



INTRODUCTION

Jesus taught, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (Mark 9:37 NRSV) and “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6 NRSV).

We should not allow possible risks to undermine or stop our ministry. Rather, we must acknowledge the risks and develop a practical plan to address these issues. We must take steps to prevent harm to our children, youth and other vulnerable persons. We must continue to answer the Gospel’s imperative to be in ministry with children, youth, and other vulnerable persons, thus making a difference in their lives



PURPOSE

1. Kennonsburg Church (KC) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing this policy, our goal is to protect the children of KC from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.



MINISTRY SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

SIX MONTH RULE

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with KC for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the leadership.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and volunteers, 18 years or older.

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be emailed a link to complete the background check. If an individual declines to complete the form, she/he will be unable to work with children.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the leadership on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances.

Background checks are fulfilled through Lifeway.com and KC receives a pass or fail notification.

The background check results will be maintained in confidence on file at KC.

TWO ADULT RULE

Two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, there must be an unobstructed window in the door, or the door to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation. If the two-adult rule cannot be observed, a screened, designated roamer will regularly check on groups with only one adult.



CHECK IN

Children, youth, and other vulnerable people will be checked into and out of a church-sponsored activity by their parent or legal guardian or people authorized by the parent/legal guardian.

OVERNIGHT/OFF CAMPUS EVENTS

- Participants will have access to a telephone or cell phone when groups are at or away from the church facility.
- For overnight events at the church and church-sponsored off-premise activities, two or more screened adults must be present. This arrangement must include at least one male and one female if the group is mixed gender.

Whenever KC transports children, youth, or other vulnerable people away from the church campus.

- No youth should drive to/from events.
- An adult should never transport a child/youth/other vulnerable person alone.
- Drivers of church vehicles should be approved and covered by the church's insurance company.
- Drivers should go through the same screening process as all other paid/volunteer staff.

MEDICATIONS POLICY

It is the policy of KC not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care, unless prior written consent is given by the child's guardian.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted in an emergency.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the policy of KC 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.

TEENAGE VOLUNTEERS

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

Must be at least age 12.

Must be screened as specified above.

Must be under the supervision of an adult on the premises who is a designated roamer.



RESTROOM GUIDELINES

Children nine years of age and under should be escorted to the restroom by an adult. The adult should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside. The adult should then remain outside the restroom door and escort the child back to the classroom. It is preferred to use the restroom next to the nursery during Sunday School and Children's Church.

Children that may need assistance should go to the main restroom as a class accompanied by two adults. When two adults are present in the restroom, an adult may assist a child, while leaving the stall door open.

If a child requires assistance, and the adult is alone, the adult should prop open the restroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child. If possible, the adult should have another adult present while assisting the child.

If the adult needs to assist the child with zippers or buttons, it is recommended to say out loud what they are doing, such as, "I am going to zip your pants now." If the child needs assistance with wiping, or anything else the adult is not comfortable with, the adult should ask the child's parent to take over.

For the protection of all, adults should never be alone with a child in a restroom with the door closed and never be in a closed restroom stall with a child.



TRAINING

Teacher/helper training is held annually where all persons working with children will be given the Child Protection Policy along with support for their ministry.

KC is a certified trafficking free zone through the U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking. All persons working with children are required to complete the USIAHT educational course.



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 sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, 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.

- 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 this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor 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 this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:
 - The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
 - The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation



and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.

- All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
- The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
- The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
- A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
- Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.



ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under the care of KC, the following steps should be followed:

- 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 of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
- For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
- Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring more than First Aid, or any injury the worker feels needs to be documented.



Mandatory Reporting Letter from Ohio Attorney General

In Ohio, all clergy members and individuals acting in an official capacity such as an Elder are mandated reporters who must report suspected child and elder abuse and neglect due to their role in protecting vulnerable populations. Reports must be made to the public children or senior services agency or a peace office in the county where the abuse occurred.

Please let me know if I can be of any additional assistance in this matter.

Very respectfully yours,



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