

APPENDIX "A"

NEWNAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & NEWNAN PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL POLICY TO PREVENT ABUSE OF CHILDREN

NEWNAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

"Newnan Presbyterian Church is a community of believers committed to being open and caring as we worship in our historic location. Mission Statement: To glorify God as we seek inspiration through worship, study and fellowship and to extend Christ's love in our community and beyond."

The following applies to all employees and volunteers working with minors of Newnan Presbyterian Church (NPC) and Newnan Presbyterian Preschool. For the purposes of this policy, a minor is defined as any youth under the age of 18.

I. SCREENING OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

A. Employees/Applicants

1. Must complete application/screening form. (includes history of work with children/youth)
2. Criminal background check must be authorized by applicant and completed.
3. Personnel Ministry or designated Search Committee (approved by Session) or Preschool Director (for Preschool employees) will check references & document responses. If any concerns are raised when reviewing the application or the criminal background check, the Personnel ministry or designated Search Committee or Preschool Director will meet with, at a minimum, the Personnel Ministry Chair, the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor, and the chair of the Education Ministry to determine appropriate action to be taken.
4. Personnel Ministry or designated Search Committee or Preschool Director will conduct personal interview with applicant.
5. Personnel Ministry or designated Search Committee will recommend a candidate to the Session which will vote on whether to hire the candidate. The Preschool Director has the authority to hire Preschool employees, with oversight by the Preschool Advisory Board.
6. All criminal background check information is considered to be confidential and will be maintained by the church in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet in the Church secretary's office. Access to such information is restricted to Pastor(s), Chair of Education, Chair of Finance and Personnel, Director of the Pre-School, Youth Director and Clerk of the Session. This list may be expanded by the Session of Church as it deems necessary.
7. Must complete a required training class on the prevention of child/youth abuse as offered by NPC.

B. Volunteers

The Associate Pastor and chairs of all ministries of the Church (e.g., the Christian Education Ministry, the Youth Ministry, the Worship Ministry, etc.) and the Preschool Director are responsible for screening, training, and record keeping for all volunteers utilized within their respective areas.

1. Certified Volunteers

- a. Must have been affiliated with the Church or Preschool for at least 3 months.
- b. Must complete an application/screening form (includes history of work with children/youth)
- c. Must complete an interview with the appropriate staff member and ministry chair (e.g., Children's Sunday School Superintendent, Director of the Preschool, Youth Director, Associate or Senior Pastor)
- d. Criminal background check must be authorized by volunteer and completed.
 - i. If any concerns are raised when reviewing the application or the criminal background check, the Personnel Ministry or designated Search Committee or Preschool Director will

- meet with at a minimum the Personnel Ministry Chair, the Associate/Senior Pastor, and the chair of the Christian Education Ministry to determine appropriate action to be taken.
- ii. Some convictions on a criminal background check may bar the applicant from serving as a volunteer.
- iii. All criminal background check information is considered to be confidential and will be maintained by the church in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet in the Church secretary's office. Access to such information is restricted to Pastor(s), Chair of Education, Chair of Finance and Personnel, Director of the Preschool, Youth Director and Clerk of the Session. This list may be expanded by the Session of Church as it deems necessary.
- iv. Must complete a required training session on child abuse

2. Assistant Volunteers

Assistant Volunteers are defined as adults who have requested to volunteer who may not have been affiliated with the Church or Preschool for three months, and have not had the opportunity to go through a training session.

Assistant Volunteers must:

- a. be paired with a certified volunteer,
- b. complete all of the requirements in section I: B1, a-d of this policy, and
- c. move to the status of "Certified Volunteer" within six months.

- 3. It is the expectation of the Church that all volunteers who work with minors of NPC be certified.

II. TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS

A. Training Requirements

Each employee/volunteer must attend a training session on child abuse.

Training will be offered as needed but no less than once every six months.

B. Minimum topic to be covered in training

At a minimum, the following will be covered in the training session:

- 1. The definition of child abuse
- 2. Sexual and physical abuse symptoms
- 3. What constitutes appropriate and inappropriate contact

Appropriate

- Listen carefully to children and show interest in what they have to say.
- Pray that our children may grow in faith in God and in respect for each other and creation.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Have a sense of humor, be flexible and giving, enjoy the children, and smile often.
- Focus on positive behaviors and praise him/her for that behavior.
- Set clear limits that can be managed by adults and understood by children.
- Use appropriate, positive steps when discipline is needed and focus on the behavior, not the child.

Inappropriate: (defined by the Laws of the State of Georgia)

- Corporal Punishment, which is use of physical force to discipline a child.
- Physical abuse, which is any physical injury inflicted by an adult on a child by other than accidental means.
- Sexual abuse, which is a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor to engage in any sexual act as defined by the Law of the State of Georgia.

- Sexual exploitation, which is conduct by a child's parent or caretaker that allows, permits, encourages or requires that child to engage in prostitution, or child pornography.
4. Church policies that govern working with minors
 5. Civil and criminal consequences of sexual misconduct
 6. Reporting procedures for observed or suspected misconduct
 7. Rationale behind screening procedures

III. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

A. SUPERVISION

1. It is the expectation of the Church that two certified adults be present when caring for minor children under the auspices of Newnan Presbyterian Church. When it is not possible to have two certified adults present, the person responsible for the activity (e.g. Sunday School Superintendent, VBS director, Wednesday night coordinator, Music Director, etc.) will provide supervision by checking on the group periodically and be available if needed.
2. When occasions arise making it necessary for one adult to meet alone with a minor, written consent of parents is required.
3. When occasions arise making it necessary for an adult to drive minor's off-site, written consent of parents is required.
4. Off-site youth events require the completion of a parents/guardians permission form and a medical treatment form. Copies of these forms are available in the Church Office. Off-site youth trips will adhere to the following adult to student ratios:

Child's age	Amount of adults	Amount of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-13	1	8
14-18	1	8

However, a minimum of two adults must be present with minors for all off-site events unless the Session specifically approves and exception.

B. REST ROOM SUPERVISION

The exact nature of the supervision will depend on the age of the children. Following are some general guidelines:

1. Adult leaders will make sure suspicious or unknown individuals are not occupying the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities.
2. Adult leaders will always use proper supervision when children are using public bathrooms to ensure their safety.
3. Adult leaders will call on other leaders to assist with restroom supervision in order to maintain the two-adult expectation.
4. If adult leaders are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
5. Adult leaders will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom in visual sight of another adult. The policy allows protection and privacy for the children and protection for the adult leaders.

C. MINIMUM FIVE YEAR OLDER

Adult leaders should be at least five years older than the young people with whom they are working. It is extremely difficult for a person who is too close in age to have the credibility needed to be the leader of a group of young people. The leader is apt to be viewed as a peer rather than as a leader.

D. WORKERS LESS THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE

While in some situations they may provide excellent help, people under the age of eighteen cannot be expected to have developed the judgment and maturity required to be fully responsible for supervising younger children. Providing that the rule concerning the "Minimum five years older" and that the proper ration of adults to children/youth is adhered to, youth are welcome to assist as long as the adults supervising the activity are certified.

E. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Employees and volunteers will not:

1. Verbally, emotionally, physically, sexually or spiritually abuse children
2. Discipline children by use or threat of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care
3. Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or be impaired by legally prescribed drugs during church sponsored programs
4. Smoke or use tobacco products during church programs
5. Use profanity, inappropriate language or jokes or any kind in the presence of children
6. Possess obscene or pornographic materials
7. Carry any type of weapon on church property or during church activities
8. Share inappropriate details of their personal lives or ask children to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal or electronic
9. Date program participants under the age of 18
10. Give gifts to individual children or youth without knowledge and permission of parents and the appropriate ministry (e.g., Christian Education/Session) Because gift giving can be a form of "buying" silence or loyalty, gift giving must be done on a group basis and for specific occasions only (e.g. third grade Bibles, confirmation materials, etc.).

IV. REPORTING/RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

A. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Mandated Reporters

The Law of the State of Georgia requires that certain categories of persons (e.g. Medical Personnel, Teachers, Volunteers, Clergy, etc.) who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made as provided by law. Newnan Presbyterian Church directs all mandated reporters to comply with the requirements of the law.

Georgia law mandates that reporters must report within 24 hours of learning of suspected abuse/neglect.

2. Non-mandated Reporters

Newnan Presbyterian Church directs all of its personnel, paid or volunteers, to report their knowledge or belief of the abuse of minors when that knowledge is obtained while engaging in the ministries of Newnan Presbyterian Church. Under State of Georgia law, any person who knowingly and willfully fails to report child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor.

3. Reporting Alleged Violations

All paid personnel and volunteers of Newnan Presbyterian Church are to report suspected inappropriate conduct and/or alleged violations of prohibited behaviors to the associate pastor (or senior pastor if the associate pastor is unavailable). Teachers or volunteers at the preschool shall report to the Director of the Preschool and to the associate pastor (or senior pastor if the associate pastor is unavailable).

Once a report is made to the associate pastor (or in the case of the preschool, the preschool director) an unmodified report must be made to Child Protective Services within 24 hours.

All such reports shall be in compliance with the law of the State of Georgia.

4. Confidentiality of Information

All such reports are to be considered confidential and will have limited dissemination (Pastors, chair of involved ministry, and Church attorney).

5. Reporting Alleged Violations to PGA (Presbytery of Greater Atlanta)

The senior pastor or his/her designate shall report all alleged violations to the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta when the alleged violator is a member of the clergy.

B. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS

If a member of NPC staff or a volunteer at NPC is suspected of any act of child abuse, the following should be undertaken:

1. The Church does not investigate mandatory reporting. If the individual reporting child abuse to the Associate Pastor or to the Director of the Preschool **states that such abuse occurred then a report to Child Protective Services must be sent.** If there is suspicion of inappropriate conduct or violations of the standards then an investigation can be conducted.
2. The Associate Pastor is the designee of the Church for gathering information and conducting any investigation. If the Associate Pastor is unavailable then this responsibility will fall to the Senior Pastor.
3. The purpose of an investigation is to establish "reasonable cause" for suspected child abuse/neglect **or** to ascertain if a standard of conduct has been broken. If reasonable cause for child abuse is established a report must be forwarded to Child Protective Services. The investigation is not to find innocence or guilt but rather to gather facts and establish if reasonable cause exist. A mandated reporter by law must inform Child Protective Services within 24 hours of learning of suspected abuse/neglect. If a standard of conduct has been broken the Ministry Chair and Associate Pastor will with the Session determine any actions necessary.
 - a. Treat all complaints as serious.
 - b. Begin investigation of complaint immediately (Do not delay).
 - c. If it is necessary to interview the minor child his or her parents/guardian must be present.
 - d. Two designated, trained persons (one a pastor, the other a lay person) should do all of the necessary interviewing.
 - e. Inform the minor's parents/guardian of the suspected abuse and actions being taken
 - f. Guard confidentiality of complaint and of investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed, and instruct him or her not to disclose any information regarding the complaint or investigation to anyone.

- g. Make detailed written notes of each conversation noting persons present, date, time, location and details of the conversation. Ask interviewee to review the notes and sign that they are accurate. (With the interviewee's permission, conversation may be tape recorded rather than taking written notes.)
4. Remember that if reasonable cause of child abuse is established at any point within the investigation, the investigation is concluded and a report must be forwarded to Child Protective Services. If a report is forwarded to Child Protective Services then the following should be done:
- a. Immediately remove the individual from any volunteer position involving contact with minors until issue is resolved.
 - b. Consult with the church's attorney and follow personnel policy when the accused is a paid staff person.
 - c. Follow the recommendations for "Responding to the victim and the victim's family" (See Section C).
 - d. Contact the church insurance company.
 - e. Contact the church's attorney.
 - f. Contact Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
 - g. Inform the Session of the investigation and steps taken.
 - h. Inform the victim and the victim's family of action taken as a result of the investigation.
 - i. Inform the accused of action taken as a result of the investigation.
 - j. Keep the congregation informed when appropriate. If communication is to be by letter, send it only to active, adult confirmed members and mark the letter and envelope "Privileged and Confidential." In the letter state only facts that can be established as true. Have the letter reviewed by an attorney before it is sent. If communication is to be oral, allow only active, adult, confirmed members of the congregation to be present, read a written statement which follows the above guidelines and has been reviewed by legal counsel. Do not attempt to answer questions or make comments.

C. RESPONDING TO THE MINOR CHILD AND THE FAMILY OR FAMILIES INVOLVED

1. If the suspected abuse occurred at Church or at a Church-sponsored event, inform the victim's family of the steps that are being taken and continue to keep them advised of the status of the investigations.*
2. In order to repair harm and promote healing, the Church will offer compassionate and timely pastoral care to the victim, the family or families involved and the affected congregation.
3. Through this pastoral care, as well as ongoing education and training for pastors, Church personnel, volunteers and other individuals connected with the Church, the Church will work diligently to promote a safe and healthy community of faith.

*If the victim is deemed old enough to participate by the parents, he or she may participate in this step.

D. RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA

The Associate Pastor will serve as the Church's sole access to the media. If the Associate Pastor is unavailable, then this responsibility will fall to the Senior Pastor.