

Children's (or Minor's) Protection Policy

The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church

Spring 2002

(updated January 2010 by CE committee, background check process and service
updated March 2015)

Task Force Members

*Linda Evans (Chair), Pam Broussard,
C.J. Haynes, Mike Mauldin,
Brian Pelecky, Joan Purcell,
Genette Stanton*

Presbytery of New Covenant

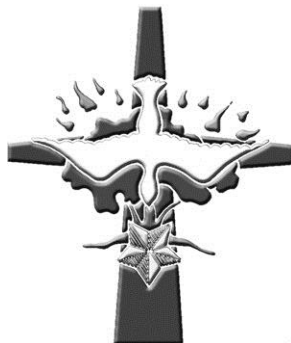


Table of Contents

Letter to Clerk of Session	Page 1
Steps to Forming a Child Protection Policy in the Local Church	Page 2
Child Protection Policy Outline	Page 3
Statement of Purpose and Procedure Safeguarding the Well Being of Minors.....	Page 6
Appendixes	
Appendix A - Paid Staff/Volunteer Form	Page 13
Appendix B - Criminal Background Check Resource	Page 17
Appendix C - Telephone Reference Check	Page 18
Appendix D - Adult/Student Ratios	Page 20
Appendix E - Acts of Neglect and Abuse Which Must Be Reported	Page 21
Appendix F - Possible Signs of Abuse	Page 22
Appendix G - General Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse	Page 24
Appendix H - Suspected Abuse Incident Report Form	Page 25
Appendix I - How to Respond to a Child Disclosing Abuse.....	Page 27
Appendix J - Sample Paid Staff and Volunteer Training Outline	Page 28
Appendix K - Educating the Congregation	Page 29
Appendix L - Protection Policy Task Force	Page 31

*Presbytery of New Covenant
1110 Lovett Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77006-3808*

Dear Clerk of Session,

The Year of the Child is almost over. Yet the work we do for our children is never complete. One area we are urging each church to examine is the quality of care we are providing for the children and youth we teach and fellowship with. How well are we protecting the children God has entrusted to our care? This is a tough area to ask you to tackle. Therefore, Equipping Ministries of the Presbytery of New Covenant has taken the first steps in this endeavor for you.

Some churches already have in place a Children's Protection Policy. Some are in the process of developing one. Others know they need one, but may not know where to begin.

Equipping Ministries of the Presbytery of New Covenant accepted the responsibility of sponsoring a Children's Protection Policy Task Force. The task force is made up of childcare professionals, lawyers, a minister, Christian educators, volunteers, and professionals. Together they have worked for several months to form an outline and a sample protection policy for churches within the presbytery. Realizing each church is unique in size and needs, this policy is general in nature, yet offers specifics were appropriate.

We strongly recommend each church in Presbytery of New Covenant to prayerfully consider the needs and place for a Protection Policy for their own churches and schools. The tension between grace to all who enter our doors and not hindering the children is a tough one worthy of pray and discussion.

Please share this information with your session or with the appropriate committee. This is too important to misplace or lose. The people who served on the Protection Policy Task Force are willing to share their experience with you or the sponsoring committee at your church.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this matter. Each time a child is baptized in our churches we make a covenant with God and the child's parents to help that child experience God's love. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for theirs is the kingdom of God."

Sincerely,

Denise Wilborn
Protection Policy Task Force, Chair
Presbytery of New Covenant

STEPS TO FORMING A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

THIS PROTECTION POLICY DEFINES CHILDREN AS AGES BIRTH TO 18-YEAR-OLD, HEREAFTER REFERRED TO AS "MINORS."

- 1) Form a Protection Policy task force sponsored by a committee to be approved by the session which should include, but not be limited to, the following members of your church:
 - Staff Member (preferably one who works with minors)
 - Parent
 - Session Member
 - Member of Personnel/Administrative committee
 - Childcare Professional or Social Worker
- 2) Review current procedures for recruiting volunteers with minors:
 - Who does the recruiting?
 - What criteria are used?
 - What training takes place?
- 3) List all programs that involve minors:
 - Who plans and implements these programs?
 - What adults are present?
 - How many adults are present?
 - What are the ages of sponsors (high school, college, etc.)?
- 4) Tour your facility and look closely at the areas where minors' programs occur. Note areas where minors might be isolated. Note if rooms have doors with windows. Pay attention to potential safety problems.
- 5) Check your church's insurance policy to make sure it contains sexual abuse coverage. Some insurance policies have a clause, which exempts (which means they will not cover) sexual abuse. Such coverage is necessary for the church.
- 6) Using these suggested Presbytery of New Covenant guidelines, decide the essential elements to include in your policy.
- 7) Write the Protection Policy and have your church's legal counsel review it.
- 8) Present the Protection Policy to the session for discussion and approval.
- 9) Educate your congregation.
- 10) Implement the session-approved policy.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OUTLINE (From Presbytery)

In establishing policies and procedures that provide safeguards against minor abuse in our churches, six critical areas must be addressed:

- Selecting and screening volunteers and paid childcare staff.
- Supervising volunteers and paid childcare staff.
- Reporting allegations.
- Responding to allegations.
- Educating the child to speak up.
- Training for church staff and volunteers on the recognizing and reporting abuse, and the church's protection policy.

The process presented below is intended to include not only volunteers, but also all paid staff who work with minors.

1) Screening and selection of volunteers

A. Personnel needs for this part of the process:

- Persons responsible for programs for minors to distribute Paid Staff and Volunteer Information Forms and conduct interviews.
- An "Administrator" is appointed to oversee the procedure, to follow through on criminal record checks, and to review both the record checks and the reference checks. This person will need to document and record criminal record checks and reviews of records and reference checks.
- Trained volunteers to follow through on reference checks.

B. For all who work with minors, full-time or part-time, paid staff, or volunteer:

- Put in writing (for the record) your procedure for selecting volunteers/workers
- Require that any volunteer be an active member of the church for at least 6 months. If they have been an active member less than six months they can work with the children only in tandem with a current, active church member. This excludes guest speakers or guest leaders approved by the session. It is recommended that older children under 18 work in tandem with two adults (one of whom must be an active member) in each room; and that they also complete Paid Staff/ Volunteer Information Form to be signed by their parents. Those under 18 who work with younger minors do not count in the adult/student ratio.

- Require all volunteers and paid staff to fill out a confidential Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Form (Appendix A) that allows for a criminal history record check and reference check:
 - Conduct a criminal background check most areas have a local agency that will provide this service for a nominal fee (Appendix B).
 - Require at least three references.
 - Check all references. If a person comes from another community, a reference from their former church should be contacted where applicable.
 - Make a record of contacts with references and prior churches (Appendix C).
- Conduct a personal interview.
- Identify personnel to implement the screening and selection (see “Personnel Needs” below).
- Limit access to the locked records to the Administrator.
- Periodically update the Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Forms.

C. Occasional Volunteer Workers:

- For those who volunteer occasionally: Keep on file the confidential Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Form and one reference.
- For teenagers under 18 who help in the children’s program: have them fill out a Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Form, signed by their parents, to be kept on file.

2) Supervising Volunteers

- **At least two adult volunteers should be present during any church sponsored events or activities for minors.** It is strongly suggested that the two adults not be related (for example: husband/wife, mother/child, siblings, etc.). If the two adults are related, it is suggested that a third adult be present as well. It is strongly suggested the ratios for each age be followed as outlined in Appendix D.
- Obtain written and signed parental permission in these situations:
 - 1) When an adult might be spending time alone with a minor in an unsupervised situation (for example when tutoring a minor or in a mentoring situation);
 - 2) When transporting a minor;
 - 3) For any off-campus church activity; or
 - 4) For special programs such as lock-ins and out-of-town mission trips.
- Install windows in classroom and office doors; or leave doors open when with minors.
- Use a church identification procedure for nursery, early childhood, and elementary age, such as a “check in/check out” system. Also obtain, in writing, from parents specifically which adults may pick up their child/children (for example parents, grandparents, aunt, etc.).
- Provide a list of violations (Appendix E).
- Educate all volunteers and paid staff who work with minors as to your church’s policies and procedures regarding violations.

3) Reporting Allegations

- Personnel Needs for this step of the process:
 - Look at your staff to determine who is responsible for which areas of work: infant/toddler childcare, children, and youth. Identify who on your staff is responsible for specific age groups covered by your Protection Policy.
 - Determine who on the staff should be contacted in case of an incident.
 - Identify alternate contact person if the accused person is the original contact person. (Suggestion: a session member or Presbytery staff person)
- Appraise all workers in training sessions (Appendix G) as to the reporting procedure and as to the **requirements of state and local laws regarding the reporting of abuse of a minor(s)**. Refer to Appendix E for reportable acts of abuse or neglect. If you have questions about reporting, contact your state Children's Protection Services or your local Police Department.
- **Report any incident of abuse to the designated person within the church (see Personnel above) who will help the paid staff member or volunteer through the reporting process.**
- The person initially contacted by the alleged victim or witness should fill out a written Suspected Abuse Incident Report verbatim (Appendix H).
- Have a prepared list with individuals at agencies and governing bodies to be contacted, for example: Presbytery, Children's Protective Services, insurance company etc.

4) Responding to Allegations

- Personnel Needs for this step of the process:
 - Establish a Response Team comprised of 3 - 5 discreet individuals who understand the issues of confidentiality.
 - Response Team members should include:
 1. A spokesperson to the media;
 2. An attorney for the church;
 3. Counselors for both the alleged victim and accused person.
 - Write clear descriptions of each team member's responsibilities and who they are responsible for communicating with (i.e. the police, insurance, District Attorney's office, church's attorney, other).
- Have your Response team in place to respond immediately in case of allegations of abuse.
- Have a prepared position statement for the media (Appendix I).
- Work with the General Presbyter or the Chair of the Committee on Ministry at Presbytery of New Covenant and your insurance company.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE SAFEGUARDING THE WELL BEING OF MINORS

The members of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church (hereafter WCPC) believe that we are called by God to create a safe haven for all the children and youth in our care, protecting those who are powerless and empowering them through faith and trust. During each baptism of an infant, child, or adult into this covenant community of faith, the members of this church pledge to uphold that person in Jesus Christ and to teach, strengthen, and support individuals' relationships with the household of God.

Therefore, the members of WCPC are committed to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children - ages birth to 18-year-old, hereafter called 'minors', participating in the activities and programs of this church. This policy addresses the preventable risk of any form of neglect, abuse, or harassment, whether physical, mental, sexual, or verbal, by any of the paid staff, teachers, or volunteers of this church while on church property or while engaged in church sponsored activities or programs. In addition, we are called to stand not in judgment, but in compassion for each other. We believe that any person who has been accused of committing an act of abuse can expect due process, our prayers, and acceptance as a human being. It is anticipated that this policy will be implemented in the Fall of 2002 and will be reviewed and changed as necessary with a complete review after three years.

Therefore, all WCPC sponsored activities and programs, regardless of location, involving minors, will be subject to the following policy:

- At all times a minimum of two adults will be assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving minors. Appendix D outlines student/teacher ratios by age groups, which are strongly suggested.
- A Parent Permission Form must be completed and signed for all programs and activities outside the regular classes and meetings on campus. These would include, but not be limited to: overnight lock-ins; off campus service trips; off campus fellowship activities; and out-of-town trips.
- A signed Parent Permission Form must be completed any time a minor and single adult are in a situation where a second adult is not present, such as (but not limited to) a tutoring situation or mentoring relationship.
- No person shall be recommended to the session of WCPC as a lead teacher or volunteer leader of minors until such person has been an active member of the church for 6 months (a person may teach in tandem with an active member before that six month requirement is reached), has completed a Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Form (once per individual is sufficient), Background check form, and training from the youth or children's director or online through the BSA website, security check has been completed, and references checks have been completed. The Background checks will be redone every two years, training every year the volunteer continues to work with minors. On occasion there may be an individual

who has been active in WCPC activities, but has not joined the church. A “Friend of the Church” status may be available for such an individual at the discretion of the Session. This would enable the individual to serve as a volunteer leader or helper as long as a church member is the second member of the team in children and/or youth activities.

- Mentors for Confirmation Class: Because of the special nature of this role, individuals serving as mentors must be an active member of WCPC for at least one year before serving as mentors.

Paid Staff and Volunteer Information Form

Paid non-clergy staff (including children and youth ministry directors, custodial & nursery staff, worship and music directors), teachers of minors, and volunteers for church activities or programs for minors will be required to complete a Paid Staff and Volunteer Information Form providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform security background checks and reference checks on each individual. While this process understandably intrudes into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and references checks, and the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be considered confidential. Guest speakers and Leaders approved by the session will be exempt from this policy. Friends of the Church will only be able to serve in non-leadership roles and not as the only adult with children and/or youth.

Security background checks for persons 18 and older will be conducted by the WCPC Business Manager after completed forms are obtained from WCPC volunteers by the Children and Youth Ministry Directors, with the assistance of the appropriate local agency (Appendix B). Additionally, Character References (see Appendix J) will be checked by the youth and children's ministry directors. The written results of the security background checks (pass or fail) and the date reference checks completed and date forms completed will be recorded in ACS by the business manager, and youth and children's ministry directors in a confidential section. Background checks on the Business Manager will be submitted for review and signature by the head pastor. CE or Children and Youth Directors will conduct training of minor volunteers in Child Protection and note the training date in the ACS database.

Without the written permission of the paid staff, teachers of minors, and volunteers for the church's activities and programs for minors (and except as may be required by law), the information contained in the Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Form, the results of the security background check, and the results of the reference will be disclosed only to the persons designated in the previous paragraph.

The Business Manager will maintain a locked storage cabinet in the church for all Paid Staff and Volunteer Information Forms and the results of the reference checks. The results of the security background checks will be destroyed periodically if required by the guidelines mandated by the appropriate local agency. Whether disclosed voluntarily or by the results of the security background check, the following terms will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership or sponsorship of any church activity or program for minors:

Any indictment alleging the offence of, or any conviction for: murder; aggravated assault; sexual abuse (rape); aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child; incest; indecency with a child; inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child; possession or promotion of child pornography;

the sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor; employment harmful to a child; or abandonment or endangerment of a child.

For Drivers of Minors: A DWI/DUI conviction or 2 traffic violations involving reckless behavior (defined as driving more than 20 mph over the speed limit or running stoplight or stop sign) or loss of license to drive within the last three (3) years will disqualify the individual from driving minors on church activities. Since checking volunteer driving is an added expense only regular drivers of youth will be checked routinely for driving records.

All other convictions or changes for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the business manager and youth and children's directors as described in the second paragraph under Paid Staff and Volunteer Information Form. If an applicant disputes information that appears in his or her criminal history record transcript, he or she may appeal through the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Prohibited Acts

The following acts are prohibited by this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any WCPC sponsored activity or program. Any observation or personal knowledge of such violations must be immediately reported to the Director of Christian Education, Pastor, or youth or children's ministry directors after the safety of the minor has been assured.

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of sexual conduct towards a protected minor;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a protected minor;
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between an older child and a younger child;
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of WCPC;
- Causing mental or emotional injury to a minor;
- Possessing obscene or pornographic materials at any function of WCPC
- Possessing or being under the influence of any illegal substances;
- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a minors' function of WCPC;
- Any kind of verbal remarks with sexual connotations, overtones, or innuendo directed to or about a minor;
- Carrying any type of weapon on church property.

Upon accusation the accused is entitled to prompt and fair disposition of such serious charges and to receive due process of law including the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty.

Reporting Policy Violations

In order to maintain an environment free of destructive acts toward all minors the paid staff, teachers, parents, and volunteers of WCPC must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstances, observation, act, omission, or situation thought to be in violation of this Policy. All questions or concerns of any suspected abusive behavior or harassment shall be directed to the Director of Christian Education, Children's Ministry Director, Youth Director, the Pastors, or in extenuating circumstances the General Presbyter or the Chair of Committee on Ministry at Presbytery of New Covenant.

In the event anyone personally witnesses any occurrence of a Prohibited Act as stated in this Policy, that person will be asked to complete a Suspected Abuse Incident Report. Anyone who should witness such an occurrence should consider the following recommendations as to how such a situation should be handled to insure the security of the minor involved and to protect against physical, emotional or psychological injury, to all persons involved.

The following are the steps to take in case any occurrence of a violation of the Policy; **and should be covered thoroughly in training:**

- PERSONALLY SECURE THE SAFETY OF THE MINOR OR MINORS;
- REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE DESIGNATED PERSON ON RESPONSE TEAM;
- DO NOT LEAVE THE MINOR OR MINORS UNSUPERVISED WHILE REPORTING THE INCIDENT;
- DO NOT PERSONALLY CONFRONT THE ALLEGED OR ACCUSED VIOLATOR OF THE POLICY;
- ALLOW THE DESIGNATED PERSON TO PROVIDE YOU WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR REPORTING OF THE INCIDENT TO THE PARENTS OR GUARDIAN OF THE MINOR OR MINORS;
- THE HEAD OF STAFF OR THE DESIGNATED PERSON ON THE RESPONSE TEAM WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH;
- REPORT ABUSE INCIDENT TO CHILDREN'S PROTECTIVE SERVICES IF APPLICABLE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE WCPC's DESIGNATED PERSON.

In the event a minor observes, suspects, and reports abusive conduct regardless of where or when the conduct occurred, the person initially contacted by the minor should contact the designated person to complete a written Suspected Abuse Incident Report. Record in the Suspected Abuse Incident Report the words originally spoken by the minor and the minor's conduct and demeanor observed concerning the incident.

Consequences of Violation

Any person accused of committing a Prohibited Act, whether a paid staff member or volunteer will immediately be suspended from participation as a leader or helper in all church sponsored activities and programs with minors. Such suspension shall continue during any investigation by the church or law enforcement or child protection agencies.

Any person found guilty of a Prohibited Act shall be prohibited from future participation in all church sponsored activities and programs with minors. If a person is a paid staff member such conduct may also result in termination of employment.

As required by Texas law, all reports of abuse will be reported **within 48 hours** to the appropriate child protection and law enforcement authorities. Such reporting must be accomplished in addition to complying with this Children Protection Policy. **The church's legal representative shall also be notified.**

Failure to timely report a Prohibited Act to the designated person shall be considered a procedural violation of this Child Protection Policy and shall be grounds for termination of employment of a paid staff member or employee and suspension and dismissal from participation in all children and youth activities and programs of WCPC by any person.

APPENDIX A

Paid Staff/Volunteer Form

THE WOODLANDS COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS VOLUNTEER/EMPLOYEE INFORMATION FORM

Part I

Name (last, first, middle, maiden): _____

If you have ever used another name, please indicate the name and the time period(s) used: _____

Current address: _____

How long have you lived at this address: _____

If less than two years, previous address: _____

How long have you lived in Texas: _____

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Birthdate: _____

Are you a member of this church? ☐ No ☐ Yes - since date (month/year) _____

If less than two years, previous church: _____

Texas Drivers License Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Home Phone: _____

Place of Employment: _____

Work Phone: _____

Prior Experience in working with children _____

Part II

Your honest answers to the following questions will assure our church family, parents, and children of the finest care we can provide. *If you prefer, you may choose to discuss your answers with a member of our pastoral staff rather than using this form.*

1. In what area of ministry do you wish to serve and why?
What gifts and experience do you bring to this ministry?
2. Knowing that abuse is pattern of behavior often repeated by the victims of childhood abuse have you prayerfully considered your background and do you feel able to minister to children in your staff or volunteer position?

3. Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action, complaint or allegations that you violated any employer's or any organization's policy concerning sexual misconduct? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please explain.)

4. Have you ever been arrested, charged, indicted or convicted for any criminal offense (misdemeanor or felony) other than a minor traffic violation? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please explain.) Note: Please list DWI/DUI if applicable. Also any traffic violations including driving 20 mph over the speed limit, running a stop sign or stop light in the past 3 years.

5. Have you ever had your driver's license suspended or restricted for any reason? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please describe the date(s) and reasons for each occurrence.

6. Have you ever been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please explain)

7. Other than the above questions, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would cause you or the church to have concerns about your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of minors? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please explain.)

Would you like to meet with a member of the pastoral staff regarding the issues listed above or for any other concerns? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, and you would prefer a specific staff member, please indicate your choice:

Part III

References: Please list three persons who are familiar with your character and abilities. Contacts at prior churches are appropriate. Please do not include relatives and members of church staff. References are confidential.

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Nature of the relationship with you: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Nature of the relationship with you: _____

3. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Nature of the relationship with you: _____

For Volunteers Only:

1a. Since being a member of WCPC, in what activities have you participated? _____

1b. If a member of WCPC for less than two years, please list previous church's activities: _____

2. List other volunteer organizations to which you belong: _____

Part IV Authorization and Release For Paid Staff and Volunteers

I understand and agree that:

- a. All information I have provided may be verified. I agree to release from liability any person or organization that provides information regarding me, including these persons I have listed as references. I do hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church of The Woodlands, Texas, its employees, representatives and agents from any claims or causes or action relating in any manner to the verification of or attempts to verify the information provided, attempts to contact references or conversations with any references. I understand that any information received will not be disclosed to me, and I hereby waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me on this form.
- b. By signing this form, I certify and affirm that the information I have given is true, complete and correct in all respects.
- c. I hereby give my permission for The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church of The Woodlands, Texas to obtain information relating to my criminal history record through the appropriate agency. The criminal history record, as received from the reporting agencies may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications. I understand this information will be used, in Part, to determine my eligibility for an employment or volunteer position with the church. I also understand that I will have the opportunity to review the criminal history, and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I, the undersigned, do for myself and heirs, executors and administrators, hereby release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify the investigating agency and each of their officers, directors, employees, and agents and hold them harmless from and against any and all causes of actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever, and any and all related attorney's fees, court costs and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become an employee or a volunteer.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print name

Here: _____

Parent or Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(if under eighteen) *No background checks will be done on children under the age of 18.*

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form is confidential and will be kept in a locked file in the office of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church of The Woodlands, Texas.

Note: It is your responsibility to attend a scheduled training session on abuse and the church's policy, or view a videotaped session, before you work as an employee or volunteer.

APPENDIX B

Criminal Background Check Resource

Criminal background checks are run through the online web service of Intellicorp,

www.intellicorp.net

to complete a background search of SSN verification and criminal search. We check volunteers and staff every 2 years after initial screening when they are first hired or volunteer. Volunteer and nursery staffs under 18 are not background checked but references are checked well and these instances we know the youth and their parents from church membership for more than 2 years.

APPENDIX C

Telephone Reference Check

RE: _____ FROM: _____

- 1) How well do you know the applicant? (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 2) In what capacity have you known the applicant?
- 3) How long have you known the applicant?
- 4) Attitude toward children/youth *Recognizes the needs of children* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 5) What is the applicant's relationship to children/youth in general? (check as many as are applicable)
☐impatient ☐understanding ☐stern ☐friendly ☐well-liked ☐don't know
- 6) Does the applicant have the ability to be a role model for youth?
- 7) Personality *wholesome, pleasing* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 8) Social qualities *ability to relate to others in a positive manner, maturity* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 9) Character: *good reputation, high moral qualities* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 10) Ethics: *Right principles used in personal affairs* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 11) Emotional stability: *self control, steadfastness, maintains emotional equilibrium* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 12) Commitment: *ability to remain involved for long periods of time* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 13) Dependability: *Keeps promises, accountable* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 14) Flexibility: *Ability to adjust to changing situations* (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being high)
- 15) Give three adjectives to describe the person
- 16) Does the applicant have or ever had a drinking/drug problem?

17) For any reason do you feel that the applicant would not be a suitable volunteer on _____ program or a paid childcare worker at WCPC?

18) Is there anything WCPC should know about the applicant before he/she becomes a volunteer/paid childcare worker in our program?

Date: _____

Signature of Person doing the reference check: _____

APPENDIX D

Adult/Student Ratios

There should always be two adults with minors for an activity, on or off campus, no matter what size the group. For large groups the following guidelines are suggested:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends the following staff to child ratio by age of children and group size.

Age of Children	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	30
Infants (birth to 12 months)	1:3	1:4									
Toddlers (12 to 24 months)	1:3	1:4	1:5	1:4							
2-Year-Olds (24 to 30 months)		1:4	1:5	1:6	1:7						
2-Year-Olds (30 to 36 months)			1:5	1:6	1:7						
3-Year-Olds					1:7	1:8	1:9	1:10			
4-Year-Olds						1:8	1:9	1:10			
5-Year-Olds						1:8	1:9	1:10			
Kindergarten							1:10	1:11	1:12		
6- to 8-Year-Olds								1:10	1:11	1:12	
9- to 12-Year-Olds										1:12	1:15

.....

Adult/Student Ratios recommended by the American Camping Association:

Camper Age	Number of Staff	Overnight Campers	Day-only Campers
4-5 Years	1	5	6
6-8 Years	1	6	8
9-14 Years	1	8	10
15-18 Years	1	10	12

Cho-Yeh Camp and Conference Center requires a minimum of two adults for any group of minors. For larger groups they have a 1/6 Adult/Student ratio for all ages, including teenagers. Their ratio is beyond that recommended by the American Camping Association.

APPENDIX E

Acts of Neglect and Abuse Which Must be Reported As Defined by the Texas Legal Code

- 1) Indecency with a Child:
 - a. A person commits an offense if, with a child younger than 17 years and not their spouse, whether the child is of the same or opposite sex he/she:
 - Engages in sexual contact with the child; or
 - Exposes any part of his/her genitals, knowing the child is present, with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person.
- 2) Assault:
 - a. A person commits an offense if the person:
 - Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causes bodily injury to another, including the person's spouse;
 - Intentionally or knowingly threatens another with imminent bodily injury, including the person's spouse; or
 - Intentionally or knowingly causes physical contact with another when the person shows or should reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative.
- 3) Sexual Assault:
 - a. A person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly:
 - Causes the penetration of the anus or female sexual organ of a child by any means;
 - Causes the penetration of the mouth of a child by a sexual organ of the actor;
 - Causes the sexual organ of a child to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; or
 - Causes the anus of a child to contact the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor.
- 4) Aggravated Sexual Assault:
 - a. A person commits an offense:
 1. If the person intentionally or knowingly:
 - i. Causes the penetration of the anus or female sexual organ of a child by any means;
 - ii. Causes the penetration of the mouth of a child by the sexual organ of the actor;
 - iii. Causes the sexual organ of a child to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; or
 - iv. Cause the anus of a child to contact the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; and
 2. If the victim is younger than 14 years of age.
- 5) Injury to a child:
 - a. A person commits an offense if he intentionally, knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence, by act or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly by omission, causes to a child:
 - Serious bodily injury
 - Serious mental deficiency, impairment, or injury; or
 - Bodily injury.
 - b. An omission that causes a condition described above is conduct constituting an offense under this section if:
 - The actor has a legal or statutory duty to act; or
 - The actor has assumed care, custody, or control of a child.

APPENDIX F

Possible Signs of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Behavioral Indicators

- *Child* is very aware of adults, manipulative, has poor self-concept
- *Child* is self-mutilating, exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide, uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
- *Child* is frightened of parents or going home, exhibits a drastic behavior change when not with parents or caregiver, is overprotective of or responsible for parents
- *Child* is either extremely aggressive or withdrawn, is dependent and indiscriminate in their attachments
- *Child* is uncomfortable when other children cry, generally controls their own crying
- *Child* has behavior problems at school. Exhibits delinquent behavior (such as running away from home)

Physical Indicators

- **Child has unexplained:** bruises or welts (often clustered or in a pattern), and/or unusual burns (cigarettes, doughnut-shaped, immersion lines, object-patterned), bite marks, fractures or dislocations, abrasions or lacerations, wets the bed

Sexual Abuse

Behavioral Indicators

- *Child* is pseudo-mature, exhibits unusual sexual behavior and/or knowledge beyond that which is common for their developmental stage, is promiscuous
- *Child* is reluctant to change clothes in front of others, is withdrawn, is self-conscious, is obsessively clean, engages in fantasy or infantile behavior
- *Child* has poor peer relationships, has problems with authority and rules, is manipulative, has school difficulties, is unwilling to participate in sports activities, exhibits extreme compliance or defiance
- *Child* is self-mutilating, uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs, exhibits eating disorders, exhibits delinquent behavior (such as running away from home), exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide
- *Child* either avoids or seeks out adults, is fearful or anxious

Physical Indicators

- Child has: pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital area, venereal disease, swollen private parts, difficulty walking or sitting, torn/bloody/stained underclothing, vaginal or penile discharge
- Child: is pregnant, experiences pain when urinating, wets the bed.

Possible Signs of Abuse

Neglect

Behavioral Indicators

- *Child* is truant or tardy often or arrives early and stays late, engages in delinquent behavior (such as prostitution or stealing)
- *Child* begs or steals food, is extremely dependent or detached, appears to be exhausted
- *Child* uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs, attempts suicide
- *Child* states frequent or continual absence of parent/guardian

Physical Indicators

- *Child* is: frequently unwashed, hungry, or inappropriately dressed, tired and listless
- *Child*: engages in dangerous activities (possibly because they are generally unsupervised), has unattended physical problems, may appear to overworked and/or exploited

Emotional Abuse

Behavioral Indicators

- *Child* is depressed, is apathetic, is passive, is impatient, exhibits inconsistent behaviors, is excessively anxious, is withdrawn, exhibits aggressive or bizarre behavior, has unprovoked fits of yelling/screaming, exhibits changes in behavior
- *Child* is overly eager to please, has difficulty sustaining relationships, has unrealistic goal setting
- *Child* lacks self-confidence, is self-deprecating and has a negative self-image, sabotages their chances of success, has low self-esteem
- *Child* views abuse as being warranted, is unwilling to discuss problems, feels responsible for the abuser
- *Child* seeks out adult contact, exhibits a gradual impairment of health and/or personality, is unable to communicate or express their feelings/needs/desires
- *Child* attempts suicide, runs away from home

Physical Indicators

- *Child*: has a sleep disorder, wets the bed, exhibits developmental lags (stunting of their physical, emotional, and/or mental growth), is hyperactive, exhibits eating disorders

APPENDIX G

General indicators Of Child Sexual Abuse

- I. Ages 0 – 8 years
 - A. Drawings, pictures or stories with a strong, unusual or bizarre sexual theme
 - B. Overt sexual behavior (individually and/or with peers)
 - C. Withdrawal from peer interaction
 - D. Aggressive behavior
 - E. Extreme fear of being alone with men or boys
 - F. Extreme fear of showers and restrooms (these are common places for sexual abuse to occur)
 - G. Poor attention span – daydreaming
 - H. Poor self-concept
 - I. Aggressive behavior, poor peer relations
 - J. Reluctant or fearful about going home after school
 - K. Frequent absences from school that are justified by one parent only, without apparent regard for the child's school performance
 - L. Appearance or behavior often seems more mature or older than their age mates
 - M. Manipulative behavior
- II. Ages 9 years and older
 - A. Overt sexual behavior
 - B. Withdrawal
 - C. Poor self-concept
 - D. More mature appearance or behavior than their age mates
 - E. Poor attendance and academic performance
 - F. Poor attention span
 - G. Refusal to dress for physical education
 - H. Unwillingness to participate in recreational activities
 - I. Repeated attempts to run away from home by a child who is otherwise not a behavioral problem
 - J. Use of drugs
 - K. Prostitution
 - L. Frequent absences from school that are justified by one parent only, without apparent regard for the child's school performance
 - M. Aggressive behavior toward peers
 - N. Unusual and offensive body odors

APPENDIX H

Suspected Abuse Incident Report Form

Completing this Suspected Abuse Incident Form will immediately activate WCPC's Response Team. All information on this form will be provided on a confidential basis to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

The term "Protected Individual" refers to all minors age birth to 18 years of age protected under WCPC's Protection Policy.

Name of person observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

Street Address of Reporter: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number of Reporter: _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Name(s) of Minor(s): _____ Minor's Age: _____

Name(s) of those Suspected of abuse or causing neglect:

Relationship of the accused to the minor: _____

Date/Place of initial conversation with/report from minor: _____

Minor's statement (quote relevant statements made by the minor):

Describe the minor's demeanor and/or appearance:

What immediate action was taken:

Does anyone else have relevant information? Were there any witnesses?

NAME

PHONE NUMBER

Report Submitted to _____

Reporter's Signature _____ Date _____

Record of Reports of Incident of Suspected Abuse:

Reported to Pastor: _____ Date/Time: _____
Summary: _____

By whom: _____ Signature: _____

Report to minor's parent/guardian: _____ Date/Time: _____
Summary: _____

By whom: _____ Signature: _____

Call to local children and family service agency: _____
Date/Time: _____ Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

By whom: _____ Signature: _____

Call to local law enforcement agency: _____
Date/Time: _____ Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

By whom: _____ Signature: _____

Other contacts: _____
Date/Time: _____ Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

By whom: _____ Signature: _____

Other contacts: _____
Date/Time: _____ Spoke with: _____
Summary: _____

By whom: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX I

How to respond to a child disclosing abuse

- Listen
- Be sensitive to vague disclosures
- Avoid expressing shock or outrage
- Don't threaten or condemn the alleged perpetrator
- Let the child know you believe him/her
- Tell the victim s/he was right to disclose
- Assure the child the abuse was not his/her fault
- Reassure the victim that s/he will be safe
- Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible
- Get as many details as the child is comfortable disclosing
- Write down exactly what the child said
- Follow authorized reporting procedures

APPENDIX J

Sample Paid Staff and Volunteer Training Outline

Protection Policy Training

- I. Protection Policy
 - A. History
 - B. Content
 - 1. Background checks on all members and paid staff involved with minors
 - a. Submit Paid Staff/Volunteer Information Form
 - b. Security of information reported to Church
 - 2. Personal obligations of Paid Staff and Volunteers
 - a. Take training
 - b. Commit no prohibited acts (see policy)
 - c. Consciously practice good personal boundaries
 - d. Report suspected abuse
 - (1). Legal obligation if you have observed abuse or abuse has been disclosed to you
 - (2). More subtle indicators, such as patterns of behavioral changes; ask your program staff person for advice on proceeding
 - (3). How to report
 - (a). First secure the safety of the minor(s)
 - (b). **Do not** confront the suspected abuser
 - (c). Request and complete report form
 - (d). Return copy to designated person
 - (e). Follow guidelines concerning speaking to media, parents, or others
- II. Understanding and Recognizing Abuse
 - A. Definition
 - B. Statistics
 - C. Perpetrators
 - D. Why?
 - E. Myths
 - F. Incest
 - G. Physical Indicators
 - H. Changes in Behavior
 - 1. Those common to all ages
 - 2. Infants to preschoolers
 - 3. Six- to twelve-year-olds
 - 4. Adolescents
 - I. Handling Disclosure
 - 1. Of a child
 - 2. Of an adolescent
 - J. Summation

*Child Protection-
Everyone's Responsibility*

Who Else Has Such a Program?

Many churches have instituted child protection programs such as the one at Webster Presbyterian Church (WPC). Presbytery of the New Covenant, of which WPC is a member, developed guidelines for its churches to use in establishing their own programs. Our policies and procedures are based on the Presbytery of the New Covenant guidelines, with the inclusion of recommendations from the Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network. Much of the format was adapted from a similar policy at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church in Dallas.



For More Information

Contact any member of WPC's Child Protection Policy Task Force for more information:

Bill Dixon
Joe Galvan
Karen Modesett
Joyce Roberts
Laura Shipman
Mary Swan

Child Protection

Everyone's Responsibility



"All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children."
Isaiah 54:13

Spiritual peace is always in jeopardy when children suffer abuse.

Abuse is spiritual matter; it shatters the trust

which is the foundation of faith.

For the faith of our children,

the peace of their parents,

the protection of our teachers,

and the confidence of the community,

we declare Webster Presbyterian Church's commitment to the protection of the children and youth in our care.

Child Protection Policy Task Force

Webster Presbyterian Church
201 W. Nasa Road One, Webster Texas
77598
281/332-1251

Educating the Congregation

The Need for Child Protection

Child abuse strikes children of every age and social background. Statistics indicate that in 95% of the cases abuse occurs in settings where children or youth completely trust adults --- in homes, schools, athletic programs, and most sadly, the Church. Our baptismal vows obligate us to reduce the risk of child abuse ever occurring in our ministries. In order to protect and safeguard the children, youth, people with disabilities, volunteers, and staff, we have taken positive steps to provide a safer environment.

What Does This Mean To You?

Child Protection policies are a normal part of our school systems. Teachers in local school districts, as well as volunteers in organizations serving children, are screened prior to working with Children. Webster Presbyterian Church (WPC) is initiating a similar program to reduce the risk of child abuse.

All staff members, and volunteers (18 years and older) who wish to minister to our children, youth, or people with disabilities on regular basis, must complete the following requirements:

- WPC membership.
- Complete an Information form.
- Agree to a confidential criminal background check.
- Agree to adhere to the conduct required in WPC's Child Protection Policy.

Confidentiality

All screening will remain confidential. Only one minister will see your criminal history except for occasions when one other program staff may be consulted. We are only looking for crimes against children; other incidents in your past will not prevent your participation. All records will be secured in locking files.

Training

All volunteers working with children and youth will be offered training to recognize possible signs of child abuse and how to report potential abuse.

Everyone's Responsibility

In a church, protecting children is everyone's responsibility. Please remember that the purpose of these policies is the physical, emotional, and spiritual health of our children.

In addition, this process will protect our volunteers from false accusations and reduce the church's liability both financially and emotionally. This small sacrifice of personal privacy is a priceless gift to our children and your church community.

We need your support and commitment!

Commonly Asked Questions

Question: Why did we initiate this program when the risk seems so small? Has something happened?

Answer: No... There have been no incidents. We simply have both a moral and a legal obligation to the children and youth of our community that we must uphold, regardless of the risk involved. We want any potential abusers to know that WPC will not grant them easy access to our children.

Question: What if we don't have enough volunteers to serve our children and youth as a result of implementing this program?

Answer: Some people may refuse to answer a call to service, but we are not willing to consider the alternative of not screening our volunteers and exposing our children to higher potential of abuse.

Question: Isn't this program a violation of our implicit trust in one another?

Answer: Our trust level should rise as a result of our caring for our children enough to implement a program of this kind. It declares the level of our commitment to the nurture of our children.

Question: Are clergy and staff in the program?

Answer: Background screening checks will be performed on all clergy and staff, including additional reference checks.

APPENDIX L
Presbytery of New Covenant
Children's Protection Policy Task Force

The members of this Task Force are willing and available to serve you and your congregation as resource people. Each person brought to this effort their talents, expertise, love for children, and love for God. If you are in need of assistance with your church's Protection Policy, please call any of the people listed below.

Denise Wilborn, Chair

Director of Christian Education
Spring Branch Presbyterian
1215 Campbell Road Houston 77055
713-464-7659 (work)
dwilborn@swbell.net

Eileen Graham Moore

Director, Saint Paul Presbyterian Early
Childhood Weekday Ministries
St. Paul Presbyterian
7200 Bellaire Blvd. Houston 77074
713-778-1819 (work)
kk5uo@hal-pc.org

Amanda Gibson

Summer Camp Director
Cho-Yeh Camp and Conference Center
2200 S. Washington Avenue.
Livingston 77351
936-328-3202
amandag@cho-yeh.org

Connie Nyquist

Associate General Presbyter for Equipping
and Connection Ministries
Presbytery of New Covenant
1110 Lovett 77006
713-526-2585 x224 (work)
1-800-444-1278
cnyquist@pbyofnewcovenant.org

Rev. Woody Berry

Pastor
Webster Presbyterian
201 W. Nasa Road 1
Webster 77598
281-332-1251
wberry@clearlasil.net

Karen Billman, M.Ed., L.P.C.

Children & Family Service Specialist
Presbyterian Children's Home
5020 W. Bellfort Houston 77035
713-721-2908(work)
Houston@pctx.org

Andries Coetzee

Youth Director and Assistant to the Pastor
St. Paul Presbyterian
7200 Bellaire Blvd. Houston 77074
713-774-7446 (work)
AJCoetzee@aol.com

Kimberly Stabler

Executive Director
Justice for Children
2600 Southwest Frwy, St 806
Houston 77098
713-225-4357 (work)
kstabler@jfcadvocacy.org

Amanda Morvant

Executive Assistant
Justice for Children
2600 Southwest Frwy, St 806
Houston 77098
713-225-4357 (work)
amorvant@jfcadvocacy.org

Sharon Jones

St Paul Presbyterian (member)
12306 Meadow Hollow
Stafford 77477
281-221-4588 (cell)