



248 East Derry Road, Hershey, PA 17033 • 717-533-9667 • derrypres.org  
*Derry Presbyterian Church warmly welcomes you to worship and grow with us in faith.*

## SAFE CHILDREN POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the safety and well-being of children and foster a culture of safe practices. Its intent is to reduce the risk of abuse. By using practical procedures, we will protect those under our care and show respect for our caregivers. The development of this policy is a responsibility of the Session of Derry Presbyterian Church (“DPC”). Its implementation is the responsibility of the designated Staff and Volunteers.

### 2. DEFINITIONS:

**Abuse:** Child abuse includes any action or lack of action that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

- Physical abuse – non-accidental physical injury to a child, such as hitting, shaking.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury to a child, such as constant criticism, humiliating punishments, lack of nurturing or love and security.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest and pornography.
- Neglect – depriving a child of essential needs, such as food, water, shelter and medical care.

**Adult:** A person 18 years of age or older.

**Child(ren):** Any person(s) under the age of 18 for the purpose of this policy shall be referred to as a child.

**Children’s Activity:** Any activity or program in which children are under the supervision of Staff or Volunteers to include Derry Discovery Days.

**Compliance Officer:** A person designated by the Personnel Committee of DPC to monitor compliance with this Policy.

**Parent:** Shall mean any parent or legal guardian.

**Staff:** Any Adult paid employee of DPC.

**Volunteer:** Adult who regularly provides unpaid services that involves direct contact with and accepts responsibility for the care of children.

**Person(s) Required to Report Child Abuse:** All Staff and Volunteers who are involved in working directly with children.

### 3. BACKGROUND CHECKS:

As mandated by the State of Pennsylvania (PA) under Act 153, appropriate background checks shall be required as follows:

- Those serving in the positions listed in Exhibit A of this Policy will be treated by DPC as Volunteers for purposes of this Policy.
- All Volunteers shall complete a DPC Volunteer Application, including the Safe Children Affidavit, and submit it to the DPC Compliance Officer (*See Appendix A, Volunteer Application*).
  - All Volunteers are asked to complete the Safe Children Affidavit, which satisfies the requirement for those Volunteers who have been residents of PA for 10 consecutive years or more to affirm that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under Pennsylvania Title 23 Chapter 63 Section 6344(c).
- All Volunteers must submit certifications (background checks) as follows:
  - PA Child Abuse History Certification
  - PA State Police Criminal History
  - FBI Criminal History Record, which includes fingerprinting
- The PA Child Abuse History Certification and State Police Criminal History, background checks are to be renewed every three years, or as required under Act 153. For existing Volunteers as of 7/1/2015, if the background checks were issued:
  - Prior to 7/1/2015 and are less than 36 months old, then must be renewed within 36 months of certification.
  - Prior to 7/1/2015 and are more than 36 months old, then must be renewed by 7/1/2016.
- All background checks shall be completed as soon as practical after submitting their DPC Volunteer Application. If a clear background check is not received within 30 days of application, then the Volunteer will be suspended from further volunteer activities until a clear check is received, or as extended upon review by the Compliance Officer.

- Background check costs are ordinarily paid by the Volunteer, who then owns the background checks. Volunteers who face financial hardship may seek reimbursement for their background check costs from the Compliance Officer.
- All Staff are required to submit background checks as follows:
  - PA Child Abuse History Certification
  - State Police Criminal History
  - FBI Criminal Background check, which includes fingerprinting.
  - Background check costs will be reimbursed by DPC for current employees
  - Successful or “clear” background checks are a condition of employment for all Staff positions or as reviewed and approved by the Pastor
  - Background checks are to be renewed every three years, or as required under Act 153
    - *See Appendix B, Completing Certifications*
- All newly employed Staff are hired on a provisional basis, not to exceed 90 days, as long as:
  - They have applied for the background checks
  - Derry has no knowledge which would disqualify the candidate from employment
  - The newly hired Staff affirms that they are not disqualified from service under PA Title 23 Chapter 63 § 6344 (c), by completing the Safe Children Affidavit
  - Pending the completion of background checks, the newly hired Staff is not permitted to work alone in the immediate vicinity of children and must work with an appropriate Staff member

Background check records are confidential. If the background check is not “clear,” the report is to be reviewed by the church staff member associated with the Volunteer’s activity and the pastor. An “unclear” background check may refer to a prior conviction of a felony or sex crime, identification as a perpetrator of child abuse or a drug offense conviction within the past five years.

#### **4. TRAINING:**

DPC will conduct a training session related to this Policy once per year. This training shall occur prior to or concurrent with the beginning of the school year. Subsequent session(s) may be required and/or may be done online. Training sessions will be conducted by a person(s) designated by the DPC Personnel Committee. All Volunteers must attend a training session(s) as conducted by DPC, in order to continue to serve as a Volunteer.

All Staff are required to complete training on the mandatory reporting of child abuse.

## 5. SAFETY GUIDELINES:

The following list represents DPC's guidelines for the safety of children. All Volunteers and Staff agree to be bound by this Policy and its Guidelines.

- Ordinarily, two Volunteers or one Volunteer and one Staff member shall be present at all times during any program or event involving children, including the nursery. When Volunteers are related, i.e. a husband and wife, a third Volunteer should be present.
- Activities involving Children will take place in rooms with unobstructed glass in doors or doors will be standing open.
- Check-in/Check-out Procedures:
  - For the Nursery, parents must sign their children in to receive a pager. When pagers are returned, the children are released to parents.
  - For Church School and Kids In Worship Instruction (KIWI), weekly attendance is taken for all children and youth classes. Children ages 2 years through Grade 5 are released only to a parent or guardian.
  - Registration and medical release forms are required for all retreats and lock-ins for all ages.
- Children with the following symptoms should not be placed in DPCs care:
  - Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting
  - Green or yellow runny nose
  - Eye or skin infections
  - Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease
- DPC will not administer prescription or non-prescription medications to children. Exceptions may be granted by the Director of Christian Education to Parents for children with potentially life-threatening condition (such as asthma or severe allergies).
- Staff or Volunteers will walk the hallways during church school to randomly observe the classrooms.
- Restroom Guidelines for children below kindergarten:
  - If available, children should use a classroom bathroom. If an in-classroom bathroom is not available then two or more children should be escorted to the hallway bathroom.
  - A child should never be taken to a hallway bathroom alone.
  - The Volunteer or Staff should check the bathroom first to be sure it is safe and then allow children to enter.
  - The Volunteer or Staff should remain outside the bathroom door and then escort the children back to the classroom .
  - If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the Volunteer or Staff should open the door and call the child's name. If the child asks for help, the Volunteer or Staff should prop open the door and leave the stall door open as they help the child.

- Restroom Guidelines for children between kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grade
  - At least one female Volunteer or Staff should escort girls to the bathroom.
  - At least one male Volunteer or Staff should escort boys to the bathroom.
  - The Volunteer or Staff should check the bathroom or bathroom stall first to see that it is safe and then allow children to enter.
  - The Volunteer or Staff should remain outside the bathroom door and then escort the children back to the classroom.

Regardless of age, adults should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with a closed door or closed stall.

- Accidental Injuries to Children. If a child is injured under the care of DPC, the following steps will be taken:
  - First aid will be applied to minor scrapes, bruises, etc. and the child's parent will be notified.
  - The parent will be contacted for injuries needing treatment beyond first aid. If warranted an ambulance will be called.
  - An incident report will be completed and the DPC insurance company will be notified for any injuries requiring medical attention.
- Volunteers and Staff should not drive alone with another person's child in their vehicle.
- Children shall not drive other children from church to activities occurring off of DPC premises.
- Parent consent forms are required for all activities for Children occurring away from DPC premises.
- When Children are in a facility for any function, they must be under the control of their Parents, Staff or Volunteer at all times. Children are not permitted to roam freely outside or inside the church property.

## **6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Any Staff member or Volunteer who becomes aware of suspected abuse of a child in their care **must immediately report suspected abuse** to ChildLine by calling 1-800-932-0313 or electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis).
  - Additionally the Staff or Volunteer must report the suspected abuse to the Pastor. If the Pastor is not available or is allegedly involved, a report should be made to the Clerk of Session.
  - Write down word for word what the child said, using the child's words, do not editorialize.

*(See Appendix C, Staff Procedures for alleged child abuse or neglect, for further details).*

- Any Staff member or Volunteer who is arrested or convicted of an offense that constitutes grounds for denying working with children, shall provide written notice with 72 hours to the Pastor and Compliance Officer.

**Appendix**

**Item**

- A Derry Presbyterian Church Volunteer Application, including the Safe Children Affidavit (*immediately following this page*)
- B Completing Certifications
- C Procedures for Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect
- D Designated Volunteer Positions

**Children/Youth Volunteer Application,  
Affidavit and Safe Children Policy**



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This form is only for adult volunteers (18 years or older) who will be volunteering with children and youth. Please return a completed copy of the Children/Youth Volunteer Application via regular mail or drop off: Compliance Officer, Derry Presbyterian Church, 248 East Derry Road, Hershey, PA 17033

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Day/Year)

Home Address:

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Phone number (Home): \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid driver's license? \_\_\_\_\_ State issued: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Yes or No)

If you plan to use your car or a church vehicle for church activities, do you have current auto insurance: \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes or No)

Do you have the following certifications	No (v)	Yes (v)	If you checked yes, provide the date of the certification*
PA Child Abuse History Certification			
PA State Police Criminal History			
FBI Criminal Background check and fingerprinting			

\*If you have completed your certification(s), a copy of the original is needed for our records.



**I have read and agreed to be bound by the Safe Children Policy of Derry Presbyterian Church.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Initial)

I hereby authorize and consent to Derry Presbyterian Church, its agents and employees, to inquire into and undertake whatever background check of me that Derry Presbyterian Church, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate to determine my fitness to serve as a volunteer. I understand the inquiry may include computer database searches, criminal history checks, interviews with people acquainted with me, employers, or references. I release and hold harmless Derry Presbyterian Church, its employees and agents—including all persons, companies, and/or corporations supplying information to Derry Presbyterian Church in connection with any and all background checks—from any and all liability in obtaining or providing such information about me. I agree that if Derry Presbyterian Church determines, in its sole discretion, that I have provided false or incomplete information in response to the above questions, or Derry Presbyterian Church decides, with or without cause, not to approve or retain me as a volunteer for whatever reason, Derry Presbyterian Church may, without notice or other process, reject my application to serve as a volunteer, or revoke my privilege to serve as a volunteer. All of the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Safe Children Affidavit for Volunteers and Employees

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## I affirm the following:

I have lived in Pennsylvania continuously from: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Day/Year)

I am not disqualified from service as a volunteer or employment as described in Pennsylvania Title 23 Chapter 63 Section 6344(c) and I have not been convicted of an offense similar in nature to those crimes listed in Section 6344(c) under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of a foreign nation or under a former law of this commonwealth.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month/Day/Year)

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pennsylvania Title 23 Chapter 63 § 6344 (c)

### (c) Grounds for denying employment or participation in program, activity or service.--

(1) In no case shall an administrator hire or approve an applicant where the department has verified that the applicant is named in the Statewide database as the perpetrator of a founded report committed within the five-year period immediately preceding verification pursuant to this section.

(2) In no case shall an administrator hire an applicant if the applicant's criminal history record information indicates the applicant has been convicted of one or more of the following offenses under Title 18 (relating to crimes and offenses) or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state:

Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide).  
Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault).  
Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking).  
Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping).  
Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint).  
Section 3121 (relating to rape).  
Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).

Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).  
Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).  
Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).

Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault).  
Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).  
Section 4302 (relating to incest).  
Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child).  
Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children).  
Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children).  
A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses).  
Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances).  
Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors).  
Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).

The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses set forth in this paragraph.

(3) In no case shall an employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for employment decisions hire or approve an applicant if the applicant's criminal history record information indicates the applicant has been convicted of a felony offense under the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L.233, No.64), known as The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, committed within the five-year period immediately preceding verification under this section.

## Appendix B - Completing Certifications

All Staff and Volunteers must complete both the Child Abuse History Certification and PA State Police Criminal History

Before you begin, be sure to have your own email address as results will be sent to the address on file.

The PA Child Abuse History and the PA State Police Certifications can be applied and paid for electronically. All necessary instructions and links to apply for these Certifications can be found at <http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/findaform/childabusehistoryCertificationforms/index.htm>

### PA Child Abuse Certification (online)

Access the Child Welfare portal [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis)

Before you start, you should have the following information readily available to help you complete your application:

- Addresses where you have lived since 1975
- Names of all individuals with whom you have lived, to include parents, guardians, siblings, spouses, etc., since 1975
- Any previous names you have used or have been known by
- As a Volunteer who works with children the \$10 application fee is waived

You will be asked to create a user ID

A temporary password will be created for you and sent to your email address. You will be asked to login again with your temporary password to change to a permanent password in order to complete your Certification.

You might find it helpful to have print capabilities to print off certain pages for reference, such as your user ID and answers to security questions

## PA State Police Criminal History (online)

Before you start, you should have the following information readily available to help you complete your application:

- Paper to take notes
- Ability to print certificate
- As a Volunteer who works with children the \$10 application fee is waived
- Go to [www.psp.pa.gov](http://www.psp.pa.gov) and scroll down to Request a Criminal History Report and click on the online link  
*A notarized copy is not needed for volunteers*
- Submit a record check, read information and either accept or decline, and select volunteer.
- You will be asked to enter your data and then enter. The same screen appears: enter the same information as the first screen and then enter finished.
- Once the screen with your information appears, it is recommended to write down the control number for future reference, submit and print the certificate.

## FBI Criminal History Record and fingerprinting

- You need to register prior to going to the fingerprint site. Walk-in service without prior registration will not be provided at any fingerprinting location.
- Registration is available online 24 hours/day, seven days per week at [www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com). Telephonic registration is available at 1-888-439-2486 Monday through Friday, 8am to 6pm EST. During the registration process, all demographic data for the applicant is collected (name, address, SSN, etc.) There is no data entry required at the fingerprint collection site. This registration will remain open for 90 days. If the registration is not used within 90 days, it will be automatically cancelled and the fee refunded.
- Applicants (Volunteers) will pay a fee of \$25.75 for the fingerprint service and to secure the Criminal History Record. Applicants may make their payment online at [www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com) using a credit card or debit card. Money orders or cashier's checks payable to 3M Cogent will be accepted on site for those applicants who do not have the means to pay electronically. No cash transactions or personal checks are allowed.
- The applicant (Volunteer) proceeds to the fingerprint site of their choice for electronic fingerprinting. The location of the fingerprint sites and days and hours of operation for each site are posted on 3M Cogent's website ([www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com)). The location of fingerprint sites may change over time, so applicants are encouraged to confirm their nearest site location.

## Appendix C –Procedures for Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

In the event of an incident of alleged Child abuse, the following procedures shall be followed:

- As outlined in Section 6, any Staff member or Volunteer who becomes aware of suspected abuse of a child in his or her care **must immediately report suspected abuse** to ChildLine by calling 1-800-932-0313 or electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis).
  - It is encouraged to make reports via the website as once the report is made, no further action is required.
  - Reports made via the 800 number also require a subsequent written report

Whether the report is made electronically or in writing after calling the 800 number, a copy of the report needs to be sent to the Compliance Officer.

- The Staff or Volunteer must also report the suspected abuse to the Pastor. If the Pastor is not available or is allegedly involved, a report must be made to the Clerk of Session.
- The Pastor or Clerk of Session will notify the child's parent.
- If the alleged abuse involves a Staff member, then the alleged perpetrator will immediately be placed on paid leave and instructed to remain away from all church properties during the investigation. If in the event the Staff member is found guilty of the alleged abuse, he or she will be terminated immediately.
- If the alleged abuse involves a Volunteer, then the alleged perpetrator will immediately be instructed to remain away from all church activities involving children during the investigation.
- Civil authorities will be notified, and DPC will comply with all state reporting requirements.
- The Compliance Officer will notify the DPC insurance company and an incident report will be completed.
- If the media is involved, DPC will seek legal counsel before responding to the media or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of DPC should not speak to the media.
- Pastoral visits will be arranged for those who request them.

## **Appendix D –Designated Volunteer Positions**

In compliance with Derry Presbyterian Church Protection of Children Policy and Procedures, the following unpaid positions have been designated as Adult Volunteers by the Director of Christian Education in partnership with the Christian Education Committee.

As of May 20, 2015

### **Volunteers with direct contact: with children/youth:**

- Boys & Girls Club tutoring drivers
- Choir accompanists
- Choir directors
- Church School administrators
- Church School teachers
- Confirmation Class mentors
- DivorceCare for Children leaders
- Drivers (to any program)
- Intergenerational event leaders
- Kids In Worship Instruction (KIWI) leaders
- Krislund Traveling Camp volunteers
- Lock-in chaperones
- Mission Trip leaders
- Mission Week volunteers
- Montreat Youth Conference chaperones
- Montreat Youth Conference drivers
- Nursery volunteers
- Pilgrim Fellowship leaders
- Puppet leaders
- Retreat chaperones
- Summer Festival of Gifts event leaders
- Sunday Funday leaders
- Terrific Tuesday volunteers
- Vacation Bible School volunteers
- Youth Advisors