

**CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY  
FOR PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS  
(POPLC)**

**Proposed February 1, 2021  
Approved May 18, 2021**

# CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY FOR POPLC

## Introduction

To help protect children, **POPLC** has adopted the following Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Program. It is important that all **POPLC** paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent sexual abuse against children and youth. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children and youth.

## Purpose

These procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child and youth sexual abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist **POPLC** in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of sexual abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of sexual abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

## Definitions

The following terms used herein and are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any pastor or paid employee of **POPLC**. Excluded are Prince of Peace Preschool and Kindergarten staff who are covered by a different policy.
2. *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer*: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.

5. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
6. *Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

## **Protection and Prevention**

### **Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures**

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application and Volunteer Application*: All paid staff and any volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and/or the Volunteer Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses.
- Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving.
- Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
- References from previous employers and organizations that serve children.
- Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).
- Criminal history information.

Our Volunteer Application includes questions regarding:

- Current address.
- Volunteer experience.
- Criminal history information.
- Personal references.

Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes **POPLC** to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

2. When hiring potential staff, the policies of The Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Personal Policies will be followed.
3. All potential volunteers for Board of Youth Ministries must be associated with Prince of Peace for a minimum of six months and complete a volunteer application. All applications will be reviewed by the Pastor or designated staff; this excludes single events.
4. *Criminal Background Check:* **POPLC** will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated every three years.
5. *Six-Month Rule:* All volunteers will be required to have been a member of **POPLC** for six months before completing the application and have reviewed and signed the Child and Youth Safety Policy.

### **Confidentiality**

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted. These materials will be archived.

## Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, **POPLC**:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Ratios of adult supervision will vary depending on the event, with a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 10 children.
2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children and youth.
3. Will release minors only to a parent or guardian.
4. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and provide information regarding the trip.
5. Will require that young children be accompanied to the restroom and the paid staff or volunteer wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
6. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of **POPLC** property.

## Behavioral Guidelines for Paid Staff and volunteers

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, **POPLC** events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Whenever possible, at least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors without windows will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.

4. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
5. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
6. Anyone recognizing an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult must report the issue to the Pastor or designated staff person.
7. If one-on-one pastoral care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.
8. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of **POPLC** for handling.

### **Disqualification**

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

## Sexual Offender at POPLC

**POPLC** may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation but that person must adhere to specific guidelines. However, first check with the offender's probation/parole officer for any restrictions regarding attending services or other functions where children are present. Ask the probation/parole officer to put any restrictions in writing. If restrictions don't prohibit participation, implement the following four guidelines.

1. A known sexual offender cannot participate in any of the child or youth programs in any way;
2. A known sexual offender can only participate in a predetermined worship service each week; and
3. A known sexual offender must report in and be assigned to an escort who will accompany him or her at all times while at **POPLC**.
4. The identity of the sexual offender will be disclosed to the congregation.

## Response to Sexual Abuse

**POPLC** will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Pastor or an appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Pastor is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the Executive Director of the congregation will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to **POPLC's** insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. An official of **POPLC** will communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of **POPLC**.
5. An official of **POPLC** will communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.
6. An official of **POPLC** will hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of **POPLC's** attorney.

## **CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY TRAINING FOR PAID STAFF/VOLUNTEER**

1. Training must be successfully completed by each staff and volunteer initially at the beginning of service and annually. Training will be provided by **POPLC**, directed by the Pastor or designated staff person.
2. Training will include education regarding child and youth sexual abuse laws, organizational policies to address the risk of child sexual abuse, the reasons for these policies, and the disciplinary actions to be taken against anyone who violates laws or policies, or who permits, suggests or fails to report violations.
3. Training will include education on the extent and effects of child sexual abuse, the signs of possible abuse and the circumstances in which abuse may occur.
4. Training will include education on and the recognition of the “grooming process” used by sex offenders.

## **SCREENING FOR PAID STAFF/VOLUNTEERS**

1. A written application is required for all employee/volunteer applicants. The personnel committee will provide the application for all paid staff applicants.
2. The written application will require information provided to assess the background and interests of applicants.
3. The written application will include questions designed to help determine whether applicants have mature, adult relationships as well as clear boundaries and ethical standards for their conduct with youth.
4. A more in-depth written application and personal interview process will be required for adolescents, for whom work history and criminal background checks may be unavailable.
5. A criminal background check showing any history of violent behavior or child sexual abuse is an immediate disqualifier.
6. Professional and personal reference checks on all persons with access to children within the organization will be conducted.
7. Verbal, not just written, references for all applicants will be obtained.
8. Reference checks will include questions about interaction with youth.
9. References will be matched with employment and volunteer history on applications.
10. Applicants and/or volunteers must not be on a state or national sex offender registry.
11. Face to face interviews will be conducted with all employee/volunteer applicants.



12. Interviewers will be trained to utilize screening questions and recognize high-risk responses during the screening process. Interviews will include open-ended questions that encourage discussion.
13. All applicants, both adults and adolescents, for all positions that have contact with youth, will be screened.
14. The Pastor will make the final determination about an employee/volunteer candidate.
15. Exceptions will not be made in our screening and selection process for individuals that are known or have worked for our organization in the past.
16. All employees/volunteer applicants will receive information about the policies/procedures regarding the prevention of child sexual abuse. Applicants will be required to sign a document acknowledging their understanding and agreement to that.
17. The permission statement will include an indemnification clause to protect **POPLC** from false allegations or other legal issues.
18. Applicants will be asked to sign a disclosure statement about previous criminal histories of sexual offenses, violence against youth, and other criminal offenses.

**CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY FOR PRINCE OF  
PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS**  
**Acknowledgment**

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. **POPLC** reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with the **POPLC** or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the **POPLC's** Child and Youth Safety Policy. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of the **POPLC**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date