

# Worthington Presbyterian Church

## Child Safety Policy

### Purpose

Worthington Presbyterian Church ("WPC" or the "church") is determined to provide **Safe Ministry** - spiritually, physically and emotionally--for all people. This policy is designed to ensure the safety of all children involved in the education, fellowship and service programs of the church. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at WPC.

### Definitions

Child means: "anyone under the age of eighteen (or still in high school)."

Child safety means: "preventing physical, mental and/or emotional injury to a child, including the prevention of sexual abuse."

### Volunteer Worker Selection

1. All persons who volunteer to work with children in any capacity related to the work of WPC shall have been previously involved in activities at this church for 6 months, or shall be recommended by church Program staff.
2. Each volunteer should have experience working with children, or should demonstrate an ability and willingness to learn.
3. Each volunteer shall satisfactorily complete and pass<sup>1</sup> a background check (updated every 4 years). WPC reserves the right to recheck at any time. The Director's for Children's and Youth Ministries will be responsible for overseeing background checks and updates.

### Safety Rules

1. Whenever possible, at least two adult leaders shall be present at activities involving children.  
Nursery and Toddler Rooms SHALL have two volunteers present at all times.  
The following are the only exceptions:
  - a. A Pastoral or Program staff member providing confidential counseling services may meet in a setting that is audibly private, but visibly public with a youth; or
  - b. A regularly-scheduled class may be conducted by one worker, provided the room where class is being held has an unobstructed window or the door to the room remains open during class time and a hall monitor is present.
2. Leaders and participants will model positive, appropriate Christian behavior.
3. Leaders and participants will behave respectfully toward others and the property of others.
4. At all times, leaders, to the best of their abilities, will ensure the safety of the participants. Participants will not endanger themselves or others.
5. Leaders and participants are expected to remain at the site of the event for the duration of the event, and to be available to participants who may need adult assistance. No participant may leave the site of the event without the permission of an adult leader.
6. For any activity that takes place off-site, the Parental Consent Form shall be used, granting each participating child the written permission of a parent or legal guardian.
7. Adult leaders are prohibited from doing any of the following:
  - Physical striking, hitting, spanking or inappropriate touching;
  - Verbal or emotional abuse;
  - Neglect of physical or emotional needs.

#### Some examples of positive and appropriate forms of affection are:

- Brief hugs
- Pats on shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High fives
- Verbal praise
- Sitting beside small children

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<sup>1</sup> Passing a background check = no violations or offenses involving minors and no felony convictions.

### **Some examples of inappropriate behavior:**

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Lengthy embraces
- Touching any area that is covered by clothing (bottom/chest/genital area)
  - Exception: diapering a child
- Wrestling with a child/youth
- Any type of massage
- Comments that relate to physique or body development (spoken/written/electronic or social media)

### **Overnights (Sleepovers/Lock-in)**

1. There will be an adult/child ratio of no less than 1:10 and two adults must be present at all times.
2. Parental Consent Forms (including emergency numbers, release of liability, medical emergency authorization) must be secured for a sleepover activity.
3. As long as any youth is awake, one adult should also be awake.
4. Rooming arrangements:
  - a. In situations where one large sleeping area is provided, two adults of the same sex shall accompany children of the same sex.
  - b. When rooming assignments are provided, children will be roomed with other children and adults will be roomed with other adults. Adults should not share rooms with children, (unless child and adult are related).

### **Transportation**

One adult transporting one child in a vehicle shall be prohibited.

One adult driver may transport two or more children or two adults may transport one child.

- a. All adult drivers will be screened and must pass<sup>2</sup> a motor vehicle driving history search (updated every 4 years).
- b. Drivers must provide a copy of a valid driver's license and proof of car insurance.
- c. Seat belts will be required for all passengers.

### **Training**

All volunteers will complete the orientation and training appropriate to their position before beginning their assignment. Throughout the volunteer worker's tenure, on-going supervision and training opportunities will be provided to help the volunteer and participants have a rewarding experience, and to ensure quality programming. All volunteers will receive a copy of this Child Safety Policy and it will be posted in all classrooms. Training regarding this policy and clear expectations of what is expected as a Child or Youth volunteer will be available in January, April, and September.

### **Reporting Safety Concerns**

*If any volunteer has knowledge of any incident in which the above Safety Rules have been violated, he or she shall report such incident immediately to a Pastoral or a Program staff member, who will complete an Accident/Injury/Child Safety Violation Report. Any accident or hazard in our facilities shall be reported to the Business Manager. Worthington Presbyterian Church will take all reports very seriously. Allegations of incidents involving violation of the Child Safety Policy will be handled with respect for all parties involved, and timely notification of all appropriate parental, legal, social welfare, insurance, or other authorities will be made. Opportunities for spiritual and emotional support will be offered. All reporting will be handled discreetly and tactfully, and any allegations of misconduct will remain confidential except for required reporting. By law – we WILL report any allegations of physical or sexual abuse involving a minor to the police department.*

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

The Children and Youth Ministry Teams will review this policy annually, in August, and will report on said review to Session. All volunteers and staff are encouraged to make suggestions as to how to make this policy more effective in protecting children and supporting volunteers. Suggestions should be reported to the Director for Children Ministry, the Director for Youth Ministry, or the Pastor for Discipleship.

March 23, 2016

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<sup>2</sup> Disqualification for driving: 3+ driving citations/accidents in the last 15 years or DWI or DUI in the last 15 years