

SAFETY AND ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." Mark 9:35-37, ESV

"Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalm 82:3-4, ESV

Psalm 82 reminds us that when God sees, He does something. God's heart is bent toward the helpless. He sees the weak, the afflicted, the abused, the neglected. The curse of sin has taken its toll. But God is working. He has given us the redemption through Jesus offered to all. He has given us the Spirit to make this redemption manifest today. And He has given us His church to be a light in a dark world, protecting those in her trust, and offering hope to the hopeless.

Tragically, this has not always been the case in churches. Whether it is negligent care by volunteers, or malicious sexual or physical abuse, children and youth have been put in harm's way in churches – all types of churches. Neglect and abuse cuts across all social lines. Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child or youth, the family, the church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the emotional, legal, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse or negligence.

It is our prayer that God continues to protect the children within West End Presbyterian Church from harm. While the policies below are an effort to do just that, we acknowledge that it is the Lord who is our strong tower and refuge, not a policy.

Purpose

West End Presbyterian Church's purpose for establishing this Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy (SAAPP) and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our covenant children and youth.

Policies

As a community of faith and a Presbyterian Church in America congregation, we seek to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as that of our volunteer ministry leaders.

Ministry staff will review, and update if needed, this Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy no less than every two years.

2. DEFINITIONS OF IMPORTANT TERMS:

Adult: a person at least 18 years of age.

Appropriate conduct: conduct that one could reasonably assume would be acceptable and permissible by the child and/or youth's parent(s) or guardian(s) and the Session of West End Presbyterian Church.

Child or Youth: a person under 18 years of age.

Child abuse: harm or threatened harm to a child or youth's health or welfare which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury; through neglect or abandonment; failure to provide adequately; or committing or allowing to be committed any sexual act, molestation, exploitation, or disseminating, exhibiting, or displaying pornographic material to children. (For definitions of terms according to the code of Virginia, see Appendix A)

Neglect: the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm.

Sexual abuse: engaging in any sexual contact with a child; the sexual exploitation or molestation of any person, and/or disseminating, exhibiting or displaying pornographic materials regardless of whether such conduct is with or without the knowledge or consent of the other person. Sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. It includes sexual behaviors involving touching, such as fondling, as well as penetration, intercourse and rape. It also includes sexual behavior that does not include touching, such as sexually suggestive comments, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, displaying pornographic materials, and allowing children or youth to witness sexual activity.

Staff member: any person serving at West End Presbyterian Church in an official paid capacity. Any paid worker in Children's ministry must be 14 years or older.

Volunteer ministry leaders: persons giving leadership in the children's ministry, neighborhood outreach ministry and/or youth ministry of West End Presbyterian Church. This does not include leaders of other churches or partner ministries.

3. VOLUNTEER SCREENING:

3.1. SIX-MONTH RULE:

- 3.1.1.** Every volunteer ministry leader will have been a member of West End Presbyterian Church for a minimum of six months prior to working with our children and/or youth.
- 3.1.2.** The appropriate staff member has the right to waive the six-month rule at any point if deemed necessary and prudent.
- 3.1.3.** A person who is not a member of the West End Presbyterian Church may serve as a volunteer ministry leader at the discretion of the appropriate staff member. They will still be required to wait six months prior to working with our children and/or youth.

3.2. VOLUNTEER APPLICATION:

- 3.2.1. Every volunteer ministry leader working with children or youth will complete a written volunteer application with references. See attached ministry volunteer applications (Appendices B, C and D).
- 3.2.2. All potential volunteer ministry leaders may be searched on the Virginia sex offender registry.
- 3.2.3. At his or her discretion, the ministry staff member will order a criminal background check on any volunteer ministry leader. Prior to this background check, the potential volunteer ministry leader will complete a background check release.
- 3.2.4. All applications and applicant information will be kept in a confidential location in the church office.

3.3. VOLUNTEER TRAINING:

- 3.3.1. All volunteer ministry leaders will be required to attend a training meeting which will include a presentation of this Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy and information pertaining to recognizing signs of abuse and inappropriate behavior. At this time, volunteer ministry leaders shall sign and turn in a “Code of Ethics” (Appendix E).
- 3.3.2. This Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy as well as the Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy Exam (Appendix F) will be given at the time of application. Successful completion of the exam is required of all volunteer ministry leaders.

4. SUPERVISION

"They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain. . . " Isaiah 11:9

The kingdom of God is described in a variety of ways throughout the Bible, perhaps none so picturesquely and with so much vivid imagery as in the book of Isaiah, chapter 11. It's a beautiful and harmonious scene, culminating in the quotation above. This passage describes not only relationships within the whole of God's creation, but also human relationships.

The fall of the human race into sin and the depravity that resulted have destroyed God's original design and intent for this world and especially for our relationships. While it is true that sin in general affects the whole of human life, few sins tear at the fabric of relationships with as much human misery and pain as the sin of abuse. Abuse distorts the image of God, devalues human beings created in His image, and devastates its victims.

The biblical record realistically portrays the presence and results of abuse among the people of God (see, for example, the story of Amnon and Tamar in 2 Samuel 13). Where such abuse is perpetrated by spiritual leaders within a congregation, there is not only a terrible perversion of power, but enormous spiritual damage results.

Yet the Bible's message is not one of despair, but of hope! In Christ, God's world is restored, and God's kingdom comes. In His life on earth, Christ was the embodiment of righteousness, justice, peace, reconciliation, and love. Through His death, He redeemed His church; by His Word and Spirit, He calls and equips us to model His kingdom until it comes in all its completion and glory.

The church is responsible for becoming a safe community that confronts sin, particularly the sin of abuse. The church seeks to bring healing to its victims and help to its perpetrators. It consciously works for the prevention of all abuse.

4.1. Temporary Custody and Care

- 4.1.1.** Parents or guardians of children or youth are responsible for the supervision of their children while in the building of West End Presbyterian Church and on its grounds, until such time as the child or youth is released to the temporary custody of a volunteer ministry leader as part of a ministry program.
 - 4.1.1.1.** If a parent leaves a child or youth unsupervised in the building of West End Presbyterian Church or on its grounds, the volunteer ministry leaders will not be responsible for the child or youth's safety, behavior or actions.
- 4.1.2.** Children or Youth should never be left unattended by a volunteer ministry leader.
- 4.1.3.** Volunteer ministry leaders are to release children or youth in their custody only to parents, guardians, or persons specifically authorized to pick up the child.
- 4.1.4.** If possible, this transfer of temporary custody should be in written form.

4.2. Standards of Conduct

4.2.1. Prohibited Conduct

To achieve the goal of preventing any forms of abuse or the potential of false allegations of abuse, staff members, volunteer ministry leaders or any church member ministering to children or youth whether paid or volunteer shall not engage in any of the following conduct with ministry participants whether consensual or non-consensual:

- abuse of any kind, including neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse;
- sexual exploitation or molestation;
- disseminating, exhibiting, or displaying pornographic material;
- hitting, kicking, slapping or shoving;
- selling, giving, or furnishing any child or youth with any tobacco substance, alcohol, or controlled drug;
- demonstrate any romantic or sexual interest in a child or youth;
- remove any dress clothing from another person, except when appropriately required under necessary circumstances;
- wear anything but appropriate attire in the presence of others, especially children or youth;
- kiss any child, youth or non-family member on the lips or in an intimate area;
- extended or inappropriate hugging or embracing;
- sleep in the same bed or bedding with any child or youth;
- remain in any building, room, motor vehicle or private place with a child or youth except as permitted in this policy;
- assist any child or youth in the rest room except as permitted in this policy;
- deny anyone, who is not a threat to a child or youth, access into a room, vehicle, or other place in which you are present with a child or youth.

4.2.2. Permitted Conduct

It is quite natural, appropriate and desirable for Christians to express and share their love and affection for each other and Christ. This sharing is essential for healthy emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals, and for the growth and development of a loving and caring Christian community such as West End Presbyterian Church. This sharing of love is especially important to children and youth for their normal, healthy, and happy growth and development. The expressing and sharing of one's Christian love to a child, youth or another adult member shall not be considered abuse or be in any way prohibited, restricted or limited by this policy. The following conduct by a staff member, volunteer ministry leader or any other church member whether paid or volunteer shall be considered to be an expression of this Christian love and not abuse or even creating the appearance of abuse:

- verbally expressing one's Christian love and affection to another;
- appropriately holding and comforting another person;
- occasionally and appropriately hugging or embracing another person, especially when initiated by the other;
- sharing emotional and spiritual concerns with another person;
- providing necessary medical care and attention to another person;
- encouraging another member to appropriately express and share their Christian love.

4.3. Recognizing Abuse

4.3.1. You may learn of abuse in these three ways.

4.3.1.1. **Disclosure:**

A child has broken through secrecy, fear, and shame and has chosen you as the person he or she trusts enough to tell. Honor that with attention, compassion and belief. Listen calmly and openly. Tell the child you believe him/her. Don't ask leading questions about details. Seek the help of a professional who is trained to talk with the child about sexual abuse.

4.3.1.2. **Discovery:**

You've witnessed an abusive act by an adult or youth with a child, or you know by some other way that abuse has taken place. For example, a friend or coworker may have told you something definitive. In cases of disclosure or discovery, report immediately to local law enforcement or to child protective services in the county in which the child lives.

4.3.1.3. **Suspicion:**

You've seen signs in a child, or you've witnessed boundary violations by an adult or youth toward a child. Suspicion means, at a minimum, you need to set some limits or ask some questions. The following lists include general characteristics of abuse victims. Any one indicator does not necessarily mean that abuse has occurred. They may also indicate stress or anxiety in a child or youth. However, if a number of indicators are present, it is wise to consider the possibility of abuse.

4.3.1.3.1. Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises or welts (bruises in various stages of healing - different colors, old and new scars together).
- Unexplained burns (cigarette, etc.).
- Unexplained broken bones.
- Unexplained cuts or scrapes.
- Unexplained stomach injuries.
- Unbelievable explanations of injuries or claiming no knowledge of the source of injury.
- Exhibits habit disorders (sucking, biting, eating disorders).
- Fears adults; shrinks away from touch.
- Afraid to go home.
- Bald spots and scalp bruises (caused by hair pulling).
- Human bite marks.
- Fears parent(s) or care giver.
- Overly aggressive or withdrawn.
- Seeks more than average amounts of affection from other adults.
- Lags in emotional and intellectual development.

4.3.1.3.2. Possible Indicators of Neglect

- Under-fed or constantly hungry.
- Constantly unclean/poor hygiene.
- Unattended medical needs.
- Growth rate below normal.
- Begging or stealing food.
- Lack of supervision.
- Constantly fatigued or listless.

4.3.1.3.3. Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse/Neglect

- Speech problems.
- Slow mental or emotional growth.
- Anti-social or destructive behavior.
- Dramatic emotional swings.
- Low self-esteem.
- Slow physical growth.
- Habit of sucking, biting, or rocking.
- Long-term depression.
- Loss of appetite.

4.3.1.3.4. Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Unusual knowledge of or interest in private parts.
- Bed-wetting.
- Depression or withdrawn behavior.
- Poor relationships with other children and/or youth.
- Acting out adult sexual behaviors.
- Indirect hints that allude to problems
- Pain or itching around private parts.
- Stomach-aches.
- Sleep problems.
- Sudden behavior changes.
- Reluctance to go to the bathroom.
- Anxiety, irritability, constant inattentiveness.

4.4 Abuse Reporting Procedures

4.4.1 In the cases of disclosure and/or discovery of abuse, contact the ministry leader and the authorities immediately. Remember:

Few reported incidents are false.

You do not need proof to make a good faith report to authorities.

Do not interview the child personally. Just report what he/she tells you.

4.4.2 The ministry staff member will complete the Abuse Report Form (Appendix G) and make a report of the disclosed or discovered abuse to the Teaching Elders.

4.4.3 In the case of suspected abuse:

4.4.3.1 Any suspected abuse will be reported immediately to the ministry staff member.

4.4.3.2 The ministry staff member will complete the Abuse Report Form (Appendix G) and make a report of the suspected abuse to the Teaching Elders.

4.4.3.3 Any reasonable suspicion of abuse should be reported to the authorities as soon as possible by the ministry staff member or volunteer.

5. INCIDENT PROCEDURES:

5.1 Injuries

5.1.1 Any volunteer ministry leader who becomes aware of an injury to a child, youth, or other volunteer ministry leader will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.

5.1.2 In the case of a minor injury of a child or youth, first aid should be given as needed and the child or youth's parent or guardian should be notified when he/she picks up the child or youth.

5.1.3 Any injury which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. If a child or youth, the parent or guardian of the injured child or

youth should be immediately notified, along with a WEPC staff member. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.

- 5.1.4 After any injury in which first aid was applied, an “Incident Report Form” (Appendix H) should be filled out and returned to the appropriate staff member.

5.2 Illness

- 5.2.1 People who are ill, have recorded a fever, or have a communicable disease which can be transmitted by cough or by touch, should not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
- 5.2.2 Volunteer ministry leaders who are ill should contact the appropriate ministry staff member or director as soon as possible to assist in finding a replacement.
- 5.2.3 Should a volunteer ministry leader feel that a child or youth may have a fever, the parent(s) should be contacted immediately. If necessary, the child or youth will need to be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.

5.3 Building Emergencies

- 5.3.1 The Deacons have established the WEPC Statement on Emergency Preparedness.
- 5.3.2 These procedures should be reviewed by all volunteer ministry leaders.
- 5.3.3 An evacuation map should be posted in each room.

6. MINISTRY SPECIFIC POLICIES:

6.1 Children’s Ministry:

6.1.1 Two-Person Rule:

- 6.1.1.1 At least two unrelated volunteer ministry leaders should be present at every children’s ministry program, at least one of whom is an adult.

6.1.1.2 **TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION, CARE WILL BE TAKEN TO ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM RATIOS (MINIMUM 2 ADULTS IN EACH ROOM):**

- **Infants** (*0–12 months*): Two babies to one adult
- **Toddler** (*12-24 months*) Four toddlers to one adult
- **Toddler** (*2-3 years*) : Five children to one adult
- **Preschool** (*4 years old*): Eight children to one adult
- **Kindergarten** (*5–6 years old*): 10 students to one adult
- **Elementary** (*1st – 5th grade*): 15 students to one adult

6.1.2 Diapers / Bathroom:

- 6.1.2.1 All male and female children aged 0 – 5 will be diapered or assisted in the bathroom by a female adult.
- 6.1.2.2 For children aged 6 - 10, at least one adult female should take girls to the restroom, and one adult male should take boys to the restroom.
- 6.1.2.3 The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe and then wait outside the restroom for the children.
- 6.1.2.4 If possible, the volunteer ministry leader should bring at least two children.

6.1.3 Discipline:

According to Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 4:7, the goal of discipline is to produce repentance and to bring forth godliness. Because sin will abound in any room, even those with children, one of our primary responsibilities is to attempt to bring repentance (and reconciliation when dealing with two or more children). And because we are dealing with children, a subsequent responsibility is to alert the parent(s) of the involved children.

6.1.3.1 Classroom Procedures:

- 6.1.3.1.1 STEP 1: *Instruction in the Gospel.* Discipline is simply another outworking of the Gospel. Without a basis of God's redeeming work in this world, then discipline will either be too harsh or too lenient.
- 6.1.3.1.2 STEP 2: *Admonish the child* (Matthew 18:15, Galatians 6:1). Speaking in love, verbally convict the child of his/her sin. Redirection may be used to minimize sinful behavior.
- 6.1.3.1.3 STEP 3: *Time Out.* If the admonishment is rejected, or if the sinful behavior continues, then the volunteers have the discretion to use a form of "Time Out." This can include the isolation of the child (within the classroom and under supervision), or isolating an activity or a toy, for a suitable amount of time.
 - 6.1.3.1.3.1 * Volunteer ministry leaders are never to physically discipline anyone, or use any form of punishment intended to produce shame or abasement.*
- 6.1.3.1.4 STEP 4: If this discipline is rejected, and the child is unrepentant and/or uncontrollable, then the parent(s) may be asked to remove the child from class that day.
- 6.1.3.1.5 STEP 5: For recurring problems, the parent(s), the volunteer ministry leaders, and the Children's Ministry Director should work together to restore the child. This may include required attendance by the parents or a period of suspension.

6.1.3.2 Care must be taken to protect the reputations of children. When dealing with a disciplinary situation, only the parent(s) of the involved child(ren) need to be contacted. Volunteer ministry leaders or staff members are not to speak about discipline cases to anyone uninvolved. If a parent takes issue with any discipline, they should contact the Session of WEPC.

6.1.4 Allergies:

- 6.1.4.1** Food allergies are common and may represent a significant health concern for some infants and children. Parents are asked to provide any allergy information for each child, especially when it is life-threatening. This information will be made available to volunteers.
- 6.1.4.2** In order to avoid inadvertent allergen exposure, WEPC will provide pretzels and water as a snack in most cases. In a few of the younger nurseries, Cheerios and water may be given.
- 6.1.4.3** An ingredients list should be made available to any parent.
- 6.1.4.4** Volunteer ministry leaders may occasionally bring in other food or provide a different snack, but in those cases parents will be alerted at least a week in advance.
- 6.1.4.5** If a child with allergies brings in his/her own snack, volunteer ministry leaders should closely monitor the food.

6.2 NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH:

6.2.1 The Tension in Interpersonal Ministry

The opportunity for a church member, whether child, youth or adult, to share confidentially his or her private and personal concerns with another member or ministry leader can contribute significantly to his or her spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Indeed, this may be the only time when a person may be willing to disclose any abuse and/or personal struggle he or she may be suffering. Such private and confidential meetings and conversations are an integral part of a caring and loving Christian community.

On the other hand, such private meetings and conversations create an environment with a risk for potential abuse situations to arise. They create an opportunity for: (1) abuse to occur, (2) a false appearance that abuse may be occurring, and/or (3) a false, but difficult to refute, allegation that an incident of abuse did occur.

Thus, there is a tension between two valuable objectives designed to reach a common ministry goal. A proper balance is difficult to achieve with any set of policies or guidelines, especially given the variety of circumstances and relationships that may exist. The notification rule and guidelines for private meetings, conversations and/or counseling exist to create the context for this important interpersonal ministry while serving to protect those who are ministering and those who are receiving ministry.

6.2.2 The Notification Rule

It is strongly encouraged that at all regular neighborhood outreach ministry meetings there be at least three people present, preferably two unrelated adults and one child or youth. Any one-on-one meetings between volunteer neighborhood outreach ministry leaders and children or youth will be governed by the standards of conduct in this policy, and require an advance email notification sent to notify@wepc.org including the child or youth's name, date, times and purpose for the meeting.

Note: The WEPC Neighborhood Outreach Ministry does not have a two-person rule in which a child or youth must always be accompanied by at least two adults. If a volunteer neighborhood outreach ministry leader is prohibited from meeting alone with individual children or youth, this prohibition does not allow for opportunities for leaders to build trusting relationships with children or youth which are crucial for effective ministry. The notification rule is intended to protect both the volunteer neighborhood outreach ministry leader and the child or youth. No volunteer neighborhood outreach ministry leader may meet with a child or youth without advance notification. Without this provision a two-person rule would be necessary.

6.2.3 The Tutoring Location Rules

Tutoring ministry is an hour a week one-on-one session between a West End Presbyterian Church Neighborhood Outreach Ministry volunteer and a child or youth. This tutoring session will be governed by the standards of conduct in this policy and requires in addition to the notify rule a prior signed waiver statement of a parents or a guardian of the youth or child acknowledging that this ministry is a one-on-one meeting. Thus allowing WEPC volunteers

and the tutor to meet with their children or youth in a room with an open door or with a see through glass window.

By signing the waiver statement, parents are acknowledging that tutoring will not always be in a populated place. WEPC may not be able to guarantee the meeting to be in a populated location. As a result, tutoring will be governed by the open door policy and the notify rule policy after a parent or a guardian of the youth sign the waiver statement. The open door policy allows tutors to meet with students in a room next to other tutors who are tutoring at the same time. Under this policy all tutors are required to leave their doors opened while they are in session. The notify rule requires all tutors to send a notification email to notify@wepc.org prior to their meeting indicating the time and location of their tutoring.

6.3.3 Guidelines for Private Meetings, Conversations and/or Counseling

Before engaging in a private meeting or conversation with a child or youth, every staff member and volunteer neighborhood outreach ministry leader should weigh and balance the following considerations:

Location. Private conversations can be conducted more safely in public and populated locations. If possible, all conversations should be conducted in a public place, easily accessible to others.

Necessity. If the conversation does not involve confidential matters, but is generally "small talk", it is not necessary to be alone in a private location.

Relationship. The leader should have a good, healthy relationship with the other person. Private conversations and meetings should be avoided if any romantic interests start to develop.

Gender issues. Private meetings and conversations with persons of the opposite sex are more prone to abuse and the appearance of impropriety.

Frequency. Frequent private conversations can create difficulties in a child's or youth's healthy development or lead to dangerous relationship dynamics among adults.

Ability of the Leader. If a person's spiritual or emotional needs are significant, the leader should refer him or her to the pastor or to a professional counselor. One should not overestimate one's own counseling abilities.

Reliability. Consider the emotional stability and maturity of the individual. If lacking, private meetings with that person may be dangerous because such individuals may create the highest risk of false accusations.

Appearance. Maintain an appropriate appearance at all times. Remember, words and conduct that you may consider to be appropriate at the time can subsequently be made to appear inappropriate or sinister.

Substance of conversation. The substance of the conversation should be appropriate at all times.

Touching. Although hugging another person in a public location when several others are present may be appropriate, physical contact in a private, isolated location creates a high risk of being misconstrued and should be avoided.

6.3 YOUTH MINISTRY:

6.3.1 The Tension in Interpersonal Ministry

The opportunity for a church member, whether child, youth or adult, to share confidentially his or her private and personal concerns with another member or ministry leader can contribute significantly to his or her spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Indeed, this may be the only time when a person may be willing to disclose any abuse and/or personal struggle he or she may be suffering. Such private and confidential meetings and conversations are an integral part of a caring and loving Christian community.

On the other hand, such private meetings and conversations create an environment with a risk for potential abuse situations to arise. They create an opportunity for: (1) abuse to occur, (2) a false appearance that abuse may be occurring, and/or (3) a false, but difficult to refute, allegation that an incident of abuse did occur.

Thus, there is a tension between two valuable objectives designed to reach a common ministry goal. A proper balance is difficult to achieve with any set of policies or guidelines, especially given the variety of circumstances and relationships that may exist. The notification rule and guidelines for private meetings, conversations and/or counseling exist to create the context for this important interpersonal ministry while serving to protect those who are ministering and those who are receiving ministry.

6.3.2 The Notification Rule

It is strongly encouraged that at all regular youth ministry meetings there be at least three people present, preferably two unrelated adults and one youth. Any one-on-one meetings between volunteer youth ministry leaders and youth will be governed by the standards of conduct in this policy, and require an advance email notification sent to notify@wepc.org including the youth's name, date, times and purpose for the meeting.

Note: The WEPC Youth Ministry does not have a two-person rule in which a youth must always be accompanied by at least two adults. If a volunteer youth ministry leader is prohibited from meeting alone with individual youth, this prohibition does not allow for opportunities for leaders to build trusting relationships with youth which are crucial for effective youth ministry. The notification rule is intended to protect both the volunteer youth ministry leader and the youth. No volunteer youth ministry leader may meet with a youth without advance notification. Without this provision a two-person rule would be necessary.

6.3.3 Guidelines for Private Meetings, Conversations and/or Counseling

Before engaging in a private meeting or conversation with a youth, every staff member and volunteer youth ministry leader should weigh and balance the following considerations:

Location. Private conversations can be conducted more safely in public and populated locations. If possible, all conversations should be conducted in a public place, easily accessible to others.

Necessity. If the conversation does not involve confidential matters, but is generally "small talk", it is not necessary to be alone in a private location.

Relationship. The leader should have a good, healthy relationship with the other person. Private conversations and meetings should be avoided if any romantic interests start to develop.

Gender issues. Private meetings and conversations with persons of the opposite sex are more prone to abuse and the appearance of impropriety.

Frequency. Frequent private conversations can create difficulties in a child's or youth's healthy development or lead to dangerous relationship dynamics among adults.

Ability of the Leader. If a person's spiritual or emotional needs are significant, the leader should refer him or her to the pastor or to a professional counselor. One should not overestimate one's own counseling abilities.

Reliability. Consider the emotional stability and maturity of the individual. If lacking, private meetings with that person may be dangerous because such individuals may create the highest risk of false accusations.

Appearance. Maintain an appropriate appearance at all times. Remember, words and conduct that you may consider to be appropriate at the time can subsequently be made to appear inappropriate or sinister.

Substance of conversation. The substance of the conversation should be appropriate at all times.

Touching. Although hugging another person in a public location when several others are present may be appropriate, physical contact in a private, isolated location creates a high risk of being misconstrued and should be avoided.

7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Section 63.2-100 of the Code of Virginia defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 years of age whose parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care:

- 1) Causes or threatens to cause a nonaccidental physical or mental injury.
- 2) Causes or threatens to cause a nonaccidental physical or mental injury during the manufacture or sale of certain drugs.
- 3) Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care.
- 4) Abandons the child.
- 5) Fails to provide adequate supervision in relation to the child's age and level of development.
- 6) Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child including incest, rape, fondling, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.
- 7) Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person who is not related to the child by blood or marriage and who is required to register as a violent sexual offender.

Reporting

Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect; however Section 63.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* requires that designated professionals who have contact with children immediately report their suspicions. It is not necessary to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. **Reports can be made by calling your local social services department or the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.**

Reports can be made anonymously. If you choose to provide your name, it will not be released to the family who was reported, except by Court order. Persons reporting in good faith are immune from civil and criminal liability pursuant to Section 63.2-1512 of the *Code*.

What to Look Out For

This is covered in Child Safety Training. And can also be found at the VA Department of Social Services website: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

Today's Date:

APPENDIX B

**WEST END PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

Thank you for volunteering for a position in Children's Ministries at West End Presbyterian Church! In order to provide a safe environment, not only for our covenant children but also for our volunteers, we require this application to be completed before you begin in ministry.

West End Presbyterian Church will check your references, and reserves the right to conduct a criminal background check.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

All Children's Ministry volunteers should be members of West End Presbyterian Church. Are you currently a member of West End Presbyterian Church? _____

****All potential Children's Ministry volunteers must submit to a Criminal Background check.**

What church(es) have you attended in the last five years, apart from West End Presbyterian?

Church	Location	Pastor's Name
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

In which area of children's ministry do you desire to become involved? _____

Previous children's ministry volunteer or employment experience (if not at West End Presbyterian, give location). Please continue on back of this sheet, if needed:

Date(s)	Organization	Program	Contact

Please briefly describe one way you are currently growing in your knowledge and love of Christ:

Can you make a one-year commitment to this volunteer role? _____

Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children and/or youth? _____

What qualities or special interests do you have that would help you work with children and/or youth?

Have you at any time ever:

- Been arrested for any reason? Yes No
- Been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any crime? Yes No
- Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation or abuse? Yes No

Are you aware of:

- Any traits that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others? Yes No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others? Yes No

If the answer to any of these question is “yes,” please explain in detail on the back of this page.

As a volunteer in Children’s Ministry at West End Presbyterian Church, you will be required to attend one training session on child safety policies, and to complete this child safety training session within twelve weeks of beginning your involvement in ministry. Occasional periodic volunteer training sessions may also be required.

Do you agree to attend these sessions? Yes No

References: Please list two personal references (people not related to you by blood or marriage) and provide a complete address and phone information for each. References are completely confidential, but will be checked.

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Relationship to reference: _____

Children's/Youth Work Verification and Release

I recognize that West End Presbyterian Church is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on this Children's Ministry Volunteer Application. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that the information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize the organization to contact any person or entity listed on this Children's Ministry Volunteer Application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide West End Presbyterian Church with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release West End Presbyterian Church and any such person or entity listed on this Children's Ministry Application from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize West End Presbyterian Church to conduct a criminal background investigation if such a check is deemed necessary.

I have carefully read the policy and procedures of West End Presbyterian Church, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth assigned to my care or supervision at all times.

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C



**leadership
application**

**West End Presbyterian
Church**

9008 Quioccasin Road
Richmond, VA 23229

phone: 804.741.6562

fax: 804.741.8884

<http://www.wepc.org>

Thank you for volunteering for a position in the Youth Ministry at West End Presbyterian Church! In order to provide a safe environment, not only for our students but also for our volunteers, we require this application to be completed before you begin in ministry. West End Presbyterian Church will check your references and reserves the right to conduct a criminal background check.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening phone: _____ Email: _____

****All potential Youth Ministry volunteers will be screened using the Virginia Sex Offender Registry.****

Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? _____ Please write a brief testimony on the last page.

Are you currently a member of West End Presbyterian Church? Yes No

How long have you attended West End Presbyterian Church? _____

What church(es) have you attended in the last five years other than West End Presbyterian?

Church	Location	Pastor's Name
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Occupation: _____ Title (if student, area of study): _____

Employer: _____

In which areas of youth ministry do you desire to become involved? _____

Previous youth ministry volunteer or employment experience (if not at West End Presbyterian Church, please give location):

Date(s)	Organization	Program	Contact

Special interests, hobbies, and skills: _____

How much time (i.e. number of hours or number of evenings, afternoons, etc.) can you commit to this ministry per week? When? _____

In light of your other time commitments, what priority will youth ministry have in your schedule? _____

Why would you like to volunteer to work with youth? _____

What qualities do you have that would help you work with youth? _____

Have you, at any time, ever:

- Been arrested for any reason? Yes No
- Been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any crime? Yes No
- Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation or abuse? Yes No

Are you aware of:

- Any traits that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others? Yes No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," please explain in detail on a separate page.

As a volunteer in the Youth Ministry at West End Presbyterian Church, you will be required to attend one training session on safety and abuse prevention policies, and to complete this training session within twelve weeks of beginning your involvement in ministry. Occasional periodic volunteer training sessions may also be required. Do you agree to attend these sessions? Yes No

Do you understand that we are teaching students to remain pure sexually until marriage, and do you recognize that your lifestyle is an example to the students you will work with and therefore see the importance of being sexually pure yourself? Yes No

Do you affirm that this lifestyle is true of you at this time? Yes No

Do you agree to let the church know if that situation changes, and to step down from your responsibilities in the Youth Ministry until these issues are resolved. Yes No

References: Please list two personal references (*people not related to you by blood or marriage*) and provide complete address and phone information for each in order that they may be sent a written reference form. References are completely confidential, but will be checked.

1. Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
 Email (if known): _____
 Relationship to reference: _____
 (Staff Use) Reference checked by: _____ Date: _____

2. Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
 Email (if known): _____
 Relationship to reference: _____
 (Staff Use) Reference checked by: _____ Date: _____

Verification and Release

I recognize that West End Presbyterian Church is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on this Youth Ministry Leadership Application. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that the information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I authorize the organization to contact any person or entity listed on this Youth Ministry Leadership Application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide West End Presbyterian Church with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications.

I voluntarily release West End Presbyterian Church and any such person or entity listed on this Youth Ministry Leadership Application from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize West End Presbyterian Church to conduct a criminal background investigation if such a check is deemed necessary.

I have carefully read the policy and procedures of West End Presbyterian Church, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the youth assigned to my care or supervision at all times.

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Personal Testimony

Applicant Checklist (for staff use)

Interview Date: _____ Name of Interviewer: _____

Reference Checks: ___ #1 ___ #2 ___ interviewing elder ___ church

Comments: _____

Observation Period: _____ Start Date: _____ Ministry Position: _____

Special Restrictions:

___ Handbook ___ SAAPP Training

Confirmed with Applicant: Date: _____ by: _____

Follow up evaluation date: Date _____ comments: _____

APPENDIX D

West End Presbyterian Church Neighborhood Outreach Ministries Volunteer Application

This survey is to be completed by all those desiring a ministry position involving the supervision or custody of minors. It is being used to help the church provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for those children and youths who participate in our programs and use our facilities. All information given on this application will be kept in strict confidence. Thank you.

Name: _____ Date: _____
Last First Middle

Present Address: _____
Street
_____ City State Zip

Home Phone: _____ Social Security #: _____

Permanent Address: _____
Street
_____ City State Zip

Permanent Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ Marital Status: _____

Current Occupation (if student: school and year): _____

Employer: _____ Title: _____

Part-time work: _____ Languages Spoken: _____

Birth Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year (optional) _____

Person to notify in case of emergency: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Please circle your response:

Are you a member of West End Presbyterian Church? Yes No

Are you a member of another church? Yes No

How long have you been a member? _____

How long have you attended WEPC? _____

Please list (both name and address) the other churches you have regularly attended in the past 5 years:

Please list any other WEPC ministries in which you are involved:

Are you currently in a Home Fellowship Group or a Bible Study? _____

If so, who are your leaders? _____

Please fill in the following information. If you need to use additional paper to complete your responses, please do so.

Please give a brief testimony of your faith: _____

Please briefly describe how you are growing in your knowledge and love of God: _____

Please describe why you are interested in serving with WEPC's Neighborhood Outreach Programs, and please describe the primary gifts you bring to the ministry:

What volunteer and/or leadership experience have you had with children and youth?

List and gifts, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you to work with children and youth:

*The questions, below, are part of our application process in order to help provide a safe and secure environment for our youth. All information is held strictly confidential by West End Presbyterian Church's staff. Answering 'yes' to any of the questions below may **not necessarily preclude your involvement** with Neighborhood Outreach Ministry Programs. Thank you for your cooperation.*

Please circle your response:

Have you ever been convicted for use or sale of drugs? Yes No

Have you ever been arrested for any criminal offense, excluding minor traffic violations? Yes No

Have you ever been accused, arrested, or convicted of any sexually related crimes (including attempted molestation of a minor)? Yes No

Have you ever been accused, arrested, or convicted of any abuse related crimes? Yes No

Have you ever been a victim of:

physical abuse?	Yes	No
sexual abuse?	Yes	No
verbal abuse?	Yes	No

Oftentimes, we do not think about why we do what we do. Know for sure that the children and youth you spend time with will mimic what you do. The following questions if included to get you to think about your lifestyle and actions. The question is not intended to imply that there is a prescribed standard which qualifies you for ministry:

Are there any circumstances involving your lifestyle or your background that would in any way hinder you from your ability to work with youth? Yes No

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please explain:

West End Presbyterian Church
Neighborhood Outreach Ministries
Personal Reference Form

Please fill out the following two pages of reference information. We request that your references meet the following qualifications:

- *At least 18 years old*
- *Not related to you*
- *Someone who has known you for 3 or more years*

If you are a member of West End Presbyterian Church, please list the names of the elders who interviewed you for membership: _____

If you are not a member of WEPC, please submit three references. If you are a member, please submit three references. ALL volunteers must sign the statement, below.

Reference #1:

Name: _____ Years known: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Relationship: _____

Staff Use Only: Reference checked by: _____ *Date:* _____

Reference #2

Name: _____ Years known: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Relationship: _____

Staff Use Only: Reference checked by: _____ *Date:* _____

Turn Over Please.

Reference #3

Name: _____ Years known: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Relationship: _____

Staff Use Only: Reference checked by: _____ *Date:* _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge, and I authorize West End Presbyterian Church to check my references. I authorize any references, churches, or other organizations listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children and youth. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations to you, provided they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf. I also authorize West End Presbyterian Church to conduct a police record check if it is required for the position for which I am applying in order to comply with the West End Presbyterian Church's Neighborhood Outreach child protection statement. (If this check is needed, it will be necessary to sign a separate authorization form.) I understand that the personal information will be held confidential by the pastoral church staff.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

CODE OF ETHICS FOR VOLUNTEER MINISTRY LEADERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I belong to Christ and He belongs to me. Because of this basic truth, and as part of the promise made at baptism to love, pray for, encourage, instruct, and sustain the children at West End Presbyterian church, I will help fulfill that vow by being faithful in my commitment to the children/youth to whom I am responsible. Believing that God is calling me to serve children or youth in this congregation . . .

1. As I am teaching/supervising/leading children or youth I will seek the welfare of the children/youth physically, socially, educationally, and spiritually.
2. I will also try to understand and respect the child's/youth's individual background.
3. I will give the parents/guardians full information about the ministry I am teaching/supervising/leading, and what time it begins and ends.
4. I will arrive on time and be prepared for the activities to which I have committed.
5. I have read West End Presbyterian Church's Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy. I understand it, and I will live by it in my participation in West End Presbyterian Church's children's ministry, neighborhood outreach ministry, and/or youth ministry.
6. I will not do anything that will damage a child's or youth's trust. I will try to protect the child/youth from all forms of abuse while he or she is in my care.
7. If I suspect that a child/youth may be hurt by the abusive behaviors of another person I will report that suspicion to the appropriate ministry staff person so that it can be investigated properly.
8. If a child/youth consistently behaves in an unacceptable manner, I will seek help from the appropriate ministry staff member, parents/guardians and others to assist me in responding to the child/youth.
9. If a child/youth is distressed, I will try to offer comfort and help. I will encourage them to find the appropriate help for their needs.
10. I will pray regularly for each child/youth and let them know that I care about them.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy Exam

You may use WEPC's Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy to answer these questions.

You can find the Policy at www.wepc.org/grow/children/

Please return your completed exam to the church office.

1. The purpose of our SAAPP is to demonstrate our commitment to the _____ and _____ of our covenant children and youth.
2. What/Who is our only refuge? _____.
3. Can sexual abuse be non-violent? _____.
4. Can I work with children even if I'm not a member? If so, what must I do? _____.
5. When a family (children and parents) enters the doors of the church building, who is responsible for the safety of the children at that moment? _____.
6. When does a volunteer leader receive temporary custody of a child or youth? _____.
7. What are three examples of prohibited conduct: _____, _____, & _____.
8. Should a volunteer leader ever hug or show affection to a child or youth? _____.
9. What is one possible indicator of physical abuse? _____.
10. What is one possible indicator of neglect? _____.
11. What is one possible indicator of sexual abuse? _____.
12. If I suspect a child is being abused, who should I contact? _____.
13. Authorities should be contacted immediately if: _____.
14. Can a child or youth participate if he/she has a fever? _____.

Children’s Ministry ONLY

1. Children 5 and under should be helped in the bathroom or diapered by a(n) _____.
2. Children aged 6 and older should be taken to the bathroom by a(n) _____.
3. How many children should a worker try to take to the bathroom at one time? _____.
4. Is physical discipline ever appropriate in a ministry setting? _____.
5. What should you do when a child is unrepentant and/or uncontrollable? _____.
6. What is done to protect the reputations of children? _____.
7. What must be done in order to bring in special food for your class?
_____.

Neighborhood Outreach and Youth Ministry ONLY

1. Can I ever meet with a child or youth privately? _____.
2. What must I do before I meet with a child or youth privately? _____ and _____.
3. What are the ten guidelines for private meetings? _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, and _____.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of suspected child abuse:

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

2. Alleged victim's name: _____

Alleged victim 's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from alleged victim:

4. Alleged victim's statement (give your detailed summary here):

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to alleged victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other):

6. Date/time reported to pastor: _____

Summary: _____

7. Date/time of call to alleged victim's parent/guardian: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

8. Date/time of call to local children and family service agency: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

9. Date/time of call to local law enforcement agency: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary: _____

10. Date/time of call to attorney: _____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

11. Other contacts: _____

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary: _____

APPENDIX H

West End Presbyterian Church
9008 Quioccasin Road
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 741-6562

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

(This form is not intended
for suspected child abuse)

Name of person(s) involved in the incident:

Date and time of incident:

Did the incident occur on church property during a regularly scheduled event? Circle one YES NO
If yes, please describe the event in progress and the room or area where incident occurred:

If not on church property, where did the incident occur? _____

Witnesses or other adults present at time of incident:

In the space provided below, write a description of the event as witnessed by you:

What actions were taken in response to the incident?

Were the parents or ministry leader notified? Circle one YES NO

If yes, write the date and time, and person(s) notified:

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate and complete. (Sign and date below)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Notes