

CHILD YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY TRAINING

JANUARY 2020

HISTORY

- POLICY WAS UPDATED IN NOVEMBER 2018.
- ALL CHURCHES REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT BY APRIL 2019.
- MORE THAN 20 YOUTH AND CHILDREN MINISTRY WORKERS ALONG WITH CONFERENCE STAFF AND LAWYERS WORKED ON THE NEW POLICY.
- LAWSUITS ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE PREVALENT WHEN AN ISSUE ARRIVES IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY.
- MINISTRY PROTECTION INSURANCE RATES WILL INCREASE BY POSSIBLY 40% IN 2020 DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF PAYOUTS FROM LAWSUITS.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

- **CHILD** - under the age of 12 years.
- **YOUTH** - anyone at least 12 years of age, but not yet 18 years of age or anyone or older who is still attending high school.
- **ADULT** - anyone 18 years of age or older who has finished high school.
- **SCREENING** - Background checks which include:
 - National Criminal Background Search
 - National Sex Offender Search
 - Identity Confirmation
 - Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Search (New Florida legislation has implemented a \$24.00 fee per each name checked)

IMPORTATION DEFINITIONS – CHURCH PERSONNEL

- **PAID STAFF PERSON** - anyone employed by the church, including all appointed clergy and all other staff on the payroll.
- **ADULT VOLUNTEER** – any adult not paid by the church who serves in a position involving the supervision or custody of minors, including volunteers in the nursery, daycare, schools, Sunday School, VBS, drivers and chaperones.
- **SCREENED ADULT** – volunteer or paid staff person who has undergone the church's screening process.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHYSICAL ABUSE – violent non-accidental contact which results in injury. • SEXUAL ABUSE – any form of sexual activity whether at the church, at home or any other setting. • EMOTIONAL ABUSE – a pattern of intentional conduct which crushes the spirit of or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating or belittling. • NEGLECT – failure to provide for basic needs or failure to protect from harm. • Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When child abuse is suspected or observed, the moral imperative and potentially the legal requirement is to call the CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE – 1-800-96 ABUSE. (1-800-962-2873) • Contact senior pastor OR district superintendent if senior pastor is not available. 	<h2 style="margin: 0;">CHILD/YOUTH ABUSE</h2>
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<h2 style="margin: 0;">WHO NEEDS SCREENING</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL CLERGY whether appointed or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church. • All paid staff persons whose living quarters are ON THE GROUNDS of the church or related entity. • All paid staff persons, except those whose duties are performed entirely when children/youth are not present – unless they have a key. MUST IF THEY HAVE A KEY. • Adult volunteers whose service regularly takes them throughout the church facility or grounds or WHO HAVE KEYS TO CHURCH BUILDINGS.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult volunteers who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs, or activities MORE THAN THREE TIMES per year. • Adult volunteers who transport children/youth without other adults in the vehicle MORE THAN THREE TIMES per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult volunteers who participate in overnight activities with children/youth MORE THAN TWO TIMES per year. • Adult volunteers who assist in the nursery MORE THAN FOUR TIMES per year. 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">WHO NEEDS SCREENING</h2>
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<h2 style="text-align: center;">SCREENING & SELECTION OF CHURCH STAFF & VOLUNTEERS</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">(ALL WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH REGULARLY)</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must comply with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form with three reference checks. • Background check consent form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive appropriate clearances from all reference checks and background check. • Undergo personal interview. • Attend training on child/youth policy once per year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign statement agreeing to abide by policy. • Undergo a motor vehicle records check if transporting children/youth. • Undergo a renewed background check EVERY THREE YEARS. 	

ANNUAL POLICY TRAINING

- The training should include at a minimum:
 - Definition & recognition of child abuse.
 - Current child protection issues.
 - Church's policy & procedures on child abuse and reasons for them.
 - The need to maintain a positive classroom environment.
 - The appropriate behavior for teachers/leaders at child/youth events.
 - Abuse reporting responsibilities & procedures.
 - Definition of appropriate interpersonal boundaries.

- **Two Adult Rule**
 - Two non-related adults must be present at all non-classroom programs or activities involving children/youth, one of whom **MUST BE A SCREENED ADULT**. All activities must be supervised by at least one screened adult.
- **Three Year Rule**
 - All screen adults supervising children/youth **MUST BE AT LEAST THREE YEARS OLDER** than the group they are supervising.
 - Adults who do not meet this criteria must be under the direction of a screen adult who is **AT LEAST THREE YEARS OLDER** than the age group.
- **Six Month Rule**
 - Adult volunteers must be a member or regular attendee at church for **AT LEAST SIX MONTHS** prior to working with children/youth.
 - Exceptions to the rule:
 - The spouse of a newly-appointed clergy person.
 - Transferee from a FLUMC congregation upon verification of screening & participation from former church.
- **Windows/Open Doors**
 - **EACH ROOM MUST** have a door or wall with a window, half doors or open doors.

SUPERVISION: GENERAL RULES

<p>SUPERVISION: CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crib/Toddler to Second Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two adults must be present. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If related, must be a third adult. • If two adults are not available, doors must remain open and a floating adult is needed. • One must be a screened adult. • Grades 3-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One screened adult. Two preferred. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If two adults are not available, doors must remain open and a floating adult is needed. • Grades 6-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One screened adult. • Floating adult should do a periodic check. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Classroom Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two unrelated, screened adults MUST be present for all non-classroom activities. • Must get permission from the parent or guardian prior to the activity. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be in a group setting including two adults, one must be screened. • No gifts to mentees without knowledge of parent/guardian. • Mentors must have permission from the parent/guardian to have one-to one communication and those forms of communication approved. • Counseling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires one screen adult and the knowledge of a paid staff member. • At the church - Door to room remains open the entire session unless glass in the door or wall with clear view of room. Another adult must be on the premises. If not, can meet at a public place. 	<p>SUPERVISION: OTHER</p>

SUPERVISION: TRIPS & RETREATS

- Must be two unrelated, screened adults present.
- Leader needs to carry permission slips and emergency information.
- Group must have access to phone, cell or mobile device.
- If a pool is involved, one adult certified in CPR must be present.
- Overnight Events
 - Co-ed Events: Must be at least one screened adult for each gender present.
 - Single Events: At least one of the two screened adults must be of the same gender of the child/youth.
 - Sleeping Arrangements
 - Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same bed/room unless the child/youth is an immediate family member.
 - If open space event, multiple screened adults can sleep in the same space. Must have two adults.
 - Hotels: separate rooms for adult & child/youth. At least two child/youth per room. Adult room should be between two child/youth rooms. Two adults should monitor hallways. Prefer hotels with interior rooms.

Sign-In/Sign- Out Procedure

- All programs for infants, toddlers and children in grades K-2 must have procedures.
 - Released to parents/guardians or designated adults **ONLY**.
 - **DO NOT** allow children to leave with anyone not on the designated list.
- Time Following Group Events:
 - **AT LEAST ONE** screened adult must remain until all children/youth are picked up by parent/guardian.
 - **ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY** and with permission from parent/guardian can screened adult transport child/youth home.

TRANSPORTATION

- Driver
 - **MUST** be known to the leader of the event.
 - Solo driver **MUST** be the parent/guardian or a screened adult or paid staff person at least 18 years old. Recommend at least one other adult.
 - In a church-owned vehicle, driver **MUST** be at least 21 years old with a motor vehicle record search and have valid driver's license for vehicle being operated.
 - **MUST** use seat belts.
 - **MUST** follow designated route.
 - **NO** cell phone usage unless communicating with other drivers.
 - May use HANDS-FREE GPS system.
 - If trip is **100 MILES** or more, driver must be on the approved driver list at the church office.
 - If trip is over 500 miles, a church trip form must be submitted to Ministry Protection Office.
- Children/Youth
 - At least two children/youth **MUST** be in any vehicle driven from church to an offsite activity.
 - Must use seat belts.
 - Not permitted to drive from church to an offsite church activity. Can meet the group at the location, not at the church.

Use of Church by Outside Groups

- Must adhere to the Child/Youth Policy regulations.
- If regular usage (by another congregation) their volunteers and staff must be screened.
- For weddings and other events that may involve children, the parents are responsible for oversight, unless there is a designated room for childcare. Then the policy must be enforced.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church computers for public use set up in high traffic areas and monitored by staff or screened adult. Controls needed for inappropriate content. • Church personnel prohibited from viewing or downloading any sexually-oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children/youth. • Electronic communications with children/youth should be limited and should be done by the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group emails • Church Facebook page or other social media • Parents must be aware and given consent. • One-on-one is prohibited. 	<h2>Online Safety</h2>
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<h2>Online Safety: Social Media & Church Personnel</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot initiate a “friend-request” or “follow-request” to a non-family related child/youth on social media. • Cannot post photos of youth or children’s ministry activities or any students on your own personal social media pages. • The church social media account(s) should be the only one posting the above-mentioned photos. Must have signed parental permission slips to post photos on the church website or social media accounts that contain a recognizable face of the child/youth. • Child/youth/parent can tag themselves and their child/youth, but the church or personnel cannot tag a photo of a child/youth.
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RECOMMENDED
**SOCIAL
 MEDIA**
 (NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

- **FACEBOOK** – Reaches majority of older millennials & up. Great all-in-one communication. Very few younger millennials and Gen Z use it though.
 - **INSTAGRAM** – Highly used by millennials and Gen Z. Some use by older gens but not much.
 - **REMIN** – Great mass texting platform for youth groups to look into if they don't already have a platform. Allows teacher/leader to directly send a text to everyone in the group & will receive a single 1 to 1 text not as a group text. The app also keeps records of all text conversations made on it.
- Be sure to include screened adult leaders in the groups that contains child/youth so that you have adults receiving the same content as the child/youth.

- **TIK TOK** – New, recent app popular with Gen Z & young millennials. Share short videos on the app & get likes/shares from community. No friending feature. No pics, comments or private messaging. Could be a great app for reaching younger church members but does have inappropriate content on it.
- **SNAPCHAT** – Popular with Gen Z, millennials & some Gen X. Send videos/photos to friends/followers. All content automatically deletes in 24 hours. There is no way to preemptively screen what gets sent to each youth. Churches should avoid using this with child/youth groups.

- **STORY FEATURE ON FB** – Should be used with caution. A minor on FB can post something in their story that is sensitive or explicit, you would then be logged as "seen" for that post to the owner and can be implicated as a viewer of said content. Adults should avoid viewing minors videos on all social media.
- **TWITCH OR OTHER ONLINE GAMING COMMUNITY CHAT BOARDS/VIDEO SERVICES** – Functions like AOL instant messenger but for gamers. Predators find their way into these boards. Minors should not use without parent supervision. Easy way for leaders to get into unsafe conversations with minors.

**BE AWARE
 (NOT
 EXHAUSTIVE)**

QUESTIONS &
ANSWERS