

Crossroads Christian Connection Youth Protection Policies

Crossroads Christian Connection is a ministry that strives to bring support to homeschooling families through group events, classes, and field trips. Because of the social nature of our organization, it is important to recognize the need for youth protection policies and procedures. Not only are CCC members required to read and to adhere to the policies herein stated, but they are also asked to be alert and to report any known violation of protocol and/or abuse.

Crossroads Christian Connection has instated the following five point plan to prevent abuse:

- Education of CCC parent members through video training and written youth protection guidelines of CCC.
- Screening of members in leadership roles through background checks and one semester monitoring prior to obtaining a leadership role.
- Establishing policies that create barriers to abuse within CCC, such as two-deep leadership of adults and buddy system for youth members.
- Encouraging youth/parent members to report improper behavior in order to identify offenders quickly.
- Swift removal and reporting of alleged offenders.

It is important for members to remember that **any time abuse is suspected, Crossroads Christian Connection board members must be contacted immediately.** They will take necessary steps in informing the authorities.

Background Information: What is abuse?

Child abuse is defined as: harm to a person under the age of 18 that occurs immediately or through the accumulated effects over a period of time.

Child abuse is often described in four categories, although these can overlap in a single child. These categories are

1. Physical abuse: Non-accidental bodily injury of the youth by the parent or another adult. Indicators of physical abuse include unexplained, unusual, or repeated injuries.
2. Neglect: Caused by withholding from a child life's necessities, which are vital to his or her safety, health and general well-being. Basic food, clothing, and shelter and proper medical care are forms of neglect a child may experience.
3. Sexual abuse: Any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between children where there is an unusual distribution of power, such as when one is significantly older or larger. It involves the misuse of trust and power.
4. Emotional abuse: Occurs for example, when a youth is consistently told that he or she is not good and never will be. Name-calling is a form of emotional abuse which is difficult to substantiate but significantly harms the child's emotional status and self image.

Characteristics of a Child Molester/Abuser

Very ordinary, upstanding, and well-respected individuals in positions of authority have been found to be child molesters. Relatives or people very well-known to the children are just as likely to be abusers. A child is more likely to be abused by somebody he/she knows or someone in the family than by a stranger. The Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection video and guidelines below help members take notice of sexual misconduct and what is appropriate versus inappropriate verbal and physical behavior. **There is zero tolerance for inappropriate/harmful behavior within Crossroads Christian Connection. If the following inappropriate/harmful verbal and/or physical behaviors are reported, Crossroads Christian Connection membership will be revoked. If sexual abuse is reported, authorities will be contacted by the CCC Board and membership will be revoked.**

Verbal communication

Appropriate:

- Praise
- Positive reinforcement for good work/behavior

Inappropriate/harmful:

- Sexually provocative or degrading comments
- Risqué jokes

Physical Behavior

Appropriate:

- Pats on the back or shoulder

Inappropriate/harmful:

- Patting the buttocks
- Intimate/romantic/sexual contact
- Grooming
- Corporal punishment (such as spanking)
- Showing pornography or involving youth in pornographic activities

Youth Protection Guidelines

The following policies have been adopted to provide security for youth; in addition they serve to protect adult leaders from situations in which they are vulnerable to allegations of abuse.

- **Two-deep leadership:** Two Crossroads Christian Connection parents/teacher/board member/background-checked members—both of whom are 21 years of age or older—are required on all trips and outings.
- **No one-on-one contact:** One-on-one contact between adults and participants is not permitted, except for authorized driving. Personal conferences must be conducted in plain view of others.

- **Buddy system:** When breaking from the main CCC group for bathroom visits, etc., youth are to pick a buddy to maintain safety in numbers.
- **Respect of privacy:** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of participants in situations such as changing into swimsuits or taking showers at activities and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. They must also protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- **Photography/video:** Adult and youth are restricted from use of photography and video in restrooms/changing areas. Members are restricted from showing and recording sexually explicit acts, suggestive posturing, pornography.
- **Separate accommodations:** When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the same tent or room with an adult other than their own parents or guardians. We strongly encourage separate shower and toilet facilities for males and females, and when separate facilities are not available, posted shower schedules for males and females.
- **Proper preparation for high-adventure activities:** Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, supervision, and safety measures.
- **No secret organizations:** There are no secret organizations recognized in Crossroads Christian Connection. All aspects of Crossroads Christian Connection programs are open to observation by parents and leaders.
- **Appropriate attire:** Proper clothing for activities is required. Skinny-dipping is not appropriate.
- **Constructive discipline:** Discipline in Crossroads Christian Connection should be constructive and reflect the program's underlying values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- **Hazing prohibited:** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any CCC activity.
- **Youth helpers/leader training and supervision:** Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth helpers/leaders.
- **Screening:** In addition to background checks of members, potential members are asked to disclose if they have been accused of, participated in, or been convicted of sexual misconduct at the time of registration.

Adherence to these policies not only enhances the protection of participants but also ensures the values of Crossroads Christian Connection are preserved. It helps to protect volunteer adult members from situations that are deemed at risk by creating barriers to abuse.

Reporting Abuse

It is important for parents to talk to their children about the youth protection guidelines as well as proper versus inappropriate verbal and physical boundaries.

If abuse is witnessed and/or suspected or claimed by a youth member, board members, Carrie Arnold and Dawn Griffin, are to be notified. In turn they will notify the authorities immediately. For safety, the identity of the victim and the person reporting will remain

anonymous within Crossroads Christian Connection. CCC will rely upon the authorities to advise protocol regarding the accused during the investigation. If the media becomes aware of the case, Carrie and/or Dawn will direct the media to respecting the privacy of all involved.

In response to any problems presented in the future, these policies will be analyzed and will be subject to change to best protect Crossroads Christian Connection child participants and members.