

# ICC Children’s Ministry Policies

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY	2
Definitions	3
Why Child Protection Policies are a necessity.	4
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	4
TRAINING	4
SCREENING	5
SUPERVISION and CONDUCT	6
PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE	8
Incidents Involving Minors:	8
PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO QUESTIONABLE CONDUCT	9
Incidents Involving Minors:	9
PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO ABUSE ALLEGATIONS	9
Incidents Involving Minors:	9
Sickness Policy	11
Photography/Video Policy	11
Diaper change policy	11
Crying children policy	11
<b>ICC Children’s Ministry Policies</b>	<b>1</b>

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Elders, members, and staff of Iron City Church ("ICC") recognize that our children and youth are entrusted to the care of adults who lead church programs and activities.

The Elders, members and staff of ICC are committed to maintaining an environment in which children and youth are protected from physical and sexual abuse, and in which church staff or volunteers are protected from potential false allegations of abuse.

To achieve the goals of preventing either incidents of abuse or the unfounded assertion of such conduct, ICC has developed appropriate procedures to be followed in the following areas:

- The screening and selection of volunteers involved in the supervision or custody of minors;
- Orientation and training of approved volunteers;
- Supervision of these volunteers by trained leadership;
- Reporting of and responding to any incident and/or allegation of the abuse of a minor.

This policy is intended to protect children and youth from abuse in church sponsored events. The general policy and procedures shall apply to all persons, whether compensated staff, volunteers, all church members, visitors, and guests. This policy does not constitute a contract between the church and its volunteers. As situations arise in the future which are not adequately covered by a specific procedure or policy, this policy may be revised by the Elders of ICC.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

## Definitions

ICC: Iron City Church.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND/OR MINORS: Any person under 18 years of age involved in programs provided at or sponsored by ICC.

STAFF: All full time or part time paid employees of Iron City Church

VOLUNTEERS: Any paid or unpaid volunteer worker who serves in an ICC ministry to children. They agree to submit to the leadership and government of the church in their service.

CHILD ABUSE: Any wrongful treatment of a child which results in any non-accidental injury to the child, including physical, emotional, and/or sexual injury. Evidence of injury may include scars, bruises, wounds, medical findings, etc.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: Any staff or volunteer or other person or caretaker who has or is involved with the care of a child who commits, permits or encourages the commission of any sexual act, touching, or contact, vaginal intercourse, other sexual gratification, the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child in such, or any other offense against public morality and decency, by, with, or upon a child, or who commits, permits or encourages any act or prostitution with or by a child.

PHYSICAL ABUSE: Physical child abuse occurs when a child is purposely physically injured or put at risk of harm by another person.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. This can involve sexual contact, such as intentional sexual touching, oral-genital contact or intercourse. This can also involve noncontact sexual abuse of a child, such as exposing a child to sexual activity or pornography; observing or filming a child in a sexual manner; sexual harassment of a child; or prostitution of a child, including sex trafficking.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Emotional child abuse means injuring a child's self-esteem or emotional well-being. It includes verbal and emotional assault — such as continually belittling or berating a child — as well as isolating, ignoring or rejecting a child.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

**Why Child Protection Policies Are A Necessity. -**

<https://ecap.net/no-longer-optional-why-child-protection-policies-procedures-a-re-necessary-for-most-churches/>

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ICC is subject to Alabama law regarding the protection of children.

ICC will seek to prevent the abuse of children when they are participating in church programs. Preventive measures shall include screening, training and supervision of custodians of minors, including particularly staff and volunteers as defined in this policy.

It shall be the responsibility of the ICC Elder(s) accountable for any ICC program that involves minors to ensure that appropriate practices are implemented within those programs and activities to reduce the risk of abuse. The specific circumstances of each program shall be considered in the development of those program-specific practices.

### TRAINING

1. All staff and volunteers will be given a written copy of this policy. They will be asked to read this policy when applying to serve with the children's ministry.
2. Information and instruction concerning this policy and related abuse issues involving children shall be offered periodically, and at least annually, at ICC. The following goals will be addressed:
  - Protection of children in ICC programs and activities;
  - Protection of providers from exposure to "high risk" situations and false accusations;
  - Awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse;
  - Understanding of the reporting procedures and the procedures for responding to incidents/reasonably suspected incidents of abuse.
3. This information and instruction is required training for each new staff member and volunteer involved in the custody of children.
4. Training sessions to update and refresh staff and volunteers shall be provided annually in conjunction with Child Protection Policy renewal requirements.

### SCREENING

1. All staff and volunteers or other persons involved in the custody and care of children at ICC shall attend regularly and be a member of the church. Only ICC members may serve as teachers.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

- a. Exceptions to this provision will be made only in cases where the ICC staff member or Elder directly responsible for the ministry in question recommends and requests that an exception be made on a case by case basis.
  - b. Exceptions require the approval (by agreement) of an ICC pastor and ICC Elder chairman.
2. All new staff members and volunteers involved in the custody and care of children at ICC shall complete a confidential Application that will ask for references and include questions concerning child abuse. The application will be submitted to the ICC staff person or Elder responsible for the ministry.
3. Initial background checks (via on-line websites) and/or reference checks on regular staff and volunteers will be made by or under the direction of the ICC ministry staff member directly responsible.
  - a. Legal and criminal background screening will be conducted using an independent, fee-based service; this screening process will be directed by the Iron City Personnel Committee.
  - b. All compensated volunteers will be required to complete all screening processes prior to the first day of employment.
4. Application files for all volunteers shall be maintained by ICC and shall include the Application and the results of any investigations or inquiries made pursuant to an applicant's responses on these forms.
5. The personnel files of all compensated ICC staff working with children shall include the Application and the results of any investigations or inquiries made pursuant to an applicant's responses on these forms.
6. Confidentiality of the completed and signed forms utilized to implement this policy shall be maintained by limiting the access to these filed forms to the Personnel Committee, the ICC member directly responsible for the ministry specific to the application and the Elders or its designees.
7. The applications and information gained because of any reference check, background check or other related investigation of persons whose offer to serve is withdrawn or declined before service will be destroyed.
8. Anyone who is known or determined to have committed abuse of a child under the age of 18 or of a mentally or emotionally handicapped person at any time during his/her adult life is not eligible for service either as employee or a volunteer and, if already serving, will have his/her service with Iron City terminated immediately, with no later opportunity to serve as an employee or volunteer to work with children or youth. Iron City will not knowingly allow anyone who has been convicted of child abuse to participate in any children's ministry, either as a staff or volunteer.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

9. Anyone who committed child abuse or neglect before the age of 18 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account such factors as age, seriousness of the offense, acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment.
10. Any staff member or volunteer whose dependent children have been determined to have committed child abuse will be asked to follow through with an action plan put in place to resolve the causes and effects of the abuse, taking into account such factors as age, age difference between offender and victim(s), seriousness of the offense(s), acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment. Failure to follow the action plan will lead to termination of their service with Iron City. Reapplication would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and involve effective treatment and other factors listed above.

## **SUPERVISION and CONDUCT**

1. Staff and volunteers or other persons involved in the custody and care of children at ICC should observe the "two adult rule," which requires an adult working with children to be accompanied by at least one other adult volunteer or staff member. The "two adult rule" should be followed at all times. The "two adult rules" must be adhered to strictly in areas considered to be high isolation settings.
2. One-on-one supervision of a minor or any other exception to the "two adult rule" is acceptable ONLY in the event it occurs in a public area that is not considered to be a high isolation setting.
3. Diaper changes must only be provided by **adult** female volunteers.
4. All rooms used by adults and minors together should be accessible (unlocked doors) and have open visibility (a window in the door or the door left wide open).
5. Church staff or their designees shall make unannounced visits to all scheduled classes or small group situations involving children, youth, teachers and volunteers.
6. Parents or legal guardians are welcome to observe any activity involving their child.
7. ICC staff and volunteers will not search children.
8. Physical force (hit, slap, pinch, push, hold against their will) will not be used except in self-defense or when deemed necessary to prevent possible injury. Staff and volunteers will work in teams in all significant discipline problems.
9. Discipline should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. It should not include slapping, hitting, shaming, yelling at, or belittling a child.
10. Volunteers and staff shall avoid favoring or showing differential treatment to a particular child or youth to the exclusion of others.
11. All volunteers for any overnight church activity involving minors must be approved in advance by the ICC Elder or program staff responsible for that program.
12. The parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring that the child is not left alone in an unsupervised area. Pick up of children up to and including 2nd grade shall only be by the parent or guardian unless written, signed notification is provided for other arrangements.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

13. Technology should be used appropriately to protect children or youth from abuse and exploitation. Volunteers and staff shall not engage in social networking, texting or any other means of private communication with children and youth without the permission of the parents or guardian. All electronic communication must not be erased or deleted and made available for review upon request by the ministry leader or Elders.
14. Volunteers and staff shall not let children view or hold their personal devices (phone, tablet, ipad, ipod, etc). This is strictly prohibited when serving with children at Iron City sponsored events.
15. Words can also be used to support and encourage a child, such as praise, positive reinforcement, and appropriate jokes. Inappropriate verbal interaction includes the following: shaming, belittling, humiliating, name calling, using harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate the child, cursing, or making derogatory remarks about the child. Inappropriate verbal interaction also includes telling off-color or sexual jokes, making sexually suggestive comments, telling inappropriate secrets, or inappropriately discussing sexual encounters or desires with children.
16. Because healthy, caring touch is valuable to children but unhealthy touch is abusive, the following guidelines apply:
  - a. Touch shall be open rather than secretive.
  - b. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
  - c. Touch should be in response to the need of the child, and not the need of the adult.
  - d. Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
  - e. It should be with the child's permission and any resistance from the child should be respected.
  - f. Touch should always communicate respect for the child.
17. Volunteers and staff should avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they are able to do for themselves, including personal hygiene and bathroom breaks, dressing, bathing, etc. If a child voices that they need help at a bathroom break, please allow a female volunteer/resource to assist.
18. The following signs of affection are generally appropriate within specific contexts: verbal praise, side hugs, shoulder to shoulder hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head (when culturally appropriate). For smaller children, touching their hands, faces, shoulders and arms, arms around their shoulders, hugs, or holding them when others are present.
19. The following behaviors between volunteers and staff and children are inappropriate or may be perceived as inappropriate and shall not be engaged in: touching buttocks, chests, genital areas, or thighs; showing affection in isolated areas or when alone with a child; sleeping in bed with a child; inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development; flirtatious or seductive looks; any form of affection that is unwanted by the child; showing sexually-suggestive

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

videos or playing sexually-suggestive games with any child; any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual in nature.

20. Volunteers and staff members shall monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything that could be misinterpreted. Failure to notify the director over children's ministry and ICC elders if you have knowledge of a staff member or volunteer intentionally violating policies will result in removal of serving in ICC Kids for a temporary or permanent timeframe (removal timeframe discussed and decided by ICC elders)

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE

**CHILD ABUSE:** Any wrongful treatment of a child which results in any non-accidental injury to the child, including physical, emotional, and/or sexual injury. Evidence of injury may include scars, bruises, wounds, medical findings, etc.

### Incidents Involving Minors:

1. Incidents of abuse that occur or are reasonably believed to have occurred at ICC, and where a child's physical or mental health has been or may be adversely affected, shall be reported as soon as possible to the county Department of Human Resources (DHR) or to a local law enforcement agency. Any such incident must also be reported to the ICC staff or All of the Elders. The Incident Report must be completed.
2. All incident reports MUST follow the Reporting Protocol Policy.
3. Organizations that use ICC facilities that have reporting procedures of their own shall follow those established reporting practices. In addition to following their notification procedures, however, any outside organization that uses ICC facilities shall also notify the ICC Pastors, Elders, or designee as soon as possible about any such incident involving any person affiliated with that organization using ICC facilities.
4. The identity of any person making such a report will, pursuant to Alabama law, be kept confidential by the agency or department receiving the report, except as provided by law. Such exceptions would include the DHR providing such information to the law enforcement agency investigating the report.
5. ICC will follow and comply with Alabama law concerning reporting of abuse. A copy of [Alabama Code Section 26-14](#) is attached to this policy and is incorporated by reference as a part of this policy.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

## PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO QUESTIONABLE CONDUCT

### Incidents Involving Minors:

1. All members of ICC, staff and other adults participating in programs on the property of ICC are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse of children and youth. They shall be encouraged not to hesitate to caution others that activities they observe are, or may appear to be, questionable.
2. *Questionable* behavior when observed shall be reported to the ICC person directly responsible for the specific area of ministry involved, as such conduct can *precede* abuse, even if the observed act itself is not.

## PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

### Incidents Involving Minors:

1. Facts and circumstances of an incident shall be documented. Concurrently with the notification to the DHR (refer to "Reporting Protocol Policy"), the ICC person directly responsible for the area of ministry involved or pastors shall be notified of the incident of abuse. In the event the person making the report wishes to remain anonymous or otherwise prefers not to document the report, the ICC person or Pastor notified of the incident shall document the report.
2. The Pastor, Elder, or designee shall be responsible for securing the safety of the potential victim in cases where DHR is not responsible for the potential victim, for immediate notification of parents/guardian of the potential victim.
3. In the event any in-depth investigation becomes necessary, it shall be carried out by DHR and/or appropriate law enforcement personnel and not by church personnel.
4. Persons accused shall be immediately relieved of further responsibilities involving direct contact with minors until any investigation is completed and the allegations are cleared *or* charges are formally brought against the accused. If charges are made, the Elders shall consult with the accused regarding future responsibilities.

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

5. The Pastor(s) or his designee shall report incidents of abuse to legal counsel for the church, the liability insurer for the church and the Elders or the committee of the Elders designated to receive and address any such reports.
6. The Pastor(s) or his designee shall document all steps taken in the course of handling the incident or report. The documentation shall be kept in a confidential file maintained by ICC.
7. All parties involved in the incident or reasonably suspected incident, including the accuser, the accused, and the victim, shall be treated with dignity, support, and love. Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the fullest extent possible.
8. If Iron City Church is asked for a reference for anyone whose service or membership was terminated due to a violation of our Child Protection Policy, Iron City will generally disclose the reasons for termination. Further, if Iron City becomes aware that a former employee or volunteer of Iron City who was dismissed becomes employed by or volunteers to work with children or youth in another organization, Iron City will seek legal counsel on our duty to warn the organization by making that organization aware of the reasons for Iron City's termination of employment or volunteering of the individual.
9. The Pastor(s) shall be the sole spokesperson for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. However, where appropriate the Pastor(s) and Elders may designate another individual to act in such a capacity with regard to a given case. The Confidentiality of all persons involved shall be safeguarded to the fullest extent possible.

## 2 Adult Policy Violation

If a volunteer violates the 2 adult policy for the first time they will receive a verbal warning by a children's ministry staff person. If the same person violates the policy for a second time they will receive a warning by a pastor or elder over the children's ministry. If there are any further violations of this policy then the volunteer will be relieved from serving in children's ministry. The volunteer may not be permitted to serve in children's ministry for any events (including Parents' Night Out, Members Meetings, and supervising children for off-campus Iron City events)

# ICC Children's Ministry Policies

## Sickness Policy

When children and volunteers should **not** come to children's ministry:

Symptoms to look out for are fever over 100.4 F, vomiting, diarrhea, severe coughing, nasal drainage, etc.

If you have covid or believe you have been exposed to covid, please follow [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) (go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>)

## Photography/Video Policy

Photos/Videos of children should *not* be taken without the parent's consent.

Parents should be notified that pictures may be taken at the time of drop-off (sign should be posted/ consent form for parents to sign stating where image/video will be posted)

## Diaper change policy

All **female adult volunteers** in the Babies and Younger Toddlers Classes will be required to check/change diapers throughout the service. 15 minutes before the service ends **every** child's diaper needs to be checked/changed. **Diapers must be changed unless the diaper is dry.** Place a sticker on the child's name tag each time they are checked and/or changed during the service.

*Step-by-step instructions on how to change diapers will be posted in the class by the changing table.*

## Crying children policy

If the child cries without ceasing after drop-off for over 15 minutes then the parents will be notified.

Parents can decide if they would like to allow more time for their child to calm down. If the crying continues for an additional 15 minutes after parents are notified then we will message parents and ask if they can pick up their child or assist in calming them.

***We can use this policy with some discretion. Some children cry at every service and their parents are aware. If we are able to manage the class well with the child continuing to cry then we can allow them to stay and/or wait longer to call their parents.***

## Children's Ministry Pickup

We ask that after the service ends to please pick up your children as soon as possible. 10 minutes after the service ends a courteous reminder text will be sent to the parents/guardians of the child asking them to pick up their child if not done so already. Please inform the resource worker serving in children's ministry that Sunday if you know pickup may run later than 10 minutes.