

**Safe Church Policy  
Christ Presbyterian Church  
Camp Hill, PA**

**Statement of Purpose**

Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) seeks to provide a safe, secure environment for children participating in CPC activities. The goal of this policy is to set standards for providing an environment in which children, teachers, leaders, and volunteers will be safe from misconduct or inappropriate behavior. This policy applies to all activities of CPC and the CPC nursery school.

Any outside groups that use CPC's facilities must agree to be bound by this policy and by Pennsylvania law governing the safety and protection of children, and acknowledge that their leaders have completed Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance forms and Criminal Record Checks.

**Definitions**

For purposes of these guidelines, the following definitions will apply:

- "Child" or "children" includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- "Staff" includes the Pastor, Director of Music, Christian Education and/or Youth Director, administrative assistant, church nursery attendants, Nursery School Director, and nursery school staff.
- "Volunteer" includes an unpaid adult who has direct contact (defined in 8 PA.C.S. § 3124.3 as under the care, supervision, guidance, or control) with children at CPC (or offsite with CPC children), including Sunday school teachers, Vacation Bible School teachers and assistants, youth leaders, parents and grandparents, and other adults.
- "Teen volunteer" includes a child under the age of 18 who assists with activities and programs for younger children.
- "Child abuse" means any of the following: any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator that causes non-accidental bodily injury to a child; an act or failure to act, or a series of such acts or failures to act, by a perpetrator that causes, or substantially contributes to, non-accidental serious mental injury to a child; or an act or failure by a perpetrator that constitutes sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child; any recent act, failure to act or series of such acts or failures to act by a perpetrator that creates a substantial and unjustifiable risk of bodily injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child; serious physical neglect by a perpetrator. This policy incorporates further definitions outlined in Act 108 of 2013, amending Title 23 of Pa.C.S.A.

**Selection and Screening of Staff and Volunteers**

Screening is required for all adults who interact three or more times in a calendar year with children participating in CPC activities. Screening includes the following:

**1. Six Month Rule**

Volunteers must have been actively involved with CPC for a minimum of six (6) months. This time period allows for better evaluation of the suitability of the volunteer for working with children. The six-month waiting period also applies to all volunteers, other than parents and grandparents, who will come in contact with children at the nursery school.

**2. Written Application and Waiver Form**

Before being permitted to regularly work with CPC children, staff and volunteers over the age of 18 must complete and sign an application and waiver form supplied by CPC. The application requests standard contact information and two personal (not related) references from the applicant and inquires into previous experience with children as well as disclosure of any criminal convictions. See form in appendix.

Application and waiver forms will be maintained in a confidential file at CPC. The Pastor and staff will have the authority to approve applicants.

**3. Background Check**

- a. All staff and adult volunteers are required to complete a criminal background check at the expense of CPC and present it to the church for placement in a confidential file before the staff member or volunteer will be permitted to participate in children's activities. A background check must be completed every two years.
- b. Staff and volunteers must sign an authorization form allowing CPC to run the check and waiving confidentiality. If he or she refuses to sign the authorization form and waiver, he or she will not be allowed to work with children.
- c. An applicant who has been convicted of an offense involving children and/or involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, or indecency will not be permitted to work with children at CPC. What constitutes a disqualifying offense will be determined by the Pastor and/or the Christian Education and/or Youth Director on a case-by-case basis.
- d. The applicant must present a satisfactory Pennsylvania Request for Criminal Record Check dated less than one year prior to the application. Applicants living outside Pennsylvania for any extended period during the five years prior to the application may also be asked to secure other appropriate criminal record checks. See form in appendix.

- e. The applicant must present a satisfactory Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form dated less than one year prior to the application. See form in appendix.
- f. Persons who will transport children on CPC-sponsored activities must provide proof of insurance and a valid driver license.

### **Teen Volunteers**

When volunteers under the age of 18 assist with activities for children, the following guidelines apply:

- a. Volunteers must be under the supervision of an adult.
- b. Volunteers and the children they are working with must remain in public, accessible spaces.

### **Guidelines for Maintaining a Safe Environment**

1. All classes and activities for children will be held in spaces that are public and easily accessible.
2. Children will be supervised at all times.
3. Parents are encouraged to share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment by escorting preschool and elementary age children to and from any activity, picking up and dropping off children on time, dropping off children only when staff is present, and never leaving children alone in the parking lot or on the church sidewalks or driveway.
4. A sign in/sign out procedure will be maintained in the CPC nursery during Sunday school and worship times. The week-day nursery school will maintain a list of people who are permitted to pick up the children. In case of emergency, a parent or guardian is asked to call the church office to relay the message that a person not on the list will be picking up his or her child.
5. Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while children are inside the room.
6. No adult should be alone with one child. Exception: any one-on-one meeting between paid staff and a child for purposes of counseling will take place in a setting where it may be easily observed.
7. Paid staff or volunteers should never be alone with one child in a bathroom with the door closed and should never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.
8. Children with the following symptoms should not participate in CPC activities or attend nursery school: fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours, eye or skin infections, or other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease. If the staff determines that a child is ill, he or she

- will be separated from the other children, and the parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the child.
9. If a child is injured while under CPC's care, the following steps should be followed: minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises can be treated with Band-Aids, etc., and the parent or guardian will be notified when the child is picked up. If a child sustains an injury requiring treatment beyond simple first aid, the parent or guardian will be notified, and if necessary, an ambulance will be called. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, staff will complete an incident report.
  10. CPC staff or volunteers do not administer prescription or nonprescription medicine. Exceptions to this policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions, such as asthma or allergic reactions. Parents should address these situations and develop a plan of action with the CPC or nursery school staff.
  11. No paid staff person or volunteer is permitted to administer corporal punishment. Spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children is not tolerated. Staff or volunteers who need assistance with disciplinary issues should consult with the Pastor, Christian Education and Youth Director, or Nursery School Director (for issues related to children attending the nursery school).
  12. All drivers for CPC offsite events must be over the age of 21. Staff has the discretion to make exceptions for family members who wish to transport children.
  13. Parents or guardians of CPC children participating in field trips, retreats, mission trips, or other overnight events must sign permission slips that include medical authorization and contact information. For nursery school field trips, parents or guardians are responsible for transporting children to and from the event.

## **Reporting**

Under the Pennsylvania Child Protective Service Law, persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation, or profession come into contact with children, have certain reporting responsibilities when they have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse on the basis of their professional training or experience. This reporting responsibility arises as to children under the care, supervision, guidance, or training of that person, or the institution with which they are affiliated.

Within CPC, those persons include the Pastor, the Director of Christian Education, Nursery School Director, Nursery School teachers, CPC nursery attendants, and volunteers as defined under this policy. If a mandatory reporter becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his or her care, he or she will immediately call ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 (the 24-hour telephone reporting system operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare). He or she will simultaneously report the abuse to the Pastor and to

trustees. The Pastor and trustees will follow procedures in accordance with Pennsylvania law. A pastoral visit may be arranged for anyone involved who desires this service.

### **Training and Education**

All staff and volunteers must attend training sessions conducted by the Director of Christian Education, in conjunction with the Pastor and the Christian Education Commission. These staff members will also plan and provide an initial educational event to inform the congregation of this policy. Informational events will also be provided at least annually. This policy will be posted at the church and on CPC's website.

### **Effective Date**

This amended policy will take effect on January 1, 2015. Those who are already working with children at CPC when the policy is adopted will sign the waiver and complete the background and criminal record checks.

# APPENDIX

**Safe Church Employee/Volunteer Application and Waiver Form**

Christ Presbyterian Church  
421 Deerfield Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

1. Name (last, first, middle) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Previous address (if you have not lived at present address for the last five years) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Email \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_
7. Driver's license number \_\_\_\_\_
8. Please submit names, addresses, and phone numbers of two personal (not related) references \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Have you ever been convicted of child abuse or sexual misconduct or entered a guilty plea to a charge of child abuse or sexual misconduct in a court of law or administrative procedure?  
No \_\_\_\_\_  
Yes (if yes, please explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. I have read the Safe Church Policy of Christ Presbyterian Church and agree to be bound by its terms. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

11. I certify that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge. I give permission for CPC to complete criminal record and background checks and contact the references named above. I waive any rights to confidentiality in the information disclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(please print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)