

BETHEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

CHILD/YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE & RESPONSIBILITIES

Bethel Christian School (BCS) is a non-profit religious school and is substantially governed and supported by Bethel Church of Redding. More importantly, our organization is a community of believers who have joined together to meet the spiritual and academic needs of the greater community.

Our organization promotes behavior consistent with God's Word. Consequently, when joining **BCS** as a staff member or volunteer, you freely and willingly agree to the standards of behavior outlined in this policy. The standards included in this policy are not exhaustive; rather, they provide a guideline of conduct that is aligned with biblical standards.

As representatives of **BCS**, we strive to keep our actions above reproach in all things. Consequently, these standards of conduct shall apply to all staff and volunteers. Violations of these standards by employees are regarded as a serious breach of integrity and could result in discipline, up to and including termination. Violations of these standards by volunteers may result in your removal from the volunteer team.

God's Word teaches us that certain attributes are desired, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-24). By joining the BCS team, you commit to seeking, encouraging, and demonstrating these attributes in your relationships and in working with children or youth.

Scripture further teaches us that every believer has a duty to protect the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of those most vulnerable among us. (Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 22:6, Mark 9:42, and James 1:27).

BCS understands the responsibility placed upon our school and church by both God and parents who entrust children to our care. Any person known to pose a threat to children or youth will be prohibited from working with children or youth. This is non-negotiable.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the terms "**child**", "**children**", and "**youth**" refer to all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

"**BCS**" refers to **Bethel Christian School**, which has activities that involve the direct supervision of children. BCS is considered a youth service organization as defined by the State of California in Business and Professions Code section 18975.

A “**regular volunteer**” is any volunteer who is 18 years of age or older and has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per year.

An “**occasional volunteer**” is any volunteer who is 18 years of age or older and has contact with children for less than 16 hours per year.

“**Employee**” refers to all employees, whether they work with children or not, including seasonal, occasional, and part-time employees.

“**Worker**” refers collectively to all volunteers and employees.

“**Administrator**” may include administrators including clergy, HR administrators, board members, and elders.

“**Mandated Reporters**” are individuals required to complete annual training and to serve as mandated reporters as defined by California Penal Code section 11165.7, paragraph (7) of subdivision (a).

TRAINING ON CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING

Child abuse and neglect, as defined in [CANRA](#) (California’s Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act), includes physical abuse, sexual abuse (including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation), willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, and neglect (including both acts and omissions).

All administrators, employees, or regular volunteers of BCS shall individually complete training in child abuse & neglect identification and training in child abuse & neglect reporting consistent with Business and Professions Code 18975(a). This California-specific training will cover types of abuse & neglect, what the law requires of mandated reporters, how to spot evidence of child abuse, examples of different types of abuse, how to report abuse, what happens after a report is filed, and much more.

Mandated reporter training must be completed before working with children as an employee or volunteer of BCS. Bethel Church’s Human Resources department coordinates mandated reporter training resources for new hire employees via live training or a link in the HR system (UKG Ultipro). Volunteers receive live training under the supervision of an administrator. A copy of the training certificate will be retained by BCS as proof of training.

ADMINISTRATORS, EMPLOYEES, & REGULAR VOLUNTEERS – BACKGROUND CHECKS

All administrators, employees, and regular volunteers must undergo a background check as outlined in Business and Professions Code section 18975 and Penal Code section 11105.3 to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

Administrators, Staff, and Regular Volunteer Screening

All administrators, employees, and regular volunteers (volunteering 16 hours or more) who work with those under the age of 18 participating in our programs and activities will be screened.

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a position that involves working with children or youth, will complete and return an initial board, staff, or regular volunteer application.
2. The administrator, or designee, will carefully review the application, ensuring that the candidate is an appropriate match for the position. The administrator also will permanently store all application materials—the application form, reference check, notes from interviews, etc.—in a locked file cabinet or other secure location.
3. If the individual appears to be an appropriate candidate for the position, the administrator, or designee, will check at least two references to confirm the information that the candidate provided on the application.
4. Criminal background check guidelines: Pursuant to Section [11105.3 of the Penal Code](#), all employees, administrators, and regular volunteers shall undergo a background check to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse or other convictions that have been determined by the FBI that would preclude them from working with youth.

Before a background check is conducted, all employees, administrators, and regular volunteers will be asked to complete and sign an authorization form allowing BCS to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the authorized Custodian of Records based on guidance provided by the FBI. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. According to privacy laws, the result of the background check will not be disclosed to any applicant. However, you may contact the FBI directly for your records [here](#).

The background check authorization form and results will be permanently maintained in confidence on file at BCS.

5. After the administrator or designee contacts references and a background check has been completed, he or she will interview the candidate.

6. When indicated by our screening procedures, candidates who pose a threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be removed from consideration for any position involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Occasional Volunteer Screening:

1. Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a position that involves occasionally (under 16 hours) working with children or youth, will complete and return an occasional volunteer application.
2. Criminal background check guidelines: Pursuant to Section [11105.3 of the Penal Code](#), all occasional volunteers shall undergo a background check to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse or other convictions that have been determined by the FBI that would preclude them from working with youth.
3. Before a background check is conducted, the volunteer will be asked to complete and sign an authorization form allowing BCS to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.
4. What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the authorized Custodian of Records based on guidance provided by the FBI. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. According to privacy laws, the result of the background check will not be disclosed to any applicant. However, you may contact the FBI directly for your records [here](#).
5. Once the occasional volunteer is cleared, they may have contact with children in the presence of a mandated reporter, or in the case of acting as a driver, may drive children so long as there are at least three children present.

SUPERVISION

Two Adult Rule: To the greatest extent possible, the presence of two unrelated mandated reporters is required for extracurricular school activities that involve contact with, or supervising, children. The best-case scenario is the presence of two screened and unrelated staff members in each classroom, vehicle, or enclosed area. California does not consider volunteers to be mandated reporters.

Rule of Three: For classroom/teaching scenarios, it is acceptable for one mandated reporter or screened volunteer to be present with children/youth as long as there are at least three people present. For driving students on school trips, the policy is at least three children to one screened

adult or two screened adults to at least two children. For transport over 4 hours (for instance, in the case of a mission trip), two adults (screened volunteers or staff) per vehicle is required.

One-to-One Mentoring of Youth: BCS provides one-to-one mentoring of youth. Only concerning one-to-one mentoring activities, the “Two Adult Rule” outlined in the paragraph above does not apply. To be eligible to participate in one-to-one mentoring:

- b) Volunteers, parents or guardians of youth participating in one-to-one mentoring must undergo the training outlined in paragraph “Administrators, Employees, and Regular Volunteers – Background Checks”
- c) A BCS administrator shall have contact with volunteers and parents or guardians of youth participating in one-to-one mentoring no less than twice in a thirty-day period.

Any one-on-one mentoring of youth must take place in a location where the adult worker and the youth are both visible to others. Any planned one-on-one meetings must be approved by an administrator, and the adult worker must obtain prior written approval from parents/guardians. The duration and frequency of approved one-on-one meetings are to be limited to no more than three occasions for no more than 30 minutes at a time.

Appropriate Behavior with Children: Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety in all circumstances - such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing, embracing others, etc.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room unless for experiencing an emergency or emergency drill with procedures that dictate otherwise.

RESTROOM GUIDELINES

Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom restroom if one is available. If a classroom restroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. If a child is age six or older, he or she may go to the children-only restroom in the hallway without adult accompaniment.

When the classroom teacher or aide initiates a restroom break for the whole class, they should always go in a group, never taking a child to the restroom alone. When using a restroom that is not designated child-only, workers should check the restroom first to make sure that it is empty, then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the restroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the worker should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a restroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Adults may not use child-only restrooms.

CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

1. Workers should arrive at the designated times for their positions. They must remain at their assigned post until all people in their care have been picked up by an authorized person. No children or youth should be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation.
2. Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child.

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN

If a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide first aid (bandages, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid or anything that has impacted a child's head, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by the circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. In the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional, an incident report must be completed once the child has received appropriate medical attention.

TEENAGE WORKERS

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for students (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under the age of 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above (except for a background check, which can't be conducted on minors).
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of two mandated reporters and must never be left alone with children.

(Using only underage workers does not meet the requirements of the Business and Professions Code section 18975.)

INJURIES OR ILLNESS

1. Persons who are ill (with a fever, or a communicable disease that can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any activity.

2. A suitable worker - one who has been previously approved through our screening process - must be used to take the place of a worker who is ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parents or guardians as soon as the illness is discovered. If immediate return is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that allows an adult worker to monitor the participant until he/she can be returned to a parent or guardian.
4. Take reasonable steps to avoid contact with blood, saliva, or other bodily fluids.
5. School coordinators and supervisors who become aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure that proper medical attention is given to the injured person and provide for continued monitoring of the remaining activity participants.
6. Persons who have received an injury that is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The individual's parents or guardians should be notified of the injury when they pick up the injured person.
7. Any injury that may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parents or guardians of the injured person should be notified immediately, along with the worker's coordinator or supervisor. If warranted by the injury, emergency medical personnel should be called.

MEDICATIONS POLICY

BCS does not administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent/guardian at home. This policy is provided to parents/guardians at the start of each school year.

Exceptions to the medication 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 BCS office manager to develop a plan of action.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

BCS does not condone or 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 an administrator if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

VIOLATION OF POLICIES OR PROCEDURES

1. Workers must promptly notify their supervisor or an administrator when they or others violate the procedures mandated by this policy.

2. Workers who become aware of a violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.

REPORTING ABUSE

If child abuse is suspected, administrators, employees, and regular volunteers or one-to-one mentoring volunteers must also report the incident to the Head of School.

Mandated reporters must report to a county child welfare department, child protective services, or local law enforcement (police or sheriff's department) immediately by phone. A written report must then be sent within 36 hours electronically.

Written reports must be submitted on the California Suspected Child Abuse Form 8572 ([link](#)). More information on mandated reporting ([link](#)).

ALLEGATIONS & INVESTIGATIONS

1. BCS considers any allegation of abuse or neglect a serious matter. Leadership will notify local authorities and contact our legal counsel as soon as possible after we receive notice of possible abuse. Advice from legal counsel will be the basis for our response to the allegations.
2. Each situation will be fully investigated first through local authorities, then by administrators, following consultation with qualified legal counsel and Human Resources. BCS administrators, employees, and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with investigators.
2. Workers who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation. Employees will be placed on unpaid administrative leave.
3. Any worker found guilty of abuse or who admits to abuse will be permanently removed from all BCS activities. In the case of an employee, employment will be terminated and the employee will be considered ineligible for rehire.

NEWS MEDIA & SOCIAL MEDIA

1. One individual—a member of the leadership team, an employee, or our attorney will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. The designated spokesperson will be the only person authorized to convey information to news media concerning any BCS matters.
2. Administrators, employees, and volunteers are strictly prohibited from posting photos or names of BCS students on any social media platform. No one aside from the BCS authorized designee may engage news media or other forms of external media on behalf of BCS.
3. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in employee discipline or termination of a volunteer position.

ANNUALLY SIGNING THE BCS CODE OF CONDUCT

All administrators, employees, and volunteers of **BCS** shall [sign this Code of Conduct](#) annually as an acknowledgment of having read, understood, and agreed to abide by the policies stated in both of these documents.