



United City Tucson Child Protection Policy

General Purpose Statement:

United City Tucson seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children participating in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of our church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “volunteer” includes persons who work and serve in our children's ministry.

ZERO Tolerance Policy:

Zero tolerance means that under no circumstances, abuse will not be tolerated at United City Tucson. From members, volunteers, ministers, leaders, and the pastor, zero tolerance will be enforced regardless of accidental mistakes, ignorance, and extenuating circumstances. Our Child Protection Policy will be enforced.

Selection of Volunteers:

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

The Six-Month Rule

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been an involved member of United City Tucson for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability for working with children.

Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into the previous experience with children, previous United City Tucson affiliation, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at United City Tucson.

Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all volunteers (regardless of position). This can be completed on www.sentrylink.com for a total of \$19.95. Volunteers are required to pay for their background checks. *(If you have a fingerprint clearance card from an employer, this is an acceptable form of a background check).* **Documents must be turned in with the volunteer application to be considered.**

Sexual Abuse + First Aid Training

All persons seeking to work with children must complete **Safeguard From Abuse for Faith-based Organizations with First Aid** by *SafeGuard From Abuse*. To be considered for a volunteer position, a score of 80% or more is required to be granted a certificate proving that you have competency in this training. This can be completed by going to www.safeguardfromabuse.com/churches for a fee of \$7.25. Volunteers are required to pay for this training. **A certificate of completion is required to be turned in with the volunteer application to be considered.**

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Our Senior Pastor Sabas Jimenez + a member of the Ministry Team on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances.

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.

The Two Adult Rule:

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Since the majority of abuse cases are linked to males (88%, according to rainn.org 2018), the Two Adult Rule will go as follows for volunteers per Sunday, per classroom, as requested by the Senior Pastor:

- Two females
- A married couple, male and female
- A male teacher, with a female teacher
- Two male teachers will not be allowed

No male volunteer will be allowed in close contact settings with a child. Close contact settings include: needing help washing hands, leading children to the bathroom, holding hands, or touching of any kind.

If a rare instance arises where there is 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.

The 17 Nevers:

The 17 *Nevers* are actions that are considered inappropriate with children because many of them are the behaviors that child sex offenders use to groom children. Volunteers should *never* engage in the following:

1. • Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
2. • Any type of kissing.
3. • Holding children on the lap.
4. • Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas.
5. • Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas, or other private rooms.
6. • Occupying a bed with a child.
7. • Touching the knees or legs of children.
8. • Wrestling with children.
9. • Tickling children.
10. • Piggyback rides.
11. • Any type of massage given by a child to an adult.
12. • Any type of massage given by an adult to a child.
13. • Any form of unwanted affection.
14. • Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, “You sure are developing,” or “You look really hot in those jeans.”
15. • Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touches of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
16. • Giving gifts or money to individual children.
17. • Private meals with individual children.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse:

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, biting, and spanking.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury is when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as in 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, luring, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Volunteers 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 United City Tucson becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor, Sabas Jimenez, and his wife Raquel Jimenez as well as our Children’s Director’s, Karina and Jireh Jimenez 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 United City Tucson 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 volunteer or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children.

Open Door Policy:

Classroom doors should **always remain unlocked**. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room, allowing anyone to enter the room on any given Sunday School Session.

Restroom Guidelines:

Kingdom City Kidz Children (Ages 4-8) should use the available classroom bathroom. In the rare event that a classroom bathroom is not available, volunteers should escort a group of children to the church bathroom. **They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone.** The volunteers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. **The volunteers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.**

For Juniors and Preteens (Ages 9-13), since the bathroom is located in another building, children should go in a group of no less than two children in the Kingdom City Kidz classroom.

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

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children use the bathroom prior to each class.

Accidental Injuries To Children:

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, volunteers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, 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, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Medications Policy:

It is the policy of United City Tucson not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. **Medications should be administered by a parent at home.** 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 Children's Directors Karina + Jireh Jimenez to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy:

It is the policy of United City Tucson 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 disciplines of children.