

CHILDREN & YOUTH SAFETY POLICY

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I. Opening

A. Statement of Purpose

In an effort to protect (1) the children and youth who attend Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church and its events, (2) individuals who work with the children and youth at Covenant-Central, and (3) Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church itself, we deem it necessary to adopt the following Children & Youth Safety Policy.

B. Introduction

We, as members of Christ's family and Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church, are entrusted with the care of many children and youth. This includes caring for their minds, bodies, and souls. We strive to nurture these children and youth and to show them Christ's love. Such a monumental responsibility implies that we strive to protect the children and youth in our charge.

Any abuse has a lasting impact on its victims. This policy is designed to protect our children and youth from abuse. Our volunteer and paid caregivers are also important to us. They give of themselves to guide, nurture and teach. This policy is designed to protect them from false accusations of abuse.

C. Definition of Child Sexual Abuse

"Child sexual abuse is any sexual involvement with a minor child, including any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator...child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent (and) is an exploitation of the child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions. (It) involves children in sexual

behaviors for which they are not personally, socially and developmentally ready. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects." (From Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, p. 13, by Richard R. Hammer, Steven W. Klipowicz and James W. Cobble Jr., 1993, published by Church Law and Tax Report.)

II. Selection and Screening of those working with Children and Youth

A. Recruiting and Selecting Workers

1. No person who has been convicted of, or plead guilty to child abuse or

a violent crime shall be allowed to supervise children.

2. All persons supervising children and/or youth, transporting children and/or youth, or leading overnight activities shall submit to a "Primary Screening Procedure." (see below)

B. Primary Screening Procedure

1. Application for supervising children and youth

a. Applicant Information/Reference Form for paid staff

b. Volunteer Information/Reference Form for volunteers

2. A personal interview with the Personnel Committee (for paid staff position) or with the Children's Ministry Coordinator (for volunteers)

3. Reference check

4. A criminal records check and child abuse history clearance will be done for all persons applying for a paid staff position. It may be done for persons applying to be volunteers if written application or personal interview indicates the need for such.

5. The information provided through the Primary Screening Procedure will be reviewed by the Children and Youth Ministries Committee of this congregation; they will determine whether the applicant is approved for supervising children.

III. Supervision of those working with Children and Youth

A. Prevention Strategies

1. There will be two persons at all times supervising children and youth.

In the case of children's events and the nursery, it will be either

2 adults, or one adult and one teen helper, or one adult with the room

easily observable by the Children's Ministry Coordinator or other

non-supervising adult. Youth events will be supervised by at least

2 adults.

2. All persons supervising children and youth shall participate in training about this policy and child sexual abuse prevention at the beginning of their service and every three years thereafter.

3. Performance of all paid employees will be reviewed yearly by the Personnel Committee. The performance of all volunteers will be reviewed annually by the Children & Youth Ministries Committee. Approval by the respective committees must be given to continue in the position.

4. Reasonable efforts will be made to insure that children under 16 years

of age will only be allowed to leave a church function with a parent or with a person previously approved by the responsible parent. The "responsible parent" is the parent who has legal custody.

B. Volunteers

1. Primary volunteers are those in charge of a group of children and/or youth. They must be at least 18 years of age.

2. Secondary volunteers are those who assist the primary volunteers.

3. Volunteers are asked to complete a Volunteer Information/Reference Form.

4. Volunteers must regularly attend the church a minimum of twelve (12) months before serving children and/or youth.

5. Training will be offered and volunteers will be required to attend.

6. Two volunteers must be present with each small group at all times, or the room must be easily observable by a coordinator.

C. Sunday School

1. Substitutes for Sunday School classes must be selected from an approved list.

2. Sunday School substitutes must complete a Volunteer Information/Reference Form.

3. Children grade 3 and younger must be escorted to and from Sunday

School by parent or individual named on the Child/Youth Information

Form.

4. We ask that children visit the restroom before Sunday School begins

and in between Sunday School and worship. It is disruptive and

complicated for volunteers to be taking children to the restrooms

while they are teaching.

5. If a child needs to use the restroom during Sunday School, s/he will

be asked if s/he can wait. If not, a friend will accompany him/her.

6. If a child needs to use the restroom during Beginner Church and

cannot wait, the child will be sent next door to the toddler bathroom.

If a child needs to use the restroom during Junior church and cannot wait, a friend will accompany him/her.

7. If a young child needs assistance from an adult, the door will always be left open.

D. Children's Outings/Youth Events

1. Must be supervised by at least two adults.

2. Parent(s) must sign a Consent Form before children/youth may attend an event held off the church premises.

3. Volunteer drivers must complete a Volunteer Information/Reference Form and attach photocopy of driver's license and insurance card for any vehicle driven.

4. Children and youth must use seat belts at all times.

5. Children under 12 must not sit in the front of a vehicle equipped with a passenger airbag.

IV. Child/Youth Information Form

All parents/guardians must fill out a Child/Youth Information Form. This will be kept on file in the Children's Ministry Coordinator's office and a copy with the child's Sunday School teacher. This form will be available to persons supervising any event the child or youth attends. The leader will

take the forms on the trip.

V. Reporting/Response Procedures in Case of Child Abuse

A. Reporting Procedure

If any person working with children, paid or volunteer, suspects that a

child has been abused, s/he will report it according to the following procedure:

1. All persons, who reasonably suspect or have proof of child abuse, shall report directly to the Pastor within 24 hours, with the following

exception:

If the Pastor is suspected of abuse, the person will report to

the Administrative Assistant.

B. Response Procedure

1. When the Pastor receives a report of reasonable suspicion or provable

physical or sexual abuse (or if Pastor is accused, the Administrative Assistant) she/he will contact Presbytery within 24 hours and appropriate authorities (Child Abuse Hotline, Local Police, Children & Youth).

2. The Pastor and the Administrative Assistant will maintain all records of such an investigation.

3. Regarding calls from the media, all calls will be referred to our legal

counsel.

***NOTE: The following sections go beyond sexual abuse, but are deemed important to the safety of our children. Therefore, they are included in our safety policy.

VI. Nursery Policy

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF NURSERY CAREGIVER

1. Sign children in when parents drop them off. Assign cubby to each

child for his/her belongings. When parents pick children up, have

parents wait outside. Dismiss children one at a time with their

belongings. Check each child out as s/he leaves.

2. Keep inventory of needed items and report to Children's Ministry

Coordinator if something is needed: diapers, wipes, sanitizer, snack, etc.

3. Sanitize toys weekly that are used by children.

4. Weekly sanitize tables used by children.

5. Engage children in activities appropriate for their age. Use videos as a last resort.

6. Report to Children's Ministry Coordinator anything that is broken or in need of attention.

B. NURSERY POLICY

1. There must always be at least two approved people (the paid caregiver and a teen helper) in the nursery.

2. Children must be signed in and out by the paid caregiver.

3. Only parents, or those persons designated by the parents as indicated on the Child/Youth Information Form, may remove the child from the nursery.

4. Only the paid caregiver should change diapers.

5. Use rubber gloves when changing diapers, and/or when in contact with blood or bodily fluids.

6. Sanitize hands when necessary.

7. Pagers are available for parents when requested.

VII. Fire Drills

To insure readiness in case of fire, teachers and students will practice how and where to exit the building twice yearly, September and March.

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DEFINITIONS

Sexual abuse: sexual involvement with a minor or one who is legally incompetent to consent.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to, unwelcome sexually oriented humor or language; questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications; undesired physical contact; inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance; or repeated requests for social engagements, in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, or colleague relationship between the persons involved.

Sexual exploitation is a betrayal of trust in a pastoral relationship by the development, or the attempted development, of a sexual or romantic relationship between a church worker and a person with whom that worker has a pastoral relationship.

THE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CONTINUUM

A FEW BEHAVIORS

NO FORCIBLE

TOUCH-----PENETRATION

|||||

exposed to secrecy/ exhibitionism fondling oral molestation

sexual threats sex (rape)

language

Church Settings Training Manual DRAFT - Presented to General Convention 1994

PEDOPHILIA:

CLINICAL DEFINITION

A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intense sexually arousing

fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger).

B. The fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors cause clinically significant

distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

C. The person is at least age 16 years and at least 5 years older than the \

child or children.

Note: Does not include an individual in late adolescence involved in an ongoing sexual relationship with a 12- or 13-year old.

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MYTHS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

MOST OFFENDERS ARE *STRANGERS*.

PEOPLE WHO SEXUALLY ABUSE CHILDREN CAN BE EASILY IDENTIFIED.

ONLY GIRLS ARE MOLESTED.

ALL MEN WHO MOLEST BOYS ARE HOMOSEXUAL.

ALL HOMOSEXUALS ABUSE CHILDREN.

ALL CHILD SEX OFFENDERS ARE PEDOPHILES.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS RARE.

Child Sexual Abuse in Church Settings Training Manual DRAFT - Presented to General Convention 1994

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Sample Forms

CHILDREN & YOUTH INFORMATION FORM

(All information will be kept strictly confidential.)

Name of Child _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Parent Names _____

Person responsible other than parent _____

Names of persons who may pick up child (for children grade 3 & under) _____

Where to contact parent/person responsible during Sunday School _____

Allergies _____

Any disabilities, limitations or other unique situations that we should know about?

Does the child take any prescription medications that we should know about? _____

EMERGENCY TREATMENT CONSENT

(All information will be kept strictly confidential.)

1st Emergency contact: _____ Phone # _____

2nd Emergency contact: _____ Phone # _____

3rd Emergency contact: _____ Phone # _____

Child's physician _____ Physician's phone # _____

Health Insurance Provider _____

Health Insurance Plan # _____ Group # _____

I, the undersigned, do hereby authorize representatives of the Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church to contact directly the persons named on this form, and do authorize such treatment as may be necessary in an emergency, for the health of said child.

In the event physician or parents cannot be contacted, the church representatives are hereby authorized to take whatever action is deemed necessary in their judgment for the health of the aforesaid child.

I hereby promise and agree to hold Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church free and harmless of and from all claims and suits brought by or on behalf of said child for or on account of emergency care and/or transportation of said child.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR EVENTS

I hereby give permission for my child, _____, to take part in the (event) _____ on (date) _____ from (time) _____ a.m./p.m. to _____ a.m./p.m., which the children's ministry of Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church is sponsoring.

I am reporting any change in the Child Information Form/Emergency Treatment Consent as follows: _____

(If none, write "None.")

Signature _____ Date _____

EMERGENCY TREATMENT CONSENT

(All information will be kept strictly confidential.)

1st Emergency contact: _____ Phone # _____

2nd Emergency contact: _____ Phone # _____

3rd Emergency contact: _____ Phone # _____

Child's physician _____ Physician's phone # _____

Health Insurance Provider _____

Health Insurance Plan # _____ Group # _____

I, the undersigned, do hereby authorize representatives of the Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church to contact directly the persons named on this form, and do authorize such treatment as may be necessary in an emergency, for the health of said child.

In the event physician or parents cannot be contacted, the church representatives are hereby authorized to take whatever action is deemed necessary in their judgment for the health of the aforesaid child.

I hereby promise and agree to hold {Name of Church} free and harmless of and from all claims and suits brought by or on behalf of said child for or on account of emergency care and/or transportation of said child.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION/REFERENCE FORM

(All information will be kept strictly confidential.)

Please check applicable area(s) nursery volunteer Sunday School teacher

Beginner/Junior Church volunteer VBS teacher VBS helper
 other _____

Driver

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Current Address _____

Previous Addresses within past 5 years

Phone # (home) _____ (work) _____

Occupation _____ Social Security # _____

Are you a member of {Name of Church} ? yes no

If you are a member, when did you join our church? _____

If not a member, how long have you been attending? _____

Yes No (If answer is yes, please provide details on reverse side.)

___ ___ Have you ever been charged, or convicted of summaries, misdemeanors or felonies? Explain

___ ___ Do you have, or have you had any mental or physical condition which may affect your work with children?

___ ___ Have you ever had a child removed from you or placed under supervision by a government authority?

___ ___ Have you ever been known by any other name?

Experience with groups of children _____

Name, address and phone number of three references (other than a relative). Please list only those whom you've known five years or longer and your relationship to each.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I grant {Name of Church} permission to contact my references and initiate a criminal record check and child abuse clearance. ___ yes ___ no

If I am a volunteer driver, I agree to provide a copy of my driver's license and a valid insurance card with this form and to notify the church of any change in status. ___ yes ___ no

Signature _____ Date _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION/REFERENCE FORM

(All information will be kept strictly confidential.)

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Current Address _____

Previous Addresses within past 5 years

Phone # (home) _____ (work) _____

Present Occupation _____ Social Security # _____

Employer Name/Address/Phone # _____

Are you a member of {Name of Church}? ___ yes ___ no

If you are a member, when did you join our church? _____

If not a member, how long have you been attending? _____

Yes No (If answer is yes, please provide details on reverse side.)

___ ___ Have you ever been charged, or convicted of summaries, misdemeanors, or

felonies? Explain

___ ___ Do you have, or have you had any mental or physical condition which may affect your work with children?

___ ___ Have you ever had a child removed from you or placed under supervision by a government authority?

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Experience with groups of children _____

Name, address and phone number of three references (other than a relative). Please list only those whom you've known five years or longer and your relationship to each.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I grant {Name of Church} permission to contact my references and initiate a criminal record check and child abuse clearance. ___ yes ___ no

Signature _____ Date _____