

Ryot Church of the Nazarene Child Protection Policy

for Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Prevention

09/01/2021

Ryot Church of the Nazarene (herein referred to as RCON) does not tolerate sexual abuse or misconduct in the church or during any organization related activity. RCON provides procedures for employees, volunteers, and church board to report any misconduct. Those suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment or membership. As well as criminally prosecuted.

General

It shall be the goal of RCON to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional wellbeing of all children participating in church activities, including participants in all daily or temporary programs. The church's goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled events.

Future revisions to this policy may be made with the authorization of both the Pastor and the church board.

Definition

The term "child" or "children" shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection and Screening Process

As part of the program, RCON is committed to maintaining a diligent screening process that could include but not limited to applications, personal interviews, criminal background checks, and personal references.

Minimum Age

All primary volunteers must be 18 years or older. Younger persons may assist adults but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

Six Month Rule

No applicant/volunteer will be allowed to work with children in any capacity until they have been an active and participating attendee of the church for a minimum of six (6) months. The applicant/volunteer must be a regular attendee and involved in church activities for that period. This time of interaction between leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant/volunteer for working with children.

Volunteer Applications

RCON keeps confidential all information received in the applicant/volunteer selection process. Such information will be stored with access only to appropriate church staff and church board on a need-to-know basis.

A Ministry Application must be completed before consideration of any position in the church. Those already approved as volunteers will not be asked to complete the form to continue working with children.

Survivors of Child Abuse

Survivors of childhood sexual abuse or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of the church family. Their experience with abuse and their recovery process may be pertinent to their work with children. Any applicant/volunteer who is a survivor of child abuse in the past, must meet with the Pastor prior to service in a position with direct relation to children. This will not necessarily disqualify them from service, however the desire of RCON is to assist and care for survivors of abuse as well as to fulfill our obligation to protect the children left in our care.

Criminal Background Checks

A PA Criminal Background Check (Act 34) and PA Child Abuse Registry Check (Act 151), as well as an FBI Clearance Check (Act 114) shall be required for all employees which have direct contact with children.

A PA Criminal Background Check (Act 34) and PA Child Abuse Registry Check (Act 151), as well as a FBI Clearance Check (Act 114) shall be required for all children's worker positions for volunteers which have any contact with children. A volunteer can sign an FBI Disclosure Statement in place of FBI Fingerprinting if the volunteer has been a full-time resident of Pennsylvania for the last ten (10) years.

All teen volunteers must have a completed Teen Background Form on file. This form includes their full name, address, phone number, birthdate, Social Security Number, and a PA Driver's License, or a Photo ID.

In accordance with PA State Law requirement, all volunteers and employees in direct contact with children, as well as the church board, will acquire and maintain the Mandated Reporting Certificate (Act 31). Further information can be found in the Reporting Obligation section of this policy.

In addition, the church office will access the National Sex Offender Public Website known as SMART Check, once per calendar year. A background check will be done for each employee and volunteer and the results will be included in their individual file.

Anyone unable to provide all clearance requirement documents, will not be permitted to volunteer in any capacity where there is a potential for direct contact with children.

Clearances must be renewed and filed every five (5) years. Anyone who fails to submit updated clearances before the expiration date of those on file, will be informed by email that they are prohibited from having any direct contact with children until valid clearances are submitted and have been filed with the church office.

An Employee/Volunteer Checklist will need to be completed by the Event Supervisor and submitted to the church office at least one week prior to any event.

A Ministry Application Processing form will be filled out and filed along with all clearances with the employee/volunteer's individual files. A copy will be placed in folders labeled Children's Ministry and NYI and will be in possession of an adult leader on all church related activities where children are in attendance. This form is subject to change.

An example of the form is provided for adult and teen volunteers.

Ministry Application Processing

Ryot Church of the Nazarene

406 Dunkard Hollow Road

Alum Bank, PA 15521

(For Office Use Only)

Name of Applicant: _____

Birthdate: ____/____/____

___ Completed and Signed Ministry Application

Date Received: ____/____/____

___ Photo ID on File

Date Issued: ____/____/____

Criminal Background Checks

___ Act 34 PA Criminal

Date Completed: ____/____/____

___ Act 114 FBI or ___ Signed Disclosure

Date Completed: ____/____/____

___ Act 151 PA Child Abuse

Date Completed: ____/____/____

___ Act 31 Mandated Reporting

Date Completed: ____/____/____

___ SMART Check

Date Completed: ____/____/____

___ Acknowledgement Form of Church Policy

Date Completed: ____/____/____

___ Copies of Certificates Received

___ Copies Placed in employee/Volunteer's File

Date Filed: ____/____/____

Renewal Dates

___ Photo ID Date: ____/____/____

___ Act 34 Date: ____/____/____

___ Act 114 Date: ____/____/____

___ Act 151 Date: ____/____/____

___ Act 31 Date: ____/____/____

___ SMART Check Date: ____/____/____

Ministry Application Processing for Teen Volunteers

Ryot Church of the Nazarene

406 Dunkard Hollow Road

Alum Bank, PA 15521

(For Office Use Only)

Full Name of Applicant: _____

___ Address

___ Phone Number

Birthdate: ___/___/___

18 years old on ___/___/___

___ Photo ID on File

___ School ID

___ PA Driver's License

Expiration Date ___/___/___

___ Social Security Number on File

___ Copies of Certificates Received

___ Copies Placed in employee/Volunteer's File

Date Filed: ___/___/___

Renewal Dates

___ Photo ID

Date: ___/___/___

Vehicle Safety

Persons who drive privately owned vehicles for conducting RCON business or transporting children must maintain a current valid PA driver's license and must have proof of insurance and comply with all other church transportation policies. No volunteer will be permitted to transport a child by themselves.

First Aid Training

It will be the goal of RCON that most who work with children will maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or the equivalent) as required by applicable licensing requirements or other local regulations. The church will pay the cost of this training. Volunteer workers are encouraged to get training if they frequently accompany children on activities such as recreational activities, camps, retreats, mission trips, or any other activity with an element of risk.

ID of Workers

All employees and volunteers who are engaged in work with children must provide a current Photo ID to be kept in their personal file. This includes all teenage volunteers.

Acknowledgement of Church Policies

All applicants/volunteers must acknowledge in writing that they have received a copy and understand the church's policies pertaining to the protection of children and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants/volunteers sign the *Acknowledgement of Receipt Form*. A written copy of the church policy will be available by request. The policy will also be accessible through the church website at www.ryotnazarene.org.

Supervisory Requirements

It is the policy of RCON to provide adequate supervisory control of persons working with children participating in all church programs. The following regulations shall be applicable to all workers having contact with children participating in all church programs.

Safety of Children

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in church programs to promote emotional and physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists, such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure, or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

Two Person Rule

It shall be the goal of RCON that a minimum of two workers/volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a church activity regardless of the number

of participants, location, or activity. A teen volunteer may be present with an adult. The purpose is to avoid one-on-one interactions between adults and minors that are not easily observable to others. If individual meetings must be held, the door to the room being used must be kept open.

Some Youth Sunday School Classes may have only one adult in attendance as the teacher while the class is in session. In these instances, doors to classrooms will remain open, or windows must be installed in the door for full visibility.

At no time should an adult ever be in a room or enclosed area with a child.

In the event of an overnight activity, males and females will be assigned separate areas. Men will not chaperone girls' activities without a woman present and women will not chaperone boys' activities without a man present.

Observation of Children

At no time will an adult meet alone with a child in any room where the door is closed or in an area where they cannot be seen. A clear glass window will be in the door of all rooms typically occupied by children.

Diaper Changing/Restroom Policy

Infant/Toddler Age

Parents are encouraged to change diapers immediately before leaving their child in the nursery.

Diapers will be provided by parents.

Diapers will be changed in the nursery by volunteers with another volunteer present for regular attendees.

Visiting parents will be informed that if a need arises for their child's diaper to be changed, that a volunteer will notify them.

All volunteers will maintain valid clearances.

If provided spare clothing, a child may be changed by volunteers with another volunteer present, except in the case of a visiting child.

Preschool Age

Parents are encouraged to take their child to the bathroom immediately before class.

Volunteers will supervise children using the bathroom as needed.

The bathroom door will remain open at all times.

Volunteers will be expected to give minimal help with the explicit knowledge to all other volunteers that it will be happening and for a specified time.

A parent/guardian will be contacted if the child needs additional help or if the child has an accident requiring a change of clothes.

Volunteers will assist children with hand washing after bathroom use.

Elementary Age

One child will be permitted to use the bathroom at a time unless being supervised by a volunteer.

The bathroom door will remain open at all times.

A volunteer will never enter a bathroom stall with a child.

A parent/guardian will be informed of any emergency situation.

Volunteers will remind children about hand washing after bathroom use.

Teen Age

One teen at a time will be permitted to leave a classroom or event for a bathroom break.

Worker Training

Each new volunteer will be given a copy of RCON Protection Policy. They must sign a statement indicating they have received and read the policy before they can begin working with children.

Awareness of Church Policy

There will be a periodical review of the definition of child abuse and neglect as defined by law and the church's policy concerning these crimes. These reviews can be conducted at least once a year and following any change in or addition to such policies. Each employee/volunteer will acknowledge participating in a periodic review of the church policies and procedures. The signed **Acknowledgement Form: Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Prevention Policy** shall be retained in the personal file of all employees/volunteers. This form is subject to change.

An example of the form is provided.

Acknowledgement Form: Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Prevention Policy

I acknowledge that I received and read the RCON Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Prevention Policy and/or had it explained to me. I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by all rules contained in this policy. I also understand how to report incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct as set forth in the policy.

I acknowledge that I will be alerted when changes and updates are made to RCON Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy and will be responsible for reading and complying with said updates.

Employee/Volunteer's Printed Name

Employee/Volunteer's Signature

Witness Signature

Date of Annual Review

Children's Pickup

A child twelve years or younger shall not be taken from or allowed to leave church property, either unattended or in a group without specific parental permission.

Children who are six years or older are permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity without further supervision of the workers unless otherwise instructed by the parent or guardian.

Release of Claims

A permission form including emergency contact and medical information as well as a release of claims must be filled out and filed for each child attending any church events. Nothing will be added or taken away from said forms without consent from the church board. These forms will be renewed yearly beginning January 1, of the current year, and expiring December 31 of the same year. It is the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian to give any updated information to the church. These forms will be kept in folders labeled Children's Ministry and NYI and will be in the possession of an adult leader on any church related activity where children are in attendance.

In the event that additional activities are scheduled that present a greater potential liability exposure, an additional signed Activity Participation Agreement will be required for each individual event.

A copy of the form will be included at the end of this policy.

Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

RCON is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and or child protective services.

Reporting Policy

It is the Policy of RCON to report any incident of child abuse or neglect toward any child that the "Church" is in contact with.

We do not treat any suspicion as frivolous.

Mandated Reporters must make an immediate direct report of suspected abuse to Childline, either electronically @ www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis or by Calling 1-800-932-0313 or 814-623-4804.

Those reporting abuse will notify the Pastor immediately after making a report to Childline.

The Pastor will notify legal counsel as well as the church insurance agent that an abuse report has been filed with the appropriate local or state agency.

The Pastor will notify church leadership insisting on complete confidentiality as later described.

The Church will cooperate fully with authorities.

The accused will be suspended from all duties involving children until the official investigation has been completed.

The Pastor will inform Social Services of the steps that are being taken by the church.

It will be Social Services responsibility to keep the assumed victim and parent/guardian informed of the status of the investigation.

The Pastor, in consultation with legal counsel and church leadership, will determine the amount of information believed to be appropriate to relate to the congregation. Keeping in mind that commenting in detail on an ongoing investigation is usually not wise.

In instances where evidence is inconclusive, the Pastor and church leadership should act with the advice of legal counsel in consultation with law enforcement officials depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration of the victim and the victim's family's request.

In an instance where child abuse is confirmed, the church will immediately dismiss the worker/volunteer from their position. Termination will be considered appropriate in these circumstances.

Reporting Obligation

RCON policy in accordance with PA State Law requires all volunteers and employees in direct contact with children, as well as the church board, to acquire and maintain the Mandated Reporting Certificate (Act 31).

According to PA Law, anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected is required by law to report this information.

If child abuse is suspected, you should call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313 or at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

Church leadership should also be notified immediately of any suspected abuse.

Reports Required

Any worker/volunteer of the church who has cause to believe that a child's physical or emotional health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report that belief according to the following procedure:

The worker shall immediately report to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313 or at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

The worker shall report belief of abuse or neglect to the Pastor or to a member of church leadership who will then inform the Pastor.

The Pastor will notify legal counsel.

The Pastor will notify the parents of child (unless the parent is the person responsible for the abuse or neglect).

The Pastor will notify the church's insurance agent that an abuse report has been filed with the appropriate local or state agency.

Incident Report

The person making a report should identify:

The name and address of child.

The name and address of person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child.

Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

Confidentiality

All report of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church will be cause for immediate dismissal. In no case shall the identity of the alleged victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

Investigation of Alleged Abuse or Neglect

It is the policy of RCON not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of abuse and a condition before reporting the allegation to the proper law enforcement authorities or protective services.

No person shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation either through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person, or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been neglected or abused. Interviews shall be conducted by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported or, when appropriate by the legal counsel or persons representing the church in an official capacity.

All employees and volunteers of the church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

Suspension of Church Related Duties

A person accused of child abuse or neglect will be suspended from all church related duties involving children. This removal of duty should occur in such a way that an innocent person is not immediately deemed guilty. There are false claims made every year. If the allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, the employee/volunteer can be returned to their prior position.

Preservation of Records

Copies of all documents relating to an event of abuse or neglect, including a list of all persons known to be present or in the vicinity shall be transferred to the Pastor to determine if the documents are complete in accordance with church policy. If any documents are missing, written notations will be made and given to the church office administrator who shall retain them until advised that all criminal and civil investigations and actions have been completed.

Ministerial Care

The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the child and the parents in securing appropriate counseling, care, and support. If the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the

church, the staff shall encourage and assist the individual in securing appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counseling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest. All persons shall act towards the child, the parents, and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity.

Liaison with the Community

The Pastor will serve as the church's sole access to media. The church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim, and the extensive steps taken to address the safety of all children.

The following is a SAMPLE of a Ministry Application form that may or may not be used for new volunteers.

Ministry Application

Today's Date: ____/____/____

Name: *(Please Print)* _____
Last (Maiden Name) First Middle

Current Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Number of years at this address: _____ If less than 5 years, list previous address below.

Previous Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Birth Date: ____/____/____ Driver's License #: _____ State: _____

Current Home Phone #: _____ Cell Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Current Employer: _____ Occupation: _____

Marital Status: Married ____ Separated ____ Divorced ____ Cohabiting ____ Single ____

If married, spouse's name _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone #: _____

How long have you consistently attended this church? _____

Are you a member? Yes ____ No ____

Have you been convicted of or entered a guilty plea or no contest to any crime other than a minor traffic violation? Yes ___ No ___

Have you ever provided an illegal substance to a minor? Yes ___ No ___

Have you ever been charged with sexual harassment? Yes ___ No ___

Have you ever been investigated by Child Protective Services or any Law Enforcement Agency? Yes ___ No ___

Do you have health concerns that might impact your ability to perform the function of the ministry position? Yes ___ No ___

If you have responded "Yes" to any of the above questions, please explain here and on the back of this page:

Describe your volunteer or career experience with children or youth: _____

List any gifts, training, or education that prepared you for ministry with minors: _____

Do you have an age group preference for ministry, and why? _____

Read Carefully

I certify that the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I will complete and turn into the church office all clearance requirement certificates including Act 34, Act 114, Act 151, and Act 31 before beginning to work with the youth. I release and hold harmless from all liability any individual or organization requesting, supplying, or verifying information in connection with this screening process.

Date: ___/___/___

Printed Name

Social Security Number: ___/___/___

Signature

