

# **SPOKANE VALLEY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**



## **CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY PROGRAM**

Adopted: October 17, 2011

Revisions Approved by SVNC Board: June 14, 2022

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# **CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY PROGRAM FOR SPOKANE VALLEY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

## **Introduction**

Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene (“SVNC”) has adopted the following Child and Youth Safety Program. It is important that all SVNC paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for the children and youth attending SVNC. The following material includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the Protection and Prevention policies, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children and youth.

## **Purpose**

These policies and procedures are designed to reduce the risk of inappropriate conduct and interactions with the children and youth of SVNC in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist SVNC in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of physical or sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.

## **Definitions**

The following terms are used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any pastor, minister, preacher, cleric, or employee who is paid.
2. *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer*: Any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors.

5. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
6. *Child Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

## **Protection and Prevention**

### **Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures & Requirements**

Except as outlined below, Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures for specific ministries, the following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application and Ministry Application*: Any paid staff and volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and/or the Ministry Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses
- Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving
- Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned
- References from previous employers and organizations that serve children
- Pending criminal charges
- Criminal history information

Our Ministry Application includes questions regarding:

- Current address
- Volunteer experience
- Criminal history information
- Personal references

Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes SVNC to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

All volunteers will need to complete a Ministry Renewal Application on a biennial basis which shall include questions regarding current contact information (including address, phone number and email) and updated criminal history information.

2. *Employment and Ministry Screening Process.* After receiving an Application, a member of the paid staff of SVNC will implement the following screening procedures:

- Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
- Conduct interviews with qualified applicants, if applicable

If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, refer to SVNC's Employee & Volunteer Background Check Policy for additional screening steps involved. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as a volunteer, document the reasons for overriding the prior information.

- Contact all listed references for volunteers in child or youth ministry lead or supervisory roles. References do not need to be obtained on ADP parents/guardians assisting in their child's classroom, nor assistant roles for one-time events. Contact each of the volunteer applicant's references and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
- Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.

3. *Three-Month Rule:* All volunteers in a lead position will be required to have been regularly involved in SVNC for three months. A volunteer may be involved in an assistant role without being required to have been regularly associated with SVNC for three months, based on the discretion of ministerial staff.

4. *Criminal Background Check:* SVNC will conduct a criminal background check through Ministry Safe on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. Refer to the Employee and Volunteer Background Check Policy for additional screening steps involved. All criminal background checks will be updated on a biennial basis.

### 5. *Additional Requirements:*

- *MinistrySafe Videos:* Must be viewed every four years by all paid staff and volunteers over 16 years of age and older with the exception of ADP parents/guardians and one-time event volunteers.
- *Required Annual Meeting:* Attend annual Child and Youth Worker Training meeting each year for paid staff and volunteers with the exception of ADP parents/guardians and one-time event volunteers.
- *Child and Youth Safety Program Acknowledgement Form:* Must sign Child and Youth Safety Program Acknowledgement Form biennially.
- *CPR Safety Certification:* Current safety certification is required biennially for W-2 paid nursery and Amazing Day Preschool staff. This training will be provided at no cost to the employee.

### **Confidentiality**

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible.

### **Supervision Procedures**

Except as outlined below for specific ministries or unless an extenuating situation exists, SVNC:

1. Will have adequate number of screened paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
2. Will have, whenever possible, at least two screened paid staff or volunteers (one of whom will be an adult) in the room when children through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade are present. Doors will be left fully open if one paid staff or volunteer needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both paid staff and volunteers are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.

If a minor volunteer does not have MinistrySafe training, the presence of two trained adults will still be required.

3. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.

4. Will request, whenever possible, a parent, guardian or other person authorized by the parent or guardian to sign in all minors through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade and only release minors through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade to a parent, guardian or other person authorized by the parent or guardian.
5. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip to the church office.
6. Will use two screened paid staff or volunteers when transporting minors through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade in vehicles. Will require one screened paid staff member or volunteer when transporting sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) through twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade youth. For SVNC youth outreach programs that may require the use of the van, two screened paid staff or volunteers are preferred. Neither paid staff nor a volunteer shall transport one minor in a vehicle unless there are at least two paid staff or volunteers.
7. Will require that children no longer in the Nursery through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade be supervised when they go to the restroom. The paid staff or volunteer supervising any restroom visits will make sure that the restroom is safe for the child and wait outside the facility. Whenever possible, the supervisor will be the same sex as the minor. In the case of young children (such as a pre-schooler), one paid staff or volunteer may assist in the restroom with another paid staff or volunteer holding the restroom door open.
8. Only individuals authorized by the Personnel and Policy Committee shall be allowed to change diapers and assist minors in the restroom located in the Nursery.
9. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of SVNC property.
10. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
11. Will require any paid staff or volunteer who is ill (has a fever or has a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch), or otherwise unable to fulfill their duties to contact the church office to find a substitute who has been approved as a volunteer through the above-mentioned screening process. No volunteer may appoint a substitute without contacting the church office to see if the proposed substitute has been properly screened.
12. Will return any minor who is ill to their parent or guardian as soon as the illness is discovered. If return is not possible, the ill minor should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the minor can be returned to their parent or guardian.
13. Will administer basic first aid for any minor injury with the parent or guardian being notified of the minor injury when the minor is picked up. In the event the injury requires medical treatment beyond basic first aid, the parent and guardian must be immediately notified and the injury should be given immediate attention. Any injury that occurs must be documented on an accident/injury report with said report filed with the church office.

## **Behavioral Guidelines for Volunteers and Paid Staff**

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, SVNC events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors, including lap sitting, hugging and other invasive physical touch. All physical contact should be limited to brief shows of support or praise. Only a minor's shoulders, upper back, arms and hands should be touched when initiated by the child. In the case of Nursery and pre-school classes, these guidelines may not be practicable in all circumstances; therefore, all physical contact to comfort or otherwise console a minor by a Nursery or pre-school class worker must occur in the presence of other workers and must never be done alone or in isolation.
4. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
5. If an inappropriate relationship develops between a minor and adult, the paid staff or volunteer should maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
6. If one-on-one pastoral care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.
7. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of SVNC for handling.

### **Disqualification**

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence

3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors

### **Response to Physical or Sexual Abuse**

SVNC will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of physical or sexual abuse. All accusations of physical or sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege physical or sexual abuse and those who have been accused of physical or sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving physical or sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Senior Pastor or an appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Senior Pastor is the individual accused of physical or sexual abuse, then the District Superintendent will conduct the investigation. In order to provide a healthy, safe and secure environment and to protect the rights of the accused, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws
2. Report the matter to SVNC's insurance carrier
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier
4. An official of SVNC may refer the person making the complaint to the appropriate counseling
5. SVNC may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender
6. An official of SVNC will communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of SVNC
7. An official of SVNC will communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator
8. An official of SVNC may hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of SVNC's legal counsel

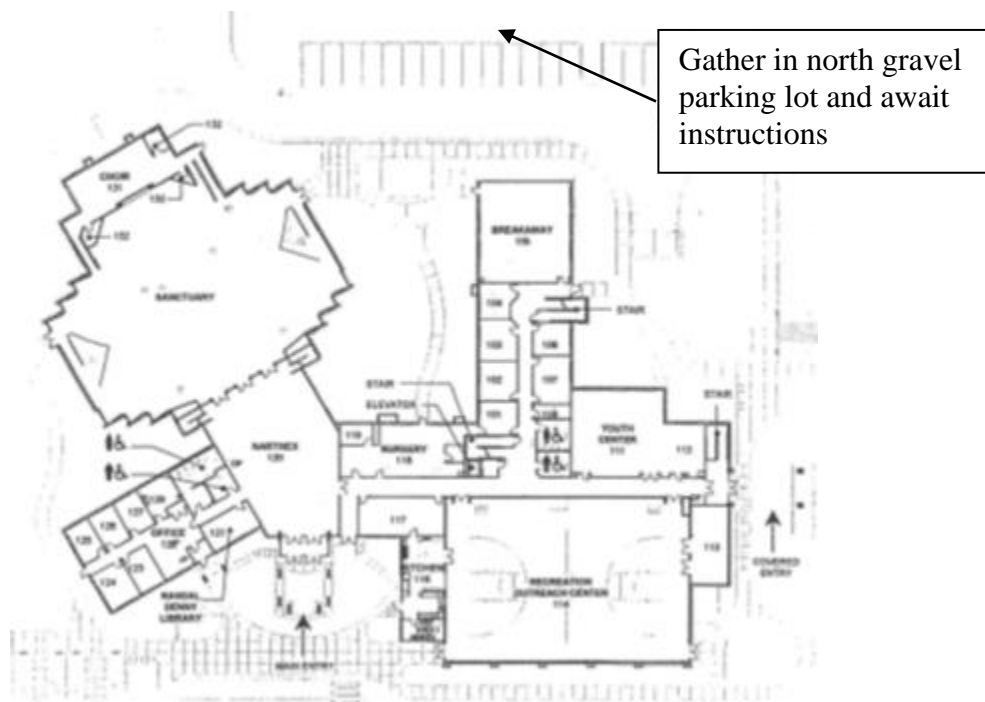


# Fire Evacuation Plan

## Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene

In the event of a fire alarm, teachers will guide their classes to the closest safe exit out of the church. At each classroom entrance door, there is a map with the exit routes drawn out. You must use your judgment to ensure that the route you are taking is the safest one. Use of an alternate route is encouraged if your path is unsafe.

1. If at all possible, the teacher should grab the attendance sheet to make sure all children/attendees are accounted for. Guide your class to the nearest exit as indicated on the map by the classroom door. Close the door after exiting to keep the fire from spreading.
2. All evacuation routes must lead to the back gravel parking lot on the north side of the building. Teachers are to stay with their class in a group and keep control of their students at all times. Assembly students in a line with teacher at the lead and verify that all of your students are present and accounted for. The gravel lot is where parents/guardians will pick up their children after the firemen have given an an-clear.
3. Take caution as fire trucks may be coming through the parking lot at any time.
4. The fire department has asked that no one exit the parking lot by vehicle until instructed by a member of the church staff or a fireman as it could cause problems with fire trucks entering the parking lot.
5. A member of the church staff will let people know when it is safe to leave the parking lot.





## **Child and Youth Safety Program Acknowledgment**

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. SVNC reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with SVNC or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of SVNC's Child and Youth Safety Program. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of SVNC.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date

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Parent/ Guardian Signature (if under 18)

*Please detach this page, sign, and return it to the Church Office.  
Please keep the rest of this document for your reference.*

*Revised 4/15/2024*