



Dear Ministry Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in serving in a ministry at Abundant Life. A primary value of our ministries is providing a safe environment for others to come to know Jesus and develop a relationship with Him. Among the things we do to ensure this is ask that each volunteer be safety screened and approved prior to serving.

Abundant Life has also developed safety policies to protect our young people who, because of their vulnerability, might be exposed to inappropriate contact and behavior. These policies are also in place to help protect you as a worker from situations that could put you at risk, including false accusations.

Our safety screening process is a critical and required step for all volunteers who may or may not be working directly with minors. It involves your authorization for a designated representative of Abundant Life Church to perform an extensive criminal background and personal reference check. Please know that all information is held in the highest confidence. This process must be completed to our satisfaction prior to your approval to serve.

Please read the enclosed child safety policies then complete and sign all forms (front and back). Upon completion please mail all forms to:

Abundant Life Church
Attention: Safety Screening – Confidential
17241 SE Hemrick Rd.
Damascus, OR 97089

You will be notified should further questions arise, or upon completion of the process.

Thank you for your willingness to impact the lives of others through your involvement. If you have further questions on this process, please contact Jenifer Stone at the church office at 503-658-8271, ext. 252, or via email at childsafety@coolchurch.com.

Sincerely,

George Powell
Senior Pastor
Abundant Life Church



Abundant Life Church Child Safety Policy

Purpose Statement:

Abundant Life Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of Abundant Life Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. This policy covers all Abundant Life Campuses.

I. Selection of Workers:

All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes:

a. Six Month Rule

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until he or she has been involved with Abundant Life Church for a minimum of six months. The beginning of the six month wait period is a fixed date determined by the applicant’s information being entered into the all-church database, Fellowship One. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

b. Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. This application, the *Abundant Life Safety Screening Application*, will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at Abundant Life Church and will be available to the designated Safety Screener and select leadership on staff.

c. Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview with the ministry director may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d. Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicant's references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Abundant Life and may be available to select leadership on staff.

e. Criminal Background Check

A national background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for all volunteers who work with or around minors at Abundant Life or any off-site event or activity sponsored by Abundant Life Church.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form, called a Background Screening Consent, authorizing Abundant Life Church to run the check using an outside source. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he or she will be unable to work with minors. No background check will be run without the applicant's required signature authorizing it.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by a pastor on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency, and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form will be maintained in confidence on file at Abundant Life Church. The background check results will be maintained in confidence and available for review in Fellowship One by a select few.

In some cases, a person may be approved to volunteer only in specific ministries without direct contact with Children or Students. If that person is interested in serving in ministry while children are in the building, he or she would need prior approval from the Pastor of Family Ministries, and would require an escort while children are present.

II. **Child and Worker Supervision**

a. **Two Adult Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

b. **Age Specific Practices**

- Infants through 2 years olds may need to be patted, held, hugged and rocked.
- Three year olds through Kindergarten also need to be hugged and held occasionally.
- Elementary age through Senior High have not grown too old for a caring, affirming touch from an adult. Touching should be limited to handshakes, a pat on the arm or shoulder, or a quick “side-to-side” hug or embrace.

c. **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children in 5th grade and younger, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be checked in by a parent or guardian at a kiosk, and will receive a “pick-up tag” for the child, similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the pick-up tag in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the pick-up tag, he or she should be directed to the Children’s Ministry kiosk to discuss the surrounding circumstances with a ministry leader. The parent or guardian may be asked to present photo identification before the ministry leader releases the child into his/her care.

III. **Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

- Physical Abuse – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns and biting.
- Emotional Abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.

- Sexual Abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including but not limited to the following activities: fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to a Family Ministry staff person for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

- 1) The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
- 2) The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending investigation.
- 3) Our insurance company will be notified and we will complete an incident report.
- 4) We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
- 5) We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
- 6) Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children or youth.
- 7) The Pastor of Communications or the Senior Pastor will be our designated spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
- 8) A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

IV. Non-Abundant Life Sponsored Activities

Staff and volunteers, in general, may not be alone with children and youth they meet at Abundant Life. This includes both sanctioned Abundant Life ministry activities, as well as non-church/personal activities. Any exceptions require the ministry area Pastor's approval before the fact for ministry related activities, or the parent's approval for clearly stated non-Abundant Life activities (such as babysitting, or other one on one activities).

Safety Screening Application

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or paid) at Abundant Life Church. It is being used to help Abundant Life Church provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our programs and use our facilities. It should be placed in a sealed envelope and returned to Abundant Life Church, Attention: Confidential Safety Screening.

Full Legal Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender _____

Please list all states and counties of residence since turning age 18: _____

Please circle any of the following states in which you have lived: A, CO, DE, LA, MA, SD, VT, WV, WY

Other Names Previously Used (including nicknames, alias, maiden, previous married names, etc.)

List churches you have attended regularly in the past five years and all previous church ministry (include church names, phone numbers, dates and details about the work):

List previous non-church work experience you have that relates to the position for which you're applying (include organization names, phone numbers, dates and types of work):

List any gifts, callings, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for working in a ministry:

Please complete the back side!

I would like to volunteer at the following campus: HAPPY VALLEY _____ PARKROSE _____ SANDY _____

I am interested in working in the following ministry areas:

I am an Abundant Life Church member: Yes _____ No _____ In membership process _____

I am a regular Abundant Life attendee: Yes _____ No _____ How long/often? _____

Please provide the name(s) of an Abundant Life pastor, staff member or ministry leader who knows you well enough to comment on your participation at ALC so far: _____

Please provide two adult references who are not family members. If you are applying to work with children or youth, please make sure your references can comment on their observations of you in that area.

Reference #1

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____ Work _____

Reference #2

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____ Work _____

I understand that my signature below grants permission to Abundant Life, its agents and any person or entity to provide information or hold discussions in regards to investigating or obtaining information which may be material to my qualifications for service now, and if applicable, during the tenure of my employment or service with Abundant Life. I hereby certify that all information I have provided on the pages of this application is true, correct and complete. I understand that any false information or omission may disqualify me from further consideration and could result in my removal if discovered at a later date.

Applicant Signature _____ **Date** _____

Safety Statement of Agreement

I agree with the need to provide a safe place for people of all ages when involved in ministries and activities at Abundant Life Church. I have reviewed the Abundant Life Safety Policy at the beginning of this packet (also available at the Children's Ministry kiosk), and I understand and agree to comply with it.

Applicant Signature _____ **Date** _____

Printed Name _____

Confidential Safety Screening Form

This page is to be completed by all volunteer applicants for any position, and paid positions involving the supervision or custody of minors. It is being used to help Abundant Life Church provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. This page will be reviewed by the designated evaluator and may be forwarded to a pastor for a follow-up discussion or interview with the applicant. The church has agreed to provide a professional evaluation through Sundstrom and Associates' clinical professions center, for individuals whose answers on this confidential screening form raise significant issues. The designated evaluator will contact you if further follow-up is needed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ E-Mail _____

1) Have you ever been the subject of an investigation concerning any sex-related crime? _____ YES _____ NO

2) Have you ever been the subject of an investigation concerning child abuse or neglect? _____ YES _____ NO

3) Have you ever had problems with drug or alcohol abuse? _____ YES _____ NO

4) Have you ever been convicted of a crime except a minor traffic violation? _____ YES _____ NO

5) Have you been arrested within the last three years for a crime for which there has not yet been an acquittal or dismissal? _____ YES _____ NO

6) Have you had recurring mental health issues, psychiatric care or hospitalizations? _____ YES _____ NO

7) Have you ever or are you currently taking any psychotherapeutic medications? _____ YES _____ NO

8) If you have been diagnosed with any of the following, please circle: Chronic Hepatitis, HIV, Tuberculosis.

List any other chronic communicable disease if applicable: _____

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, please use the back of this page to write an explanation.

9) Have you ever experienced physical or sexual abuse? _____ YES _____ NO
(Answering yes or leaving this question unanswered will not automatically disqualify you from working with children and youth.)

I hereby certify that all information provided and questions answered above are true. Further, by signing below, I release Abundant Life and its agents from any liability or claims concerning the information and questions on this page.

I have read, agree with, and understand the paragraph at the top of this page.

Signature

Date

BACKGROUND SCREENING CONSENT

Note: This consent does not apply to applicants who are under the age of 18.

By signing below, I hereby authorize Abundant Life Church and/or its agents to make an independent investigation which may include some or all of the following: background, references, character, past employment, education, adult criminal or police records, SSN trace and motor vehicle records. I understand that this information will be used for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Safety Screening application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualifications for employment and/or service now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my employment or service with Abundant Life Church.

Further, I release Abundant Life and/or its agents and any person or entity which provides information obtained pursuant to this authorization from any and all liabilities, claims or law suits in regards to the information obtained from any and all referenced sources used. I understand that by signing below, I give permission to release all answers and information obtained as a result of the Safety Screening process to a pastor on staff for review or a follow-up interview if determined necessary.

Lastly, I certify that the information I have provided below is true and correct.

SSN _____ - _____ - _____ D.O.B. _____

Driver's License # _____ State of Issue _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

