

Camano Chapel
Camano Island, WA
PREVENTION AND REPORTING OF CHILD / YOUTH ABUSE
PLEASE KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

“And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” Matthew 18:5-6

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible.” Eph. 5:11-13

Camano Chapel places great emphasis upon our ministry to children and youth. We stress the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God. The Chapel stresses the importance of providing a safe and secure environment for children and youth entrusted to our teaching and care. We recognize that formal and written policies and procedures will help prevent the opportunity for abuse or molestation to occur. These policies and procedures are adopted for the protection of our children and youth, our employees, our adult volunteers, and our church family as a whole.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to a child or youth or minor means a person under eighteen (18) years of age.

DEFINITION OF CHILD / YOUTH ABUSE

Child “abuse” or “child abuse or neglect” means the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances, which indicate that the child’s health, welfare, and safety is harmed.

SELECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKERS

Paid Employee: Every applicant for any paid position shall complete an employment application and/or Application for Children/Youth Workers form for a background check, or the applicant will not be considered for employment by Camano Chapel. No person shall be employed before the Chapel has received and reviewed the applicant’s completed employment application and completed background check of appropriate references. The employment application and reference checks will be placed in secure personnel files.

Adult Volunteers: As a condition precedent to volunteer work with children or youth, the prospective volunteer shall have been a member or regular attender of Camano Chapel for six (6) months preceding commencement of the volunteer work, unless said requirement is waived by mutual agreement of the Children’s Director or Student Ministries Pastor and Ministry Director. All prospective volunteer workers for children or youth ministries shall complete an Application for Children/Youth Workers form. This application includes a necessary background check as well as two personal references, and Statement of Faith. All current volunteer workers are expected to have this application on file. All information gathered would be held by the church in a confidential file.

PROTECTIVE POLICIES FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

We are committed to the safety of our children / youth and the protection of our workers at Camano Chapel. In order to accomplish this safety goal we have the following child care policies:

1. At least two (2) volunteers/workers, minimum one adult, must be present at all times in any children's ministry. No children are to ever be left alone for any reason. The only exception to having only one volunteer/worker alone is when there is one taking a child(ren) to the restroom.
2. All volunteers/workers are required to fill out the Application for Children/Youth Workers and be checked by the Washington State Patrol.
3. **Diapers:** Female volunteers/workers will change all diapers in designated areas.
4. **Restroom:** All doors will be **left open** while children's programs are operational. All children shall occupy the restroom **alone** unless assistance is required. When volunteers/workers are escorting a child to the restroom, they must stand **outside** the door, unless assistance is required.
5. **Physical contact:** Any physical contact between workers, children, and/or youth should be engaged in with care so as to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Physical contact should never take place in private.
6. All incidents of biting, falls, or injuries must be reported to the parents by the volunteers/workers.
7. Youth helpers must be at least twelve (12) years old to work in any childcare situation.
8. Any worker who violates these Protective Policies may be asked to resign his/her involvement with the ministry.

PROTECTIVE POLICIES FOR YOUTH MINISTRIES

Discretion in staff members' and ministry leader volunteers' personal lives is fundamental to both spiritual integrity and to continuing to do spiritual ministry among students and their families (Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-16). To live wisely and without any hint of sexual misconduct we keep the following standards:

1. Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction with any student is inappropriate.
2. Dating or going out with any junior or senior high student is forbidden.
3. Discretion must be used in physical contact with any students. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. A hug around the shoulders is not sexual abuse, but a full body-to-body hug, stroking, massaging, or affectionate kissing raises questions. Any overt display of affection, appropriate hugging, for example, should be made in a public setting in front of other group members.
4. Sexual gestures or overtures to a staff member by a student should be reported to one of the ministry leaders or the student ministries pastor so that discussion can be held with the student.
5. Staff should form male / female ministry teams whenever possible.
6. One-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place. As a general rule, when counseling a member of the other gender, invite a member of the same gender as the counselee to be the observing staff.

7. When a situation arises where you are alone with a student of the other gender, quickly move that situation to a public setting. Make the meeting as brief as necessary to accomplish God's purpose.
8. Driving alone with a student of the other gender should be avoided at all times.
9. Romantic or sexual attraction for a student by an adult leader should be brought up and discussed with the youth pastor for prayer and guidance.
10. All suspicions of child or sexual abuse must be reported to the youth pastor who will report it to the mandated reporter in the organization. That person will notify the appropriate agency.
11. Any knowledge or suspicion of any youth ministry staff having an inappropriate relationship with a student must be reported promptly to the youth ministry leader. If the person in question is the leader, the report should be made to that person's supervisor.
12. No wrestling or physical horseplay should ever occur between staff and students of the opposite sex.
13. Church staff or volunteers should obtain the consent of the student's parent or guardian before scheduling outings with that student or spending time with the student in an unsupervised situation.

REPORTING CHILD / YOUTH ABUSE

The primary responsibility of paid staff and ministry volunteers is to the potential victim of child abuse and his/her safety. It is the policy of Camano Chapel that all situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for the privacy and confidentiality of all persons involved. Confidentiality regarding the complaint and investigation will be maintained as much as possible. Each person interviewed will be instructed not to disclose any information to other persons. No complaint will be treated as frivolous. Each complaint will be considered serious until proven otherwise. In order to best minister to and serve the needs of children and youth, the following reporting procedures are to be taken should suspected or alleged child abuse occur within any Camano Chapel sponsored activity or if evidence of possible home originated abuse is discovered.

Any suspected or alleged child abuse or any questionable activity involving children or youth is to be reported immediately to either the Director of Children's Ministry, if the suspected abuse reporting is within the jurisdiction of the Children's Ministry, or to the Student Ministries Pastor, if the suspected abuse is within the jurisdiction of Student Ministries. It is the responsibility of these pastoral and program directors to then immediately report the suspected abuse to the Senior Pastor, or Ministry Director. If the Children's Director or Student Ministries Pastor is not available, it is the responsibility of the reporting staff person to provide the information directly to the Senior Pastor, or Ministry Director. The reporting staff person is to put in writing on the day of the incident a confidential verbatim/exact account of the observation and/or accusation. The Senior Pastor or Ministry Director will take appropriate steps initiating an immediate investigation in accordance with Camano Chapel policy and state child abuse statutes. Investigation will be commenced in a prompt and timely manner.

Due to the sensitive nature of these issues, it is the practice of Camano Chapel to follow the protocol described below:

1. Immediate child abuse assessment to determine if the case needs to be reported.
 - a. Interview alleged victim with or without the presence of his or her parent(s) depending upon the circumstances with interests of the child paramount.
 - b. If deemed appropriate to continue investigation, interview accused.
 - c. Interview supervisor of the accused (if any).
 - d. Interview witnesses (if any). Great care must be used during interviews to protect against an adverse affect upon subsequent investigations.
 - e. If reasonable cause exists that child abuse may have occurred, report to county department of social services or local law enforcement agency and/or respond with church discipline.

2. Keep victim and victim's family informed of Chapel actions; stay in contact with the family to express concern and make the services of the Chapel available to them, including guidance and counseling, as necessary.
3. Responding to media, the Chapel spokesperson, who would be either the Senior Pastor or in his absence the Ministry Director, emphasizes awareness of the problem of abuse, concern for victims, and steps taken to reduce risk and provide safe environment (this is not the time for silence or "no comment").
4. Keep the Chapel family informed, as appropriate, when complaint is publicly reported.

REPORTING AND BOUNDARIES FOR REGISTERED OR ACCUSED OFFENDERS

An additional responsibility of paid staff and ministry volunteers include reporting knowledge of registered or accused offenders attending Camano Chapel. It is the policy of Camano Chapel to handle individuals in this situation balancing forthright accountability with Christian love; respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the individual. All matters of investigation and fact-finding will be handled in the same manner described earlier in this policy.

Knowledge of any registered or accused offender attending Camano Chapel is to be reported immediately to one of the Pastors, Elders or Ministry Director. The Ministry Director will take appropriate steps to gather facts and speak with the proper authorities concerning the accused individual.

Due to the sensitive nature of these issues it is the practice of Camano Chapel to follow the protocol described below:

1. Contact law officials having jurisdiction over this matter and, as necessary, the Dept. of Social & Health Services for specific facts and direction.
 - a. In cases of registered offenders – facts include: information of public record concerning the charges and boundaries established for the individual (i.e., restraining and/or no trespass orders, etc.)
 - b. In cases of accused offenders – facts include: public information about the investigation and nature of charges.
2. To protect the children and youth of Camano Chapel, at least two Elders will meet with the registered or accused offender to:
 - a. Provide care, encouragement, and accountability to the individual.
 - b. Communicate a "no contact" boundary with children and youth at any on or off campus Chapel related event.
 - c. Name specific and appropriate "all-church" functions open to the individual.
 - d. Offer and establish a mentor/small group relationship for purposes of ministry and accountability.
3. In situations where an individual has been accused, investigated, and acquitted of all charges, the Elders will review the elimination of established boundaries on a case-by-case basis.

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Child Abuse Policy