

**Naperville Presbyterian Church
Child Protection Policies and Procedures**

February 2026

Dear Staff Member or Volunteer,

Welcome to Naperville Presbyterian Church!

At NPC, we take our responsibility to care for children and youth very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children and youth can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and to protect the integrity of our staff members and volunteers.

This handbook provides a general overview of procedures and guidelines for NPC staff members and volunteers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children (birth through 5th grade) and youth (6th through 12th grade). The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

NPC Minor Protection Committee

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I. Overview of the Naperville Presbyterian Church Safety System

Because we love children and desire to protect them, NPC requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or youth (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placement begins.

All opportunities to serve are at the discretion of the ministry director. Applicants must complete a screening process and background check to be considered to volunteer. After completing the screening process and background check, prospective volunteers must then complete a review of all policies and procedures and the sexual abuse awareness training.

A. STEP ONE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the NPC screening process, which includes:

- Employment application (staff members only)
- Ministry application
- Face-to-face interview
- Reference checks, when deemed necessary

B. STEP TWO: Background Check

NPC requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children or student activities or programming undergo a background check. Individuals who have committed sexually oriented or sex-related crimes will not serve in any area providing services to children or youth. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving with minors. Background checks will be renewed every three years.

C. STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

D. STEP FOUR: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

NPC Policies and Procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a ministry director or a member of the Minor Protection Committee.

Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in “grooming” a child or youth 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 equip NPC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, NPC requires all staff members and volunteers to complete Mandated Reporter Training required by the state of Illinois. This training will be renewed every three years.

II. Minor Protection Committee

A. MINOR PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, NPC will appoint and maintain a Minor Protection Committee, which will meet once each quarter or as necessary.

The purpose of the Minor Protection Committee is to enable NPC children’s and youth ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

B. COMPOSITION

The Minor Protection Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- The senior pastor or associate pastor
- The children’s ministry director
- The youth ministry director
- One elder
- One member of the NPC Safety Team

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing NPC Policies and Procedures related to children's and youths' 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 NPC elders regarding safety issues.

NOTE: *It is NOT the responsibility of the Minor Protection Committee to investigate any report of abuse or neglect. It is the responsibility of law enforcement to investigate reports once they are submitted.*

III. Child Safety Policy

A. ZERO TOLERANCE ABUSE POLICY

NPC supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of Illinois law for any staff member or volunteer to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child or youth participating in NPC programs. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at NPC to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the ministry director, any staff member, or elder who will then report to the Minor Protection Committee.

B. ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

NPC staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all NPC policies. Anyone working with children or students at NPC is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff and must follow these guidelines. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in children's ministry – for both staff members and volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Minor Protection Committee.

IV. Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

A. REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

NPC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children, youth, and families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to local law enforcement (or Illinois Department of Child and Family Services) and the Minor Protection Committee.

****As a staff member or volunteer serving with children or youth, you are a MANDATED REPORTER, according to Illinois state law.**

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a ministry director, any staff member, or elder who will then report to the Minor Protection Committee. Because sexual abusers “groom” children and youth for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to “groom” a child or youth for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are required to report grooming behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a ministry director, any staff member, or elder who will then report to the Minor Protection Committee.

B. REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

To maintain a safe environment for our children, NPC staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to a ministry director, any staff member, or elder who will then report to the Minor Protection Committee.

C. CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the Minor Protection Committee to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in any ministry involving children, youth, or other vulnerable individuals. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Illinois Department of Child and Family Services, or the Minor Protection Committee.

If the information received by the Minor Protection Committee reveals that the violation is of a sexual nature, the staff member or the volunteer will be suspended from serving in any ministry involving children, youth, or other vulnerable individuals as the investigation by law enforcement and Illinois DCFS is initiated by mandatory reporting. The employee or volunteer will not be allowed to continue in any capacity of service until the investigation concludes.

Any person found to have committed a violation of these policies and procedures (NOT of a sexual nature) will be suspended from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, youth, or vulnerable populations at NPC until the situation can be investigated by the Minor Protection Committee.

Depending on the results of an investigation, the consequences could include termination of employment from NPC or permanent removal from a volunteer role.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and may be grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act will be restricted from participating in any activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable populations at NPC until the investigation is completed.

Staff members and volunteers should immediately discuss with the ministry director any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and seek counsel from the Minor Protection Committee and an attorney, if needed.

D. REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE IN ILLINOIS

As a staff member or volunteer serving with children or youth, you are a MANDATED REPORTER, according to Illinois state law. You are therefore required to report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children¹ to local law enforcement or the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services Hotline:

1-800-252-2873 or 1-800-25 ABUSE

Because many adults are unfamiliar with Illinois reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, NPC may utilize a “tandem or dual report” model, where permitted. A “tandem or dual report” occurs when the person receiving the report from an individual then reports

¹ “Mandated reporters are required to call the Hotline when they have **reasonable cause to believe** that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child” (p. 2, “Manual for Mandated Reporters,” Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, September 2020 revised edition).

the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard, or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, DCFS, OR THE ABUSE HOTLINE *DIRECTLY*. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and youth, and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED from NPC before reporting to law enforcement personnel or the Child Abuse Hotline. In addition, a report may be made without involving or informing NPC personnel.

While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse or neglect (or any inappropriate or “grooming” behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to a ministry director, any staff member, or elder who will then report to the Minor Protection Committee. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in NPC programs.

When in doubt, report.

V. Children’s and Youth Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

Any time a child or youth has been entrusted to staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their care.

A. BUILDING SAFETY

Every ministry director is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children or youth. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and children or youth. No child or youth will *ever* be left unattended in a ministry area during regular programming, classes, or activities.

B. SUPERVISION

Only parents (dropping off children/youth), screened ministry volunteers, NPC staff, and children/youth are allowed in areas where ministry to children/youth is occurring. If another adult enters the children’s or youth ministry area, they should be identified and then encouraged to leave the area and escorted out of the area if deemed necessary. If questions

or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a ministry director or Safety Team member should be notified immediately.

Two trained, screened adults are required to supervise children at all times.

NPC practices the *Two Adult Rule*, which requires a reasonable number of adult leaders (with a minimum of two) to be maintained when supervising children and youth. A married couple or two family members comprise *one adult* for purposes of compliance with the *Two Adult Rule*. *In the event a married couple serves together, a third adult will be scheduled with them.*

Avoid being alone with an individual child or youth in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children for any reason, notify the ministry director before leaving (or immediately if there is an emergency) so that another staff member or volunteer can serve in their place, always maintaining the Two Adult Rule.

If two or more individuals serving in a room are related, an additional unrelated adult volunteer or staff member must also be present.

Avoid distractions that would impact your ability to effectively supervise children or youth and maintain situational awareness (i.e., use of cell phones, wearing headphones, etc.).

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, ministry area, and restroom is checked, all children are picked up by a parent, and rooms are locked prior to leaving.

C. WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS

1. For Children’s Ministry

NPC is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all children’s ministry programs. Accordingly, the following volunteer-to-child minimum ratios will be observed. In the event there are mixed ages in a classroom, the ratio defaults to the youngest age in the room.

Nursery (infants)	1:3
Walkers – 2 years old	1:4
Ages 3 – 5 years old	1:7
Elementary	1:10

CHECK-IN

Upon check-in, each child will receive a name tag with a security number, and their parent or guardian will be given a claim tag with a matching number. Volunteers must check and match each claim tag before releasing a child at pick-up.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children’s ministry staff members and 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. Children should NOT be released to siblings. Security tags must always be matched upon pick-up and before release.

If a claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to the director of children’s ministry where proper identification can be made by a staff member before the child is released. (Have the child stay in the classroom; the parent may pick up the child once cleared by the ministry director.)

In the event staff members or volunteers are uncertain about releasing a child, they should immediately contact the children’s ministry director *before* releasing the child.

2. For Youth Ministry

NPC is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all youth ministry programs. Accordingly, the volunteer-to-student minimum ratio of 1:10 will be observed.

Students

1–20

21–30

30+

Workers

at least 2 staff members or volunteers (Two Adult Rule)

at least 3 staff members or volunteers

at least 4 staff members or volunteers

VI. Communicating with Families

A. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are permitted 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 or youth’s programs at NPC will be required to complete the NPC ministry application and screening process.

Parents who leave a child or youth in the care of NPC staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in ministry programs.

VII. Disciplinary Policies

A. DISCIPLINE

It is NPC's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children or youth. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors.

1. For Children's Ministry

When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct their behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations, and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually, when possible; try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting.
**When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.*
2. If the child repeats the action, guide him or her to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.
3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. (“Georgia, you didn’t stop hitting Cole when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.”)
4. After a third time, refer to a staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported to the children's ministry director immediately.

NEVER:

- Yell at a child.
- Grab a child.
- Threaten a child. Always follow through with your words.
- Hit a child.
- Confront a parent in front of others.
- Humiliate a child in front of the class.

2. For Youth Ministry

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and a youth ministry staff member. Any behavior problems will be handled in the following sequence:

- The student will be asked to correct the behavior.
- A staff member will talk with the student to discuss the problem behavior.
- Parents will be notified of discipline or behavior problems.
- The student will not be allowed to attend a ministry event. (This is a final measure, but not desired.)

NEVER:

- Yell at a student.
- Grab a student.
- Threaten a student. Always follow through with your word.
- Hit a student.
- Confront a parent in front of others.
- Humiliate a student in front of their peers.

If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions, the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the student. Any damage to property will be reported to parents, who will be responsible for repairs, including damage incurred at off-campus ministry events.

In the event of a fight or physical altercation, verbally redirect those involved and avoid physical intervention unless necessary for the safety of other students. In these instances, staff members and volunteers are allowed to restrain a student with appropriate physical force, as needed.

B. BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in NPC ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry director. There is no *harmless put-down* where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense:* Issue a warning to the child or youth and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense:* Pull the offending child(ren) or youth from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child know that the next step is communication with a staff member and the child's parents. Notify the ministry director of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.
 - a. Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that the child or youth who was the target of the bullying is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. **DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD OR YOUTH OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP.** Be discreet.
3. *Third Offense:* Contact the ministry director for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

VIII. Restroom Policies

A. FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a restroom in use by children. In the cases where there is a restroom in a classroom, these are for children ONLY. Adults should always use a hallway bathroom. Adults should use a restroom separately and apart from restrooms used by children during services or when there are children present. No volunteer OF ANY AGE should enter or occupy a restroom while children are using it. When no child is present, adults (and young volunteers) are allowed into a restroom (one at a time) so long as there is another adult at the doorway keeping any child from entering. Diaper changes must take place at a diaper changing station in the classroom and must be within plain view of other volunteers.

1. Nursery Children

Because nursery children may require assistance with their restroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

DIAPERING

- Changing diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children should never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents should be adhered to.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- **Children should be diapered using changing tables or stations only, located in the classroom.**

TOILET TRAINING

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- When early childhood children use classroom restrooms, the door may be left partially open if it is not a half door.
- Young children should never be left unattended in restrooms.
- Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in toilet training before leaving the child with staff members or volunteers. Any special instructions given should be adhered to.
- Parents should be consulted as to how much assistance is needed by their child.
- Staff members and volunteers are trained and encouraged to talk a child through the process **before assisting**.
- Children can be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available in all classrooms in the children's early childhood area if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

2. Grades 1–5

Elementary children should be able to use the restroom independently. Hallway bathrooms are available and a volunteer should step into the hallway to see both the hallway restroom and the classroom. Assure that the child returns after using the restroom.

If you must go into the restroom to check on a child, seek out another adult volunteer or staff member to accompany you. If another volunteer is not available, go to the exterior restroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.

The only exception would be in the event of an emergency where life saving measures are required; necessary and appropriate contact in the medical context may be necessary to aid a child in distress.

If a child requires assistance, leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the restroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting, while the child remains behind the door of the stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be in the presence of another volunteer.

If restroom use is required:

- Only one child in the restroom at a time in a single toilet facility.
- In general, children at this age should be able to use the restroom without assistance. If a need arises for assistance, the child should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- All students in grades 1-5 must be accompanied to the restroom by a volunteer, but volunteers should remain in the hallway while the child uses the restroom, and within view of the classroom, as well.
- Be aware if a child repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to the ministry director if it occurs.
- A single staff member or volunteer should never take a lone child to the restroom.

3. Disabilities

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of individuals with disabilities. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change the diapers of all individuals with disabilities. If individuals under 4 years of age with disabilities require assistance using the restroom, an adult volunteer may assist them in the restroom using the appropriate guidance above.

B. FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Be aware if a student repeatedly leaves to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to the ministry director. In offsite contexts, send students to use the restroom in groups of at least three, when possible.

During regular meeting times, volunteers should use separate restrooms from the students. Utilize verbal supervision, outside the restroom door, when necessary. If a situation requires entering the restroom, a parent should be contacted to handle the situation. If the situation doesn't allow for waiting for a parent, two (unrelated) staff members or volunteers of the same gender must enter the restroom together.

The only exception would be in the event of an emergency where life saving measures are required; necessary and appropriate contact in the medical context may be necessary to aid a student in distress.

IX. Verbal Interactions with Children and Youth

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children or youth should be positive and uplifting. NPC staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to children or youth in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

X. One-to-One Interactions with Children and Youth

A. FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in NPC children's ministry programs. Another adult who has completed the NPC application and screening process should always be present.

1. Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children and 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.

2. Sexually Oriented Material

Staff members and volunteers in children's ministry at NPC are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children.

3. Physical Contact

NPC is committed to protecting children in our care. To this end, NPC has implemented a "physical contact policy" which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our children's ministry while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in children's ministry programs:

- Physical contact in any form should be above reproach, for the benefit of the child, and never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in children's ministry must foster trust at all times.
- Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

AVOID the following interactions:

- Never touch a child in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even if a child has been injured in one of these areas. Never allow casual contact in these areas, under or over clothing.
- No sitting on laps unless serving in the nursery (children ages birth to 2 years).
- No handholding, unless part of a worship/prayer service, leading a preschool-aged child or younger or a group game.
- Never touch in anger or disgust.
- Never touch in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Avoid touching a child between the navel and the knees.
- Never carry a child piggy-back, or on your shoulders.
- Never place hands beneath a child's clothing to play, rub or comfort.
- Never tickle, participate in "horseplay," or wrestle with a child.

The only exception would be in the event of an emergency where life saving measures are required; necessary and appropriate contact in the medical context may be necessary to aid a child in distress.

Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

Physical affection should occur only in observable locations or when in the presence of other staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others, including other children.

Inappropriate touch and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touch or display of affection should be immediately reported to the ministry director, staff member, or elder and then to the Minor Protection Committee.

Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the ministry director, staff member, or elder and then to the Minor Protection Committee.

B. FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Meeting the emotional or spiritual needs of students may occasionally involve interaction on an individual basis. Please observe the following guidelines when interacting with minors:

The Two Adult Rule should be diligently followed during ministry programs. Do not interact alone with an individual student in any room or building. In the event you find yourself alone with a single student, move to a room or area occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

One-to-one meetings with an individual student must occur at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. *Example:* If a student desires additional conversation after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present, or into a public space.

Never hold a one-to-one meeting with a student who is the opposite gender, in any context.

If a closed-door meeting must occur, it should occur on church property, with a second adult present. The door must remain unlocked, and any window treatments *open*.

Any ongoing meetings with students (such as counseling, one-to-one discipleship, etc.) should be discussed with a youth ministry staff member, and should comply with the Two Adult Rule OR occur in a public, easily observed location. Parents should always be aware of one-to-one meetings.

Staff members and adult volunteers are prohibited from dating (or having any sort of romantic interaction with) students in the youth ministry.

1. Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any student in the program.

However, it is expected that youth ministry discussions and lessons may occasionally address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey the church's views on these topics to the students.

Students may have questions/struggles in this area and desire to confide in a trusted adult leader for guidance. Proceed with great caution, teaching with sensitivity and from a biblical perspective.

- Avoid discussing anything of a sexual nature with students of the opposite gender.
- If a student's questions or comments on a sexual matter become too detailed or explicit in a group setting, the leader should use discretion and set up another time to meet with this student. It is often wise to leave these conversations to the student's parents. Parents should be aware beforehand if a conversation with a student will be about a sexual matter. For any follow-up meeting: inform the youth ministry director *first*. Always comply with the Two Adult Rule OR meet in a public, easily observed location.

- When in doubt as to whether a conversation could be interpreted as a “sexually oriented conversation,” treat the conversation as such and follow this policy. When possible, clarify the question/topic with the youth ministry director.

2. Sexually Oriented Material

Staff members and volunteers in the youth ministry at NPC are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, etc.) on church property or in the presence of students.

3. Physical Contact

In certain situations, appropriate touch is acceptable. The following guidelines should be observed:

- Physical contact in any form should be above reproach, for the benefit of the student, and never based upon your emotional needs.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in the youth ministry must foster trust at all times.
- Pat a hand, shoulder or back in an encouraging manner.
- Side hugs: in public view and kept brief. When hugging someone of the opposite gender, hugs should be limited to side hugs.
- Look for opportunities to give plenty of “high fives” and “fist bumps,” unless this makes a student feel uncomfortable.
- Shake hands, or briefly put an arm around the student’s shoulder.

AVOID the following interactions:

- A sexual relationship with a student is never acceptable.
- Never touch a student in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even if a student has been injured in one of these areas. Never allow casual contact in these areas, under or over clothing.
- No sitting on laps.
- No hand-holding, unless part of a worship/prayer service or a group game.
- Never touch in anger or disgust.
- Never touch in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Avoid touching a student between the navel and the knees.
- Never carry a student piggy-back, or on your shoulders.
- Never kiss a student, or give (or receive) a massage.

- Never place hands beneath a student’s clothing to play, rub, or comfort.
- Never tickle, participate in “horse-play” or wrestle with a student.

Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant student. A student’s preference not to be touched must be respected.

Physical affection should occur only in observable locations or when in the presence of others. It is much less likely that touch will be misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others, including other students.

Inappropriate touch and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touch or display of affection should be immediately reported to the ministry director, staff member, or elder and then to the Minor Protection Committee.

Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to the ministry director, staff member, or elder and then to the Minor Protection Committee.

XI. Electronic Communication

A. FOR CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

All communication with children must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with ministry leadership or a parent.

1. Texting

Texting between staff members or volunteers and children is not permitted.

2. Communication Applications

It is permissible for the ministry to use applications that have messaging features using a children’s ministry account to communicate with parents or guardians. At least one other

staff member must have credentials to access the application and regularly review the messaging, comments and postings.

It is not permissible for staff members to use ministry or personal accounts to direct message children.

3. Personal Social Media

Staff members and volunteers must maintain a high moral standard in social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension or removal from participation in children's ministry at NPC. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media.

For the safety of our children, DO NOT post pictures of children in ministry activities on your personal social media.

B. FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

All communication with students must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with ministry leadership or a parent.

1. Texting

Texting between staff members/volunteers and students is permissible only as outlined below.

- In general, texts should occur in group form, whenever possible. Though students may reply individually, make every effort to text in group form and encourage replies to the group.
- When possible, staff members should send and receive texts using a ministry-provided device or account.
- Parents should always be aware if a volunteer or staff member is texting a student. Parents must give written permission (via text if necessary) for a volunteer or staff member to text their student.
- Parents may ask staff members or volunteers to see the text messages between them and their student.

- Prudent judgment must be used in the timing of texts. **Do not text before 7:00 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m.** unless the texting occurs as part of a programmed ministry activity.
- Avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via texts.
- It is not permissible to text photos or videos to a student. Likewise, it is not permissible to request photos or videos from a student.

One-to-one texting communication with a student of the opposite gender is prohibited.

2. Communication Applications

It is permissible for the youth ministry to use applications that have group messaging features – using a youth ministry account. At least one other staff member must have credentials to access the application and regularly review the messaging, comments and postings. These applications may not be used to direct message students.

It is not permissible for staff members to use personal accounts to direct message students. All group messaging to/from students should be above reproach, available for supervisory access and originate from the youth ministry account – not a personal account.

In the event a student direct messages a staff member’s personal account, the staff member will follow up in a group message through the youth ministry account, or via text message following all of the above policies and procedures. All students will be counseled to direct communication to the youth ministry account.

Staff members and volunteers should avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via social media.

It is not permissible for staff members or volunteers to send photos or videos to a student, or to request photos or videos from a student.

Staff members and volunteers may not comment or reply to a student’s post that is inappropriate or questionable.

All interactions should be above reproach and reflect the integrity and values of NPC youth ministry. Staff members and volunteers may not post inappropriate or off-color content, or comment on inappropriate or off-color posts. When in doubt, treat a post as inappropriate.

No one-to-one social media communication may occur with ANY student.

3. Dating Applications

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from interacting with students on dating apps. They are prohibited from being on any apps intended to facilitate sexual encounters.

4. Personal Social Media

Staff members and volunteers must maintain a high moral standard in social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension or removal from participation in NPC's youth ministry. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media.

For the safety of our students, **DO NOT** post pictures of students in ministry activities on your personal social media.

XII. Tobacco Use

NPC requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children, youth, or their parents, or during NPC activities or programs, whether on campus or away. NPC is a tobacco-free facility.

XIII. Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or any illegal drugs while in any NPC facility, while traveling with children or youth, or while working with or supervising children or youth during any NPC program or activity.

XIV. Nudity

Staff members and volunteers in NPC children's and youth ministry should never be nude in the presence of children or youth.

A. FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

In the event a volunteer needs to use the restroom, volunteers should use a hallway bathroom when children are not present.

B. FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

In the event there is a situation that necessitates changing clothes (i.e., changing clothes during a pool party, weekend, or overnight retreat, etc.), staff members and volunteers are required to change in a location where they are not possibly visible to students, nor should students be visible to them while changing.

XV. Physical Appearance

Staff members and volunteers should dress in modest, comfortable clothes. Do not wear thin-strapped shirts or low-cut shirts while serving. First impressions are important; take this into consideration while serving:

- No revealing swimsuits
- No revealing/form-fitting clothes
- No shirts with low necklines or that show midriff
- No short dresses, skirts or shorts

XVI. Medication

A. FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child while serving in ministry programs, including topical or over-the-counter medications.

B. FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Administering over-the-counter medication will require written parental consent (via text message, if necessary). It will be provided only with the awareness of the youth ministry director or designated medical staff.

No prescription medications may ever be administered or distributed, unless it was provided by the parents before the event. Access to prescription medications will be controlled by the youth ministry director or designated medical staff. NPC is not responsible for remembering to administer medication. That responsibility falls solely on the student.

XVII. Transportation

A. FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Staff members and volunteers may, from time to time, provide transportation for children using a church-owned van or a bus service for the purpose of ministry. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- No drivers under age 25 may drive NPC owned or rented vehicles.
- In transportation, the TWO ADULT RULE must be followed.
- Transport only the number of children for whom you have seatbelts.
- Seatbelts must be worn at all times while in the vehicle.
- No one should be double buckled (two children using one seatbelt).
- Use extra caution when driving children.
- Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops should be avoided.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- Absent an emergency, **cell phones may not be used by drivers** while transporting minors (other than navigation applications for directions). In an emergency, stop the vehicle to use the cell phone, unless a stop cannot safely occur. Texting or other cell phone use is strictly prohibited while driving.

B. FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Staff members and volunteers may, from time to time, be in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when ministry workers are involved in the transportation of students:

- Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place must be avoided.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one student in transport.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
- Absent an emergency, **drivers may not use cell phones** while transporting minors (other than navigation applications for directions). In an emergency, stop the vehicle to use the cell phone, unless a stop cannot safely occur. Texting or other cell phone use is strictly prohibited while driving.
- No drivers under age 25 may drive NPC owned or rented vehicles.
- In transportation, the TWO ADULT RULE must be followed.
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a student of the opposite gender.
- Never instruct a student to drive other students to a ministry event.
- Transport only the number of students for whom you have seatbelts.
- Seatbelts should be worn at all times while in the vehicle.
- No one should be double-buckled (two youth using one seatbelt).
- Use extra caution when driving students.
- Transportation for one-to-one meetings may only be provided with written permission from parents (via text if necessary). Drivers must go directly to a public location.

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of NPC's Child Protection Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at NPC.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by NPC.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at NPC at any time.

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

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the NPC Child Protection Policies and Procedures manual.

Staff member or volunteer name (please print)

Staff member or volunteer signature

Date

This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the children's or youth ministry director.

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