

Seven Mile Road Church Child Protection Policy

General

I. Goal

It shall be the goal of Seven Mile Road Church to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well being of all children participating in church activities, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs. The church's goal is to inform workers and enforce policies to ensure that all children are safe and well protected while attending scheduled activities.

Future revisions to this policy may be made with the authorization of Seven Mile Road Church's pastors.

II. Definition of "children"

The term "child" or "children" shall include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection and Screening Process

III. Pre-employment procedures for paid and volunteer workers

It is the goal of Seven Mile Road Church (herein referred to as "Seven Mile Road Church" or as "church") to adequately screen the applications of persons desiring to work with children participating in all church programs, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs.

IV. Volunteers must be members of the church and/or a regular attendee at Seven Mile Road Church for a minimum of six months

All volunteers who work with children must be a member and/or a regular attendee of Seven Mile Road Church for a minimum of six (6) months. If an individual is not a member, they must meet with the Directors of the Children's Ministry for a personal interview. This time of interaction between our leadership and the volunteer allows for better evaluation of the applicant's suitability for working with children. Under certain circumstances, exceptions to these requirements can be made through consultation and approval from two or more Pastors at Seven Mile Road Church.

V. Classification of workers

In order to screen workers appropriately for their responsibilities, the ministerial staff person responsible for each division will categorize workers into two categories: primary and secondary. These terms refer to the relative levels of responsibility and risk, not to the ages of the children being served.

Primary volunteer workers: Includes all paid staff members plus those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk are classified as primary workers and should meet the primary screening standards. Must be eighteen (18) years of age.

Secondary volunteer workers: Persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances. (i.e.: Sunday school teachers and volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on church premises, or who interact with children in the presence of an approved primary worker are classified as secondary workers.) This category may also include parents of participants who help supervise activities. All volunteer workers under the age of eighteen (18) will be considered secondary workers.

VI. Minimum age

All primary volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons, who are assisting under the supervision of their parent, may assist adults but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

VII. Volunteer applications

Volunteer applicants must complete and sign an *Application For Children's Ministry Volunteers*. Applications will be submitted to the administration office. The minister in charge of the division in which the volunteer will work will be

responsible for the interview process and reference checks for Primary workers. The church keeps confidential all information received in the applicant selection process. Such information will be stored with access afforded only to appropriate church staff on a need-to-know basis. If the church learns of false, misleading or amended information on an application that could cause potential danger to children or liability to the church, that person will be terminated.

VIII. References for Primary Workers

The minister in charge of the division in which the person will work must check and document at least three (3) references for each primary worker applicant. References may be checked by phone, mail or in person.

Whenever possible, the three references should include:

- a person who has known the applicant for a minimum of 5 years;
- a former supervisor; and
- a member of the applicant's immediate family.

Information gained in these checks should be noted directly on the application.

IX. Survivors of child abuse

The church desires to demonstrate love and acceptance to survivors of childhood sexual or physical. However, an individual's experience with abuse and their recovery process may have implications to their ability to work with children. Survivors of abuse may, if they choose, request confidential counseling either from the pastor or from a professional counselor. This will not necessarily disqualify them from service. The desire of the church is to assist and care for survivors of abuse as well as fulfill our obligation to protect the children left in our care.

X. Confidential interviews

All primary volunteer applicants desiring to work with children must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. The ministry leader of the program in which the applicant will work conducts interviews. A team of interviewers may be used. Church policy concerning prevention and response to child abuse and neglect must be discussed during the interview.

XI. Background checks and Clearances

All children's worker positions, both staff and volunteer workers, are required to complete the following clearances:

- PA State Police Criminal History Record
- Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse Report

In addition to the above two clearances, any staff or volunteer who has been in Pennsylvania for less than 10 full years have to complete the following clearance:

- Federal Criminal History Record Information (FBI)

Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding related to an allegation of child abuse or neglect MAY NOT work with children and youth. Conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from employment or volunteer opportunities: drug-related, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or abuse of a minor. Background checks will be kept confidential in a locked file with access afforded only to appropriate church staff on a need-to-know basis. The designated church representative will conduct criminal background checks notifying the appropriate minister if a negative report is received.

XII. Volunteer orientation and training

Each new volunteer will be provided orientation and training on child safety and protection policies.

XIII. Vehicle safety

Persons who drive privately-owned vehicles for conducting church business or transporting children on a regular basis must maintain a current valid Pennsylvania/New Jersey/Delaware driver's license, provide proof of insurance in such amounts as may be required by the church and comply with all other church transportation policies.

XIV. First aid training

It will be the goal of the church that most paid employees and primary workers who work with children will maintain current certification in basic first aid and basic CPR (or the equivalent) as required by applicable licensing requirements or other local regulations. The church will pay the cost of this training. Secondary volunteer workers are encouraged, but not required to get training if they frequently accompany children on activities such as recreational activities, camps, retreats, mission trips or any other activity with an element of risk.

XV. Acknowledgement of church policies

Each volunteer, prior to beginning any volunteer role, will be required to sign an acknowledgement that he or she has received a copy of the Seven Mile Road Church Child Protection Policy, understands it, and will comply with its terms.

Supervisory Requirements

It is the policy of the church to provide adequate supervisory control of persons working with children participating in all church programs, including daily or temporary childcare programs of the church. The following regulations shall be applicable to all primary and secondary workers having contact with children participating in all church programs:

XVI. Safety of children

It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in church programs to promote the emotional and physical safety of the participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists; such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.

XVII. Identification badges

All church employees and volunteer workers, both primary and secondary, who work with children, are required to wear a Seven Mile Road Church volunteer nametag whenever they are supervising children. These tags will be provided by the church and will show the worker's name.

XVIII. Two-adult rule

A minimum of two workers, either primary or secondary, will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during a church activity regardless of the number of participants, location or activity. These two adults cannot be married to one another. The presence of two leaders is to protect children and youth against situations in which abuse might occur, and to protect leaders against false allegations of abuse or neglect. At no time should an adult ever be in a room or an enclosed area alone with a child.

XIX. Discipline and touching policy

It is the policy of Seven Mile Roach Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Verbal abuse including yelling, inappropriate joking, or disparaging comments are also not permitted. Staff and volunteers should also not touch children inappropriately, including stroking, caressing, kissing, hugging, or any contact with private anatomy.

XX. Check-in/Check-out Procedure

A security check-in/check-out procedure will be utilized during Sunday gatherings. The child will be checked into his/her classroom by a parent or guardian through the teacher present in the classroom. The family's phone number will be used as

the security code for check-in/check-out for each family. Children will not be released to any other person than his/her parent or guardian without prior arrangements being made or permission being granted.

XXI. Classroom accessibility and visibility

Classrooms, childcare rooms, and any area in which programs for children or youth are taking place may be visited without prior notice by church staff or other volunteer church workers. No windows may ever be totally blocked so as to prevent visual observation into the classroom.

Each classroom for children and youth should ideally have a door with an observation window. If it does not, and two leaders are not present in the room, then the door must remain open at all times. Child gates may be used for classrooms with smaller children to keep them contained during such instances. The volunteer should not position himself or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway cannot see him or her.

XXII. Restroom Guidelines

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 bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

In a situation where a child must be taken to the bathroom:

- Children under 3 (not wearing a diaper) will be assisted by a female volunteer or staff member. The workers should prop open the bathroom door or leave the stall door open as they assist the child.
- Children 4 and older will be escorted to the bathroom by a female volunteer or staff member, but not assisted. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door or stall and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should check with the child to see if he/she is in need of assistance.

Please note that children wearing a diaper will not be changed during the duration of nursery or Sunday School.

XXIII. 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 parent or guardian through an Incident Report at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the Director of Children's Ministries. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance should be called immediately. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed.

XXIV. Incident report

In an event where a child's safety (e.g. fall, bruises, etc.) has been affected while under the supervision of the church, the volunteer responsible for the child during the incident must make a report identifying:

1. The name of the child
2. Details concerning the incident (e.g. date of occurrence, what happened, who was present, who was informed)
3. Volunteers in classroom

This information should be documented and given to the parent of the child upon return. This information should also be subsequently emailed to the Directors of Children's Ministry within 24 hours.

XXV. Awareness of church policy

The minister responsible for each division shall periodically review the definition of child abuse and neglect as defined by law and the church's policy concerning these crimes. These reviews can be conducted either with the workers individually or

in groups, at least once a year and following each change in or addition to such policies. Each worker shall acknowledge receipt of a written copy of the policy prior to the time they commence working with children and after each change to such policy. Each worker shall acknowledge participating in the periodic review of the church's policies and procedures annually. The signed acknowledgements shall be retained in the personnel file of the worker.

XXVI. Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers are expected to meet the following set of requirements:

1. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable or that disregard their right to say no.
2. Staff and volunteers may not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
3. Physical restraint is used only in situations necessary to protect the child, other children, or staff from harm.
4. Staff and volunteers may not administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home.
5. While supervising children and youth participating in church's programs, staff and volunteers should know where participants are at all times.
6. Under no circumstances should volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized by the parent or guardian.
7. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
8. Being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
9. Possessing or using concealed weapons or firearms while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
10. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children, youth, or parents while working or volunteering is prohibited.
11. Profanity, inappropriate jokes and media, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, youth, or parents are prohibited.
12. Staff and volunteers will be mindful of the content on any portable electronic device, social networking pages, or other electronic media that might be accessible to any children and youth.
13. Staff and volunteer adult and youth leaders shall wear appropriate dress when volunteering with children and/or youth.

Sick Child Policy

XXVII. Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Seven Mile Road Church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

XXVIII. Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any non-consented and/or inappropriate sexual activity between two individuals, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

XXIX. Reporting policy

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Seven Mile Road Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Directors of Children's Ministries for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Seven Mile Road Church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. A pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

XXX. Confidentiality

All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. The pastors and Directors of Children's Ministries may discuss all information concerning the alleged event with one another in order to follow necessary steps for reporting and pastoral care. Any breach of confidentiality by an employee of the church shall be cause for immediate dismissal. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure if necessary to protect other children from harm in the near future, particularly where the person responsible for the abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.