

APPENDIX B: CHILD, YOUTH, VOLUNTEER AND STAFF PROTECTION POLICY

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

At Westminster Presbyterian Church of Knoxville ("WPC"), we take seriously our moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and youth and support for those who work with them. This is an expression of our faith as we seek to proclaim the good news that we know in Jesus Christ and work for Him: in our church and beyond.

The Session, staff, and members of WPC are committed to maintaining a safe environment in which children and youth are protected from inappropriate treatment of any kind. Our intent is to protect children and youth in all church programs; to educate all staff and volunteer workers concerning pertinent child and youth protection issues; and to protect staff and volunteers, as well as the church, from potential allegations of abuse and neglect.

Protection Policy includes:

- Selection of staff, teachers, volunteers, and others involved in activities with children and youth;
- Orientation and training of these individuals;
- Supervision of these individuals;
- Monitoring the policy and procedures to ensure compliance;
- Procedures for reporting and responding to allegations.

We recognize that children and youth are entrusted to the care of adults in church programs and activities, both on and off campus, and also in programs operated by others on church property. Children and youth should be free to participate in these programs and activities without intimidation, coercion, or abuse of any type. This policy is applicable to all persons under the church's supervision, including, but not limited to, church members, visitors, compensated staff, and volunteers.

We recognize that awareness and prevention are the essence of safety. Workers are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential for abuse and neglect of children and youth and to awareness and prevention of the same.

We recognize that adults working with children and youth give much of their time and energy to our programs. This policy is designed to minimize the potential for false accusations or misunderstandings.

In the event of an accusation or incident, support will be given to all parties and will include ministering to all persons involved and their families. The highest possible confidentiality shall be observed at all times.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child", "children", "youth" and "minor" include all persons under the age of 18.

Throughout this document "Inappropriate Treatment" shall refer collectively to the following:

- Physical abuse: any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burning, and biting.
- Emotional abuse:- emotional injury when a child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse: any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect: depriving a child of essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, safety, and medical care.

For purposes of this policy, the following terms apply to persons working with children and youth:

- **Staff**: the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or contracted to work for the church for salary or wages.
- **Volunteer**: the term used for those persons who provide services for the church, including its governing bodies and entities and members, and receive no benefits or compensation.
- **Workers**: Staff and volunteers as defined above.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKERS

Guidelines for Selection and Training

The following guidelines apply to all persons who work with children and youth at WPC.

1. Only volunteers who have been members, or participating non-members, of WPC for at least six months are eligible to work with children/youth. Exceptions must receive Session approval.
2. Volunteers and staff who have infrequent direct contact or contact only in group settings are required to attend policy training sessions and are subject to reference checks, especially regarding their children/youth work history.
3. Volunteers and staff with frequent direct contact with children must complete the Application to Work with Children and Youth (Appendix B-2). They are subject to the above requirements, as well as a personal interview with the program director and a criminal background check (including a nationwide records search and a review of state offender registries). These records are considered confidential church property and are not to be released to any other party except on a need-to-know basis with the approval of the Senior Pastor, or the Chair of the Human Resources Ministry Team.
4. Adults who have been convicted of an offense involving a child or youth will not be accepted to work or volunteer in any church-sponsored activity for children or youth.
5. The following additional procedures should be followed with staff who work with children/youth:
 - a. The staff person must complete a screening application (Appendix B-2) which will ask about any past volunteer involvement and employment history, including any previous responsibilities in working with children/youth and a list of references.
 - b. The staff person's supervisor will interview them, and essentially the same questions will be posed to each person.
 - c. Reference checks and criminal background checks of individuals will be conducted as stated above.
6. All workers are required to complete the applicable forms (App. B-2 and App. B-6 if driving) in order to be approved for participation in activities involving children/youth. It is mandatory that a criminal background check be performed on all prospective workers who might be involved with overnight activities or counseling of children/youth. This process will be coordinated with the office manager. Any criminal allegations or convictions (felony or misdemeanor) that involve bodily harm, property damage, or moral turpitude will prohibit employment or volunteering, unless approved by the Session.

Guidelines for Performance of Duties

1. Workers are expected to avoid, to the extent possible, any situation in which they would be alone or out of sight of others with a single child.

2. At least two unrelated adults, over the age of 18, (and more if circumstances demand) must be available before, during, and after an event, until all children/youth are in the care of their parents, guardians, or authorized responsible caregivers.
3. Additionally, it is expected that in any off-campus activities, including out of town or overnight trips, that there be a least one (1) adult, age 21 or over, per every six (6) children/youth. Male and female workers will be selected based on the gender composition of the group.
4. In circumstances when two adults are not available to attend a regular Sunday school class, it is acceptable to have only one adult, provided that classroom doors are left open (doors with windows may be closed) and a supervisor is provided for periodic observation (e.g., staff member or elder).
5. Only adults aged 21-75 will be allowed to drive vehicles in which children and youth are passengers. Drivers must be free from vehicle accidents and moving traffic violations within the previous three years. For drivers over 75 to be permitted to drive, they must provide a doctor's statement verifying their ability to operate a vehicle safely. All drivers must adhere to church guidelines, whether it is a church-owned, rented, or personal vehicle. Exceptions must receive Session approval.
6. Adults are encouraged to be sensitive to the potential of abuse of children/youth and to avoid appearance of same. They should not hesitate to caution others if they observe activities or behavior which are or might appear to be inappropriate.
7. Workers/volunteers who observe questionable or inappropriate behavior of any kind affecting children/youth must report it immediately to an appropriate staff member. This applies to the behavior of children/youth as well as to the behavior of workers.

Teenage Workers

It is recognized that there might be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are under age 18 to assist in caring for children during church programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14.
- Teenage workers will be screened (as specified above) by the staff person who supervises their work.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of WPC for workers to promote the safety and well-being of all children and youth engaged in church activities. WPC also promotes respectful, positive support of the social-emotional development of children and youth. Workers shall not administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There shall be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with the appropriate staff person for the program if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues. Workers should refrain from yelling and should speak calmly to children/youth and endeavor to redirect uncooperative behaviors.

Orientation and Training of Workers

Before they begin working with children/youth, WPC will provide workers with an orientation and training, including a review of the Child Protection Policy. WPC will strive to provide opportunities for ongoing training for workers. Completion of orientation and ongoing training is the responsibility of the worker and the staff person overseeing the worker. Completion of the training will be documented on the applicable forms and retained in the appropriate files.

Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Inappropriate Treatment of a Minor

The procedures set forth below shall be carried out in the event of an allegation of Inappropriate Treatment of a minor, as previously defined in this policy.

1. The person who suspects or witnesses Inappropriate Treatment of a minor shall report the incident immediately to the chairperson of the division with responsibility for the program or activity (hereafter referred to as the "Chairperson"). Confidentiality of all persons will be safeguarded to the extent reasonably possible.
2. Within twenty-four hours of the incident, the person who suspects or witnesses the Inappropriate Treatment shall document in writing all known facts and circumstances regarding the incident and shall deliver to the Chairperson, written documentation of the inappropriate treatment.
3. The Chairperson shall notify the Senior Pastor or designee and the Chair of the Human Resources Ministry Team within twenty-four hours of the incident.
4. The person who suspects or witnesses Inappropriate Treatment of a minor shall report it to either the Department of Children's Services, County Juvenile Court, or law enforcement with jurisdiction within twenty-four hours of the incident. Incident/allegations that occur outside Tennessee will be reported within twenty-four hours to law enforcement with jurisdiction for that location. If circumstances warrant, law enforcement should be called immediately.
5. The church will be supportive of the individuals who, in good faith, make reports of actual reasonably suspected cases of Inappropriate Treatment. All reports will be taken seriously, but not judged prematurely.
6. An in-depth investigation will be carried out by the appropriate state authorities, rather than by church personnel.
7. Contact with and notice to the parents/guardians of the suspected victim regarding the alleged inappropriate treatment shall be dealt with solely by the appropriate public investigating authority and not by church personnel.
8. The safety and security of the child must be safeguarded before the person accused of the abuse/neglect is confronted.
9. The Senior Pastor or designee will make an appropriate report to the liability insurer, and the appropriate governing bodies in the denomination and appropriate legal counsel.
10. Persons accused must be treated with dignity and will be given support. Depending on the circumstances of the allegations, such persons may be immediately relieved of further responsibilities until the investigation is completed, and appropriate actions determined. Following the report of an allegation, the Human Resources Ministry Team has the authority to terminate the employment of accused employees and to prohibit the involvement of accused volunteers in church sponsored youth activities.
11. The Senior Pastor or designee will be the sole spokesperson for the Church regarding media inquiries.
12. Any report of Inappropriate Treatment involving an ordained minister or commissioned pastor shall be made to the accused minister's or pastor's Presbytery. The Presbytery's designee shall be responsible for following procedures set forth in this section and all practices established by the Presbytery.

Nursery Staff Expectations

The expectations listed below are your job responsibilities as Nursery Staff of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Our church nursery is often the very first introduction that visitors have to our church and is a ministry of its own within the church. We are very committed to offering the highest level of safety, quality childcare, and nurturing to every child that comes into our care. Our Nursery may be one of the first memories that the children will have of our church family.

The Director of Children's Ministries shall provide a cell number posted in a visible place in the Nursery.

Expectations:

- Arrive on time
- ALWAYS greet parents with a smile as they walk into the nursery. If you do not know them introduce yourself IMMEDIATELY. For many parents the church nursery is the first public place that they will be leaving their child.
- Interaction with the children is a must. There are many books, toys, puzzles, educational games, etc., that are here for the children to enjoy with you and each other.

Child Safety:

- Be sure that two sitters are in the Nursery at all times, keep door open unless it is the Sunday School hour and there is a baby crying.
- NEVER EVER leave children unattended
- All children must be signed in at the desk outside of the Nursery, and a nametag must accompany the child
- If a new family visits, ask the parent to fill out an information sheet on their child listing the child's name, birth date and special instructions for their child. If they are in a hurry, please ask them to take one with them and return it when they pick up their child.
- Be sure to remind new visitors to sign their child out as they come to pick them up.
- If a child is crying and cannot be comforted in ten minutes, get another adult, or another sitter to go and find the parent of the child.
- Never let a sibling, or another child or adult pick up someone from the Nursery unless arrangements have been made by the parents with you beforehand.
- In case of an emergency, take appropriate immediate action if needed: If a child is bleeding apply pressure until it stops, clean wound and bandage. If you need help, there is a phone in the nursery for you to either call 911 if a true emergency or call the Director of Children's Ministries. The number is also on the phone pad. If you just need assistance or an extra hand you can ask a parent, or Sunday School leader to assist you.

- Always be aware and keep your eyes open for choking hazards that may have wandered into the Nursery. A safety check is done on the Nursery bi-weekly, but many visitors and members use our Nursery, so we need to be watchful.

Diaper changing and Well Child Policy

- Change diapers in the bathroom on the changing table with the door open. Gloves are available for you, and as always, wash your hands after changing diapers.
- No medications can be given to any child EVER - the only exception is an epi-pen for allergic reactions that a parent will make you aware of and train you to use beforehand.
- If a child appears to be ill, vomits, has a fever, you notice a rash such as chicken pox, you should remove the child from the room as soon as possible without compromising the child to sitter ratio and have another sitter or adult in the church get the parents out of the Sunday School class or Sanctuary. You may take the child to the Sunday School room next door or empty room or hallway to wait on the parents to arrive. Explain to them that their child is not feeling well and that you are instructed to remove the child from the Nursery so that the other children are not exposed.
- If you notice any extremely odd behaviors, bruises, cuts, etc., please immediately notify the Director of Children's Ministries and we can review what actions may need to be taken.

Snacks, Bottles, and Feeding:

- All formulas will need to be warmed either with a bottle warmer or warm water in the Nursery kitchenette area. NEVER warm a bottle in the microwave. Breast milk and bottles can be stored in the fridge of the Nursery if needed.
- Only snacks that are provided by the church may be used, unless the parents have sent allergy-safe foods for their child. If this is the case, please be sure that the parents have written the allergy on the information sheet at the check in desk.
- All snacks provided by the church, and by parents, shall be peanut free.
- Children are not allowed to share snacks provided by the church or by parents.