



# **New Life Presbyterian Children's and Youth Ministries Child Protection Policies**

**Updated January 2025**

**Dear Children's Volunteers, Church Officers, or Staff Members,**

Welcome to New Life's Children's and Youth Ministries!

At New Life, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of New Life. The following procedures have been adopted by the Session of our church and will be diligently enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please complete the online form, which includes a brief questionnaire, through the below online form.

Scan the QR Code to fill out the online form or go to  
[newlifedresher.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/894/responses/new](http://newlifedresher.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/894/responses/new)

Sincerely,

Beth Anne Lesshafft, *Children's Ministry Director*  
Dave Hopping, *Pastor of Emerging Generations*

# **New Life Presbyterian Church Policies & Procedures for Children’s and Youth Ministries**

Contents:

<b><u>SAFETY SYSTEM OVERVIEW</u></b>	4
<b><u>REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR POLICY INFRACTIONS</u></b>	5
<b>1. Abuse Prevention and Definition</b>	5
<b>2. Reporting and Response</b>	6
<b>3. Enforcement and Consequences</b>	7
<b><u>CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE</u></b>	8
<b><u>CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH STAFF MONITORING PLAN</u></b>	9
<b>1. Child Safety and Well-Being</b>	9
<b>2. Staff-Child Interaction Guidelines</b>	13
<b>3. Appropriate Content and Conduct</b>	16
<b>4. Health and Medication</b>	17
<b>5. Parental Engagement</b>	18
<b><u>CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN</u></b>	19
<b><u>STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT</u></b>	22

## **SAFETY SYSTEM OVERVIEW**

Because we desire to protect children involved in our ministry, New Life Presbyterian Church requires all staff members, church officers, and volunteers working with children, youth, and other vulnerable populations to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin. This includes any student volunteer 14 years or older.

### **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers should have a basic understanding of sexual and other forms of abuse. They also should understand the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To this end, New Life requires all employed staff members to complete the three-hour state mandated child protection training at [reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://reportabusepa.pitt.edu) every five years. All church officers and volunteers serving with children and youth are to complete the one-hour sexual abuse awareness training every other year through Ministry Safe.

### **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers working or serving with children and youth are required to complete New Life's Screening Process, which includes:

- an Employment Application or Volunteer Questionnaire included with policies & procedure confirmation
- a face-to-face interview (employees and most volunteers)
- annual approval by the Session for working with children or youth
- all volunteer must attend New Life for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing ministry services to children and youth.

### **STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and complete the online form indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply

with policy requirements. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are also required to attend all job-related trainings both online and in person.

#### **STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check**

New Life requires that all staff members, church officers, and volunteers serving in children's and youth activities undergo criminal background checks mandated by the Commonwealth of PA. This include the PA Child Abuse Registry Check, PA State Police Check, and FBI Fingerprinting if they are on staff OR have not lived in PA for the past 10 years. If they have lived in PA for more than 10 years than an affidavit must be completed.

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR POLICY INFRACTIONS**

#### **1. Abuse Prevention and Definition**

##### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

**New Life has a zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member, church officer, and volunteer at New Life to act in the best interest of all minors in every program.** New Life Presbyterian Church commits itself to provide training to all volunteers in our children and youth programs regarding their responsibility concerning the issue of child abuse.

Church staff members and church officers working with volunteers in our programs are to avoid negligence (1) by following proper guidelines in recruiting persons to work with children, (2) by providing adequate supervision of those who are working with the children and youth, and (3) by following required procedures in our policies in the areas of reporting child abuse whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has been child abuse.

New Life Presbyterian Church of Dresher requires all staff, church officers, and volunteers working with its child and youth programs to become educated concerning child abuse. This should include the awareness of county and state laws and procedures for reporting as well as penalties for not reporting incidents of real or suspected abuse. Staff, church officers, and volunteers are also to learn what policies and procedures mitigate opportunities for child abuse by others and to implement these practices.

##### **DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE**

"Child Abuse includes serious physical or mental injury which is not accidental, sexual abuse or exploitation or serious physical neglect of a child under age 18, caused by the acts or omissions of the child's parents, a person responsible for the child's welfare, and an individual residing in the same home as the child, or a paramour of the child's parent." Child Protective Services Law, PA Act 124 of 1975.

### **1. Serious Physical Injury**

Serious physical injury which constitutes abuse must be a recent injury that causes the child severe pain, or significantly impairs the child's functioning, either temporarily or permanently.

### **2. Sexual Abuse or Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is defined as the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purposes of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting, or filming of any sexually explicit conduct. It is also 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.

### **3. Serious Mental Injury**

There are many ways that a child can be abused mentally, but abuse is identified as a psychological condition that is diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist. The condition evidences itself when a child is chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic, or in reasonable fear that his/her safety is threatened, or a condition that seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

### **4. Serious Physical Neglect**

Serious physical neglect is indicated when a child's life or development is endangered, or when neglect impairs the child's functioning. It must arise from prolonged or repeated lack of supervision, or failure to provide the essentials of life, including adequate medical care.

## **2. Reporting and Response**

### **REPORTING A VIOLATION OF POLICY**

All questions or concerns related to non-abuse violations of New Life's policies should be reported immediately to the Children's Ministry Director, or the Pastor of Emerging Generations.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

All staff, church officers, and volunteer staff who work with and are responsible for the care of children and youth at New Life are considered mandated reporters by law in the Commonwealth of PA. Any mandated reporter who has reason to believe abuse may be occurring at the church or at home against a child is to report their suspicions to Childline and file

a report within 24 hours. The report may be made verbally by calling **800-932-0313**, but the state prefers an online report through Child Welfare services at [compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home](https://compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home).

It is our policy that a staff member be made aware when a report is made. A report does not judge the guilt or innocence of the people involved in the report and a thorough response by trained investigators will take place to establish the guilt or innocence of those mentioned. Those suspected of child abuse are not to be notified as this is the responsibility of the state, and not the church.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member, church officer, or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, *REPORT!***

#### **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

New Life Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs and will fully cooperate with the official investigation. The church is not to perform its own investigation. Any appropriate actions in removing staff, church officers, or volunteers temporarily or permanently is the responsibility of the Session.

### **3. Enforcement and Consequences**

#### **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

New Life staff members, church officers, and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children’s and Youth Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the New Life’s Session.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Children's and Youth Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Welfare agencies.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member, church officer, or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or students at New Life. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from New Life.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Church officers or volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or students at New Life.



## **CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

### **CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, New Life appoints and maintains a Child Protection Committee, which meets once each quarter.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Child Protection Committee is to enable New Life's Children's and Youth Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

### **COMPOSITION**

The Safety Committee on each campus will be comprised of the following members:

- Director of Operations
- Children's Ministry Director
- Pastor of Emerging Generations
- Any designee of the Session

### **MEETINGS**

The Pastor of Emerging Generations or his designee will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a committee member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing New Life policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's and Youth Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the New Life's Session regarding safety issues.

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH STAFF MONITORING PLAN**

1. Monitoring of staff members, church officers, and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interaction with children.
2. New Life's Children's Ministry Director and Pastor of Emerging Generations are to regularly observe paid and volunteer staff under their supervision for performance and safety issues.
3. Annually they conduct written performance evaluations of paid staff which includes matters of children protection.
4. In addition, they are to observe and provide regular verbal feedback to volunteers including matters regarding child protection. Any issues are to be addressed and if necessary, volunteers may be temporarily or permanently removed.
5. New Life's Children's Ministry Director and the Pastor of Emerging Generations are to meet regularly with the Director of Operations to address issues in their area, including any concerns regarding Child Protection. An annual written performance evaluation will address all areas of ministry including child protection, safety and training.
6. The Pastor of Emerging Generations or his designee is to conduct an unscheduled observation of a Children's ministry program at least quarterly.

### **1. Child Safety and Well-Being**

#### **BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE**

##### ***Nursery and Walker Children***

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

1. Only staff members or trained volunteers 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 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 clip board.

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.
7. No child in the nursery and walker rooms will be taken out of their room to use the bathroom. If a parent wants their child to use the bathroom and that child is in the walker room, the parent must come and take the child.

### ***Children Age 2 -5 years Old***

1. No child will be forced to toilet train.
2. Only volunteer workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will take children to the bathroom.
3. When children are taken into bathrooms the main door will always be left open.
4. The Hallway monitor will only enter the bathroom to assist with the presence of a staff member or trained registrar. Verbal assistance should be given when possible. If physical assistance is necessary, this should always be done with two adults present.
5. "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child. A parent or guardian should be called so they can change their child. Extra clothing and diapers are available in room 201 if needed.
6. Once a child enters our two-year old class; we will no longer change diapers; if a diaper needs to be changed a parent will be called to take the child to an available room with a diaper station.

### ***School-age Children in the Children's Wing***

1. Children can be dismissed to the bathroom on their own but volunteer should make sure the hallway monitor is aware.
2. If the hallway monitor must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out a staff person or trained registrar to accompany him/her. Staff members and volunteers should never be alone with a child in the restroom.
3. If the child requires assistance, the adults 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 always be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

### ***School-age Children on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor***

1. Children can be dismissed to the bathroom on their own but a volunteer should stand at the doorway of the classroom and ensure the child makes it to and from the bathroom safely.
2. The exterior bathroom doors should remain open at all times.
3. If a child requires assistance, the volunteer should contact the staff person. They can text/call the director of Children's Ministry or the Assistant.
4. When possible and appropriate, have a classroom bathroom break and send two children in at a time. Volunteers should wait outside of the bathroom with the remaining students.

### ***Special Needs***

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers with regards to diapering or bathroom instructions for children with special needs. If regular assistance is required, special arrangements can be made with the agreement of staff and parents.

### **BUILDING SAFETY**

The Children's Ministry Director will be responsible for ensuring that their places of ministry are monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and children in children's classrooms.

No child will ever be left unattended in the Children's wing or on the children's playground during children's ministry programming or classes. Children's Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single child, that staff member or volunteer will take the child to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child 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 Ministry staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

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

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

### **SUPERVISION**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers in Children's and Youth Ministries are expected to provide adequate supervision for children and youth in their care while working in church programs.

### **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

At any time that a child or youth has been entrusted to Children's or Youth Ministry staff members, church officers, or volunteers, the Church incurs responsibility for the safety and welfare of the child or youth.

Children under sixth grade will be required to check in when children arrive for Sunday morning and Sunday evening activities. Other programs require prior registration. Staff members, church officers, 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. On Sundays, this includes a check out system using unique stickers for parents and guardians. Only those who have the proper sticker can receive a child into their care.

Our check-in system and registrations permit someone other than the one who dropped them off to pick up a child or youth if this is arranged ahead of time. They must have the appropriate sticker. Unauthorized adults can only pick up a child if a parent is contacted and gives permission.

*In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact the Children's Ministry Director or the Pastor of Emerging Generations before releasing the child or youth.*

## **SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS**

It is anticipated that certain Student Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and staff members and volunteers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members, church officers, and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult rule must be followed; a single student should not be alone with a staff member or volunteer.
2. All adult leaders must have previously completed the Church's screening and training process.
3. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Children's Ministry Director or the Pastor of Emerging Generations prior to the activity.
4. As long as any students are awake, one trip leader must be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
5. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. No R-rated movies are permitted.
6. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn; both tops and bottoms.
7. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by student leaders of the same gender.
8. Staff members and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a student.
9. Whenever possible, at least one staff member or volunteer will sleep in the same room (but not same bed) as students, or in an adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open.
10. 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.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children and youth. The

following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children and youth:

1. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport. We understand there may be circumstances where there is one student being transported. This is permitted when necessary.
2. Children and youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided.
3. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
4. Parents should be aware when staff members, church officers, and volunteers are driving their student and should be contacted when students are dropped off.
5. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving for a church sponsored event, unless in an emergency.
6. No drivers under age 21 may drive youth or children to, from or during a church sponsored event. Only drivers over 25 are permitted to drive a rented van.

## 2. Staff-Child Interaction Guidelines

### WORKER TO CHILD RATIOS

New Life is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Children's Ministries programs. Accordingly, the following worker to child **minimum ratios** will be observed:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Workers</u>	<u>Children</u>
Nursery and Walkers	2	8
Preschool, 2 and 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 and 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

1. Two unrelated volunteers or staff persons are required per classroom. Related individuals can serve together if there is a third volunteer.

2. Approved teen volunteers can serve as a second volunteer but only when the other volunteer is an adult.
3. If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the Children's Ministry Director or her Assistant. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker to children's ratios into compliance with Church policy.
4. Special Exception: Room 207 is designated as a sensory breakroom, where volunteer buddies can bring children who need a break. The door must remain open at all times, with the hallway monitor and/or staff member serving as additional adult supervision.

### **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Children's or Youth Ministries activities or programs. Another trained, screened adult should always be present.

### **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH YOUTH**

New Life recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis on and off church property. Staff Members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students.

#### ***Individual Meetings on Church Property***

Staff members, church officers, 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 Pastor of Emerging Generations.

If a closed-door meeting must occur, the staff member must inform another staff member BEFORE the meeting occurs, and the door remains unlocked.

#### ***Individual Meetings for Ministry Purposes off Church Property***

1. Staff Members, church officers, and volunteers meeting youth offsite, should do so in public spaces and parents of those youth should be aware of where the meeting is taking place and at what time.



2. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers should seek to have the youth meet them at the public space, but if that is not possible see policies on transportation.
3. Staff Members, church officers, and volunteers should never have youth at their residence alone. If there is a reason for youth to be at a staff member, church officer, or volunteer's residence, there should be others present and in spaces where interactions can be easily observed.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### ***Children's Ministry***

It is our policy that staff members, church officers, and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children 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 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 away from the group to a corner of the room where the group is meeting (never being alone with the child).
3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the time-out, and provide the child with clear explanation of your expectations. ("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. Do not physically hold a child in time-out.
4. Provide the child 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 if it lasts longer than one minute for every year of the child's life (3 years old, 3 minutes).
6. Monitor the child through the entire time-out without giving your undivided attention. For longer time-outs 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 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 and the Children's Ministry Director.

### ***Youth Ministry***

It is the policy of New Life that staff members, church officers, and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the student. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff members will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Pastor of Emerging Generations.

### **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members, church officers, or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Staff members, church officers, 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 and youth.

To this end, staff members, church officers, and volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members, church officers,

and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children and youth.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

New Life is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, New Life has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in Children and Youth Ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members, church officers, or volunteers and children are important for children's 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 supervisor, the Children's Ministry Director or a member of the Pastoral staff.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member, church officer, or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or Children and Youth Ministry staff members, church officers, 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, church officers, or volunteers in Children's or Youth Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to Childline and to the Children's Ministry Director, Pastor of Emerging Generations, or a member of the Pastoral Staff.

### 3. Appropriate Content and Conduct

#### **ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING**

##### ***Youth***

1. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers need to be wise in the use of electronic media and social networking. Parents of youth (sixth grade through twelfth grade) will be asked to sign a permission slip allowing youth staff and official volunteers to text, message and email youth. Parents will be encouraged to come forward with any concerns about a staff member or volunteer and their use of electronic communication.
2. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are encouraged to not text youth after 9PM or during school hours, though there may be times this is necessary.
3. Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are encouraged to have more than one person (other youth, guardian, other leader) on texts or messages to youth. If a staff member, church officer, or volunteer is texting or messaging an individual youth it should be for informational purposes (scheduling, answering questions, making aware of program, etc.).

##### ***Children***

1. No staff member, church officer, or volunteer working with children from fifth grade or younger should be emailing, texting or messaging with a child.

They should communicate through their parents and with the knowledge of staff leadership. A staff member, church officer, or volunteer who ignores this protocol will be warned, and if repeated, could be removed from their position.

#### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and youth except in cases of public biblical instruction about sexual matters. Parents will be notified before this happens. Staff, church officers, and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information

about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child in the program.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care, or at any other time and doing so can lead to dismissal.

### **NUDITY**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers serving in Children or Youth Ministry should never be nude in the presence of children 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 leading the event will submit a plan to the Children's Ministry Director or the Pastor of Emerging Generations concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

## **4. Health and Medication**

### **MEDICATION**

A staff member, church officer, or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in Children's Ministry. The exception is lifesaving medication like an epi-pen.

### **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members, church officers, and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any New Life program or activity.

### **TOBACCO USE**

New Life requires staff members, church officers, and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during New Life activities or programs. New Life does not permit the use of tobacco inside it's building. This includes vaping.

## **5. Parental Engagement**

### **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents who leave a child in the care of New Life staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Children's or Youth's Ministries programs.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete the Church's volunteer screening process.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **DEFINITION OF CRISIS:**

Any occurrence that harms a student, threatens the public reputation or immediate financial integrity of the organization, or that may create a situation of legal liability to the organization or its directors or officers.

Examples include allegations or incidents of suspected abuse including child-to-child abuse, arrest of current or former staff or volunteer for child pornography, etc.

### ***Key Crisis Management Objectives***

- Prioritize child protection and safety
- Be proactive, timely, transparent, accurate, consistent, and unified in the messages presented internally and to media and the public
- Evaluate the organization's policies and protocols and demonstrate to the church how the organization is evolving to correct past challenges and improve the church's safeguarding efforts
- Prepare for a potential crisis year-round, not just when one occurs

### ***Prior to Allegation/Incident***

- The Crisis Management team will include the Director of Operations, the Director of Children's Ministry, the Pastor of Emerging Generations, and one additional member of the session.
- Staff, church officers, and volunteers will be educated on what to do if someone alleges current or historical abuse involving a minor, staff person, or volunteer of the church.
- All staff, church officers, and volunteers should know how to fulfill their duties as mandated reporters.

### ***Once Allegation/Incident Occurs***

#### **Secure Immediate Safety and Minimize Access**

- To the extent possible, ensure the victim-survivor is secure and safe from additional harm or abuse
- Follow all mandated reporting requirements and contact the authorities as appropriate.
- If the accused person is a staff person, follow progressive discipline procedures accordingly. This may involve suspending the accused during the investigation.

- Where applicable, prevent the accused from having further access to children until a thorough incident review and/or investigation is completed.
- Before beginning an internal incident review, verify with local authorities that this will not interfere with their investigation.
- When applicable, notify other staff members that there has been a critical incident and the crisis management plan has been activated.

### ***Initial Communication Plan***

- Designate a point person to respond to all inquiries from parents/guardians, the media, and other stakeholders.
- Prepare a short media statement in advance or anticipation of receiving a media or public inquiry.
- All oral and written communication should speak with a voice of compassion and confidence.
- All employees and volunteers should know how to refer media inquiries to the appropriate person.
- As soon as possible, meet in person (not over the phone) with identified victim survivors and their parents/guardians.
- Reassure them that you are taking the allegation or incident seriously.
- Find out what response they desire and be prepared to explain what support you will offer, such as counseling or therapeutic services.
- Reach out in writing to parents/guardians of all children attending the church or the particular program in which the accused offender was involved or had contact with children.

### ***The Message Should Communicate***

- Empathy: Begin by stating that such incidents run counter to your organization's values.
- Facts: Include a summary of the incident, including information about any suspensions, investigations, arrests, etc.
- Contact Request. Ask parents/guardians to contact the church or the specified authorities if they suspect their child may have been abused.
- Your Response: Explain that your church is fully cooperating with the authorities. Describe proactive steps the organization is taking such as offering resources to individuals, hosting a parent/community meeting, training staff, church officers, and volunteers, and conducting an independent investigation to learn from this incident so the organization can prevent it from happening again.



### ***Host a Parent/Community Meeting***

Speak directly with concerned families and directly answer any questions before rumors or misinformation is spread.

- Communicate as much information as you can about the incident.
- Provide information regarding the proactive steps leadership is taking in response to the incident.
- Describe resources the organization is providing families and give parents/guardians a chance to ask questions.
- Provide parents/guardians with information about how to talk to their children about abuse.

### ***Ongoing Communication and Response***

- Determine how to manage ongoing relations with authorities, parents/guardians, the community, and media relations.
- Consider adding a designated page to your website with updated details about the incident.
- Designate specific individuals in the organization to handle various communications and outreach efforts.

### ***Promote Prevention at All Levels of the Organization***

- Educate parents/guardians on abuse prevention information. Offer a workshop during which parents/guardians can learn how to protect their children from abuse. This is an educational session that is different from the parent meeting described above.
- Provide a child education program to all children involved with the organization on how to protect themselves from abuse and how to express concerns.
- Train (or –re-train) all staff, church officers, and volunteers on how to identify and report “red flag” behaviors that do not rise to the level of suspected abuse. This is an important part of the overall response and ongoing prevention effort.



**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT**

I have received and read a copy of New Life's Children's and Youth Ministries Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at New Life.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by New Life.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for an academic year at a time, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between New Life and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of New Life policies and procedures manual.

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

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

Go [\*\*HERE\*\*](#), to acknowledge your receipt of New Life Policies and procedures online.