

# Butte Community Bible Church Child Protection Policy

Adopted by BCBC Elders September 7, 2024, revised September 6, 2025

## BCBC Student Ministries Mission Statement

The BCBC student ministries exists to:

- 1) Provide a safe, loving, and godly environment for children and youth to receive care while their parents are participating in other activities of the church
- 2) Present the Gospel in a clear and compelling way so that children and youth may know their need for salvation and how to be saved, without manipulation or undue pressure but rather allowing God to speak to them and draw them to Himself in His time
- 3) Train children and youth in righteousness
- 4) Promote the integration of children and youth into the full body of Christ
- 5) Encourage and equip parents as God-given authorities and spiritual leaders in their children's lives

## Parameters for the Policy

This child protection policy applies to children (birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) who are voluntarily placed by their parents or legal guardians under the responsibility of Butte Community Bible Church's student ministry for our main worship service or other church-sponsored events (Bible studies, R.O.C.K., Vacation Bible School, Youth Group, etc.). Any harm, neglect, abuse, or other problems related to children at home, school, or any Bible-study, activity or venue not directly related to BCBC student ministry is not covered by this policy.

## Personnel Summary

### Staff

Staff means all paid non-contract staff of the church whether primarily employed in the area of student ministries or not.

### Volunteer

Volunteers are adults who work with children and are not in the employment of the church.

### Adult

Adults are individuals who are 18 years or older.

### Minor

Minors are individuals who are under the age of 18.

### Youth

Youth are minors who are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade or higher.

## Helper

Helpers are minors who are at least 2 years older than the children they are assisting and who are assisting with some aspect of student ministry under the supervision of an adult.

## Elder Board

The elder board is the body elected by the church membership to oversee the spiritual care and governance of the church. Elders are subject to the same screening guidelines as all other volunteers when serving in student ministries.

## Parent(s)

A parent or parents are the adult or adults who have legal responsibility for a child. This may be biological, adoptive, or foster parents or legal guardians. For simplicity the terms parent or parents will be used throughout this policy.

## Personnel Expectations

All volunteers and staff working in student ministries are expected to:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Be growing in their faith through regular prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other believers
- Be walking in the Spirit and living lives above reproach
- Love and serve the children in their care as though loving and serving Christ, doing all things for the good of the child
- Understand that ministering to children is a privilege that comes with great responsibility
- Dress and act in a professional and caring matter while serving
- Follow through on commitments to serve by preparing appropriately, arriving on time, and communicating any changes in schedule to the Student Ministries Director or other appropriate personnel

## Training and Screening Procedures

To ensure safe care, BCBC has established a screening policy to approve all volunteers who work with children:

- All volunteers must be regular attendees of BCBC for at least 6 months. Staff (paid positions) or those with a leadership or teaching role in student ministries must be active members of BCBC in good standing. An exception to the 6 month attendance requirement is made for volunteers who assist with the mid-week program currently known as R.O.C.K.- these volunteers must complete all other screening procedures but do not have to attend BCBC or for a minimum length of time.
- Children or youth who are at least 2 years older than the children they are assisting can apply to become helpers. Helpers are in addition to adult volunteers unless specifically noted in the policy.
- All volunteers must have completed the volunteer application and been approved by the Student Ministries Director in consultation with the Pastor and elders as needed. Helpers must have the approval of their parents.
- At least one reference check must be satisfactorily completed prior to beginning service. Criminal background checks and any other appropriate screening checks will be completed for all adult volunteers.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely along with the original application.

- All volunteers must have completed BCBC's student ministries volunteer training before serving.
- All volunteers must repeat the screening procedures and criminal background checks every 5 years.
- Student ministries volunteer training will be completed at least annually. This training will include at minimum: how to identify abuse and neglect, appropriate discipline, how to effectively present the Gospel to children, and a review of this policy.

BCBC reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete the screening procedure, providing false or misleading information on the application, any criminal report or charge, obtaining information from references or a criminal records check that suggest the applicant is not suitable to help with children, or failing to meet the personnel expectations set forth in this document.

Any one who is a regular attendee of BCBC who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to the Student Ministries Director and/or the Pastor. He or she is also personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose such information to authorities.

## Expectations for Classroom Settings

### Age Ranges

Nursery provided during the main worship service is for children birth through age 4. Children's Church provided during the main service is for children ages 4-end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Other student ministry events should make clear the age range that the event is intended for. Parents who bring students outside of the designated age range will be asked to take their children to the appropriate class or monitor them themselves.

### Number of Volunteers

#### Birth- age 4

All classes and BCBC children's events for this age group must be supervised at all times by at least 2 adults. Minors aged 16 or older can serve as one adult in this scenario. There should be no more than 5 children per adult.

#### K-6<sup>th</sup> grade

All classes and BCBC children's events for this age group should be supervised at all times by at least 2 adults. Minors aged 16 or older can serve as one adult in this scenario. If there is a volunteer shortage there must be one adult and at least 2 other people present at all times. (If there is only 1 student, the adult volunteer must cancel the event.) There should be no more than 10 children per adult.

#### 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

All classes and BCBC youth ministry events for this age group will be conducted in such a way that there are always at least 3 people present, one of whom must be an adult volunteer. No adult or minor shall be left alone with another minor. It is highly encouraged to have at least 2 adults present.

### Visibility

When children's classes are in sessions, interior doors and windows should allow for an unobstructed view of everyone inside the room. Adult volunteers and helpers should stay where they are visible to one another and keep all children in view in the classroom.

## Discipline

Classroom discipline shall be carried out in a calm and respectful manner. No yelling, threatening, or corporal punishment is allowed. Discipline should not result in an adult and minor being alone together out of view of other students and adults. If a child is not responding well to discipline and is causing undue disruption or there is a threat of harm to students or volunteers, the child's parents will be called and the child will be sent out of the classroom with him or her. A child who is in imminent danger of causing harm to him/herself or others may be restrained until parents arrive. Any use of physical restraint must be reported as soon as practicable to the child's parents and the Student Ministries Director and/or Pastor; an Incident Report Form should also be completed. If a pattern of violence or disruptive behavior emerges with a child, the Student Ministries Director should be notified and a meeting should be set up with the child's parents to address the issue and provide resources as needed.

## Physical Touch

Physical touch is one way of expressing affection and safety but it can easily be misused or misconstrued. Light, brief touch of a head, shoulder, or hand is fine. No sitting on laps for any classes above nursery. No touching of areas that are reasonably considered to be private or would be covered by a swimsuit. A child's desire not to be touched shall be respected at all times unless the child is in imminent danger of causing harm to him/herself or others. Any use of physical restraint must be reported as soon as practicable to the child's parents and the Student Ministries Director and/or Pastor; an Incident Report Form should also be completed. All touch should be for the care and comfort of the child, never for the benefit or pleasure of the adult.

## Food & Drinks

No food or drink should be provided in a classroom without first consulting the roster list to determine the allergies of all children present. Items with high risk of allergic reactions such as peanuts, tree nuts, and shellfish shall never be brought into the classroom. Attempts should be made to keep all food or drink offered healthy.

## Safety Guidelines

### Incidence Reporting

Any incident that results in the harm or undue emotional turmoil of a child or causes a safety risk must be reported on an Incident Report Form which shall be turned in to the Student Ministries Director. The Student Ministries Director will consult with other staff as needed and will also communicate to parents as appropriate. These forms will remain on file for a minimum of 2 years.

### Sickness Policy

Students who have had a fever, vomited, or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours shall not be allowed to participate in the BCBC Student Ministries. If a child develops any of these symptoms while participating in BCBC Student Ministries, his or her parents shall be called and asked to pick the child up and take him or her home. Children who appear to have an active illness shall not be allowed to participate in the BCBC Student Ministries.

### Check-in & Check-out Procedures

Check-in & check-out procedures vary according to the different ministries of the church. Check-in sheets must be clearly labeled with the event/class, date, and volunteers present.

R.O.C.K. or other mid-week programs through 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Children are checked in by their parent at the beginning of the night. All children remain in the building with their classes until the end of the program where they are

then signed out by their parent or legal guardian. Other family members or friends may drop-off and pick-up a child with prior verbal or written notification. This information will be recorded on the student checklist. Volunteers will turn the check-in sheet into the office.

Children's Church during Sunday morning service: Prior to the service starting all families who are planning on having their children attend children's church need to check-in at the front desk. Children are dismissed from the service after worship time. Volunteers who are working that day will pick up the check-in sheet from the front desk and indicate on the sheet the children who left the service with them. Children will remain in the designated areas with the volunteers until the last song has started to close the service. Volunteers will escort the children back to the sanctuary and help them find their parents. Volunteers will turn the check-in sheet into the office.

Nursery: Parents will drop-off children at the nursery. Volunteers will ensure that each child is marked present on the check-in sheet and verify contact details and allergy information with the parents before the parents leave drop-off. Children will remain in the designated area until their parents return for them. Other family members or friends may drop-off and pick-up a child with prior verbal or written notification. This information will be recorded on the check-in sheet. If a child is picked up partway through the service and then returns to the nursery, this should be noted on the check-in sheet. Volunteers will turn the check-in sheet into the office.

Sunday School (through 6<sup>th</sup> grade): Children should be brought to their classrooms by their parents. Volunteers will ensure that each child is marked present on the check-in sheet and verify contact details and allergy information with the parents before the parents leave drop-off. Children will remain in the designated areas with the volunteers until the end of the Sunday School time. Volunteers will escort children to the sanctuary and help them find their parents. Volunteers will turn the check-in sheet into the office.

Youth Events (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade): Youth are assumed to be present with the consent and knowledge of their parents. They will be asked to fill out a contact information form so that volunteers have a way to contact a parent if needed. Volunteers should keep a record of youth who are present and should not allow a youth to leave an activity early without prior verbal or written notification from a parent. If a youth does leave an event early, a call should be made to the youth's parents to ensure that they are aware of the youth's location. Volunteers will turn the check-in sheet into the office.

Other events shall follow procedures as needed to ensure that children are accounted for during their time in the BCBC student ministry and are returned safely to their proper parents. Attendance records shall be kept and turned into the office.

### Restroom Procedures

Diapers: Parents of children who still wear diapers or pull-ups shall be asked to bring their children to the nursery in a clean diaper and/or having just used the restroom. If a diaper change is required, a volunteer shall change the diaper within sight of another volunteer or helper using proper sanitary procedures.

Children who are age 5 or older are assumed to be able to take care of their own bathroom needs. A volunteer will escort children to the restroom and remain outside the door to ensure their privacy. No other person shall be allowed in the restroom until the child comes out.

Parents of children under age 5 should be asked about the level of assistance their child requires. If a child is independent the same procedure shall be followed as for a child age 5 or older. If a child requires assistance, 2

volunteers will accompany the child to the restroom. 1 volunteer can enter the stall with the child and assist. The second volunteer or helper should remain outside the stall and ensure the privacy of the child.

### Transportation Guidelines

Transportation of minors by BCBC staff or volunteers requires prior written consent from the minor's parents (transportation consent section of student ministries registration form). At no time during transport should a minor be alone with a volunteer or other minor. Drivers should follow all local laws and safety guidelines.

### Off-site Event Guidelines

Off-site events require prior written consent of the minor's parents (special event consent section of student ministries registration form or a form created specifically for the event). Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that minors are checked-in, checked-out, and supervised during their time with BCBC student ministries. As much as practicable the expectations for classroom settings and safety guidelines shall be followed.

### Communication

Volunteers with BCBC student ministries must ensure that all communication with students- in person and electronically- is done in a way that is above reproach. Volunteers should not contact students one-on-one but use group messaging and ensure that students' parents are included, except in rare cases when that may be harmful to the student. It is recommended that all text messaging take place through the church group messaging service so there is a record of messages if needed.

### Emergency Response Plan & Evacuation Procedures

A first-aid kit shall be clearly labeled and accessible for all events. In the event of an evacuation, volunteers should take the check-in sheet with them and proceed to the closest exit with students. Check that all students and volunteers are present once a safe distance from the building. As parents collect their children, mark off on the check-in sheet that students have been reunited with their families. Volunteers should be notified by the security team of threats in the building. Volunteers will help students take shelter as far as possible from the entrance and barricade the door until a security team member or law enforcement notifies them that the threat is over.

### Reporting & Response Plan for Child Neglect & Abuse

Volunteer training will include information on recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect. If a volunteer has reason to believe that a child is experiencing abuse or neglect of any type, the volunteer should make a report in writing of what they noticed that leads them to that conclusion and submit it to the Student Ministries Director and the Pastor. This report should be taken as a serious matter and reviewed quickly. Local authorities should be contacted if there is any reasonable cause to think abuse is taking place. A volunteer can also contact authorities directly with their concerns and may be required to do so by law.

Allegations of misconduct by a BCBC volunteer or staff member should be regarded as a serious matter that requires immediate attention. The Student Ministries Director, Pastor, and Elder Board will hear the allegations from the accuser and investigate. Anonymous and second-hand allegations will be heard but do not automatically carry the weight to prompt a full investigation. The person accused of misconduct will be removed from their position while the investigation is carried out. If a criminal act is alleged, the proper authorities will be called immediately. If law enforcement is involved, the Elder Board will seek legal counsel and will appoint one person to act as a spokesperson. That person will be responsible for informing the church body of the situation

and handling all information requests from outside parties in a truthful and discrete manner with the guidance of legal counsel.

## [Guidelines for How the Church Handles Sexual Offenders Who Regularly Attend or Join the Church](#)

We affirm the power of God to change lives while also recognizing the seriousness of child sexual abuse and the statistics that reflect the likelihood of reoffending. If it becomes known to church staff, volunteers, or elders that a person listed on the child sex offender registry has started to attend the church, the elders shall be informed and shall investigate the matter. A member of the church (or a rotation of members) shall be appointed to accompany the person in question everywhere while they are on church property. This requirement may be dropped upon review of the facts by the elder board. A review may include meeting with the individual, looking up their criminal conviction, requesting to speak to their parole officer, asking for references, etc. An individual on the child sex offender registry is forever barred from serving in student ministries and from entering the children's area while children are present. Families in the church will be notified on an annual basis that a regular attender of the church is on the sex offender registry and of the steps being taken to protect children.

## [Appendix 1: Student Ministries Forms](#)

[Student Ministries Registration Form \(w/transportation & special event consent\)](#)

[Youth Contact Form](#)

[Incident Report Form](#)

[Volunteer Application Form](#)

[Reference Response Form](#)

## BCBC Student Ministries Registration Form

Butte Community Bible Church sends text messages for student ministries through a group messaging service for the purpose of 1) emergency notifications, 2) reminders of events you've signed up to attend or volunteer at, and 3) schedule updates. If you would like to receive these messages, please check the "text opt-in" box when you provide your cell phone number. You can opt-out at any time by contacting the church or replying STOP to the text messages. Message & data fees from your service provider apply.

### Parent/Guardian Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

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

### Additional Emergency Contact: (if you will be off-site while your child attends)

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

### Child(ren) Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

Allergies/Special Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

Allergies/Special Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

Allergies/Special Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

Allergies/Special Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

More children welcome!- Please share information on a second form/ piece of paper.

**Consent**

- I consent to my child’s attendance and participation in the activities of the student ministry at Butte Community Bible Church
- In the event of a medical emergency, I understand that an effort will be made to reach me. However, I authorize the individuals caring for my child to grant permission for medical treatment during the event that the parent/guardian is unable to provide such consent.
- I give permission for my child’s picture (with no identifying information included) to appear, on occasion, in publications, websites, and social media accounts managed by Butte Community Bible Church.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Additional consent for transport/special events (fill out only if requested):**

- I do / don’t (circle one) consent to my child being transported by volunteers and staff of Butte Community Bible Church student ministry in personal vehicles.
- I give my specific consent for my child to participate in \_\_\_\_\_ (activity) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## BCBC Youth Contact Form

Butte Community Bible Church sends text messages for student ministries through a group messaging service for the purpose of 1) emergency notifications, 2) reminders of events you've signed up to attend or volunteer at, and 3) schedule updates. If you would like to receive these messages, please check the "text opt-in" box when you provide your cell phone number. You can opt-out at any time by contacting the church or replying STOP to the text messages. Message & data fees from your service provider apply.

### Student Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F

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

Allergies/Special Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Parent/Guardian Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

### Additional Emergency Contact:

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

## **BCBC Student Ministries Incident Report**

Any incident that results in the harm or undue emotional turmoil of a child or causes a safety risk must be reported on this form. This form is to be given to the Student Ministries Director, Pastor, or Administrator. That individual will consult with other staff as needed to ensure the safety of the children in the student ministries programs.

**Date & Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Event/Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteers/Staff Present:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Students Involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Incident:**

**Staff/Volunteer Actions:**

**At the time of this report, have the student(s)'s parents been informed of the incident?**

**Additional pertinent information:**

## BCBC Student Ministries Volunteer Application Form

### Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Opt-In

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F

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

On a separate sheet of paper, please give an account of your relationship with Jesus Christ and attach it to this application.

### Service/Reference Information

In which area of student ministries do you want to become involved? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What skills would you bring to the student ministries program? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What other children's/youth work experience do you have:

Organization/Program	Dates	Contact
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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Which church or churches have you attended in the past 5 years:

Church	Dates	Pastor
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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Please provide at least 2 independent references (not relatives, past ministry leaders/employers preferred)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **Additional Questions:**

Have you at any time ever:

- Been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any crime?    Yes    No
- Participated in, or been accused, convicted, or pleaded guilty or no contest to abuse or any sexual misconduct?    Yes    No
- Habitually viewed or otherwise consumed pornographic or erotic material?    Yes    No

Are you aware of:

- Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others?  
Yes    No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others?    Yes    No

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," please explain in detail on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this application.

### **Work Verification and Release**

I (Applicant's Name) \_\_\_\_\_ recognize that Butte Community Bible Church is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on the Student Ministries Application form. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that the information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize the organization to contact any person or entity listed on the Student Ministries Volunteer Application form, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide the organization with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release the organization and any such person or entity listed on the Student Ministries Volunteer Application form from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications.

I have carefully read the policy and procedures of the organization, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth assigned to my care or supervision at all times.

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **Minor Applicants Parental Affirmation and Consent**

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ affirm that I am the parent/legal guardian of the applicant. I recognize that Butte Community Bible Church is relying on the accuracy of the information provided. To the best of my knowledge, I affirm and attest that the information provided is true and correct. I further attest and affirm that I am aware of no traits or tendencies of (applicant's name) \_\_\_\_\_ that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others.

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## BCBC Reference Response Form

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: Butte Community Bible Church, 2210 Florence Ave, Butte, MT 59701, info@buttecbc.com

Subject (name of applicant): \_\_\_\_\_

The individual named above has expressed an interest in working with children or youth in our ministry. The candidate has listed you as a reference. In order for our organization to properly evaluate the qualifications of this worker candidate, we are asking you to complete this form with your honest opinions and impressions of the candidate.

Please return the completed form to our organization in the enclosed envelope or via email. Thank you for your assistance.

1. How long have you known the ministry worker candidate? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In what capacity have you come to know this individual? (i.e. coworker, neighbor, friend, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In your opinion, is the above worker candidate fully qualified to work with children and youth?

Yes No (If no, please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What concerns, if any, would you have in allowing this individual to work with children or youth?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you aware of anything in the candidate's background, personality, or behavior that could in any way pose a threat to children or youth? Yes No (If yes, please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments or explanations may be provided on a separate piece of paper.

The above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

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

Please return this form at your earliest convenience to: Butte Community Bible Church

Thank you.