

Children and Youth Ministry Policies

PVCC cares for a number of children and youth and desires to protect them. The policies following are designed to safeguard them and reduce the chance of injury, or even the suspicion of questionable behavior.

All staff and volunteers who desire to work with minors will be required to complete the Volunteer Information sheet. Criminal background checks will be performed on each volunteer after the signed information sheet has been received and prior to the volunteer being enlisted as a worker. Each volunteer must be given a copy of these policies and sign that they have read and agree to abide by the policy.

The following items would disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership or supervision of any activities or programs with minors:

1)Criminal homicide 2) aggravated assault 3) crimes related to the possession, use or sale of drugs or controlled substance 4) sexual abuse or assault 5) incest 6) indecency with a child 7)possession or promotion of child pornography 8) abandonment or endangerment of a child 9) public lewdness or indecent exposure 10) enticing a child 11) kidnapping 12) being required to register as a sex offender, or 13) other felony convictions. The elder board has the flexibility to consider repentant sinners in volunteer roles after careful examination of the situation.

Only the Senior Pastor and a member of the lay leadership selected by elders may view information obtained on the criminal background check. The information will be filed in a secured area located in the church office.

PVCC has adopted the “two adult rule”, which, whenever possible, means no adult shall be left alone with a child. In counseling sessions or other individual meetings with a minor, written parental permission shall be obtained prior to meeting privately or the “two adult rule” shall be used in that instance. When an adult is alone with a minor, it should occur in a public area, a room with transparent windows, and any door without a window shall remain open at all times. If a teacher is the only adult with one child, the classes should be combined or another responsible adult or youth should be present.

Section 1: Bathroom Procedures

This section addresses those steps that the church should implement to protect child, staff and volunteers when children need to utilize bathroom facilities. Children, for purposes of this section, will be defined as age 3 (potty-trained) through grade 5.

- a) If a child requires assistance, the responsible adult (gender sameness preferred) should take the child to the restroom, prop the door open and assist the child in an appropriate manner. The first choice for a restroom is to be, if available, the small bathroom located by the nursery.

- b) If the child does not require assistance, the adult should accompany the child, check to see if any adults are already in the bathroom and, if so, ask they leave the bathroom as soon as possible so the child may use the facility in private and then remain outside. Whenever possible, using the small bathroom next to the nursery is preferable.
- c) In the event the responsible adult is the only individual with a group of children and one or more need to use the bathroom facilities, the adult should seek the assistance of a Security Team member or other trusted adult to assist or the adult should position himself so as to monitor both the bathroom and the group of children.

Section 2: Fire

In the event of a fire or fire alarm, adults should lead the children to the nearest exit and walk to the front parking lot and stay with the children until it is safe to return to the building or the children are released to their parents or guardian. Adults should take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for.

Section 3: Lost or Missing Children

A child is considered lost or missing if the responsible adult cannot locate the child within the confines of their classroom, their immediate area or the church grounds as a whole. This policy covers all children attending church-related activities located on and off the church premises.

- 1) At the first indication a child is missing, notify an elder, member of the Administration Team, ministry coordinator or security team member to report the incident.
- 2) As soon as possible, all available volunteers or staff should be enlisted and church exits should be secured.
- 3) Bathrooms are to be searched first. Then persons involved should conduct a brief but thorough search inside the church facility, including all of the “out-of-the-way” places.
- 4) If the indoor search is unsuccessful, then proceed outside and conduct a search of the grounds.
- 5) Isolate the class or group in which the missing child had been involved and take attendance to ensure there is no other child missing. Children should be asked if they know the location of the missing child.
- 6) If the child cannot be located within five minutes, notify the child’s parents and the police.

Section 4: Medical Emergency

In the event of a serious injury, there are two (2) basic rules:

- A. Do not move the injured unless they are in another life-threatening situation, i.e. a fire.

- B. Do not leave the ill or injured person unless required to provide the appropriate level of assistance.

Follow the following steps:

- 1) Call 911 immediately for any life-threatening emergency and follow their directions. If unsure of the urgency of the situation, call 911 if a qualified medical person cannot be **immediately** located.
- 2) Enlist the help of any trained medical professionals who may be available to assist the individual. In the event of any serious injury, notify the parents as soon as possible.
- 3) Enlist the help of other responsible adults to assist, to retrieve first aid supplies or attend to other children as soon as possible.
- 4) As soon as the immediate need is handled, notify a staff person to report the incident. That staff person should report the incident to our church insurance agent.

Section 5: Tornado or Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather or the threat of said incident, a responsible adult, staff member, or member of the Elder or Administration Team should monitor weather reports. If possible, volunteers should be posted to observe outside conditions.

If threatening conditions are sighted or a warning is given, all children should be moved to a small, sturdy, **interior** room such as the restrooms or the small Kids' City room or hallway away from windows. The small bathroom and small room in the nursery area is also available. People should evacuate the main sanctuary room and go into the hallways.

Section 6: Transportation

Whenever youth involved in church activities are transported by vehicles, the vehicles should **only** be operated by responsible adults over the age of 25. If a youth pastor, they should be between 21 and 70 years of age. Under **NO** circumstances should any youth drive other youth (siblings exempted) during official youth group activities unless parental permission is **clearly** granted in writing in advance. No youth should drive themselves beyond 10 miles during any youth event unless the parent is notified in advance. Any vehicles should be in good operating condition and adequately insured. Volunteers driving their own vehicles are strongly encouraged to carry minimum personal automotive liability limits of \$100,000/\$300,000/\$100,000. Volunteers should have a valid U.S. driver's license, good driving records meaning no more than one at-fault accident or moving violation within the last three years, and no alcohol- or drug-related violations. The youth pastor is responsible for verifying that all volunteers driving youth meet the above requirements.

Due to higher incidents of rollover accidents, large passenger vans are discouraged for use in youth activities. If a larger van is rented or used, the van should have dual rear truck wheels or be equipped

with an anti-rollover package, have seatbelts for all passengers and be a 2004 model year or later. No trailers, no roof rack loads are permitted.

Parents of youth should **always** be informed on any plans for transportation away from the location where youth are dropped off for the activity. If youth decide to meet after a youth event, PVCC is not responsible, but youth should be encouraged to inform their parents of plans.

Youth Pastors are responsible for obtaining Permission/Liability Release/Medical Release forms for all youth participating in activities away from the church property. The only exception is the ordinary weekly youth gatherings held at members' homes. Youth pastors and chaperones should be familiar with any special medical conditions or allergies.

All drivers should have written directions to the destination for longer distance trips rather than being told to "keep up" or follow the vehicle in front of them.

In the event of a vehicle accident, the following steps should be taken:

- a) Stop immediately and aid any injured and see to it they receive medical attention as soon as possible. Move any vehicles and people well away from the roadway if possible to do so safely. Do not attempt to move injured persons unless they are in another life-threatening situation, i.e. fire or traffic.
- b) Call for help if needed. Report the accident to local police.
- c) Place emergency reflectors, flares.
- d) Assess damage, get witnesses' names and telephone numbers. Get Driver's license, insurance information, and license plate information of other driver.
- e) Notify the families of other passengers involved in the accident.
- f) Record details of the accident in writing and notify the insurance company.

Section 7: Recreational Safety

Youth groups often are involved in recreational activities that have the potential for injury. Youth leaders and volunteers should be aware of any potential dangers that cause injury such as sharp objects near the activity. Be sure that activities are away from any traffic. Consider the size and experience of various youth and guard against injury that might result from larger youth being with smaller youth. Leaders should also be aware of the condition of all youth when the weather is hot and humid.

Section 8: Discussions of Sexual or other Sensitive Topics

Youth groups may discuss from time to time information that may be only appropriate for youth of a certain age. Parents may have different views regarding the discussion of these topics. Teachers or

youth leaders should inform parents in advance any time these topics will be discussed and the nature of the discussion should be clearly conveyed.

Section 9: Mission Trips

PVCC will go on mission trips from time to time. These trips often involve trips to faraway locales, operation of dangerous equipment and other risks. It is the policy of PVCC that youth under the age of 18 should be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. If another adult is willing to assume the responsibility of accompanying the minor, parents should sign a written permission and grant healthcare powers to that adult.

Section 10: Youth Overnight Activity Policy

All overnight activities involving minors, whether on or off church grounds, shall be supervised or chaperoned by at least two adults, and if youth participants are both male and female, then supervisors and chaperones must be both male and female. All supervisors and chaperones must be twenty-one years of age or older and must a completed and clear background check on file at PVCC.

Section 11: Membership

Those in leadership would like to encourage congregants to use their gifts and serve in multiple areas. However, to serve in some areas of the church, it will be necessary to be a Member of PVCC. In addition to roles mentioned in the By-Laws (Elders, Admin Team, Ministry Team Leaders, and Ministers), these areas include small group leading and teaching/leading children of any age. We believe all teachers should have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be committed to and in line with the mission, ministry, and message of the church. This is both for the benefit and protection of PVCC as well as the teachers themselves. It helps us to establish and ensure teachers are well-equipped to handle the tasks asked of them and are educating our children and congregants in a manner that lines up with the beliefs we hold.

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