



Child / Youth / Vulnerable Adult Safe Church Policy Summary

COMMITMENT

Neffsville Mennonite Church (NMC) is committed to protecting its children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and does not nor will not tolerate any abuse or neglect. We believe it is our responsibility to:

- 1) Protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults to whom we minister from abuse while they are in our care.
- 2) Guard our paid staff and volunteers from suspicion or false accusation of wrongful behavior toward a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- 3) Report any incidents or suspected incidents of abuse promptly to ChildLine (1-800-932-0313) as required by Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law.
- 4) The Child Protection Committee oversees the SafeChurch policy, provides training for volunteers, and insures the safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Guidelines for volunteers who desire to work with children and youth under 18 years of age are as follows:

- 1) Attend Neffsville Mennonite Church for a minimum of 6 months.
- 2) Complete all forms and obtain required clearances (also referred to as certifications).
- 3) Attend an initial training session.
- 4) Sign and comply with the Child Protection Covenant.
- 5) As an Approved Adult notify the Child Advocate if arrested or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denial of employment or volunteer work with children. Such notification is required by law within 72 hours.

In compliance with Pennsylvania law, all adult volunteers must obtain the following certifications before working with children or youth at NMC:

- 1) Child Abuse History Certification (CY-113)
- 2) Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check (SP4-164)
- 3) Complete NMC Approved Adult Application
- 4) FBI Fingerprint Record Check if volunteer has not lived in Pennsylvania for previous 10 years

Certifications are repeated every 5 years. Certification results must be provided to the Administrative Assistant and all documents will be kept secure.

ADULT GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN & YOUTH

- 1) Child abuse is prohibited including intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing physical injury, mental injury, or serious physical neglect.
- 2) Sexual abuse is prohibited. This includes having any interaction with a child or youth where the child or youth is being used for sexual stimulation of any adult regardless of whether or not the behavior involves touching or any other activity described as sexual abuse.
- 3) Two Approved Adults will be present at any church sponsored child or youth activity. If two Approved Adults are not available, the door to the room must be left open at all times (Sunday School, nursery, WNO clubs, etc.). A designated Approved Adult will circulate outside the classroom or nursery areas and be within easy reach to provide assistance if needed. In a mixed group, whenever possible, a male and a female Approved Adult should be present.
- 4) Diapers will not be changed by anyone other than the parent unless written permission is given, and then only when 2 approved Adults are present.
- 5) An Approved Adult will accompany a preschool child to the bathroom but will remain outside the stall. Minimal assistance may be provided.
- 6) Discipline of any type involving physical contact is not permitted.
- 7) Approved Adults will use caution when physically expressing affection toward a child or youth. Bear hugs, touches on private areas and mouth kissing are inappropriate.

CHILD/YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Every August, all parents of children and youth will complete a Registration, Medical Information & Release-- General Permission -- form for children and will be kept on file for the year. Any special activity or overnight activity will have an additional permission form for parents to sign. These forms must be completed for the child/youth to participate in church activities away from church grounds. Overnight activities will be chaperoned by at least 2 Approved Adults each of the same gender. Boys and girls will sleep in separate areas. If transportation is provided, there will be at least 1 Approved Adult in each vehicle. Anyone who has had their license revoked or suspended within the last 2 years will be ineligible to drive for youth activities.

This summary is not a substitute for the reading of the entire SafeChurch policy as required for volunteers and employees as indicated in the Approved Adult Application. The full policy is available in hard copy in the church library and online at the Neffsville Mennonite Church website, neffmc.org.

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