

NPC SAFE PRACTICES STANDARDS

ADOPTED BY SESSION JUNE 12, 2016

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Preface: The Session of the National Presbyterian Church affirms the dignity and worth of all persons and is committed to the safety, welfare and protection of all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of the Church. It adopts these **standards** for the purpose of keeping children and youth safe from exploitation and sexual abuse. The practices adopted here seek to balance the security and welfare of the children and the legitimate expectations of privacy of staff and volunteers. Instances of non-compliance will be addressed in the periodic compliance reports from the appropriate directors (see below).

1. Standards for Volunteer Application

- a. **Clean Records Practice:** All volunteers are required to submit to a criminal background check. Confidential reports are kept on file by the Personnel Administrative Assistant.
- b. **Six Month Practice:** All volunteers will be members or actively participating non-members for at least six months.
- c. **Annual Training Practice:** All volunteers will review safety practices and fill out forms. Training takes place in August each year.

2. Standards for Sunday Mornings and Events for Children

- a. **Two Adult Practice:** Two adults will be present in each room at all times. This practice assumes three leaders and/or an adult 'rover' for preschoolers and under, when restroom assistance is needed.
- b. **Open-Door Practice:** Avoid being out of sight by leaving doors open or using doors with a window
- c. **Required Reporting Practice:** Immediately report to staff supervisor any sign of possible abuse.

3. Sunday Morning Check In/Out for Children

- a. **Enrollment:** All new children in the nursery or Sunday School must fill out an enrollment form.
- b. **Nursery + Preschool Sign In:** Children younger than kindergarten must be signed in and out of their classroom/nursery room by a parent or guardian
- c. **Elementary In/Out:** Kindergarten through 5th graders attendance is recorded on an attendance sheet. K-2nd graders wear name tags and must be picked up in the classroom by a parent or guardian. 3rd-5th graders may leave independently with parent permission.

4. Standards for Interaction with Youth

- a. **Two Adult Practice:** All volunteers and teachers are to be accompanied by another adult (non-spouse) when meeting or interacting with students. If another adult is not available, the volunteer must meet with the student in a public place in close proximity to other adults (e.g., restaurant). Staff may meet with individuals alone; however, these meetings must adhere to the Open-Door Practice. *Exceptions may be made (e.g., rides home) only with the prior written consent of parents.*
- b. **Open-Door Practice:** When meeting with students, volunteers and teachers must keep the door to the room in which they are meeting open.
- c. **Transportation:** Staff, volunteers, and teachers may provide transportation to students **but only with parental approval**. However, when a vehicle is parked, all passengers must exit immediately.
- d. **Required Reporting Practice:** Immediately report to staff supervisor any sign of injury or possible abuse. *Confidential records of such conversations will be kept by pastors and reported as law requires.*

5. Accountability

The Associate Pastor for Grow is responsible to the Senior Pastor, to implement these **standards** through the Director of Children's Ministries and the Director of Youth Ministries, who each shall provide compliance reports at least quarterly.

Procedures for Handling Misconduct Allegations

Any issue of sexual and/or emotional abuse or neglect involving a minor, whether perceived or actual, will be dealt with immediately, effectively, and with discretion. Any allegation of abuse or neglect will be addressed to a Pastor, Director of Children's or Youth Ministry, or the Clerk of Session. If appropriate, the church will notify governmental agencies such as the police and Child Protective Services. Proper written documentation of the allegations and proceedings will be maintained.

In the specific case of the complaint being made against any ordained minister, the Clerk of Session should notify the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk of National Capital Presbytery and request guidance on the procedure to be followed in processing the allegation and obtaining a Moderator for the Session. The Clerk shall also notify the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk if allegations have been raised against a member or non-ordained staff person.