

Child and Youth Protection Policy

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Purpose, Applicability, Scope, and Policy Terms

- Purpose 3
- Applicability..... 3
- Scope 3
 - Who Is Covered by This Policy? 3
 - What Does the Policy Require?..... 4
 - Outside Groups Using MPPC Facilities 5
- Policy Terms (glossary) 6

Screening of Employees and Volunteers

Supervision

- Two-Adult Policy 8
- Adult/Child/Youth Ratios 8
- Open-Door Policy 9
- Six-Month Policy 9
- Training for Adults..... 9
- Training for Children and Youth..... 10
- Adult Leadership Form 10
- Code of Conduct..... 11

Welcoming All.....

Social Media

Reporting

- Allegations..... 12
- Concerns 13

Responding.....

- Allegations..... 12
- Concerns 13

Addressing Known Offenders Who Are Members

Purpose, Applicability, Scope, and Policy

Purpose

This policy is intended:

- To be faithful to our baptismal vows as we seek to welcome children and remove stumbling blocks.
- To provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth at MPPC.
- To protect children and youth from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse while participating in MPPC activities.
- To provide a mechanism to deal with reported concerns and subsequent actions.
- To guide MPPC as an institution in the conduct of its employees and volunteers and prevent incidents and allegations of child abuse.
- To protect adult volunteers and employees from unwarranted allegations of child abuse.

This policy addresses five components of child and youth protection:

1. Screening applicants for employment and volunteer service for a history of behavior potentially detrimental to children and youth.
2. Training both employees and volunteers and children and youth in the child and youth protection policy and in appropriate supervision and chaperoning.
3. Reporting allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues
4. Responding to allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues.
5. Addressing known offenders as members of MPPC

Applicability

This policy applies to persons, including MPPC employees and volunteers participating in all children and youth programs of MPPC, including but not limited to:

- Sunday school classes
- Children and youth fellowship programs
- Weekday School
- Children and youth choirs
- Church-sponsored retreats, mission trips, etc.
- Vacation Church Camp
- Wellness Ministry and its sponsored activities.
- Church-sponsored athletic teams

- Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts
- Outreach, such as CROSS, community service, etc.
- Nurseries and childcare

Scope

Who Is Covered by This Policy?

This policy supersedes all prior MPPC child and youth protection policy statements.

All employees of Myers Park Presbyterian Church, including the staff of the Weekday School, are governed by this policy, which relates specifically to the Personnel Manual's reference to "Child Protection Policy." With regard to any employee(s) of MPPC, perceived conflicts or ambiguities in interpretation and application of this policy shall be resolved by the Executive Director and Head of Staff.

Generally, MPPC does not directly control independent contractors, however, all independent contractors who work with MPPC children and youth are governed by this policy.

All volunteer leaders of Myers Park Presbyterian Church who work with children and youth are governed by this policy.

What Does the Policy Require?

- All employees and volunteers shall abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Each person must assume responsibility for his/her own actions in working with children and youth and for attending training offered on child and youth protection.
- Each person must be screened by application and background check.
- An individual may be terminated from employment and/or volunteer service for failure to observe and abide by this policy. This action may be taken regardless of the outcome of any investigation if the Head of Staff, Executive Director, Personnel Committee, or CYP Steering Committee determine that the Child and Youth Protection Policy and procedures have not been followed.

Outside Groups Using MPPC Facilities

All leaders of non-MPPC sponsored groups and events using MPPC facilities, which have direct supervision of children and youth, are expected to adhere to these policies. Upon receipt of the policy from MPPC, the leaders must review the Child and Youth Protection Policy and sign the Outside Group Leaders Release Form to acknowledge their review of it and to confirm their agreement to follow the policy. This includes but is not limited to groups such

as AA, ALANON, NA, CODA, UNCC Reading Enrichment Programs, Birthday Parties scheduled through Wellness, etc.

Given the nature of the outside groups that use MPPC facilities, MPPC will not perform background checks, seek personal and professional references, review employment records, or obtain civil and criminal records for such groups. Leaders of outside groups will be invited to attend MPPC's frequently scheduled training classes and are expected to conduct their own due diligence in this regard.

Policy Terms (Glossary)

Adult Leadership Form – This form tracks compliance of adult leadership for ministries that supervise children and/or youth.

Child Abuse – A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse may include:

Emotional Abuse – Chronic and persistent acts by an adult that endanger the mental health or emotional development of a child, including rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constant criticism, mean remarks, insults, and giving little or no love, guidance, and support.

Neglect – Occurs when the adults responsible for the well-being of a child fail to provide for the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, shelter; failure to keep children clean; lack of supervision and withholding medical care.

Physical Abuse – An injury or pattern of injuries that happen to a child that are not accidental. These injuries may include beatings, burns, bruises, bites, welts, strangulation, broken bones, or death.

Sexual Abuse – Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period of time or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Typically, the perpetrator keeps the child from disclosing the abuse through intimidation, threats, and rewards.

Spiritual Abuse – Using religious references to shame or by guilt to motivate a child into a particular action or behavior.

Child or Youth – Persons under 18 years old and considered a minor under the law. This term shall also include legally incompetent persons. A Child is 5th grade and younger. Youth are 6th grade-18 years old.

Child and Youth Protection Steering Committee (The Steering Committee) – A 3-5 person team which meets to oversee the policy's implementation, to monitor compliance, to recommend policy changes and clarifications, to provide frontline evaluation of concerns, making recommendations to the appropriate decision-making persons/entities, and to provide routine interpretation and training. Members include the Executive Pastor, the Operations Director, Associate Pastors for Children and Youth, and one layperson.

Church Sponsored Activity – Includes any and all gatherings that arise from MPPC-generated worship, educational, fellowship, administrative, pastoral, mission, or recreational events. These events include on-campus and off-campus gatherings.

Employee – Any person who works for salary or wages at Myers Park Presbyterian Church (MPPC) (e.g. staff, MPPC Weekday School employees, custodians). Employees may be 16 years of age if the second adult is 21 years of age or older.

Head of Staff – the Senior Pastor of Myers Park Presbyterian Church.

LGBTQIA+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexuality, and “+” other identities not represented.

Volunteer Leader – An adult member designated by the sponsoring organization, with responsibility for children and/or youth. The adult must be a minimum of 18 years of age and at least 4 years older than the oldest child or youth they supervise. Volunteer Leaders of overnight trips must be at least 22 years of age, with at least half the leaders 25 years of age or older.

Screening of Employees and Volunteers

- Personal interviews, application forms, personal and professional references, employment records, background checks (both criminal and civil) are required for all employees. Background checks will be done on MPPC volunteer leaders and employees. Information gained by these means will be used to determine eligibility to work with children and youth.
- Interviews, reference checks, employment records, and criminal and civil background checks are to be documented in writing, and become confidential church property. These records will not be released to any party except with the written approval of the Head of Staff or Executive Director. These records will be made available to the employee or volunteer leader, but not a candidate for employment, if a written request is made to the Head of Staff or Executive Director.
- In addition, all current and potential employees and volunteer leaders will be required to sign the Employee and Volunteer Ministry Application Form at the beginning of their service and again every three years. This statement is a supplement to the personal application, and is maintained in the employee's personnel file or in departmental notebooks of volunteer forms.
- For Employees: Any candidate for employment who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect cannot be employed by Myers Park Presbyterian Church without the express written approval of the Personnel Committee, including the Head of Staff and Executive Director. The Personnel Committee, including the Head of Staff and Executive Director, will consider the available information related to the circumstances of the situation in order to make a determination about the employment of the individual in question. Active substance abuse or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from employment with children or youth: pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or abuse of a minor.
- For Volunteer Leaders: Any candidate for leader service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect cannot work with children and youth at Myers Park Presbyterian Church. Active substance abuse or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from service with children and youth: pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy, or abuse of a minor. The CYP Steering Committee will inform any leader applicant denied the opportunity to serve with children and youth the reason(s) for disqualification and how to access information relevant to the decision.

- In the special circumstance where employees do not have ANY contact and responsibility with youth and children under this policy, a Temporary Supervision Waiver must be completed for each employee.

Supervision

Two-Adult Policy

At least two adults, trained and screened in the MPPC policy, will supervise all church sponsored programs and activities involving children and youth whether on or off campus. Adults must remain in sight of one another at all times except in emergency situations. Non-screened volunteers do not count in the Two-Adult Policy. Non-screened volunteers will always be accompanied by a screened employee and/or volunteer leader. It is permissible for one adult driver to transport several children and youth in a single vehicle in a convoy of vehicles traveling to or from an event. If an employee or volunteer leader will be driving for a ministry event, they must fill out the Employee and Volunteer Motor Vehicle Report Application and approve a Motor Vehicle Report to be run on their behalf before they may drive.

Since spouses cannot be compelled to testify against one another in a court of law, husbands and wives count as one adult. Adults in leadership roles are expected to avoid situations where they are alone with children and youth by having leadership teams of at least two adults for all activities. The presence of two or more adults prevents awkward circumstances where child abuse could occur or be alleged, allows shared leadership, and facilitates appropriate discipline. This two-adult policy extends to all overnight and off campus-related events. Under no circumstances can one adult alone take or accompany children or youth on an overnight outing.

When one-on-one interactions between children and youth and employee/volunteers are necessary (e.g. in emergency situations), care must be taken to conduct the meeting in an environment that provides visibility by other adults. Another adult must have knowledge of the employee/volunteer's whereabouts and with whom they are meeting.

Situations where a single adult is alone with a single child or youth are to be avoided at all times. If a situation arises in which an adult is alone with a child or youth (i.e. an emergency situation) the adult should notify another adult in a leadership role before and/or after the period during which he/she is alone with the child or youth.

Adult/Child/Youth Ratios

- The required adult/child/youth ratios for chaperones for any ministry with children or youth that is held within a contained classroom shall be 1:10, however, best practices highly recommends 1:4. Gender balance is suggested.
- The required adult/child/youth ratios for chaperones for any ministry with children or youth that is held in the gym, outside, on the lawn or off campus shall be 1:6.

Gender balance (proportionate number of male and female chaperones) is suggested.

- The required adult/child/youth ratios for chaperones for overnight trips shall be 1:6, however, best practices highly recommends 1:4. Gender balance (at least two male and two female adult chaperones) is required.

Open-Door Policy

Doors to rooms in which children and youth are present are to remain open. If noise increases to a level that disturbs other classes, the door may be shut as long as there is clear glass in at least half the door, nothing impedes vision through the glass, and at least two adults are present. Employees and volunteer leaders are expected to avoid any situation in which they could be alone with children and youth or out of sight of others except in emergency situations. This is to protect:

- a. children against situations in which abuse might occur, and
- b. adults against false accusations of child abuse.

Six-Months Policy

Any volunteer leader in a leadership position with children or youth must have been a member of MPPC for at least six months. Any exceptions must be approved by the CYP Steering Committee for each specific volunteer opportunity. No exceptions will be granted for overnight situations. A waiver form is to be submitted for each exception requested. See the Child and Youth Protection Waiver Form attached.

Temporary Supervision Waiver

In unusual or extreme circumstances (e.g. six-month policy), a Temporary Supervision Waiver must be completed by a ministry area detailing the reason for the waiver, time frame, and approved by either the Executive Pastor or Operations Director. The waiver should be completed two weeks prior to the ministry event or upon awareness of not being able to follow any supervision policy. See the Child and Youth Protection Temporary Supervision Waiver Form attached.

Training for Adults

All employees, all church officers, and any volunteer leaders, who work with children and youth, are required to attend a training session and sign the relevant documents regarding child and youth protection. The church will offer regular training opportunities. This training will include the following:

- The need for the Child Protection Policy
- Definition of child abuse
- Preconditions for child sexual abuse to occur
- Definition of inappropriate conduct
- Church policies governing working with children and youth
- Two Adult Policy
- Open Door Policy

- Procedures for reporting allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues
- Procedures for responding to allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues
- Supervising and chaperoning children and/or youth

Following successful completion of the above training and approval of their application, employees and volunteer leaders may be deemed eligible to work with children and youth at MPPC. Training sessions must be renewed every three years and background checks will be renewed every three years, or at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

Training for Children and Youth

Parents bear the primary responsibility for teaching their children about child and youth protection and safety issues. Nonetheless, from time to time, MPPC may offer age- appropriate educational opportunities for children and youth to provide them with necessary information about child and youth protection issues, including their right to be free from unwelcome and inappropriate touching or remarks, how to report their concerns, and church policies regarding their safety. Parents will be advised prior to any such educational sessions.

Adult Leadership Form

All departments that engage in ministries with children and/or youth are required to submit an Adult Leadership Form to the Executive Pastor's office for the CYP Steering Committee in order to document compliance with this policy. This form tracks membership status, compliance with training, ensures proper ratios, acknowledges background checks and transportation requirement compliance. A separate form must be submitted for each activity, event, trip or ministry. If two different age groups are attending the same ministry, two separate forms must be completed and submitted. Overnight ministries must submit the ALF no later than one month before the activity, event, trip or ministry. Non-overnight ministries must submit the ALF no later than two weeks before the activity, event, trip or ministry.

Code of Conduct

1. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will not verbally, emotionally, physically or sexually abuse children.
2. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will not discipline children by the use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
3. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders may use physical restraint only in situations necessary to protect the child or others from harm.
4. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will provide proper supervision and exercise sound judgment in providing a safe environment at all times.

5. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will avoid situations during MPPC programs where they would be alone with a single child and cannot be observed or monitored by others. As adults supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other adults can see them.
6. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders are expected to observe the Two-Adult Policy and Open-Door Policy in their interaction with children and youth at all times except in an emergency situation.
7. Restroom supervision:
 - a. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will always use proper supervision when children are using public bathrooms to ensure their safety.
 - b. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will call on leaders who may be “floating” from room to room to assist with restroom supervision in order to maintain the two-adult rule.
 - c. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will make sure suspicious or unknown individuals are not occupying the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities.
 - d. Children will be sent in pairs, and whenever possible, with MPPC employees and volunteer leaders. MPPC employees and leaders will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom in visual sight of another adult. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the MPPC employees and leaders (i.e. not being alone with a child).
 - e. If MPPC employees and volunteer leaders are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
8. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will respect the rights of children and youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and their right to say no. Adults will discourage children from touching others in an inappropriate manner.
9. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children entering the program. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported to the Associate Pastor for Children and Their Families or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families who will report to the CYP Steering Committee and the Head of Staff or the Executive Director of MPPC. If the Associate Pastors mentioned above are not available, MPPC employees and leaders should call the church on-call pastor at any time in order to report (704.376.3695).
10. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders should release children (fifth grade and younger) only to the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized in writing by the parent or guardian.
11. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or being impaired by legally prescribed drugs during church working hours or church-sponsored programs is prohibited.

12. Smoking is allowed only in designated areas. Smoking or use of tobacco during church programs is prohibited.
13. Profanity, inappropriate language or jokes, and any kinds of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.
14. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders will not share inappropriate details of their personal life or ask children to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal, or electronic.
15. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders may not date program participants under 18 years of age.
16. Because gift giving can be a form of “buying” silence of loyalty, gift giving must be done on a group basis and for specific occasions only (e.g. baptism, 3rd grade Bibles, confirmation and graduation). MPPC employees and volunteer leaders are not allowed to give gifts to individual children or youth without knowledge and permission of parents and MPPC minister/department head.
17. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders are required to read, sign, and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend training sessions on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.
18. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders are required to report to the Head of Staff or Executive Director any circumstances that under this policy affect their ability to work with children and youth.
19. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders may learn of situations where a child or youth are currently or may in the future plan harm to themselves or others. Employees or volunteer leaders will report this information to clergy or the staff person over the ministry area. Clergy will report this to the child’s parent or guardian. This step is in addition to and not a replacement of North Carolina’s mandatory reporting laws.

Welcoming All

1. We believe God's grace is unlimited, the Holy Spirit is at work within all people, and all persons are God's beloved children. Our leaders, our staff and our congregation hope to demonstrate what it looks like to be a fully inclusive body of Christ. You are invited to join us.
2. The following are best practices and procedures to allow accommodations to assure that each person is included in our community and create a safe space.
 - Make no assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or identity. Identity can be fluid, especially with children and youth, so approach each conversation open and unassuming.
 - Do not enforce or reinforce gender stereotypes.
 - Acknowledge and celebrate an individual's preferred name.
 - Respect an individual's privacy. If an individual shares their sexual orientation or gender identity with you in confidence, honor that confidence. We will strive to provide a safe place and minister to each individual. Do not share with other leaders, students, or parents. Encourage students to share with their parents, but keep their confidence.
 - Be intentional about creating a safe environment and culture by awareness and include in leaders training around homophobic language and bullying. There will be no tolerance for exclusivity or language that is homophobic, bullying, judgmental or dismissive by a child, youth, or volunteer.
3. When assigning LGBTQIA+ persons to Groups for Programming and Activities:
 - The Two Adult and Open Doors rules already provide the first barrier of protection for both children and youth and for volunteers for groups and activities.
 - When relevant to programs, youth ministry will strive to provide at least one co-ed group for each age group. Youth then have the option of a female group, male group, or coed group.
4. Please speak to a member of the CYP Steering Committee should changes or decisions need to be made regarding overnight accommodations or restroom use or signage. Always err on the side of compassion when making decisions regarding LGBTQIA+ persons.

Social Media

Communicating with Children and Youth

- *Privacy Settings.* Set stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile if you are an adult ministering to children and youth.
- *Youth Leaders.* Grant the Associate Pastor for Youth and their Families full access to your profile and correspondence if you accept friend requests from minors or youth associated with our community of faith.
- *Abuse and Neglect.* Remember material on any site (church-affiliated or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/ neglected/exploited should be immediately reported to the clergy and/or the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- *Two-Person Rule.* Note that any and all private communication between a child/youth and adult must include two adults, preferably one being the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families or the Associate Pastor for Children and Their Families.
- *Group Page.* Keep in mind that the best way to communicate is through a group page set up by the church. Tie events to the group page.
- *Limit Commentary on Pictures.* Remember, if you are an adult, limit comments to just one or two photographs on a child/youth's page. Otherwise it can be perceived as intrusive and make the child/youth feel uncomfortable.

Groups on Social Networking Sites – Youth

- *It Takes Two.* Be sure each group has at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two youth participants.
- *Closed Versus Hidden.* Choose closed, not “hidden” groups, for youth.
- *Inviting Youth.* Let youth take the lead when it comes to group invitations. Youth administrators should invite their peers, unless a youth specifically asks you to invite him/her.
- *Appropriate Content.* Create behavioral covenants to govern appropriate content for an online youth group.
- *Consequences.* Report any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/ neglected/exploited to the clergy and/or the North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS). If the material is on a church-affiliated site, that material should be documented for church records and then removed from the site after consultation with DSS and/or police.
- *Inappropriate Behavior.* Address any content that depicts inappropriate behavior during a church-sponsored event or activity with fellow youth leaders and parents.
- *Open to Parents.* Open social networking groups for youth to current members' parents.
- *Former Youth Workers.* Remove former adult leaders and youth members from digital communications via the church's social networking sites after youth “age-out” of a program or leaders depart from their current position.

Reporting

The law and this MPPC policy make the responsibility for reporting Child Abuse and Suspicions of Child Abuse very clear. See Section “Responding” and “Addressing Known Offenders Who Are Members” of this policy for guidance and direction regarding reporting of and responding to Child Abuse and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Allegations

1. Every employee and volunteer leader of Myers Park Presbyterian Church is required to report any situation which presents a suspicion that child abuse may have occurred. Such report shall be made to the Associate Pastor for Children and their Families or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families, in no case more than 24 hours after such occurrence, who will report to the CYP Steering Committee and the Head of Staff or the Executive Director.
2. Any report of child abuse made by a child about their care by a parent, guardian, youth, adult, or MPPC staff employee or leader, despite how unlikely such report may seem, must be relayed to the Associate Pastor for Children and their Families or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families who will report to the CYP Steering Committee, and Head of Staff or the Executive Director of MPPC.
3. The Pastor or Executive Director shall, as required by law, report the situation to the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services or other local authorities for investigation.
4. All concerns and reporting shall be kept confidential.
5. Concerns may be left at the confidential email address at concerns@myersparkpres.org or after-hours by calling the pastor on-call at 704.376.3695.

Concerns

From time to time issues arise regarding the conduct of our children, youth and adults at MPPC, and the Children and Youth Ministry Programs that are not clearly abuse related issues but impinge upon child and youth protection and safety, and may require attention and review. Sometimes patterns and trends of a questionable nature may be noticed. This section provides a means to report such issues other than Child Abuse in a manner that will assure the issues, patterns, or trends are recorded for subsequent review, addressed, and resolved.

Examples of issues reported might include:

- lack of adherence to the Child and Youth Protection Policy
- observation of inappropriate class or group conduct or activities during MPPC-sponsored events for Children and Youth

- potentially inadequate, inappropriate, or unwise leadership of children and youth ministry activities
- 1. All adults, youth, and children are encouraged to report any issues. These are to be reported as soon as possible to the responsible adult leadership at the time the issue is observed. Such notification may be oral.
- 2. When it is appropriate or more comfortable, anyone who wishes to have a concern addressed is encouraged to bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Pastor for Children and Families and/or the Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families either verbally or in writing. All disciples are encouraged to be responsible in identifying issues.
- 3. Specific concerns shall be communicated to the Child and Youth Protection Policy Steering Committee in a timely manner. The Steering Committee is available to hear concerns from any member or employee of MPPC related to protection and safety concerns of children and youth.
- 4. You may also send concerns to concerns@myersparkpres.org.

Responding

Allegations

In the event of an allegation of child abuse, the following procedures shall be followed at Myers Park Presbyterian Church:

1. Every allegation shall be taken seriously. Adequate care, respect, and confidentiality shall be offered to alleged victims and perpetrators until the allegation is substantiated or cleared.
2. The Executive Director will immediately contact the MPPC attorney and liability insurance carrier.
3. In consultation with the MPPC attorney the following may be appropriate:
 - a. The Head of Staff may notify the parent(s) or legal guardian of the alleged victim.
 - b. The Head of Staff and/or the Executive Director may notify the accused individual.
4. Written documentation, relating to the matter, shall be kept in a confidential file.
 - a. The Head of Staff, Executive Director and/or the Personnel Committee may complete an internal investigation in addition to that which will be carried out by the authorities, following the required notifications.
 - b. An individual accused of child abuse may be placed on leave from his/her responsibilities at the discretion of the Head of Staff, Executive Director or Personnel Committee. For employees, this may be with or without pay.
 - c. To protect the child or youth from further possible abuse or harassment, MPPC will prohibit the accused individual access to the alleged victim and other children and youth in ministries sponsored by MPPC.
 - d. In the event of an unsubstantiated allegation, the Head of Staff or the Executive Director will make a determination as to whether the individual will be allowed to return to work as an employee or volunteer at the Church. They will consider the individual's likely effectiveness in working with children/youth following an allegation and investigation of child abuse. An employee has the right to appeal the decision to the Personnel Committee. A volunteer has the right to appeal the decision to the Clerk of Session who will address the situation with the Session in the appropriate time and manner.
5. MPPC employees and volunteer leaders are expected to cooperate fully with the investigation authorities, with guidance from the MPPC attorney.
6. All MPPC employees and volunteers will refer any inquiries regarding the situation to the CYP Steering Committee. The Head of Staff, or his/her

designee, shall be the only person authorized to release any information regarding an allegation except where the law requires others to release information, such as to a protective services investigator or a police officer.

7. All MPPC employees and volunteers are expected to avoid denial, minimization, or blame during the period of investigation of the allegation.

Concerns

1. Every report of a concern regarding the children or youth of MPPC shall be evaluated to determine if it in fact represents a report or a suspicion of Child Abuse. Such concerns will be processed as described by this policy.
2. The Child and Youth Protection Steering Committee shall evaluate any report of a concern related to child and youth protection and safety, even if it does not fall under the legal definition of abuse or its suspicion, to assure proper follow up on the issue.
3. All concerns reported shall be documented and maintained for long-term review of notable trends or patterns of unacceptable activity by the Steering Committee. If a trend or pattern develops, the Steering Committee will determine appropriate action. If a conflict of interest is noted during the review, other church staff will perform the review. Over a longer term, the file of written concerns shall be reviewed in summary form by the Steering Committee.

Addressing Known Offenders Who Are Members

At Myers Park Presbyterian Church, we seek to live in covenant with God and with one another and to be a redemptive community to all who are members. We also acknowledge that redemptive action and responsible action can, at times, be in tension or even in seeming opposition. We embrace this fact as a natural part of seeking to be the church in the world.

We adopt these procedures for ministering to those among us who are known offenders of children and youth while maintaining our focus on protecting the children and youth of our church.

1. Known offenders will be encouraged to make their status and any terms of probation known to the Pastor.
2. The steering committee will appoint a group of three to five members to establish appropriate boundaries, and writing, governing the life of the offender within the church, including areas on campus where he/she may go unaccompanied. Group members will receive training and protection of children and youth and in dealing with known offenders. No decisions made by this group will conflict with any provisions of the MPPC Child and Youth Protection Policy.
3. The known offender will give written acknowledgment and acceptance of MPPC's Child and Youth Protection Policy and of the boundaries imposed.
4. At no time is a known offender to be assigned to ministries with children and youth.
5. At no time is a known offender to congregate with children and youth.
6. At no time is a known offender allowed in areas of the church or grounds dedicated to children and youth or in use primarily by children and youth.
7. As circumstances warrant, the Steering Committee may identify a known offender to church employees and leaders whose ministries should be informed of this fact.
8. Known offenders will receive the normal pastoral care afforded any member.
9. Should a known offender disregard the terms established in this policy, or should a known offender disregard any boundaries or conditions set by the Steering Committee and his/her appointed group, the violation will be handled through the rules of discipline in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).