



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
WORKING WITH MINORS

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Striving for a safe, secure environment for minors (any person under the age of eighteen) who participate in our programs, we have established the following policies and procedures. These guidelines are also designed as a safeguard to our church and all that work with minors.

This document does not create any employment contract between those working with the church minors and the church. The church remains free to use or not use the services of any individual at its discretion.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Screening:

ALL adults participating with minor children are required to follow the procedures below prior to participation in any State College Access Church children's or youth ministry.

State College Access Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for those who participate in our programs. To minimize any vulnerability to children and youth, as well as minimize unwarranted accusations of improper behavior that our church volunteers and employees may experience in our ministries, we have established certain requirements for adults involved in children and youth ministry.

To fulfill these commitments as fully as possible, State College Access Church has adopted the following procedures and clearances to be used, without exception, when selecting ministry volunteers and employees:

#1. State College Access Church Application - Filed by the church office

#2. Pennsylvania Criminal Record Check - Completed by the church office once your application is submitted.

#3. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance - www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS
- Church office will provide a special code for you to enter online to waive the fee.

One of the following:

- **Self Disclosure Form** - Volunteers who have been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years do not need to obtain the FBI Criminal Background Check. Instead, complete the attached Self Disclosure Form return to your team leader.

Or

- **Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Criminal Background Check** - Separate instructions will be emailed to you by the church office once you have completed #1-3. This must be completed for an new resident to the state of PA within the last 10 years.

Worker Policies:

This is intended to provide protection for both the child and worker.

- All ministries to children under the age of 18 shall have a minimum of two responsible workers.
- Two responsible workers is defined as: one adult worker/one teenage worker, two adult workers/ no teenage worker (Two-Person Rule).
- Workers may not appoint additional workers who have not been properly screened.
- Approval for a family member to assist must come from the Pastor.

Discipline Procedures:

Our church believes that the staff and volunteers must, “*Train up a child in the way he should go*” with love and caring concern.

Never use corporal punishment (i.e. spanking, slapping, etc.) and never discipline by humiliation. If a minor needs correction, privileges may be taken away. If age appropriate, offer the minor a “time-out” away from the activity in progress. If the problem persists, contact the parent, or an usher to locate the parent.

Basic Behavior Boundaries:

- Boundary setting and options are the domain of the teachers.
- Make no threats.
- Do not withhold snacks for behavior control.
- It is acceptable for a child to choose not to participate.
- It is not acceptable for a child to disrupt the entire class, or to hurt or endanger another child.
- Do not leave the child alone outside the classroom, or in another room. Do not leave the child alone with one worker (Two-Person Rule).

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Recognizing and Reporting Abuse:

It is the intent of Access Church to follow state regulations in reporting child abuse. If a paid employee or un-paid volunteer suspects that a child is being physically abused, harmfully neglected, or sexually abused, then as a mandated reporter immediately report the suspected abuse to CHILDLINE. After reporting to CHILDLINE the law also requires mandated reporters to immediately notify a person in charge, which is the Lead Pastor or a Staff Pastor. It is not the worker’s responsibility to conduct an investigation into suspected abuse. This is the responsibility of trained persons who work for the

local child and youth services and if needed law enforcement.

HOW TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE – PA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES INFORMATION

What is child abuse?

Child abuse, according to the Child Protective Services Law (CSL), includes: serious recent physical injury which is nonaccidental; mental injury which is nonaccidental; sexual abuse; or serious physical neglect of children under age 18 caused by the acts or omissions of a perpetrator. Child abuse also includes certain acts including: kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child; unreasonably restraining or confining; forcibly shaking or slapping or striking a child under one-year; interfering with breathing; present at a meth lab; and leaving unsupervised.

“Recent” is defined as an abusive act within two years from the date CHILDLINE is called. Sexual abuse has no time limit.

Child abuse also includes any recent act, failure to act, or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator that creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.

Who could be a perpetrator?

A perpetrator of child abuse can be a child’s parent, the person responsible for the welfare of a child such as a babysitter or day care staff person, an individual residing in the same home as the child, or a person having an intimate relationship with the child’s parent.

Who is a mandated reporter?

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse. Mandated reporters include: health care professionals; **school employees; child care services; clergy; individuals – paid or unpaid – who as part of a regularly scheduled activity are responsible for the child’s welfare or has direct contact with children;** children social services; law enforcement; emergency medical; and others listed on the PA Department of Human Services website.

What some examples that must be reported?

Non-touching Offenses:

- Indecent exposure
- Showing pornographic materials to a minor
- Obscene telephone calls
- Deliberately letting a minor see or hear a sexual act
- Exposing a minor to graphic sexual material

Touching Offenses:

- Fondling
- Touching sexual organs
- Making a minor touch another person sexually
- Attempted or actual sexual intercourse

How do I report?

CHILDLINE at **1-800-932-0313** is the 24-hour toll free telephone reporting system operated by the PA Department of Human Services to receive reports of suspected child abuse.

CHILDLINE website <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> is to be used by mandated reporters.

CHILDLINE forwards the report of suspected abuse to the local county children and youth agency, which must begin an investigation of the report within 24 hours; decides if the report is a vivid instance of child abuse/neglect; and if so, arranges for or provides the services that are needed to prevent the further maltreatment of the child and to preserve the family unity. CHILDLINE also maintains a statewide Central Register, which contains the names and vital information about children who have been abused in PA since 1976. This information can be accessed by county children and youth agencies when investigating new reports of suspected child abuse.

What do I do after I make a report?

After making the report to CHILDLINE, mandated reporters are required to immediately thereafter notify the person in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency or the designated agent of the person in charge. As an employee or volunteer of Access Church, immediately notify the Lead Pastor or a Staff Pastor.

Do I have to know for sure that a child was abused?

Your responsibility is to make the report when you suspect a child is abused. The caseworker of the county children and youth agency will investigate and determine whether the child was abused.

Where can I find more information?

The PA Department of Human Services website www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov.

EMERGENCY & SAFETY ISSUES

It is important to become acquainted with the following procedures. In the event of an emergency, be prepared for what to do and where to go. The following is general information; specifics will be provided in teacher training.

Emergency Issues:

- If there is an emergency, use the classroom radio to contact the security team. There are designated people who will come back to the classroom to assist you.
- Do not send a child for help in an emergency.
- When calling 911, the caller will be asked to stay on the phone until emergency crews arrive. Send someone to the foyer to inform the security team.
- Parents should be notified as soon as possible of any accident, illness, physical

distress or emotional trauma of their minor.

Fire and Other Emergency Evacuations:

- Become familiar with the evacuation route.
- Know where the nearest fire extinguisher is located.
- Know where the nearest security alarm is located.
- Preschool and nursery workers: in the event of an evacuation, take the registration sheet. This will provide a means for all children to be accounted for.
- If an alarm goes off in the building, **Evacuate!**

General Safety Issues:

- Workers shall not administer any medication or remedies.
- In a medical emergency use the video projection system and our emergency medical team by entering the number 777.

Off-premises Activities:

- A pastor must approve all off-premises activities.
- All off-premises activities require a parental consent and medical emergency release form. Consent forms are to be signed by a parent or legal guardian and kept with the leader during off-premises activities.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

Basic hygienic procedures for protecting against communicable disease:

- Children with any type of communicable disease (such as viral infections) that are producing active symptoms of coughing, fever, open sores, etc. should not be admitted into the nursery or other classroom situations.
- Infants or children who bite or who exhibit tendencies to bite should not be admitted.
- Children with open skin lesions or other open wounds should not be admitted unless the wound is suitably bandaged; any open wounds suffered during church activities should be immediately bandaged by workers wearing protective gloves.
- Toys or objects that children place in their mouths should be properly disinfected.
- Diapers should be changed on a table with disposable covering, the area should be disinfected after each changing and workers should wear protective gloves while changing diapers or soiled clothes.
- Monitor all children to protect against the kind of contact that would create the risk of transmission of a communicable disease.

Adolescent and Adult Workers:

- Adolescents or adult workers with any type of communicable disease (such as viral infections) that are producing active symptoms of coughing, fever, open sores, etc.

should not be admitted into the classroom.

- Keep protective gloves and disinfectants readily available. If accidental contact with bodily fluids occurs, wash contaminated area immediately.

HIV/AIDS Consideration:

At this time, our government is assuring us (through the Center for Disease Control and the National Institute of Health) that it is impossible for AIDS to be transmitted through the ordinary kinds of social contact that occur in a church. HIV does not spread through casual contact as would occur even among intimate family members (e.g. hugging, kissing, sharing meals, and changing diapers).

COVID/19 Consideration:

We recognize the concern associated with COVID-19. Safe practices are consistently reviewed (through the Center for Disease Control and the National Institute of Health). A COVID-19 response plan has been developed and safe practices are communicated to all leaders working with Children.

NURSERY GUIDELINES

Nursery Guidelines:

Your faithful service in the Infant and Toddler Nurseries serves as both a ministry to our church and as an outreach to visitors. The objective of the nursery is to gain the confidence of parents by ensuring a safe, clean, positive, loving, Christ centered environment for each child.

Nursery Staff:

- Above all, communicate love to each child in the nursery.
- Workers and teachers should be in the classroom 40 minutes before their class starts.
- It is important for all nursery staff to establish a good working relationship with one another. Maintain a spirit of unity. Although you may not be a member of the church, you represent the church to our parents. Babies are forming first impressions of church, God, and Christian love through your words and actions; exhibiting a proper attitude is required.
- Dress neatly, but comfortably, in clothing which will allow you to be on the floor with the children.
- Wear provided nametag for entirety of class.
- Do not bring your own children to the nursery without approval.
- Except in an emergency, do not take any child out of the nursery.
- Children need to see the same workers regularly. Your commitment is important.
- Please call the Children's Pastor if you cannot come to work.
- Be flexible and sensitive to parents' needs and requests.
- All nursery staff members are asked to change diapers. We must respect every parent's preference of cloth, disposable, or pull-ups.
- Maintain an organized nursery.
 - ✓ Pick up extra toys periodically, especially after class and service.
 - ✓ Be sure countertops are kept neat and clean.

Children in the Nursery:

- All children must be checked in. Labels are provided.
 - Accept children within the age limits.
 - Please keep infants and toddlers separated.
 - We operate a “well baby” nursery. If a child is admitted who shows any signs of sickness, please consult the team leader.
 - Keep to a minimum the number of parents and guardians that enter the nursery. Babies become anxious when parents enter the nursery. This will also help with security issues.
 - Every child needs a diaper change during its stay in the nursery. Use the changing table, a new pair of disposable latex gloves, and a new changing pad for each child.
 - Do not show favoritism to any child. All children deserve to be treated with kindness and respect.
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- Use the sign in sheet to:
 - ✓ List children by name
 - ✓ Note any food allergies and special instructions.
 - ✓ Check off each child’s name as diaper is changed.
 - ✓ Check off each child’s name as they are picked up.

PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL AGE GUIDELINES

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 11:

Your faithful service in the Children’s Ministry Department serves as a ministry to our church and as an outreach to visitors. The objective is to provide a safe, clean, positive, loving, Christ-centered environment for each child.

- Above all, communicate love for each child in the class.
- Workers and teachers should be in the classroom 15 minutes before their class starts, and be ready to take over the class at five minutes before the scheduled start time. This allows time to review the lesson and to check the status of your classroom and students.
- Wear provided nametag for entirety of class.
- When a child needs to use the restroom, we recommend propping the bathroom door open and avoiding contact with the child while they use the restroom (unless absolutely necessarily).
- Every classroom needs to be cleaned up prior to the end of class.
- Make sure supplies and materials are returned to the cabinets and toys are put away neatly. Keep the supply cabinets clean.
- Do not show favoritism to any child. All children deserve to be treated with kindness and respect.
- Be familiar with the fire evacuation route.

Using the Video Projection system (Video Display):

- Information must be communicated to the computer technician running the equipment.
- Projection screen is located in the center sanctuary stage. They will enter the child's number to display it on the screen.
- After parent returns to the classroom, the computer technician will erase the number

Allergies or Special Need Related to Food:

- Children with food allergies or special needs will have their name tags marked
- When in doubt, do not feed the child
- Children with food allergies may have their own snacks in containers labeled with their name in their diaper bag.

Check-in procedure:

- All preschool children must be signed in and released only to a parent (unless other arrangements have been pre-made).
- Parents of new children must complete a registration card for each child. Attach a security name tag to the child (on his or her back).
- Label everything with stickers provided (bottle, pacifier, diaper bag, etc.).

Checkout procedure

- A child may not be released unless a parent has a security nametag that corresponds with the nametag on that child.
- Parent must sign the child out on the sign out sheet and include the corresponding nametag.
- Siblings under age 18 may not pick up the child unless approved by the lead Pastor.

