



Derry Church

PRESBYTERIAN (USA)

248 East Derry Road, Hershey, PA 17033 • 717-533-9667 • derrypres.org
Derry Presbyterian Church proclaims God's word, shares God's love, and practices God's justice.

SAFE CHILDREN POLICY

(Approved by Session on August 17, 2022)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the safety and well-being of children & youth and foster a culture of safe practices. Its intent is to reduce the risk of abuse. By using practical procedures, we will protect those under our care and show respect for our caregivers. The development of this policy is a responsibility of the Session of Derry Presbyterian Church ("DPC"). Its implementation is the responsibility of the designated staff and volunteers.

2. DEFINITIONS

Abuse: Child abuse includes any action or lack of action that endangers or harms a minor's physical, psychological or emotional development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

- Physical abuse – non-accidental physical injury to a minor, such as hitting, shaking.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury to a minor, such as constant criticism, humiliating punishments, lack of nurturing or love and security.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a minor and an adult or between a minor and another minor at least four years older than the victim, such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a minor of essential needs, such as food, water, shelter and medical care.

Adult: A person 18 years of age or older.

Child: A person under the age of 18.

Children's Activity: Any activity or program in which children are under the supervision of staff or volunteers to include Derry Discovery Days.

Compliance Officer: A person designated by the Christian Education Committee of DPC to monitor compliance with this Policy.

Parent: Shall mean any parent or legal guardian.

Person(s) Required to Report Child Abuse: All staff and volunteers who are involved in working directly with children.

Staff: Any adult paid employee of DPC.

Volunteer: Adult who provides unpaid services involving direct contact with children and accepts responsibility for the care of children.

3. FORMS and BACKGROUND CHECKS

Any volunteer who has not been a church member for a minimum of 6 months will be screened via an interview with the Christian Education Committee or its designate prior to volunteering with children. Church membership is not a requirement to volunteer.

As mandated by the State of Pennsylvania (PA) under Act 153, appropriate background checks shall be required for those serving in the positions listed in Appendix C of this Policy and will be treated by DPC as volunteers for purposes of this Policy.

All background checks shall be completed prior to volunteering. All volunteers must submit clearances (background checks) as follows:

- PA Child Abuse History Clearance
- PA State Police Criminal Record Check
- FBI Criminal Background Check and History Record, required if the volunteer has lived in PA for less than 10 consecutive years; this also includes fingerprinting
- Children Volunteer Application and Disclosure Statement every 5 years, which needs to be signed and witnessed by someone other than a direct relative. This form also satisfies the requirement for volunteers who have been residents of PA for 10 consecutive years or more to affirm that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under Pennsylvania Title 23 Chapter 63 Section 6344(c).

The PA Child Abuse History Clearance and State Police Criminal Record Check are to be renewed every five years, or as required under Act 153.

Clearances and FBI Criminal Background Check costs are ordinarily paid by the volunteer. Volunteers who face financial hardship may seek reimbursement for their costs from the Compliance Officer.

All staff are required to submit background checks as follows:

- PA Child Abuse History Clearance
- PA State Police Criminal Record Check
- FBI Criminal Background check, which includes fingerprinting.

- Children Volunteer Application and Disclosure Statement every 5 years, which needs to be signed and witnessed by someone other than a direct relative.

Background check costs will be reimbursed by DPC for current employees. Successful or “clear” background checks are a condition of employment for all staff positions or as reviewed and approved by the Pastor. All newly employed Staff are required to complete their clearances before working (*See Appendix A, Completing Clearances*).

Background check records are confidential. If the background check is not “clear,” the report is to be reviewed by the church staff member associated with the volunteer’s activity, the Compliance Officer and the Pastor, or Head of Staff. An “unclear” background check may refer to a prior conviction of a felony, sex crime, identification as a perpetrator of child abuse or a drug offense.

Persons who admit to or plead guilty to or are convicted in a court of law of any form of physical or sexual abuse of a child will be immediately, permanently, and completely disqualified by the Safe Children Compliance Officer. Persons who admit to a Pastor or the Chief Compliance Officer any type of physical or sexual abuse of a child but who have not appeared in a court of law will be disqualified from working with the children/youth in the congregation.

4. TRAINING

DPC will conduct regular training related to this Policy. All volunteers must attend a training session(s), as conducted by DPC, in order to serve as a volunteer.

All staff are required to complete training on the Safe Children Policy.

5. HEALTH RULES and GUIDELINES

The following represents DPC’s guidelines for the health and safety of children. All staff and volunteers agree to be bound by this Policy and its guidelines.

The Children & Youth General Information & Medical Form is required to ensure that the church has appropriate information needed in case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete the form. A new form must be completed at the beginning of each school year or when any of the information changes.

The Children & Youth General Information & Medical Form and Children & Youth Medication Order Form must stay on file with the Children’s Ministry Coordinator (Nursery-5th grade) and Associate Pastor for Youth and Families (6th-12 grades). Outdated forms will be shredded on a periodic basis.

Medications and Allergies

DPC will not administer prescription or non-prescription medications to children; exceptions may be granted by the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families.

If the child is involved in an extended DPC event or overnight trip, a Children & Youth Medication Order Form must be completed and signed by the child's parent or guardian prior to the event, and the medication must be in its original packaging.

If the child has a life-threatening condition (such as asthma or severe allergies) and it is necessary to have lifesaving medication on hand at all times, it should be noted on both the Children & Youth General Information & Medical Form and the Children & Youth Medication Order Form.

To protect those with food allergies, parents and children should not eat in or near the classrooms or the Nursery, unless eating foods provided by teachers or Nursery volunteers.

Children with Symptoms

Children with the following symptoms should not be placed in DPC's care:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Accidental Injuries to Children

If a child is injured under the care of DPC, the following steps will be taken:

- Apply first aid to minor scrapes, bruises, etc. and notify the child's parent.
- Contact the parent for injuries needing treatment beyond first aid. If warranted, call an ambulance.
- Complete an incident report and notify the DPC insurance company about any injuries requiring medical attention.

6. NURSERY

Parents must check their children in and out of nursery. They must sign in their children in order to receive a pager. When pagers are returned, the children are released to parents.

The nursery facility is available by arrangement at least two weeks prior to an event by contacting the church office. Our safety standards require that two non-related nursery care providers must be present to operate the nursery. At least one of these must be a Derry Church qualified caregiver. Both must be adults over the age of 18. A fee for the nursery care provider is required. (Please review the *Impact Fee Schedule*.)

7. SAFETY RULES and GUIDELINES

Ordinarily, two volunteers or one volunteer and one staff member shall be present at all times during any program or event involving children, including the nursery. When volunteers are related (e.g., a husband and wife), a third volunteer should be present.

- **Two Adult Rule:** A minimum of two unrelated adults shall be present at any activity. There should be at least 3 volunteers who are not related for lock ins.

No child(ren) shall be alone with an individual adult, either on church premises or in any church-related activity. Church staff and volunteers must obtain written consent of the child's parent before any one-to-one meeting, travel, or other situation where the child is alone with the adult.

Children to Adult Ratios

Ratios are used to ensure adequate protection and safety for our children and should inform how many staff and volunteers are needed for church activities based on the anticipated number of participating children and the age of the children.

Desired Ratio of Adult to Children	Age of Children
1 to 4	Up to 12 months
1 to 5	12 months through 23 months
1 to 6	24 months through 35 months
1 to 10	36 months through 60 months
1 to 12	Kindergarten through 3 rd grade
1 to 15	4 th grade through age 17

When traveling, the minimum number of adults should be increased. This is required due to the possibility of needing to leave an adult behind with a child who has an emergency.

Parental Consent

Parental consent is required for all activities for children and youth occurring on or away from DPC premises. The Children & Youth Permission Slip must be completed before the child may participate in any approved activity either on the church premises or elsewhere. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete it. A new form must be completed at the beginning of each school year.

Safety Steps

The following steps will be taken by volunteers and staff:

- Activities involving children will take place in rooms with unobstructed glass in doors or doors will be standing open.
- Weekly attendance is taken for all children and youth classes for Church School and Kids In Worship Instruction (KIWI)
- Children ages 2 years through grade 5 are released only to a parent or guardian.
- As a courtesy to those using the Nursery or classrooms, please silence your cell phones to ensure everyone can focus on the teachers' and volunteers' instructions

Social Media

Social media posts are never private! Protect confidential information at all times and be judicious in what you are posting.

- All parents must either give or not give written permission to use or not use photos of their children.
- Permission is given by completing the Derry Presbyterian Church Children & Youth Ministries Permission Slip.

Restroom Guidelines

Guidelines for children below kindergarten:

- If available, children should use a classroom bathroom. If an in-classroom bathroom is not available, then two or more children should be escorted to the hallway bathroom.
- A child should never be taken to a hallway bathroom alone.
- The volunteer or staff should check the bathroom first to be sure it is safe and then allow children to enter.
- The volunteer or staff should remain outside the bathroom door and then escort the children back to the classroom.
- If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the volunteer or staff should open the door and call the child's name. If the child asks for help, the volunteer or staff should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as they help the child.

Guidelines for children between kindergarten and 5th grade:

- If available, at least one female volunteer or staff should escort girls to the bathroom.
- If available, at least one male volunteer or staff should escort boys to the bathroom.
- The volunteer or staff should check the bathroom or bathroom stall first to see that it is safe and then allow children to enter.
- The volunteer or staff should remain outside the bathroom door and then escort the children back to the classroom.

Regardless of age, adults should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with a closed door or closed stall.

Children who would like bathroom privacy (e.g., LGBTQ or special needs) should be accommodated. Please use one of 3 private bathrooms located throughout the church. Staff and volunteers must always strive to minimize the stigmatization of any participant and maximize social integration for all.

Transportation

Transportation to and from church-related activities is the responsibility of the families of the participants. Church personnel transporting children and youth for church-related activities, whether in a personal vehicle or in the church van, shall follow the "Two Adult Rule" unless prior written approval has been obtained from the parent or guardian.

With the exception of siblings, children aged 16-17 shall not drive other children either from or to church-sponsored activities.

Behavioral Guidelines

When minors are in a facility for any function, they must be under the control of their Parents, Staff or Volunteer at all times. Minors are not permitted to roam freely outside or inside the church property.

Respect, safety and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact between volunteers and children. It is important for the volunteer to have an awareness of how a child or youth react and interact with them. This includes verbal and non-verbal reactions. A child should

not feel uncomfortable by a volunteer's action. When lending a hand, volunteers should seek the child's permission first by asking if they can help. Never make a child uncomfortable. Below are guidelines that are intended to help children feel safe and comfortable:

- Brief hugs or side hugs
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Pats on the shoulder, back or head
- Handshakes, high-fives, and fist bumps
- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms of children
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Holding hands during group prayer

The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children in a ministry setting:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Holding older children on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
- Touching knees or legs of children
- Wrestling with children
- Tickling children
- Piggyback rides
- Any action making children or youth uncomfortable (e.g., excessively stroking hair, long strong hugs)
- Any form of unwanted affection

It is the policy of DPC not to administer corporal punishment, even if the parents have given permission or requested it. Absolutely no spanking, grabbing, hitting or physical discipline of children is permitted.

Clear rules, expectations and consistent messages about behavior are the key to effective discipline. Occasionally, children have trouble following the rules or display disruptive behavior. In these cases, the following steps will be taken:

- Attempt to redirect children to another activity.
- With children old enough to understand, talk with the child and state clearly what the problem behavior is and what the child should do instead.
- If the child continues to exhibit problem behavior, then the volunteer should discuss the behavior with the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families or the Children's Ministry Coordinator and they will determine the appropriate action.

Overnight Trips

If children participating in overnight trips include both males and females, the adults shall include both sexes. Exceptions may be approved only by the CE Committee or the Head of Staff.

If accommodations require minors and/or adults to share rooms or sleeping spaces, parents/guardians shall be informed ahead of time. Unless directly related to each other, adults shall not occupy the same bed as a minor.

It is expected that chaperoning adults will:

- Use separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the children.
- Use separate dressing facilities.
- Ensure that no cot or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.
- Collect written permission from parents to allow child(ren) to double up in bed.

It is expected that the Team Leader will:

- Carry the 800 Child Safety number with them at all times.
- Know whether or not each participant has given permission to allow their photograph to be taken and used.
- Ensure that children who have additional bathroom and/or sleeping privacy needs (e.g., LGBTQ or special needs) are accommodated. Private sleeping rooms and/or use of a private bathroom may be required.

Mission Trips and Volunteers Working with Refugees

All volunteers must abide by this Policy, including the requirement to obtain clearances and background checks regardless of whether they will or will not directly interact with children. Volunteers must ensure that private information is not made publicly available and refrain from posting images and information on social media without explicit permission.

Use of Facilities by Outside Organizations

Outside groups and organizations using the church facilities for activities that include children must either abide by this Policy or demonstrate that their own policy and procedures meet the minimum requirements of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law. For those organizations using their own policy, they must submit it to the Safe Children Compliance Officer for review and approval before using the church facilities. The Safe Children Compliance Officer will be looking to ensure that the outside organizations policy includes the following, but not limited to:

- PA Criminal Clearance
- PA Child Abuse Clearance
- FBI Clearance and fingerprinting, if the volunteer has lived in Pennsylvania for less than 10 consecutive years
- Completion of a Disclosure Statement
- Adhere to the 2 Adult Rule
- Deliver and attend training

This includes activities that are indoor or outdoor and provided on a recurring basis.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Any staff member or volunteer who becomes aware of suspected abuse of a child in their care must do the following:

1. **Immediately report suspected abuse** to ChildLine by calling 1-800-932-0313 or electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.
2. Report the suspected abuse to the Head of Staff (Pastor) or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families. If the Pastor or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families is not available or is allegedly involved, a report should be made to the Clerk of Session.
3. Write down word for word what the minor said, using the minor's words, and do not editorialize. (*See Appendix B, Procedures for Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect*)

Any staff member or volunteer who is arrested or convicted of an offense that constitutes grounds for denying working with children or youth shall provide written notice within 72 hours to the Pastor and Compliance Officer.

9. FORMS

All forms are located on the church website at: Derrypres.org → Education → Children and Youth page → section on Essential Forms. These include:

- Children & Youth Volunteer Application and Disclosure
- Children & Youth Ministries Permission
- Children & Youth General Information & Medical Form
- Children & Youth Ministries Medication Form

To ensure the safety and protection of Safe Children documents and related forms for staff and volunteers they will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Only the Financial and Office Manager and the Safe Children Compliance Officer will have direct access to the files.

LIST of APPENDICES

- A. Completing Clearances and Background Checks
- B. Procedures for Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect
- C. Designated Volunteer Positions

Appendix A - Completing Clearances and Background Checks

All staff and volunteers must complete both the Child Abuse History Clearance and PA State Police Criminal Record Check.

Before you begin, be sure to have your own email address as results will be sent to the address on file.

The PA Child Abuse History Clearance and the PA State Police Criminal Record Check can be applied for electronically. All necessary instructions and links to apply for these clearances can be found at www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov:

- Select Get A Clearance.
- Scroll down to and click on Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS).
- This will take you to the Child Welfare Portal and then follow the instructions.
- You will be asked to create a user ID. Be sure to write this down and save for the next step.
- A temporary password will be created for you and sent to your email address. You will be asked to login again with your temporary password to change to a permanent password to complete your clearances.
- You might find it helpful to have printing capabilities and print certain pages for reference, such as your user ID and answers to security questions.

PA Child Abuse History Clearance

Before you start, you should have the following information readily available to help you complete your application:

- At least one, or as many as you can collect of your past addresses where you have lived, including the county.
- Names of all individuals with whom you live with including parents, guardians, siblings, and spouses.
- Any previous names you have used or have been known by (e.g., maiden name).

PA State Police Criminal History Clearance

Before you start, you should have the following information readily available to help you complete your application:

- Paper to take notes
- Ability to print results

Submit a record check, read information and then either accept or decline, and select volunteer.

- You will be asked to type your data and then enter. The same screen appears: enter the same information as the first screen and then enter finished.
- Once the screen where your information appears, print the Record Check.

FBI Criminal Background Check and fingerprinting

All necessary instructions and links can be found at www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov.

- In the upper right-hand corner of the home page select GET A CLEARANCE
- Scroll down to “FBI Digital Fingerprinting” and click on **IDEMIA**
- Upper right-hand corner “Get Fingerprinted” – Select PA and in upper right-hand corner select Digital Fingerprinting
- The Volunteer Code is **1KG6ZJ**
- Select “Schedule or Manage Appointment”
- Enter demographic information and for proof of identity, enter your name exactly the same as on your driver’s license or for non-US citizens your passport
- Have an email address where your appointment confirmation will be sent
- Helpful to have your calendar with to make your appointment
- For the section asking for Employer Information – do not enter, as you are completing this for volunteer purposes. Leave information blank and hit Continue

Your registration/receipt is valid for 90 days. If the registration/receipt is not used within 90 days, it will be automatically cancelled.

The current cost is \$21.35 and pay at time of appointment. Payment may be made by credit card.

Appendix B –Procedures for Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

In the event of an incident of alleged Child abuse, the following procedures shall be followed.

As outlined in Section 8, any staff member or volunteer who becomes aware of suspected abuse of a child in his or her care **must immediately report suspected abuse** to ChildLine by calling 1-800-932-0313 or electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

- It is encouraged to make reports via the website as once the report is made, no further action is required.
- Reports made via the 800 number also require a subsequent written report.
- Whether the report is made electronically or in writing after calling the 800 number, a copy of the report needs to be sent to the Compliance Officer.

The staff or volunteer must report the suspected abuse to the Head of Staff Pastor or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families. If the Pastor or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families is not available or is allegedly involved, a report should be made to the Clerk of Session.

The Pastor or Clerk of Session will notify the child's parent or guardian, unless the suspected perpetrator is the parent or guardian.

If the alleged abuse involves a staff member, then the alleged perpetrator will immediately be placed on paid leave and instructed to remain away from all church properties during the investigation. If the staff member is found guilty of the alleged abuse, he or she will be terminated immediately.

If the alleged abuse involves a volunteer, then the alleged perpetrator will immediately be instructed to remain away from all church activities involving children during the investigation.

Civil authorities will be notified, and DPC will comply with all state reporting requirements.

The Compliance Officer will notify the DPC insurance company, and an incident report will be completed.

If the media is involved, DPC will seek legal counsel before responding to the media or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of DPC should not speak to the media.

Pastoral visits will be arranged for those who request them.

Appendix C – Designated Volunteer Positions

In compliance with Derry Presbyterian Church Protection of Children Policy and Procedures, the following unpaid positions have been designated as Adult Volunteers by the Christian Education Committee.

As of August 17, 2022: Volunteers with direct contact: with children:

Boys & Girls Club tutoring drivers
Choir accompanists
Choir directors
Church School administrators
Church School teachers
Confirmation Class mentors
DivorceCare for Children leaders
Drivers (to any program)
Intergenerational event leaders
Kids In Worship Instruction (KIWI) leaders
Krislund Traveling Camp volunteers
Lock-in chaperones
Mission Trip participants
Mission Week volunteers
Nursery volunteers
Pilgrim Fellowship leaders
Puppet leaders
Retreats including middle school and high school chaperones and drivers
Summer Festival of Gifts event leaders
Sunday Funday leaders
Terrific Tuesday volunteers
Vacation Bible School volunteers
Volunteers working with Refugees
Youth Advisors