

We are shocked and grieved to share that this week a Saddleback member reported that a student ministry volunteer had acted inappropriately with two 14-year-old boys. Of course, our staff quickly reported this accusation to our Orange County Sherriff's Department. The next day, the volunteer was arrested on suspicion of the offense. The investigation of the accusation is now in the hands of the proper authorities.

We ask you to do two things: first, please pray for the Saddleback families who are involved in this sad matter; second, please pray for the investigators as they determine the facts. As followers of Jesus, we always want the whole truth to come out because Jesus taught us that lies enslave us, but the truth sets us free.

As a part of Saddleback, you know that our church has been built on the service of thousands of volunteers who donate hundreds of thousands of hours of their time. Most of you know that for decades we've had extremely high requirements and strict procedures in place for anyone who volunteers in our student and children ministries.

To be considered for volunteering with kids or students, we require fingerprinting, professional background checks, and personal interviews. We also use services that report any illegal activity to us immediately. In this case, the accused volunteer had no record of arrest or criminal charges. Also, our church requires volunteers who work with students or children to complete an annual training regarding appropriate conduct. Our system of safeguards has safely served over 40,000 students and children for 38 years.

Please pray for everyone involved. We love you.

Kurt Johnston, Student Ministries Pastor & Elder
Steve Johnson, Executive Pastor & Elder