

# **Covenant Presbyterian Church Privacy, Child Protection, and Crisis Preparedness Policy**

## **PRIVACY AND INFORMATION**

### **Privacy Notice**

This privacy notice discloses the privacy practices for Covenant Presbyterian Church and/or [www.cplig.net](http://www.cplig.net). This privacy notice applies solely to information collected by Covenant Presbyterian Church and/or its website. It will notify you of the following:

1. What personally identifiable information is collected from you through Covenant Presbyterian Church and/or its website, how it is used and with whom it may be shared.
2. What choices are available to you regarding the use of your data.
3. The security procedures in place to protect the misuse of your information.
4. How you can correct any inaccuracies in the information.

### **Information Collection, Use, and Sharing**

We are the sole owners of the information collected by Covenant Presbyterian Church and/or its website. We only have access to/collect information that you voluntarily give us via email or other direct contact from you. We will not sell or rent this information to anyone.

We will use your information to respond to you, regarding the reason you contacted us. We will not share your information with any third party outside of our organization, other than as necessary to fulfill your request, e.g. process secure, encrypted background checks.

Unless you ask us not to, we may contact you via email in the future to tell you about upcoming ministry events, new volunteer opportunities, or changes to this privacy policy.

### **Your Access to and Control Over Information**

You may opt out of any future contacts from us at any time. You can do the following at any time by contacting the church office at (724) 238-3657 or via email at: [info@cplig.net](mailto:info@cplig.net)

- See what data we have about you, if any.
- Change/correct any data we have about you.
- Have us delete any data we have about you.
- Express any concern you have about our use of your data.

### **Security**

We take precautions to protect your information. When you submit sensitive information to Covenant Presbyterian Church either in person or via our website, your information is protected both online and offline. Wherever we collect sensitive information pertaining to your identity,

that information is encrypted and transmitted to us in a secure way. You can verify this by looking for a closed lock icon at the bottom of your web browser, or looking for "https" at the beginning of the address of the web page.

While we use encryption to protect sensitive information transmitted online, we also protect your information offline. Only employees who need the information to perform a specific job (for example, Human Resources) are granted access to personally identifiable information. The computers/servers in which we store personally identifiable information are kept in a secure environment.

If you feel that we are not abiding by this privacy policy, you should contact us immediately at (724) 238-3657 or [info@cpclig.net](mailto:info@cpclig.net).

### **Policy Review**

The provisions of this Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Church Session, or on an as-needed basis.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

It shall be the goal of the Covenant Presbyterian Church to provide a safe environment for the physical and emotional well-being of all children participating in activities, including participants in any daily or temporary childcare programs. The organization'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 the Session.

### **Definition of "Child" or "Children"**

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

### **Selection, Screening Process, and Pre-employment Procedures for Paid and Volunteer Workers**

Classification of Workers: In order to screen workers appropriately for their responsibilities, workers will be categorized into two classifications:

1. Primary volunteer workers: Includes all paid staff workers 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.
2. Secondary volunteer workers: Persons who occasionally interact with children and/or in less risky circumstances. i.e.: Sunday School teachers and volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on 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 workers under the age of eighteen (18) will be considered secondary workers.

All primary volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers. Volunteers must complete and sign an Acknowledgment of Receipt of the Child Protection Policy Statement form and the Covenant Presbyterian Church Background Check Authorization form. All information will be kept confidential.

A criminal background check, Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance, Pennsylvania Criminal History Check, and an FBI Fingerprint Check shall be required for all children's workers positions which includes employees, and primary and secondary volunteer workers. All must complete the Covenant Presbyterian Church Background Clearance Process. Clearances and checks are valid for a period of 5 years. If an individual has current clearances from another job or volunteer position he/she may present a copy of those rather than repeating the process. Expenses incurred for background checks will be reimbursed by the church. No one who has been convicted of a crime involving misconduct with children will be allowed to work with children.

It is the policy of the Covenant Presbyterian Church to report any incident of child abuse or neglect toward any child. If warranted, the Child Abuse Report will be filled out and filed with the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau (724) 834-2191.

### **Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers**

1. Staff and volunteers are required to adhere to the Covenant Presbyterian Church Children & Youth Protection Policy guidelines in all their interactions with children and youth.
2. 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.
3. Staff and volunteers may not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
4. Physical restraint is used only in situations necessary to protect the child, other children, or staff from harm.
5. While supervising children and youth participating in Covenant Presbyterian Church programs, staff and volunteers should know where participants are at all times.
6. Restroom supervision: Whenever possible, volunteers will make sure any restroom used is not occupied by any suspicious or unknown individual before allowing children and youth to use the facilities. Always send children in pairs with a volunteer. The staff or volunteer, will stand in the external doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff or volunteer (not being alone with a child). If a child of any age needs help in the restroom, two volunteers must go to assist (i.g., toddler/preschool age child). Staff and volunteers shall strongly encourage parents to take children to the restroom whenever possible.
7. Diapering and potty training should be done primarily by staff members/paid caregivers. Volunteers may be asked to help in certain situations and should follow posted nursery guidelines when performing diapering.
8. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported according to this policy and using the *Suspected Child Abuse Report* form accompanying this policy.
9. Staff and volunteers are discouraged from being alone with children or youth without parental permission.
10. Staff and volunteers should not release children 10 years of age or younger to any adult or family member, including older siblings, other than the child's parent/guardian unless prior written permission has been obtained from the parent. In regard to older youth, ages 11-18, staff and volunteers are advised to be vigilant and exercise caution as they dismiss young people from events and activities. Upon arrival no youth, regardless of whether he or she is a licensed driver age 16 or older, may leave an event or activity without the knowledge and permission of a ministry staff or volunteer.
11. Consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.
12. Being impaired by legally prescribed drugs while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited.

13. Possessing concealed weapons or firearms while working or volunteering with children or youth is prohibited. The exception to this is if the volunteer is a sworn law enforcement officer.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco *in the presence of* children, youth, or parents while working or volunteering is prohibited.
15. 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.
16. 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 or easily viewed by any children and/or youth. Such accessible or easily viewable devices, social media outlets, or other electronic media must not contain content or links to content fitting anything fitting the descriptions listed in (15) above.
17. Staff and volunteer adult and youth leaders shall wear appropriate dress when volunteering with children and/or youth. Guidelines with regard to appropriate dress shall be discussed and provided by the particular ministry area staff director.
18. Movies used in all church settings shall meet the voluntary movie rating system guidelines established by the Motion Picture Association of America for age-appropriate content.
19. Staff and volunteers may not date or be romantically involved with program participants or church members who are younger than 18 years of age.
20. Staff and volunteers are required to read, sign, and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and will complete required training sessions on the subject.
21. Staff and volunteers are required to report any concerns or suspicions regarding their observations of any individual's interaction with a child. Except for concerns related to alleged or potential abuse, which require specific immediate reports, these concerns may be reported to the individual.
22. If it is necessary for an adult to take a child or youth home after an event, all staff and volunteers shall abide by safe driving laws when transporting children or youth. Driving record history shall be obtained on all youth leaders and volunteers. An effort should be made to contact the family and inform them of the situation before transporting the child or youth. It is always advisable for leaders to give parents advance notice and full information regarding the event in which their child or youth will be participating.
23. If staff and/or volunteers take child(ren) or youth(s) home after an event, the staff/volunteer should be of the same gender as all the child(ren)/youth(s) in the vehicle. If this is not possible, then those of opposite gender than the driver shall be dropped off first; even if that means it will be "inconvenient" for the driver. At NO TIME shall a driver and a single child/youth of opposite genders be in a vehicle alone. Other arrangements will have to be made.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff members, both volunteer and professional, are required to keep information about children and families confidential. Staff members are to refrain from commenting about children or families in the presence of other adults or children.

## **Parental / Guardian Consent**

Children and youth must obtain parental or guardian permission for involvement in church sponsored activities or programs that involve travel away from the church's physical facilities.

## **“Six Month” Rule for Volunteers**

A volunteer must be a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, or have regularly attended Covenant, for six months before working with youth or children. This requirement does not apply to paid staff or volunteers involved in activities in which their own children are present. The Pastor shall have the authority to waive this six-month rule upon request, where appropriate.

## **Social Media Policy**

Social media are defined as online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information. It includes any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, and internet forums. While social media can keep one connected with a broad range of colleagues and friends they also have inherent risks.

Once information is released into cyberspace it is gone forever and can never be retrieved. It can be copied and passed to hundreds of people in a fraction of a second. One may think social media posts are private but they are never private. They can be copied by your friends and passed to people you don't know.

Because of the nature of social media, protect confidential information at all times. Never post any information about a child or family involved in your care, either by name or by any other descriptive nature, on any social media site, ever. This includes positive as well as negative comments.

Reminders for staff members on social media:

- Do not “friend” children without parental consent.
- Protect your profile and your privacy settings. (Keep up to date on any changes.)
- Make sure you *know* your friends. Friends can download and share your information.
- Make sure you have to approve any posts or images of you.
- Be careful about what you post--if you would not want your mom, supervisor, or students to see it, don't post it!
- Never post images or comments that include any children on your personal page.
- Secure your profile.

## **REPORTING INCIDENTS**

Any individual who observes or becomes aware of any alleged or potential incident of child abuse (regardless of whether perpetrated by staff, volunteer, parent or guardian) must, as soon as possible, report the matter. Because of the importance of proper reporting, pastors, employees, Session members, and persons highly visible to church members and visitors should understand the terms of the policy and be ready to help direct any such reports or allegations to the appropriate persons.

Such reports must be documented in writing and should contain the name of the person making the report, the date, time and location of the incident, the person(s) involved in the incident, the person(s) witnessing the incident and a detailed description of the incident itself, including who did and said what. The person making the report and any adult witnesses who can corroborate its details should sign it. The report should be submitted to the appropriate staff person for their signature and kept on file.

### **Investigation**

Upon receipt of a report or allegation of child abuse at Covenant Presbyterian Church, the Elders and Pastor shall ensure that an appropriate investigation is commenced and appropriate procedures are followed as required by Pennsylvania law. The process will include documenting all steps undertaken in handling the investigation, and a Report of Suspected Child Abuse form shall be completed.

### **Confidentiality**

All investigations shall be conducted in as confidential a manner as is compatible with a thorough investigation of the report or allegation.

### **Parental Notification**

If an incident has occurred on church property or during a church-sponsored event, the parents of any minor involved in any allegation of abuse shall be immediately notified.

### **Potential Responses**

Upon any report of potential or alleged child abuse by an employee or volunteer of Covenant Presbyterian Church, any individual accused of such conduct may be temporarily relieved of any duties involving youth or children pending an appropriate investigation.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Medical Emergency Plan

1. **Staff or Volunteer Injury:** Report injury immediately to the Church Administrator. Fill out the proper incident report.
2. **Child / Participant Injury:**
  - a. Staff or volunteer stays with the child/participant and ascertain the extent of injury. Take appropriate emergency first aid action for the type of injury. First aid kits are located in the church office and various locations throughout the facility.
  - b. Call or instruct a specific individual to call 911 if it is determined that any of the following apply:
    - i. Severe bleeding.
    - ii. Bad fall with possible back injury.
    - iii. Loss of consciousness.
    - iv. Not breathing.
  - c. Others should be removed from the immediate area until the injury is treated or the injured person evacuated.
  - d. The staff person or volunteer should fill out the incident report in duplicate immediately. After securing a parental signature (if the injured party is a minor) one copy should be sent home with the parent and another filed with the Church Administrator.

### Fire Emergency Procedures for Staff and Volunteers

When a fire alarm sounds:

1. Take note of the visual floor plan immediately by the door with multiple exit points. Always default to behind or in front of the church based on your options. This is best to do during a non-emergency time if you can.
2. Quickly check your exit doors for any signs that the fire is close to your room. This will determine how quickly you need to evacuate.
3. Do a headcount, checking any immediate bathrooms.
4. Determine how many children you have to evacuate.
5. When possible take a printed roster with you of who is present.
6. Report to your room's designated safe area, walking in an orderly fashion. If possible, close all windows and doors on your way out.
7. Upon arrival at the safe area, count your children to make sure all are accounted for. If a child is missing, get word to a fire official and/or the Children's or Youth Ministry Director immediately, but do not leave the other children unattended.



8. A parent or guardian is the only person to take the child from the established safe area. Stay with the children until all children have been picked up.
9. Once you and your class have evacuated the building, do not go back into the building until given an “all clear” signal from a fire official or the Children’s or Youth Ministry Director.

### **Tornado Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a tornado sighting in the area, all individuals in the church building should proceed to the church basement. From the upstairs of the Education Wing individuals should exit by the hall next to the Parlor and go down the steps to the left into the hall underneath the main church building. There is emergency lighting in the hall and there are bathrooms.

In the event that the building is hit by the tornado attempts will be made to contact outside help through other phone lines or one person (staff or volunteer) will leave the building to find help.

## **“OFF-SITE” EVENTS AND TRAVEL**

### **Permission Forms**

Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and Medical Consent Forms must be completed prior to all trips. The two-adult rule must be followed throughout the trip with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities. Under no circumstances may one adult alone take or accompany minors on an overnight outing.

### **Ratios**

The required adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones for any ministry with children or youth shall be 1:6. Gender balance is preferred. For overnight trips, an adult to child/youth ratio for chaperones of 1:4 is preferred, although 1:6 is permissible. Gender balance is required.

### **Rooming Arrangements**

- Rooming arrangements should provide for children and youth of the same biological sex to room together and adults of the same biological sex to room together.
- When possible, adults' rooms shall be next to youth rooms and youth may be checked on during the night.
- Ordinarily, adults should not share rooms with children. An individual minor may share a room with an individual adult if the two are related (parent/child), or if written permission has been granted prior to the event by a parent or guardian (in such cases as Intergenerational Mission Trips).
- In situations where one large sleeping area is provided, two adults of the same biological sex shall accompany children or youth of the same biological sex.

### **Medical**

- Each child, youth, adult volunteer, and staff must submit a completed Permission Slip and Parental Consent for Emergency Care. Each minor's form must have a parent or guardian's signature.
- Whenever possible, all activities with children and youth shall have a staff or volunteer adult leader with current-certification first aid/CPR training.
- Group leaders should have a copy of all Permission and Consent forms for overnight or off-site events. These forms will be kept on the event site for the duration of the event.
- First Aid supplies will be available on the event site. All workers will be informed of the location of First Aid supplies/equipment and shall have access to information concerning specific medical conditions and concerns of participants.
- A written report will be completed in the case of any accident, medical emergency or injury. (*Report of Accident / Medical Emergency* form to be added to Appendix B)

## **Driving Rules/Travel**

- It is suggested that all drivers of children and youth be over 21 and under 65. In situations where this is not possible, parent permission shall be obtained before the trip and vehicles shall travel together.
- When one vehicle is used for an event, the two-leader rule still applies unless parental permission is obtained prior to the trip. When several vehicles are taken for an event and two leaders are not available for every vehicle, keeping the other vehicle in sight at regular intervals is an acceptable substitution for the two-leader rule.
- Travel arrangements for off-campus events will be coordinated through the church.
- All adult drivers of children and youth will be screened through a driving history search. A valid driver's license will be required.
- All vehicles should remain parked throughout the duration of the activity except for transporting children and obtaining supplies.
- Seat belts will be provided for all passengers.