

Child Protection First!

Child Abuse Prevention Policy for

Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA

PURPOSE: It is the purpose and intent of Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for the children and students of our community.

GOAL: Our goal is to protect children from sexual abuse or child molestation by employees or volunteers in this church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations.

DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse defines child sexual abuse as "any sexual activity with a child, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child provided the child is four (4) years older than the victim."

Child sexual abuse can be violent or non-violent. It is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of the oral, genital, and anal areas; intercourse; and forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

DEFINITION OF A MINOR: A minor is any individual under the age of 18 years.



The policy and procedure set forth below will apply to all people who give supervision or have custody of minors or who have opportunity to have contact with minors in church facilities or church sponsored activities.

This policy will address four (4) areas that are critical for the protection of the children, our employees and our church: **selection process, protection policy, reporting procedures, and responses to allegations.**

I. SELECTION PROCESS

A. **Employee** - anyone who is paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis, whether or not they work directly with preschoolers, children and students.

Church employees will be required to complete a confidential application and an EPCA nursery form - 4yrs and under, as well as be interviewed by appropriate staff member, have references checked and verified, and give written permission for a SSN trace report through VCI Employment Screening.

B. **Volunteer** - anyone who is not paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis, and is serving in any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. Example: Nursery, childcare, pre-school, grade school, junior high and high school workers, bus drivers, teachers, chaperones, workers, volunteers.

A volunteer will be required to complete a confidential volunteer application form and turn in a copy of Alabama Drivers License and be active members of EPCA for at least 6 months.

C. **Current Volunteer/Employee Implementation** (See Implementation Guidelines, Appendix O)

In addition to the above requirement, a volunteer must be a member of EPC, PCA Church for at least six (6) months. A volunteer who has been a member for less than six (6) months may serve upon verification of references and approval of the age-group minister. If the less than six month rule applies, a long term visitor of one year or more who has recently joined may be used in a volunteer situation based on the nursery coordinators discretion.

II. **PROTECTION POLICY**

A. **Two Adults**

Every attempt will be made to have two (2) adult workers present with children and students at all times during church activities. In addition, age-group ministers, division directors, hall monitors, greeters and/or the program director will be present and available on each floor, in the hallways where minors are present. Every effort shall be made to assure that one adult is not left alone with one minor. A husband and wife working the same room will typically be considered as one adult for purposes of this policy.

B. **View Windows**

Every effort shall be made to place preschoolers, children and students in rooms with view windows for all teaching/learning activities.

C. **Over-Night Activities**

Volunteer adult chaperones and supervisors will be required to comply with all of the Child Protection First! policies.

D. Within Town Activities

Volunteer adult chaperones and supervisors will be required to comply with all of these policies as outlined.

E. Out-of-Town Activities

All participants shall have written parental consent and a notarized medical release form. Consent forms may be completed for a one-year period and must be renewed annually. Volunteer adult chaperones and supervisors shall be required to comply with all of EPC, PCA's policies including, but not limited to, those outlined in Child Protection First!

F. Preschool Security Policies

Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA has a detailed, working program that should be conscientiously followed and all employees and volunteers must abide by the Preschool Security Policy as well as Child Protection First! Please contact the Evangel Church Administrator relative to questions about these policies.

G. Weekday Programs

Due to the professional relationship of the teacher and student, parents understand that only one teacher may be present in certain learning or artistic performance programs.

H. Age Specific Guidelines (See Appendices A through D)

III. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Observed or reported child sexual abuse or child molestation should be reported immediately to the appropriate age group minister or Evangel Church Administrator.

Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, you should talk with an appropriate person to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child and help the family. When time and circumstances permit, the report should first be made to the appropriate age-group minister, who will then proceed with the correct and thorough process. (See Appendices F, G, H and J for reporting forms)

IV. RESPONSES TO ALLEGATIONS

A. All allegations will be taken seriously and church staff will take appropriate action in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama, insurance policy requirement, and based upon advice of legal counsel.

B. The official spokesperson for the church in any of these matters will be the Pastor or his appointee. No other staff members or church members shall speak to the media in an official capacity.

C. The church staff will document (in writing, with date and signature) all efforts in the handling of any incident.

D. The church staff will not deny, minimize, or blame any individual involved in allegations. Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA staff will minister to all involved, as well as investigate, and cooperate with authorities.

V. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA believes that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8). Therefore, any claim or dispute arising from or related to allegations by or against workers, employees, volunteers, church members or their families, shall be settled by biblically based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation. (A complete text of the Rules is available at <http://www.hispeace.org/html/geticrul.htm>. Further information on Peacemaker⁷ Ministries can be viewed at www.hispeace.org). These methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this policy

VI. AMENDMENT OF POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

The Board of Elders may amend these policies and forms upon 30 days notice to the congregation.

VII. EFFECTIVE DATE

July of 2001

Child Protection First! Appendix Index

- A Guidelines for Nursery/Preschool Ministry**
- B Guidelines for Children's Ministry**
- C Guidelines for Youth Ministry**
- D Youth Ministry Behavior Guidelines**
- E The State of Alabama Child Abuse Reporting Requirements**
- F What is Child Sexual Abuse?**
- G Types of Child Sexual Abuse: Touching and Non-Touching**
- H Common Symptoms of an Abused or Molested Child**
- J Abuse/Molestation Incident Report Form**
- K Parental Consent, Certification, and Medical Authorization**

(Copies of Appendix's I, L-S may be obtained through the church office by request. These forms are in regards to the hiring procedure Evangel Church, PCA and its ministries are required to follow when hiring an employee or a volunteer.)

APPENDIX A
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

Guidelines for Nursery/Preschool Ministry
Age Birth through 5 Years

1. Employees and volunteers must have no record of arrests or convictions for child abuse, or any crime dealing with the welfare of a minor.
2. Employees and volunteers must be free of any and all accusations or allegations of child abuse.
3. **Every effort** will be made to staff all rooms with at least two (2) adults (age 18 and up), during all services.
4. Ministry leaders who coordinate and/or supervise nursery workers must be members in good standing of EPC, PCA.
5. Effort will be made to ensure at least two workers for each Nursery room:
 - A. Helpers in the Crib Room should be adults.
 - B. Helpers in the 1-3's nurseries should be adults. High school at least fourteen (14) years of age may serve as helpers, on an as-needed basis. All Alabama Child Labor Laws are followed by Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
 - C. Teenagers under age fourteen (14) may accompany two adults or a couple, as “third persons” in any of the rooms. They will be considered “in training” and not responsible as a scheduled worker or helper.
6. All parents who have children in the program will be telephoned and encouraged to participate in the program on a rotational basis.
7. All workers must adhere to the Child Protection First Policy and procedures, as well as the Preschool Security Policy.

APPENDIX B
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

Guidelines for Children's Ministry
Age 6 through Grades 6

1. Children's ministry workers must have no record of arrests or convictions for child abuse, or any crime dealing with the welfare of a minor.
2. Children's ministry workers should be free of any and all accusations or allegations of child abuse.
3. All Sunday school teachers and children's ministries' program leaders must be at least 18 years of age, and must be members, in good standing, of EPC, PCA. For Evangel Classical School a teacher is not required to be a member of the PCA, but be a member of an evangelical church and be approved by the leadership of the school.
4. Every effort will be made to secure a yearly commitment from each children worker, at EPC, PCA.
5. All children's workers must adhere to Child Protection First! policies and procedures, as well as the Preschool Security Policy.

APPENDIX C
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

Guidelines for Youth Ministry
Grades 7 through 12

1. Youth volunteer ministry workers must have no record of arrests or convictions for child abuse, or any crime dealing with the welfare of a minor.
2. Youth ministry workers should be free of any and all accusations or allegations of child abuse.
3. Youth ministry workers should be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
4. Youth ministry workers should be members, in good standing, of EPC, PCA.

5. Youth ministry leaders and workers must adhere to the EPC, PCA policies and procedures, including Child Protection First and other policies and procedures in effect from time to time.

APPENDIX D
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

Ministry to Students Behavior Guidelines

Written guidelines for appropriate behavior--to be read and signed by all returning and new youth ministry.

1. Any verbal or non-verbal sexual behavior with the youth is inappropriate.
2. Dating any of the youth is inappropriate.
3. Discretion should be used in dealing with all youth, especially regarding physical contact.
Innocent gestures can be misinterpreted.
4. Sexual gestures to staff by youth should be reported to the Minister To Students.
5. Two adults should be present at all times, especially when working with youth of the opposite sex.
6. One-to-one conversations with a youth should occur in a public place.
7. Driving alone with a youth should be avoided as much as is **reasonably possible**, with particular care extended to troubled teens.
8. Special care is to be taken when driving alone with a youth:
 - Do not sit close to one another in the car.
 - No physical contact.
 - Do not stop the car to talk.
 - If you must stop, turn the light on inside the car.
 - If at all possible, get out of the car to talk.
 - Avoid physical contact in saying goodbye (hugs/kisses).
 - Be aware of the time you leave the meeting and the time you arrive at the youth's house.
9. Romantic/sexual attraction for a youth should be discussed with the Evangel pastor for prayer and guidance.
10. All suspicions of child abuse/sexual abuse should be reported immediately to the Director of the particular Evangel Church Ministry or Church Administrator.

I certify that I have read the above guidelines and I agree to abide by them.

Signature

APPENDIX E
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

The State of Alabama Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

The following information is from the Code of Alabama:

I. MANDATORY REPORTING

(a) All hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, **day care workers or employees**, mental health professionals, **or any other person called upon to render aid** or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report, or cause a report to be made of the same, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority. Ala. Code § 26-14-3(a) (Cum. Supp. 1996) [emphasis added].

II. PERMISSIVE REPORTING

In addition to those persons, firms, corporations and officials required by Section 26-14-3 to report child abuse and neglect, any person may make such a report if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected. Ala. Code § 26-14-4 (1975).

III. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY

Any person, firm, corporation or official participating in the making of a report or the removal of a child pursuant to this chapter, or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting there from, shall, in so doing, be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Ala. Code § 26-14-9 (1975).

IV. PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO MAKE A REQUIRED REPORT

Any person who shall knowingly fail to make the report required by this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than six months' imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.00. Ala. Code § 26-14-13 (1975).

If you have questions about reporting obligations: Contact the Minister of Human Resources.

APPENDIX F
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

1. Child Sexual Abuse is a Crime

“Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.” (Church Law & Tax Report, *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*, 1993, p. 13)

2. General Definition

A general definition of child sexual abuse consists of “any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator.” (Church Law & Tax Report, *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*, 1993, p. 13)

3. Common Definition

“Any sexual activity with a child--whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.” (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992)

4. Alabama State Definition

“Sexual abuse includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law. Sexual exploitation includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes.” Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1) (Cum. Supp. 1996).

APPENDIX G
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

Types of Child Sexual Abuse: Touching and Non-Touching

THIS LIST IS NOT-ALL INCLUSIVE

Types of Abuse that Involve Touching Include:

- Fondling
- Sexual Gratification
- Oral, genital, or anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible Rape

Types of Abuse that DO NOT Involve Touching include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

APPENDIX H
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

Common Symptoms of an Abused or Molested Child

Physical signs may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty while sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Emotional signs may include:

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Acting out of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs may include one or more of the following statements:

- I don't like [the name of a particular worker].”
- “[A church worker] does things to me when we're alone.”
- “I don't like to be alone with [a church worker].”
- “[A church worker] fooled around with me.”

APPENDIX J
Evangel Presbyterian Church, PCA
Child Protection First!

ABUSE/MOLESTATION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to an individual and family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse by anyone toward a minor, you should document and report incidents to the appropriate age-group minister.

I have observed conduct that I feel would fall under the definition of sexual abuse as defined in the EPC, PCA Church "Child Protection First!" policy:

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Child sexual abuse can be violent or nonviolent. It is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of the oral, genital, and anal areas; intercourse; and forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

I understand that this material is to be treated as highly confidential and that I am not to discuss it with anyone else other than the age-group minister to whom I make this report.

Name _____

Date this report was made _____

REPORT OF THE INCIDENT:

Date of incident _____ Time incident
occurred _____

Suspected Abuser's Name _____

Minor's Name (victim) _____

Describe nature of the incident:

Personal observations of indications of suspected abuse that are not readily explained:

(circle any or all that apply)

Physical Abuse

unexplained bruises
welts
lacerations
underclothing
burns
fractures
abdominal injuries
human bites
child unusually wary of
physical contact with adults
demonstrates extremes in
behavior
age.
seems frightened of parents
or caretaker

Sexual Abuse

child reports abuse by others
has difficulty walking or sitting
torn, stained or bloody

complaints of pain or itching in
genital area
bruises or bleeding in external
genitalia, vaginal or anal area
unusual interest in or knowledge
of sexual matters
unusual and excessive behaviors
inappropriate for a child of that

Provide a complete description for the personal observations of indications of suspected abuse you have checked above:

I have reviewed the above report. It is true and correct, based on my personal observations.

Signature of Person Making Report

Date

Received by: _____

(Minister)

Date

APPENDIX K EPC Child Protection First!
Parental Consent, Certification, and Medical Authorization

Child's Name _____ **Date of Birth** _____

Parent or Guardian Name (s) _____

Home Phone _____ **Home Phone** _____

Work Phone _____ **Work Phone** _____

Cellular # _____ **Cellular #** _____

Doctor's Name _____

Chart # _____ **Telephone** _____

Health Insurance Contact #: _____ **Insurer:** _____

Known Allergies _____

List any medication or drugs taken regularly: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Local Relative or Friend in case Parents can not be located:

Name _____ **Telephone** _____

Permission to Participate in EPC, PCA Activities

As the parent (or legal guardian), I the undersigned, certify that my child, named above, has my express permission to participate in all activities, of any nature, sponsored by EPC, PCA Church for the calendar year.

Dispute Resolution Agreement

EPC, PCA Church believes that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8). Therefore, EPC, PCA and I fully agree that any claim or dispute shall be settled by biblically based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker7 Ministries. (A complete text of the Rules is available at <http://www.hispeace.org/html/geticrul.htm>. Further information on Peacemaker7 Ministries can be viewed at www.hispeace.org.) Judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The undersigned and EPC, PCA understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement.

In Case of a Medical Emergency

It is my understanding that a church representative will attempt to notify me in case of a medical emergency involving my child. If the church cannot reach me, then I authorize the church representative to hire a doctor or other health-care professional, and I give my permission to the doctor or other health-care professional to provide the medical services he or she may deem necessary. I will pay for any medical expenses so incurred. I will notify the church if I feel there are any health considerations that would prevent my child's participation in an activity. I also give my permission for church leaders to restrict my child from participation in any activity, which they have any question about for health or other reasons.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Witness

Date