

Child Safety & Protection Policy

Zion Cathedral COGIC / YAYA Nation

Purpose

Zion Cathedral COGIC is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and secure environment for all children and youth. This Child Safety & Protection Policy establishes screening standards, supervision expectations, reporting responsibilities, and media consent requirements for ministry activities involving minors (under age 18).

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, ministers, leaders, contractors, and volunteers participating in any church-sponsored program involving minors, including worship services, classes, events, rehearsals, trips, and online communications.

1. Screening & Vetting Requirements

All adults serving in programs involving minors must complete screening requirements prior to service, which may include:

- Identity verification and reference checks (as applicable)
- Background screening consistent with New York State requirements, including fingerprint-based checks where required
- Required child protection and mandated reporter training certificates (as applicable)

No adult may begin service with minors until screening is completed and approval is granted by designated church leadership.

2. Training & Conduct Expectations

All workers serving with minors must:

- Complete child safety orientation and periodic refresher training (as applicable)
- Maintain appropriate boundaries, respectful communication, and professional conduct
- Refrain from any behavior that could be interpreted as grooming, exploitation, harassment, or inappropriate communication
- Avoid private, secretive, or exclusive relationships with minors

Any suspected violations of conduct standards must be reported immediately using the reporting procedures below.

3. Supervision Standards

To protect children and workers, programs involving minors will follow safety practices including:

- Age-appropriate supervision ratios based on activity type
- Two-adult oversight whenever feasible
- Clear check-in/check-out procedures for scheduled programs
- Prohibition against being alone with a minor in isolated settings whenever feasible
- Reasonable exceptions for emergencies must be documented and reported to leadership

Where feasible, rooms used for children's ministry should maintain visibility (open doors or windowed doors).

4. Check-In / Check-Out Procedures

For scheduled programs serving younger children:

- A secure check-in/check-out method will be used (e.g., sign-in/out or claim-check pick-up)
- Only authorized parents/guardians or approved adults may pick up a child

- Workers must not release a child to an unauthorized person

5. Transportation & Off-Site Activities

For trips, events, and transportation:

- Parent/guardian permission is required in writing
- Medical authorization and emergency contact information must be on file
- Safety rules, supervision expectations, and designated leaders will be documented for each event
- Adults supervising off-site activities must follow all behavior and supervision standards in this policy

6. Digital Communication & Online Safety

Communication with minors must:

- Be ministry-related, appropriate, and transparent
- Preferably include a parent/guardian or ministry administrator in the communication loop when feasible
- Avoid private or secretive messaging patterns
- Follow the church's technology and social media guidelines
- Prohibit sending inappropriate content, private late-night messaging, or communications that are not ministry-related

7. Photo / Video / Media Consent

Zion Cathedral uses images responsibly:

- Photos/videos of minors are used only with parent/guardian permission via written consent (event-specific or annual)
- Parents/guardians may withdraw permission in writing at any time
- Requests for image removal will be addressed promptly

8. Mandatory Reporting & Safety Concerns

If a worker suspects abuse, neglect, or immediate danger:

- Immediate danger: call 911
- Notify designated church leadership/safety officer:

Safety Officer / Leadership Contact (Name/Title/Phone/Email):

Security Office 516.623.9466 Delores Fletcher

- Follow applicable reporting requirements under New York State law and church procedures
- Do not attempt to investigate independently—preserve safety, document facts, and escalate appropriately

9. Response to Allegations

When an allegation is made, the church will take immediate steps to protect children, which may include:

- Removing the accused individual from contact with minors pending review
- Notifying appropriate authorities as required
- Completing internal documentation
- Notifying insurance and counsel as appropriate
- Maintaining confidentiality to the greatest extent possible while meeting legal and safety

obligations

10. Policy Enforcement

Violations of this policy may result in removal from service, suspension pending investigation, and/or reporting to appropriate authorities. Zion Cathedral reserves the right to deny or revoke ministry participation for individuals who do not meet screening, training, or conduct standards.

11. Updates

This policy may be updated as needed to maintain best practices, legal compliance, and ministry safety standards.

Last updated:

2-8-2026

Approved by (Church Authority):

FRANK A. WHITE

Signature (if printing):

Frank A. White

Date:

2-8-2026

Note: For Adobe Sign / DocuSign, place a signature field over the Signature box above.