

The Highland Presbyterian Church Child Protection Policy

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. (Matthew 19:14, Luke 18:16). We who lead children and youth as they grow in faith also have a responsibility to protect and care for them. HPC seeks to protect the adults who work with the young people in the church as well as the young people that the adults work with. We have compiled the following guidelines based on the recommendation of the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Christian Education Unit.

For on-site Children and Youth Activities:

1. Adult volunteers will receive information and training regarding the safety and protection of the children and youth in their care. Additionally, all adults working with minors will receive information about the reporting laws in the state of Kentucky. Adult volunteers will sign a form saying that they have received this information. Typically, this information will be received in Sunday School teacher training or Youth advisor training.
2. Two adult leaders are required to attend all church functions and events. Adults and children/youth are not permitted to be alone unless the adult and child/youth are in clear view of other adults and children/youth or the adult has obtained permission from the minor's parents. If only one adult can attend a function (such as a Sunday School class or youth group meeting), the adult will leave the door open.
3. Respect for the privacy of children, youth, and adults is expected at all times unless the health and safety of the individual is at risk. Responsible use of digital devices is expected in all situations (for example, taking appropriate photos, age appropriate movies).
4. Attire that is appropriate for the occasion is to be worn by all participants.
5. At all times children, youth, and adults are expected to treat one another with love and respect, guided by Jesus' words, "in everything do to others as you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12). Care and respect should be used when interacting with children.
6. Children and youth are encouraged to immediately tell an adult about any inappropriate situations.
7. Adults are expected to be alert to any situations that may place children and youth in danger. They are encouraged to establish a relationship of trust with the children and youth in their care. If inappropriate activities are reported, the adult will immediately give the information to a Pastor or Christian Education Director, and shall otherwise comply with all mandatory reporting laws. A reportable event occurring on church property or at a church sponsored event shall also be reported to the session.
8. Adults will periodically check to see that all equipment is clean and being used appropriately. Any recalled products will be removed immediately. Adults will report any equipment, supply, or classroom concerns to church employees.
9. The HPC Nursery and Weekday School program would be expected to comply with all state regulations with regard to child care and safety.
10. Any adult present where children are not under the supervision of a legal guardian will agree to background checks. These will be conducted every other year. The record checks will employ a number of national and state of residence (Indiana or Kentucky) data bases. The results of the background checks will be reviewed by the pastoral staff. The Pastor, Associate Pastors, or

Director of Music Ministries overseeing an event may waive the background check at their discretion. This would be a rare event.

For Off-site and overnight Events:

1. Adult volunteers who accompany minors to off-site or overnight events will agree to background checks. The forms to authorize this background check can be found in the CBA's office. All adults who anticipate being off-site or overnight chaperones should complete these forms as soon as possible. The Pastor, Christian Education Director, or Director of Music Ministries overseeing events may waive the back-ground check at their discretion. This would be a rare event, for example, a last minute chaperone change.
2. An adult will not travel off-site with one child/youth in a vehicle unless that child is the adult's immediate family member or the adult has obtained parental permission.
3. At overnight events, all sleeping arrangements should be carefully considered to ensure the safety and well-being of participants.
4. Ratios for children to adults should be at least 6:1. Overnight trips should have, at a minimum, three adults with at least one male and one female chaperone.
5. Before children or youth participate in an overnight or offsite activity, the church must have a current copy of his/her insurance information and medical forms on file.

For Web-based media:

1. Church Members and Staff who work with children are not allowed to post pictures of youth or children on public websites or social media sites without express consent of the minor's parent(s). HPC has a consent form that parents will sign and will be kept on file.
2. After permission is obtained, the pictures posted will not have any reference to the minor's name, location, or other identifying information.
3. HPC may consider posting names and children's pictures together if the site is private and password protected or if the social media site offers the option for limited access by permission (for example, being "accepted" into a group on facebook).

Church employees working with children and youth:

1. All church employees working with children and youth shall comply with the above stipulations as well as undergo a background check which will be kept in their employee file.

2. For HPC Facilities Use:

a. Church Members and Staff who work with children and youth may post pictures of youth in rooms primarily used for children's and youth activities. Pictures posted may include first names and general interest information. No last names, addresses, home neighborhoods, school descriptives or any other specifically identifying information will be displayed.

b. Church Staff will endeavor to prevent outside groups from using rooms primarily designated for children's and youth activities by either locking or monitoring.

c. Non-HPC adult groups meeting at HPC will be scheduled in rooms not primarily used for children's and youth activities. Any non-HPC group seeking to use an HPC children's or youth room, will submit a request to Church Staff who will review and either approve or reject the request.

Mandatory Reporting Law:

There are mandatory reporting laws in the state of Kentucky for any crime committed against a person under the age of 18, all cases of domestic violence, and cases of abuse and neglect of persons over the age of 18 who are physically or mentally challenged. If you receive information regarding someone in

one of these categories who has been sexually assaulted or in any other way abused or neglected, you are legally obligated to report the incident to the Department of Community Based Services or law enforcement.

The Christian Education team is encouraged to review the policy annually and to submit any changes to session for additional approval.