

Child Protection Policy Part 2:

Pastoral Protocols and Guidelines

Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon

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

The 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 rules and guidelines for how our programs and activities are conducted.

This 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 and to provide responsible protocols for when issues arise.

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

Please note: the definitions used in the first booklet also apply to this booklet.

This set protocols and pastoral guidelines governing proper conduct and behavior is being enforced for the principal purpose of creating and maintaining harmonious relations among our youth, youth workers, parents and other community stakeholders.

These protocols and pastoral guidelines will be enforced and applied uniformly and impartially to all concerned individuals.

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Introduction:

Engaging the proper civil authorities at the proper time as we deal with a child protection issue is a key part of our approach. Community staff and volunteers should know and adhere to the relevant government reporting requirements for their program, position, or operating license. We do not want to substitute community authority and pastoral processes for legitimate governmental authority and processes. In this regard, if parents or community members think they are endangered or that police or other legal authorities should be involved, we will fully support them in this engagement. If they feel a crime has been committed, they should contact the police or proper authorities.

Dealing with suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse can be challenging. Situations are sometimes unclear and relationships between brothers and sisters in the community can become stressed or damaged. As a result, the Sword of the Spirit International Assembly has agreed that local communities should engage outside pastoral resources of the region in dealing with any case of suspected or confirmed child abuse; we should not handle these matters alone. In particular, the community's Outside Coordinator and the Regional President must be notified of the concern at the onset and should be engaged in the process of dealing with the concern.

The process outlined below follows a sequence:

- Determining if there is a legitimate concern
- Reporting the concern to the appropriate parties
- Responding to a suspected case
- Responding to a confirmed case

Member communities in the Sword of the Spirit shall follow this process, unless it conflicts with the civil process.

Dealing with Suspected or Confirmed Child Abuse

Determination of Suspected Child Abuse

- A. Child abuse may be suspected by witnessing suspicious behavior, through the allegations of a victim or another witness, posts in private or group chats, social media posts, etc.
- B. Information that raises a reasonable suspicion of abuse must be acted upon promptly, seriously, discreetly, and with confidentiality for the protection of the victim and to preserve the reputation of the alleged perpetrator.
- C. Information that does not initially rise to the level of reasonable suspicion, but nevertheless raises concern about possible child abuse, should be reported to and

investigated by the community authority responsible for the activity or program (i.e., Youth Program Coordinator through the Program Director). The inquiry shall be conducted in a manner that respects the privacy of the child and the authority of the child's parents.

1. The inquiry should be limited to clarifying the nature of the concern and obtaining further information that will alleviate or validate the concern.
2. Until the concern is confirmed as credible or dismissed, the matter should remain confidential, and the inquiry should avoid creating unnecessary alarm or casting doubt on the character or actions of any individuals involved.
3. While confidentiality is important, so is good counsel. Having more than one leader aware of the question ensures we are pastorally vigilant. Youth Program Coordinators or Program Directors cannot dismiss an allegation as invalid without receiving counsel from his/her Supervisor.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

- A. Coordinator, Senior Woman Leader, Program Director, or Youth Worker who obtains credible information that a child has suffered physical or sexual abuse, shall:
 1. Take prompt, lawful, and reasonable intervention to:
 - Stop the suspected abuse
 - Separate the child from the suspected abuser
 - Provide the child with safety
 - When necessary the police or authorities should be engaged to protect the child
 2. Report the suspected abuse as soon as practicable to:
 - The child's parents
 - The appropriate civil authorities as warranted
 - Youth Program Coordinator (through Program Director)
 - If the Program Director is the alleged perpetrator, suspected abuse should be reported to the Coordinator or Senior Woman Leader responsible for the program.
 - If the allegations implicate the Coordinator responsible for overseeing the program, then the matter must be reported to the Senior Coordinator and Presiding Senior Woman Leader.
 - In the event the Senior Coordinator is implicated, then the matter must be reported directly to the Outside Coordinator.
 - The Regional President, Outside Coordinator, and Outside Senior Woman Leader
 - In appropriate circumstances, obtain legal counsel.
- B. If a Youth Worker has a concern about the conduct of another youth worker, they have a duty to report that concern to the Supervisor of the other Youth Worker.

Responding to Suspected Child Abuse

- A. The community, its Coordinators, and staff must be committed to cooperating with government authorities (criminal, civil, and regulatory) as they investigate or prosecute suspected child abuse.
- B. Faithful to Christian teaching, while investigations or prosecutions are taking place, we will take measures to protect the children, the reputation of the alleged perpetrator of child abuse, and the integrity and credibility of the community. Such measures include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Immediately suspending an alleged perpetrator from service in youth ministry.
 - 2. Immediately suspending an alleged perpetrator from pastoral and service roles that brings him/her into regular contact with minors.
 - 3. Immediately suspending an alleged perpetrator from a leadership role whose validity would be undermined by the allegations of abuse if they were later confirmed true.
 - 4. Providing discreet pastoral care to those families affected by the alleged abuse.
 - 5. Keeping the names of allegedly abused children and their family members confidential.
 - 6. Encouraging community members to refrain from unnecessarily and prematurely publicizing accusations of wrongdoing, whether directed at the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator, or members of either family.
 - 7. We should uphold the principle of 'innocent until proven guilty' in our speech and actions.
 - 8. For the good of all involved, community leaders may forbid the alleged perpetrator (whether a member of the community or not) from attending community functions until the allegations are resolved.
- C. If a charge is not substantiated, community leadership should take steps to restore the good name of a person who may have been harmed through unsubstantiated charges.

Responding to Confirmed Abuse

- A. We accept as confirmation of abuse:
 - 1. A criminal conviction
 - 2. A civil judgment against the perpetrator
 - 3. Other substantiation by civil authorities
 - 4. Placement on a sex-abuse or child-abuse registry
 - 5. A confession or other acknowledgment by the perpetrator that the allegations of child abuse are true

- B. In the absence of an official determination by civil authorities, evidence and circumstances surrounding abuse allegations may compel community leadership to conduct an independent investigation. This investigation is not to determine guilt or innocence, but to determine how the community will resolve issues related to participation and membership.
1. The community will undertake an independent determination cautiously, confidentially and based on prudent pastoral judgment.
 2. It will not attempt an independent investigation without the consent of the alleged victim or, if the victim is a minor, his/her parents.
 3. Information reviewed should be limited to
 - Information gathered by the authorities
 - Information freely and consensually offered by the alleged victim, his/her parents, the alleged perpetrator, and witnesses.
- C. In the case of confirmed child abuse, and assuming the perpetrator has appropriately repented of his actions, the community will:
1. Bar the perpetrator from service in youth ministry and related services, i.e., Family Life
 2. Bar the perpetrator from a pastoral or service role that would bring him/her into regular contact with minors
 3. Bar the perpetrator from a leadership position whose validity would be undermined if held by one who has perpetrated child abuse
 4. Provide discreet pastoral care to those families affected by the confirmed abuse
 5. Keep the names of abused children and their family members confidential
 6. Encourage community members to refrain from unnecessarily and imprudently publicizing or discussing accusations of wrongdoing, whether directed at the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator, or members of either one's families.
 7. Limit communication about the confirmed abuse to leaders who need this information to make informed decisions and to the amount of information necessary to make those decisions
 8. If the perpetrator does not pose an unreasonable threat to safety and well-being of children, the community may allow him/her to attend community functions, with the following limitations:
 - If the perpetrator is an Underway or Covenanted Member in good standing, the community will provide on-site, one-on-one supervision by a mature and reliable covenant member selected by the Coordinators. The Monitor will observe the perpetrator's interactions at all community events the perpetrator attends.
 - The perpetrator must consent and adhere to the following conditions:
 - Disclosure of the allegations and extent of abuse to the Coordinators and the Monitor
 - Supervision by the Monitor at community functions

- Limiting attendance to activities where the Monitor can provide sufficient supervision, as determined by the Monitor and approved by one or more of the Coordinators
- D. The community may choose to bar from participation, or attendance any individual (member or non-member) who poses a plausible threat to the safety or well-being of others, especially of children.
1. Indicators of plausible threat include, but are not limited to:
 - Showing children inordinate and/or inappropriate attention
 - Overly familiar physical affection
 - Giving children money, toys, candy or other gifts without the parents' knowledge or consent,
 - Without parental knowledge or consent, taking pictures of children
 - Engaging secrecy, isolation, intimacy, etc.
 2. If Youth Workers witness suspicious behavior by members or non-members, they shall immediately tell their Supervisor or Program Director.
 3. When necessary to protect the safety and well-being of minors, the community may demand and pursue an individual's lawful removal from community activities, functions, or property.
- E. Individuals who pose an unreasonable threat to the safety or well-being of minors should not be permitted access to children. The community may determine that an individual poses an unreasonable threat to safety or well-being because the individual:
1. Has prior confirmed allegations of child abuse involving:
 - Serious physical abuse, or attempted abduction
 - Child sexual abuse
 - Repeated violations of a substantial nature
 2. And, he/she:
 - Does not express remorse, acknowledge responsibility, or appreciate the severity of the abuse
 - Does not acknowledge the adverse effect the abuse or investigation has had on the child victim and the victim's family
 - Indicates in any way that child abuse might recur

Appendices

Appendix 1: Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies and Policy Confirmation

Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon is a community of disciples on mission that strives to support the conversion, spiritual growth, and development of children and youth. Youth workers work closely with children and youth in a ministerial environment. Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon recognizes that a position of ministry carries with it a responsibility for appropriate behavior.

As a youth worker, I understand that I will be seen as a role model and that my actions directly communicate God's nature and reflect on Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon. Therefore, I agree to conduct myself with appropriate moral behavior. As a Youth Worker, I promise to follow the rules and guidelines as stated here:

Standards of Conduct:

Christian Beliefs:

1. Youth Workers will only promote orthodox Christian beliefs.

Ministry Responsibility:

1. Youth workers will treat every person with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
2. They will follow the reasonable directives of the community leaders and carry out responsibilities given to them to the best of their abilities.
3. They will attend the training that is pertinent to their responsibilities.
4. They will attend events to which they are assigned unless their absence has been approved by their Supervisor.
5. If they are not able to fulfill the duties assigned to him, he will inform his Supervisor promptly, allowing the Supervisor or service leader to make alternate arrangements

Personal Responsibility:

1. Youth workers will conduct their ministry efforts in such a manner as to be above criticism, reproach or disapproval.
2. They will be conscientious with the money, property, and possessions/resources of the community and others.
3. They will take appropriate concern for the health and well-being of minors and adults involved in the event/program.

Membership:

As a Christian organization, Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon expects its Youth Workers to be active Christians who support and live consistently Christian morality and the teachings of the community. For some roles, membership in the community for a period may be required.

Confidentiality:

Youth workers will keep personal and/or family information given to them by children confidential, only disclosing such information when required by law or when it is in the interest of protecting a child's or family's health and welfare. When it is deemed necessary to disclose personal information, it should only be communicated to those persons in a "need to know" position of authority. These persons would generally be a Youth Worker's Supervisor, the child's parents or guardians, and/or social welfare authorities. Permission to disclose personal information should first be sought from a child's parent or guardian, unless to do so would not be in the interest of the health and welfare of the child.

Reporting Abuse:

1. In the case of suspected neglect, sexual abuse or violence, Youth Workers will comply with the policies and reporting regulations as outlined in **Safeguarding Our Children**, and the reporting protocols outlined in Pastoral Protocols and Guidelines which are deemed incorporated and integral to these protocols.
2. Youth Workers shall immediately report suspected child abuse to the supervisor in charge of the event/program. When necessary, Youth Workers will cooperate fully in civil or community investigations of abuse.

Inappropriate conduct:

Recognizing that the position of "Youth Worker" carries with it responsibility for appropriate behavior and protection of the children with whom they work, certain kinds of behavior are not acceptable. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Child Abuse and/or Corporal Punishment

Youth Workers will NOT:

- Strike a child with a fist, open hand, foot, etc.
- Grab and or hold a child with excessive force
- Shake, shove, push, throw or spank a child
- Restrain a child with tape, cord or other items
- Use abusive and/or demeaning language
- Threaten a child with physical harm

2. Sexual Contact/Pornography:

Youth workers will NOT:

- Touch or relate to minors in a sexual or inappropriate manner.
- Touch a child on or near the genitalia breast or buttocks
- Use or engage any physical contact that may be considered sexually abusive (e.g. intimate touching, fondling of any sort, etc.)
- Make comments of a suggestive sexual nature
- Have intimate physical contact with another adult (e.g., fondling, sexual intercourse, prolonged kissing) while serving in a youth event.
- Show or possess pornographic materials in any manner or whatever form.

3. Harassment/bullying:

While serving, youth workers will not act in ways that cause discomfort or humiliation. They will

- Not ridicule, threaten, make degrading remarks, or make comments of a sexual nature.
- Not use profanity, make sexually explicit statements, use statements with sexual innuendos, or tell inappropriate stories or jokes.
- Not initiate nor engage unwelcome physical contact or use corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking, shaking, or slapping
- Immediately stop a behavior when they receive reasonable input that it is inappropriate or causes discomfort.

4. Romantic relationships:

- Youth workers will not initiate nor engage in a romantic relationship with a minor/youth during their service or ministry.

5. Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco:

Youth Workers will not

- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or recreational/illegal drugs while serving a youth program or event.
- Smoke or use tobacco products while serving a youth program or event.

6. Firearms/Lethal Weapons:

- Youth workers will not have any firearm/lethal weapon on their person, in their possession, or in their vehicle while serving a youth program or event.
- Exceptions to this policy are allowed for people engaged as security personnel or a police officer.

Appropriate Conduct:

The Youth Workers Personal Conduct is not designed simply to limit and constraint Youth Workers in the Ministry. Rather it promotes safe practices that advances the objectives of the Program. Below are some appropriate practices which we want to ensure we do.

1. Youth Workers will carefully read and abide by the guidelines described in detail in the Child Protection Policy
2. Apply the “Two Adult Rule” especially but not limited to:
 - One to one conversations and mentoring in person meetings, via text or digital messaging (Viber, WhatsApp, etc.)
 - Building relationships (including gift giving)
 - Providing Transportation
 - Needing to be with minors in private situations (like bathrooms)
 - Supervising swimming activities
3. Youth Workers will promote modesty and protect dignity of minor and themselves
 - When changing clothes Youth Workers should ensure that this is done as modestly as possible, preferably in private. Adults will avoid changing in the children's presence when possible.
 - Applying modesty rules of the Youth Program consistently (regardless of age or stature)
4. Youth Workers will promote healthy relationships and help create a positive winning environment
 - Relate with respect regardless of age or stature
 - Build significant friendships and relationships as brothers and sisters
 - Praise in public and correct in private. This is especially true when dealing with minors
 - Gain trust. Keep the Confidentiality Rules of the Youth Program

My signature confirms that I have read and understood the Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon Child Protection Policy and that as a person ministering to children and youth, I agree to follow these standards.

I understand that any action or omission inconsistent with this Personal Conduct Policy or failure to act mandated by this Personal Conduct Policy may result in my removal from serving the child and youth programs of Ligaya ng Panginoon and/or liability as laws provide.

I confirm that I have not previously behaved or been accused of behaving inappropriately as described above in any youth work context

Child/Youth Worker Printed Name

Child/Youth Worker Signature

Date

Program Supervisor Printed Name

Program Supervisor Signature

Date

Appendix 2: Screening and Training

| | Screening Requirements: | Day event / One-time engagement | Repeated events/ Overnight events/ Camps/Retreats |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Background Check | YES | YES |
| 2 | Recommendation from Pastoral Leader | YES | YES |
| 3 | Community participation/ membership for at least 1 year | YES | YES |
| 4 | Youth Workers Personal Conduct | Aware | Signed |
| 5 | Approval from Coordinator | Not Necessarily | YES |
| 6 | Acceptance by the Youth Program Leadership | YES | YES |

Training required for those with on-going service in the Youth Program (i.e., beyond a one-time engagement)

1. CPP + Personal Conduct Policies (Code of Conduct)
2. Event training meeting
3. Other specific training topics

Process of getting Youth Workers on Board (beyond a one-time engagement)

1. Initial Application
2. Letter of Recommendation by Pastoral Leader and /or Coordinator
3. Background check. (May include criminal background check)
4. Interview
5. At the start of their tenure, orientation, signing of agreement to CPP and Youth Workers Personal Conduct

Initial Application

Initial written service application including general information questions as well as exploratory questions in morality and faith.

Recommendations

Letter(s) of recommendation (based on Screening Requirements) referencing the background, morality, and character of the individual with a current perspective of the person's spiritual maturity and conduct.

Background Check

Youth workers may be asked to participate in a criminal background check. Community leadership may provide further selection process that they deem comprehensive and inclusive.

Training

All staff and volunteers working with children and youth should receive training for their specific area of involvement.

- Training will vary in length and depth depending on what is needed for the specific service, but it should equip individuals with the knowledge and tools to safely serve the young people they will be interacting with.
- Safe Environment Training should clearly communicate acceptable ways of relating with children and youth, inappropriate behavior that will not be tolerated, and the lines of supervision that should be included.

Child Protection Certification

Staff and volunteers working with children and youth should attend a child protection certification program wherever possible.

Interviews

It is important to have personal interaction and communication with individuals looking to work and serve with children and youth. Whether formal or informal, time should be taken to get to know those wishing to serve and through this conversation discover if there are areas of concern that need further investigation.

CPP Agreement and Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies

Youth workers should be given the community's Child Protection Policy and specific policies associated with the program or activity for their review and acknowledgment.

- The CPP document may be reviewed annually with those serving as community youth workers.
- Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies will be signed at the start of their tenure as Youth Workers.

Leadership Position and Membership

For some areas of service and work with children and youth, it may be required that the individual occupies a leadership position, i.e., Senior Leader or Senior Woman Leader, and has been a member of that community for a specific amount of time.

Appendix 3: Record Keeping

As the community implements its CPP, documents will be created, and these will need to be stored for a period. The length of time that records must be kept will vary based on legal or risk mitigation requirements. The community should organize its CPP materials and documents in a location that can be easily accessed and shared with the appropriate people (digital storage is ideal).

- An up-to-date list of staff and volunteers working with minors
- Checklist of requirements met by youth workers:
 - background check,
 - letters of recommendation,
 - completion of required training,
 - signed agreement of the CPP and Youth Workers Personal Conduct Policies
- The documents underlying the above checklist.
- Background check results organized by last name
- Signed code of conduct
- Date of completed community youth worker training
- Date of activities or events participated in by the youth worker

Appendix 4: Technology and Social Media

Communication

- The “Two-Adult Rule” applies to text, private messaging, and email communications. They constitute a private setting.

- E-mail: When using email to communicate with minors it is important to always be professional and appropriate. All email communications should be kept for reference for a reasonable time and ideally a Superior should be able to access these emails if required. This will require those who work with minors to agree to voluntarily provide access if requested. Informing parents of communication methods used with children and youth is required.

- Text: If text/private messaging is going to be used with children and youth, it is important to inform and get consent from Parents or Guardians and give them the opportunity to let the youth worker know if they are not comfortable with this method. Text message (Viber, WhatsApp, etc.) and conversations with minors should be kept and available for reference if requested as described above for email.

- Other Options: Should any other method of communication be used with minors (letters, apps, or other), these general principles apply:
 - Always be appropriate and professional
 - Keep a record of all communications
 - The Supervisor should have access to all communications as required
 - Secure parents’ consent for the use of the communication methods before using it

Social Media

Social media can be a challenging area to navigate with children and youth. Youth workers frequently are unsure how to approach this area and whether it should be avoided altogether or navigated with care.

- Youth workers need to be mindful themselves of what they post on their social media accounts. (The children and youth they work with may see these posts.)
- If using social media accounts with children and youth, content should always be appropriate.
- Youth Workers should not post in their personal social media accounts photos or videos of a child/minor for whatever reason without the permission of the Parent and of the child/minor.
- Minors should never be featured in Social Media posts or other online publications without the written consent of Parents or Legal Guardians and community leadership.