



Centreville Presbyterian Church

## Safe Church Procedures

### Guidelines for Screening Staff and Volunteers

**Paid Staff** - will adhere and submit to the Personnel Committee the following:

Written Application

References

Personal Interview

Background Records Check

**Volunteers** - will adhere and submit to the appropriate Ministry Director the following:

Written Application

References – must be checked

Background Records Check-

- Any volunteer working with and/or serving alongside a child under 18 will undergo a background check to be conducted by CPC staff. Information, including social security number, will be kept confidential and on file with the same level of security as personnel forms.
- If in the process of the background check a concern is raised, it will be held in confidentiality. The initial screener and the Senior Pastor will determine if the concern would negatively affect the individual's participation in working with children or students.
- The background check will be repeated in three years for volunteers still active in the program.

Personal Interview by the appropriate Ministry Director or Senior/Associate Pastor

- Six-Month Rule - Volunteers, members or non-members, must be regular participants in the life of the church for at least six months before working with students or children in a role as lead teacher. The appropriate Ministry Director or Pastor must interview and approve non-members, who have been active in church life for six months, before assuming a role as lead teacher. Members will be interviewed during the membership process.
- Student volunteers may work with children and students, on recommendation of the appropriate Ministry Director are required to attend the ministry training sessions.
- Volunteers under 18 do not need background checks.
- Signed Safe Church Policy, completed annually

## **Accountability**

The staff member or volunteer determined to be in charge of the program is responsible for enforcing the Safe Church Policy and Procedures. Each responsible entity should use his or her discretion when enforcing this policy. Volunteers should contact the Director of Children's Ministry or Student Ministry if questions arise regarding policy implementation.

Staff and volunteers who fail to adhere at all times to CPC's Safe Church Policy and Procedures will be removed from positions of responsibility and/or job termination.

Outside groups using CPC facilities are required to follow CPC's Safe Church Policy and Procedures. A copy will be supplied with the facilities use agreement and will be included in the acknowledgement by the outside group.

Ministries or groups planning special events that involve children and students must at all times follow this policy and actively assess the level of risk for each event in order to adopt appropriate measures to ensure safety. These may include but are not limited to: requiring permission slips, establishing sign in/sign out procedures and determining appropriate child/adult ratios.

The appropriate Ministry Director will schedule training of the Safe Church Policy and Procedures at the annual meeting and at teacher trainings throughout the year.

A person who has reason to believe that misconduct governed by this policy has occurred will immediately report the information to a pastor, program staff member or other responsible entity.

Infractions of physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the misconduct response team consisting of the Pastor, Adult Discipleship Pastor, Director of Student Ministry, and Director of Children's Ministry. The response team will then reference the policies stated in the Staff Handbook. Allegations of sexual abuse of children will be reported immediately to the appropriate government authority as required by law. Child sexual abuse between an adult and a child or student is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child or student. By law, reports of abuse are strictly confidential. CPC will cooperate fully with government authorities in the investigation of allegations of child sexual abuse. CPC paid staff working with children and students fall under the category of childcare custodians and therefore are considered mandatory reporters. Rape or sexual assault is a crime in every state and should be reported to civil authorities and to the stated clerk of the Presbytery.

All other forms of misconduct will be investigated by a member of the pastoral staff and the appropriate staff member. Should the report or charge be credible, the team will advise the Session and take other steps as necessary to investigate and resolve the matter. They will also determine if professional advice is needed. Failure to follow CPC's Safe Church Policy and Procedures may result in removal from the position of authority.

If the accused is a Pastor or Associate Pastor of CPC, the stated clerk of the Presbytery will immediately be notified and the Presbytery's policies and procedures will control the outcome from that point forward.

## Explanation of Terms

- A child is a person considered a minor under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. A person who is legally incompetent is considered a child under this policy.
- A student is a special classification of children referring to students in grades 6 to 12.
- Adult refers to anyone 18 years of age or older, regardless of student status.
- Employee "is the comprehensive term used to cover individuals who are hired or called to work for the church for salary or wages."
- Volunteer "is the term used for those who provide services for [the church] and who receive no benefit or remuneration."
- Program Staff Member is the term used for non-ordained employees responsible for CPC's education, music and student programs, i.e. Director of Student Ministry, Director of Children's Ministry.
- Lead Teacher is the term used for an individual who is responsible for teaching, content and classroom management.
- Responsible entity is the term used for staff person in charge of the ministry, ministry chair or other persons determined to be ultimately responsible for a program's adherence to CPC's Safe Church Policy and Procedures.
- Mandated reporter is a term for persons required by law to report suspected child abuse. Legally mandated reporters include, but are not limited to, childcare custodians, health practitioners, and employees of a child protective agency. CPC paid ministry staff fall under the category of childcare custodians.
- Misconduct Response Team is a predetermined group of people consisting of the pastor, associate pastor, director of Student Ministry or director of Children's Ministry.
- Supervision includes direct observation or control of activities.
- Outside groups are individuals or groups using CPC facilities on a contract basis.
- Level of risk examines the degree of supervision needed at an event. General supervision is appropriate for low-risk activities where potential for accident, isolation or injury is low. As risk increases, supervision must increase.
- Child sexual abuse and misconduct is defined as an abuse of authority and power, breaching Christian ethical principles, by using a trust relationship to gain advantage over another for personal gratification. Sexual abuse includes touching as well as non-touching interaction between adults and children, and between children, for the purpose of sexual stimulation. This behavior is always considered force, regardless of the child or student's consent. Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to:
  - Rape or sexual assault
  - Sexually demeaning comments
  - Verbal suggestions of sexual involvement or sexual activity
  - Unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact
  - Graphic or degrading comments about an individual's physical appearance
  - Expressions or questions or comments about sexual behavior
  - Implied sexual advances or propositions
  - Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures

This document will be reviewed annually by the ministry directors and/or pastors for necessary updates.

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