

Proposed Policy For Children and Women Safety

The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc. (“COOLJC”), and its affiliate churches, have a duty to all parents, parishioners and the community to ensure the safety of children, teens and women to the greatest extent possible. The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ strives to develop procedures that will result in the safest environment possible for the women, children and youth of the church.

Screening of Ministers, Staff and Volunteers

1. Selective Hiring

All persons working with children under the age of 18, and all prospective ministers and missionaries seeking credentials from COOLJC, must undergo a screening process before being appointed to any volunteer or employment position or awarded credentials from the Church.

The Process

- a. Application: For all persons seeking credentials from the Church, (including ministers, bishops, and missionaries), and for all persons seeking to work with the children’s ministry, applicants must complete an employment application, whether the “job” is for pay, elected or on a volunteer basis. The applicant must provide the following information:
- Current and previous residence addresses.
 - Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles and reasons for leaving.
 - Current and previous churches attended, including addresses, dates, duties, titles and reasons for leaving.
 - Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned, if any.
 - References from previous employers and organizations which serve children.
 - Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).

Ministers, Bishops and missionaries that were licensed prior to August, 2008, will not be subject to reference checks or the personal interview unless deemed necessary by the credentials committee or the screening committee. They will however be subject to all other screening including background checks.

b. Applicants must acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed.

c. The applicant must also give consent to the COOLJC and the recommending Pastor to contact any individual or organization listed in the application. Pastors making recommendations for appointments or the award of any credentials must certify in writing that he has contacted all the references and employers and completed the required background check and provide to the screening committee, a summary of his findings.

d. The Board of Apostles will appoint a “screening committee” consisting of one representative from the Boards of Apostles, Board of Bishops, Missionary Department, General Secretary’s Office, Credential Committee and Youth Ministries. The screening committee will ensure that the applicant has properly completed the application and that the references provided have been called and a background check has been completed. The Committee will ensure that all calls have been properly recorded and a record of their findings is filed in the Office of the General Secretary. Any irregular findings must be reported to the Board of Apostles for consideration prior to any appointment or award of credentials.

e. If the Board of Apostles finds that an applicant has “issues”, and still finds the applicant desirable, the Board will make a note of its findings and the reason for the denial or the granting of credentials or appointment. “Issues” are any matter or detrimental information, that may cause concern, such as allegations, founded or unfounded, or a criminal background. An applicant with a criminal record will not be automatically disqualified, however, the applicant will be subject to a further interview by two members of the Board of Apostles.

Additional Screening:

Applicants seeking to work with children, 18 years or under, at any international meeting must:

1. Be at least 21 years of age or older;
2. If applicant is in a “key role”, such as the Youth Congress President or Children’s Convention Coordinator or a key part of its staff, applicant must submit to a criminal background check, provided such background check does not violate any state law; and submit to being fingerprinted.

Before being permitted to work with COOLJC children, all applications, background checks, and fingerprints must have been received and such applicants approved by the Board of Apostles.

Requirements for Working With Children:

COOLJC will put forth its best effort to make certain that no spoil comes to children and youth by enforcing the following rules:

1. Two Adult Rule: Two adults must always be present in the room where there are children or youth events. When this is not possible, a “roamer” will visit the room periodically.
2. All volunteers must be at least five years older than the children they are working with or supervising.
3. No worker under the age of 18 will have sole responsibility, nor be alone with, any child or youth without having an adult check in with them periodically.
4. Doors to classrooms must be kept open unless the noise is prohibitive. In that instance, a roamer will visit the room periodically.
5. COOLJC shall provide an annual orientation session that includes:
 - church policies for prevention of child abuse;
 - procedures to be used in ministry with children and youth;

- appropriate steps to report an incident of abuse;
- providing first aid and CPR training for all workers with children and youth;
- details of state laws regarding child abuse.

Any worker that cannot attend the orientation session, must provide proof that they have received training in another venue that contained equivalent information

6. Counseling sessions should be held with doors open or with two adults present, preferably, not husband and wife.
7. No adult is to initiate any physical contact with a child, such as hugging and playing; and
8. Parents must be given advance notice and full information about activities involving children and youth.

Responding to Alleged/Suspected Child Abuse While on the Premises at a Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ Meeting or at any COOLJC Related Function

The Board of Apostles appoint the First Lady of the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Marion Norwood and Bishop Gentle Groover as the designated individuals who will receive all reports of suspected or alleged abuse. In the event they are not on the premises, any member of the Children's Church or ABYPU or staff person will be the designated person to receive the report.

Upon notification of the abuse of a child or suspected abuse while on the premises or at any church related function of COOLJC:

1. The designated individual must then immediately, in a non-accusatory manner, separate the alleged abuser from the victim.
2. The designated individual will immediately notify the Presiding Apostle.
3. The designated individual will immediately contact the parents of the alleged victim.
4. The Presiding Apostle will contact the attorney to determine whether the alleged abuse must be reported to the state authority and to the insurance company.
5. The designated individual will then document all steps taken pursuant to the notification of alleged abuse.
6. The designated individual and any other persons involved in the incident will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the person(s) involved and refrain from making any unnecessary comments.
7. COOLJC will cooperate with any official investigation conducted by a governmental agency.
8. The Presiding Apostle, or his designee, will be the only person authorized to speak to the media.
9. The person under investigation for the alleged abuse will be immediately suspended from all responsibilities with children and/or youth until a thorough investigation is conducted.