



CAROLINE'S
PROMISE
RECLAIMING HOPE AROUND THE WORLD

**CHILD AND YOUTH
PROTECTION POLICIES
CAROLINE'S PROMISE**

INTRODUCTION

To help protect the children and youth that we serve, Caroline's Promise has adopted the following Child and Youth Protection Policy. It is important that all volunteers and paid staff of the ministry understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent abuse against children. The following defines the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children.

PURPOSE

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, and adult volunteers and staff.
2. Assist Caroline's Promise in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and or/exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and volunteers with a screening process.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of sexual abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used herein and are defined as follows:

1. **Paid Staff:** Any administrator, missionary, or other employee who is paid.
2. **Children/Youth/Minor:** Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. **Adult:** Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
4. **Volunteer:** Any unpaid person involved in activities and/or who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
5. **Sexual Abuse:** The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any person to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct. Additionally any rape, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of a minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or any action defined by federal or state law shall be deemed as falling under this definition. This includes, but is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, sexual gestures, sexual touching, fondling, assault, or other unwelcome physical contact of an intimate nature, compelling another person to engage in any of the above by threats, fear, or intimidation and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.

PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

The following screening procedures are to be used with all paid staff and volunteers. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

- 1. Volunteer, Employment, or Mission Trip Application:** Anyone who will work with a minor must complete an application along with a release statement authorizing a background check. The application and release statement must be signed by the individual completing the application in order to apply for and qualify for service.

This application and release statement may include questions regarding:

- Current and previous addresses
 - References from previous employers and organizations that serve children
 - Pending criminal charges
 - Drug test
 - Criminal history information
 - Volunteer or mission work experience
 - Personal references
- 2. Criminal Background Check:** Caroline's Promise may conduct a criminal background check on all volunteers. All criminal background checks may be updated periodically without the express written permission of the applicant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information obtained through these processes will be kept in confidence unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained by this means shall be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted. These materials will be archived.

BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

- 1. Do not provide alcohol, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.**
- 2. Adults are not allowed to have alcohol, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law on any mission trip or activity related to Caroline's Promise.**
- 3. Any tobacco use should be minimal and out of sight of minors.**
- 4. Prescription drugs, aspirin, and other first aid items will be given to youth with prior parental consent.**
- 5. To the extent possible, events or activities related to Caroline's Promise that are co-educational will have both male and female volunteers available.**
- 6. Whenever possible, at least two unrelated staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily.**
- 7. Speaking one-on-one with a minor or minors should be done in public settings and in the sight of other people.**
- 8. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched and not on the needs of the volunteer or staff member. In the event that a minor initiates inappropriate physical contact or touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.**
- 9. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/emotional abuse, or sexual abuse of any kind.**
- 10. If you observe an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.**

11. Anyone who observes violations to this policy will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and to officials of Caroline's Promise for handling.

DISQUALIFICATION

Caroline's Promise will examine past criminal activities and separate these into two groups: Permanent disqualification and allowable participation after a minimum of 5 years waiting period following the end of sentence.

PERMANENT DISQUALIFICATION: No person will be entrusted with the case or supervision of minors or may oversee and/or exert control over minors if he/she has been convicted of the following, been on probation or received deferred adjudication for the following, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made (including but not limited to any person who is currently on deferred adjudication).

1. Any offense current or prior against minors as defined by state or federal law
2. Any offense current or prior as defined by state or federal law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting of child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, or incest.

FIVE YEAR WAITING PERIOD: Any misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law for family related violence against a minor or adult, drug related offenses, or assault of a minor or adult would require a minimum of 5 years from the end of the convicted individual's sentence before being able to care for, supervise, control, or have oversight of minors.

RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ABUSE

Caroline's Promise will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be given a copy of these guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Executive Director in conjunction with a Board Member will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Executive Director is the individual accused of sexual abuse, the Board Chair and one other Board Member will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to the appropriate authorities in accordance with mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to the Executive Director who will then report to the Board Chair and one other Board Member.
3. Report the matter to Caroline's Promise's insurance carrier.
4. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
5. The alleged offender will be suspended from their employment (with pay) or volunteer duties while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
6. The people conducting the investigation will present their findings to the Board of Directors who will then meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for action.

- 7. During the investigation an official of Caroline's Promise will maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian and inform them of the actions taken. The ministry will assist them in their process of healing.**
- 8. Communicate with civil and legal counsel of Caroline's Promise.**
- 9. Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.**
- 10. Assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of Caroline's Promise's Board of Directors and/or legal counsel.**