

Paw Creek Presbyterian Church
Paw Creek, North Carolina

Child and Youth Protection Policy
adopted by the Session November 18, 2018

Paw Creek Presbyterian Church embraces a theological, moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and youth, and support for those who work with them - both staff members and volunteers. To that end, the Session has adopted the following policy:

A. Definitions

- Church Program - for the purposes of this policy, an activity sponsored and/or operated by Paw Creek Presbyterian Church, on or off of church property, at which children or youth are present and are unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian. This term may include, but is not limited to: Sunday School, nursery care, Youth Group, Vacation Bible School, Youth Mission Week, and any other enrichment or tutoring activity.
- Child - a person under the age of 18 years who participates in any Church Program, including Youth between the ages of 11 and 18 years
- Staff - any paid employee of the Church, regardless of specific responsibilities related to children.
- Volunteer - an adult over the age of 18 years who is present at a Church Program as a leader, helper, chaperone, or in other capacity, inclusive of church members and non-members; for Youth programming, a Volunteer is an adult over the age of 21 years for the purposes of Youth Fellowship, or an adult over the age of 18 years for the purposes of Sunday School classes .

B. Rules applicable to all Church Programs

1. Background Screening

All Staff and Volunteers must grant permission to the Church to perform a Background Screening to seek information about any history of criminal or other inappropriate behavior. Prior to transporting Children in a motor vehicle, a Drivers License screening is also required. These screenings will be performed through a procedure approved by the Session and administered through the Church office. Results of screenings will remain confidential, as detailed in the current Session procedures, but may be used to deny participation in Church Programs. All screenings must be renewed every three years.

2. References

Those in charge of various Church Programs may ask for and contact references from new Volunteers, especially those who are new to the Church family.

3. Two Adult/Open Door Rule

At least two adults should be present with Children at all times, and must remain within sight of each other except in emergency situations. If two adults are not available, then doors to all rooms in which Children are present are to be open at all times.

4. Gender Balance/Overnight activities

A balance of male and female adults is recommended for all activities, and is required for overnight Youth activities. Overnight activities for all Children require a minimum of two adults over the age of 21 years, at least one of which is over the age of 25 years.

5. General conduct

In working with Children, Staff and Volunteers are expected to:

- Connect with Children and express the love of Christ to them;
- Help to build a welcoming environment where Children feel seen and wanted;
- Serve using good and common-sense safety practices;
- Retrain from unsafe acts that might endanger self or others;
- Report any unsafe situations or acts immediately to the person in charge of the Program;
- Be aware of location of first aid and other safety equipment.

C. Rules applicable to specific situations

1. Bathroom breaks

An adult should not enter the bathroom with a Child over four years of age. For younger Children who need assistance, an adult may enter the bathroom after notifying an additional adult and leaving the door to the bathroom open.

2. Discipline

When needed, discipline should be accomplished primarily through redirection or, if necessary, a time out or notification of a parent or guardian. Physical discipline is never allowed.

3. Allegations of Abuse

Any suspicion or evidence of abuse (injury, negligent treatment, or sexual/emotional maltreatment) should be reported immediately to the Session through the Pastor or Clerk of Session. All allegations will be treated with upmost seriousness and urgency, which will include notification of parent or guardian, and notification of and cooperation with legal authorities. This includes suspicion or evidence of abuse that has taken place outside of the Church Program.

D. Implementation

1. Staff and Volunteers

All current Staff and Volunteers are required to read and sign a copy of this policy. Newly recruited Staff and Volunteers must read and sign a copy of this policy prior to beginning their work with Children. All Staff and Volunteers must re-read and re-sign this policy at the beginning of each academic year. The Session, upon recommendation of those in charge of Church Programs and/or the Pastor, may decline to allow a Volunteer's participation for any reason.

2. Training of Staff and Volunteers

The Session will provide resources to train staff and volunteers on the use of this policy.

3. Church Programs

Staff, program leaders and applicable session committees shall review this policy regularly and ensure that procedures are in place to properly enact its provisions and support all volunteers in compliance.

4. Outside Users

An entity or individual using church property to operate an activity that is not a Church Program and at which children or youth are present without a parent or guardian, regardless of payment or non-payment of rent, is required to review this policy and satisfy the Session that steps will be taken to substantially comply with its terms while on church property.

Statement of Staff and Volunteers

I acknowledge receiving a copy of this Child and Youth Protection Policy and reading its content. I accept responsibility to abide by its provisions, and to do everything possible to provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment for the Children and Youth of Paw Creek Presbyterian Church.

Signature _____

Date _____