



Child Protection Policy

General Guidelines

Parents and guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children during all worship services and public events in which childcare or a church-sponsored program is not available for children or when the parents choose not to have their children participate. Additionally, parents are responsible for the supervision of their children when their family is at the church but not participating in a program offered to children and youth (ex: meetings). Children are expected to be accompanied by a parent or other trusted adult when in the building and not attending a program sponsored by the church. This includes time just before and after the sponsored activity and transition time between activities.

Children, Youth, and Family Activities at Church

Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church (NPC) is committed to creating disciples of Christ. The Church maintains a safe, nurturing environment for all children and youth under the age of eighteen and vulnerable adults in its care. At Baptism, the congregation participates in a covenant to guide and nurture its children in Christ's faith. Parents and members of the congregation are responsible to shepherd children, leading them toward a deeper understanding of the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, this policy seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in the ministries of NPC.

Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is any person eighteen years old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent or whose physical ability prohibits their regular participation in many church activities. This includes those who participate in the MINTEC ministry or those who receive homebound care. Individuals working with vulnerable adults either have their clearances as outlined in this policy or use the two-adult rule. If the two-adult rule is used, it is not necessary for the second adult to be someone affiliated with NPC. The sections of this policy related to restrooms and transportation shall also apply to this population.

Requirements for Volunteers

All adults who are in a leadership position with children as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service of the church or who have direct contact with children, meaning they provide care, supervision, guidance, or control of children or who have routine interaction with children, **shall obtain the appropriate clearances**. The same also pertains to volunteers who are with children and youth infrequently or overnight or in one-on-one relationships, such as mentoring, as well as those who volunteer in after-school ministries of the Church.



Who must comply with the Policy

This Policy applies to all clergy, staff, volunteers, and other persons who work with children and youth in any paid or voluntary capacity. For the purposes of this policy, “clergy” refers to pastors, “staff” refers to paid church employees, and “volunteer” refers to non-paid volunteers. “Worker” may include any of these. “Vulnerable adults” include those participating in the MINTEC program and adults receiving homebound care. “Child” refers to those between age 0 and 5th grade; “youth” refers to those from 6th grade through age 17.

3 Clearances

As of January 30, 2025, the required clearances include **Pennsylvania State Police** and **Child Abuse** clearances and others as mandated by state law. Currently this includes an **FBI fingerprint check** which is required for all staff. Volunteers have the option to complete an affidavit stating they have lived in Pennsylvania for the past ten consecutive years (available through the church) or the FBI criminal background check. The Child Abuse clearance may be done online by going to <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>. The Pennsylvania State Police background check can be done online at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/criminal-background-check.html>. The Church Affidavit can be downloaded at https://faithconnector.s3.amazonaws.com/3538/files/c_e_files/affidavit_for_fbi_waiver.pdf, or the FBI Fingerprints can be completed at several locations such as the Farmer’s Insurance agency in Monroeville (4035 William Penn Hwy, Monroeville, PA 15146). **NPC’s IdentoGO code is 1KG6ZJ**. For Volunteers the State Police and Child Abuse Clearances are provided for free and nearly immediately online. They need to be submitted to the Church Office, Jenn Wagner, Office Manager.

Training

All volunteers in a leadership position with children on a regular basis (once per quarter or more frequently) shall attend a training session which covers information pertaining to signs of abuse in children, procedures for reporting, and in-depth training regarding this policy. A mandated reporter is defined by state law as “any individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.” As such, **all clergy, employees, and volunteers are mandated reporters** for most of the ministries in which they serve and **are obligated by law** to report if there is a suspicion that a child is the victim of abuse or neglect. The Mandated Reporter Training is available for free online at <https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu>. Any signs of possible physical, mental, or sexual abuse or neglect must be reported immediately to **ChildLine (a 24/7/365 hotline) at 800-932-0313**. Information regarding how to file a report is covered in Child Protection Training.

Best Practices for Child Supervision

It is a Best Practice for the protection of both the child and the Adult Leader (Clergy, Staff, Volunteer) to maintain the practice of two non-related adults as being present in each room where there are children. Every effort shall be made to fulfill this rule. In the event it does not prove to be possible, it is acceptable to have one adult and one non-related youth helper who is at least 14 years of age and is at least four



years older than the majority of children whom he or she is leading. However, a youth helper should never be left alone with a child or group of children. In the event that an adult is alone with a child or group of children in an area where few other people are around, visibility shall be maintained at all times, either through a window in a door or a door left ajar, and a second adult should be within auditory contact range. If this is not possible, the group should move into an open part of the facility where others are present, and if none is available then the event should be canceled. An adult should **never** be alone with one child on the premises for any NPC-sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation or other ministry that calls for it. Maintaining the two-adult rule, we strive for an adult-to-child ratio of the following:

1:4 – Nursery; 1:6 – Preschool; 1:7 – K-5th grade; 1:10 – 6th grade+

Restroom Usage

Few of our classrooms have an in-class restroom. It is at the discretion of the adult worker whether or not a child should then be accompanied to the restroom. If it is determined that the child needs to be accompanied, the worker should check the restroom first to make sure that it is empty before allowing children inside. If possible, the worker should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the restroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the worker should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as they assist the child. For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and should never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Diaper changes should occur in an open classroom.

Transportation

Volunteer drivers for church-sponsored trips shall ordinarily be between the ages of 23 and 65. All drivers must have proper licensure and insurance on file with the church. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. In the event of an accident, the driver's auto insurance would be primary. It is recommended that any individual over the age of 70 interested in driving must provide a letter from their physician annually deeming them fit to drive. Individuals who are 21-22 years of age shall be considered on an individual basis; no one under the age of 21 shall drive for church sponsored events. Any individual with a DUI or DWI within the past 10 years shall not be eligible to drive for any church-sponsored event. The general recommendation is that drivers would bring children back to the church after an activity for parents to pick up their own children. No adult should transport a child in a car alone; a minimum of three people should be in the vehicle at all times. If the need arises for an adult to take a child home, the adult shall contact the parent(s) to obtain permission to drive the student. If possible, they should also check in with a staff member upon departure and arrival. Ordinarily an adult providing transportation for a church function will not drive children home who are not their own; however, with previous permission from the parent such may occur under extenuating circumstances. Written permission is always preferred such as a text message.



Computer and Social Media Practices

Many curricular tools now integrate the use of streaming services and downloadable videos. Employees and Volunteers must supervise the use of these aspects of the curricula carefully so as not to expose children to inappropriate or off topic materials. In addition, workers may reach out to participants in upcoming activities through social media or text messaging to encourage participation. Best Practices such as the following list should be implemented.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Make this Social Networking Code of Conduct accessible to and required reading for children, youth, and their parents.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's and youth interactions with contacts on the Internet and social media, as well as employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children and youth how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Consistently model appropriate participation to individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

Outside Groups Using Church Facilities

All groups using church facilities, whether on a regular, occasional, or one-time basis, are responsible for children in their care. The leaders of such groups are considered volunteers in the community and the Church; therefore, **they must comply with this policy**. They would need to submit the Clearances listed to the Church Office. There are to be no unaccompanied children in the building. All groups are expected to sign out the space they need through the church office and shall be limited to the use of the space that has been reserved for them.

Injuries or Incidents

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under NPC's care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up.



2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an Incident Report form will be completed and submitted to the appropriate staff member.

4. All workers are strongly encouraged to receive training in First Aid, CPR, and/or AED use if available to them and particularly if it is offered through NPC.

An Incident Report shall be filled out for any injury that occurs on church property and shall be submitted to the staff member overseeing that ministry. In the event that a volunteer or employee has a suspicion of or knowledge of allegations of abuse or neglect, **they must report it to ChildLine at 800-932-0313 first**. Do not delay. Every adult working with children is considered a Mandated Reporter by the state of Pennsylvania, and ChildLine will handle any investigation when notified.

Prohibited Practices

Prohibited conduct includes any form of physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual abuse of a child, including but not limited to the exploitation of a child, which breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relationship. Sexual exploitation of a child includes, but is not limited to, any interaction between a child and another individual in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the other individual. This may or may not include touching. Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Carrying any type of weapon on church property, even with a concealed carry permit except law enforcement agents.
- Possession or being under the influence of any illegal substances.
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a function at the church which has children or families as a primary audience.
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a minor.
- Using religious references to motivate a child towards hateful conduct or to become involved in a participatory action or behavior otherwise prohibited (spiritual abuse).
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.



Procedures

Pastors:

When you receive a report from someone, or you are the initiator of a report, report it immediately to ChildLine by phone at 1-800-932-0313 or online at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

You must notify the appropriate ministry director and ensure that an Incident Report Form is completed and submitted to them.

You may activate a Response Team. One pastor will serve on the Response Team to develop a Plan of Action in response to the report.

Contact an attorney.

If applicable, ensure that a parent(s) or legal guardians of any children involved in the incident are informed in partnership with the appropriate ministry director.

Ministry Directors:

When you receive a report from someone, or you are the initiator of a report, **report it immediately to ChildLine by phone at 1-800-932-0313** or online at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

You must notify a pastor and ensure that an Incident Report form is completed and submitted.

A ministry director may serve on the NPC Response Team, convened by a pastor, to develop a Plan of Action in response to a report.

Completed Incident Report Forms are submitted to you and treated confidentially.

You will redact Incident Report Forms so that personally identifiable information of accused persons or victims are not discernible prior to review by the Response Team or Session.

If applicable, ensure that a parent(s) or legal guardians of any children involved in the incident are informed in partnership with a pastor.

Employees:

When you receive a report from someone, or you are the initiator of a report, **report it immediately to ChildLine by phone at 1-800-932-0313** or online at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. Then notify the appropriate ministry director and the pastor(s) immediately.

Complete an Incident Report Form and submit it to the appropriate ministry director immediately.

Volunteers:

When you receive a report from someone, or you are the initiator of a report, **report it immediately to ChildLine by phone at 1-800-932-0313** or online at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. Then notify the appropriate ministry director and the pastor(s) immediately.



Complete an Incident Report Form and submit it to the appropriate ministry director immediately.

APPENDIX

Convictions of crimes under Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes or equivalent crime in another jurisdiction will exclude persons from employment at NPC and from working with children at NPC as either a volunteer or employee. Convictions of the following crimes may exclude persons from other volunteer opportunities at NPC as well, at the discretion of the supervising staff.

Chapter 25	(relating to criminal homicide)
Section 2702	(relating to aggravated assault)
Section 2709.1	(relating to stalking)
Section 2901	(relating to kidnapping)
Section 2902	(relating to unlawful restraint)
Section 3121	(relating to rape)
Section 3122.1	(relating to statutory sexual assault)
Section 3123	(relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
Section 3124.1	(relating to sexual assault)
Section 3125	(relating to aggravated indecent assault)
Section 3126	(relating to indecent assault)
Section 3127	(relating to indecent exposure)
Section 4302	(relating to incest)
Section 4303	(relating to concealing the death of a child)
Section 4304	(relating to endangering welfare of children)
Section 4305	(relating to dealing in infant children)
Section 5902(b)	(relating to prostitution and related offenses)
Section 5903 (c) (d)	(relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances)
Section 6301	(relating to corruption of minors)
Section 6312	(relating to sexual abuse of children)

Or an equivalent crime under federal law or the law of another state.

