

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE  
SAFEGUARDING THE WELL-BEING OF  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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The members of Sewickley Presbyterian Church (SPC) are committed to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children and youth<sup>1</sup> participating in the activities and programs of SPC. This commitment includes the protection of all children and youth from any form of abuse or harassment whether physical, mental or sexual. During each baptism of an infant, child, or adult into this covenant of faith, the members of this church pledge to uphold that person in the spirit of Christ and to teach, strengthen, and support the individual's relationship with the household of God.

In our pledge to sustain one another in the Gospel of Christ, we also undertake the responsibility to preserve the integrity of each person within our household of faith.

It is the policy of Sewickley Presbyterian Church that no child or youth shall be subjected to the preventable risk of any form of abuse or harassment by SPC employees, teachers or volunteers while on SPC property or while engaged in SPC activities or programs at any location. The standards implemented in this Statement of Purpose and Procedure seek to uphold the commitment to the safety of the children and youth of SPC, whether members or guests. Therefore, all SPC activities and programs, regardless of location, involving children or youth, will be subject to the following policy:

- As often as practical, at least two adults who have received their background checks and clearances will be assigned to supervise or lead all activities involving children and youth.
- No person will be approved as a teacher or volunteer leader of children or youth activities until a Volunteer Form has been received and the following has been completed and the person has been a member of SPC for a minimum of six (6) months or the Senior Pastor<sup>2</sup> has recommended waiver of the membership requirement:
  - PA Child Abuse History Clearance:  
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
  - Form:  
[http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/form/s\\_001762.pdf](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/form/s_001762.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> As used herein, the terms “child”, “children”, and “youth” refer to all persons under 18 years of age.

- PA State Police Criminal Background Check:  
<http://www.psp.pa.gov/Pages/Request-a-Criminal-History-Record.aspx#.VLfJjgg-Uk>
- Paper Form:  
[http://www.psp.pa.gov/layouts/download.aspx?SourceUrl=http://www.psp.pa.gov/Documents/Public%20Documents/criminal\\_history/Request%20for%20Criminal%20Record%20Check%20-%20Volunteer%20Only%20-%20SP%204-164a%204.doc](http://www.psp.pa.gov/layouts/download.aspx?SourceUrl=http://www.psp.pa.gov/Documents/Public%20Documents/criminal_history/Request%20for%20Criminal%20Record%20Check%20-%20Volunteer%20Only%20-%20SP%204-164a%204.doc)
- The [Report of Federal Criminal History Record \(fingerprinting\)](#) is required if the volunteer has not lived in PA for the past 10 years. If you have lived in PA for 10 consecutive years a waiver is required to be signed.
- Register: [https://pa-aps.3m.com/perlpub/registration\\_welfare\\_pci.pl](https://pa-aps.3m.com/perlpub/registration_welfare_pci.pl)

### **Screening Process**

Employees, teachers of children and youth, and volunteers for children and youth activities or programs of SPC will be required to complete a Volunteer Information Form in the form set forth in Exhibit “A” attached hereto, providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform criminal and child abuse background checks on each individual, along with FBI fingerprinting or Fingerprint waiver (whichever is necessary). Each new employee, teacher and volunteer for the children and youth activities will be asked to supply two references that can be consulted during the screening process. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children and youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements would be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

A staff person designated by the Session as the “Administrator” and his or her staff will supervise the clearance process. The Administrator will forward to the Senior Pastor any records that are found.

The Administrator will maintain a secured storage cabinet in the Church’s Business Office for all Volunteer Information Forms. The results of the security background checks will be destroyed periodically as required by the guidelines mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Volunteer Information Forms and security background checks will be updated every three years (36 months). Whether disclosed voluntarily or as a result of the security background check, the violations listed below will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership or sponsorship of any children or youth activity or program. If an

applicant disputes information that appears in his or her criminal history record, he or she must follow the procedure as set by the PA ChildLine, PA State Police Criminal Request, or FBI Criminal Fingerprinting.

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<sup>2</sup> As used herein, the term “Senior Pastor” may also refer to the acting Head of Staff, as designated by the Senior Pastor, Session or Presbytery.

### **Violations**

Any indictment alleging, or conviction of, the following offenses under Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code or of an offense similar in nature 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 will result automatically in the suspension of the volunteer in activities with children. Reinstatement of a volunteer will may be reviewed once an alleged indictment is resolved.

- Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide)
- Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault)
- Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking)
- Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping)
- Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint)
- Section 3121 (relating to rape)
- Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault)
- Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
- Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault)
- Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault)
- Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault)
- Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure)
- Section 4302 (relating to incest)
- Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child)
- Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children)
- Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children)
- A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses)
- Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances)
- Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors)
- Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children)
- A felony offense under the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L. 233, No. 64), known as The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, committed within the five-year period immediately preceding today’s date
- The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the above offenses

All applicants must sign and acknowledge that they have an affirmative obligation to notify the Senior Pastor within 72 hours of any arrest, charge, indictment and / or allegation levied against them at any time after their criminal and child abuse background checks have been returned to the Administrator. Applicants also agree and acknowledge that they will voluntarily cease any and all activities with children or youth pending a resolution of the arrest, charge, indictment and / or allegation. If the church becomes aware or has reason to believe that there has been an arrest, charge, indictment and/or allegation, it can require new clearances be run at the cost of the SPC.

All other convictions or charges for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the Senior Pastor, the Administrator, and at the Senior Pastor's discretion, the staff persons responsible for children's and youth activities. These persons will be responsible for determining whether such conviction or charges will disqualify a volunteer from participation in any child or youth activity.

The following acts or omissions are violations of the policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any SPC activity or program. Such acts or omissions should be immediately reported:

- Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a child or youth.
- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a child or youth.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between youth or children.
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or youth.
- Physical neglect of a child, children or youth, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of SPC.
- Emotional or psychological mistreatment of a child, children or youth, including verbal abuse.
- The presence or possession or being under the influence of any illegal drugs.
- The consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in children's or youth functions of SPC.

Any violation of this Policy on the part of any member of the staff, employee, member or volunteer will result in immediate dismissal from participation in all children and youth activities

and programs of SPC. In the case of staff members or employees, any violation of this Policy may result in termination. In accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, any and all reports of abuse will immediately be forwarded to the appropriate authorities. Compliance with the reporting aspects of this Policy does not complete the obligation you may have to report the incident to the Sewickley Police Department or ChildLine.

### **Responsibilities of a Witness to a Policy Violation**

In the event, anyone personally witnesses an occurrence in violation of the Policy or anyone who witnesses such an occurrence should adhere to the following guidelines as to how such a situation should be handled to insure the security of the child or youth involved and to protect against physical, emotional, or psychological injury to all people involved.

### **Guidelines**

- REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY TO CHILDLINE AT 1-800-932-0313 OR FILE ELECTRONICALLY AT [HTTPS://WWW.COMPASS.STATE.PA.US/CWIS/PUBLIC/HOME](https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home)
  - If notifying by telephone, then a CY47 form must be completed and mailed within 48 hours to local Child Protective Services.
- DO NOT LEAVE CHILD, CHILDREN, OR YOUTH ALONE TO REPORT THE INCIDENT.
- DO NOT PERSONALLY CONFRONT THE ALLEGED OR ACCUSED VIOLATOR OF THE POLICY.
- REPORTER MUST INFORM THE PERSON IN CHARGE, TYPICALLY THE Senior Pastor, IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. If the Senior Pastor is not readily available, then the matter should be reported to the designated Head of Staff or the Administrator.
  - Should the activity of concern involve the Senior Pastor, the matter should be reported to the Commission on Ministry of Pittsburgh Presbytery by the Clerk of Session.
- THE SENIOR PASTOR WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH.

**\*\*\* Adopted by Session on 3/14/06 \*\*\***

**\*\*\* Amended by the Christian Education Committee for the Session 5/20/08 \*\*\***  
**2/12/14-Updated draft with childcare issues 31815**

**\*\*\* Amended by the Discipleship and Spiritual Formation Committee 4/14/15 \*\*\***  
**\*\*\* Amended by Laura Mikush 4/23/15 \*\*\***

**Approved by Session 5/19/15**