

STEPUP MINISTRY SEXUAL ABUSE POLICY

Sexual abuse of children and youth is, unfortunately, a significant issue in today's society. Workers with children and youth are more vulnerable to claims arising from misperceived conduct. StepUP Ministry has implemented responsive procedures and affirmations for staff and volunteers. StepUP Ministry hereby adopts a policy for its volunteers in children's ministries and part-time child care workers. The policy affirms our commitment to provide a safe place for our children and condemns clearly any instance of sexual abuse of children. The policy also recognizes that volunteer workers are an integral part of StepUP Ministry to children. They must be encouraged to teach by their presence and example and be supported as they do so.

StepUP Ministry cannot, through any policy, guarantee against sexual abuse of its children; the existence of rules alone cannot insulate StepUP Ministry with its volunteers from assertions of liability. However, StepUP Ministry wishes to make its condemnation of abuse of children clear. Our organization, including volunteers and part-time child care workers, lend their voices in the denouncement of such conduct. In so doing they lend their support to each other, and they help prevent unfounded or mistaken claims.

RULES TO PREVENT SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

To give guidance and protection to our workers and to give protection to children and youth, these practices shall be followed:

1. At least two adults aged eighteen or over shall be on duty every time child care is offered at StepUP Ministry.
2. Two adults, one aged twenty-one or over, will be on duty any time infants (children under age 2) or ten or more children over age 2 are involved in child care offered at StepUP Ministry.
3. All nursery and children's volunteers shall sign an affirmation representing that they have not been the subject of a complaint, investigation, or action involving a reported instance of sexual abuse. In the event of inability to do so, they shall be qualified only after staff has performed adequate investigation.
4. If a volunteer finds himself or herself in a room with a child by himself or herself, he or she will make every effort to engage at least one other volunteer and child into the room.
5. A volunteer shall not provide transportation for one youth alone without permission from a parent. In addition, male staff should only drive males home and female staff should only drive females home.
6. Staff and volunteers should avoid one-on-one situations with under-age persons apart from visible and public settings.
7. All reports of sexual abuse at StepUP Ministry shall promptly be made directly to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will then communicate this issue to the Board President and, depending on the site of the incident, will report it to that site recipient contact.
8. Interpersonal relationships between all staff members/volunteers with participants and or children are not permitted.

