

Golden Hills Community Church POLICY AND PROCEDURE	NUMBER: 0070	PAGES: 1 of 5.
	RELATED ISSUES: Policy 0012- Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy 0057- Background Checks Policy 0067- Complaints	
	ISSUED DATE: September 16, 2024	
	REVIEW DATE: March 25, 2025	
	REVISION DATE: 4-7-25	
DEPARTMENT: Business Administration	SUBJECT: Child Protection	

I. **PURPOSE:**

GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH takes its responsibility to practice due diligence very seriously, especially in safety for our children and vulnerable adults. (*Vulnerable adults are 18 or older but unable to legally consent, or unable to comprehend the nature of certain actions, or susceptible to coercion or abuse*). We understand that broken trust can have permanent consequences to a child's mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. We believe that requiring our staff and volunteers to take extra precautions in order to be above reproach is our duty, not just our legal obligation under California law

II. **POLICY:**

GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH (GHCC) has instituted Child Protection Measures, which will be always followed. These measures include alignment, background checks, training, and procedures.

III. **PROCEDURE:**

A. **Church Child Protection Measures are Mandatory for:**

- All GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH staff members
 - Regardless of role or classification
- All regular volunteers
 - Regular volunteers are defined as volunteers with GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH who is 18 years of age or older and who has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for 16+ hours per month or 32 hours per year
 - In order to serve as a regular volunteer with GOLDEN HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH, an individual must attend GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH for a minimum of 6 months.

- Administrators
 - Elders, Deacons, Ministry leaders, HR administrators, etc.

B. ALIGNMENT

Staff and volunteers are required to agree to the standards of behavior in this policy and always exhibit biblical behavior. Violations of standards may result in immediate dismissal, removal from position, and legal ramifications. Any person listed above as a staff member, volunteer, or administrator will be screened and reference checked. Every person will complete the following Alignment documents or processes:

1. Complete an application.
 - Provide basic identifying information
 - Previous experience with children
 - Church affiliation
 - Employment Information
 - Provide reference
 - Disclose criminal convictions
- Authorize and complete a background check process, to include Live Scan
- Sign a certification form confirming they pose no risk
- Sign a Commitment to Standards of Behavior/Conduct Guideline Agreement
- Complete a personal interview
2. References provided should be of an institutional nature, as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from Golden Hills Community Church where the applicant has worked and/or volunteered with children in the past. GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH will contact a minimum of 2 references.
3. To certify that they pose no risk, all candidates will sign and date the following statement:
I certify that I have never participated in, or been accused, convicted, or pleaded guilty or no contest to abuse or any sexual misconduct.
4. GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH will securely retain all Alignment documentation and will decide on his/her suitability for the desired role. In addition to keeping documentation confidential and securely stored, GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH will limit access to those who are required to view it. Candidates deemed unsuitable for any reason will be removed from consideration.

C. BACKGROUND CHECKS

1. An administrator, employee, or regular volunteer shall undergo a background check to identify and exclude any person with a history of child abuse, in compliance with California law. To meet the requirements of California law, Live Scan background checks, including fingerprints will be run on all individuals being offered employment, all current employees, administrators, and all regular volunteers. *Because GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH wishes to follow all best practices for background checks, GHCC will run nationwide checks and county court record checks based on addresses of residence back 7 years and re-run them every 5 years.*

2. A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Management Team, based on guidance from the FBI. Convictions for an offense involving children, violence, and convictions as a sex offender will disqualify an applicant. Additionally, any conduct contrary to GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH's, mission may prevent someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will disqualify an applicant.

D. TRAINING

All administrators, employees, and regular volunteers will complete training in child abuse and neglect identification, as well as training in child abuse and neglect reporting. This training requirement will be met by completing the online [Mandatory Reporting Training](#) provided by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention in the State Department of Social Services OR training recommended by the insurance provider.

E. POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. Teenage Workers

When it is necessary to have the assistance of teens in caring for children during programs or activities, the childcare worker:

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- Must be screened as specified above
- Must be supervised by an adult
- Must never be left alone with children

2. Reporting

a. Though California's AB506 law does not specifically require all people covered under our

Child Protection Policy to be mandated reporters, it does require two mandatory reporting adults to the greatest extent possible to be present for any program or event where minors are under GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH supervision. For this reason, GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH will require all individuals working with children and vulnerable adults to report internally to a ministry supervisor, and when appropriate, report to authorities. Childcare workers often could notice signs of abuse.

Some examples of abuse may include:

- Physical Abuse - Any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional Abuse - Emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual Abuse - Any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect - Depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

b. Should an incident of abuse or neglect be reported as occurring at GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH, or during GHCC sponsored programs or activities, GHCC will:

- Notify the parent(s) or guardian of the child within 24 hours of receiving a full report.
- Immediately place the alleged abuser on leave, instruct them to have no contact with the alleged victim or witnesses, and to remain away from GOLDEN HILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH property pending an investigation.
- Report all allegations to the civil authorities, complying with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting, and fully cooperate with the investigation by civil authorities.
- Notify their insurance company, complete an incident report, and forward any documents relating to the incident and/or allegations.
- Seek legal counsel regarding a spokesperson. If approved by counsel, GHCC will designate a spokesperson, should one be needed to respond to the media. No one else would be authorized to speak to the media.
- Arrange a pastoral visit, for those who desire it. This is for the purpose of providing support during the time of crisis, not for investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
- Remove any person who is not found innocent from their position working with children or youth.

c. When needed, reporters are to use [California Suspected Child Abuse Form 8572](#). Anyone

who suspects that a child has been, or is in danger of, abuse or neglect may contact the county Children's Protective Services [24-hour emergency response phone](#) or the local police department or county sheriff.