



CHECKPOINT
CHURCH

MARCH 2022

SAFEPOINT PROPOSAL

Providing Safe Sanctuary for the
Digital Community

DRAFTED BY
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ABOUT CHECKPOINT CHURCH

Checkpoint Church is a church plant from the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Planting in August of 2020, the church was assigned to Denver, NC, but found it's footing on the World Wide Web. Wearing the moniker of the 'church for nerds, geeks, and gamers,' Checkpoint has cemented itself onto the platforms of Twitch, Discord, and YouTube as the foundation for the community of this digital-first new church start.

Founded by self-proclaimed 'Nerd Pastor' Nathan Webb, this church is striving to be the middle ground between the worlds of faith and fandom. With the concerns of online safety, Checkpoint Church has begun the process of drafting an online 'safe sanctuary' document for best practices and use by the wider community of digital churches finding footing on the Internet.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

NATHAN WEBB
PASTOR

[VACANT]
GUARDIAN COORDINATOR

ROB HUTCHINSON
CHURCH DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR (WNCC)

DAVID CHRISTY
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

INTRODUCTION

WHAT WE STRIVE TO DO

As a Christian community of faith, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as those who serve in ministry with and to them. As such:

- We will follow reasonable safety measures in the screening and selection of leadership, both paid and volunteer.
- We will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs, events and ministries.
- We will educate all our leadership—both paid and volunteer—with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods.
- We will have a clearly defined procedure to reporting an observed or suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law, and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Nothing in this policy or procedure is designed to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported or confirmed violations of any North Carolina criminal laws.



This policy shall apply to all activities sponsored by Checkpoint Church, regardless of location, as well as any activities utilizing its facilities, digital and physical. This includes, but is not limited to, voice, video, and text-based communication via any of our social media applications or community-based apps. Outside groups utilizing the church's facilities or streaming platforms shall be required to adhere to this policy or adopt and adhere to equivalent policies. Where the two policies are in conflict, the more conservative approach shall be taken.

THEOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND



THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child, welcomes me" (Matthew 18:5). He also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to those who cannot protect themselves. We affirm this responsibility at each person's baptism by our congregational response, pledging: "With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this person, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Book of Worship, Baptismal Covenant, Congregational Pledge, 11).



DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, we will use the following terms:

- Child or youth: Any person under the age of 18
- Adult: Any person 18 years old or older
- LVL2: an application-based volunteer leader program at Checkpoint Church
- Vulnerable adult: Any person 18 years or older who is in need of special care, support or protection due to diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities or at risk of abuse due to the power dynamics of the situation (e.g. mission work or visitation ministries)
- Guardian: Any adult—paid or volunteer—who has supervision or management responsibilities for the event, program or ministry



POLICY

a. Liability Insurance

The church shall have adequate liability insurance for all ministries, including sexual abuse or misconduct coverage.

b. Screening and Selection

All persons serving in leadership with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall be:

- An active member of the local ministry for at least six months
- At least 21 years of age
- At least five years older than the oldest person they are supervising/leading

(Exception: This does not apply to adults in ministry with vulnerable adults.)

As part of the selection process, applicants must:

- Submit an application and personal references
- Participate in an interview process as determined by LVL2
- Consent to a National Criminal Background Check

Any conviction involving abuse of or harm toward children, youth or vulnerable adults will disqualify the applicant from participating in ministries with children, youth or vulnerable adults. All other convictions will be reviewed by LVL2 in order to ensure the safety of all involved.

All documentation collected as part of the application and screening process shall be maintained in a permanent secure file accessible only to persons identified by LVL2.

c. Youth helpers

Youth helpers are considered children or youth under the age of 18 who assist with ministries (e.g. Vacation Bible School).

Youth helpers shall follow all of the same guidelines as adult leaders.

Youth helpers shall never be alone with children without an adult present.

POLICY

d. Training

All leaders shall be trained annually in the practices of Safe Sanctuaries and a record of attendees shall be kept on file for a minimum of seven years.

Local church staff or lay leadership may facilitate Safe Sanctuaries at the local church level. However, it is expected that at least once every four years that the church utilize conference leadership to be updated on new and emerging trends in Safe Sanctuaries.

The church community shall be informed of the Safe Sanctuaries policy and how the

- church is working to prevent abuse. The church community shall also be notified in
- advance of Safe Sanctuaries training opportunities.

Training may be offered to the following:

- Any leader of church-sponsored ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults
- Any leader of outside groups that utilize the church facilities for activities with children, youth or vulnerable adults
- Any person in the community who would like to learn more about Safe Sanctuaries and its ministry of abuse prevention

The training shall include information, explanation and discussion of the following:

- Local church policy and operational procedures
- Appropriate boundary **guidelines**
- Appropriate playground/recreational supervision
- Behaviors or other indicators which may signal concerns or abuse
- Requirements of North Carolina law for reporting incidents of abuse
- Procedures for reporting observed or suspected incidents or abuse

POLICY

e. Activity Procedures

All activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults shall adhere to the following minimum requirements:

- There shall be two unrelated adults present at all times.

“Unrelated adults” is interpreted as adults who are not related to one another. (The adults may be related to participants, but not to one another.)

When two unrelated adults are not able to be present, two related adults shall be present, so long as they are not in a marital relationship. (Married adults may lead together, but there must be at least one more adult present.)

If it is not possible to have two adults present at all times, the activity must take place in an open space—indoors or outdoors—where other adults are able to witness the activity and interactions of all involved.

It is NOT acceptable to have only one adult present with children, youth or vulnerable adults in a private space, or any space where other adults are not able to witness the activities and interactions of all involved.

If participants represent more than one gender, then there shall be at least one male adult leader and one female adult leader.

- There shall be at least one adult present at all activities who is trained in first aid and CPR. First aid kits shall be readily available at physical office spaces, conventions or mass gatherings.

- There shall be a roving monitor during high-volume ministry and class times (e.g. Sunday School).

POLICY

e. Activity Procedures (cont'd)

- At no time shall windows be obscured or doors locked to areas where children, youth or vulnerable adults are meeting.
(Exception: Active shooter drills or incidents.)
- When digital rooms are active in community applications, they will remain open for public entry.
- All leaders assisting with diaper changing, toileting and clothes changes of young children or of children, youth or adults with special needs shall follow [guidelines as set forth in training].
- All leaders supervising or assisting with recreational or playground activities shall follow guidelines as set forth in training.
- All leaders shall follow appropriate boundary guidelines as set forth in training.
For example:

Appropriate boundary setting for all leaders engaging in ministry with vulnerable adults

Appropriate boundary setting for youth leaders, especially focused on small group ministry, overnight retreats and transportation to and from activities

Appropriate boundary setting for clergy and leaders regarding counseling and confidentiality

POLICY

f. Individual counseling

Sometimes one-on-one interactions are necessary, specifically in reference to counseling. These interactions must be conducted in an appropriate manner.

The clergyperson, staff person, or lay leader shall conduct the meeting in a visible space, meaning that the office door is cracked open or a window is visible and someone can reasonably see all persons in the room, or the meeting shall take place in a public place.

Suspected abuse or neglect uncovered in counseling shall be reported in accordance with North Carolina law.

In digital meetings, a request for consent to record the conversation will be sought out. Recordings will be kept confidential, unless further review is needed by leaders selected by LVL2.

Should the request for consent be denied, the conversation itself will be available to a Guardian who will be on standby should intervention be necessary. Both the clergyperson, staff person, or lay leader and the recipient shall have access to the Guardian on standby.

g. Internet and Social Media

Images and names of children, youth and vulnerable adults shall not be utilized on any website or application without explicit consent.

A social media covenant shall be adopted and adhered to by all participants and leaders. This covenant shall be kept on file as an addendum to this policy. At a minimum, this covenant shall include:

- Leaders shall never initiate a social media connection (friend, follower, link, etc.)
- Boundaries regarding calling, texting and private messaging
- Boundaries regarding taking and distributing photos and videos
- Boundaries regarding social media posts

Separate sections [l. Discord and m. Twitch] are exceptions to the stipulations made above and should supersede this specific section of the policy.

POLICY

h. Transportation

Any person driving a church-owned vehicle or driving a personal vehicle on behalf of the church must consent to a motor vehicle record check and provide proof of current insurance coverage.

When using charter buses or other contracted drivers, the carrier must provide certification that the driver has completed a recent background check.

All vehicle use requirements set forth by LVL2 shall be followed.

i. Off-Site and Overnight Events

All requirements from section 3C: Activity Procedures shall be adhered to.

Adults and children or youth who are unrelated shall not share beds.

Leaders must obtain medical information and liability release forms for all participants and keep those records on hand throughout the off-site activity or overnight event.

Leaders shall provide parents or guardians with specific information regarding the schedule, sleeping arrangements, leader-to-participant ratios and emergency contact information.

j. Missionaries

When engaging in mission work—whether domestically or globally—missionaries are intrinsically put in a place of power over the persons they serve. Due to these power dynamics, all persons participating in mission work shall follow the screening, selection, training, activity, counseling, transportation, and off-site/overnight event regulations as set forth above.

k. Daycare/Preschool Requirements

In addition to the requirements set forth in this policy, the church's daycare program shall also adhere to relevant requirements established by the state of North Carolina. Where the two requirements are in conflict, the more conservative approach shall be taken.

POLICY

I. Discord

In keeping with Discord Terms of Service, users on the Discord platform must agree to all rules in the following policy in order to obtain access to the server.

Digital Open Room Policy

- All digital rooms on Discord will be closed unless two [2] Guardians are present
- Any open rooms will be public and general entry
- Voice and video will be set to 'Off' until approved by a Guardian
- Access to a room may be requested by any site member

Broadcasting (Or Live Streaming)

- Broadcasting or sharing of a user's screen must be approved by the policy approved by LVL2
 - Once approved, temporary access will be granted as according to the Broadcasting Policy
- Video and voice may be requested; if child, youth, or vulnerable adult, then a form for explicit consent to appear must be completed

Acknowledgment of Control

- Assuming all users are abiding by Discord's Terms of Service, we acknowledge that our digital space is limited to the Server that we have created, Direct Messaging and/or creation of other non-affiliated servers is beyond the purview of this Safe Sanctuary Policy.

Violation of these terms or policy can result in removal or banning from the created Discord community.

POLICY

m. Twitch/YouTube

Broadcasting (Live Streaming)

- Video and voice may be requested; if child, youth, or vulnerable adult, then a form for explicit consent to appear must be completed

Where there is no real-time interaction between viewers (e.g., a video posted but not broadcast live) the two adult rule applies in that there shall always be two, unrelated authority figures with administrator rights on any account that is posting official ministry content.

Where there is real-time interaction between viewers, there shall be two, unrelated authority figures in attendance wherever the real-time interaction is happening (chat room, etc.).

The church programs/events/broadcasts shall be initiated from official church accounts rather than personal accounts. Two authority figures shall be included.

Violation of these terms or policy can result in removal or banning from the Twitch channel or YouTube channel.

n. Private Text Messaging

Private text messaging is allowed. When possible, it shall be shifted to a group text that shall include two authority figures.

No messaging shall take place on a platform where messages automatically disappear.

Authority figures shall not delete history or chat logs from a messaging platform for 30 days.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE

a. Documentation and Reporting

All incidents—including accidents and suspected abuse—shall be documented in writing on the Incident Report Form and kept on file. The form is available on the church website.

In the event of an accident or injury, one copy of the Incident Report Form shall be given to the parent or guardian of the affected child, youth or vulnerable adult.

In the event that an allegation of abuse or misconduct is made against a volunteer or lay leader, a report shall be made to the ministry area leader who shall report it to the Senior Pastor.

In the event that an allegation of abuse is made against a clergy member or staff person, a report shall be made to the members of LVL2.

b. Mandatory State Reporting

All reporting of alleged or actual incidents of child or vulnerable adult abuse must strictly follow North Carolina law. Although there is no obligation for private citizens to report evidence of a most crimes, North Carolina citizens have a legal duty to report in the following situations:

- Suspected child abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian or caretaker NC G.S. 7B-301(a)
- Suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult by their caretaker NC G.S. 108A-2

A leader who has reasonable cause to suspect that abuse has occurred should secure the safety of the child, youth or vulnerable adult (if possible) and then immediately report the incident to appropriate law enforcement.

It is never the responsibility of a leader to investigate allegations of abuse.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE

c. Response

All allegations shall be taken seriously.

A quick, compassionate, and unified response to an alleged incident of child or adult abuse will be initiated following the direction of the appointed clergy in the local church and in consultation with the District Superintendent of the district in which the church is located.

In the case that the alleged incident involves the appointed clergy, the response will be directed by the District Superintendent of the district in which the church is located. A response will include appropriate pastoral care and support for all involved in the allegation, including the alleged perpetrator(s), alleged victim(s) and their families.

d. Interaction with the Media

In the event that an incident receives media attention, the only persons authorized to speak to the media are the Senior Pastor and District Superintendent.

If approached by the media, all others should not comment and instead endeavor to help the media find the authorized spokesperson(s).

GUARDIAN PROGRAM

SAFETY BY MODERATION

The Guardian shall be a volunteer position in the structure of this policy. The Guardian must be a LVL2 member and must apply for this role.

Requirements for this role are as follows: prior to joining the Guardians, one must submit the Guardian application form, be 21 years of age, be present on the Discord server for 6 months and/or a member of LVL2 for 3 months, comply to a background check, be approved by leadership, attend Discord training (100 required, others preferred), attend yearly safe sanctuary training, be prepared to serve in this role for 1 year, and present a person of reference from within the community.

Once this role is assumed, the responsibilities of the Guardian are as follows:

- on the Discord server, they can
 - open and close rooms
 - moderate Voice Chat (VC) spaces
 - take room requests
 - view MEE6 Audit Log
 - time-out/kick/ban Members
 - mute/deafen/move members within VC
 - manage messages
 - access the Guardian Role & Private Channel
 - receive Direct Messages for issues
 - create events, and be pinged on the server
- on the Twitch channel, they shall be given Moderation powers.



GUARDIAN PROGRAM

SAFETY BY MODERATION

Guardian Procedures:

- **Trial Period:** Leadership can evaluate and potentially remove a new Guardian from their position within 90 days of receiving the position.
- **Guardian Removal:** The Guardian Role can be removed from a member if deemed necessary. If issues are presented, the Approval Process team would be notified and the approval process would begin.
- **Approval Process:** The Guardian Applicant is given approval by a revolving team of the Pastor, Guardian Coordinator, and Misc. LVL2 Member.
- **Incident Report:** If any punishment is required, the Guardian is expected to fill out an incident report form.

Additional Role:

- **Guardian Coordinator:**
 - Elected role
 - Point person, expected to be the communicator between the Guardians and the Pastor
 - Expected to complete full Discord training
 - Will work with Pastor for Safe Sanctuary training
 - Term of 6 months
 - Manages schedule for VC room
 - Expected to ensure that spaces are being made available and safe



BEST PRACTICES

HOW SAFETY IS BEST PRACTICED



NO DIRECT MESSAGES (DMs)

Unless an emergency contact is needed, then contact should only be facilitated with either Pastor or Guardians.



TWO-PERSON RULE

There should always be two background-checked leaders present in any space where voice or video can be shared.



PING THE MODS

When in doubt, always contact a Guardian via the @guardian ping role to ask a safety-related question.

**For inquiries,
contact us.**

www.checkpointchurch.com

checkpointchurch@gmail.com



CHECKPOINT
CHURCH

A team comprised of representatives of age-level ministries, LVL2, as well as others whom they invite to participate in the team's work, shall be responsible for reviewing this policy on an annual basis for relevance and adherence to requirements established by the Western North Carolina Conference.

ENTHUSIASTS, GEEKS,
NERDS, DWEEBES, DORKS, PO
S, BOOKWORMS, EGGH
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ENTHUSIASTS, GEEKS,