

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Bel Air, Maryland Child Protection Policy



Delaware - Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1 Mission Statement Regarding This Child Protection Policy (CPP)

In Baptism, parents and sponsors promise to help baptized children live in the covenant of Baptism and in communion with the Church. Parents and sponsors promise faithfully to bring children to the services of God's house, to teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, to place in their hands the Holy Scriptures and to provide for their instruction in the Christian faith. The purpose of this church's ministry with children and youth is to support parents in fulfilling these responsibilities and to invite into participation those children and youth who have not yet been baptized. This congregation assembles weekly around Word and sacrament. This community of faith provides opportunities for children and youth to learn about Christian faith, to develop an identity as part of the Christian community, and to serve others, following the example of our Lord Jesus.

This church's ministry with children and youth begins by striving to provide a safe environment and to provide caring and effective leaders. In an effort to promote this safe environment, the congregation binds itself to the Child Protection Policy described in this document. To protect the safety of our children and youth, employees and volunteers will be screened as to their acceptability for working with children and youth. They will follow the guidelines set forth in this Child Protection Policy. The Church Council and the Child Protection Policy Committee (CPPC) is committed to implementing and following this Child Protection Policy.

2 Definitions

2.1 Section I – Church Definitions

Any reference to “church”, “congregation”, or “preschool” shall refer to The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Bel Air, Maryland and its preschool.

2.2 Section II - Child Protective Services Definitions

2.2.1 According to Maryland Child Protective Services, child abuse includes any of the following:

- Physical injury not necessarily visible on a child under circumstances that indicate that a child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.
- The failure to give proper care and attention to a child including leaving a child unattended where the child's health or welfare is harmed or a child is placed in substantial risk of harm.
- An act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation whether physical injuries are sustained or not.
- Identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or physiological ability to function.
- Finding credible evidence that has not been satisfactorily refuted that physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse occurred.

2.2.2 The definition of child sexual abuse or exploitation is:

"The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer, depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault, or other form of sexual exploitation of children."

2.2.3 “*Sexual abuse*” refers to any interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching.

- 2.2.4 Sexual abuse and harassment can include the following:
- Verbal sexual suggestions, innuendoes, or jokes
 - Leering or ogling
 - Intrusive touching, including pats, hugs, pinches, kissing, brushing against someone's body
 - The use of pornography
 - Sexual assault or attempted sexual assault

2.3 Section III - Child Protection Policy Definitions

- 2.3.1 An employee is hired by the church and provided wages, benefits, and/or other compensation while a volunteer is anyone who provides services for the church and receives no compensation.
- 2.3.2 An Approved Adult is anyone 18 years of age or older who has satisfied all the requirements of the Child Protection Policy and the application procedure in Section 7 of this Policy. An Approved Adult can be an employee of the church or a volunteer. Approved Adults include the Pastor, all employees, and volunteers wanting to work in a leadership or primary role with children, for example:
- Sunday school teachers
 - Vacation Bible school teachers
 - Pre-school teachers and administrators
 - Youth program leaders
 - Mentors
 - Children's choir and music directors
 - Any adult participating in an overnight activity
 - Other adults who have satisfied all the requirements of Approved Adults, e.g. nursery/cribbery volunteers
- 2.3.3 An Assistant Adult Volunteer is anyone at least 18 years of age that satisfies the requirements of the Child Protection Policy and the application procedure in Section 8 of this Policy. These individuals may assist in children's activities for the church with the understanding that they will always be monitored by Approved Adults and never left alone with children not their own.
- 2.3.4 A child (or youth) is any person considered a minor under the laws of Maryland, that is, a person who is under 18 years of age. A person who is legally incompetent is considered to be a child under this Policy irrespective of his/her age.
- 2.3.5 A Teenage Worker is any child, at least 14 years of age, paid or volunteer, who will assist in caring for children during programs or activities with the approval of a parent or guardian. These individuals may assist in children's activities for the church with the understanding that they will be monitored by Approved Adults and never left alone with one child. Specific requirements are listed in Section 9 of this Policy.
- 2.3.6 A pastor refers to the regularly called or appointed, ordained, rostered leader to the church. In the absence of a called pastor, the Church Council shall appoint another called/hired staff person as the main point of contact until a called, or appointed, pastor assumes his/her duties in the church. The pastor may also appoint such a staff person to serve in their place as preferred.
- 2.3.7 Social media is forms of electronic communication (as web sites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos).
- 2.3.8 "Successfully passed" means, when used in connection with:

- 2.3.8.1 A criminal background check, that an individual has not received a conviction, a probation before judgment disposition, a not criminally responsible disposition, or a pending charge for the commission or attempted commission of a crime or has been assessed as being suitable to be an Approved Adult.
- 2.3.8.2 A review of available church or public records of abuse and neglect of children or adults, that an individual has been assessed as being suitable to be an Approved Adult.

3 Appropriate Behavioral Guidelines

To ensure that a nurturing Christian environment for children is maintained within the church, to protect children who participate in activities sponsored by the church from abuse as defined in section 2.1, and to protect the church's members from false allegations of abuse, the church has adopted this policy.

3.1 Prohibited Behavior

Those who accept the special responsibility of working with the church's children shall not violate that responsibility by abusing or causing non-accidental physical or mental injury.

3.2 Expressions of Affection

True expressions of affection toward children can be a manifestation of Christ's love for all of us. A kind word of encouragement to a child or a pat on the back can be a small but significant act for both the adult and the child. That being said, adults must use caution and common sense when physically expressing affection toward children.

- Respect a child's refusal of affection.
- Never make a child feel uncomfortable.
- Be aware of appropriate hand placement. A child or observer could misinterpret a pat on the bottom or a bear hug.
- Note that a body-to-body embrace, a touch on private areas (those areas covered by a bathing suit), or any type of kiss is inappropriate.

3.3 Social Media – Best Practices for Online Presence:

We live on a digital age, and many of the young people and their parents with whom we work have a presence in online communicates (Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Tumbler, etc.). It is equally important to remember that the pages and materials that we post to those pages are viewed by our young people and need to be consistent with the ministry we do with them. Our pages should not have inappropriate postings or photos on them. Refer to the LCGS Social Media Policy for the guidelines on social media.

Relationships with young people, whether hosted with Social Media or not, are precious and therefore should be handled appropriately.

4 Creating a Safe Church Environment

In addition to creating a church where Approved Adults are trained to keep children safe from abuse, the church should be a place which is safe and hospitable for children of all ages throughout the facility. Among the many areas to consider, the following are steps we will take to maintain a safe and healthy church environment:

- Toys and books for younger children, whether in nursery or Sunday school classrooms or in activity bags for use during worship, should be safe, clean, and age appropriate.
- Cleaning supplies and other harmful chemicals should be kept out of the reach of children under the age of 14.
- Playgrounds should be fenced-in.

- As appropriate, electrical outlets should be properly child-proofed.
- Care should be taken when making decisions about furniture and accessories throughout the building.

5 General Policies

5.1 Two Approved Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two Approved Adults will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some activities may only have one Approved Adult in attendance; in these instances, doors to the room should remain open, unless there are windows that provide an unobstructed view of the activity area. **There should be no fewer than two children with one Approved Adult.**

5.2 Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or an interior window that provides an unobstructed view of the activity area. Doors will never be locked while persons are inside the room.

5.3 Empty Room Policy

After an activity has ended, check rooms to ensure that no one is in the room.

5.4 Restroom Guidelines

5.4.1 Children up to **5** years of age should be escorted as a group to the restroom. An unrelated adult should never take a child to the restroom alone. The Approved Adult should check the restroom first to make sure that it is empty, prop the door open, and then allow the children inside. If a child requires assistance, leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

5.4.2 For children **from 6 to 12 years old**, an Approved Adult may decide, based on the current environment and activities, to escort the children or send them in same gender groups of two or more to the restroom or, at their discretion, send an individual child. If escorting a group, the Approved Adult should remain outside the restroom door and afterward escort the children back to the room.

5.4.3 Children from 13 to 17 years old may be allowed to go alone to the restroom.

5.5 Discipline Policy

While supervising children in the absence of their parents, it can be expected that one or more youth may require some discipline. It is the policy of this church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. Spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children is not acceptable nor is forcing a child to eat or drink, or withholding food or beverages. If child discipline is necessary, that discipline shall be appropriate to the age, maturity, and physical condition of the child.

5.6 Permission Slips

5.6.1 Children must have written permission from a parent or guardian to participate in any overnight activity or any activity that takes place away from church grounds. The written permission slip must identify the specific overnight or offsite activity in which the child will be participating, the date (or dates for recurring events), time period, location, and method of transportation if appropriate. It will require the parent to provide an emergency contact number, print his/her name and sign it. The church has approved Permission Slips that should be used; a sample is provided in the Appendices. When sent home with children the Permission Slip will list the activity leader.

5.6.2 The Pastor or Council President may waive the requirement for permission slips where a permission slip serves no useful purpose, for example when a child is accompanied by a parent or guardian to the activity.

5.7 Transportation of Children

When children are transported for church activities by unrelated adults they shall be transported in groups of at least 2 children per one Approved Adult in each vehicle.

5.8 Sick Child and Medication Policy

5.8.1 Illness

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at our church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be brought to or dropped off at any church activity:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up and taken home for the remainder of the day or event.

5.8.2 Medications

It is the policy of this church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy. Children requiring medication while attending activities away from the church for camps or other events will be covered under special permission agreements as determined by the activity.

5.9 Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

- 5.9.1 For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, Approved Adults, or any adult if an Approved Adult is not available, will provide First Aid (wash with soap and water, apply Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up.
- 5.9.2 For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent or guardian will immediately be summoned, in addition to another adult, if available. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called and the child's parent/guardian contacted regarding the required emergency care and where the child is being treated. If the injury occurs during preschool or Vacation Bible School, the second adult should be the Director or senior staff member.
- 5.9.3 Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed by the adult witnessing or attending to the injury. One copy of this report will be given to the child's parent and another will be kept on file in the church office.

5.10 Confidentiality

Church leadership will respect the confidentiality of information which they have acquired in the course of abuse accusations and investigations. Therefore, the Pastor, Council President, and other employees or volunteers in the church, with access to this information will:

- Discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations at the beginning of volunteer opportunities, with assurance that confidentiality will be respected.
- Disclose confidential information only for compelling professional reasons or as required by law.
- Exercise great care to limit the content of shared information when disclosure is necessary.
- Safeguard the confidentiality of information maintained in notes and files or by electronic means.

6 Activity Specific Policies and Procedures

6.1 Music Programs

Music programs include but are not limited to activities such as children's choirs, music lessons, instrumental practice, and youth bands. Many of these activities are led by a music director employed by the church, but can be run by another Approved Adult. The policies and rules in section 5 apply to these activities with the following exceptions and additions.

- 6.1.1 Many of these activities will only have one Approved Adult present. For these activities, paragraph 5.1 applies.
- 6.1.2 For activities held at times when church is not in session and the office is closed, the following rules will be followed:
 - A sign in sheet will be completed that includes the child's name, one parent's name, and that parent's contact phone number.
 - No activity will be conducted with only one student, unless the parent remains in the building and is able to view the activity.
- 6.1.3 For Preschool and Sunday School music activities involving the music director or a volunteer, the teachers remain responsible for their students.

6.2 Preschool and Vacation Bible School (VBS)

The policies and rules in section 5 apply to these activities with the following exceptions and additions.

- 6.2.1 The preschool and VBS staff, including the director, teachers, adult aides, and substitutes, will be Approved Adults. For the Preschool and VBS, Approved Adults do not have to be members of the church.
- 6.2.2 Teenage workers will be monitored by the staff.
- 6.2.3 Those who volunteer to assist in the preschool will, as a minimum, meet the criteria and rules for Assistant Adult Volunteers, section 8, and have name tags that identify that they are in this category.
- 6.2.4 For field trips, parents will be responsible for the transportation of their children and will remain with their children at all times during the trip. If a parent cannot accompany a child and arranges for someone else to bring the child, then a permission slip must be completed and given to the staff that indicates who will have responsibility for the child and an emergency contact number for the parent. As this alternate chaperone is the parent's representative, the chaperone does not have to be an Approved Adult.

6.3 Worship Nursery/Cribbery Program

The Cribbery, also known as the Nursery, is staffed during Sunday services and the education time between services. It is also staffed for special services, such as Christmas Eve. The policies and rules in section 5 apply to these activities with the following exceptions and additions.

- 6.3.1 The Cribbery is staffed by at least one Approved Adult, who may be helped by one or more Teenage Workers meeting the criteria described in Section 9. Teenage Workers will be supervised by the Approved Adult and should not be left alone with one child.
- 6.3.2 Children from 6 months to 5 years of age may be signed in to the Cribbery when it is staffed. The sign in sheet will include the child's name and age, the parent's name and the name of another person allowed to sign out the child (as appropriate), the color/description of any bag being left with the child, and information regarding any food or other type of allergy. It will also have a place for the parent to indicate if the child is in a diaper and whether the staff is authorized to change the diaper. The Sign-in Sheet will include the following statement:

"By signing in your child, you acknowledge and understand that your child will be supervised by one or more Approved Adults who will follow the church's Child Protection Policy, available for review upon request. The Approved Adult may be assisted by one or more Teenage Workers who will also follow this policy.

The parent will be given a pager and if it vibrates, the parent is expected to return immediately to the Cribbery."
- 6.3.3 At sign-in, the parent will be given a pager that will be used to call the parent to the Cribbery as needed, e.g. for a restroom break, injury, or anxiety.
- 6.3.4 The Cribbery has a split-door and the top half will be left open when it is staffed and children are present.
- 6.3.5 Children in diapers will be changed by the Cribbery staff as needed and if the parent has authorized it.
- 6.3.6 After the service or event, parents will pick up their child(ren) as quickly as possible. Children will only be signed out to the person who signed the child in or the alternate person identified on the sign-in sheet.

6.4 **German-American Youth Exchange (GAX)**

The GAX program is a unique opportunity for high school-age youth of our church to learn about their Lutheran heritage through inter-congregational fellowship and immersion in German culture. This ministry is also about opening our homes and hearts to our German brothers and sisters in Christ and proudly sharing our American heritage. This program has special rules specified below:

- 6.4.1 An approved GAX permission slip will be completed, signed by a parent, and turned in the event organizer (an Approved Adult).
- 6.4.2 Children are required to sign a Behavior Contract to ensure they understand what behavior is expected of them during the activity.
- 6.4.3 A minimum of two Chaperones, **both Approved Adults**, are required to conduct an activity. Additional Approved Adults should be considered for participation greater than 5 children per chaperone.

6.5 **Youth Education & Social/Service Programs**

This paragraph applies to any children's activity that is not covered in another section of this policy. Examples of these programs include Sunday School, Confirmation classes, and CIA. The policies and rules in section 5 apply to these activities with the following exceptions and additions.

- 6.5.1 **For activities held on church property at times other than Sunday morning and the office is closed**, the following rules will be followed:
- 6.5.1.1 A sign-in sheet will be completed that includes the child's name, one parent's name, and that parent's contact phone number. If someone other than that parent is allowed to pick up the child, then the alternate's name must be added to the sign-in sheet.
 - 6.5.1.2 No activity will be conducted with only one student, unless the parent remains in the building and is able to view the activity.
 - 6.5.1.3 Two Approved Adults or an Approved Adult and Assistant Adult Volunteer are required to conduct the activity.
- 6.5.2 **For off-site activities that are not overnight events**, the following rules apply:
- 6.5.2.1 An approved permission slip, described in 5.6, will be completed, signed by a parent, and turned in to the event organizer (an Approved Adult).
 - 6.5.2.2 A minimum of two Chaperones, either two Approved Adults or an Approved Adult and Assistant Adult Volunteer are required to conduct an activity. Additional chaperones, of the same categories above, should be included for participation greater than 5 children per chaperone.
 - 6.5.2.3 No Chaperone should be left alone with a single child.
- 6.5.3 **Overnight Activities.** Overnight activities can be on or off the church property, e.g. "lock-ins", retreats, and conventions. The following additional rules apply:
- 6.5.3.1 An approved permission slip will be completed, signed by a parent, and turned in to the event organizer (an Approved Adult).
 - 6.5.3.2 Children are required to sign a Behavior Contract to ensure they understand what behavior is expected of them during the activity.
 - 6.5.3.3 A minimum of two Chaperones, **both Approved Adults**, are required to conduct an activity. Additional Approved Adults should be included for off-site participation greater than 5 children per chaperone.
 - 6.5.3.4 The gender of the Chaperones should match the gender of the children. For off-site events, Chaperones will only room with children of the same gender.
 - 6.5.3.5 No Chaperone should be left alone with a single child.
 - 6.5.3.6 No Chaperone will share a bed with a child that is not his or her own child.
 - 6.5.3.7 Chaperones are expected to enter rooms at various times when there are only children in the room. If a Chaperone must enter a room containing children of the opposite gender, the room door must be propped open, all children must be clothed, and there must be more than one child. The Chaperone should stay long enough to manage the situation at hand, and then leave.
 - 6.5.3.8 Children shall not be allowed to enter the rooms of children of the opposite gender without a Chaperone of the same gender as the children in the room being present, i.e. a girl's room will have a female Chaperone present.

7 Approved Adults (Employees and Volunteers)

Applications and related papers will be locked in a confidential file under the jurisdiction of the Pastor. In addition to performing their expected duties, Approved Adults will be expected to monitor Assistant Adult Volunteers and Youth Volunteers to ensure they follow the CPP.

7.1 Employees

This church expects all employees and volunteers comply with the following requirements and this policy, in addition to the church employment process. Failure to comply with the process or above criteria is grounds for removal from the candidate pool, or if employed then grounds for dismissal.

- 7.1.1 Successfully pass a Maryland Individual Background Check using fingerprints and the Maryland Sex Offender Registry, <http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/onlineservs/socem/default.shtml>, or other criminal background check as deemed appropriate by the church officials. New background checks are required for all applicants and they are required to sign an authorization for church officials to obtain these checks. Previous checks from other sources are not valid for this process.
- 7.1.2 Criminal record checks and sex offender history clearances will be refiled at least every two years or more often if there is reason to believe that an employee's status may have changed. Employees will certify that personal information has not changed and the record checks will be conducted without requiring employees to be fingerprinted again.
- 7.1.3 Attend a Council-approved training session on Child Protection.
- 7.1.4 Sign a Child Protection Covenant acknowledging that the applicant has read and understood the Child Protection Policy and agrees to comply with it.

7.2 Approved Adult Volunteers

This church requires that adults who want to work in a leadership or primary role with children complete the following application process in order to become an Approved Adult Volunteer, defined in paragraph 2.3.2.

- 7.2.1 Complete the Approved Adult & Assistant Volunteer application form, provide signed record check, child abuse history, and Child Protection Covenant forms and turn them in to the Pastor, Church Office or CPPC chairperson. These documents may be placed in a sealed envelope.
- 7.2.2 Successfully pass a Maryland Individual Background Check and the Maryland Sex Offender Registry, <http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/onlineservs/socem/default.shtml>, or other criminal background check as deemed appropriate by the church officials. New background checks are required for all applicants and they are required to sign an authorization for church officials to obtain these checks. Previous checks from other sources are not valid for this process.
- 7.2.3 Criminal record checks and sex offender history clearances will be refiled at least every two years or more often if there is reason to believe that an individual's status may have changed. Individuals will certify that personal information has not changed and the record checks will be run without new fingerprints.
- 7.2.4 Individuals shall be members of the church, or receive a recommendation from the Pastor or his designated representatives, and continue to be an active member after being accepted as an Approved Adult Volunteer. For the purposes of this policy, the Preschool and VBS Directors are considered designated representatives of the Pastor and each may authorize nonmembers to be Approved Adults for their activities.

- 7.2.5 Attend a Council-approved training session on Child Protection.
- 7.2.6 Sign a Child Protection Covenant acknowledging that the applicant has read and understood the Child Protection Policy and agrees to comply with it.

8 Assistant Adult Volunteers

This church requires that adults who want to work in a supporting role with children at this church complete the following application process in order to become an Assistant Adult Volunteer (Assistant), defined in paragraph 2.3.3. These individuals may participate in children's activities for the church with the understanding that they will always be monitored by Approved Adults and never left alone with any children not their own.

- 8.1.1 Complete the Approved Adult & Assistant Volunteer application form and Child Protection Covenant forms and turn them in to the Pastor, Church Office or CPPC chairperson. These documents may be placed in a sealed envelope.
- 8.1.2 Maintain an active membership in the church or receive a recommendation from the Pastor or his designated representatives. For the purposes of this policy, the Preschool and VBS Directors are considered designated representatives of the Pastor and each may authorize nonmembers to be Assistants for their activities.
- 8.1.3 Sign a Child Protection Covenant acknowledging that the applicant has read and understood the Child Protection Policy and agrees to comply with it.
- 8.1.4 When participating in any children's activity, Assistants will check in with the leader/teacher.
- 8.1.5 Recognizing that...
 - VBS provides an opportunity for parents who are not members in the church to provide adult supervision while their children are participating in VBS and
 - Encouraging this adult participation is in the interests of furthering the church's outreach into the community and
 - Such participation has given non-members an opportunity to learn more about LCGS and has led to future family membership in the church:

This policy will allow non-members to volunteer as VBS assistant adult leaders during VBS. VBS Assistant Adult leaders will comply with all conditions specified in section 8 other than the need to read and understand the Child Protection Policy and sign a Child Protection Covenant (as these non-member adult assistants often do not sign up to help prior to the start of VBS). These VBS assistant adult leaders will be required to complete the Approved Volunteer & Assistant Volunteer application form.

9 Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for youth, paid or volunteer, to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least 14 years of age and have the written permission of a parent or guardian.

- Teenage workers will be trained in accordance with this policy. They will sign a Child Protection Covenant acknowledging that they have read and understood the Covenant and agree to comply with it.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult and should not be left alone with one child participating in the activity.
- Recognizing that....
 - Youth of age 12 and 13, who are no longer eligible to attend VBS, have always been encouraged to remain active in VBS by serving as youth volunteers and
 - Supporting their participation helps to keep these youth active at a critical time in their faith development:

Teenage VBS workers will be permitted to be as young as 12 years of age but must otherwise comply with the conditions specified in section 9 of this policy.

10 Parent Responsibilities

- Parents will provide the Activity leader or teacher with their emergency contact number for each child, if the parent plans to leave the church property or will not be attending the activity.
- Parents are responsible to pick up their children within a reasonable time after the activity.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the Activity leader or teacher of any pertinent health issues that their child may have. Parents will obey the Sick Child rules in paragraph 5.8 above.

11 Suspected Child Abuse

11.1 Reporting Procedure

You should report suspected abuse or neglect to the local department of social services or to a local law enforcement agency. If you are a health practitioner, educator, human service worker or a police officer, you are required to report both orally and in writing any suspected child abuse or neglect. The Pastor, Council President, and CPPC chairperson will also be notified.

- 11.1.1 Oral reports should be made immediately and written reports must be made within 48 hours of contact which disclose the suspected abuse or neglect. A report must include:
- The name and home address of the child and the parent or other individual responsible for the care of the child
 - The present location of the child
 - The age of the child
 - Names and ages of other children in the home (if known)
 - The nature and extent of injuries or sexual abuse or neglect of the child
 - Any information relayed by the individual making the report of previous possible physical or sexual abuse or neglect
 - Information available to the individual reporting that might aid in establishing the cause of the injury or neglect
 - The identity of the individual or individuals responsible for abuse or neglect (if known)
- 11.1.2 If reporting abuse or neglect of a child involving mental injury, a description of the substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological ability to function that was observed and identified and why it is believed to be attributable to an act of maltreatment or omission of proper care and attention.
- 11.1.3 The contact information for Child Protective Services in Harford County is as follows:
- Tel: (410) 836-4713

- After hours call the Sheriff's Office: (410) 838-6600
- FAX: (410) 836-4945
- Address: 2 South Bond Street, Bel Air, Maryland 21014

11.1.4 All allegations of child abuse or serious physical neglect will be taken seriously by the pastor(s), Council, and the CPPC committee. All reporting steps taken will be documented, including a log of phone calls, personal visits, and written reports. Whenever possible there should be at least the Pastor or the Council President involved for verification and authority. If the Pastor and Council President are unavailable to report the abuse, then the person who witnessed the abuse or reasonably suspects child abuse has occurred should report the suspected abuse. Thereafter, the person also should promptly notify the Pastor or Council President. The Pastor and/or the Council President shall notify the Office of the Synodical Bishop immediately about any report of suspected child abuse.

11.2 Response to the Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

- 11.2.1 Based on the guidance of Child Protective Services, the Pastor, or Council President if the Pastor is unable, will make notification to appropriate parties, e.g. parents, and maintain a record of actions taken.
- 11.2.2 The Pastor or Council President will provide a written report of the incident and actions taken to the Council and provide updates as needed.
- 11.2.3 The Pastor or Council President will notify the church's insurance broker and/or carrier when the reporting procedures have been initiated. The phone call or written report will be documented. If the original notice is by phone, a letter memorializing that report will also be sent to the insurance broker and/or carrier.
- 11.2.4 The Pastor or Council President will determine whether the church should engage legal counsel in consultation with the insurance carrier.
- 11.2.5 The Pastor or Council President will authorize the Pastor or one of the Council members to act as the official spokesperson for the church. Only the authorized person or persons can speak for the church to the news media, government agencies, attorneys, or others.
- 11.2.6 All other steps taken to respond to an allegation of child abuse or neglect will be approved in advance by the Pastor or Council President and will, as far as possible, be documented by them.
- 11.2.7 All communications within the church regarding the report of suspected child abuse shall attempt to protect the dignity and privacy of those persons affected by the report including the alleged child victim and the person suspected of child abuse while at the same time ensuring that persons in responsibility and law enforcement authorities remain fully informed.
- 11.2.8 There are times when allegations of abuse prove to be unsubstantiated and without merit. The Pastor or Council President should work to insure the confidentiality of the allegations and take measures to protect the reputation and standing of the individual in the life of the church and the community.

12 The Child Protection Policy Committee (CPPC)

12.1 CPPC Membership

The CPPC shall consist of four members, plus the Pastor and Council President. The Pastor and Council President will appoint members with the approval of the Council. The CPPC chair shall be elected by the committee or appointed by the Pastor and Council President. Upon initial implementation, two members will be appointed for one year terms and two members for two year terms. After the initial terms, two year terms will be used. If a member resigns or is removed from the committee, a replacement will be appointed following the same procedure discussed above, for the remainder of the exiting member's term.

12.2 Responsibilities of the Child Protection Policy Committee

12.2.1 Periodically review the CPP and recommend changes to the Council.

12.2.2 Keep Council apprised of all committee activities. Submit periodic educational statements regarding committee activities for publication in the church communications.

12.2.3 Application Process

- Receive applications and record check forms from church members desiring to become an Approved Adult. Delegate the task of reviewing applications to the committee chair and the Pastor.
- Forward record check forms to the designated Council representative for processing.
- After the results of record checks are returned, submit qualified candidate files to the Pastor, or his/her designee, for Personal Interviews. Personal Interview forms will be completed by the interviewer and will be included in the CPP files.
- The Pastor or his/her designee will grant "Approved" status for individuals that successfully pass all requirements and will notify the individual, the committee, and others as appropriate of the individual's status. The file will be appropriately annotated and added to the CPP files.

12.2.4 Provide Child Protection training for all staff, approved adults and volunteers working with the children regarding child abuse (physical and sexual) and the church policy. Training should be completed prior to an individual working with children. Until a training program is in place, adults currently working with children may continue to do so and will attend the training at the earliest opportunity after it is available.

12.3 Responsibilities of the Pastor, Church Office, Council, and Ministry/Activity Leads

12.3.1 Post a list of Approved Adults as a reference and provide copies to each ministry team leader.

12.3.2 The Pastor will perform the personal interviews with Approved Adult Volunteer candidates, or designate an alternate to perform this responsibility.

12.3.3 The committee will recommend to Council and Council will determine appropriate disciplinary action or disqualification in response to a violation or violations of the Child Protection Policy.

12.3.4 Ministry and Activity Leaders will monitor Approved Adults to ensure that policies are being followed.

12.3.5 Files

12.3.5.1 Permission slips will be turned in to the office after the conclusion of events and kept for three years. If an incident of abuse is reported relating to an event, the permission slips for that event will be maintained indefinitely.

12.3.5.2 Applications, record checks, interview forms, and signed CP Covenants will be maintained for three years after an Approved Adult, Assistant Adult Volunteer or Teenage Worker stops participating or leaves the church. If an incident of abuse is reported against any of these individuals, the applicable documents will be maintained indefinitely.

12.3.5.3 Sign-in sheets will be kept for one year.

13 Violations of Child Protection Policy

- Persons who admit to or plead guilty to or are convicted in a court of law of any form of physical or sexual abuse of a child will be immediately, permanently, and completely disqualified from working with children in the congregation. Persons who admit in writing to any type of physical or sexual abuse of a child but who have not appeared in a court of law will be disqualified from working with children.
- The Council shall disqualify any person from working with children while allegations of sexual or physical abuse are being investigated. The CPPC committee can recommend temporary or permanent disqualification of any person(s) from working with children as the committee deems appropriate. Alleged violations of the policy, other than abuse, shall be immediately reported to the CPPC Committee chair who will report it to the Pastor and the President of Council, if deemed appropriate. The alleged violations of the policy will be investigated at the direction of Council. If the person(s) is found to be in violation of the policy the CPPC committee will recommend to Council what action, if any, is appropriate.

14 Forms

All forms and standardized reports discussed in this policy are named here. A brief description of forms not described above is provided here.

14.1 Permission Slips

- Off Property Activity
- Overnight Activity
- GAX: For the bi-annual trip abroad, the GAX permission slip will identify that the trip will be overseas and that children will be staying with families from our sister church.

14.2 Cribbery Sign-in Sheet

14.3 Behavior Contract

The Behavior Contract identifies the overnight activity and the behavior expected of the children planning to participate in the activity. It is signed by the child and a parent.

14.4 Approved Adult and Assistant Adult Volunteer Application

To be completed by all individuals desiring to become an Approved Adult or Assistant Adult Volunteer. Completed forms may be returned in a sealed envelope to the Pastor, Church Office, or CPPC Chair.

14.5 Child Protection Covenant

To be signed by all church members desiring to become an Approved Adult, Assistant Adult Volunteer or Teenage Worker and returned to the Pastor, Church Office, or CPPC Chair.

14.6 Request for Background Check

To be completed by individuals desiring to become an Approved Adult. Completed forms should be returned to the Pastor, Church Office, or CPPC Chair. The Maryland Individual Background Check requires completed fingerprint cards.

14.7 Personal Interview Form

To be completed by the Pastor, or designee, during the Personal Interview of the applicant desiring to become an Approved Adult Volunteer. This form is signed by the applicant and the Pastor, or his/her designee and placed in the applicant's file following the interview.

14.8 Incident Report

Used to report accidents and incidents that cause injury to individuals on church property or during sanctioned church events.
