

**PRACTICES FOR THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN  
PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
WESTLAKE, OHIO**

**Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **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, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
4. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists.
5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children or youth.
7. The Senior Pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect unless he or she is alleged to be involved. All other workers should refrain from speaking to the media.
8. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.

## **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

## **Check-in/Check-out Procedure**

For children below grade 3, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a "child check" for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the "child check" in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the "child check," the Christian Education Staff Leader will be contacted. The Christian Education Staff Leader will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

## **Sick Child Policy**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Prince of Peace Lutheran 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 dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

## **Medications Policy**

It is the policy of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Christian Education Staff Leader.

Prescription or nonprescription medications being administered to children or youth on overnight events (such as church sponsored camps or retreats) should be addressed individually by the parents with the appropriate staff or volunteer. Directions and permission for administering either prescription or nonprescription medications should be given in writing, and signed by the parent/guardian of the child involved.

## **Accidental Injuries to Children**

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

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (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 from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

### **Elevator Policy**

No adult staff member or volunteer will be alone on the church elevator with a child or youth.

### **Transportation of youth:**

The key consideration for any transportation issue is the safety of our children. For the purposes of this policy "youth" refers to a young person below the age of 18 OR a young person 18 or above who is still a high school student.

*Transporting Youth to or from home to the church or an offsite church sponsored activity:*

Parents or guardians have responsibility for youth transportation to and from home to church, or directly to and from another site when the activity is held away from the church, and the group is gathering at that site. For reasons of safety, youth transported by parents or guardians is always the preferred method of transporting youth. When youth drivers are involved, Prince of Peace recommends the following:

- a. Riding in private vehicles:  
All youth traveling to or from a youth event in private vehicles will wear a seat belt properly buckled.
- b. Youth Drivers (High School):  
Youth drivers shall not transport other youth with the exception of his or her siblings or stepsiblings.
- c. Valid Driver Licenses:  
Drivers must be properly licensed (no suspended or revoked licenses).
- d. Drugs and Alcohol:  
No vehicle shall be operated by a driver under the influence of or impairment by the use of drugs or alcohol.

*Transportation of youth shall be by volunteer adult drivers or Prince of Peace staff, driven to and from the church property for an event held offsite:*

- a. Riding in private vehicles:  
All youth traveling to or from a youth event in private vehicles will wear a seat belt properly buckled.

b. Volunteer Drivers:

Drivers transporting youth to or from a youth event shall be at least 22 years of age, and be properly licensed (i.e. no suspended or revoked licenses). No person under the influence or impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol shall transport youth to or from Prince of Peace.

c. Vehicle Maintenance:

Children or youth will not be allowed to travel in any vehicle known to be in need of maintenance that might impact the safe operation of the vehicle.