

Niceville Assembly of God 108 Highway 85 North Niceville, FL 32578 nicevilleag@nicevilleag.com	Child Protection Policy <i>Printed Copy Valid for Reference Only</i>	NUMBER: NAG-CPT-007	REVISION: - 007
		PAGE: 1 of 7	DATE: 11/17/2008
SUBJECT: Niceville Assembly of God Child Protection Policy			
Prepared By:	Lisa Ansley	Date: 11/17/2008	
Approved By: Board of Directors as represented by the Secretary & Treasurer	Cliff Troxell	Date: 11/17/2008	
Approved By: An Executive Pastor <i>Required for Policies only</i>	Kraig Krempa	Date: 11/17/2008	
Approved By: Senior Pastor <i>Required for Policies only</i>	Phil Daniels	Date: 11/17/2008	

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to prevent abuse. This policy governs the conduct of all paid and volunteer workers of Niceville First Assembly (“the church”) as they are involved with official church functions and activities. "Official" functions and activities are those which are sponsored by the church pastors, department leaders, teachers, assistants, and/or workers in direct relation to one or more of the church ministries which are recognized by the pastors and official board. The church recognizes the importance of providing an environment which is safe, healthy, and conducive to both learning and forming positive relationships. Protecting minors (those under 18 years old) is of utmost importance in all of our ministries.

2.0 SCOPE

All workers, paid and volunteer, shall be responsible for implementing this policy.

3.0 TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse can be classified into two major categories: “touch” and “non-touch.” Touch abuse includes, but is not limited to, striking, slapping, shaking, pinching, yanking, smothering, inappropriate contact with body parts, fondling, kissing in inappropriate ways, and intercourse. Non-touch abuse includes, but is not limited to, severe shaming, sexual remarks, showing pornography, showing sexual body parts, and watching any sexual activity.

4.0 ADULT WORKER SELECTION AND SCREENING

A process for selecting and screening adult workers shall be followed. Below are lists of requirements that must be met before an applicant may work in ministry:

Children/Youth/Adult Worker

- Application for Ministry
- Interview
- Reference and Background Check
- Church Membership (*Exceptions will be considered for Membership requirement*)
- Six-Month Rule
- Child Protection Training (CPT)

Adult Only Worker

- Application for Ministry
- Interview
- Reference and Background Check
- Church Membership (*Exceptions will be considered for Membership requirement*)
- Child Protection Training (CPT)

4.1 Application for Ministry. Applicants shall be at least 18 years old on the date they sign their application. Applications shall be submitted to the Pastor or staff member who oversees the department in which the applicant desires to work (hereafter called “the processing staff member”) or church office. Upon receipt of an application, an admin representative shall create a folder, make a copy of the applicant’s photo ID and place it in the folder and ensure completeness of the character reference sections of the application as it pertains to necessary address information to be used for mailing information. The processing staff member shall also review the application to ensure its completeness during the screening process. Upon receipt, incomplete applications shall be returned to the applicant for completion.

4.2 Interview. After the application has been completed and submitted, the processing staff member shall conduct a face-to-face interview with the candidate to review the application and discuss information pertaining to the suitability of the candidate to work in ministry. Such information may include—but not be limited to—biographical data, education, training, spiritual calling, spiritual gifts, personal desires, experience, and spiritual maturity. After completion of the interview, the processing pastor shall make a recommendation whether to proceed with the application process. If the recommendation is to not proceed, a decision shall be made in consultation with an Executive Pastor and the application shall be archived and protected in a manner appropriate for confidential and sensitive documents. The processing staff member shall inform the applicant of the decision.

4.3 Reference Checks and Criminal Background Check(s). The completed application must include at least four character references. These references shall not be family members, relatives, Pastors of this church, or the department head under which the applicant could potentially work. The church may contact these references, other references as provided by the initial references, churches, organizations, and prior employers to assess the applicant’s suitability to work with minors. All information received from all reference contacts shall be kept in strict confidence. A nationwide criminal background check is also mandatory.

4.4 Application Processing Procedures. The church shall establish and maintain files for all workers. This file shall be held in strict confidence from anyone except the pastoral staff, other officials as authorized by an Executive Pastor, and admin assistants which have an established need for access. All completed worker files shall be maintained under lock and key. A mandatory nationwide background check of the ministry applicant will be obtained by the processing pastor. At least four character-reference request packages shall be distributed for each applicant by an appointed admin assistant. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires from the reference contacts, an appointed admin assistant shall compile the letters into the file and alert the processing pastor that the application is ready to be checked for completeness and forwarded for final review by the review committee. Assigned members of the pastoral staff and/or processing staff members that make up the review committee shall make recommendations to an Executive Pastor to approve or disapprove the application. Final approval and disapproval of an Application for Ministry shall be decided by an Executive Pastor. Approved workers will be placed on the appropriate list reflecting their approval level, 1) Children/Youth/Adult, 2) Adult Only. Workers will only then be allowed to work with the age range that their approval level reflects.

4.5 Use of Members-Only. Only official members of the church shall be used in leadership positions of the church. This “members-only” requirement is waived only for applicants who have children in the nursery and desire to work exclusively in the nursery or by ‘special exception’ made by an Executive Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

4.6 The Six-Month Rule. Applicants shall not be approved to work in Youth or Children Ministries until they have attended the church regularly for at least six months. “Regular attendance” is defined as attendance in at least three services per month. Applications may be submitted and processing may begin before the Six-Month Rule has been met, but approval shall not be made before this rule has been satisfied.

4.7 Child Protection Training. Workers shall receive orientation and training concerning the definition and prevention of abuse. Such training shall include a thorough review of this policy. New workers shall also be trained concerning other policies and procedures which are applicable to their position. Workers shall receive child protection training annually. Those who have not received updated training within 18 months from the month of their previous training shall be removed from the List until such training is completed. Workers who have attended one CPT session may take a refresher in place of a CPT session. Workers who fail the refresher shall be required to attend a CPT session.

4.8 Reinstatement of Workers Removed From the List. A person whose name has been removed from the List due to lack of CPT may have their name reinstated if their name has not been off the List for more than six months and they complete CPT. Persons whose names have been removed from the List for six months or more may have their name reinstated based on the recommendation of the pastoral staff and completion of CPT. The CPT refresher may be substituted in lieu of the formal CPT or waived altogether based on the approval of the pastoral staff. Prior to reinstating a name that has been off the List for six months or more, the pastoral staff shall determine if additional requirements need to be met based on factors such as, but not limited to, length of absence from the church’s ministry, reason(s) for removal from the List, or relevant events or circumstances which have changed in the life of the person.

4.9 Approved Worker Status Exemption/Membership only requirements regarding Connecting Points Categories: Adult Type C (fellowship & interest based small group) facilitators are only required to be an official member. Type A (Adult Discipleship) Facilitators (only) & Type B (Ministry Based Groups) Facilitators & participants will require official worker approval status. Additionally, an approved worker status exemption may be granted to an individual for the purpose of facilitating an adult only Type A class on a short term basis.

5.0 MINORS IN MINISTRY SELECTION AND SCREENING

Minors in ministry shall not be considered workers as pertaining to the two adult worker policy. A process for selecting and screening minors in ministry, as described below, shall be followed. This process shall include formal minor application, formal interviewing, application processing, and minor child protection training.

5.1 Minors in Ministry Application. All minors desiring to lead or teach must complete a “Minors in Ministry Application.” Any minor refusing to complete the application shall not be considered to work in the church. Applicants shall be under 18 years old on the date they sign their application. Applications shall be submitted to the processing staff member who oversees the department in which the applicant desires to work. Upon receipt of an application, the processing staff member shall review the application to ensure its completeness. Incomplete applications shall be returned to the applicant for completion. All minors’ applications must be signed by their parent or legal guardian.

5.2 Interview. After the application has been completed, the processing staff member shall conduct a face-to-face interview with the candidate to review the application and discuss information pertaining to the suitability of the candidate to work in the church. Such information may include-but not be limited to - biographical data, education, training, spiritual calling, spiritual gifts, personal desires, experience, and spiritual maturity.

5.3 Application Processing Procedures. The church shall establish and maintain files for all minors in ministry. This file shall be held in strict confidence from anyone except the pastoral staff, other officials as authorized by an Executive Pastor, and admin assistants which have an established need for access. All completed worker files for minors shall be maintained under lock and key. The Youth Pastor, Children’s Pastor, and any pastor under which the minor will serve shall review the application for approval or disapproval. Unanimous approval of the aforementioned Pastors is required before a minor can work in the church. Names of minors who are approved shall be placed on the “Approved Minors in Ministry” list (“the Minor List”). Only those people who are on the current list shall be allowed to work in the church.

5.4 Minor Child Protection Training (MCPT). Minors in ministry that are in sixth grade and higher shall receive orientation and training concerning the definition and prevention of abuse. New minors in ministry shall be trained concerning other policies and procedures which are applicable to their position. MCPT shall be completed before each worker is approved to work.

5.5 Transition from Minor Worker to Adult Worker. When the minor turns 18, he/she will have 30 days to submit his/her adult Application for Ministry. They will then go through the adult worker approval process as specified under the Adult Worker Selection and Screening.

6.0 HISTORY OF COMMITTING CHILD MOLESTATION

In no case shall any registered sex offender/predator be allowed to work in any capacity at Niceville Assembly of God.

7.0 WORKER SUPERVISION

7.1 Two-Adult Workers Rule. At least two approved adult workers shall be present with minors at all times. This rule protects minors by reducing the risk of abuse, and protects adult workers by reducing the risk of false accusations. The two-adult worker rule applies to all official church functions, including - but not limited to - services, classes, field trips, and parties. The only exception to this rule applies in designated situations where a member of the Pastoral Staff must meet privately

with a minor to offer spiritual guidance. Two approved adults shall be required in each vehicle transporting minors in relation to official church functions.

7.2 Adequate Staffing. Two approved adult workers may not be enough for some activities such as large classes, campouts, lock-ins, and so on. All official church functions which involve minors shall be staffed adequately enough to ensure safe activities and compliance with this policy. In the event of emergencies when adequate numbers of workers are not present for a function, department heads may request other fully-qualified and approved workers to substitute for those who are absent. In the event of extreme conditions when staffing levels drop below what is required, the function shall be canceled or postponed.

7.3 Visibility into Classrooms. It is important that visibility into classrooms be maximized, while potential classroom disruptions are minimized. The windows on classroom doors shall remain clear and unobstructed at all times. Barriers shall not be erected which delete visibility into classrooms.

7.4 Diapering and Restroom Policies. All workers shall follow the diapering policy specified in the Nursery Policy. Except in Nursery restrooms, a worker shall not enter a restroom alone with a child. Workers shall not enter a restroom stall with a child. Children who are capable of pottying by themselves should be allowed to do so, but workers shall adequately monitor children's travel to and from the restroom. Workers may provide assistance in unfastening and fastening young children's clothing, but such assistance shall not take place inside a restroom stall. Doorstops shall be used to assist in supervising children in restrooms.

7.5 Administration of Medicine Prohibited. Workers shall not administer any medication of any kind to any child. Medication may be administered only by a child's parent/guardian. If a child's unreported rash is discovered by Nursery workers, then the parent/guardian shall be contacted to determine the rash's severity and next course of action. The Nursery shall not stock or supply any diaper ointment or powders.

7.6 Immediate Feedback for Inappropriate Behavior. All workers who observe abuse of any type shall be responsible for providing immediate feedback to those who exhibit the inappropriate behavior. All inappropriate behavior shall constitute an incident, and shall be reported by the observer as specified later in this policy.

8.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Responsibilities. Everyone shall be responsible for reporting child abuse. All workers who observe abuse or have reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred shall immediately report such concerns to any Pastor of the church. In the interest of quick reaction to a potentially harmful situation, these concerns may initially be expressed verbally. The allegations shall then immediately be documented in writing on an Incident Report Form (*Form NAGF-IR-001*) and shall be submitted to a Pastor. Incident Report Forms shall be readily available in the church. In the event that a Pastor is not available, such allegations shall be documented in writing and submitted to a deacon or deaconess. (According to Florida Statute Title V, Chapter 39.201 "any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected...shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department's central abuse hotline" 1.800.962.2873 or 1.800.96.ABUSE).

8.2 Protection for Good Faith Reporting. Protection shall be provided for good faith reporting of child abuse. Such protection includes maintaining anonymity of the accuser, alleged victim, and alleged abuser, except to those with a compelling need to know in order to conduct an initial low-level investigation.

9.0 RESPONSE PLAN

9.1 All Allegations Considered Seriously. All allegations received by the church shall be considered seriously by the church leadership and shall be dealt with expeditiously. Under no circumstances shall allegations of abuse be taken lightly or ignored. For the purpose of investigating the alleged abuse and resolving the issue, sensitive care and support shall be provided for the victim, victim's family, and alleged abuser.

9.2 Low-Level Investigation. Upon written receipt of an allegation of abuse, the church shall conduct a prompt, low-level investigation. This investigation shall focus on gathering the facts of the allegation. It shall include separate discussions with the victim in the presence of the victim's family, all witnesses, and the alleged abuser. The pastoral staff and official board may call upon church officials, denominational leaders, clinical experts, the church insurance company, legal counsel, and others as necessary to assist in conducting a low-level investigation.

9.3 Documentation of Investigation. The church shall carefully document the details of the investigation. Such documentation shall be held with strict regard to confidentiality.

9.4 Compliance with Child Abuse Reporting Laws. If the low-level investigation reveals reasonable cause to believe abuse of a minor has occurred, then the church shall comply with the state's child abuse reporting laws. Such incidents of potential or actual abuse shall be reported to the proper civil authorities.

9.5 Documentation of Corrective Actions. Once the issue is resolved, the church shall carefully document the corrective actions taken to reduce the risk of abuse in the future. For the purposes of education and risk reduction, these corrective actions shall be clearly communicated to all involved in the abuse incident.

9.6 Response to Media. The church shall prepare a press release statement which appropriately responds to the alleged abuse situation and actions being taken by the church to address the alleged incident. One person from the church shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor to be the spokesperson to the media. The church leadership shall decide when to release the statement to the media.

10.0 ATTACHMENT

Form NAGF-IR-001 Incident Report Form

11.0 REFERENCES

Florida Statute Title V, Chapter 39.201

