

[CHURCH NAME]

Background Check Policy

The purpose of this policy is to designate formal and routine procedures for making legal investigations of possible criminal history of persons who may be involved either with the children or with the finances of the church.

- I. Persons to be checked
 - a. Minister
 - b. Director of Religious Education
 - c. Any adult, staff or volunteer who serves as a church school teacher, youth sponsor, nursery worker or anyone who serves in an ongoing volunteer position within the child or youth programs of the church.
 - d. Church Treasurer
 - e. Board President
 - f. Board Vice-President
 - g. Financial Secretary
 - h. Other persons now or in the future who will have or possibly may have contact with children or with money that the Board of Directors decide is necessary and consistent with the purposes of this policy.
- II. Persons responsible for checking
 - a. The Board of Directors shall assign three persons qualified for reviewing criminal background transcripts and approving or denying placement.
 - b. The terms of these positions shall be indefinite.
 - c. The Board shall have the power to replace any reviewer. Reviewers desiring to resign their position should give as much notice as possible to the Board.
 - d. Qualifications:
 1. Persons selected shall have been a member in good standing of [Church Name] for a minimum of 3 years.
 2. Persons selected shall have read and understand the “PENALTY OF THE UNAUTHORIZED OBTAINING, USE OR DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL HISTORY INFORMATION” at the back of this policy section.
 3. Persons selected shall perform required training at the [Training Center Name] prior to submitting or evaluating any criminal history transcripts.

III. Procedure for review

a. Preparation of Application/Consent Form

1. The consent/Background Check Authorization form (see form at end of policy) must be completed as indicated and signed by the applicant.
2. These forms must be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

b. Preparation of Background History Check Form

1. The form (see form at end of policy) must be completed as listed and signed by the applicant.
2. This form must be kept in a locked storage drawer until the background check is completed.
3. At this time the applicant shall be made aware of the grievance process available should a dispute arise over a criminal background check report or the decision of placement based on said report.
4. This form, when completed, shall be submitted to checking agency. Separate checks must be submitted for any aliases provided by applicant.

c. Receipt of Background Check Information

1. All records pertaining to a criminal background check shall be destroyed with a shredder within 5 days of making a decision of each applicant's suitability for placement.
2. All records pertaining to a criminal background check shall be destroyed within 30 days after having received the records from the checking agency.
3. All criminal background reports shall be kept in a locked storage drawer until such time as the records are destroyed by shredder.
4. Information contained in the returned report may only be shared with the applicant, another qualified reviewer and the checking agency. Under no circumstances shall it be shared with anyone else.
5. Applicant may NOT be allowed to keep or photocopy his or her history transcript.
6. The reviewer may not record in any way, under any circumstances, the information contained in the history transcript except for cases resulting in grievances.

d. Review of Reports with Criminal History

1. Positions working with children and youth:
 - a. A reported conviction, plea bargain or deferred adjudication of rape, sexual abuse or physical abuse of any nature automatically disqualifies any applicant.
 - b. All other recorded offenses shall be reviewed on a case by case basis. A second opinion should be obtained in these cases prior to making a decision.
2. Positions working with church finances:
 - a. A reported conviction, plea bargain or deferred adjudication of theft, robbery, burglary, or fraud, of any nature, automatically disqualifies any applicant.

- b. All other recorded offenses shall be reviewed on a case by case basis. A second opinion should be obtained in these cases prior to making a decision.
- e. Failure of Applicant to be Accepted
 - 1. The reviewer should meet with the applicant privately to discuss the nature and reasons for denial. This will give the applicant an opportunity to withdraw from consideration. The reviewer(s) should notify the Director of Religious Education or Board of Directors of the self-removal by applicant. The details of the self-removal shall not be disclosed to anyone except another qualified reviewer or the checking agency.
- f. Grievances
 - 1. Disagreement with the accuracy of information
 - a. See the forms at the end of this policy for process related to accuracy of information.
 - 2. Disagreement based on qualifications or suitability.
 - a. Reviewer should obtain a second opinion from another qualified reviewer or the checking agency.
 - b. In the case of continued dispute, the reviewer should present facts and his or her recommendation to the Board of Directors for final decision.