

POSITION PAPER RELATED TO CHILD ABUSE

MANDATE: To establish a policy or at least a position on how to deal with unruly children and children in general. Also, we would like to establish a set of guidelines that we will follow if accusations of child abuse are ever made.

Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3). They need to feel safe in the confines of the church and with Children ministry leaders. We as a church feel that it is essential for both children and parents of children to know that while children are in the care of Arborg Christian Fellowship, they will be safe and well taken care of.

Children ministries are very important. "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). It is essential that they continue without problems and that the teachers have guidelines on how to deal with children so that they can avoid any accusations of handling children improperly.

THE LAW: - NO TOLERANCE . . . if an accusation is made child against adult, and if this is reported to the authorities, immediate action is taken. Basically, the attitude is guilty until proven innocent.

- HANDS OFF . . . any physical action toward a child that is unwanted (hug, pulling of ear, even pushing), although it may be totally pure in motivation, it is unacceptable if the child does not want it. Any improper handling of children is not tolerated at all and will bring swift action.

ACF POSITION: We as a church will not tolerate the abuse of children by our leaders. To protect the children and the leaders, below are listed some guidelines on how to handle the children in the church. If an accusation of any variety is brought forward, we will meet together with the parents, pastor, board, and accused party. (Child will not be present for first meeting). If guilt is found, the person will be asked to step down from their position and restitution guidelines will be followed. Generally, we trust things can be worked out due to a possible misunderstanding. We, as a church, are very confident that we have good and godly leaders.

GUIDELINES: 1) Do not put yourself, as a leader, in a position in which you are alone in private with one child or youth.

2) Establish a system by which you can handle unruly children. This may be a time-out chair, standing in the corner, or deprivation of privileges. Always give the child the choice. i.e. "Are you going to start behaving or do you want to stand in the corner for 5 minutes?"

3) If you make a threat (time out chair), follow through with it otherwise the children/youth will lose respect for your authority.

4) Do not discipline physically (spank, pull ear, etc.). If you are having problems and your system of discipline is not working, notify the parents and let them deal with the hyper child.

5) Always keep parents up to date on any behavioral problems. This will avoid later complications.

6) If you give encouraging pats on the shoulder, do it when there are people around to avoid it being misunderstood. Men, be very careful!

7) Words are one of the best ways to show love. Be encouraging, not critical. The tongue is a powerful tool and can hurt a person just as badly as a physical blow.

8) Love the children. We all of course have their best interests in mind. Children, for the most part, want to please. Treat them as you would want someone to treat your own child.