

# Child Abuse Policies

**“In America, 6 children are reported abused or neglected every minute. Research tells us that for each child reported there are 18 more harmed in the same 60 seconds. What this means for churches is that none can expect to remain unaffected by the problem.”**

Churches today are writing policies for reducing the risk of child abuse. Procedures are written for the protection of children, staff members, child care employees, adult volunteers and the church family.

## I. Adoption of policy

1. Appoint a committee expressly for the purpose of policy development. The committee members should be comprised of several disciplines (law, counseling, medicine, religion and education, etc.) and represent a broad spectrum of church membership.
2. Create a perception that the church is acting proactively to reduce the risk of a future problem, and not in response to past occurrences. Ask for input from everyone. Let the entire church know that a policy is being developed.
3. The final policy should attempt to be comprehensive, should be in writing, should be adopted as an official policy of the church in a church business meeting, and should be available for review at all times.

## II. Worker Enlistment

- Every applicant for any paid position shall complete an employment application and a consent form for a background check.
- All prospective volunteer children’s teachers shall complete a questionnaire, and a consent form for a background check. No person shall be accepted for volunteer service before the church has received and studied the completed questionnaire.
  - The prospective volunteer shall be a committed Christian, at least 18 years old, a church member for six or more months, good physical, mental, and emotional health, and have a pleasant manner with children.
  - At least two adult workers shall be present at all activities involving children. At no time shall only one worker be allowed to be alone with one child. Also needed is a small window in classroom doors, and protective procedures for changing diapers and assisting in rest rooms. Supervision of teachers should be ongoing, with designated staff members or division directors available to teachers, as needed.
  - No adult or youth with known prior incidents of sexual misconduct with minors shall be permitted to serve in any capacity involving custody or supervision of children.

## III. Worker Training

Each new worker should be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing, as well as the policy of the church on reporting of child abuse.

## IV. Worker Supervision

Church staff should supervise on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time.

## V. Reporting Sexual Abuse

**In the case of an actual allegation, it is imperative that the church report sexual abuse.** *The Church Law & Tax Report-Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church* suggests several guidelines:

1. Document all your efforts at handling the incident.
2. Report the incident immediately to your church’s insurance company, attorney, and appropriate church staff.
3. Contact the proper civil authorities.
4. Notify the parents.
5. Do not confront the accused until the safety of the child is secured.

# **POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS/EMPLOYEES WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH/DISABLED**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

In order to provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry's and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

### **VOLUNTEER WORKER SCREENING PROCEDURES**

- Prior to consideration for a position, any candidate who may be working with children, youth or the disabled will complete and return an initial ministry application (See Form #1).
- The ministry application will be carefully reviewed by a ministry leader or designee to make certain that the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based on the information provided.
- If the person appears to be appropriate for the ministry work, then at least two of the references will be checked to confirm the information provided on the ministry application (See Form #2)
- A criminal background check may be performed with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children, youth or the disabled. The "Pre-Employment/Volunteer Authorization and Consent for Release of Personal Information" (See Form #5) form required by our service contractor must be completed and signed. If any candidate refuses to complete this form he/she will be immediately removed from consideration for a ministry position with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.
- Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry position with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

## **EMPLOYEE SCREENING PROCEDURES**

- The same procedure set forth for volunteer workers will apply to all potential employees, regardless of the ministry position for which they are being considered. (See Form #'s 1 & 2)
- In addition, a criminal background check will be performed with respect to all candidates for employment.
- Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for employment with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

## **WAITING PERIOD**

No volunteer worker candidate will be considered for any ministry leadership position involving contact with children, youth, or the disabled until the candidate has been a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church for one year or more.

## **SUPERVISION**

- At least two adults (at least one over the age of 21) should be present at every function, and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area, during every child, youth, and disabled ministry program.
- During the service/event, at least two adults (who have been approved as volunteer workers through the above screening process) will be appointed to

supervise activity on the premises outside of the room where the service/event is held.

- Workers should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to a scheduled activity and should keep watch over those in their care until all have been picked up by an authorized person. Do not send children out to find their parents, and do not release any child or youth to await transportation.

### **WORK RESTRICTIONS**

- For children over the age of five, at least one adult female should take girls to the restroom, and one adult male should take boys to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe, and then wait outside the restroom until the children come out.
- Children five years of age or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by an adult female.
- Never touch a person's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper.
- Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing or embracing, etc.
- Workers are to release children in their care only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child.
- All ministry events that include children, youth and the disabled will be held in rooms that have a door with window.

### **DISCIPLINE**

- Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
- Disciplinary problems should be reported to the workers' supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

## **INJURIES OR ILLNESS**

- Persons who are ill (with fever, or having a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch) will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
- A suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
- Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the child who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the child can be returned to their parent or guardian.
- All workers/supervisors should take reasonable steps to avoid contact with body fluids of any kind.
- Any worker/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a child will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
- Children, who have received an injury which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The child's parent or guardian should be notified of the minor injury when they pick up the injured child.
- Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured child should be immediately notified, along with the workers' supervisor. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

## **RECORD-KEEPING**

- An attendance list should be kept for all of the ministry's functions involving children, youth, and the disabled. The date of the function, along with the names of all children, workers and supervisors should be recorded.
- A written incident/notice of injury report should be prepared by workers whenever an injury occurs during a ministry function (See Form #4). The incident report will be forwarded to the workers' supervisor promptly upon completion.

## **NOTICE OF INJURY, ABUSE, OR MOLESTATION**

- Workers who become aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform their supervisor or ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation.
- Any supervisor who becomes aware of any injury, abuse, or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately inform a ministry leader of such injury, abuse, or molestation and will complete a “Notice of Injury” form (See Form #4).
- Any ministry leader who becomes aware of possible abuse or molestation of a child will ensure that the child’s parents or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred. The ministry leader will also see that an attorney is promptly contacted to provide a written opinion as to whether the organization should report the abuse or molestation to law enforcement authorities. The written opinion should be obtained within 24 hours of when the ministry leader first becomes aware of the abuse or molestation, and the attorney’s advice should be followed. If the attorney recommends that an incident be reported, the advice should be acted upon immediately.
- Upon notice of abuse or molestation, the church insurance carrier must be promptly notified, as well as the LCMS Northern Illinois District to whom Prince of Peace Lutheran Church may have a duty to report such allegations.

## **VIOLATION OF POLICY OR PROCEDURES**

- Workers must promptly notify their supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedure.
- Any supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of a violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their positions if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a threat to others.

## **INTERNAL INVESTIGATION**

- Any allegation of abuse or molestation will be taken seriously and will be investigated by ministry leaders.
- Any employee of the ministry who is the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church employment practices).
- Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
- Any person who is not found innocent of alleged abuse or molestation will be removed from work with children, youth, or the disabled with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. The church will consult with legal counsel for advice if termination of employment is indicated.

## **DEALING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT/MEDIA**

- All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers will cooperate fully with any law enforcement or governmental agency that may be investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation in connection with activities at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.
- Legal counsel will be contacted for advice and guidance as soon as possible after Prince of Peace Lutheran Church receives notice of possible abuse or molestation in connection with church activities. Decisions concerning the ministry's response to the allegations will be made in accordance with such advice.
- A single church leader will be designated as spokesperson following notice of any abuse or molestation in connection with activities of the ministry. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation and (to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation) will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances.

## **EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER REVIEW**

- This policy and procedure will be conveyed for review annually to all workers, employees, supervisors and leaders to whom it applies.
- All ministry employees and volunteers working with children, youth, or the disabled, will complete a brief renewal application once every five years (Form #3).
- Should the renewal application show that any employee or volunteer worker has become unsuitable for working with children, youth, or the disabled, they will be immediately removed from their current position, and will not be considered for other positions involving work with children, youth, or the disabled.

## **REVISION OF POLICY/PROCEDURES**

This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed with legal counsel and can be modified in accordance with the bylaws of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Any such modification should be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification.



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### I. Introduction

#### A. Background

1. One of the symptoms of our fallen world is the abuse that is inflicted upon children. Within recent years it has been dramatically shown that this problem also occurs in churches. Unfortunately, the risk of abuse occurring in churches has increased as other institutions that are responsible for children have taken steps to protect the children. Potential abusers being denied access to children in other places, find opportunity and trusting environments in churches.
2. Like most measures this policy requires some extra work, requires some safety procedures, and requires good, moral people to answer some questions that one neither likes to ask nor to answer. These measures will cause a little more time to be taken in the hiring process. These measures may cause some people to hesitate or refuse to volunteer to work in youth or children's ministries. Certainly these measures will prevent an immediate acceptance of some types of volunteer service with children.
3. Only extremely strong justification can support such non-traditional, disruptive, and inconvenient measures. The risk to the well being of our children and our church is great. The one incident that we may help avoid could permanently scar a life and the reputation of our church if it occurred. How many people would be drawn to a church where children were abused? I think we must conclude that the measures of this policy are not only justified but indeed are what we want to do to help protect our children and our church.

#### B. Purposes of this policy.

1. Create policy to help reduce the risks of sexual abuse for the children and youth of our church.
2. Create policy to reduce the risk to church staff and volunteer workers from potential allegations of sexual abuse.
3. To provide guidance to school, children's ministries, and youth ministries regarding abuse and the proper response to it
4. Establish procedures for handling allegations of sexual abuse.
5. Establish procedures for responding to media inquires concerning allegations.

#### C. Basic information.

1. What is child sexual abuse? *"Any sexual activity with a child - whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the victim. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim"* (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992).
2. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.
3. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching behaviors. Types of abuse that involve touching might include fondling, oral, genital and anal penetration, intercourse, and forcible rape. Types of sexual



## Good Shepherd Church



abuse that do not involve touching include verbal comments, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, and allowing children to witness sexual activity.

4. Child sexual abuse occurs in all demographic, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious groups. Strangers account for less than 20 percent of the abusers. Most of the time, the abuser is someone known and trusted by the victim.

### II. Worker selection

#### A. General.

1. One of the basic steps that we can take to help protect the children is to exercise caution in selecting persons who will be charged with caring for the children. To help in selection of workers the following procedures are established for staff and volunteers who will be working with children on a recurring basis. For this requirement, "recurring," means more frequently than once a quarter.
2. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will be responsible for administering the new employee screening process. Care will be taken to protect personal information. Results from screening processes will not be released unless directed by the Session and then only as directed.
3. Directors of Preschool, Children's and Youth Ministries, and Music Ministries will initiate actions to have volunteers and paid staff approved to work with children. See paragraphs B and C below for required actions.

#### B. Paid workers.

1. Paid church and Pre-School employees, as a part of the employment process, undergo screening. This procedure consists of the following components: an Applicant's Statement/Release Form, reference checks, a personal interview, and Authorization for Release of Information for Criminal records screening.
2. Current employees hired within the last five years must undergo screening steps not accomplished during or subsequent to their hiring. This is accomplished within two months of the approval of this policy.
3. Results from the screening process that reveal past convictions, charges, or verifiable concerns related to child abuse are grounds for not hiring prospective employees. These applicants are notified of non-selection in accordance with routine hiring procedures.
4. Should results from screening of current employees reveal past convictions, charges or verifiable concerns related to child abuse, the Chairman of Personnel would address the employee's situation individually.
5. An unsatisfactory screening report or refusal to abide by this policy will lead to the dismissal of the employee.

#### C. Volunteer workers.

1. Persons who have been involved with the church for six months or more are eligible for regular volunteer work in the Pre-School, children's, youth or music ministry.
2. All volunteers who will work on a recurring basis with youth and children as of September 1, 2004, will undergo screening. The screening includes a request for references and a criminal records check.
3. All Applications For Volunteer Service will be returned to the Senior Pastor to maintain the confidentiality and submit for screening, receive and screen results.



## Good Shepherd Church



4. Should results from screening reveal past convictions, charges, or verifiable concerns related to child abuse, the Pastor will communicate to the ministry leader only that the volunteer should be encouraged to find a place of service in a ministry other than youth or children's ministry. The Pastor will be available to privately discuss any unfavorable decision with the volunteer.
5. Volunteers and staff undergo a screening every five years to update records. This screening includes resubmitting application forms for Volunteer Service, which includes a request for references and a criminal records check.
6. The records of paid staff will be maintained in the personnel files. The records of volunteer workers will be kept by the respective Directors of Preschool, Children's and Youth Ministries and Music Ministries. [*This is to keep track of who has been screened and when.*]

**III. Supervision:** Supervision of youth and children is the foundation of helping protect them, helping protect workers and meeting the responsibilities of the Church. To establish this supervision the following guide is provided.

### A. Children's and Youth Ministries

1. In the event that enough workers are not present to have two adults in each class/nursery, the supervisor must take steps to compensate. Some possible options include: open classroom doors, roving second worker who randomly moves from one class to another, having a worker available to go to any class where a worker has a situation where he might be alone with one child.
2. Overnight activities.
  - a. Adult chaperones and supervisors scheduled for participation in youth overnight activities are approved by the staff member in charge of the activity (*in advance of the activity*). Unapproved chaperones shall not be accepted.
  - b. Acceptable chaperones are those workers and parents who have been previously screened.
  - c. Responsible staff persons carefully plan activities for overnight activities so that youth are supervised and chaperones are not placed in a potentially compromising situation.

### B. Identification of babies in nursery care.

1. The Director of Nursery develops and implements a positive identification program that clearly identifies each child and associates that child with the parent/guardian that left the child.
2. Each child is signed in and out by the parent or guardian on a permanent record that shows who dropped off the child and who picked up the child.
3. Children are released to the person who left the child or the person properly identified parent/guardian. If the child is to be picked up by anyone else, arrangements have to be made in advance with the nursery.

## IV. Worker Training



## Good Shepherd Church



- A. The Directors of Pre-School, Children's, and Youth Ministries will develop and provide training instruments for all staff and volunteers who work with minors on a recurring basis. Some of the topics that should be covered in this material are:
  - 1. What constitutes child abuse?
  - 2. Recognizing signs and symptoms of child abuse.
  - 3. The contents of this policy.
  - 4. Their reporting requirements
  - 5. The proper response to a report of abuse.
  - 6. The importance of failing to investigating allegations.
  - 7. The importance of not interrogating the child.
  - 8. The importance of privacy.
  - 9. Specifics of care and responsibilities for youth and children in the care of the Church.
- B. A record of completion of training sessions is made and a copy given to the Church office for retention, which will include a signed statement that the staff or volunteer worker has received and read a copy of this Child Protection Policy and has completed the program of training described in IV A above. Inability or refusal to sign this statement will be grounds for dismissal for paid staff and volunteers.
- C. Directors of Pre-School, Children's, and Youth Ministries will provide workers with a copy of this policy and other guidance they are expected to know.
- D. The Session approves the training material and a copy is provided to the Church Office for retention. Training directed by this policy is to be initiated within two months of the approval of this policy.
- E. Training and supporting materials are reviewed annually by Directors and supporting committees for adequacy.
- F. Periodic training in child protection issues shall be an ongoing part of regular volunteer training and continuing education.

**V. Reporting Procedures.** Even though we are diligent in supervising the youth and children, it is possible that some incident could occur, that an allegation could be made that would involve a church staff member or volunteer, or a child's appearance or behavior would indicate abuse. It is critical that we be knowledgeable and prepared to respond properly in such events.

- A. **Workers, teachers, or others** who work directly with youth or children may be told of an abusive act, and/or may have suspicions that abuse has occurred. The following actions shall be taken.
  - 1. If told of abuse by children listen carefully, but do not interrogate the child.
  - 2. Comfort the child and determine if immediate medical attention is required. If it is needed, take appropriate steps to get the child medical care.
  - 3. Report to your responsible staff person within two hours what you have been told regarding the abuse.
  - 4. You will be asked to complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix).
  - 5. Should you observe physical or emotional indicators that a child has been abused report this to your supervising director. This is a very serious matter must be reported.



## Good Shepherd Church



6. To protect the child or youth, the family and the suspected abuser, you must not tell anyone else about your report or observations. Gossip concerning suspected or actual abuse will be very hurtful to the families and individuals involved. Gossip about these matters is grounds for dismissal.
  7. If you are requested to talk to investigators or authorities concerning your report inform your supervising director. Generally you will be told not to talk to anyone without the Church's attorney being present. Refer anyone requesting information to the Senior Pastor.
  8. Georgia law protects anyone making a report of child abuse in good faith from civil or criminal liability.
- B. **Directors** receiving reports of abuse or suspected abuse will take the following actions:
1. Do not investigate the situation.
  2. Assure the child has the immediate care and comfort required.
  3. Have the reporting person complete the Incident Report Form (Appendix). Treat the completed form as confidential and deliver it to the supervisor as indicated below.
  4. Remind the reporting person of their responsibilities for privacy and keeping you informed of any further developments or requests for information.
  5. Notify the Senior Pastor of the situation and give him the complete report within two hours of receiving the report. In the absence of the Senior Pastor the report shall be made to the Associate Pastor. If none of the above is available try to reach them by phone. A report should not be held more than 24 hours without reporting to the Gwinnett County Family and Children Services Office.
- C. **The Senior Pastor** will make a report on behalf of the Church to the Gwinnett County Family and Children Services within one workday of receiving the report or upon reopening of the Family and Children Services Office.
1. The Senior Pastor in consultation with the Session is responsible for taking appropriate actions should allegations of abuse be made against a Church staff member or worker.
  2. Without comment as to the accuracy or truthfulness of any allegation and without intent to influence any future decisions, the accused staff member or worker will be removed from a position of working with children until full disposition of the matter is made.
  3. All documents concerning an alleged case of child abuse will be secured to prevent disclosure.
- D. **The Senior Pastor** is responsible for ministry actions. Therefore the pastor with an elder will be responsible for notification of the parents of an abused child if parents are not knowledgeable.

### VI. Church Response to Allegations.

An appropriate and planned response to allegations is necessary to prevent additional pain and damage and to assure that we meet our responsibilities.

- A. **The Senior Pastor** is the designated spokesperson for the Church to respond to all inquires concerning allegations of child abuse and related issues.



## Good Shepherd Church



1. Staff members and volunteers will refer inquires to the Senior Pastor without further comment. This is necessary because multiple sources and input to the media will have the appearance of confusion and contradiction, giving a negative impression of the Church and our ability to conduct business professionally.
  2. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Clerk of Session will serve as the spokesperson.
- B. **Initial Media Statement** (See Appendix) is a position statement that will constitute the initial information the Senior Pastor will give to the media.
- C. Should allegations be made against members of the church staff or volunteers, follow the above reporting procedures. Additionally, comply with the following guidelines.
1. Do not respond to questions from anyone without participation of the Pastor or the Church attorney.
  2. Do not respond to any investigative questions from police or social service agencies without the church attorney present or approval of the Pastor.
  3. Do not discuss allegations and related actions with anyone other than authorities under conditions indicated above without the Pastor, and/or the Church attorney present. This restriction is necessary because of criminal charges and litigation that can result from allegations.
  4. Because conversations with friends, family, and neighbors will only feed rumors and bring discredit upon the church and possibly further injure those involve, maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- D. An important component of the church's response to allegations of child abuse is ministry to the victim and his/her family. Further, without consideration of guilt, responsibility, or validity of the allegation there also may be a need for ministry to the alleged abuser.
1. The Pastor will be responsible for contacting those concerned for the purpose of ministry.
  2. The Pastor will coordinate any additional ministry actions on behalf of the church.
  3. Those involved in ministry will exercise great care to restrict actions to spiritual and physical healing ministries. There must not be conversations and/or actions that in any way accepts or directs to others responsibility, guilt, or negligence related to the allegations.



## Good Shepherd Church



### VII. Review of Responsibilities

- A. All Pre-School, children's and youth workers.
  - 1. Comply with guidelines and instructions that describe how you are to perform your function.
  - 2. Attend annual training.
  - 3. Take seriously any accusation or comments suggesting abuse.
  - 4. Report promptly to the designated supervisor.
  - 5. Do not discuss alleged abuse except as permitted by this policy.
  
- B. Pre-School, Children's and Youth Directors.
  - 1. Responsible for initiating the volunteer screening process.
  - 2. Maintain listing of approved workers having completed the screening process.
  - 3. Use only workers who have been through the approval process.
  - 4. Develop instructions and guidance describing the workers duties. Develop procedures that implement church policy and promote child safety and security.
  - 5. Train the workers on procedures, policy requirements, and indicators of child abuse.
  - 6. Supervise worker closely during youth and children's programs.
  - 7. Promptly forward all reports of alleged abuse as required to Child Protection Services and/or police department.
  
- C. Chairman of the Personnel Committee
  - 1. Develop and recommend Church policy addressing child abuse.
  - 2. Responsible for administering the new employee screening process.
  
- D. Pastors
  - 1. Monitor the training of workers and the development of instructions for the workers.
  - 2. Supervise directors.
  - 3. The Senior Pastor is responsible for receiving, screening and maintaining the confidential reports of all results of volunteer screening.
  - 4. Receive and administer reports of alleged abuse.
  - 5. Serve as spokesperson for the Church for outside inquires.
  - 6. Coordinate ministry to victim and victim's family.
  - 7. Coordinate ministry to alleged perpetrator.
  - 8. Minister to the congregation.

Maynard, Certified Church Business Administrator  
Atlanta GA                      NineteenthPsalm@aol.com  
Presbyterian Church, USA

## SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

- I. All volunteers who work with youth are to fill out a volunteer application and have a background check.
- II. New volunteers will not be allowed to volunteer with youth until their background check has been done.
- III. Anyone who has been convicted of abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) will not be allowed to volunteer with youth. If someone applies and their check comes back with a conviction, the Pastor and Chairman of the Elders will address this with the applicant.
- IV. Adult volunteering with youth shall observe the Two Adult Rule at all times so that no adult is ever alone with youth.
- V. GSLC should offer education to congregation members regarding child abuse dangers on a routine basis to be determined by the Board of Christian Education, as the staff and/or Council see appropriate.

### TWO ADULT RULE:

1. An adult is defined as someone over the age of 21 years of age.
2. There shall be 1 adult of each gender for overnight trips/activities.
3. Chaperones for overnight trips are approved in advance by the Director of Christian Education/Youth Director or Pastor.
4. Youth may be used to teach Sunday School with the following guidelines:
  - a. These youth may assist an adult as a teacher of any grades Pre-School – 4th
  - b. If the HS youth are 16 years old or older and are a confirmed member of the faith, they may co-teach with another 16+ youth for grades Preschool – 4<sup>th</sup> grade. If teaching above grade 4, should be with an adult.

### ACTIVITIES RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is recommended that all activities happen in the church or in a public place.
2. It is recommended that a ratio of 1 adult to 5-6 youth be maintained.
3. It is recommended that the windows on the Sunday School doors remain uncovered. If a group is in a room without clear windows the door must remain ajar.
4. Consent forms are required for participation in youth activities that occur off church property.