



Child Protection Policy

Purpose

To establish proper preventative measures to protect children/youth under the age of 18 against sexual misconduct as well as to specify courses of action in the case of allegations or an actual incident regarding sexual misconduct. It will also outline the procedures utilized for the pre-screening of Riverside Children/Youth Workers.

Definitions

Riverside Children/Youth Worker – any person, paid or volunteer, who supervises or assists with supervising children and/or youth under 18 years of age while children and/or youth are participating in Riverside Covenant Church events, ministries, educational opportunities, trips, or other activities organized by Riverside Covenant Church.

Pre-screening of Riverside Children/Youth Workers

1. All Riverside Children/Youth Workers will complete a volunteer application. Each Riverside Ministry is responsible for maintaining their volunteer application form, but it must at least contain how long the applicant has been a part of Riverside, previous and current ministry involvement, references, and a statement of faith. All completed applications should be kept on file by Riverside Ministry Leaders or the Riverside Office Manager.
2. All Riverside Children/Youth Workers will be interviewed by (have a discussion with) a Riverside Ministry Leader or a person designated by them. Prior to the interview the totality of the Riverside Children/Youth Worker's volunteer application will be evaluated by the Riverside Ministry Leader for competency of the position applied for, and whether the applicant will foster a safe environment for children and/or youth. If the Riverside Ministry Leader feels the applicant meets these criteria, they will then meet with the applicant to ask any clarifying questions and to answer any questions by the applicant. The date of the interview, and the interviewer's initials should be maintained in the confidential office records.
3. All Riverside Children/Youth Workers will provide at least two (2) professional/personal references upon application to be contacted prior to any service with the church. The references are to be contacted by a Riverside Ministry Leader or a person designated by them. The date each reference was contacted, whether the reference affirmed the applicant or not, and the name and signature of the one contacting the reference should be maintained in the confidential office records.
4. All Riverside Children/Youth Workers will undergo a criminal background check prior to becoming a Riverside Children/Youth Worker. Applicants have the right to see their results at any time and for any reason. The results of the applicant's criminal background check will be maintained in the confidential office records, as well as record of the results will be preserved by Riverside's criminal background check provider.
5. No person convicted of a sexually related crime is eligible to become a Riverside Children/Youth Worker.

6. If a Riverside Children/Youth Worker will be transporting anyone under the age of 18 an additional search of the applicant's driving record will be conducted. All drivers must be at least 21 years of age. The results of this search will be maintained in the confidential office records.
7. All Children/Youth Worker applicants will be notified as to whether their application was approved or denied. Applicants will be evaluated at least on how long the applicant has been a part of Riverside, previous and current ministry involvement, references, interview, statement of faith, and criminal background check.
8. If an applicant is denied from becoming a Riverside Children/Youth Worker for any reason, they will be informed of the specific reasons for their denial and will be counseled on how they might rectify their inability to serve.
9. All Riverside Children/Youth Workers will receive a brochure regarding their duty to report child abuse and neglect. Workers are expected to read and follow the applicable Indiana laws, reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect to the local police department and a Riverside staff member.
10. Riverside Children/Youth Workers are required to reapply to work as a Children/Youth Worker at least every five years. The interview and reference checks are not required for re-application, but completion of a renewal volunteer application and a criminal background check are required for re-application.
11. Should issues or concerns arise regarding a Riverside Children/Youth Worker's ability to serve after their volunteer application is approved, a Riverside Ministry Leader or a person designated by them should speak with the volunteer and others involved to determine whether the volunteer should continue to serve. If allegations of sexual misconduct are made against a Riverside Children/Youth Worker then the following Riverside Sexual Misconduct Prevention Procedures should be applied.

Training

All new childcare workers will be required to go through an online child abuse prevention training followed by a brief quiz. The results of the quiz will be maintained in the confidential office records. If the quiz score is low, the Riverside Ministry Leader may request that you go through the training again.

Two Adult Rule or Rule of Three

It is the goal that at least 2 screened, unrelated adult workers (18 or older) OR 3 individuals (at least 1 must be a screened adult and remaining two no younger than 5 years of age) will be present at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Classrooms may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session, but all classrooms without windows will remain open, and all classroom remained unlocked so the RiverGuide can easily see into each classroom at any time. This rule would also apply in a vehicle.

Standard of Conduct

All workers, volunteer, paid, full-time and part-time, of Riverside Covenant Church are expected to comply with the established policy on Sexual Misconduct. Any actions contrary to the church policy will be dealt with swiftly and may include disciplinary measures up to and including termination, as well as legal ramifications when applicable.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Procedures

A. Reporting Procedures

1. All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously.
2. All allegations should be reported to the local police department and a Riverside staff member as soon as possible.

3. The local police department and/or Riverside Staff should notify the parents or legal guardian of all children involved.
4. All situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
5. Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities when applicable.
6. No accused will be addressed by anyone other than the local police department and/or Riverside Staff until the safety of the child or victim is secured.
7. No victim involved in an allegation or anyone responsible for reporting an allegation will be retaliated against.

B. Investigation of an Allegation

1. All allegations will be investigated expeditiously by the local police department and Riverside Staff.
2. Any accused Riverside Children/Youth Worker will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed.
3. All details, interviews, and information will remain confidential to those legitimately involved in the investigation. Any individual or group responsible for a breach in this confidentiality is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
4. No individual involved in an allegation or anyone responsible for investigating an allegation will be retaliated against.