

**CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION
BEST PRACTICES
AND OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Trinity Presbyterian Church

Revised 2018

Best Practices and Operating Procedures

- 1) Both to protect children in situations in which abuse could occur and to protect TPC employees and volunteers from false accusations of child abuse, TPC employees and volunteers shall observe the following procedures in their interaction with children and youth.
 - a) During all church-sponsored activities involving children, TPC employees and volunteers shall avoid situations where they would be alone and out of sight of other adults with a single child. In situations where it is necessary for an employee or volunteer to be alone with a child, the employee or volunteer should notify another adult before and after the period during which he/she is alone with the child. Specifically, the employee or volunteer should:
 - (1) provide information to another adult beforehand regarding the reasons for being alone with the child;
 - (2) provide information afterwards to the other adult as to the nature of the interaction with the child; and
 - (3) leave inside doors open and attempt to be within sight of another adult.
 - b) During any on-campus church-sponsored activity involving a group of children where only one employee or volunteer is present, that employee or volunteer shall leave inside doors open.
 - c) At least two employees or volunteers shall supervise all church-sponsored activities occurring off-campus and/or overnight. This rule may be eased when an adult transports several children in a single vehicle or in a convoy of vehicles traveling to or from an event. Upon request, the Child Protection Committee may ease the two employee or volunteer requirement for off-campus or overnight activities if other adults will be close by and able to observe the activities of the group.
- 2) Restroom supervision:
 - a) TPC employees and volunteers shall always use proper supervision when children are using public bathrooms to ensure their safety.
 - b) If TPC employees and volunteers are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
- 3) TPC employees and volunteers shall respect the rights of children and youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Adults shall discourage children from touching others in an inappropriate manner.

- 4) TPC employees and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children entering the program. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported pursuant to Section V of this Policy.
- 5) TPC employees and volunteers should dismiss children as parents or legal guardians authorize.
- 6) No TPC employee or volunteer shall use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or be impaired by legally prescribed drugs during working hours or church sponsored programs.
- 7) TPC observes a No Smoking policy.
- 8) TPC adults communicating with youth through social media should follow the Social Media Guidelines.
- 9) TPC will not tolerate bullying. Bullying, an act that diminishes the image of God in the other, not only creates an unsafe environment but is counter to the Christian community we seek to create. Those working with children and youth should remain vigilant in their awareness of the different types of bullying that can occur: physical, verbal and cyber, and swift in their response.
- 10) TPC employees and volunteers shall not use profanity, inappropriate language, or inappropriate jokes in the presence of children.
- 11) TPC employees and volunteers shall not share inappropriate details of their personal life or ask children to share inappropriate details through any form of communication.
- 12) TPC employees and adult volunteers shall not date church sponsored program participants who are under 18 years of age.
- 13) TPC employees and volunteers shall not give gifts to individual children or youth without the knowledge and permission of their parents.
- 14) TPC employees and volunteers shall read, sign and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse, and they shall attend training sessions on child protection as their TPC supervisor may require.
- 15) TPC employees and volunteers shall report to the Pastor any circumstances under this policy that may affect their ability to work with children and youth.
- 16) Anyone with safety or conduct concerns that do not involve child abuse should report such concerns as soon as they arise to the appropriate adult leader or program staff. These concerns could include:

- child and youth safety during transportation to or from a church sponsored activity;
- unsafe behavior, such as inappropriate swimming conduct, during a church sponsored activity;
- inappropriate adult conduct during church sponsored activities, such as inappropriate language, dress, or discipline; poor leadership; or substance abuse;
- inappropriate child or youth conduct, language, dress, or discipline; poor leadership; or substance abuse during a church sponsored activity;
- observations of inappropriate class or group conduct during Children and Youth Programs;
- lack of adherence to the Children and Youth Protection Policy in the absence of suspected abuse; or
- potentially inadequate, inappropriate or unwise leadership of children and youth activities.

17) The Child Protection Committee recognizes that a volunteer or staff member responsible for a particular program may from time to time have someone who is not formally recognized as a volunteer assist with the program. For instance, the Minister of Music often has older youth assist with the children's choir, as this is a good way to keep youth involved in the life of the church. In any such instances, the trained staff and trained volunteers remain responsible for ensuring that the Policy and Best Practices are followed, and the staff and volunteers should remain present with the children at all times.

18) While caring for young children every effort should be made to have the appropriate number of caregivers attending the children.

a) The same number of caregivers present upon drop-off should remain in attendance and if age groups are divided parents should be made aware of the plan to accommodate the children in separate rooms.

Emergency Care:

- The Automated External Defibrillator is located at the bottom of the stairwell between the cloister and Administration building to have access to both the sanctuary and the rest of the campus.
- Due to the increased use of Epi-Pens to treat allergies such as bee stings and peanut ingestion, teachers, employees, and volunteers need to be able to use this simple device which some allergic children carry. All participants should receive a tear-off sheet explaining the three-step instructions. These instructions will be posted in classrooms as well. An Epi-Pen trainer is available for practice. Participants can borrow a DVD demonstrating the use of this device.

Parents must first alert the volunteer or employee that his or child has an Epi-Pen available. The Church does not have Epi-Pens on hand.

Social Media Guidelines for staff, volunteers, and youth:

Engaging with youth using social media can be a healthy way to cultivate positive relationships and maintain communications using the tools that youth are using. Digital communication technologies allow extending the care and welcome of the church beyond the physical walls. Yet social media is a rapidly changing communication tool, and the risk of inappropriate sharing or the blurring of appropriate boundaries between youth and adults is ever-present. Trinity takes care to protect the safety and privacy of youth in digital communication by recommending the following guidelines:

- Use good sense in all communications. Think twice before saying or sharing anything via social media or digital communications. Could this comment be misconstrued? Would you be comfortable if it were shared or read by others?
- Texts should include a third party in the communication whenever possible. ie. text parent prior to asking something of a youth or include parent in text
- Online communications with youth should be mutually agreed to. Online communications with children should be with the approval of parents/guardians.
- Avoid platforms that automatically delete content (like SnapChat).
- If you accept a social media connection from one youth, you should accept all requests on that platform from other youth.
- A youth might openly share thoughts and feelings online, but take great care when responding. Be a good listener, but be careful in expressing your own feelings via digital communication. A good rule of thumb is to limit what you share to *information*.
- Follow the church's policy regarding sharing photos or images. Permission to post photos of children and youth is assumed unless the parent/guardian opts out in writing. Care is taken not to identify children by name, although parents and youth sometimes share, tag, or post identifying information themselves.
- We recognize that social media is a rapidly shifting technology, and we resolve to pay close attention to its development and advise volunteers and staff on its use accordingly.
- Social media refers to any digital communication, including email, texting, digital messaging, and connections through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, ShapChat, and any other online or mobile application-based platform.