

# Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church Child / Volunteer Protection Policy

## CHILD / VOLUNTEER PROTECTION POLICY

Jesus showed a deep compassion for children and a strong value of children. Children are more than future adults, they are even now an example of faith for the rest of us. Thus, Jesus welcomed and blessed them.

As followers of Jesus, we also should love, value, and welcome children. Like Jesus, we must cherish not only the faith and openness of children, but also their vulnerability. This vulnerability puts children at risk, but it also places them close to God. Thus, the protection and support of children in the community of faith is very important.

To abuse a child is to take part in the evil in the world. We must take reasonable steps to prevent and bring to an end those things that harm children.

To receive a child in Christ's name is to receive Christ. We must also strive to enhance opportunities for loving trust that enable adults and children to be joyfully linked together as the family of God.

Our task as a community of faith is to demonstrate that we can be trustworthy; we can be a place where children are not betrayed; and where the value of children and adults sharing life and faith together is treasured.





## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church (PHPC) has instituted the following policies and procedures regarding child abuse. It is the responsibility of the Associate Pastor for Christian Education, other pastoral staff, and personnel committee to ensure the implementation of this program.

## **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

Child abuse is defined by federal legislation in the United States as “any recent act or failure to act on the part of parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.” There are four primary types of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect.

For the purposes of this policy, children and youth are collectively referred to as children, meaning anyone under the age of 18. The word “youth” is used when referring to one who is in middle school or high school. The word “minor” is used to indicate those under the age of 18, while “adult” is defined as any individual who is at least 18 years of age.

## **3.0 NEED FOR GUIDELINES**

- I. To aid in the protection of our children, volunteers, staff and church family and to enhance the joy of children in our community of faith.
- II. The state of Georgia requires that reasonable suspicions of abuse and known abuse be reported to the Department of Family and Children Services as soon as possible.

## **4.0 PREVENTION**

### **4.1 SCREENING**

- A. Staff: All employees of Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church, full-time and part-time shall be subject to a criminal background check as a condition of employment. The employees or prospective employees shall complete a disclosure form as shown in Figure 1.
- B. Volunteers: All volunteers who work with minors in any capacity through the programs of our church shall grant permission for a criminal background check by completing a disclosure form as shown in Figure 2.
- C. Background checks may be repeated at any time and shall be repeated every 5 years or per insurance requirements.
- D. The process of screening: After volunteers are recruited and after the background check has been completed, a report will be sent to the Head of Staff and APCE. Results that indicate no criminal activity will be stored at PHPC. The professional screening company will store the results that indicate criminal activity. After consulting, the APCE and pastoral staff may contact those persons with results indicating criminal activity.



## **4.2 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

- A. All volunteers who are in supervisory or oversight positions with children shall be required to read the Child/Volunteer Protection Policy and sign a form indicating that they have read the policy and agree to abide by it. See figure 3.
- B. Annual training will include a review of PHPC's policies and procedures, as well as signs of child abuse annually. The APCE is responsible for ensuring that this training takes place.

## **5.0 CHILD / VOLUNTEER PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **5.1 ADULT SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**

- A. All adult volunteers working with children shall have worshipped at PHPC for a minimum of six months.
- B. At least two adults shall be present at a church event involving the supervision of middle school youth or high school youth.
- C. Two or more adults or one adult and one youth volunteer shall be present at any church function that involves the care of infants, toddlers, preschoolers or elementary- aged children.
  - Some youth volunteers, while outside the care of their own parents, may work as caregivers of younger children. These youth volunteers must be supervised by at least one approved adult.
  - Older elementary children (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders), who wish to help with Extended Session may only volunteer with their parents who are approved.
- D. Adults must obtain written permission from a parent/guardian before going out alone with a child or spending time with a child in an unsupervised situation. See figure 4.
- E. All doors to children's classrooms must have a glass panel which shall remain unobstructed at all times.



## 5.2 REPORTING PROCEDURES

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a minor has been abused shall communicate their belief and the facts substantiating that belief to the Associate Pastor for Christian Education. The APCE will advise the Head of Staff of the allegation of abuse as soon as possible. If the Head of Staff is not available, report will be made to another person on the pastoral staff. If both the reporting party and the APCE agree there is reasonable cause, together they will report the facts to Gwinnett County Department of Family and Children Services as soon as possible.

- A. As soon as possible the APCE, Head of Staff or member of the pastoral staff shall advise the parents of the minor that a report of abuse has been made and DFCS has been contacted (if the abuser is not the parent).
- B. The incident shall be reported by one of the staff members listed above to the church insurance companies, attorney and denominational officials.
- C. PHPC may inform the accused only after DFCS has confirmed the safety of the victim.
- D. The accused shall be treated with dignity and support by the PHPC staff and volunteers.
- E. Efforts will be taken to ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be safeguarded.

If no agreement of reasonable cause is reached between the APCE and the reporting person, the reporting person may report to the authorities unilaterally if they still feel reasonable cause exists. Georgia law provides that any person, who in good faith reports child abuse or neglect as recognized by the law, shall be immune from any liability. Georgia law provides that failure to report reasonable suspicions is a misdemeanor.

In the event that the alleged abuser is the APCE, the report should be made to the Head of Staff. In the event that the alleged abuser is the Head of Staff, the report should be made to the APCE.



## **6.0 NURSERY SECURITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This policy is in addition to the Child Protection Policy. Its purpose is to define the security procedures in place in the PHPC nurseries. This policy and procedure applies to the infant and toddler nurseries.

### **6.2 POLICY**

- A. Two caregivers must be present at all times.
- B. At least one caregiver must be an adult, and the second must be over the age of 14.
- C. All caregivers must wear a name tag.
- D. All parents must provide a cell phone number to caregivers.

## **7.0 PRESCHOOL CHURCH SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Preschool Church School is Church School classes for children 2 years old through 4 years old.

### **7.2 POLICY**

- A. Parents shall locate the child's nametag on the board in the classroom and attach it to the child's clothing. If the family is visiting, they shall create a nametag for the child.
- B. The parents shall take the matching card with them to Church School.
- C. Upon returning to pick-up the child, parents shall present the card to the caregivers.
- D. Caregivers will then place the pairs of cards on the board for storage.
- E. If children remain in the classroom until after worship, parents must return prior to worship to sign the Extended Session notebook located outside the classroom beside the door.



## **8.0 EXTENDED SESSION SECURITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

Extended Session is the care of two year olds through kindergartners during 11:00 worship service.

### **8.2 POLICY**

- A. Parents shall locate the child's nametag in the classroom and attach it to the child's clothing. If the family is visiting, they shall create a nametag for the child.
- B. The parents shall take the matching card with them to worship.
- C. Parents shall also sign the Extended Session notebook located outside the classroom beside the door.
- D. Upon returning to pick up the child, parents shall present the card to the caregivers.

## **9.0 Child Protection Policy Review Policy and Procedure**

### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

This policy shall be reviewed at least every five years, and more frequently as needed.

### **9.2 POLICY**

- A. The Christian Education Committee shall review and suggest changes or updates to the Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church's Child/Volunteer Protection Policy
- B. The Session shall review the CE committee's suggestions and vote on approval of the updates.

*Figure 1: Example of Disclosure Statement Required for Employee / Staff Screening*

*Figure 2: Example of Disclosure Statement Required for Volunteer Screening*

*Figure 3: Example of form confirming understanding of the policy for volunteers*

*Figure 4: Example of Exception to Child Protection Policy waiver*

Updated 11/2016



Figure 1: Example of Disclosure Statement Required for Employee / Staff Screening

### Disclosure and Written Authorization To Obtain a Consumer Report or Investigative Consumer Report

By this document, Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church (PHPC) and Vericon Resources, Inc. disclose to you that they may obtain a consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report for employment purposes as part of a pre-employment background investigation and/or at any time during your employment. "Consumer Reports" may include criminal histories and any other public record or other information related to this position. You have a right to request disclosure of the nature and scope of an investigation and to request a written summary of consumer rights. You will be given a reasonable time in which to dispute any information found in the report if you so choose. FCRA Summary of Rights found at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). My signature below expressly authorizes PHPC and any of its related companies and/or Vericon Resources, Inc. and/or any of their authorized agents to obtain consumer reports and/or investigative consumer reports regarding me for employment purposes as part of the pre-employment background investigation and/or at any time during my employment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The following is my true and complete legal name, and all information about it and my background is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all inquiries on this form are used for identification purposes only in order to conduct a background check that is being conducted for legitimate business reasons, specifically for employment and/or continued employment purposes.

\* Responses to sex, age, and race inquiries are voluntary, and choosing not to respond will not preclude hire or promotion.

Last Name, First Name, Middle Name (PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)		Position Applying For	
Applicant's Signature and Date (required) _____ Date signed: _____		Daytime Phone Number:	

\*Responses to the \* questions are optional and voluntary, for identification only.

Social Security Number	*Date of Birth	*Race	*Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
Former Names and Time Frames			
Current Address	City/State/Zip	County	Dates (Mo/Yr-Mo/Yr)
Previous Addresses (Past 7 Years)			

If you are applying for employment in the state of California, Minnesota or Oklahoma, would you like a copy of the consumer report prepared for you? (CA Civil Code Section 1786.22) \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you are applying for employment or employed in New York, you will be receiving a copy of Article 23-A via your e-mail, along with a Notice that provides direction should you wish to inquire whether an investigative consumer report was requested. The notice contains the name and address of the appropriate consumer reporting agency.

FOR \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICE USE ONLY:

Please complete the following section:

Please Check Services Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal		
Other (please list) _____		
Contact Name and Phone #	Cost Code (optional):	Date

Phone: 770/457-9922  
 800/795-3784  
 Fax: 770/457-5006  
 800/915-1020





Figure 2: Example of Disclosure Statement Required for Volunteer Screening

**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

As part of its volunteer process, Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church (PHPC) obtains a consumer or investigative consumer report on individuals interested in volunteering. The information contained in these reports may be used to deny an individual an opportunity to volunteer or to restrict a volunteer's activities. The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) provides you with the right to request a disclosure of the nature and scope of the investigations requested. You may also request a written summary of your rights under the FCRA as prepared by the Fair Trade Commission (FTC).

**VOLUNTEER CONSENT FORM TO RELEASE INFORMATION**

I hereby authorize PHPC and/or Vericon Resources, Inc. and/or any of their authorized agents to obtain a consumer or investigative consumer report on me. I understand this information is gathered at any time during my association as a volunteer for PHPC. These reports may include, but are not limited to criminal histories, and any other public record or other information related to this volunteer position. I release all persons, business entities and government agencies; whether public or private, from any liabilities for having furnished such information. I understand all inquires on this form are used for identification purposes only to gather the above information accurately and will not be used to discriminate against me in violation of any law. I realize submission of false information on this form may result in non-selection or dismissal.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The following is my true and complete legal name, and all information about it and my background is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all inquiries on this form are used for identification purposes only in order to conduct a background check that is being conducted for legitimate business reasons.

\* Responses to sex, age, and race inquiries are voluntary.

<b>Last Name, First Name, Middle Name (PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)</b>	<b>Former Names and Time Frames:</b>
<b>Signature and Date (required)</b> _____ Date signed: _____	<b>Daytime Phone Number:</b>

<b>Social Security Number</b>	<b>*Date of Birth</b>	<b>*Race</b>	<b>*Sex</b> <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
<b>Current Address</b>	<b>City/State/Zip</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Dates (Mo/Yr--Mo/Yr)</b>
<b>Previous Addresses (Past 7 Years)</b>			

**FOR PHPC OFFICE USE ONLY:**

*Please complete the following section:*

<b>Please Check Services Requested:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal		
Other (please list) _____		
<b>Contact Name and Phone #</b>	<b>Cost Code (optional):</b>	<b>Date</b>

Phone: 770/457-9922  
 800/795-3784  
 Fax: 770/457-5006  
 800/915-1020







*Figure 3: Example of form confirming understand of the policy for volunteers*

I have received a copy of Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church's Child / Volunteer Protection Policy.

I have read it and will abide by it.



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Participant's Name

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Volunteer position (Nursery /  
Extended Care, Church School Teacher,  
Youth Advisor, etc.)

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Signature

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Date

Please sign and return form to the Associate Pastor for Christian Education.



*Figure 4: Example of Exception to Child Protection Policy waiver*

Parental Permission Form for Exception to the Child Protection Policy

I understand that two adults will not be present with my child and I give my permission for this exception to the Child/Volunteer Protection Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Event or Occasion

\_\_\_\_\_  
Accompanying Adult's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daughter's/Son's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date