



MINISTRY SAFE

PARK CITIES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

ABUSE AWARENESS
AND PREVENTION
POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES
MANUAL

Dear PCPC Staff Member or Volunteer,

Welcome to Park Cities Presbyterian Church!

At Park Cities Presbyterian Church, we take our responsibility to care for children, youth, and vulnerable adults seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children, youth, and vulnerable adults can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this manual provide a general overview of abuse awareness and prevention policies and procedures for PCPC volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment, protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults, the mission of PCPC, and you. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced by PCPC leadership.

Sincerely,

Park Cities Presbyterian Church

Park Cities Presbyterian Church

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Overview of the PCPC Safety System

Because we desire to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults involved in our ministry programs, PCPC requires all staff members, regardless of position, and all volunteers working with or around children, youth, and vulnerable adults to complete **5 SAFETY STEPS** before employment, ministry work, or volunteer placement begins.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

PCPC policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in ‘grooming’ a child, youth, or vulnerable adult for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, win the child’s, youth’s, or vulnerable adult’s trust (and the trust of his/her parent(s) or ‘gatekeeper(s)’), manipulate the child, youth, or vulnerable adult into sexual activity, and keep the child, youth, or vulnerable adult from disclosing the abuse.

To equip PCPC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behaviors, PCPC requires all staff members and volunteers to complete Ministry Safe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training will be renewed every three years of service.*

STEP TWO: Criminal Background Check

PCPC requires that all staff members regardless of position and all volunteers working or volunteering with children, youth, or vulnerable adults undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required. Criminal background checks will be renewed annually.

STEP THREE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the PCPC Screening Process, which includes the following:

- Complete an Employment Application (employees);
- Complete a Volunteer Application (volunteers);
- Complete a face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers);
- Provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers).

Staff members and volunteers will be required to amend/renew their applications every three years of service.*

A volunteer must attend PCPC and have been observed by other church members or current staff employees for at least six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to child, youth, or vulnerable adult. This observation should be documented by attendance records or reports that include: Bible studies, worship service, Sunday school, small group participation, or other scheduled PCPC events. A supervisor of a ministry area may make exceptions, but exceptions will be rare.

STEP FOUR: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies and procedures contained in this manual. Staff members and volunteers may also be required to attend a Policy and Procedures Class, Employee Orientation, and/or Volunteer Training.

STEP FIVE: Receipt & Acknowledgment

After reviewing the policies and procedures contained in this manual and/or attending a Policies and Procedures Class, Employee Orientation, or Volunteer Training, staff members and volunteers are required to indicate that he or she has received the Policies and Procedures Manual and has read and understood the material and agrees in order to comply with policy requirements.

* Any staff member or volunteer who ceases employment or volunteering within a ministry for more than a year will be required to complete all Safety Steps upon their return to employment or volunteering within a ministry.

PCPC Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

PCPC has **ZERO TOLERANCE for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at PCPC to act in the best interest of all children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults in every program.

In the event that staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

PCPC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults, and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency where appropriate.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to church leadership. Because sexual abusers frequently 'groom' children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child, youth, or vulnerable adult for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all PCPC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from ministry positions for both staff members or volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Session.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults, staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, act, omission or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult will be immediately suspended from employment and/or participation in any ministry at PCPC. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults at PCPC. If the person is a staff member, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from PCPC.

Failure to report a prohibited act is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults at PCPC.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers are required to report suspicions of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator.

Texas state law requires that *any adult* having cause to believe a child's/youth's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to an immediate Ministry supervisor, a Ministry Pastor, the Executive Director, the Senior Pastor, and/or the Ministry Safe Coordinator and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the Ministry Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child/youth spoke in order to get detailed information about the situation or conversation. The Executive Director, Senior Pastor, and Ministry Safe Coordinator will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, the Ministry Pastor, the Executive Director, the Senior Pastor, and/or the Ministry Safe Coordinator will inform the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400), or Child Protective Services (817-321-8680).

The provisions in this policy do not restrict or impact the right of any adult to *personally* report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to any law enforcement agency.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The PCPC Session will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

Ministry Safe Committee

MINISTRY SAFE COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, PCPC will appoint and maintain a Ministry Safe Committee, which will meet twice a year, at least.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Ministry Safe Committee is to enable PCPC to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Ministry Safe Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. Pastor of Children's and Youth Ministry
2. Director/Pastor of Children's Ministry
3. Director/Pastor of Youth Ministry
4. Director/Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adult Ministry
5. Executive Director
6. Ministry Safe Coordinator
7. One elder, designated by the Session
8. Any designee deemed helpful by the Session or PCPC leadership.

MEETINGS

The Pastor of Children's and Youth Ministry will chair the meeting of the Ministry Safe Committee on a bi-annual basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Ministry Safe Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry Safe Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing PCPC policies and procedures related to children, youth, and vulnerable adult safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all programs involving children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the PCPC Session regarding safety issues.

PCPC Staff and Volunteer Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff members and volunteers interacting with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.

1. **Each ministry supervisor** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each week for programs that occur weekly.
2. **The Children's and Youth Directors/Pastors** conducts unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.
3. **The Director/Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adults Ministry** conducts unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs occurring weekly.
4. **The Children's and Youth Directors/Pastors** conduct written performance evaluations for their respective ministries every six months for individuals in paid staff positions, including child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection issues.
5. **The Director/Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adults Ministry** conduct written performance evaluations for their respective ministries every six months for individuals in paid staff positions, including child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection issues.
6. **The Children's and Youth Directors/Pastors** conduct periodic verbal performance evaluations for their respective ministries that include items that address participation in risk-management training and adherence to risk-management procedures.
7. **The Director/Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adults Ministry** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations for their respective ministries that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
8. **The Children's and Youth Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation of a Children's Ministry and a Youth Ministry program at least once each quarter.
9. **The Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adults Ministry** conducts an unscheduled observation of any Vulnerable Adults Ministry program at least once each quarter.
10. **The Children's and Youth Pastor** meets with the Children's Director and Youth Director once monthly to discuss the respective ministry, including child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection issues.
11. **The Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adults Ministry** meets with the Vulnerable Adults Ministry Director once monthly to discuss the respective ministry, including child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection issues.
12. **The Session** meets with the **Children's and Youth Pastor** and **Pastor overseeing any Vulnerable Adults Ministry** once each year to discuss Ministries, including safety training and procedures.

PCPC Safety Procedures

BUILDING SAFETY

The Children's, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Directors/Pastors will be responsible for ensuring that their respective ministry area is monitored during Sunday school classes or weekday programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children/youth/vulnerable adults in children's/youth/vulnerable adults' classrooms.

No child or youth will ever be left unattended or unsupervised in any room, building, or on the playground during children's or youth ministry programming or classes. Children's and/or Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child or youth in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child or youth, that staff member or volunteer will take the child or youth to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child or youth is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

After every programming event, Children's and/or Youth Ministry staff members and/or volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

On the playground or outside field/area, staff members and volunteers are to circulate, watching children and/or youth during play periods, giving particular attention to any areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures).

Any two children or students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

DISCIPLINE

It is PCPC church policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children, youth, or vulnerable adults. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Children and youth are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

1. Verbally redirect the child or youth before physically intervening. With younger children some physical redirection may be necessary (for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child that is hitting another).
2. If the behavior does not cease, remove or direct the child or youth away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (avoid being alone with the child or youth).

3. Provide the child or youth with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child or youth with clear explanation of your expectations. (For younger children: “Jamie, you didn’t stop hitting Chris when I asked you to, so you need to sit quietly in the blue chair for three minutes.”) In addition, be verbally reassuring, as being removed from the group will likely upset the child or youth. Do not physically hold the child or youth in time-out.
4. Provide the child or youth with a chair to sit in or a “spot” to sit on (using a pillow, blanket, carpet square, etc.) until their time-out is complete.
5. Follow the rule of thumb that a time-out is ineffective for younger children if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child’s life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
6. Monitor the child or youth through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs given to younger children, give intermittent praise to reassure the child and keep them on task. (“Jamie, you’re doing a great job of sitting quietly – just 2 more minutes.”)
7. Praise the child or youth once he or she has completed the time-out and tell them that their reward is being able to rejoin the group. Remind them that repeating their initial behavior will result in further time-out. Follow this with praise.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents, the Ministry supervisor and Pastor.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any PCPC facility, while traveling with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, or while working with or supervising children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

MEDICATION

Medication will not be given to a child or youth by any staff member or volunteer if parents are onsite or in proximity to child. If a child or youth is in need of medication, the parents are to be notified and summoned to the ministry area. Any prescribed or over-the-counter medication must be administered by the parent. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment/medication for younger children and insect bite cream for children and youth. If a child or youth is in need of medication during a program while away from their parents (e.g. retreat, lock-in, non-Sunday morning event, etc...), the parents are to be notified and asked for instruction on treating their child with medication. Staff members and volunteers are to strictly adhere to the parental instruction given.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children, youth, or vulnerable adults in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer in charge of the event or program will submit a plan to the respective Ministry Director/Pastor and the Ministry Safe Coordinator concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may occasionally be in a position to provide transportation for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults:

1. Children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one children, youth, and/or vulnerable adult in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving PCPC vans, vehicles owned or rented by PCPC, unless in an emergency, or driver's personal vehicle.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive PCPC owned or rented vehicles.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a child or youth in the care of church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child or youth becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in the program.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their child and/or youth is involved at PCPC. Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child and/or youth is involved. However, a parent who desires to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with Children's and/or Youth Ministry programs will be required to complete the PCPC Safety System process.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

PCPC is committed to protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults in its care. To this end, PCPC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and youth. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by staff members or volunteers:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children and youth are important for children's and youth development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, and/or the Ministry Safe Coordinator.
3. ***Physical contact should be for the benefit of the children, youth, or vulnerable adult, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.***

4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in *observable places* or when in the presence of other children/youth/vulnerable adults or staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults. A child's, youth's, and/or vulnerable adult's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, and/or the Ministry Safe Coordinator.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually-oriented conversations with children, youth, or vulnerable adults that extend beyond the scope of PCPC teachings and/or understandings. Additionally, staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships (dating, sexual activities, etc...) with children, youth, or vulnerable adults in the program unless such conversations are personal testimonies/stories of rescue. Staff members and volunteers should ensure that such conversations adhere to the teachings and/or beliefs of PCPC.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers at PCPC are prohibited from possessing any sexually-oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property, church-sponsored events, or in the presence of children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

TOBACCO USE

PCPC requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, during PCPC activities or programs, or while in the presence of children, youth, vulnerable adults, or any of their parents. PCPC is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults should be positive and uplifting. PCPC staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate verbal interactions should be directed to an immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator.

SUPERVISION

Staff members and volunteers are expected to provide adequate supervision for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults in their care while working in church programs.

Information Specific to Children's Ministry (Children Aged 0 to ~10)

WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS

PCPC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all ministry programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-child ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery, Birth to 2 years old	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20

If a worker is 'out of ratio,' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor, director, or pastor. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker-to-children ratios into compliance with church policy.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in PCPC Children's Ministry programs. Another adult who has completed the PCPC Safety System process should always be present.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At any time that a child has been entrusted to PCPC staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

Before releasing the child, the staff members or volunteers must obtain the ministry-specific release document (i.e. pick-up receipt, pager, carpool tag, etc...) from the parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. If a pick-up receipt is not produced, the staff members or volunteers are to direct the parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians to the appropriate location (Red Desk, VBS Station, Ministry supervisor) to obtain a pick-up receipt. All pick-up receipts are to be gathered and turned into the appropriate Ministry supervisor Pastor at the close of the daily program.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child (even if a pick-up receipt is presented), they should immediately locate or contact their immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator before releasing the child.

RESTROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery/Preschool Children Age Children

Because nursery/preschool children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

1. Only female workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
2. Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery/preschool workers.
3. Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
4. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the whiteboard ("Seth has medicine in the bag for rash.")
5. Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
6. Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

1. No child will be forced to toilet train.
2. Only female workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
3. When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
4. Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
5. Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with staff members or volunteers. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the whiteboard ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
6. Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
7. "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. If not provided by the parent, extra clothing and diapers are available from PCPC in the children's area.

School Age Children

School-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance, when needed. However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Special Needs Individuals

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. In most circumstances, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals ages 4 and older. If a special circumstance or an emergency arises (accident, parent is not on-site, etc...) that requires immediate attention and assistance, the staff member or volunteer should treat the incident according to the Restroom Supervision and Assistance Guidelines provided herein. Additionally, a parent/guardian should be informed of incident as soon as possible.

Information Specific to Youth Ministry (Youth Aged ~11 to 17)

WORKER-TO-YOUTH RATIOS

PCPC is committed to providing adequate staff members and volunteer supervision in all Youth Ministry activities and programs. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for Youth Ministry activities and programs:

For groups up to and including 10 students, it is recommended that there be at least 2 staff members or volunteers supervising. For groups ranging between 11 to 29 students, it is recommended that there be at least 3 staff members or volunteers supervising. For groups larger than 30 students, it is recommended that there be at least 4 staff members or volunteers supervising.

If a worker is in an unmanageable ratio, it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the responsible Youth Ministry supervisor or Pastor. The responsible Youth Ministry supervisor or Pastor will make diligent efforts to immediately bring ratios into a manageable number and in compliance with this policy.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH YOUTH

PCPC recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students.

Individual Meetings

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed unless prior approval is obtained from the Youth Ministry Director or Pastor.

In the event a closed-door meeting must occur, the staff member/volunteer must inform another staff member and/or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked.

CONTACT WORK

PCPC recognizes the importance of contact work in youth ministry. Contact Work is defined as interaction with students at activities, meetings, or events outside of normal PCPC programming (e.g. meeting a student for lunch or dinner, attending a student's sports practice or game, etc.). The Youth Ministry Director and/or Pastor is responsible for training his/her respective staff members and volunteers regarding the parameters and expectations for appropriate contact work.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain Youth Ministry activities may occasionally require overnight sleeping arrangements for students and staff members and/or volunteers (i.e. retreats, lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). PCPC recognizes this and will require various sleeping requirements and allowances. In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing and approved by the Youth Ministry Director and Pastor prior to the activity.
2. A two-adult rule should be followed (at a minimum) as often as possible in all sleeping arrangements. Other arrangements must be submitted in writing and approved by the Youth Ministry Director and Pastor prior to the activity. The two adult leaders present must have previously completed PCPC's Safety System process.
3. As long as any students are awake, one of the leaders must also be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
4. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. No R-rated movies are permitted.
5. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
6. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both genders, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by leaders of the same gender.
7. Staff members and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed and/or room checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a student.
8. If a two-adult rule cannot be followed, every attempt should be made to have at least one adult staff member or volunteer in the same room as multiple students or in an adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open, but never in the same bed as a student.
9. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff member, volunteer, and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one-bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

RELEASE OF YOUTH

At any time that a student has been entrusted to PCPC staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the student. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of students in their charge.

Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing students in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities as follows:

5th – 6th Graders

At the conclusion of a Sunday morning program, staff members or volunteers will direct all 5th and 6th grade students to the main Youth Ministry meeting room for dismissal to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. A sibling in 7th grade or higher is allowed to retrieve his/her 5th or 6th grade sibling with approval from parents or legal guardians.

At the conclusion of non-Sunday morning programs (retreats, lock-in, local events, etc...), parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians are required to retrieve their student(s) at the pre-determined meeting location.

7th – 12th Graders

At the conclusion of a Sunday morning program, Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are to release all 7th through 12th grade students. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians to arrange a pre-determined meeting location.

At the conclusion of non-Sunday morning programs (retreats, lock-in, local events, etc...), parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians are required to retrieve their non-driving student(s) at the at the pre-determined meeting location.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a student, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator before releasing the student.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the Youth Director, Pastor and/or the student's parents.

Texting and Similar Electronic Communications

Texting is allowed between PCPC staff members and volunteers and students. When possible, texts should be sent in group form. Prudent judgment must be used in the time texts are being sent. Accordingly, the following texting guidelines will be observed (outside of an emergency):

Ministry	Not Before	Not After
Middle School (5 th – 8 th Grade)	7 a.m.	9 p.m.
High School (9 th – 12 th Grade)	7 a.m.	12 a.m.

Social Media Sites

PCPC staff members and volunteers may communicate with students through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and/or similar sites, but all communication should be in group form and public. Private communication through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or similar sites (not including SnapChat), should be kept to a minimum, should be same-gender (unless in an emergency situation), and should be initiated by the student.

The use of SnapChat with students should be carefully administered. All communication should be in shared, public form and should be initiated by the student. **Private SnapChat communication between staff member(s)/volunteer(s) and student(s) is strictly prohibited.**

If a social media page is initiated (i.e. for a small group), the Youth Director/Pastor must be included.

PCPC staff members and volunteers are not permitted to post inappropriate or off-color content or comment on inappropriate or off-color posts. When in doubt, choose not to post.

Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What is Ministry Safe?

Ministry Safe is an abuse prevention program and system developed by Gregory Love and Kimberlee Norris. Both Love and Norris practice law in Texas and specialize in child sexual abuse litigation and prevention. The program assists churches, camps, after-school programs, and child care entities in the design and implementation of safety systems which reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. Training is done both online and live with helpful ways to think through caring and protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

2. Why is Ministry Safe necessary or important?

Ministry Safe is “top of the line” in terms of prevention and preparation. We believe that safety is the top priority for every child, youth, and vulnerable adult, and our desire is to use the very best for the care of in our ministries. Ministry Safe will help verify each employee and person who volunteers and works with our children, youth, or vulnerable adults. The program teaches us how to be aware of anyone looking to harm a child, youth, or vulnerable adult in the care of our ministry, how to protect them, and what is appropriate care in our day and age.

3. What is required of me to be eligible to serve as a volunteer with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults or to be a staff member at PCPC?

PCPC requires all staff members and all volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults to complete the following 5 SAFETY STEPS before employment or volunteer placement begins:

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

To equip PCPC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behaviors, PCPC requires all staff members and all volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults to complete Ministry Safe sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every three years of service.

STEP TWO: Criminal Background Check

PCPC requires that all staff members and all volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adult activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required. This will be renewed annually.

STEP THREE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the PCPC Screening Process, which includes (i) completing an Application (either the Volunteer or Employee Application), (ii) completing a face-to-face interview, and (iii) providing references to be checked. A volunteer must attend PCPC and have been observed for six months by other church members or current staff employees before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Staff members and volunteers will be required to amend/renew their applications every three years of service

STEP FOUR: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in the Abuse Awareness and Prevention Policies and Procedures Manual. Additionally, each staff member and volunteer may also be required to attend a Policies & Procedures Class, Employee Orientation, and/or Volunteer Training. A Teacher's Covenant must also be signed by all Volunteers.

STEP FIVE: Receipt & Acknowledgment

After reviewing the policies and procedures contained in this manual and/or attending a Policies and Procedures Class, Employee Orientation, or Volunteer Training, staff members and volunteers are required to indicate that he or she has received the Policies and Procedures Manual and has read and understood the material and agrees in order to comply with policy requirements.

4. Will my information be protected?

Absolutely! All criminal background checks, awareness training results, and applications will be electronically (and securely) delivered, retrieved, and stored within PCPC's Ministry Safe Control Panel. This electronic process and control panel will eliminate the need to store paper versions of employee or volunteer documents. Only designated personnel have access to this control panel, and only the Ministry Safe Coordinator and HR employees can view employee or volunteer CBCs and applications.

5. Do I have to participate in Ministry Safe?

Yes. We love to have each and every employee and volunteer working with our children, youth, and vulnerable adults, but we want to assure parents and others within (or even outside) of our church family that we believe the safety and protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults is the highest priority. As a requirement to be employed at PCPC or to volunteer with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults at PCPC, our Ministry Safe process is a requirement. Even if you have received Ministry Safe training in the past, we believe that you can never receive too much training. For secured, current record-keeping, all employees and volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults will need to take the training and quiz provided by PCPC.

6. What if an individual serves for several years? Does such an individual need to obtain a new background screening?

Yes. PCPC realizes the importance of equally screening all employees regardless of position and all volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults equally. Each employee and volunteer will go through the same screening process as their peers. Each employee and volunteer will also be required to remain in compliance with PCPC screening and training policies in order to work/serve.

7. What if an individual refuses to submit to a background check?

That individual will not be allowed to serve in ministry or be employed at PCPC.

8. Who reviews the background screening materials and makes the final determination if an individual is approved?

The Ministry Safe Coordinator is responsible for reviewing and screening volunteers, with assistance from respective ministry leaders, if/as needed. The Ministry Safe Coordinator and/or a PCPC Human Resources employee will be responsible for reviewing and screening employees and/or candidates for hire.

9. What if an individual committed a sexual crime many years ago but has become a Christian since and/or has a long history of not engaging in that behavior again? Shouldn't we show grace to the person and let him/her participate in ministry?

PCPC celebrates the transformation in the life of someone who has committed sexual abuse against children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults and prays that said person is indeed able to refrain from engaging in such behavior again. However, it is PCPC's firm conviction that we are not being good stewards of the children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults entrusted to our care or to our witness to create a risk by exposing children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults to those who have a known dangerous history. No one with a history of sexual abuse may serve in ministry with children or youth.

TRAINING EVENT

1. When will Ministry Safe training occur?

Online training sessions are available at any time. Live training sessions will be offered periodically. Ministry Safe aspects will be covered in all volunteer trainings and employee hiring processes. When live training is offered at PCPC, it is strongly recommended that all staff members and volunteers attend so they will be able to interact with the staff from Ministry Safe. Every staff member and every volunteer working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults and will be required to attend/view training and pass the training quiz every three (3) years to remain in compliance with policies.

2. If I have been given similar training at my child's school, do I need to take it at PCPC, too?

Ministry Safe holds a vast array of training sessions. Please ensure that what you attended was, in fact, for volunteers and *NOT* an educational session for parents. If you only attended an information session for parents, you will need to attend a training event for volunteers offered through PCPC. For secured, current record-keeping, all employees and volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults will need to take the training and quiz provided by PCPC.

3. Do I need to attend or watch the entire training session if I only volunteer for one ministry?

Ministry Safe training events and videos are not geared toward any particular ministry and will not cover ministry-specific procedures (i.e. changing diapers, driving with youth, etc.). This is general training for all staff members and all volunteers working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.

4. If there is online training, do I really need to attend a live-training event when it is offered?

We strongly believe that the live session is an invaluable training tool to all staff members and volunteers. It is our recommendation that each staff member and volunteer attend the live session to hear directly from Ministry Safe. A Q&A session will be held, which will be highly beneficial to all in attendance.

CLASSROOM SITUATIONS

1. What do I do if I find that my class is out-of-ratio?

PCPC practices a minimum of the following Worker-to-Child Ratios:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Workers</u>	<u>Children</u>
Nursery, Birth to 2 years old	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
Middle & High School	2	20

If you are ever 'out of ratio,' immediately notify the Ministry supervisor or Pastor, whom are to make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring ratios into compliance with church policy.

2. I am a male volunteer and am not sure how much physical contact I can/should have with the children.

PCPC is committed to protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults in its' care. To this end, PCPC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children/youth are important for children's/youth's development and are generally suitable in the church setting. *Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, youth, and/or vulnerable adult, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. Physical contact and affection should be given only in *observable places* or when in the presence of others. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.*

3. There is a child/youth in my class who seems reluctant to my affection. Should I keep trying to give hugs, high fives, etc...?

Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant children, youth, and/or vulnerable adult. A children, youth, and/or vulnerable adult's preference not to be touched must be respected.

4. How do I handle a restroom request from an Elementary student who can go to the restroom alone? Do I go with them or do I send them alone?

When possible, accompany multiple children to the restroom at the same time to eliminate any one-on-one situations. If a situation occurs where a single student must go to the restroom alone, inform the program supervisor or Red Desk worker of the situation so they are aware that a child is in the restroom. If you ever leave your co-teacher alone in the classroom, please make sure there are multiple students remaining in the room, that the door is left open (when possible), and that you inform the Ministry supervisor or Red Desk worker of the situation.

5. Am I ever allowed to take a **child** to a private place to have a discussion?

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in PCPC Children's Ministry programs. Another adult who has completed the PCPC Safety System should always be present.

6. With regard to the pick-up process for children/youth, do I really have to obtain a receipt from everyone? Even those I know very well?

Yes. As a staff member or volunteer, it is important that you follow all PCPC policies and procedures. These children and youth have been entrusted to you, and you are responsible for releasing children and youth in your care as respectively stated within the Policies & Procedures Manual.

7. What do I do in a situation where I have an uneasy feeling about the adult presenting a pick-up receipt to obtain a child/youth from my class?

In the event you are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child or youth (even if a pick-up receipt is presented), you should immediately locate or contact the Ministry supervisor, Pastor, or Ministry Safe Coordinator before releasing the child or youth.