

Child Protection Policy Part 1

Safeguarding Our Children

Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon

The Child Protection Policy (CPP) of the Ligaya ng Panginoon consists of two booklets.

This first booklet, ***Safeguarding Our Children***, deals with how we safeguard our children and protect them from abuse. We use this material to train those who work with our children and youth. It provides the norms and guidelines for how our programs and activities are conducted.

The second booklet, ***Pastoral Protocols and Guidelines***, covers our protocols and pastoral guidelines for dealing with situations that may occur in the conduct of our programs.

The two booklets work together to safeguard our children in the context of our community youth program and to provide responsible protocols for when issues arise.

The second booklet also contains appendices: Workers Personal Conduct Policies, other policies and documents for use in child and youth programs.

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Overview

This overview provides a summary of the scope and purpose of the Child Protection Policy (CPP), defines some key terminology used, and provides relevant contact information for reporting purposes.

Introduction

- A. Relationships between adults and youth and among stakeholders, i.e., community, parents, children/youth and youth workers, are a foundation of Christian ministry and are central to the life of Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon. These Child Protection Policies are not meant to undermine the strength and importance of loving personal contact. Rather, we hope to help child and youth workers strengthen Christian community and demonstrate their love and compassion for children and youth through sincere, genuine, and safe relationships at every stage of the youth program.
- B. This CPP document has been adopted by Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon to ensure that children and youth experience relationships in ministry as charitable, with no intention to do harm or allow harm to occur.
- C. Community staff and volunteers who will be working with minors are asked to carefully consider each standard in the CPP and agree to follow these standards before they begin serving children and youth. These standards require staff and volunteers working with minors to:
 1. Exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
 2. Conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Sword of the Spirit.
 3. Conduct their work in a responsible manner, faithfully fulfilling their duties, respectful and encouraging toward children in their care or under their oversight. They will act the same toward fellow staff members, seeking to set a good example for the children by how they relate to one another. Youth workers will seek to provide a safe and peaceful environment for the children with whom they work.
 4. Not take advantage of a pastoral, supervisory, moral ascendancy and/or authoritative or superior relationship for their own benefit.
 5. Not abuse, neglect, discriminate upon, exploit, commit violence, impose corporal punishment, bully, and commit similar or analogous acts on a minor. This does not include the use of physicality to defend the minor from harm from self, or others.
 6. Share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their supervisor.

7. Adhere to the laws of the Philippines regarding the reporting of suspected abuse of a minor.
 8. Accept personal responsibility for the protection of minors from all forms of abuse.
- D. Before engaging with community youth, community staff and volunteers working with minors are required to read and sign our Workers Personal Conduct Policies and to abide by the standards stated in the CPP.
- E. Likewise, parents are advised to be aware of these standards, so that they may recognize their responsibility in the effective work implementation of community staff and volunteers.

Purpose

- A. Protecting the emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual development and safety of children is an overriding priority for our life and mission in the Sword of the Spirit and in Ligaya ng Panginoon. Our programs will follow the laws, observe applicable cultural norms and practices, and meet the legal requirements of the Philippines, and church practices, if applicable. To do so Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon has reviewed, adapted, and intentionally applied this document to our own situation.
- B. In all these matters, our primary concern is for the well-being of our children and youth by the institution of an effective CPP and procedures and monitor compliance thereof.

Scope

- A. The CPP covers people, i.e., community members and non-members engaged to provide services, as well as entities, who work with children and youth in our community activities and programs. The CPP applies to our work with children of families in the community as well as children of non-members who participate in community programs or events.
- B. This document may employ or refer to different policies and approaches to different ages of children and youth, including applicable laws which are supplementary in nature.
- C. The approach to safeguarding children and youth during Sword of the Spirit regional youth programs is governed by the Kairos Child Protection Policy. Parents are encouraged to review those policies if their children participate in regional programs.

General Definitions

This document employs the following definitions.

- A. **Child/Minor:** Persons below eighteen years of age or those over eighteen years of age but who are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of physical, mental disability or conditions.
- B. **Youth Worker:** Community members (adults and minors, paid and volunteer) who work with children in community programs, services, and outreach.
- C. **Youth Program Coordinator or Program Director:** The person designated by the community to oversee a children's program or youth ministry.
- D. **Non-Community Workers:** External speakers, event organizers, and other individuals who relate to our youth in community-organized activities.
- E. **Supervisor:** The service leader to whom one serving in the Youth Programs directly reports (ex. the Coordinator is the supervisor of the Sector Director; the Sector Director/Directress is the supervisor of the Astig Group Leaders, the Camp Director/Directress is the supervisor of those serving in the camp, etc.)
- F. **Designated Guardian:** Any adult (i.e., sibling, relative, extended family member such as nannies or driver) who is designated or delegated by the Parents or Legal Guardians to care for, accompany, provide, and to look after the needs of the child participating in Youth Program activities.

Neglect and Abuse Definitions

- A. **Neglect:** harm or threatened harm to a minor's health or welfare that occurs through:
 - 1. Negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
 - 2. Placing a minor's health or welfare at unreasonable risk, or the failure to intervene to eliminate a known risk when the responsible adult can do so.
- B. **Abuse:** harm or threatened harm to a minor's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment.

- C. Violence refers to a single act or a series of acts committed by a youth worker against a child which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or other abuses including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. It includes but is not limited to the following acts:
- a. Physical violence
 - b. Sexual violence
 - c. Psychological violence, and
 - d. Other acts of violence

Guidelines

The following standards govern interactions with children in community child and youth programs. They are not designed nor intended to address interactions within a family. Recognizing that the position of youth worker carries the responsibility for appropriate behavior and protection of the children with whom they work, certain kinds of behavior are not acceptable.

Protection of Child/Minor from Abuse and Neglect

- A. The abuse or neglect of minors is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ, of our life together in the Sword of the Spirit and is prohibited under the laws of man and God. Youth workers have a moral responsibility to protect the children and youth in their care from abuse and neglect. To protect the integrity of the programs, youth workers should avoid even the appearance of impropriety or of putting a child at risk of harm.
- B. While performing their duties in community child and youth programs, youth workers shall refrain from unacceptable behavior including, but not limited to:
 1. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, controlled or illegal/recreational drugs
 2. Using foul, demeaning or abusive language in the presence of children
 3. Speaking to children in a way that could be construed by a reasonable observer to be harsh, threatening, abusive, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating
 4. Hazing or bullying
 5. Using corporal punishment
 6. Striking a child with a fist, open hand, foot, etc., grabbing and or holding a child with excessive force or threatening a child with physical harm
 7. Shaking, shoving, pushing, throwing or spanking a child
 8. Restraining a child with tape, cord or other items

9. Engaging in sexually-oriented joking or conversations with children unless the conversations are part of a legitimate lesson and discussion for teenagers regarding human sexuality issues.
 - On such occasions, the lessons will convey to children Biblical, historically Christian, and Sword of the Spirit teachings on these topics.
 - If youth have questions that go beyond the aims of the presentation, they should be referred to their parents or legal guardians.
 10. Being nude in the presence of children.
 11. Possessing sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, computer-generated images, etc.).
 12. Becoming overly involved or spending a great deal of time alone with any one child, including via social media.
 - Relating to a minor in the context of the youth program needs to be defined by the goals of the Youth Program and overseen by Parents and Supervisors.
 13. Giving special gifts to a minor without the knowledge of the parents or one's Supervisor (e.g. Sector Director).
 14. Establishing a one-on-one relationship with a minor beyond the established structures and objectives of the youth program.
 - Children with significant problems suggesting a need for professional counseling should be referred to their parents or legal guardian (through the Sector's Family Life Ministry coordinator).
 - One's supervisor should be alerted to significant concerns about a child.
- C. Minors can be encouraged and supported but not forced to participate in community programs and events.
- D. Youth workers should bring immediately to the attention of the on-site Supervisor uncontrollable, dangerous, or seriously disruptive behavior of a minor that requires removal from the activity or program. Parents or legal guardians shall be notified of actions taken.
- E. At the close of events and activities, Youth Workers shall release children only to their parents, legal guardians, or Designated Guardians. If uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child to an individual, Youth Workers will consult with their Supervisor before releasing the child. (Please refer to the Transportation section of this booklet for additional guidelines).
- F. Minors working as program staff should not normally teach or provide care for younger children without adult supervision.
1. Minor staff of suitable age and maturity may provide unsupervised care for short periods of time, provided adult staff are aware of this arrangement and are able to quickly assist if necessary.
 2. Teen staff may supervise groups of children without the immediate presence of an adult, as long as the whereabouts of the supervising adults are known and adult assistance is readily available.

G. Children under age twelve shall not be left unattended.

H. Teen participants and staff need to have immediate access to adult staff in the event of an emergency.

Two-Adult Rule

In the normal conduct of our programs, a team approach is used to manage activities and other interactions with minors.

Youth Workers should be aware of their own and other's vulnerability when alone with a minor. Youth Workers will also need to be careful with their actions so as to avoid being misunderstood or to cause others to doubt their intentions and motives.

In order to protect the Youth Worker and the Minor, we will employ the Two-Adult Rule as follows:

Rule #1. Ideally a minimum of two adults are present in activities or programs involving minors. This is especially important for oversight of activities held in private homes, in vehicles, closed rooms, or other private settings.

Rule #2. If Rule #1 (i.e., presence of two adults) is not possible, Youth Workers will be with minors in public settings such as restaurants, outdoor areas, etc. (i.e., with another adult present)

Rule #3. If Rule #2 is not possible, the Youth Worker will inform his/her Supervisor and/or the Parent about the meeting/engagement with the minor that was conducted in a private setting (i.e., in person, virtual/online call, text/message/email).

The goal of the Two-Adult Rule is to avoid relating with minors in secret and to ensure accountability to another adult.

Physical Contact with Children and Youth

A. Youth workers are prohibited from using corporal punishment for behavior management of children and youth. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, pushing, or other physical violence as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by children and youth.

1. On occasion, it may be necessary to physically intervene to prevent a child from injuring himself/herself or someone else. Under these circumstances, Youth Workers should use the least amount of force reasonably necessary to de-escalate the risk and restore order.

2. Corporal punishment is prohibited even if a parent or legal guardian has given permission for it to be used with their child.
3. Parents serving in a community child or youth program or activity, when dealing with their own children in that setting, shall adhere to the corporal punishment policies outlined above.

NOTE: Normal “horseplay” which is a typical aspect of relationships between teenagers and adult staff, such as sporting events, informal wrestling, tests of strength between children and staff, etc., are acceptable forms of behavior. Special care should always be taken to follow appropriate child and sexual abuse avoidance guidelines when participating in such activities. If, at any time, there is a question as to the appropriateness of a behavior, Youth Workers will immediately bring that behavior or the activity to an end.

- B. Appropriate affection from adults is important for a child’s development. Appropriate affection between minor participants and youth workers is necessary for the success of community child and youth programs. It constitutes a positive part of community life and youth ministry. Youth workers, however, should always be aware that physical contact with minors can be misconstrued and should occur:
1. Only in public, never in private.
 2. Only when physical contact is appropriate.
 3. Only when nonsexual: that is when an outside person exercising reasonable judgment would perceive it as nonsexual.

Remember the acronym PAN: Public, Appropriate, Non-Sexual

- C. The following forms of affection are considered appropriate for community child and youth programs:
- Brief side hugs
 - Pats on the shoulder or back
 - Hand-shakes
 - High-fives, fist bumps, and hand slapping
 - Verbal praise
 - Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms
 - Arms around shoulders
 - Holding hands while walking with small children
 - Sitting beside young children
 - Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
 - Briefly holding hands during prayer in a group setting
 - Piggyback rides to children under the age of 10
 - Holding children on the lap for those under the age of six

D. To maintain the safest possible environment for children, the following are forms of affection are not to be used in community child and youth programs:

- Lengthy embraces,
- Cross-gender frontal hugs
- Kisses on the mouth
- Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, bathrooms, staff-only areas or other private rooms
- Being in bed with a minor
- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Massage given by minor to adult
- Massage given by adult to minor
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development

One-on-One Care of Children and Youth

A. In the normal conduct of a community Youth Program, Youth Workers should provide care for children based on the “Two-Adult Rule.” Adult staff members will also adhere to this rule in their interactions with staff members who are minors.

B. One to One interaction may happen as follows

1. Spiritual mentoring for youth:

- As a minor nears adulthood, it may be appropriate for him or her to meet regularly with an adult Youth Worker of the same gender normally his/her small group leader for spiritual mentoring. It is expected that such meetings would be less common for youth aged 14 to 15, and more common for youth aged 16 and above. On the higher end of frequency, these meetings may occur once a month, but exceptions can be made with a Supervisor’s agreement.
- Such meetings should normally take place in a public setting (e.g. at a restaurant) and with the Parents and/or Supervisor informed beforehand.
- However, should the meeting be immediate/urgent/unscheduled, the Parent and/or the Supervisor needs to be informed soon after the interaction. Divulging the content of the one-to-one is subject to the Confidentiality Policies of the Youth Program.
- The Youth Worker should be able to state to the Parents and to his/her Supervisor the intended purpose of the meeting, even if it is simply in pursuit of building the relationship.

2. Providing hygiene services: Should it be necessary to assist a child to the restroom and provide hygienic assistance, the interaction between the Youth Worker and the child should be as observable (as far as modesty permits) by another adult, ideally the Supervisor, and as brief as is reasonably possible. Whenever possible, bathroom breaks should be scheduled as part of a program for children 4 to 9 years old and should be taken as a group.

Transportation for Children and Youth

In the normal conduct of community child and youth programs, the "Two-Adult Rule" applies. The following standards shall be observed when Youth Workers are involved in the transportation of minors:

- A. Parents are encouraged to provide, or to make suitable arrangements for the transportation needs of their child to the event venue or the pick-up/drop off point.
 - If the Youth Program provides for "mass transportation" (e.g., van or bus) to bring the youth together to the venue of the activity, the Two-Adult Rule also applies in this transportation situation.
- B. Permission, whether written or verbal, by a Parent or Legal Guardian is required for the transportation of a child (participating in community programs or events) by a Youth Worker
 1. If a minor, including a volunteer who is a minor, requires a ride home after an event, the parent or guardian should be encouraged to send a family member or make other arrangements to pick up the child.
 2. Youth Workers are not obligated to provide transportation for a minor joining youth program activities. If the Youth Workers agree to do so, they will apply the Two-Adult Rule.
- C. It should be made clear to Parents/Legal Guardians where children will be picked up and dropped off.
- D. If private cars are used for any community sponsored event involving children, ideally the drivers and vehicles are properly insured.
- E. Drivers should be well rested and otherwise able to operate the vehicle in a safe manner.
- F. Youth workers should not engage in unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with children while in vehicles. If special circumstances necessitate a youth worker being alone in a car with a minor, the youth worker will either drive the minor to the destination directly or speak to the Parent or Guardian first.

- G. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No stops, other than for essentials like food, gas, restroom breaks, or emergencies, should be made unless approved by the director of the program or event.
- H. Drivers for community children and youth programs and events shall be at least 25 of age. Exceptions to this rule will need approval from the youth activity Supervisor or the Sector Director.

Private Quarters: Sleeping Areas and Shower Rooms

- A. Youth Workers will not sleep in the same bed, in the same sleeping bag, or be alone in a tent/cabin/room with a minor unless the adult is an immediate family member of the minor.
 - 1. Minors and Youth Workers are not allowed to be in sleeping areas of Minors or Youth Workers of the opposite sex.
 - 2. Minors are not allowed to sleep together in one bed. Beds are to be arranged to allow for good adult supervision.

- B. Adults will respect the privacy of children in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers. An adult should only intrude to the extent that the health and/or safety of the minor participant would reasonably be at imminent risk of danger.
 - 1. To maximize accountability, supervisory staff should schedule a time for a group of children to shower and change together, arrange it so no staff member is alone supervising the group, and see that interactions between the staff and children are observable.
 - 2. Whenever possible, changing and showering facilities or other privacy-related arrangements for adults should be separate from facilities or arrangements for children.

Confidentiality when Working with Minors

Confidentiality is a key factor for gaining the trust of the youth. While this is important, it is not absolute. Personal information disclosed by a minor to Youth Workers should be held in confidence.

The following situations necessitate breaking the Rule of Confidentiality: (1) Serious moral wrongdoing (2) Self-harm (3) Harm to others.

In these three situations, the Youth Workers have the responsibility to inform the Parents/Legal Guardian (of the child) and/or his/her Supervisor of such disclosures by asking the minor to share the same to his/her parents (this is the preferred route); or by informing his/her Supervisor and/or the parents if the minor is not willing.

Technology and Social Media

We recognize that to effectively communicate and reach out to the Youth, we need to employ platforms that they want to use. (i.e., Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, etc)

When working with children and youth it is important to have a clear approach to the use of communications technology and social media both to protect minors and Youth Workers, particularly with accounts that are managed by the Youth Program and Youth Workers' personal accounts. Following are the principals we will follow in our use of social media:

Use of Technology for Communication

- A. We will use phones, online communication, social media, letters, and any other forms of personal communication in a way which is consistent with this CPP.
- B. Youth workers should be mindful that such forms of communication create a 'private setting' for relating to minors and thus require careful use, consistent to the "Two-Adult Rule"
- C. Such means of communication shall:
 - 1. Only be used with parental knowledge and consent
 - 2. Be used for passing on information and for making practical arrangements.
 - 3. Be limited in frequency.
 - 4. Be used as a primary means of building relationships or for casual/informal relating with minors.
 - 5. Normally not be used late at night.
- D. The frequency and content of communication with a minor, no matter what means are used, should always be appropriate to the role and nature of the relationship.

Use of Technology for Posting Content

- A. Youth Workers should not post photos or videos of a child for whatever reason without the permission of the parent and of the child.

Supervision of Programs & Events

- A. Parents have a right to be informed of the Youth Program and its activities.
Note: In the YA Program, the parents may request to observe the activities involving their children but will require the approval of the Sector Director / Youth Activity Supervisor based on its helpfulness to the activity or their child. Parents who desire to serve in the YA program shall fulfill the requirements of the volunteer application process.

- B. Programs for minors shall be supervised or administered following the "Two Adult Rule."
- C. Youth workers under the age of 18 shall work under the direction of an adult supervisor who is age 18 or older.
- D. Community leadership, with the active support of parents, is responsible to make sure that all community children and youth programs and events have adequate supervision and training.

Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies

- A. The Ligaya ng Panginoon Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies along with the community's CPP, serves to hold community youth workers responsible and accountable to follow specific guidelines and procedures and help ensure all participants have a shared understanding of child protection expectations and procedures.
- B. Youth workers will be given a copy of the community's CPP. They should review it thoroughly. Youth workers must sign the Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies stating that they understand and agree to follow its guidelines.

Emergency and Safety Plan

There must be a clear safety plan in place for each community sponsored program or event. Child/youth workers should know the emergency procedures to follow specific to that location/event.

Screening Child/Youth Workers

The Community Leadership are committed to provide the necessary Youth Workers to enable the implementation of the community's Youth Ministry. All Youth Workers must be screened by the Youth Program Leadership prior to entering active service. This includes volunteers who are minors working and serving with peers or children younger than they are. The depth of screening may vary according to the specific service.

Youth Worker Training

- A. Youth workers must receive regular Safe Environment Training. This training will clearly communicate acceptable ways of relating to minors, inappropriate behavior that will not be tolerated, and the lines of supervision within the program.
- B. In addition to the Safe Environment Training, the community will provide training appropriate for specific children and youth programs.
- C. For example, the training needed for volunteers to work in child care will differ greatly from the training needed to serve at a community camp.
- D. Community leadership is responsible to oversee the development and implementation of these training sessions.
- E. Programs may use outside resources to train child/youth workers. Such training opportunities include the Kairos Youth Workers Conference, church training programs, online video tutorials, applicable audio talks from the Sword of the Spirit, etc.

Documentation, Tracking, and Record Keeping

- A. Ligaya ng Panginoon will keep the records necessary to document that youth workers meet the training, screening, and other criteria established by this CPP.
- B. Copies of these records will be kept for at least five years.
- C. No one will be allowed to serve in a child or youth program without meeting the requirements established by this CPP.

Education for Community Members

Each year parents will be informed how youth workers will relate to their children, what is unacceptable behavior towards minors, and to whom parents should report concerns.