

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS...

If you directly witness a child or youth being abused in any form, take immediate steps to assure the safety of the child or youth. Then immediately report the incident to the person in charge of the ministry or activity and a pastor. Similarly, if you learn of or suspect an incident of abuse or misconduct involving a church-sponsored activity, immediately report this to the employee supervising the activity and a pastor. Additionally, when child abuse is suspected, make an immediate report directly to Montgomery County Child Protective Services.

Known or suspected misconduct by a pastor shall be reported immediately to the Stated Clerk of National Capital Presbytery.

If you have questions or concerns about PPC's Safe Church Policies or any of our safe church practices, please talk with Associate Pastor Kendra Grams who administers PPC Safe Church Policies.

KEY CONTACTS

Stated Clerk-National Capital Presbytery

240-514-5348

Montgomery County Child Protective Services

240-777-4417

Pastor Sean Miller & Assoc. Pastor Kendra Grams

301-299-6007



SAFE CHURCH PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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RATIONALE



All persons are created by God, in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). As bearers of God's image, every person possesses an intrinsic dignity and is of inestimable worth. In the gospels we read countless stories of Jesus ministering to men, women, and children, teaching and healing all who came to him, treating them with dignity and respect. Moreover, Jesus charged his disciples to love one another just as he had loved them (John 13:34). Throughout the scriptures, God calls us to honor the integrity of each person and to reflect God's love, care, and respect for all of humanity.

God intends for the church to be a safe place for all to encounter God and grow into lives of service and fulfillment. During each baptism of an infant, child, or adult, the members of this church pledge to uphold that person in the spirit of Christ and to teach, strengthen, and support the individual's relationship with the household of God. This ministry is a high calling and a sacred trust.

Accordingly, we seek to provide a safe physical, psychological, and spiritual environment, which clearly and firmly discourages exploitative, abusive, and harmful behaviors, and actively nurtures and enhances the well being of our members, employees, and guests. We seek God's guidance and wisdom with each step we take.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Those who undertake the special responsibility of working with children and youth shall uphold the sacred trust of this responsibility by abiding by the Child Protection Code of Conduct. Thus, when working with children and youth, volunteers will:

- provide proper supervision and exercise unimpaired, sound judgment at all times.
- refrain from touch or interaction with children and youth that is intended to be sexual, demeaning, or exploitive in any way.
- refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, illegal drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors or adults.
- refrain from the use of profanity and other inappropriate language or jokes.
- keep sensitive information learned about children, youth, and their families confidential.
- refrain from one-to-one mentoring, one-on-one socializing, giving gifts or unwanted and/or excessive attention to a child or youth without the knowledge and permission of the child/youth's parents/guardian and a pastor.
- refrain from sharing or soliciting inappropriate details of personal lives.
- not view, store, or transmit pornographic, violent, or any other inappropriate or illegal material on any device.

SAFE CHURCH PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CLASSROOM SUPERVISION



Visual access to rooms must be maintained at all times. If possible, leave doors open. Do not obstruct the view into rooms by covering windows.

Two unrelated adults should be present at all times. If one adult needs to leave the room, leave the door open when there is only one adult in the room. If two adults are not available, leave the door open and an adult roamer should move in and out of the room. When an adult is meeting one-on-one with a child or youth because of a pre-approved mentoring relationship, meetings will be held in a public setting or at the church when others are present.

Only properly screened and trained adults may supervise children and youth. A child or youth's parent or guardian, grandparent, or other direct relative may visit their child or youth's room or event.

Children should be supervised at all times. Take periodic headcounts of children to ensure that everyone is accounted for. Release children only to a parent or guardian (or an adult authorized by the parent or guardian) and only with proper identification.

If a child needs to use the bathroom, accompany the child and wait outside the bathroom for the child. Check the bathroom first to make sure there are no suspicious or unknown individuals and then allow the child to go inside. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, knock, open the bathroom door, and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open to assist the child. If a situation arises where a child needs to use the bathroom and no properly screened and trained adult is available, then the child's parent or guardian should be notified.

APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE



The goal of discipline is positive, corrective behavior. Appropriate discipline establishes clear expectations, uses verbal disapproval, loss of privileges, and redirection to acceptable behavior. Ordinarily, the child or youth should be addressed privately, but still within public view, rather than directly in front of others. When this does not work, then the child or youth will be returned to his or her parent or guardian if the parent or guardian is available.

Physical contact may be used only in situations to protect the child, youth, or others from harm. Punitive punishment or derogatory remarks are unacceptable, and corporal punishment of any kind is prohibited.

Parents will be informed of a child or youth's behavior depending on the repetition and severity of the offense.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



In the event of severe weather, seek cover as advised by emergency personnel and alert warnings given current weather conditions.

In case of fire, be aware of the location of at least two fire extinguishers. Keep all exits free of obstruction in case evacuation is required. If evacuation is necessary, the playground for Potomac Elementary School will be used as the emergency assembly area. If the playground for Potomac Elementary School is unavailable or deemed unsafe, Potomac Post Office will be used as the emergency assembly area.

In case of a medical emergency, First Aid kits are located in the coat closet between the narthex and Fellowship Hall, the resource room between the downstairs classrooms, and in the main office. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is located in the coat closet between the narthex and Fellowship Hall. Administer emergency care only if you are trained to do so and call for help as needed. Emergency contact information for children and youth are located in the emergency binders in each classroom.

If an intruder gains access to PPC facilities or property, establish communication with the police immediately using any available phone. Leaders in the direct vicinity of the intruder should draw the intruder's attention while others seek cover and safety as they are able. If a lockdown is necessary, all those in rooms that are not occupied by an intruder should shut, lock, and barricade their doors until police say otherwise. Close

blinds and stay away from windows. Phones should be used to communicate with police and other officials outside the building. When police arrive, stay in position and avoid sudden movements until told otherwise by police.

SAFETY CHECKLISTS



Safety checklists for each classroom are provided in the emergency binders.

Teachers should complete the checklist on the last Sunday of each month to ensure classroom hazards are dealt with in a timely manner.

ALLERGY SAFETY



Do not bring highly allergenic foods such as peanuts. Check the emergency binders in each classroom for a list of

children and youth with a food or other severe allergy. If necessary, parents will supply emergency medication, such as Benadryl and/or an Epi Pen, in case of accidental exposure.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Complete an incident report when:

- A person receives an injury that requires First Aid or medical treatment;
- A person receives a bump or blow to the head or other visible injury (such as a fall that generates bruising) regardless of treatment;
- A person receives attention from emergency medical personnel or a physician;
- An unusual or unexpected incident occurs that jeopardizes personal safety, such as a vehicle accident (with or without injuries), or a child is exposed to a threatening person or situation.