

Rochester Grace Church of the Nazarene Safe Environment Policy

Introduction

We commit ourselves to treasuring all people as precious members of God's family. We acknowledge our responsibility to protect them, to create safe environments in church activities, and to respond if they are being hurt.

Definitions

Physical abuse: when a child has a non-accidental injury.

Emotional abuse: when a parent always blames or rejects the child

Sexual abuse: when an adult uses a child as a part of any sexual act

Emotional neglect: when a child is not given the chance to feel loved, wanted, and secure.

Physical neglect: when a child is not given their basic needs

(Legal definitions of child maltreatment can be found in NY Social Services Law 371 and Family Court Act 1012)

Vulnerable Adult: a person who is 18 years of age or older who is unable to provide or care for him or herself due to disability, dysfunction, or aging. (Questions around elder abuse and maltreatment of vulnerable adults should be referred to Adult Protective Services, 1-800-342-3009, Press Option 6)

For the purpose of this document references to children or youth will include vulnerable adults.

- ***As a reminder, all of the above could happen to or be perpetrated by anyone, of any age, at any time.***

Abuse prevention within our church community:

1) Maintain a safe church facility:

- a) Any activity for youth or children conducted inside or outside of the church schedule will have at least two unrelated adults providing supervision. They must not be members of the immediate family.
- b) Youth under eighteen providing childcare must have an adult present for supervision.
- c) Parents must be notified and give consent for his or her child to be transported away from church activities.
- d) Physical discipline will not be used. If a child misbehaves, adults will redirect or use verbal guidance. The child will be taken to his or her parent for any further action.

2) Personal issues

- a) In compliance with Nazarene Safe Environment Policy, All employees, people working with children or youth, and those volunteers working in ministry must...
 - i) Training: attend Safe Environment Training and renew every two years. Training is offered at least twice a year.
 - ii) Policy: each training or when policy is updated, you will be given a copy of this policy. You must sign and agree to abide by it. Circumstances and events that need additional volunteers, they will be given a policy, sign it and abide by it.
 - iii) Background check: a background check will be completed every three years.
- ***Failure to comply with the above training, policy and background check will require the volunteer to relinquish their position until they have completed all the requirements.***

- b) Any volunteer interested in leading a ministry including children or youth shall be in the church six months prior to any leadership role.
- 3) Deal appropriately with allegations of abuse
- a) If a child discloses abuse or if child abuse is suspected, a Lead or Associate Pastor should be notified and Child Protective Services (1-800-342-3720) will be notified within 24 hours. The person who knows or suspects the abuse has occurred shall make the report to CPS.
 - b) If an individual is not sure if a situation requires reporting, they should contact a Lead or Associate Pastor immediately.
 - c) The alleged offender will be removed from all responsibilities involving children or youth while the allegations are being investigated.
 - d) All parents whose children may have had contact with the alleged offender will be notified within forty-eight hours that there have been allegations and that the allegations have been reported to the proper authorities.
 - e) Pastoral care or outside referrals will be offered to all persons affected by allegations of abuse.
- 4) Policy for known sexual offenders
- a) Any individual convicted of a sexual offense may not be involved in activities for children or youth, formal or informal. They will not be allowed any unsupervised contact with children.
 - b) All parents of children or youth will be notified if there is a registered sexual offender attending the church when the information becomes known. Notification must be made within 2 weeks. A Lead or Associate Pastor is charged with disseminating the information. New families to the church must be notified within two months of beginning to attend the church.

This policy will be available to all church members and attendees, on display in a designated location, and available on the church website. Church leadership, parents, those in ministry rolls, and all individuals working with youth or children will be given a copy of this policy. This policy shall be reviewed yearly and revised as needed.

Updated May 2024