



# International Church of Prague Child Protection Policy

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## Introduction

ICP has developed this child protection policy in order to make ICP a safe community for children and those who work with them. It spells out what we expect of ourselves and our staff and workers. While we cannot foresee every situation, we are attempting to take every reasonable precaution to provide a safe learning environment for children who attend ICP.

All children are naturally vulnerable and “at risk” in that they depend upon adults for their life and welfare. In accordance with God’s plan, this relationship is a reflection of the way God intends for His “children” of all ages to relate to Him—in humble dependence. Not all adults, however, are trustworthy, and the God-given vulnerability of children has, at times, led to their abuse—in physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual ways. Abuse of vulnerable children is abhorrent to God. God intends that His people share both His concern for all children and His abhorrence at their abuse. He also calls His people to reflect His trustworthiness by being the kind of people children can depend upon—protecting and defending them from harm, as far as they are able, as well as providing advice and support. Recognizing children as one of God’s most precious gifts, International Church of Prague (ICP) is dedicated to this Christian mandate.

Furthermore, those who work with children are God’s gifts, as well. Sometimes workers are accused of abuse, and false allegations can be as harmful to one’s ministry as true ones. One purpose of this policy is to establish ICP’s procedure in case allegations are raised against someone who works with ICP children.

Finally, in recognition of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ICP is committed to the nurturing, protection, and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people. The core principles are: non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. EU document on the Rights of a child further outlines this at the following website. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/index_en.htm). All ICP staff, elected officers and volunteers working with children and youth pledge to abide by the church’s policies as explained on the following pages.

# Section 1

## *Principles of Good Practice*

All involved in child care at International Church of Prague should be committed to promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from harm. This policy should be reviewed every three years by the International Church of Prague.

The International Church of Prague shall make every reasonable effort to: provide a safe place for children to be cared for during services; provide (or help to provide) supervision, support and training for volunteers; adopt a code of conduct for volunteers as explained below; adhere to safety procedures; and share child protection issues with the necessary authorities.

It is our aim that we will help to fulfil these “Rights of the Child” while they are in our care (*IE during the children’s programme on Sunday Mornings, Youth Praha on Friday evenings and any associated events at other times*). We cannot take it for granted that everyone in our church has the children’s best interests at heart; neither can we take it for granted that everyone who volunteers to look after the children will be suitable. Therefore, this document has been created in order to encourage people to discuss how best to care for the children who are part of the International Church of Prague. This is not a document that covers all possibilities. However, it is intended as a guideline to assist those who are in a position of leadership and those who care for our children.

- **Conduct:** We will take care in the way we conduct ourselves with and in the presence of children, recognizing that adult example is an important factor in children’s development.
- **Recruitment of Staff:** We will exercise proper care in selecting and appointing those working with children and youth.
- **Training:** We will support, resource, and train those who work with children and youth as well as provide supervision.
- **Access to Children:** We will strictly monitor access by outsiders to children in the care of ICP, along with information about these children, for the sake of their safety and privacy.
- **Interacting with Children:** We will listen to and hear what children have to say, and respond with respect, while maintaining their dignity and self-esteem.
- **Reporting abuse:** We accept our responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual abuse of children and youth, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected, following the accepted ICP protocol.

## Section 2

### *How to minimise the risks on our premises*

This Child Protection document is not just to give guidelines in preventing abuse by someone on our premises, but also this document is to help workers provide a safe and protected environment for our children. Therefore, this section will also look at physical safety and how to minimise the risks, as well as how to minimize risks of a child being abused while in our care.

#### **Minimising safety risks**

Safety of the children is your FIRST priority. You have been entrusted by parents to look after their most special possession. The child is irreplaceable.

Before you welcome the children into the room where you will care for them, you must first inspect the room for ANYTHING that has even the smallest possibility of causing harm. Some things to look out for include:

- Sharp objects on the floor, tables or window ledges
- Sharp corners on tables
- Piles of chairs stacked high
- Loose screws on furniture
- Cables they can trip over
- Broken glass
- Small objects that they can put in their mouth and choke on (Little ones put EVERYTHING in their mouths, so make sure nothing is small enough to be swallowed or dirty enough to cause infections)
- And there are many more.....

Safety again is vital at craft time. Scissors, glue, pencils, crayons, markers, sharpeners, rulers, paint brushes, paints, bits of card, etc can all be dangerous to a young toddler. Ensure supervision of the craft. Draft in extra helpers if you need to. Have enough special child-friendly scissors on hand.

#### **Minimising abuse risks** – by workers; by the general public

#### **Vetting**

Vetting of potential volunteers as to their suitability is an important way to ensure that only the appropriate people have access to the children of International Church of Prague. Any adult who wishes to be a volunteer worker must complete the following:

- Be in attendance at ICP consistently over a 12-week period
- Complete a Czech criminal background check (usually available from Post Office for anyone who has a biometric card; if the applicant does not have a biometric card yet, and cannot provide a background check from his/her home country, a local reference shall be requested in addition to the other two)
- An interview with a member of the Children's Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT)

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- Provide 2 references, at least one of which should be from the applicant's home country
- Complete training for volunteers
- Final approval by CMLT
- Observation period as determined by program leader

Youth (ages 12-17) typically assist with ICP events such as Sunday School. Teenagers who wish to volunteer must complete the following:

- Be in attendance at ICP consistently over a 12-week period
- An interview with a member of the Children's Ministry Leadership Team
- Provide 2 references, at least one of which should be from the applicant's home country
- Complete training for volunteers
- Final approval by CMLT
- Observation period as determined by program leader

For teenage volunteers, a vetted adult (or child's parents) should always be present in the room.

## **Photography**

Photographs or videos and the subsequent publishing of these should only be done with the consent of the parents/carers of the children involved. No names should be printed with these photographs or videos. They should only be used for that reason for which consent was gained and not made available for any other use. Publishing of photographs on the internet should be avoided as there is evidence of such photographs having been used or adapted for pornography and/or grooming.

## **Toilets**

The UK, USA, Australia and many Western countries have very strict rules about toilets and children. These rules were created because many adults abused children and the nature of the toilet is a high vulnerability area. Workers should observe the following:

- Tell the other leader that you are taking (name of child) to the toilet. Tell them when you come back.
- Take another child/group of children to the toilets together.
- Minimise any isolated one-to-one time with any child.
- Leave the main door of the toilets open, and let the child close the cubical/stall door him/herself. (But do not let them lock it as kids sometimes get stuck)
- Do not do anything of a personal nature for the child that a child can do for him/herself.

## **Outings**

Full consent should be gained from the parents/carers for any event off of the normal facilities. This is most common through Youth Praha. Full details of the trip (date, time, location, names and mobile numbers of the supervising adults, costs) should be emailed and/or printed and given to each parent/carer and posted on ICP's website. See Section 6 for a sample form.

## Staff: Child Ratio

Most incidents can be prevented by having enough adult supervision. ICP's guidelines are as follows:

- No volunteers should be alone with children or groups of children.
- At least one approved adult **and** one additional approved adult or youth volunteer (i.e. minimum **two** approved volunteers/group) should always be with a group of children at all times.
- If groups are smaller than 3 children, it is recommended that every effort possible is made to combine with another group.
- In addition to the first two volunteers, ICP recommends that an additional volunteer be added to the group along the following guidelines:

Age of Children	General Ratio Expected	On Site Activities	Off Site Activities
0-2 Years	1 adult to 5 Children	5	Parental Supervision Required
3-6 Years	1 adult to 6 Children	6	4
7-10 Years	1 adult to 10 Children	10	5
11-13 Years	1 adult to 12 Children	12	6
12-17 Years	1 adult to 16 Children	16	8

## First Aid

Should a child in our care be injured or become ill, the parents should be contacted immediately or as soon as is practical (depending on the nature of the injury). At International Church of Prague, children do not normally attend without a parent/carer/other adult being on-site. The leader-in-charge should be responsible to deal with the injury/illness and provide relevant care as necessary and to explain to the parent/carer the details of the nature of the injury, cause of the injury and action that was taken. A written record may also be useful and should be kept on file in the church office.

## Internet & Phones

The workers at International Church of Prague should not engage in any private one-to-one contact with the children via the internet or mobile phones. Messages sent via email or Facebook should be open for viewing or through parents.

Allowing children to use a mobile phone/computer to access internet while in our care should be avoided unless there is a very deliberate reason, adequate supervision, and parents are aware of all necessary details including the reasons for doing so.

## Visitors

Visitors to children's group at ICP are inevitable. However, you are still responsible for the child's safety. Some example of what kind of visitors might be present:

- Parents of children who are upset or not used to being in this setting
- Parents of children who have difficulty understanding English
- Extra volunteers
- Guest teachers

Visitors should NEVER be left with one child alone, nor should they be left with a group of children. Someone in your team of teachers should know the person and why s/he is present.

If an unknown person comes into the room, please do the following:

- The first thing to do is to act quickly and calmly.
- There should always be two leaders/adults on duty. One should then distract all the children in a part of the room. The other leader should gently approach the stranger and guide him/her outside the door to talk.
- Ask why s/he there. He/she should have a good and valid reason to be anywhere near your precious charges.
- If you are not satisfied, calmly, politely but forcefully, let him/her know that you have guidelines that must be followed and request that the stranger leave the premises. You do not need to give any other reason. If he/she is genuine and has no malicious intent, he/she should be willing to respect your guidelines.
- NEVER leave the stranger alone for any period of time, but escort him/her off the premises or back to where the other adults are.
- Meanwhile, the other leader should keep the children distracted from seeing anything that may be happening. They are your number one priority.

Safety at going-home-time is vital. Be sure to get to know the names and faces of their parents. NEVER let a child go "home" with someone who you do not recognise as a parent or known babysitter. When a parent drops off a child, ask who will be picking up the child. If a parent wants you to let the child go with someone other than themselves, they should give you a name and description of that person. Try to notice who leaves with whom. It may prove useful if questions arise at a later date. You think it will never happen, but it can and does.

## **Section 3**

### ***Definitions of Child Abuse***

These are the four main types of abuse. Any can be carried out by strangers, but more commonly it is carried out by adults the child knows and trusts, or even other children or young people.

#### **Physical**

When a child is hurt, kicked, beaten, punched, burnt, thrown, confined, etc. Any action which causes physical harm to a child (including deliberately inducing illness in a child) or failure to prevent physical harm to a child.

#### **Emotional**

When the adult with responsibility for the child, persistently conveys to the child that they are unworthy, unloved, inadequate, etc and does not have appropriate physical contact with the child. This type of abuse also includes exposing the child to situations beyond their developmental capability; or limitation of exploration/learning opportunities.

#### **Sexual**

When an adult or other young person touches a child's private parts in a way which makes the child feel worried or unhappy. (Including penetration, masturbation, kissing, touching, etc) This also includes if a child is asked to touch him/herself in view of the adult/young person or if a child is shown pornographic pictures, videos or another sexual act. This is still abuse even if the child is not aware of what is happening. Grooming a child in preparation for abuse is also defined as abuse.

#### **Neglect**

Persistent failure to meet a child's physical and psychological needs, e.g., when a child is left alone without enough to eat, or deliberately not taken to a doctor/dentist for treatment when s/he is ill, lack of stimulation, and lack of education also constitute neglect.



## **Indicators of Abuse**

Below are some indicators of a child being abused. This is not a full list, but it is included to encourage Children's Workers to look out for the children and to be aware of these indicators as a situation that possibly warrants more investigation by an appropriate expert.

### **Indicators of Neglect**

Constant hunger  
Exposed to danger, and a lack of supervision  
Inadequate/inappropriate clothing  
Poor hygiene  
Untreated illnesses  
Tiredness  
Listlessness  
Lack of peer relationships  
Low self-esteem  
Compulsive stealing / begging

### **Indicators of Physical Abuse**

Scratches  
Bite marks or welts  
Bruises in places difficult to mark, e.g., behind the ears, groin  
Burns (especially cigarette burns)  
Untreated injuries  
Self-mutilation tendencies  
Chronic runaway  
Aggressive or withdrawn  
Fear of returning home  
Undue fear of adults  
Fearful watchfulness

### **Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

Soreness, bleeding in genital or anal areas  
Itching in genital area  
Stained or bloody underwear  
Stomach pains or headaches  
Pain on urination  
Difficulty in walking or sitting  
Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks  
Anorexic / bulimic  
Chronic depression  
Inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group  
Making sexual advances to adults or other children  
Low self esteem  
Afraid of dark  
Wariness of being approached by anyone  
Substance/drug abuse

### **Indicators of Emotional Abuse**

Sudden speech disorders  
Wetting and soiling  
Signs of mutilation  
Frequent vomiting  
Rocking, thumb sucking  
Fear of change  
Chronic runaway  
Poor peer relationships  
Attention seeking behaviour

## Section 4

### *What to do if a child discloses abuse to you*

If a child chooses to tell YOU about abuse, it is because he/she has a relationship of trust with you. Therefore, you must be sure that something is done about it. It is for professional agencies to determine if the abuse allegations are true or not, and to deal with the abuser. Your role is to support the child and ensure that he/she knows that they did the right thing and to ensure that the concerns are taken seriously by the appropriate people.

It is always better to report something and be wrong, than to not report something which turns out to be true.

#### **Vital information you should record:**

- Name, address, date of birth of the child.
- The nature of any injuries (physical or emotional).
- Any needs for medical attention.
- Your reasons for suspecting abuse.
- Details of what you have done.
- Practical information you may have (background information, etc).
- Any information you have about the person who is being accused of the abuse.
- Details of where, when and how the child made the disclosure.

#### ***Do's and Don'ts***

##### **Do**

- Stay Calm
- Listen and hear what the child is saying
- Give the child time to say what they need to say
- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you
- Record in writing what the child has said (immediately after the discussion)
- Keep a written record of who you have told and what action was decided

##### **Don't**

- Do not panic
- Do not display shock or disgust
- Do not make the child repeat details unnecessarily
- Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Do not tell un-necessary people but only report it to the Child Protection officer
- Do not enquire into the details
- Do not communicate with the person who is accused
- Do not deal with the situation alone
- Do not delay in taking action
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do not let the situation affect other activities, as these should continue with minimum disruption and minimum knowledge about the situation

## Section 5

### ***Procedures in case a children's worker (or ICP member) is accused of abuse***

#### ***Abuse by a member of our church***

If allegations of abuse are made against a member of ICP, the following procedure shall be followed:

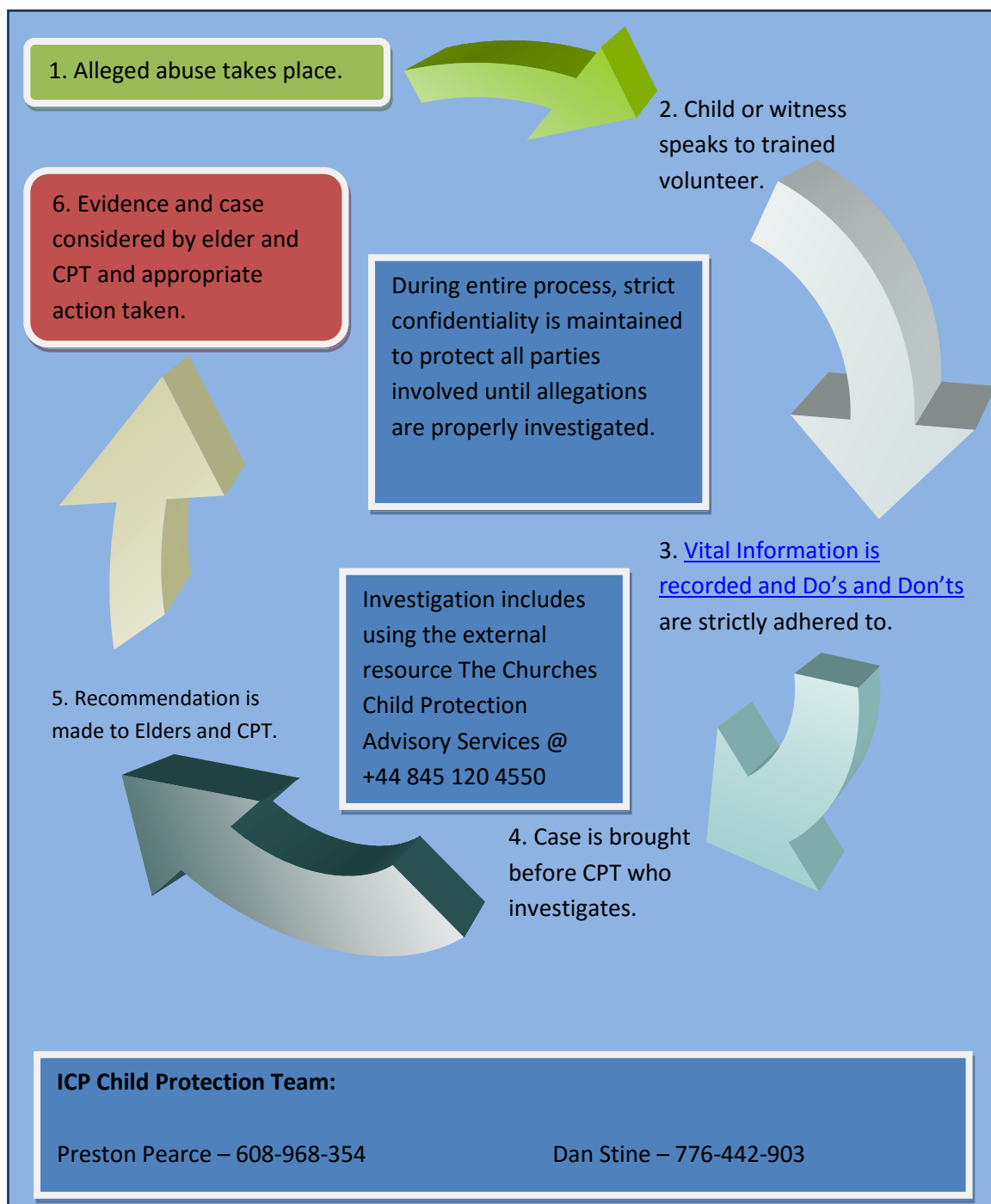
1. Within 48 hours of the allegations being made, the chairman of the elders shall designate a team of 2 elders with discretion to add a non-elder to investigate the allegation. They are expected to make a thorough investigation that includes speaking to parties involved, including the accuser and the accused, and others who have knowledge of the situation. The investigation should include the use of external resources such as [The Church's Child Protection Advisory Service @ +44 845 120 4550](#) and/or [Canadian Medical Centre](#).
2. The assessment team will make a report to the full board of elders as soon as possible. Their report shall include recommended actions. If the allegations are found to be true, these may include:
  - Termination if the accused is paid staff.
  - Revoking of the privilege of the accused to work with children
  - Excommunication by the church according to its constitution and possibly prevention from returning to the premises
  - Seeking of legal counsel
  - Reporting to local authorities, if the actions in question are criminal
  - Counselling for the victim at ICP expense, if the allegations occurred while the child was in ICP's care
  - IF the allegations are found not to be true or provable:
    - Pastoral counselling for the accused
    - Reconciliation between accuser and accused
3. While the investigation is ongoing, the accused shall not have contact with children at church events. The CMLT is responsible to monitor this.
4. The elders shall arrange for pastoral care for the accuser and the accused while the investigation is ongoing. To maintain objectivity, those involved in investigating the allegations are not to be a formal part of the pastoral care provided.

#### ***Abuse by another person***

Information about abuse by a person not known to the International Church of Prague should be taken equally seriously. Relevant authorities should be informed as appropriate; or in the case of an expatriate, the organisation who has responsibility for that person should be informed.

As already stated it is important that the child is cared for and supported throughout any investigation. International Church of Prague can provide or help to arrange provision of this care. (eg through the child's school)

## Procedures Flowchart in Abuse Allegations



**Parents will be informed at the earliest possible time as determined by the Child Protection Team.**

## **Section 6**

### ***Forms***

- **Permission form Code of Conduct / Declaration by Leaders**
- **Permission form for Field Trips**
- **Accident report form**
- **References for Leaders**

## International Church of Prague Children's Programme Information Letter

Dear parent,

At International Church of Prague we run a nursery (age 0-2) and children's (age 2-12) programme where we seek to teach biblical truth to children through games, crafts and other activities, while adults attend the main service. In order to help us to serve you in this way we would ask that you complete the attached Permission Form to Ali Marshall or Vince Corpus as soon as possible.

Notes:

- If your toddler is not potty trained, please advise the helpers and provide diapers, etc.
- Parents must come to the room and collect their child. Your child will be kept in the children's rooms until parents come to pick them up, so please come promptly and collect your child(ren) after the adult worship service. Then you are responsible for their care and supervision.
- We have a number of teenage helpers who have proved themselves very capable. They, however, are always under the supervision of a more experienced adult. Some teenagers are gaining community service credit for school while helping us.
- We are currently in need of more adult helpers. If you would like to join the team (or if you know someone who would), please speak to Ali or Vince for more information.

On behalf of the entire team, we thank you for giving us the privilege of spending time with your children and we pray that it will be a blessing to you and allow you to enjoy the service knowing that your children are being cared for.

Blessings,

Dan Stine and Jennie Hatchel

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**International Church of Prague Children's  
Programme Permission Form**

Date \_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby give my permission for my child(ren),

\_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the children's programme at the International Church of Prague.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile number to use if it is necessary to contact you during the service: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Special information about your child:**

Does your child have any medical conditions we should know about? If so, please describe:

Does your child have any allergies we should know about? If so, please describe:

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# ICP Children and Youth Field Trip Permission Form

Dear Parent or Guardian,

ICP's Children's Programme or Youth Praha is going on a field trip. Please read the information at the top of this form, then sign and return the permission slip at the bottom of this form by \_\_\_\_\_.

Field Trip Information:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Pay Cash or bank transfer by the following date: \_\_\_\_\_

Means of Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting point location: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting time: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Save this part of the form for future reference.*

*Cut here----- Cut here*

*Sign this part of the form and return it to Vince Corpus or Ali Marshall.*

\_\_\_\_\_ has permission to attend a field trip to  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ from  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ Enclosed, please find cash in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ to cover the cost of the trip.

\_\_\_ I have paid for this event by bank transfer.

I give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to receive emergency medical treatment. In an emergency, please contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





# Accident/Incident Report Form

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM

Name of injured person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Who was injured person?(circle one) Child under 18 Volunteer Employee Other

Type of injury: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Injury requires physician/hospital visit? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Name of physician/hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician/hospital phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of injured party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*No medical attention was desired and/or required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of injured party (or parent/guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Return this form to Safety Coordinator (Jana Yanova or Dan Stine) within 24 hours of incident.