

JERUSALEM CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of our church and in the realm of God. Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones . . . it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse and exploitation occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Virtually every congregation has adult survivors of early sexual trauma among its members.

Because the abuse of children is a sexual preference formed relatively early in life, some offenders consciously or unconsciously choose career paths that will bring them regularly in contact with children. Others may volunteer to supervise children’s activities for this same reason. It is not unusual for an abuser who has been identified in one church to move on and become involved in another.

Child abuse and exploitation is devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church, and its leaders. Increasingly, churches have become torn apart by legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong, where children and other vulnerable persons are protected from any potential sexual exploitation.

Purpose

Jerusalem Church’s purpose for establishing a Child Protection Policy is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all children and youth at Jerusalem Church. This policy will also comply with the most recent laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth. We also will strive to guard our volunteers and employees who work with children and youth from false allegations and litigation. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and procedures, including a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of Pennsylvania law.

Definitions and Procedures

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to pastors, leaders (including worship and spiritual), volunteers, individuals paid or unpaid, who on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of regularly scheduled programs, activities or services, in which they are individually responsible for the welfare of a child or have direct contact with children. This includes the care, supervision, leadership, guidance or control of children, or routine interaction with children. All volunteers having contact with children must be 14 years of age or older and must comply with this policy including required clearances.

Specifically includes but is not limited to:

- Pastor
- Worship Leader
- Children and Youth Teachers, Leaders, and Helpers
- Nursery Teachers, Leaders and Helpers
- Children's Church Leaders and Helpers

Responsibility

The responsibility of this policy and procedure is with the Leading Elders. These Leading Elders will annually appoint an Elder to administer this policy with confidentiality limited only by the highest level of protection provided to our youth and children. A confidential spread sheet will be maintained recording clearance dates and expiration dates.

Clearances

Individuals as defined above are required to obtain the following clearances and forward the results to the Elder charged with administering this policy.

Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>

Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check
<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Background Check is required of paid employees. It is also required of volunteers not residing in PA for the last 10 years
https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm

- Visit the above websites to apply for your clearances
- Third party clearances are not acceptable
- Expenses will be reimbursed by the church
- Must be completed every three years

Disclosure Statement for Volunteers

All volunteers must read, sign, and have witnessed the Jerusalem Church Disclosure Statement

Mandatory Reporter

Individuals as defined above are “Mandatory Reporters”. Mandatory Reporters must make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to *ChildLine* either electronically at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis>

or by calling 1-800-932-0313.

If the child you would like to report on is in immediate danger, please call 911 immediately.

After making the reports to ChildLine, you are required to immediately thereafter notify the leading elder in charge of administering the Child Protective Policy.

All volunteers and employees must complete the mandated reporter training at www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu and submit the certificate provided at the conclusion of the training.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children or youth are gathered for a program or activity or in general care.

Restroom Guideline

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the restroom prior to each class, program, or activity.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our 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 parents or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent 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 will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.