



Child Abuse Prevention Policies

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FIVE FORKS BRETHERN IN CHRIST CHURCH
CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

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INTRODUCTION

The Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church Board has approved the following set of policy guidelines to help protect the children of our church and community against child abuse. We recognize that no set of policies can ever guarantee the protection of our children. We thank God for His grace in the past, present, and future protection of our children; for as in all areas, we are ultimately dependent upon His grace and not our own abilities.

Jesus stated, "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they came! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin" (Luke 17:1-2). Although we do not believe we can guarantee the protection of our children, we do believe the church can adopt policies and practices that will help safeguard our children. This is our intent.

At this time there is little well researched, or tested, advice about what a church should or should not do that really helps reduce the risk to children. The opinions range from trust God and do nothing, to turn your church into a hyper-vigilant state of suspecting anybody and everybody of child abuse. We, as a committee, have attempted to find a middle ground that uses God-given wisdom as a faithful response to being stewards of the children God has entrusted to our church.

Churches have unique features that make them susceptible to incidents of child abuse, and especially child sexual abuse. (For conciseness we have used child/adolescent to include anyone under the age of 18.)

- 1) Child molesters are attracted to an institution in which they have immediate access to potential victims in an atmosphere of trust.
- 2) OPPORTUNITY – Churches not only provide access for many people to be with children, but they also provide ample opportunities for unsupervised close, personal contact between adults and children. This risk increases dramatically for overnight activities.
- 3) LACK OF SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – Historically churches have been trusting and unsuspecting institutions. They were reluctant to “screen” individuals who want to work with children. Also, recruiting volunteers can be a difficult task. When questions have been raised about possible misconduct of a worker with a child, most churches do not have guidelines on how to handle the situation.
- 4) RISK – All this adds up to a significant risk to our children and our church. Current estimates suggest that about 25% of females and 15% males have been/will be sexually abused before the age of 14. The age of the victim at the initiation of sexual abuse is becoming younger and younger. Some studies suggest 45% have been victimized before the age of 6, thus indicating an increased risk for preschool age children. Most children are abused by a person they know and trust. Very few sexual assaults on children are done by strangers.

The purpose of these policies is not to scare or create a “witch hunt”. Rather it is to inform the church of the realities we can no longer ignore. Thus, the need for policies for the prevention of child abuse. Imagine the devastation to a child, a family, and the church, of a child abuse situation here at the church or during a church outing. The pain of abuse is severe enough, without the added distortion of having it done under the guise of the church.

The four main areas where policies have been developed are education, children and youth programs, facilities, and requirements of volunteers and staff.

- 1) EDUCATION – We believe education is the first and most important step. The policies are to help the church educate the whole church body, the church leadership, leaders of specific ministries with children, and parents and children. They are intended to communicate an awareness of the potential risk to our children, actions to reduce the opportunities for abuse, and the necessary response if it should happen.

- 2) CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS – We commend the current workers of these programs and appreciate their work with our children. We need to continually lift them up in prayer as they are placed with the responsibility of providing spiritual guidance for our children. Policies in this area are provided to enhance the safety of the children and minimize the chance of false allegations against workers.
- 3) FACILITIES – These policies focus on minimizing access to areas that are not easily monitored. A potential abuser’s knowledge of possibly being monitored can help lower the risk. The policies are guidelines for the Trustees and Church Board to consider in the continual development of church property.
- 4) REQUIREMENTS OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF – These policies set up a procedure for all volunteers and staff who work with children. The intent is to help maximize the ministry “fit” between a worker and an area of ministry. Individuals who may pose a threat to children, such as individuals with a history of temptation with children abuse, would be redirected to other areas of ministry.

Policies are only as good as the people who practice them. We thank God for the people He has called to Five Forks. We pray these policies will help in the ministry of the church and help in the safe guard of the children God has entrusted to us.

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matthew 18:5&6

I EDUCATION

Education encompasses teaching the whole church body, the church leadership, leaders of specific children's ministries, and parents and children to understand the potential risk to our children. This manual is one way of helping us to know what actions to take that will reduce the opportunities for abuse to occur, and the correct response if it should happen.

A single incident of abuse or molestation can be devastating. It is impossible to adequately describe the spiritual, emotional, and social pain and suffering a person can experience from abuse. Abuse can be especially hurtful when it happens in the church. A deep sense of confusion and betrayal occurs when someone is abused by those professing to be caring in the name of Jesus. The personal and church implications are tremendous, including the potential for legal liability by the church. All members, but especially church leaders and those working with children and youth, must be trained to have an awareness of the basic issues of child abuse.

A. CHURCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

On alternate years, church board members are strongly encouraged to attend the Annual CAP training that is offered usually in the month of August.

B. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

1. A CAP training program is offered annually. It includes information on child abuse within the church, and a presentation of church policies that guide interactions between adults and children. This program will be provided for all currently serving paid staff, church leaders, and children and youth workers/volunteers.
2. The CAP Coordinator will have the responsibility of setting up the annual CAP training program.
3. New volunteers will be guided to www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu to take the training for Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse for Mandated & Permissive reporting in PA.

II CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Serving the Lord by working with children and youth is both a privilege and an awesome responsibility. The policies outlined below are intended to help safeguard our children and youth, and minimize the possibility of false allegations against workers of the church.

A. Supervision of Children & Youth

1. Risk for children with regard to abuse typically involves three dynamics:
 - a. **Accountability** – A basic fact of human nature is the more an individual feels accountable to someone else, the more likely he or she will monitor his or her own behavior and maintain appropriate behavior. The more a person realizes they are being monitored, the more accountable they feel and the lower the associated risk. However, the amount of accountability is also determined by perceived power. An adult working with another adult is typically on equal footing and this suggests a good level of accountability. An adult working alone with two youth would be more equal in power and thus more accountability and lower risk than an adult working alone with two young children or only one youth.
 - b. **Accessibility** – The more opportunities available to abuse a child undetected, the higher the associated risk. A child in a class room with 15 other children presents a low associated risk for being accessible for abuse. A child alone in a tent with an adult is highly accessible and thus presents with a high associated risk.
 - c. **Amount of Contact** – Although verbal, physical, and sexual assaults do happen by strangers, most child abuse is committed by people who know the child. Individuals who abuse typically develop a relationship with the child before abusing. Unfortunately just as a long-term relationship with an adult can have many positive benefits for a child or youth; the closeness, comfort and power of a long-term relationship can also be used for evil. Children and youth are less likely to recognize and report abuse by individuals they know and trust.
2. Based on this understanding, the church board has determined levels of associated risk with positions and activities and has made safety precautions based on those levels of associated risk. For example, a large youth activity in the multi-ministry building with multiple adults has a low level of associated risk. An individual serving refreshments in the kitchen with other adults during Vacation Bible School has a low level of associated risk. A youth leader driving alone with a single youth has a high level of associated risk. Two youth leaders, or a youth leader with two or more youth, going from the church to a youth activity has a low level of associated risk. A Sunday school

teacher taking a young child to the bathroom alone with the door closed has a high level of associated risk. A Sunday school teacher taking three young children to the bathroom with the door propped open has a much lower associated risk level.

B. TWO ADULT RULE

Whenever possible, we try to have at least two CAP approved adults who are not related (age 18 or older, with at least one 21 years of age or older) who are responsible for children/youth in classrooms and/or events.

A married, engaged or dating couple, or two adults from the same immediate family (father/son, mother/daughter), does not meet the two adult rule. In this situation, another adult would need to be involved. In the circumstance where only 1 CAP approved adult is available, the classroom door must be propped open, as well as CAP Patrol checking in.

1. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation should be arranged so that one adult is NEVER alone with fewer than three children, or with one adolescent (6th grade or above).

One adult may drive three children or two adolescents from one site to another.

The two-adult rule applies when adults drive fewer than three children or two adolescents at any time during the trip, such as dropping children off at their homes.

One adult may bring one child or one adolescent home with a signed permission slip from a parent specifically for that adult.

Volunteers who drive must have a motor vehicle with current inspection, registration, & insurance. Any volunteer whose motor vehicle suggests an increased risk for the safe operation of vehicles shall not be permitted to drive. No parent who is not an approved volunteer may drive children other than his/her own.

If the vehicle to be used is designed to carry more than 15 persons, including the driver, the driver must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

2. FIRST AID SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED IN THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER ADULT

Use wisdom here. Putting a band aid on a finger or arm is not as high a risk as an injury on the area of the body that would be covered by a bathing suit. In that case, ask another CAP approved adult to be present when administering personal care.

3. BATHROOM SAFEGUARDS

GRADE 1 - 5 (during the 9:30 and 11:00 am Sunday services, we have Hall Patrol on Duty)

Children of this age may go to the bathroom with another child within two years of age and of the same sex.

If a child needs to go to the bathroom with adult support:

- One adult may go with three or more children
- Two adults may go with fewer than three children.
- Always prop the bathroom entry door open if an adult is in the bathroom, and the stall door open if assistance is needed with toileting.
- DO NOT have another child assist, unless with an adult present.

BATHROOM SAFEGUARDS – KINDERGARTEN AND YOUNGER

The Pre-school (age 2 & 3 yr. olds) classroom has a bathroom facility within the room. CAP approved teacher or helper may assist with bathroom needs, keeping the door open.

Parents: Make every attempt to take your children to the bathroom, especially before or after an activity or class.

4 & 5 yr. olds: When assisting a child to use the bathroom:

Always prop the bathroom entry door open if an adult is in the bathroom and the stall door open if assistance is needed with toileting.

DO NOT have another child assist, unless with an adult present.

Hall Patrol volunteers are available to walk with children grades 1 - 5 to assure their safety to the bathroom and back to their classroom.

Diaper changing: Can only be done by a CAP approved adult. No teen should change diapers, unless supervised by a CAP approved adult.

4. CHILD-ADULT RATIOS (AS ALWAYS THE TWO ADULT RULE APPLIES)

Infants: Children/Worker	2/1
Crawlers: Children/Worker	3/1
Toddlers: Children/Worker	5/1
Two year olds: Children/Worker	6/1
Three year olds: Children/Worker	7/1
Four & Five year olds: Children/Worker	8/1
First graders & up: Children/Worker	10/1

One-on-one interactions are sometimes necessary and appropriate, but care should be taken that they be conducted in an environment that provides visibility to other adults. If at all possible, another adult should have knowledge of the one-to-one meeting, including where and with whom they are meeting. Adult workers are not to have secret meetings with children or youth. When possible, the adult worker will in advance of the proposed activity:

- 1 - Receive consent of the child's parent, and
- 2 - Notify the appropriate church leader

5. OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES

Every effort should be made to encourage safe transportation to and from the location of the outing, not only in the mode but in the leadership. At least two ministry leaders should be present for these outings. In **no circumstance** should one adult be allowed to take children or youth on an outing or overnight stay by themselves as part of a church activity.

- a) All overnight activities must be cleared in writing and in advance with the appropriate ministry directors and CAP Coordinator as to:
 - a. The specific proposed activity
 - b. The location of the proposed activity
 - c. The specific adults chaperoning and supervising the proposed activity
 - d. The goal or objective to be realized in the proposed activity
 - e. The manner and mechanism to be employed for communication at the site of the proposed activity
 - f. The manner of transport to and from the proposed activity
- b) No adult guests will be allowed who have not been approved (Interviewed & Clearances)
- c) Any parent sleeping over who will be with children other than his or her own without other adult supervision in that sleeping area will be considered in a supervisory role. All adults in a supervisory role must meet all requirements for Interview and PA background clearances.
- d) Adults and youth of the same gender may occupy single-room or dormitory-type accommodations including large tents, provided there is a minimum of two adults with two or more children. Adults must use a separate area from the youth area, or establish separation barriers or privacy zones such as a temporary blanket or sheet walls, for changing of clothes, such as getting ready for bed.
- e) When staying in smaller tents (8-person or less), no youth will stay in the tent of anyone other than his or her parent or guardian.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL WORKERS AND ACTIVITIES:

1. All paid church staff and any volunteer child/youth worker (members, regular attendees, and individuals not affiliated with Five Forks BIC Church) 18 years or older who may be involved in a church sponsored children/youth activity are mandated reporters under PA state law. All church staff and volunteers are required to fill out an application, sign the Worker's Statement, have a personal interview, provide two

reference checks, and complete required background checks as required by the state of PA before working in any capacity with children/youth (Section IV - REQUIREMENTS OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF)

2. All workers will be encouraged to attend meetings held from time to time to receive information relating to the church's policies and procedures and methods in teaching and working with children and youth.
3. After all church-sponsored children and youth activities, adult workers will remain physically present until all children/youth have vacated their designated rooms and/or are in the custody of their parents.
4. Because gift giving can be a form of buying loyalty or silence, gift giving should be done on a group basis, or for special occasions only. Gifts should not be elaborate but should be modest and appropriate to the occasion.
5. Given the responsibility of adults to be examples to our children and youth and to avoid the possibility of allegations generated from questionable behaviors, no person is permitted to use illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco products; profane, vulgar or obscene language or gestures; or materials that are in any way lurid or pornographic during any church sponsored activities.
6. The church and children/youth ministries are to have an open door policy. Parents of the children served, ministers, administrative and professional staff of the church have the right to visit and observe any program at any time unannounced.
7. **Regarding Discipline:** All children will be treated with respect and Christian love. Children may need to be disciplined with dignity, but no child will be spanked. Nor should a child be disciplined in ways that would denigrate or shame them.
8. Adult workers should limit their physical contact with children/youth to situations where an expression of care or concern is appropriate, such as holding a young child who is hurt, putting an arm around a discouraged youth, a brief hug of congratulations, bending down to the child's eye level, speaking kindly and listening carefully, taking a child's hand and leading him or her to and from an activity.
DO NOT:
 - Kiss a child, or coax a child to kiss you
 - Touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except to assist a child with toileting, In the presence of another adult)
 - Hold older children or have them on your lap
 - Give prolonged hugging to an older child or youth.
9. Any individual acting in a way that is not in conformity with these guidelines, and especially any inappropriate conduct between an adult worker and child/youth should be lovingly confronted and the incident reported to the director of the ministry under which it took place, or the pastoral staff if during a general church activity. The director of the ministry should investigate and/or report the information to the pastoral staff as needed. If the incident rises to the level of a reasonable suspicion of abuse, the procedures outlined in section – **When Abuse Happens** should be followed.
10. Any and all activities not reported to and approved by the appropriate ministry director are not sanctioned activities, and will not in any way subject Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church to any responsibility, liability, etc. on account of, or stemming from such non-sanctioned activities.

D. REPORTING

1. WHO SHOULD REPORT

We all must be involved in the protection of our children. This includes reporting suspected or disclosed abuse.

- a. All church staff (pastoral and non-pastoral) and volunteers of children and youth are **mandated** reporters and have a legal and moral obligation to report.
- b. All church members and attendees who are not staff or children/youth workers who suspect abuse are **permissive** reporters and are encouraged to report suspected child abuse, although not required by law. This may be done through one of the pastoral staff (who would then be mandated to report the abuse) or reported directly to ChildLine (800) 932-0313.
- c. Any church member or attendee who has knowledge and concern of a potential threat to children (observation of behaviors, personal knowledge, identification from the sex offender registry, etc.) is encouraged to report this to one of the pastoral staff. If the reported knowledge and concern is at the level of reporting, then the pastoral staff would be mandated to report the abuse. If the reported knowledge and concern is not at the level of suspected abuse, but is at a level of reasonable suspicion of a potential threat, then the pastoral staff will meet with the individual identified to determine the best course for the protection of the children and youth of the church and the spiritual development of the individual.

2. WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED

Child abuse includes physical injury, sexual abuse, and neglect of a child. Child abuse also includes unlawful "corporal" punishment and injury. Child abuse does not include appropriate physical discipline by a parent or guardian. Child abuse does not include a fight between minors or voluntary sexual conduct between minors where both are of similar age. A church member or children/youth worker who knows or reasonably suspects that mental suffering, physical or sexual abuse, or neglect has been inflicted on a child must report this abuse to the child protective agency and then report to the pastoral staff of the appropriate ministry. This would include suspicion of parents or guardians who are failing to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision, even if no physical injury to the child has occurred. The same responsibility applies here as listed under "Who Should Report."

The identity of the person reporting suspected child abuse is usually confidential, in accordance with the state legal code, and disclosed only between child protective agencies, to county counsel, to the district attorney (if criminal prosecutions or civil actions are initiated), or when requested by court order. The person reporting may also waive confidentiality by disclosing to third persons the fact that he or she made a report.

Oral and written reports of suspected abuse to ChildLine will include the following: Using form CY-47)

- Name and contact information of the person making the report
- Name of the child
- Present location of the child
- Nature and extent of the injury
- Other information requested by the agency, including information that led the person to suspect the abuse.

3. WHEN SHOULD IT BE REPORTED

Any staff or volunteer who works with children and youth should report child abuse whenever that person “has reasonable cause to suspect” that a child is a victim of abuse. Reasonable cause to suspect means that it is objectively reasonable for the person to entertain such a suspicion based upon facts that would cause a reasonable person in a like position to suspect child abuse. The child does not have to come before the mandated reporter in order to make a report of suspected child abuse. Initially, this appears to be an objective standard. However, the training and experience of the person will be taken into account in determining whether the suspicion is reasonable.

Staff members and volunteers of children/youth must report any suspected child abuse immediately to ChildLine and then notify the Pastor/Director of Children or Youth Ministries. Upon notification, the Pastor/Director shall facilitate the cooperation of the church with the investigation of the report. The church has a form to use when documenting the suspected abuse. The form is in the church office.

- *Report of Suspected Child Abuse* form CY-47– should be used when you actually need to make a report to ChildLine. Just fill in the details prior to reporting.
- To report: ChildLine (800) 932-0313 or www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis

A mandated reporter who is convicted of willfully failing to report or refer suspected child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor of the third degree. A second or subsequent offense is a misdemeanor of the second degree. The maximum penalty for a misdemeanor of the third degree is \$2,500 and/or one year in jail; for a misdemeanor of the second degree it is \$5,000 and/or two years in jail.

4. SIGNS OF ABUSE

As important as creating a safe, Christian, nurturing environment for children, we also need to be aware of the symptoms or signs of child abuse, whether it be physical, sexual, or emotional. In this way, we can be instrumental in preventing further abuse. Also, knowing what signs to report in a suspected abuse case is a safeguard against being sued for neglecting or ignoring or not reporting possible abuse situations. None of the following signs are necessarily evidence of abuse, but are indicators to be aware of.

a. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Symptoms of PHYSICAL ABUSE are sometimes evidenced in the child’s appearance. They might include:

- Bruises and welts
- Lacerations and abrasions
- Abdominal injuries, evidenced by constant vomiting, localized tenderness, swollen abdomen
- Burns, especially patterned and dry burns
- Frequent and/or unexplained fractures and skeletal injuries

Likewise, symptoms of PHYSICAL ABUSE may be evidenced in the child's behavior. These might include:

- Talking about abuse
- Expressing explicit or implicit fear of adults
- Extreme startles at sudden movement of an adult, such as threw up a protective hand, duck, step back, or cower
- Displaying behavior extremes such as aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Avoiding physical contact with others
- Wearing unseasonable clothing to hide injuries

b. SEXUAL ABUSE

Child SEXUAL ABUSE encompasses a wide range of behaviors including:

- Fondling a child's breasts or genitals
- Exhibitionism
- Pornographic exploitation
- Prostitution
- Voyeurism
- Intercourse (vaginal, anal, or oral)
- Attempted intercourse
- Rape
- Incest
- Verbal sexual stimulation
- Obscene telephone calls to a child
- Obscene pictures/contacts by way of internet – attempting to meet with child/youth

PHYSICAL SIGNS of sexual abuse may include:

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Pain/itching in the genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in the genital area
- Venereal disease

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS of sexual abuse may include:

- Any marked change in eating, sleeping, or recreational patterns
- Sudden onset of fears and anxieties
- Regression in young children: resorting to bed wetting, thumb sucking, baby talk, withdrawal, fear, distrust
- Especially in adolescents: depression, preoccupation with death and suicide, isolation, violent and criminal behaviors
- Preoccupation with sexual topics, vocabulary or motions
- Persistent and inappropriate sex play with toys, peers, self
- Persistent imitation of sexual behavior
- Detailed knowledge or understanding of sexual behavior

c. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical indicators of EMOTIONAL ABUSE are less apparent or obvious than in instances of physical or sexual abuse. These may be signs of EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Speech disorders
- Lags in physical development
- Failure to thrive: listlessness, unresponsiveness

Behavioral signs of EMOTIONAL ABUSE may include:

- Unpleasant behaviors: hard to get along with, demanding, destructive, cruel, causes trouble, won't let others alone
- Avoids others, is unusually shy, anxious to please, is too submissive
- Shows low self-esteem: accepts unpleasant treatment from others without protest
- Either inappropriately adult behavior/mannerisms – takes charge of other children, or inappropriately infantile – sucks thumb, rocks constantly

d. NEGLECT

Child's appearance:

- Appears tired, listless, almost always dirty, wears dirty or inappropriate clothes
- Seems often to be alone for long periods
- Obviously needs glasses, dental care or other medical attention

Reported child's behavior:

- Begs or steals food
- Causes trouble, using alcohol or drugs, engaging in vandalism or sexual misconduct

5. WHEN ABUSE HAPPENS

a. The body of Christ's relationship to known child abusers:

1. Known sex offenders or child abusers are to receive the same welcome, support and care as all sinners.
2. At **NO** time is anyone who may pose a threat, such as a known sex offender or child abuser, to be assigned to ministries with children/youth.

b. Reporting Child Abuse

1. All church staff (pastoral and non-pastoral) and volunteer children/youth workers when they have reasonable cause to suspect (on the basis of their medical, professional, or other training and experience) that a child is the victim of child abuse must report this abuse to ChildLine – either electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis or by calling (800-932-0313).
2. The allegations must be taken seriously, but the accused should not be prejudged.

3. Within 48 hours after making this oral report, one copy of a completed CY-47 report (copies in church office) should be submitted to the Children and Youth agency for the county in which the abuse occurred. A copy should be kept in the church file.
4. The Pastor/Director of Children or Youth Ministries should be notified. Upon notification the Pastor should facilitate the cooperation of the church with the investigation of the report.
5. If the Pastor/Director of Children or Youth Ministries is the one suspected of abuse, then another pastoral STAFF MEMBER SHOULD BE NOTIFIED.
6. The accused should be immediately suspended from performing any duties and all contact with children/youth under the ministry of the church until the situation is resolved.
7. The accused should be provided counseling from a qualified professional, in addition to pastoral care from the other pastoral staff.
8. The pastoral staff should inform the bishop of the Allegheny Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.
9. The church board should inform the church's liability carrier of the incident.
10. The church board should secure legal counsel for the church as soon as possible after being notified of possible abuse or molestation.

III. PHYSICAL BUILDING

God has blessed us with a wonderful facility for ministering to many people. Policies with regard to the physical building is primarily based on the view that the knowledge of possibly being monitored can help lower the risk of child abuse (CAP Patrol fulfills this). Thus these policies set forth the ideal of minimizing the risk of areas that are not easily monitored. The policies are intended as guidelines for the Trustees and Church Board to consider in the continual development of church property.

A. ABILITY TO MONITOR

1. All classrooms and offices should be able to be monitored from an inside window either in the door or in a wall. When showing a video, the door must be propped open and/or a low light must be on.
- 2) Some classrooms would require a mirror in the room that could be seen from the inside window to allow viewing of the entire room, such as behind corners.
- 3) Priorities should be given to rooms with younger children, then adolescents, then remaining rooms.
- 4) The bathroom should provide some privacy for the child using the toilet, but permit observation of adult helpers.

B. SECURE CHECK-IN

Labels will be given to parents and children through our secure check-in system. These labels must match in order for a parent to receive their child back to minimize the risk of someone wrongly taking a child.

C. SECLUDED AND LOCKED ROOMS

- 1) Areas that are out of the main traffic of the church need to be monitored during regular church activities when children are cared for in areas apart from their parents. This monitoring is done by individuals who volunteer and have been CAP approved to work with children. This is done through our CAP Patrol ministry.
- 2) Areas that are secluded should be locked.
- 3) Keys to classrooms and offices should be given based on need.

IV. REQUIREMENTS OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

- A. These policies set up a procedure for all volunteers and staff who have contact with children and youth. The intent is to help each worker find his or her most appropriate area of ministry. Any individual who may pose a threat to children, such as an individual with a history of temptation with child abuse, would be redirected from ministry with children to other areas of ministry.
- B. All individuals who desire to work with children/youth, must be actively involved with the Five Forks BIC Church for at least six months.
- 1) The six month requirement may be waived for ministry staff hired who have fulfilled all other requirements, including all background checks.
 - 2) The six month requirement may be waived for temporary situations, such as the week of Vacation Bible School, for workers who have fulfilled all other requirements including the completion of the application form, interview, and have current PA state background clearances, who will be supervised by other approved workers, and who will not be involved in any one-to-one contact with children or youth.
 - 3) The six month requirement may be waived for Parents of AWANA students, who wish to help and who attend a church other than Five Forks. These parents must meet the requirement of having completed an application form, have an interview and have current PA state background clearances on file.
 - 4) The six month requirement may be waived for volunteers, at the discretion of the interviewing church staff, and who have met the CAP requirement. Example: someone who has attended Five Forks 3 - 5 months, with whom we have established a good relationship and trust. Someone we want to encourage to get involved.
- C. All individuals who desire to work with children/youth will be asked to complete a volunteer application. This includes all church staff, Sunday school workers, nursery workers, children's church workers, children's choir workers, youth workers/advisors, Vacation Bible School staff, all Wednesday night children/youth ministries, and clubs and sports activities leaders. These individuals must be at least 13 years of age or older. The only exception to this policy is when a child between the ages of 8 – 12 accompanies a parent who is serving. A child under the age of 13 must serve with and be

supervised by a parent. As we teach our children about the love and protection of God, we should do all we can to assure our workers will help us fulfill this part of our goal.

- D. The volunteer application will cover an individual's experience and interest in working with children and youth, as well as cover background information, such as questions related to child abuse. It also asks for 2 references. All applications will be kept confidential and only be read by the interviewer(s), and the ministry leader with whom the volunteer will be working. It will be stored in a secure location at the church office.
- E. In order to keep your CAP file current, each year all workers with children and youth will be required to review the Five Forks BIC Church Child Abuse Prevention Policies and sign the "Annual Children/Youth workers Agreement." (Annual Update)
- F. All applicants will be interviewed. The pastoral staff will be interviewed by members of the church board. The Pastors/Directors will interview the volunteers of the various children and youth ministries. Any interviewer who has concern about a particular interviewee should request a second interview with a member of the pastoral staff. The purpose of the interview process is to assist workers in finding ways to serve God at Five Forks BIC Church and to assess any concerns about particular areas of ministry for workers.
- G. Individuals requesting to serve in any area of children and youth ministry should be encouraged to serve and directed to the church office to pick up a volunteer packet and policy booklet. Once the application has been completed, a time for an interview will be requested by the Pastor/Director completing the interview.
- H. **BACKGROUND CLEARANCES AND FBI CLEARANCE – WHO NEEDS THIS?**
Before serving, all volunteers/staff included in the following list, must meet the criteria required by the State of PA to have current PA State Police History and Child Abuse History Clearances completed and on file in the church office. FBI clearance (fingerprinting) must be done if the volunteer has lived outside the state of PA anytime within the past 10 years:
 - 1. All paid church staff
 - 2. Volunteers who may be engaged in contact with children and youth, or who may be in charge of taking youth or children off site and/or an overnight activity.
 - 3. Volunteers who are members, regular attendees, and individuals not affiliated with Five Forks BIC Church who may be involved in an activity involving children/youth.
 - 4. Adults on Work/Mission Trips
 - 5. Adults on Retreats, Camp, etc.
 - 6. Children and Youth Leaders
 - 7. Music Directors, and helpers for Children/Youth Choirs
 - 8. Fellowship/Small Group Leaders
 - 9. Ministry Leaders (nursery, Sunday school, AWANA, youth group, ELO, etc.)
 - 10. Sunday School Teachers and Helpers
 - 11. Vacation Bible School Teachers and Helpers

12. Summer Camp Leaders and Helpers
13. Leaders and Helpers of Wednesday Children and Youth activities
14. Child Abuse Prevention Patrol Volunteers (CAPP)
15. Hall Patrol Volunteers
16. All nursery volunteers over 18 years of age
17. Anyone administering personal care (first aid, diaper change)
18. Any adult, including a parent, who will have a supervisory role over children and/or youth.

Pennsylvania Act 153 of 2015 requires comprehensive criminal and child abuse background checks which are regularly updated for all paid employees and volunteers who are responsible for the welfare of a child or have direct contact with children. Therefore, all staff and volunteer children/youth workers must obtain the following clearances:

1. Report of Criminal History from the Pennsylvania State Police:

<https://epatch.state.pa.us>

2. Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Human Services:

www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS

3. Fingerprint based Federal Criminal History (FBI):

The FBI clearance is not required of an unpaid volunteer who has been a PA resident continuously for the past 10 years. However, they must swear or affirm in writing that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense relating to: criminal homicide, aggregated assault, stalking, kidnapping, unlawful restraint, rape, statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault, indecent exposure, incest, concealing death of child, endangering welfare of children, dealing in infant children, a felony offense relating to prostitution and related offenses, obscene and other sexual materials and performances, corruption of minors, sexual abuse of children, or the attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses in this list.

A fingerprint based federal criminal history is required if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years.

4. Prospective paid employees must submit clearances prior to the commencement of work. The church may employ an applicant on a provisional basis for no longer than 90 days if the prospective employee has:

- a. Applied for the background checks/clearances
- b. There is no known knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant which would disqualify employment; and
- c. The applicant swears or affirms in writing that he/she has not been convicted in any state of an offense that would disqualify employment

- d. the applicant, pending returned background checks, must work in the immediate vicinity of a permanent employee when working with children or youth
 - e. the employee shall be immediately dismissed if the background checks reveal he/she is disqualified.
 - f. At least two references (personal, church, or work) shall be conducted on all paid employees regardless of position. The references may be in response to a written form or a documented phone call.
5. Prospective volunteers must submit PA State clearances prior to the commencement of service.
6. All volunteers will be required to obtain clearances every 60 months (5 years). Timeframes for renewed clearances are based upon the date of each individual clearance. If an individual or agency elected to renew all clearances at the same time, the date of the oldest clearance rather than the most recent would be used.
7. Guest speakers for children and youth activities are not required to fill out the Volunteer Application, nor be interviewed by a pastor. However, the appropriate leader should inquire and be informed about the guest speaker's personal integrity and reputation. If the guest speaker will interact closely with children/youth when not speaking, the appropriate leader will ask for copies of his/her current background clearances (not more than 5 years old).

Updated: August 14, 2019