

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



I. Policy Statement

- A. The purpose of the Children’s Ministries at Trinity Presbyterian Church (the Church) is to foster the Christian growth and discipleship of all children through 5th grade. It is the policy of the Church that those age groups should receive the maximum spiritual, physical and emotional protection available within reasonable and feasible means. To that end, the Church wishes to educate its adults and to establish guidelines for the delivery of child care and ministry.
- B. The authority for this policy arises first and foremost from the authority placed upon the Church and responsibility demanded by Scripture to train up our children in the way they should go. It also arises out of the PCA Book of Church Order and from applicable federal, state and local laws.
- C. The general areas addressed by this policy include:
 - 1. Nursery, Preschool and Elementary Safety (Section II)
 - 2. Alleged Staff Sexual/Physical Child Abuse/Neglect (Section III)
 - 3. Worker Hiring/Appointing (Section IV)
 - 4. Review and Revision (Section V)

II. Nursery, Preschool and Elementary Safety

- A. Classrooms and nurseries will be kept in a generally safe and clean manner. Any worker who discovers or identifies any unsafe condition should abate or eliminate the condition immediately if possible. If elimination is not possible, or if the condition persists or returns, the worker shall report the matter to the Director of Children’s Education (the Director), any deacon on duty, or other leader of the Church, who shall then take any reasonable steps to make the condition as safe as possible.

All children placed in a classroom or under the care of a worker shall have all reasonably available immunizations according to standard immunizations requirements for day care businesses licensed by the State of North Carolina and/or the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Public Education. The standards as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics “Redbook” should be met as much as reasonably possible. In the event a child does not have those immunizations, that child’s parent or legal guardian shall release the Church from any and all liability resulting from the lack of immunizations. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to notify the Church if a child is not so immunized. It is the responsibility of all parents to notify the Church if a participating child contracts any of the immunizeable diseases.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



B. Classroom and Student Safety

1. Any teacher, staff member, volunteer, appointee, substitute, or helper, whether paid, unpaid, permanent or temporary, is a worker. Workers' attire should encourage cleanliness and safety. Any worker whose attire creates an unsafe condition may be asked to remove the unsafe condition.
2. Each child's parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring the child's safe delivery to his/her class. If a worker discovers an unattended child at the facility without prior arrangement and the worker attempts to attend to the child's needs or otherwise assists the child, those actions shall not be considered acknowledging responsibility for the child or children by the worker or the church.
3. Children will be directly and constantly supervised at all events and activities. The minimum number of workers at any event or activity is two. No worker is permitted to be alone with any one child at any time except in an emergency.
4. Any worker comforting upset children or disciplining children for disruptive behavior (pursuant to any permitted disciplinary action) is permitted to take children outside his/her classroom only when the worker remains within constant visual sight of any other worker. Hall monitors may be used to assist workers with these needs outside the classroom.
5. No worker shall ever hit, spank, slap, pop, strike, push, pinch, smother, sit on, stand on, or physically discipline any child at any time. No form of corporal punishment may ever be used on any child. Any worker known to have violated this section of this policy will be immediately relieved of any duties.
6. Emergency telephone numbers will always be posted at each telephone. First-aid supplies shall be accessible in the nursery area and the Director's office. Telephones are located in the nursery area, kitchen and office area.
7. In the event a child is injured or becomes ill, that child's parent or guardian shall be notified as soon as possible. Necessary first aid must be given or sought when any child has been hurt and is in need of medical attention. Workers must receive basic instructions on how to give first aid or on seeking appropriate medical attention. If believed needed, more advanced medical attention must be sought by any available and willing medical provider. If parents or guardians can not be located, the worker or medical provider must use their best discretion in determining what medical attention is required.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



C. Any off-site activities will require each student to have a signed parental or guardian authorization and release form. There will be a minimum of two workers present at each event to provide direct and constant supervision.

D. Discipline

There should be posted in each classroom a set of classroom rules which state as clearly as possible what behavior is expected of each student. The following is a recommended series of disciplinary measures which may be modified to meet the needs of any individual classroom or child:

1. The child should be warned that the behavior is inappropriate.
2. The worker should place the child in time-out within the room and reaffirm appropriate behavior;
3. The worker should remove the child from the classroom or have the child removed by another worker within the guidelines of Section II. B. 4. above;
4. The worker should report the child's behavior to the Director, Deacon on duty, or other Church leader, who should then report the child's behavior to the parent(s) or guardian(s), immediately if needed.

E. Children who are brought to church facilities, without prior arrangements for their care with Trinity Presbyterian Church Staff or the Director, are not the responsibility of Trinity Presbyterian Church or church workers. Parents are to be discouraged from not making arrangements, and signs shall be posted in general facility areas giving notice that Trinity Presbyterian Church is not responsible for such children's care and safety other than required by law.

III. Alleged Child Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation by Church Personnel

It is the policy of the Church that no minor be subject to, exposed to nor encouraged to perform any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation or mistreatment, whether physical, emotional, sexual or otherwise ("prohibited behavior").

A. Prevention

1. Classrooms - Each classroom should be arranged to make all areas of each

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



classroom visible. Rooms not in use should be locked if possible, and should be monitored by a worker, Deacon or other adult when in use.

2. Periodic classroom/restroom monitor - The Director shall provide for a periodic hall monitor for each session of teaching. Each monitor shall personally view any assigned area's classrooms and shall also be aware of any restroom usage. Each monitor shall report any suspicious activity during such monitoring duty as required below.
3. Prevention Training in Worker Orientation - Worker training will address the subject of abuse, neglect and exploitation to stress prevention and reporting. See Section IV. (D.), below.

B. Detection and Report

Any person suspecting any prohibited behavior shall immediately report such behavior to the Director, or any Nursery or Preschool or Elementary Coordinator, or any Deacon, Elder or te Pastor, or any staff member.

1. Detection - Any suspicion of child abuse should be reported to the Director's office.
2. Medical treatment/first-aid - Any required medical treatment must be rendered as outlined in Section II. (B.) 7., above.
3. Any person receiving an initial report of suspected prohibited behavior shall make sure the report is then immediately made to a member of the Session or to the Pastor (hereinafter "investigator").
 - a. If at any time the investigator reasonably determines that no prohibited behavior has occurred, and therefore determines that there is no cause to suspect prohibited behavior, then the investigator shall submit a written report to the Session, indicating the date, time, event, person(s) involved, the reporting person and disposition. Any additional relevant information may be added to the report. A copy of the report must be placed in the file of the reporting person, the person who was the subject of the report, and any other applicable files if any. If no file exists as to the reporting person or the subject person, the Director shall open a new file. The Director shall keep a general file labeled "Child Safety Policy: Reported Behaviors".
 - b. If the investigator believes there is cause to suspect prohibited

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



behavior occurred, the person who is the subject of the report must be temporarily relieved of his or her duties immediately. The investigator shall notify the Pastor or a Session member, in writing or verbally, by the end of the event during which the suspected behavior occurred, or at least within 24 hours. The investigator shall make a written report as outlined above.

- c. The Pastor and the Session shall make or continue any investigation they deem necessary. Any evidence relevant to the investigation may be considered. A called Session meeting is not required but may be scheduled if needed. The Session shall decide if there continues to be cause to suspect that any prohibited behavior occurred. A written report by the investigating body must be submitted to the Pastor and to the Clerk of the Session.

4. Reporting Duties if cause is determined to exist

- a. The Session or the Pastor shall report the suspected behavior to appropriate legal counsel.
- b. If the suspected behavior involves a minor, and upon the advice of legal counsel, the Session shall report the suspected behavior to the Director of the Department of Social Services (DSS) in the county in which the minor resides. The report must follow the legal requirements set forth in applicable statutes at the time of the potential offense.
- c. The Session, upon the advice of legal counsel, also shall report the suspected offense to the congregation's insurance carrier if required by the policy in effect at the time the suspected behavior occurs.
- d. The person who is being investigated shall be placed on administrative leave pending the investigation and any legal proceedings. The Session has the authority to reinstate duties to the investigated person, authorize an intermediate staff hiring or continue the administrative leave for whatever reason it deems appropriate.
- e. The Session shall determine the appropriate church discipline and/or restoration according to Scripture. This may be delayed until any legal proceedings are completed, but the Session is not obligated to delay any discipline or restoration it deems appropriate.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



- f. Any confidentiality recognized between the Pastor and a person who confides in the Pastor must be respected. Any legally required reporting duties shall be followed by the Pastor.
- g. Contact with any form of media or reporters shall be limited to the Pastor or any person chosen by the Session to represent the congregation.

IV. Worker Hiring/Appointing

A. Worker Hiring/Appointing Procedures

1. Each paid worker who serves as an employee of the children's ministry shall complete an application. No application is required for workers who have already served the children's ministry in any capacity at the time this policy is implemented, but a memorandum of prior involvement shall be placed in the worker's file. An application is not required for guest speakers, visiting ministries, other church's performers, and the like. A volunteer applicant is not required to complete an application, but the Director shall at a minimum make a check of the volunteer's criminal record.
2. Each application shall state at least two (2) references enabling church leadership to check the applicant's prior work, social or church experience. The application shall notify the applicant that an examination of prior work, social and church experience may be made, including any applicable criminal histories.
3. Each applicant shall be given opportunity to review the church policy.
4. If the applicant is new or unknown to church leadership, the Director or his/her appointee shall conduct a personal interview of the applicant. The purpose of the interview is to improve assurances of the applicant's background, experience, motive, potential and goals in joining the children's ministry. The interviewer shall make a written report to be filed in the applicant's file.
5. The Director or his/her appointee shall conduct a background or criminal examination of each applicant, using any available and reasonable means. Recommended areas of examination include courthouse records, law enforcement departments, any local, state or national reporting agencies, or private investigations of the applicant's prior residences, prior employers, prior churches, or other known or learned contacts.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



- B. Age Requirements - Any worker taking part in the children's ministry on a regular basis shall be twenty-one years old or over unless supervised directly and consistently by an adult who has been hired or appointed according to the requirements set forth above. Any variance from this requirement may be made with the Session's approval upon the C. E. Committee's (Committee's) recommendation.
- C. Membership Status - Any worker taking part in the children's ministry shall be a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church for a period of six-months or more.
 - 1. For any reason, the Director may ask for the Session's direct involvement in the hiring process, either continually or on any given case. The Session may intervene as it deems necessary.
 - 2. The Child Care Director shall have the discretion of hiring for Mother's Morning Out and Women in the Church or any child care situation.
- D. Training Requirements - Each worker involved in the children's ministry is encouraged to attend an annual orientation session which reviews the Child Safety Policy. Each worker must sign a statement that he or she has read the policy, understands it, and has had opportunity to ask any questions regarding the policy.
- E. Worker Supervision - Each worker shall have an available supervisor appointed by the Director. Resources on medical assistance, safety and abuse prevention shall be made available on an as-needed basis.
- F. File kept on each worker - The Director shall keep a permanent personnel file on each paid worker. All documents used in the hiring/appointing process, primarily consisting of the criminal record check made by the Director, the worker's application and any references, shall be kept in the paid worker's file. The Director shall keep a record of all volunteer workers, including primarily the criminal record check. Though not required, a checklist or other evidence of hiring/appointing considerations may be made. Prudent measures shall be taken to assure the confidentiality of any information gathered at any stage of the hiring/appointing process. During the hiring/appointing process, only permanent church staff, the Director, the Director's appointee, and other persons involved in the hiring/appointing process may have access to workers' files only for legitimate reasons dealing with the hiring or appointing process. No person except the Director, the Director's appointee, the Session, or the Session's appointee, and then only for compelling reasons or with the consent of the worker, may have access to any worker's file at any other time. During the entire course of any investigation pursuant to a reported incident of prohibited behavior, the worker's file shall be held

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



under lock and key by the Director or the Session. All reports or records of investigated incidents shall be kept in the subject worker's personnel file. At all other times, workers' files shall be kept under lock and key.

V. At least one adult accompanying children in any motor vehicle used on any church related activity should check to see that each child has buckled his or her seatbelt or other proper restraining device made for that purpose. This should be done prior to vehicle movement. Each vehicle used regularly in transporting children on church related activities must have a fixed sign or placard reminding all passengers to remain properly restrained during vehicle movement and reminding adults accompanying children to have the children fasten their seatbelts or restraining devices.

VI. Implementation, Review and Revision

The Director shall see that the provisions of this policy are implemented. The Director may delegate implementing portions of this policy to Coordinators or other capable assistants, but the Director remains ultimately responsible for implementation. It shall be the duty of the Committee or its successor to review this policy at least annually. This policy may be revised at any time. Any changes in church policy, authoritative law or experience shall be considered in revising this policy. All revisions shall be approved by the Session.

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

