



Double Oak Community Church

Child Development Center Policies

Dear Staff Member:

Welcome to Double Oak Child Development Center (CDC)!

At Double Oak CDC, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for all CDC staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of our program. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Robin Rose

Director

Double Oak CDC

Double Oak CDC Safety Policies & Procedures

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Overview of the CDC Safety System

Because we care for children and desire to protect them, Double Oak Community Church requires all staff members to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** *before employment begins*.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training

CDC policies and procedures require that staff members avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the Double Oak Community Church Child Protection Team.

Staff members should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in ‘grooming’ a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or ‘gatekeeper’), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip CDC staff members with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse or maltreatment, Double Oak Community Church requires all volunteers and staff members to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided live or online through Abuse Prevention Systems (www.AbusePreventionSystems.com) or MinistrySafe (www.MinistrySafe.com).

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training is required for all volunteers and staff members and must be renewed every 2 years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Volunteers and staff members are required to complete the Double Oak Community Church Screening Process, which requires volunteers and staff members to:

- complete an Employment Application
- complete the Safety Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- provide references to be checked

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Double Oak Community Church requires that all volunteers and staff members undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Double Oak Community Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in all of our programs and activities. It is the responsibility of every volunteer and staff member at Double Oak Community Church to act in the best interest of each child in every program.

In the event that volunteers or staff members observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to the CDC Director or Executive Pastor.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Double Oak Community Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the DOCC Board of Elders, the Police Department, and Shelby County Department of Human Resources (DHR), or other appropriate agencies.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to the CDC Director or Executive Pastor.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the CDC Director or Executive Pastor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

CDC staff members who supervise other staff members are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Double Oak Community Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the CDC Director, the Executive Pastor, and the DOCC Board of Elders.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Double Oak Community Church staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse of a child should be directed to the CDC Director or Executive Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and CDC activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children or vulnerable populations at Double Oak Community Church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Double Oak Community Church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at Double Oak Community Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the CDC Director or the Executive Pastor.

Alabama law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

A staff member *may* report to the CDC Director or the Executive Pastor, and allow them to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to the CDC Director or the Executive Pastor as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the CDC Director will speak with the person whom the child spoke to in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Executive Pastor and the Board of Elders at DOCC will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The Double Oak Community Church Executive Pastor and Board of Elders will take appropriate action on behalf of the Child Development Center when a report of abuse occurs.

Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously, and will be reported in accordance with this policy to the CDC Director. If appropriate, the Shelby County DHR (205) 669-3000 will be notified.

WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN VICTIMIZED

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to supervisory staff and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities (if required), Double Oak Community Church will provide the child or the child's parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow the child (or parent, on the child's behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as available counseling options.

DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH Child Protection Team

CHILD PROTECTION TEAM

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH will appoint and maintain a Child Protection Team which will meet annually.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Child Protection Team is to enable DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH Preschool and Children's Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Child Protection Team will be comprised of the following members:

1. Executive Pastor
2. Preschool Minister
3. Children's Minister
4. Student Minister
5. Missions Team Representative
6. Elder

MEETINGS

The Executive Pastor will chair the meeting of the Child Protection Team on an annual basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Child Protection Team will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Child Protection Team will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Preschool and Children's Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH Board of Elders regarding safety issues.

Double Oak CDC Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff members will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member's interaction with children.

1. **CDC Director** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each week for programs that occur weekly.
2. The **CDC Director** conducts a scheduled observation once every day.
3. **CDC Director** conducts regular performance evaluations for individuals in paid staff positions.
4. **Executive Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation of all Preschool and Children's Ministry programs at least once each quarter.
5. **The Executive Pastor** meets with the CDC Director at least once a quarter to discuss the Double Oak CDC, including safety training and procedures.
6. **The Child Protection Team** meet once each year to discuss safety training and procedures.

DISCIPLINE

It is our policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members should observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Verbally redirect the child before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
- 2) If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child).
- 3) Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. (“Jamie, you didn’t stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.”) In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child. Do not physically hold a child in time-out.
- 4) Provide the child with a chair to sit in or a “spot” to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
- 5) Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child’s life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
- 6) Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. (“Jamie, you’re doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.”)
- 7) Praise the child once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the CDC Director.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery-age children

Because very young children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female CDC staff or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Every effort will be made to change diapers in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 5) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female staff or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) Every effort will be made when children are taken into bathrooms to keep door partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the CDC will be relayed to their Class Teacher ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child, and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers should be provided by the parents.

Preschool age children

Preschool age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Staff members and volunteers should never take alone child to the restroom.

If a staff member must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, she should seek out another worker to accompany her. If another worker is not available to accompany, she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer, whenever possible.

MEDICATION

The CDC Staff will not administer any medications. The only exception will be if a child needs to have medication kept onsite for emergencies, such as allergies or asthma. The parent must meet with the CDC Director and the child's teacher prior to leaving these medications with CDC Staff, and instruct them on the proper usage. These cases will be decided on an individual basis.

GIFT GIVING

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing special gifts to any individual child. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition (i.e., mention during announcements; have the entire group sing Happy Birthday, etc.) Any requests for variance from this policy must be addressed to the CDC Director.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in the facility, during a Program activity, or while working with children at CDC (see page 2 of the Teacher Handbook). Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to children.

TOBACCO

Double Oak Community Church is a tobacco-free facility. CDC requires staff members and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of children or their parents. CDC staff members are prohibited from providing tobacco products to children.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers at Double Oak Community Church should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

CDC recognizes that meeting program objectives may occasionally require that staff members and volunteers interact with children on an individual basis. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with children:

Individual Meetings

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual child at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meetings between a staff member and a child behind closed doors. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member will notify the CDC Director immediately before or after the meeting.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave their children in the care of CDC staff members during school hours will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in CDC activities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be a part of any and all services and programs in which children are involved at Double Oak Community Church. A parent accompanied by a child to any CDC program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

All Substitute Teachers will be required to complete the Double Oak Community Church screening process outlined on Page 4 of this document.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Double Oak Community Church is committed to protecting the children in our care. Double Oak Community Church has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of CDC staff members must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Double Oak Community Church programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members and children are important for a child's development, and are generally suitable in the CDC setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to the CDC Director or Executive Pastor.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or CDC staff. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At the end of the program day or activity, CDC staff members are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents or legal guardians.

In the event that a staff member is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, she should immediately locate or contact the CDC Director or the CDC Administrative Aide before releasing the child.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children or in the proximity to children (ie. Talking to a coworker when children are present in the classroom, playground, etc.). Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms.

POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Double Oak Community Church staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on Double Oak Community Church property or in the presence of children.

INTERNET/ELECTRONIC MEDIA

No computer at or related to Double Oak Community Church is to be used by staff members, volunteers, children or volunteers to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy will lead to discipline from the CDC Director and/or the DOCC Executive Pastor. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the CDC Director.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Double Oak Community Church staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to provide nurturing care to children. Staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Double Oak Child Development Center's Safety Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Double Oak Child Development Center.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Double Oak Community Church.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the CDC Safety Policies]

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[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the CDC Director]