

Bella Vista Church of Christ Child Protection Policy

The Bella Vista Church has always made it a priority to ensure the physical and spiritual safety of its visitors and members. The Elders of the Bella Vista Church have developed and will post this policy to avert and/or deal with any abuse of our children and youth while they are engaging in any events and programs sponsored by the Church.

Beginning immediately, anyone acting as a teacher, chaperone, volunteer, staff, having responsibility for, or exercising responsibility over our children and youth, must be aware of this policy and the actions that will be taken in the event they fail to comply with this policy.

The following rules apply when working with our children and youth:

1. Avoid being in a situation where you are alone with a youth in a closed-door environment unless you are a direct relative or legal guardian. If you find yourself in this situation, you must either open a door to allow others to view activities in the room, or stop the event/program until the situation can be resolved. Ideally, find another adult to be present with you and the youth during the event/program. This includes church sponsored events not held on the campus as well as transportation to and from said events (i.e. member's homes, hotel rooms, counseling/mentoring situations, and other private spaces).
2. New members must wait 3 months before volunteering with our children and youth ministries and submit to a formal background check. This policy does not apply to members or visitors who are simply watching an event/program.
3. Violations of this policy will be dealt with according to severity, up to and including reporting to local law enforcement. The leadership of the Bella Vista Church of Christ is fully committed to cooperating with local law enforcement.
4. Bathroom policies for volunteers:
 - a. Volunteer should not allow themselves to be in a bathroom with a child alone unless they are a direct relative or the legal guardian of the child.
 - b. Only biological women may assist or escort a child to the bathroom or change a child's diaper.
 - c. If a child can use the bathroom on their own, let them. If your assistance is needed, you should ask another volunteer to watch you as you assist the child.
5. Response to any violation of this policy will be led by the chair elder. If the chair elder is the subject of the complaint, the previous chair will lead the response.
6. All volunteers, elders, and staff members are required to review and sign this policy on a yearly basis.

We are sincerely appreciative of our staff and any members who dedicate themselves to the education and well-being of our children and youth. We pray that this policy and the church's actions help everyone clearly understand the seriousness of this subject and will understand this is done with love and for the protection our children, staff and volunteers.

The Bella Vista Church of Christ Elders