ministering to children (under the age of 18) in any church program has a moral and spiritual responsibility to protect those children. The church should be a place of safety for all children and an answer to prayer for those needing relief.

This form is to be completed by all ministry partners for any position involving contact with children, teens or those considered to be members of a vulnerable population. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children, teen and vulnerable populations who participate in our programs and ministry.

Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Single  Married  Divorced  Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Children – Names and ages \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all employers/schools during the past 5 years \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you attended Faith Community Church? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a member of Faith Community Church? Yes  No

Do you currently attend another church or have you recently been attending another church? Yes  No

Name of church \_\_\_\_\_ Length of time attended \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the services and/or groups you typically attend:  
Sunday, 9:00 am  10:45 am  Small group  Other  \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please give group and leader's name)

If you know them, what are your spiritual gifts and passions?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please identify the Spiritual Growth Classes you have completed at Faith Community Church: Grow 1  Grow 2  Grow 3

Ministry area position you are applying for? \_\_\_\_\_ Date available to begin \_\_\_\_\_

Please list previous ministry experience \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any previous non-church work involving children and/or teens \_\_\_\_\_

Are you CPR certified (not required)? Yes  No  Do you have any medical training? Yes  No

Type of training (LPN, RN, Physician, EMT, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your faith journey: (please use additional paper if needed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MINISTRY PARTNER SCREENING AND APPLICATION FORM – CONTINUED

Personal References: Please list 2 adults over the age of 18 who have known you for at least 2 years; are not related to you in any way and know you well enough to serve as a reference to your character and ability to work with children, teens or other vulnerable populations.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The questions listed below are designed to ensure a safe and secure environment for children, teen and vulnerable populations participating in Faith Community Church ministry. Your answers will be kept confidential and only shared with those staff members or Elders with a ministry need to know.

- I have read Faith Community Church’s ‘Children, Teen and Vulnerable Populations Safety Protection Guidelines’ Yes [ ] No [ ] (This document is included in this packet and available at www.fch.org/forms)
Are there any moving violations on your driving record in the past 3 years? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a felony? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
Have you ever been convicted of, pleaded guilty to or been involved in physical or sexual abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor or any member of a vulnerable population? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
Is there any circumstance or pattern currently in your life that would make it inappropriate for you to serve with children, teens or any member of a vulnerable population that would compromise the integrity of the church? (i.e., alcohol/drug abuse, pornography, cohabitation as an unmarried couple) Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
Do you have any health issues that would place children, teens or any member of a vulnerable population in your care at risk? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
Would you like to meet with a pastor regarding any of the above statements? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Faith Community Church policy does not allow anyone with any history of abuse-related crimes/activities to be involved in Ministry of any kind with children, teens or those considered to be in a vulnerable population.

The information contained in this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the references listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness to work with children, teens or other vulnerable populations. I release all such references from any and all liability as a result of the inquiries made on my behalf.

I agree to be bound by the Bylaws and the ‘Safety and Protection Guidelines for Children, Teen and Vulnerable Populations’ of the Faith Community Church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I understand that upon the discovery that any of the provided information or statements is false or that significant information has been intentionally withheld, I may be disqualified from further consideration of service or may be subject to immediate dismissal from service.

I have carefully read this document. I understand its contents and sign it freely.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

All information contained in this form will be kept confidential and only shared with those staff members or Elders with a ministry need to know.

## **SAFETY AND PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN, TEEN AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

Faith Community Church - Hopkinton, Massachusetts 01748

“(Love) always protects...” 1 Corinthians 13:7a

### **GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES**

- All ministry partners involved in any way with children, teen and vulnerable populations will be required to complete the screening process.
  - Every effort will be made to provide a safe environment for all children, teens and vulnerable populations. Serious accidents will be immediately reported to the parent/guardian. Minor incidents will be reported to the parents when the child or teen is picked up. A ministry partner, in the room at the time of the accident, will complete a written incident report to be turned in to the Director of Children Ministry, Director of Student Ministry or the Executive Director.
  - Reasonable effort will be made to have a minimum of two responsible ministry partners at each class/event.
  - Whenever possible, one or more supervisors will circulate among rooms whenever children and/or teen activities are being held.
  - Parents/guardians are welcome to check on their children and/or teen at any time.
  - No child, teen or staff with any symptom of an infectious illness may attend any class or event.
  - Strict hand washing must be practiced by children, teens and ministry partners before handling food, after going to the bathroom or assisting in toileting or diapering, and after contact with body fluid (mucus, blood, vomit, etc.).
  - Leaders are to monitor (and never participate in) playful, physical activity between children/teens and end it if:
    - There is the potential for physical harm
    - Someone is not having fun
    - Someone is being bullied, disrespected or degraded in any way
    - The nature of the activity is sexual in any way
  - Show of affection between leaders, children, teens and vulnerable populations should be managed appropriately by the adult. The following are acceptable ways to show physical affection:
    - Side-by-side hugs
    - Touch on the shoulders or upper arms
    - Non-lingering frontal hugs

### **CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES (BIRTH – 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)**

- Reasonable effort will be made to staff classes with: at least one ministry partner for every three babies and/or toddlers; at least one ministry partner for every 5 children ages 2 – 5; at least one ministry partner for every 8 children in grades K – 6.
- Changing diapers is to be done in a room with at least one other ministry partner present. No child shall be left unattended on a changing table at any time.
- Children up to age 2 will be checked in and out of classrooms by a parent or other responsible adult.
- When taking children to the restroom, ministry partners should stay at the restroom door until the child is finished. Ministry partners may enter to assist only when absolutely necessary.
- Children in grades 1 – 6 should be sent to the restroom in same sex-pairs.

### **OVERNIGHT OR RETREAT/MISSION TRIP SAFETY GUIDELINES (4<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)**

- Leaders and students are to be fully clothed, wearing pajamas or appropriate clothing, at all times in sleeping areas whether they are cabins, dorms, hotel rooms or tents.
- Reasonable effort must be made by leaders and students to change clothes out of site of others (such as in a private bathroom).
- Leaders are to refrain from lying on a teen's bed at any time.
- Leaders and students are not to sleep together in the same bed under any circumstance.
- Students will not sleep more than one per bed for twin beds and two per bed for double beds and larger.
- When only group showers are available, leaders and students must shower at different times. When individual shower stalls are available, leaders will make reasonable effort to shower at a different time from the students.
- Leaders and students are to be fully clothed while walking to and from the shower area. Towels around the waist or torso are not acceptable.
- There is to be no non-emergency physical contact between two people in the shower area.
- When transporting students, leaders are not to ride alone with a teen of the opposite sex.

### **TEEN SAFETY GUIDELINES (7<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE)**

- When talking or meeting with a teen on an individual basis, ministry partners must make a reasonable effort to not be isolated with the teen.
- Leaders should not minister to the intimate personal needs of a teen of the opposite sex (either in person, by phone or by electronic means). Redirect teens of the opposite sex to their same-sex small group leader (past or present) when such needs arise. Take care to avoid situations that may compromise the integrity of the church, Student Ministry or yourself. One-on-one meetings or deep relationships with teens or leaders of the opposite sex are inappropriate.

## THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Under Massachusetts law, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency that receives all reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect of children under the age of 18. State law requires professionals whose work brings them in contact with children to notify DCF if they suspect that a child is being abused and/or neglected. DCF depends on reports from professionals and other concerned individuals to learn about children who may need protection.

### DEFINITION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

According to Massachusetts law and Department of Children and Families regulations (110 CMR, section 2.00):

**Abuse:** The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under age 18 which causes, or creates a substantial risk of, physical or emotional injury; or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth; or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of that individual. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

**Neglect:** Failure by caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home setting).

**Signs of Abuse and/or Neglect:** Church workers should be alert to the physical signs of abuse, neglect and molestations, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a child may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below (adapted from Sloan, 1983):

SIGNS OF ABUSE and/or NEGLECT	
Physical signs may include:	Behavioral signs may include:
Lacerations and bruises – particularly bruises of different colors suggesting repeated beatings	Anxious, nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
Difficulty walking	Excessive fear of being approached or touched
Nightmares	Sexual self-consciousness
Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area	Sexual behaviors or references that are bizarre, unusual or too sophisticated for the child's age
Difficulty with urination	Behavior that is withdrawn, fearful, infantile or filled with fantasy
Discomfort when sitting	Fear of going home
Evident malnutrition	
Unattended physical or medical problems	<b>Verbal signs may include the following statements:</b>
Inadequate clothing	"_____ does things to me when we're alone."
Distinctively shaped injuries suggesting an object (such as belt buckle or rope) or human bite marks	"I don't like to be alone with _____."
Pressure bruises around the neck, ankles or wrists	"_____ fooled around with me."
	"I'm afraid of _____."

## **MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Massachusetts' law requires an individual who is a mandated reporter to immediately report any allegation of serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) by oral communication. A written report must then be completed within 48 hours. All church Ministry partners and employees working with children clearly fall within the guidelines defining mandated reporters. When suspected abuse is reported to the person in charge, then the person in charge, and not the Ministry partner, is required to make the report. All reporters are immune from liability and in almost all cases, the reporter's name is not revealed to the family.

Sometimes people are unsure if a situation is abusive. If in doubt, call the Department of Children and Families directly or immediately share your concerns with paid ministry staff. See below for the church reporting procedures. The DCF Child-at-Risk 24 hour hotline may be reached at 1-800-792-5200.

### **FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

- **1<sup>st</sup> Level Response:** Any person working with minors on behalf of Faith Community Church who suspects any signs of abuse or neglect must immediately report this to the director / coordinator of that ministry. If a ministry director / coordinator are not available then go directly to Executive Director. If Executive Director is not available, then go to one of the Pastors.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Level Response:** All information will ultimately be funneled to the Executive Director, whether directly from ministry partner or through director / coordinator. If Executive Director is not reachable then a Pastor can stand in as the point person.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Level Response:** Executive Director (or appropriate replacement) will, along with director / coordinator decide if the information gathered allows "reasonable cause" to believe abuse or neglect may be occurring or may have occurred. If there does not seem to be "reasonable cause," then a report will be written and kept with Executive Director. If "reasonable cause" does exist, then the next level of response is taken. If the child or teen appears to be in immediate danger, of any kind, then Executive Director (or appropriate replacement) will file an immediate report.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Level of Response:** In situations in which reasonable cause may exist, but the child or teen is not deemed by the Executive Director to be in immediate danger, a Crisis Management Team will be gathered to discuss the information in order to come to a final decision about whether a report should be made or not. Again if "reasonable cause" is not confirmed, then a report will be made and kept with Executive Director. Otherwise final level of response is taken.
- **5<sup>th</sup> Level of Response:** When the Crisis Management Team has found "reasonable cause," a member from that team will become the designated reporter. The reporter will call in a report followed by the appropriate written report.

**Under no circumstances shall the decision-making process concerning whether to file a report or not be allowed to extend beyond 24 hours in order to meet the State mandated reporting period of 48 hours. If the Crisis Management Team cannot be appropriately convened within this 24-hour period, then the Executive Director (or appropriate replacement) shall make the determination of whether to report based on the information available and based on the best interests of the child or teen. *It must be emphasized that whenever it appears to the Executive Director (or appropriate replacement) that the child or teen is in immediate danger, the 5-step process shall be truncated and a report will be made immediately.***

**It is essential that anyone that falls within this reporting chain keep all information in the strictest of confidence. If approached by individuals or the media, direct them to the Executive Director.**

NOTE: If they prefer, a ministry partner may report suspected abuse or neglect directly to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Family at 1-800-792-5200.

The Faith Community Church assumes no liability for reliance on this form. You should consult your own attorney for written advice.

