

Paoli Presbyterian Clearance Info

- **If you are 13 and under:** No clearances needed.
- **If you are 14-17 years old:** You are required to have the PA Criminal Check clearance and the Child Abuse clearance.
- **If you are 18 years and older:** You are required to have the PA Criminal Check Clearance, the Child Abuse clearance, and either the FBI Fingerprinting clearance or a notarized Donegal Affidavit.

See below for more details on each clearance.

- **PA Criminal Check:** This is an INSTANT clearance. Click below and select "New Volunteer Record Check"
 - <https://epatch.pa.gov/home>
- **PA Child Abuse Clearance:** Create an account or log into your established account in order to apply for or update this clearance. Click below and select "Individual Login" if updating or click "Create Individual Account" if this is a new clearance for you.
 - <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/pa-child-abuse-history-clearance>
- **FBI Fingerprinting:** Schedule your fingerprinting appointment at the IdentoGO link below. The website will show you locations near you to get fingerprinted!
 - <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/fbi-fingerprinting>

OR

- **Donegal Affidavit:** If you have lived in PA for 10+ years, you are eligible to get this form notarized in lieu of fingerprinting.
 - *See next page:*

*Child Protection Policy; starts on page 4 (*please sign pages 13 & 19 of the policy & return with clearances*)



The Presbytery of **DONEGAL**

AFFIDAVIT

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

SS:

COUNTY OF _____

[Insert full name]: _____ swears and affirms as follows:

1. I wish to serve as an unpaid volunteer for the congregation of _____
Presbyterian Church located at _____ .
2. I am submitting this Affidavit to the congregation of _____
Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of Donegal in accordance with the provisions of
Section 6344.2(B.1) of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa.C.S.A. Section
6301 et seq.
3. I understand that the congregation of _____ Presbyterian Church
and the Presbytery of Donegal will be relying on my statements in this Affidavit for the
purpose of determining whether I may serve as an unpaid volunteer for the congregation of
_____ Presbyterian Church.
4. I have been a Pennsylvania resident during the entirety of the ten-year period immediately
preceding today's date.
5. I am not disqualified from service as a volunteer pursuant to Section 6344(C) of the
Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, in that:
 - a. I have never been convicted of any of the following criminal offenses under the
Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 18 Pa.C.S.A. Section 101 et seq.:
 - i. Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide);
 - ii. Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault);
 - iii. Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking);
 - iv. Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping);
 - v. Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint);
 - vi. Section 3121 (relating to rape);
 - vii. Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault);

- viii. Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse);
 - ix. Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault);
 - x. Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault);
 - xi. Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault);
 - xii. Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure);
 - xiii. Section 4302 (relating to incest);
 - xiv. Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child);
 - xv. Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children);
 - xvi. Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children);
 - xvii. A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses);
 - xviii. Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances);
 - xix. Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors);
 - xx. Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children); or
 - xxi. The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing criminal offenses.
- b. I have never been convicted of a criminal offense similar in nature to the criminal offenses listed in A. above under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of Pennsylvania.
- c. I have not been convicted of a felony offense under the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, 35 P.S. Section 780-101 et seq., during the entirety of the five-year period immediately preceding today's date.

[Insert full name here]

Sworn to and subscribed before me this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

[Notary Public]

My Commission Expires: _____

Child/Youth Protection Policy

Paoli Presbyterian Church

Adopted by Session - 10/27/2020

Amended by Session - 4/26/2022

Amended by Session - 6/24/2025

Contents

Background	3
Volunteers	4
Working with Children/Youth	5
Supervision	5
Discipline Policy	6
Sick Child Policy	6
Food/ Allergy Policy	6
Medications Policy	7
Confidentiality of Medical Information	7
Restroom Guidelines	7
Transportation of Children/Youth	8
Training Requirements and Awareness for Volunteers	8
Policy Awareness	8
Social Media Policy	8
Reporting Suspected Inappropriate Behavior	13
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	13
Responsibilities/ Administration of Policy	15
Appendices	16
Appendix A: Participation Covenant Agreement (Insert separate volunteer doc)	16
Appendix B: Forms for Reporting Suspected Violation of Protection Policy and/or Child Abuse	20
Initial Report	20
Pastor Form	21
ChildLine Report Checklist	22

Background

Paoli Presbyterian Church is committed to the spiritual nurture of the children/youth and families in our congregation as they grow to love and serve Jesus Christ. To facilitate such nurture and growth we must create safe spaces and safe relationships for that development – doing so is part of our baptismal promise.

We also join the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the commitment to protect the children/youth in our care. The following guidelines are developed from best practices from churches and child-welfare agencies around the country and are in compliance with PA State Child Protective Service/ Mandatory Reporting Laws as of December 2020.

Purpose:

Our purpose for establishing this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical and emotional safety, and spiritual growth of all children/youth, as well as the adults that serve these communities. These policies apply to all programs involving children/youth while in the building or on the grounds of Paoli Presbyterian Church, while participating or serving in an off-site event or trip sponsored by Paoli Presbyterian Church, or interacting with volunteers/staff over social media.

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Child or Children	A minor / Any person(s) under the age of 18 (At times in this document youth will be used to describe older minors in middle/high school)
Adult	Anyone 18 years of age or older
Child Abuse (as defined under Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law)	• Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age. • An act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age. • Any recent act, failure to act or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age. • Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.

Inappropriate behavior	• Inappropriate Verbal Behavior. • Rude, loud and off-colored remarks regarding race, ethnicity, sexuality or religion. • Sexual comments and questions (outside of the announced curriculum) • Fostering “crushes.” • Making inappropriate comments including comments of a sexual nature, sexual oriented humor or language. • Comments about a child’s clothes or physical appearance. • Unsolicited comments about a youth’s dating partners. • Sharing comments about a leader's personal life that are not relevant. • Secretly contacting children/youth outside of church activity hours without permission/knowledge of child’s parents. • Secretly contacting individual children/youth via social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok etc.) without permission/knowledge of child’s parents.
Inappropriate Physical Behavior	• Kissing. • Hair stroking. • Tickling. • Any form of hugging not initiated or requested by the child and done in a manner that might be construed or interpreted as romantic, sexual, or intimate. • Hugging from behind. • Touching someone in inappropriate ways and passing it off as an accident. • Sexual conduct. • Genital contact, groping, fondling, touching or taunting. • Allowing situations where left completely alone/unobserved with a child.
Children/youth activities	Any activity or program in which children/youth are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.
Staff Person	Any person employed and paid by Paoli Presbyterian Church.
Contract Employee	Any person that works for Paoli Presbyterian Church on a per diem basis (such as choir section leaders).
Volunteer	A person 18 years of age or older, unpaid, who assists with the care, supervision, or guidance of children/youth or who routinely interact with children/youth as a part of a church activity under the supervision of staff.

Helper	Any person between the ages of 11 and 17 who serves in a volunteer role.
--------	--

Volunteers

All volunteers who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children/youth shall be required to complete and provide:

- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare
- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check
- FBI Criminal History Report - this step requires fingerprints.
 - If a volunteer has lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania consecutively for the last 10 years, a notarized affidavit is acceptable.
 - If a minor who volunteers has lived in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania consecutively for the last 10 years, this FBI report is unnecessary.
- Completion of our volunteer training with the Director of Children & Family Ministries or the Director of Student Ministries, which will include examination and discussion of this policy.
- Signed Participation Covenant Agreement (Appendix A of this document, pp. 16-19).

All volunteers who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children/youth shall be required to demonstrate an active relationship with Paoli Presbyterian Church for at least 6 months prior to serving in a supervisory role in children/youth or youth activities. *Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis, approvable by the relevant program director, pastors, and reported to Session.*

Background checks must be repeated every 5 years. They will be kept in perpetuity in the church files.

The cost of screening shall be borne by the volunteer. If the financial cost presents a hardship such that it would discourage an individual from volunteering, the individual should speak confidentially to one of the pastors or ministry Directors. Staff completion of these checks is covered by Paoli Presbyterian Church.

Volunteers are selected by the Directors and/or Pastors, and serve at their discretion.

Working with Children/Youth

Supervision

In order to provide a safe haven and not jeopardize our ministries, the following procedures are required.

- 1) A minimum of two ~~unrelated~~ adult staff and/or volunteers will be supervising at all times during child/youth programming and activities at or sponsored by Paoli Presbyterian Church. This may include the presence of an adult "roamer" who moves in and out of rooms, provided all doors remain open, and the children/youth are over age four. Staff/volunteers who are related or married count as *one* adult only.
- 2) In addition to the two adult rule, we must adhere to these requirements:

Child Age Levels**	# of Adults	# of Children/ Youth
Infant	1	4
Young Toddler	1	5
Older Toddler	1	6
Preschool	1	10
K-5 th Grade	1	12
6 th - 12 th grade	1	15

*** these ratios & age ranges definitions are from childcare.gov.*

- Infant 0-12 months
- Young toddler 1-2 years
- Older toddler 2-3 years
- Preschooler 3-5 years

Each room or space where children/youth are being cared for will have a window in the door or the door will be left open. All activities should occur in open view. Should the children/youth activity be an outdoor program or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this policy, the staff person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure that the setting suits the activity, and the children/youth are properly supervised.

- 3) Youth "helpers" must be responsible and always work in the immediate vicinity of an adult supervisor. Best practice is for staff to match a helper with an appropriate activity. Youth helpers cannot be left alone with children - at least two adults must be present at all times.
- 4) The Director of Student Ministries can allow 18-22 year-olds to serve as volunteers after consultation with and agreement by the Head of Staff. These individuals will be reported to Session.
- 5) Overnight activities require at least one adult of each gender when both girls and boys are present. Staff must ensure that the children/youth are given appropriate privacy in areas of sleeping/ changing and bathing.

In group sleeping arrangements (e.g. camp cabins, ski trips, mission trips, etc.) two unrelated adults must be present with any number of students during the stated "lights out" time. Under no circumstances shall any ministry worker/volunteer share a bed with a student. In dorm or hotel settings, students and adults should sleep in

separate rooms (connecting rooms are acceptable). Room checks will be performed at stated lights out time. There should be separate sleeping areas for males and females. Any leader who is a minor must be under direct adult supervision at all times. Volunteers between the ages of 18-22 must be paired with an adult 23 years or older.

6) Housing arrangements for students with diverse gender or sexual identities will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Student Ministries in consultation with the Head of Staff. The comfort and welfare of said student – *as well as the entire group* – must be respected.

7) All activities that take place away from Paoli Presbyterian Church shall have completed permission forms signed by the parents/ guardians.

8) In certain situations, requiring one-on-one mentoring, children/youth may be with one adult in a public space (such as a common area in the church or public lobby) with the knowledge/permission of the child's parent. The adult should notify a Paoli Presbyterian Church staff member prior to the meeting with the time and location of the meeting. Directors may pastorally care for students one-on-one in their church offices, in clear view of others, and with parental knowledge/permission for the meeting. Another staff member on premises should know of the meeting before it occurs.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Paoli Presbyterian Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents give permission for it. There will be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline toward children/youth. Workers should consult with ministry leaders if assistance is needed with managing behavior.

Sick Child Policy

Children/youth who are observed by our staff or volunteers to be ill will be separated from other children/youth and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request the child be picked up.

Food/ Allergy Policy

With the rise of life-threatening food allergies in children/youth, snacks and meals should only be provided to children/youth who have a complete permission slip that notes allergy information on file. If the church is providing snacks, all children/youth present should have access to a snack safe for them and ministries should keep allergy-free snacks on hand for such occasions. If children/youth do not have documentation on file, parents should be asked to provide food and snacks for their children/youth. Due to the rising prevalence of reactions to airborne peanut allergens, foods with peanuts should be eliminated unless all children/youth present have food sensitivity documentation on file indicating no sensitivity to peanuts.

Medication Policy

It is the policy of Paoli Presbyterian Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medication to the children/youth under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions to the medication policy may be granted in the case of life-saving medications such as an Epi Pen, inhaler, or glucose tab with an acceptable documented plan signed by a parent/ guardian.

In the case of overnight events, children/youth can receive their medication. Prescriptions in their original bottles with written and signed instructions will be provided to the adult staff in charge of the trip. Over-the-counter remedies such as aspirin may be administered by volunteer/staff with signed parental/ guardian consent.

Confidentiality of Medical Information

Information regarding the medical conditions of children/youth is confidential and is only made available to the adults responsible for care of children/youth when it impacts care. In the event information about a contagious illness needs to be shared with others who may have been unknowingly exposed to a sick child, then in keeping with HIPAA guidelines, the confidentiality of the children/youth and families will be observed.

Restroom Guidelines

CDC guidelines should be adhered to and current CDC guidelines will be posted at diaper changing stations in childcare areas.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/diapering/childcare.html>

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, staff/volunteers should escort a group of children to a hallway bathroom. Children should never be taken to the bathroom alone. The staff/volunteers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the staff/volunteer should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If the child requires assistance, the staff/volunteer should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall open as he/ she assists the child.

Retreats: never be alone with a youth in a room. If volunteers/staff and youth need to share a room, be discreet, and do not change in front of youth. If a youth is in the bathroom or changing in the room, you must wait outside.

For the protection of all, staff/volunteers should never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Transportation of Children/Youth

Children/youth may be transported off-site as part of a church sponsored activity provided there is prior written consent from a parent/guardian (most often in the form of a permission

slip), and an up-to-date participant health form is kept with a responsible adult leader on the trip at all time.

Volunteers who are providing transportation must be at least 25 years of age, provide a copy of his/ her driver's license, and proof of insurance for the vehicle being used in addition to the Commonwealth required clearances noted earlier in this policy. Additionally, drivers must adhere to the church's insurance policy as outlined below. Volunteers are required to have a 3rd person in the car.

- Drivers of insured owned vehicles, as well as non-owned or hired 15-passenger vans must
 - Not have *any* alcohol or drug-related violations for the prior five (5) years.
 - Have a valid U.S. driver's license.
 - Be 25-70 years old, or if a youth pastor or director, be 21-70 years old.
 - **Church:** Youth pastor or director, be 21-70 years old.
 - **Higher Education and Seminaries:** Drivers of vehicles that carry more than 4 passengers be 25-70.
 - Drivers over age 70 can be submitted to the Underwriter for review along with a **Physician's Report of Driver Fitness**.
 - Have no more than one (1) **minor moving violation** for the prior three (3) years.
Important: Youth pastors or directors between the ages of 21-25 must have NO moving violations in the prior three (3) years.
 - Have no **major moving violations** for the prior three (3) years.
 - Have no more than one (1) at-fault accident for the prior three (3) years.
 - Have the appropriate type licenses; for example, a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for the vehicles driven as required by state law.
 - In order of priority, have
 - A Commercial Driver's License; OR
 - Passed a **defensive driving course** to operate a 15-passenger van.

Training Requirements and Awareness for Volunteers

Full-year Volunteer

Any ministry volunteers that work on a recurring basis with youth under the age of 18 must participate in a mandatory child protection training that is developed by the program area director at the start of each program year. All policies and procedures will be reviewed and signed as proof of recognition. Copies of the child protection policies will be available in the youth and children's ministry offices.

Special Event Volunteer

Any volunteer that works with youth under the age of 18 for 2 events or less every year must review and sign the child and youth protection policy handbook. That volunteer is also required to turn that in directly to the program staff member of their specific area.

Policy Awareness

Once a year, the child protection policies will be emailed to families. -The policies shall be made publicly available at all events by having a physical copy in the Directors' offices, as well as the Youth Room. Pastors shall also retain a hardcopy.

These policies are public and transparent. Any member, visitor, or business associate wishing to see them shall be able to do so.

Social Media Policy

Purpose of Guidelines

The relationship between youth leader/ volunteer and youth participant is a treasured role. That relationship, built in a foundation of trust and mutual respect and love for Christ, can be rewarding for all. As leaders, there is a responsibility to model appropriate behaviors and set an example of Christ like principles in relationship.

Paoli Presbyterian Church strives to end relational poverty and to that end we value interpersonal, face-to-face, ministry. The focus of our youth ministry is to bring youth together in community to learn more about Christ. We can use social media as a useful tool in connecting with our youth in a relevant way. These platforms offer an opportunity to deepen relationships but must be entered into with clear boundaries.

This policy provides social media guidance to Paoli Presbyterian Church staff, team members, and volunteers.

Social Media Tips/Guidelines

- Be selective! There are a variety of digital platforms available. Use the right medium for the message, and only use platforms approved by the Director of Student Ministries. Don't use public platforms to communicate sensitive or private information. When in doubt, don't post it.
- Be smart! A blog, community post, or social media post is often visible to the entire public and can/will be shared by others in various ways that cannot be controlled at any level. Imagine your comments being posted on the front page of the newspaper.
- Be intentional! Focus comments and compliments on spiritual gifts over physical attributes. Love someone's smile? Mention the JOY you see in their expression! See a graduation picture? Mention the grit that's gotten them this far and express your

excitement to see where God will lead them in the future. (Avoid commenting on sensitive topics such as weight, physical attractiveness, etc.)

- Use grace! Use Biblical wisdom when utilizing social media. For example, if someone has offended you, do not post offensive responses publicly. If circumstances present themselves, schedule a face to face meeting and discontinue electronic communications. This face to face meeting should include at least one additional youth leader.
- Ask us! In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should answer social media questions, please check with Paoli Presbyterian Church's leadership team before speaking as a representative of the church.

Use of Social Media

- All of Paoli Presbyterian Church's policies, including harassment, confidentiality, and software use, apply in regard to social media. See: employee handbook
- Violations of Paoli Presbyterian Church's social media policies will be addressed directly with volunteers by the ministry Director and Head of Staff and could result in removal from volunteer position.

Child/Youth Staff Social Media Policy

As an employee of the church who has been hired with distinct knowledge and training, employees of the church will be extended more leeway than volunteers in connections with the youth to whom they are ministering provided the following guidelines are followed:

- Take notes of the interaction and share details with colleague/supervisor.
- When appropriate, inform child/youth's family of interaction.
- Create a "paper trail," save all texts, emails and correspondence.
- Attempt to involve more players in an online gaming scenario.
- Attend trainings/network with other children/youth pastors to understand best practices for connecting safely with children/youth in social media platforms.
- Use appropriate boundaries (no texting/phone calls late in the evening except emergencies)
- Make suggestions of changes to existing policy to enhance children/youth safety.

Guidelines

- Employees representing Paoli Presbyterian Church must adhere to volunteer guidelines, be trained in social media policy and sign an acknowledgement of Paoli Presbyterian Church's social media policy.
- Social media postings should never disclose sensitive, confidential or personal information, unless written consent to share said information is obtained from the individual or parent/guardian of a minor of whom it concerns.

- Only the Director of Communications, the Director of Student Ministries, the Director of Children and Families, and the Pastors can post pictures to Paoli Presbyterian Church's social media pages. These individuals will understand who has provided written consent. Other ministry directors or volunteers must receive direct consent from the staff members listed above to post on Paoli Presbyterian Church official pages or social media.
- Employees and volunteers serving in children/youth ministries must keep their professional image in mind at all times. Online conduct, comments, behavior, etc. affects this image. (All youth group communication will go through Paoli Presbyterian Church Youth Group identified social media accounts - FB, IG, etc. - avoiding personal social media accounts with youth. Volunteers and youth can still interact on social media but only within those groups)
- Volunteers and employees are solely responsible for the content they publish online, including content from their own social media pages. It must be absolutely clear that all views/posts do not reflect Paoli Presbyterian Church, but are reflective of themselves.
- When in doubt, be positive! Whether someone has posted something mean, rude or distasteful, take the high road at all times.
- In the event of a crisis, contact direct supervisor/church leadership prior to responding to any posting or comments relating to the crisis.
- There are times when employees may have individualized contact with a youth (phone call, text exchange, online gaming, in person counsel in an office setting). In these situations, contact should remain as transparent as possible.

Volunteer Social Media Policy

Paoli Presbyterian Church is committed to the safety and well-being of our children/youth as we work closely with them and their families. Grounded in this commitment, we strive to be positive role models as we connect with them in all interactions. Our connections to children/youth should be as transparent as possible. In regard to social media and connecting with children/youths here at Paoli Presbyterian Church, be aware of what you are posting and being intentional that what we share with our children/youth is clean- (no alcohol, no drugs, no crude language etc.) Content should be consistent with building a Christian mentoring relationship.

We are sharing with families the social media platforms on which they can expect youth to receive communications. Parents can opt out of any platform they wish. We will only communicate with youth through approved platforms.

1. You may accept a friend or follow requests from youth if they follow you first. It is up to youth whether they want to ask you to follow them. As a volunteer you do not need to accept those friends or follow requests. If you already are connected to a youth through social media, prior to becoming their youth leader, unfriend or unfollow the youth (certainly okay to let them know why). At that time the youth can choose whether to re-add friend/re-follow.

2. Communication with youth should be as public as possible. Include at least one other leader when communicating with youth. When not possible, we ask you to use clinical judgement (intuition/common sense) when having conversations with the youth and share when needed with youth ministry staff. You will share with staff all the platforms you are using to interact with youth.
3. If you communicate with a youth from church, remember that your actions and written content, while not legally representing the church, reflect on the character of the church, its Student Ministry, and the Christian faith. Conduct communication in such a way as to glorify God and remain beyond reproach.
4. If you become concerned for a youth's welfare, including harm to themselves or others, you will immediately contact the youth pastor. You are a mandated reporter which means you are legally required to report your concerns.

The following statement must be signed upon becoming a volunteer and updated annually:

I _____ (printed) understand and agree to follow Paoli Presbyterian Church's Social Media policies.

_____ (Signed)

Reporting Suspected Inappropriate Behavior

The policies and procedures outlined in this Child and Youth Protection Policy are designed to ensure the safety of our minors and therefore must be regularly followed. If an employee or volunteer observes another employee or volunteer vary from the Child and Youth Protection Policy in a manner that otherwise does not raise immediate concern for the safety of the minors, the observer ordinarily should remind the employee or volunteer, in a friendly manner of the correct procedure and ask that he or she follow it. Volunteers should bring concerns regarding variances to a supervising employee at any time even if the activity was not directly witnessed by the volunteer. The observer and supervising staff member thereafter should watch to ensure that the employee or volunteer adheres to the policy or procedure.

If neglect of a supervisory policy (numbers/ratios) is suspected, the issue shall be addressed by the Director of the ministry area and the Head of Staff. Ongoing failure to comply will result in removal from the volunteer position.

If after being advised of the correct policy or procedure, the employee or volunteer continues to violate the protocols that open the possibility to abuse, sexual misconduct, or inappropriate behavior/relationship, such conduct must be reported immediately to a supervising employee along with the Pastors and the following actions taken:

- A Responding Committee of five persons shall be formed. The Committee shall include the Pastors, the Clerk of Session, and two Session members. If the subject of the Report is an employee, a member of the Personnel Council will serve as the fifth member.
- The Responding Committee shall further investigate the incident. If the investigation determines a variance from policy that does not appear to involve abuse, the Responding Committee will recommend administrative action up to and including dismissal or termination.
- The Committee shall keep the Presbytery of Donegal apprised of the investigation as needed depending on the severity of the situation.
- If the investigation determines abuse is suspected, it must follow the procedures outlined in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse below.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

As of 2020 the Pennsylvania Mandatory Reporter laws clarify and expand the individuals who qualify as mandated reporters of child abuse. People in the following positions will be defined as mandated reporters

- Clergy members, including ministers and other spiritual leaders
- An individual, paid or unpaid, who on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.

When an incident of child abuse occurs or allegation of an incident within the church or at a church event off-premise is made or an employee or volunteer otherwise has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, it is crucial that it be dealt with immediately and in a clearly outlined manner. Volunteers are asked to also discuss suspected concerns with a staff member when possible.

1. If you have concerns and would like to speak with an advocate regarding questions about suspected abuse you can reach out anonymously to **Crime Victims' Center of Chester County (610-692-7273)**.
2. If a staff person or volunteer has reasonable cause to suspect, based upon their training and experience, that a child is a victim of child abuse, the staff person or volunteer **shall immediately contact the Pennsylvania Childline and Abuse Registry (1-800-932-0313)**. Initial reports can also be filled via the website: www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis
3. This includes situations where:
 - a. A staff person or volunteer comes into contact with a child that has been abused;
 - b. An individual makes a specific disclosure to a staff person or volunteer that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse; or
 - c. An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to you that he/she has committed child abuse.

4. A volunteer may ask an appropriate staff member to be present while the call is being placed, however, the volunteer is legally responsible for contacting Childline by telephone. Staff members may not influence the decision as to whether or not the incident should be reported, but may help in providing the name, address, and family information of the alleged victim.
5. After a report is made, the volunteer shall notify the staff person in charge of the activity if he or she has not already done so.
6. The staff person in charge of the activity will immediately notify the Pastors if he or she has not already done so.

Individuals under investigation will be required to refrain from all childcare/supervisory activities until the incident report is resolved. If the removal of any person from an activity is required, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.

The following procedure shall then be followed under the direction of the pastors if the accused is an employee or volunteer of Paoli Presbyterian Church.

1. The Presbytery of Donegal will be notified, along with the insurance company and an incident report will be filed. Recommendations of Presbytery, insurance, and counsel will be taken into consideration.
2. Allegations will be reviewed by Session.
3. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law dictates and cooperate with any investigation by the Commonwealth or local authorities.
4. The Pastors or designee will be the spokesperson to the congregation/media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect unless he/she is involved. All other staff/volunteers should refrain from speaking to the congregation/ media. Pastors should be aware of Pastor-Penitent privilege in all situations, especially when speaking to the media.

Responsibilities/ Administration of Policy

Oversight of the policy: The pastors and the Directors of Child/Youth ministries have oversight of this policy and are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed and updated, including adequate training for staff and volunteers on this policy. Session alone has the authority and ability to adopt amendments into policy.

Record keeping: The Pastors and Directors of Child/Youth ministries shall coordinate efforts to keep accurate and confidential information concerning certification and training records of individuals who may work with children/youth. Clearances and records will be kept on file under lock or passkey in perpetuity.

Appendices

Appendix A: Participation Covenant Agreement

"If anyone wants to provide leadership in the church, good! But there are preconditions: A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to their spouse, cool and collected, accessible, and hospitable. They must know what he's talking about, not be over fond of wine, not pushy but gentle, not thin-skinned, not money hungry. They must handle their own affairs well, attentive to their own Children/youth and having their respect. For if someone is unable to handle their own affairs, how can they take care of God's church?... Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith." 1 Timothy 3:1-5, 13 MSG

Leading minors (anyone under the age of 18) is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly. All leaders are responsible and accountable for the nourishment and spiritual growth of young people who are a part of the Body of Christ. We want to be an example that our Children/youth and youths can look up to and model their lives after. There are many things in our society that influence our young people to live in a way that does not honor God. We are here to show them that they can have more.

Ministry Expectations of Volunteer Leaders

In all the ministry opportunities within Paoli Presbyterian Church, it is important to have expectations that are the same for everyone to keep us in line with our vision as a church. Here is what is expected:

1. **Model**—Be a role model for minors, as well, as other adults. Lead by example, be conscious of your actions, words, and lifestyle choices. Leaders should be good-listeners, caring, unprejudiced, patient, real, humble, genuine, and servant-hearted. For all volunteers under 21, underage drinking is not tolerated.
2. **Grow**—Grow in your relationship with Jesus. Be an active member of the church. Attend a worship service on a regular basis. Be a part of an adult small group. Spend time with God praying and reading His Word.
3. **Accountability**— Know your strengths and weaknesses. Understand your responsibilities. Do you have an accountability partner? An accountability partner is someone who can ask you hard questions and give you feedback without telling you what you want to hear.
4. **Consistency**—As a leader, you are expected to honor your commitment. You are expected to be at all ministry events for the age group you work with. If you cannot attend an event, be courteous and let someone know.

5. **Unity**– Be a team player. Volunteer leadership teams must be unified as a team. If there is an issue/problem, please see the Director of Children/youth or youth Ministries right away. If a problem is not resolved or cannot be resolved by the Director, see a Pastor.
6. **Communication**–The main mode of communication used is e-mail. Please check your e-mail regularly. If there is an emergency, call the Director of Children/youth or Youth Ministry's. All leader meetings are important, attendance is required. If you cannot attend a meeting, follow-up and receive the information you missed.
7. **Rapport**–Building rapport is important. When you are at an event be fully present - make sure you talk to everyone, hang-out, sit with them, etc. Be slow to speak and quick to listen.

Volunteer Leader Policies

Setting Policy

Building connections with Children/youth and youths is important for Volunteer Leaders, ensure that you are doing so in appropriate situations.

- Leaders should never be alone with a minor. Always make sure there is accountability in your setting.
- If a small group is meeting at your house, make sure there are other Leaders with you.
- One-on-one meetings may occur in locations that can be easily viewed by others, use good judgement.
- Never go to a minor's house alone when their parents are not home.
- Retreats: never be alone with a youth in a room. If leaders and youths need to share a room, be discreet, do not change in front of youth, no leader should be in a community bathroom with a youth. If a youth is in the bathroom or changing in the room, you must wait outside.

Perception is very important. While your intentions may be good in nature, the perception of being alone with the youth may not be perceived this way. Accountability is important if a youth accuses a leader of misconduct; make sure you are meeting with youths in open settings where there are witnesses.

Appropriate Touch Policy

- Leaders should never touch a minor unless the touch is defined as a "safe" touch.
- A "safe" touch is gentle contact to the hand, shoulder, and/or top of the back. All other areas of the body are not safe to touch.
- Never strike, pull, grab, or use any type of force when physically contacting a minor.
- Never initiate a hug with a minor. If a minor initiate's a hug, you may receive it.

Communication and Social Media Policy

Adhere to separate Communication and Social Media Policy.

- Avoid private communications with minors. Include parent on communications unless given parental permission to communicate directly. Communication with minors should be able to be documented.
- Avoid one-on-one texting. Group texting is allowed, use good judgement.
- Avoid direct communication through social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. (See Social Media Policy)
- Social Media connection through approved Paoli Presbyterian Church public accounts is allowed.
- Virtual meetings (Facetime, Zoom, etc.) should not take place in your bedroom. Try to be in a common area, if your bedroom is the only option, make sure to place the camera away from any personal affects. Dress appropriately as you would to attend an in-person event.

Discipline Policy

Discipline is about providing an environment within which a minor can attain acceptable, self-guided behavior.

1. Be sure God is in conflict management.
2. Aim for positive discipline: all minors are unique and need to experience success at their own levels of interest and development.
3. Avoid setting standards or conditions, which will cause a youth to fail.
4. Basic discipline policy
 - a. Diffuse the situation (separate if contact between multiple minors), get another leader involved, determine the problem, and work together to resolve the problem. If a problem cannot be solved, contact the Director of Children/youth and/or youth Ministries for next steps.
 - b. At no time is spanking, pulling, yelling, grabbing, or any other form of physical and/or mental abuse permitted.
 - c. Food is never used as a punishment.
5. Complete an incident report and follow-up with the Director of children/youth and/or youth Ministries to allow for proper documentation.

Confidentiality Policy

- Everything shared at a Paoli Presbyterian sponsored event with minors is confidential, UNLESS a minor is hurting self, hurting another, or is being hurt.
- It is Pennsylvania and Federal law to report child abuse, neglect, and suicide.
- Please contact the Director of children/youth and/or youth Ministries immediately if you suspect child abuse, neglect, and suicide.

If you feel called for a leadership role, we are excited to have you minister with us at Paoli Presbyterian Church.

I, _____, commit to this ministry and these standards.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Appendix B: Forms for Reporting Suspected Violation of Protection Policy and/or Child Abuse

Initial Report

Paoli Presbyterian Church Report of Suspected Violation of Child Protection Policy and/or Child Abuse

Name of person observing or receiving information on suspected violation

Name of victim: _____

Age of victim: _____

Observer's Statement: _____

Name of person accused of violation:

Reported to (Pastor, Name, Time, Date):

Notes of report to Pastor:

Signature of person filling out form: _____

Signature of Lead Pastor: _____

Date: _____

Pastor Form

To be filled out by the Pastor:

Date and Time parent/guardian called: _____

Who spoken with and what was said:

Date and time called law enforcement:

Who spoken with and what was said:

Date and time called ChildLine _____

Who spoken with and what was said:

Other Contacts and/or information:

Note: A copy of this form will be sent to the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Donegal.

ChildLine Report Checklist

Paoli Presbyterian Church Childline Report Checklist

The staff person or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is responsible for making an accurate and timely report. This checklist is to be completed and turned into the Pastors along with a copy of the report.

- Ensure the safety of the Children/youth and other adults before leaving to make a report.
- The individual making the report shall obtain as much information about the alleged victim as possible (i.e. full name, address, family information, etc.). In the case of a volunteer acting as the reporter, a staff member may assist in providing this information.
- The individual reporting shall call the Pennsylvania Childline and Abuse Registry (1-800-932-0313) or enter information online: www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis
- The individual shall complete form PA CY47. The Childline operator may have this completed while the reporter is still on the phone.
 - Forms PA CY47 are located online:
http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/form/c_137044.pdf
- Make 2 copies of form PA CY47. One copy is for the reporter's personal records. The other shall be provided to the Pastors.
- Send the original of form PA CY47 to the Pennsylvania Childline and Abuse Registry as noted on the form.
- Give a copy of this checklist and form PA CY47 to the Pastors.
- The Pastors will submit report of Suspected Violation Child Protection Policy (Appendix V) to the Executive Presbyter.

The individual should not share with any other person information regarding the alleged child abuse, including the alleged offender. Under no circumstances should the individual make any public statements about the report, as this could give rise to a defamation claim.

Reporter's name: _____

Reporter's Signature: _____

Date: _____