



BridgeWay Church Child/Youth Protection Policy

General Purpose Statement:

BridgeWay Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of **BridgeWay Church** from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection of Workers:

All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes:

a. **Six Month Rule¹**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until s/he has been involved with **BridgeWay Church** for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

b. **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the **BridgeWay Church**.

c. **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

¹ This is one of GuideOne Insurance's underwriting requirements.



Two Adult Rule⁴

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse⁵

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

- Physical abuse – Any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – Emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – Any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect – Depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this **church** becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to **a member of the staff at BridgeWay Church** for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this **church** or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. the parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.

⁴ A "two adult rule" is one of GuideOne Insurance's underwriting requirements. The last sentence of this paragraph sets out the language of the requirement.

⁵ GuideOne's underwriting requirements specify that a written sexual misconduct policy be in place, which includes, at a minimum, a plan for responding to an allegation of sexual misconduct.



Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at **BridgeWay Church**. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should not be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of **BridgeWay Church** not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with **the Children's Minister** to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of **BridgeWay Church** not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the **Children's Minister** if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

BridgeWay Church Protection Policy
Acknowledgement and Receipt
Please Read Carefully

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the BridgeWay Church Child/Youth Protection Policy. I understand the purpose of these guidelines is to provide volunteers of the church with general information regarding conduct and procedures. I further understand these guidelines and other oral instructions are for the purpose of volunteer activities. I agree that I am obligated to follow these guidelines of the church unless or until they are changed or modified by the church. The Church's decisions are considered final.

I understand that the answers previously given on my volunteer applications have been/will be the basis on which BridgeWay Church has/will select me for service. I certify that my answers and statements are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and that I have not withheld information. If disclosed that I withheld information, it may affect my application unfavorably. I authorize BridgeWay Church and its associates to obtain information from any person or organization with which or with whom I have been employed or associated, or who may otherwise have information concerning me, whether listed or not on this application. I hereby release BridgeWay Church and any and all such individuals, employers, and corporations contacted as a result of this application from any and all damages from the disclosure of the information provided. I understand and agree that BridgeWay Church's receipt or discovery of any misleading or incorrect statements or responses may render any applications void and may result in my immediate termination of volunteer service.

I agree to submit myself, upon request by BridgeWay Church, to testing for the presence of alcohol and drugs or substances by a physician or laboratory designated by BridgeWay Church. I understand and agree that any positive test result, or the refusal to submit to such testing, will result in immediate termination of volunteer service as stated in the BridgeWay Church policy. I acknowledge that BridgeWay Church reserves the right to inspect all packages, cases, clothing, desks, and workspaces or any other item carried on or off of BridgeWay Church premises, and I understand that cooperation with such inspections would be a condition of continued volunteer status.

I HAVE READ AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE AND AGREE THAT MY VOLUNTEER STATUS IS ON THE BASIS STATED THEREIN AND THAT I WILL ABIDE BY THESE AND THE OTHER WRITTEN AND ORAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CHURCH POLICIES READ OR RECEIVED DURING MY VOLUNTEER SERVICE.

Volunteer Name - Please Print

Volunteer Signature

Date