

# CHILD SAFETY & PROTECTION POLICY



Second  
Presbyterian  
Church

Revised: June 2022

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 42 E Church St., Newark, OH 43055

**Second Presbyterian Church of Newark, Ohio**  
**CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY**  
**Revised: June 2022**

**Purpose**

Second Presbyterian Church (SPC) of Newark, Ohio is determined to be a safe place – spiritually, physically, and emotionally – for all people. This policy applies to all SPC employees and volunteers working with children and youth in the worship, fellowship, and education that God intended for us as a church family.

**Definitions**

**Child** - A child is anyone under the age of eleven (generally in 5<sup>th</sup> grade or below).

**Youth** – A youth is anyone age eleven through eighteen (generally 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades).

**Volunteer** – A volunteer is any adult who is choosing to work with children and/or youth in church-sponsored activities in an unpaid leadership or support capacity.

**Employee** - An employee is any person who is paid to work with children and/or youth in church-sponsored activities. Youth aged 14 – 17 may volunteer or be hired as an employee to work with children under the age of 11.

**Adults with Developmental Disabilities**

In addition to children and youth, this policy will apply to adults with developmental disabilities.

**Volunteer/Employee Selection**

The Education Committee and/or pastors shall be responsible for reviewing and evaluating volunteers interested in volunteering to provide childcare or to work with a church-sponsored activity for children and/or youth at SPC. The Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Education Committee will have authority to approve volunteers unless otherwise restricted by Session. The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and evaluating employee applications and interviewing individuals interested in being employed to provide childcare or facilitating church-sponsored child and youth programming. The Personnel Committee will recommend the hiring of and seek approval from Session for the hiring of all employees.

1. Each volunteer and employee must complete the appropriate forms and be willing to have a background check completed through either Shepherd's Watch or BCII/FBI before approval. Background checks may additionally include a driving abstract and a child protection record check. (Due to the sensitive nature of information obtained, all volunteer forms/record checks will be kept in a locked cabinet with only the Clerk, Associate Pastor, and/or the Pastor having access.)
  - a. Three-month waiting period: All non-employee volunteers must have been a member of Second Presbyterian Church or affiliated with SPC for a period of three months, and had a conversation with the Pastor, Associate Pastor, and/or Education Committee, to be eligible to volunteer to work

with children/youth.

- b. In the event of a shared program with another congregation (i.e. shared Vacation Bible School (VBS) with First Presbyterian Church of Newark), SPC will ensure that the other congregation has a comparable child safety policy and/or share our Child Safety Policy with the volunteers of the other congregation and make sure that all adults are background checked.

**2. No person with any prior criminal convictions including, but not limited to the physical or sexual abuse of a child, child neglect, or child exploitation may serve or be chosen as a volunteer or employee to work with children. No person with a serious traffic violation will be permitted to drive children but will be allowed to volunteer at events.**

- a. Information of concern: If information of a cautionary nature is revealed through a reference or background check, the person conducting the check shall note this information in writing for the application file and communicate it to the pastoral staff. The Pastor and/or his/her designee and the Personnel Chair shall consider this information and decide on a course of action. The decision must be documented in writing, dated, and placed in the person's file. In such case, the person's employee application or volunteer status may be:

- 1) Accepted unconditionally;
- 2) Accepted with clearly defined restrictions; or
- 3) Denied.

The Pastor, and/or his/her designee, shall inform the employee/volunteer of the decision and its implications.

## **Safety Rules**

1. Employees and volunteers will behave respectfully toward others and SPC property, and model just and ethical behavior at all times. Illegal activity is strictly prohibited.
2. Employees and volunteers may not strike, spank, touch inappropriately, or in any way assault any child(ren) and/or youth.
3. Two Adult Rule: There will be two adults present at all children and/or youth activities. The leader-to-child ratios for larger groups will follow the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services minimum requirements for staffing ratios. For children 0-12 months, at least one adult for every five children; 12-18 months, one adult for every six children; once preschool age or older, one adult for every twelve children. In an emergency situation, only one adult need be present for on-site activities if classroom doors are left open and there is more than one child present.
4. Rule of Three: Situations in which one unrelated adult and one youth are alone should be avoided. There should be at least three people (one adult and two youth or two adults and one youth) present at all times.

5. Overnight outings: It is our intention to have two adults always supervising any group of youth/children. No minor or group of minors should ever be left overnight in the care of only one adult. **Same-sex, adult supervision will be provided for ALL overnight trips.** In situations like a retreat, adult/youth supervision may be accomplished with adult advisors from other churches, provided that such adult supervisors undergo the screening process set forth above, or the other church has comparable child safety and protection policy in place.
6. Individual Pastoral Care: When more individualized pastoral care is appropriate for children/youth, there should be a ratio of 2 adults to 1 youth, or 1 adult to 2 youth. One-on-one ministry with children/youth should be avoided, if possible, to protect all involved. When necessary, one on one ministry should take place on-site in rooms with unobstructed, transparent windows where the adult and the child/youth can be seen at all times. One on one ministry could also happen in a public place (such as a coffee shop or restaurant), if the adult meets the youth at the public place and parental/guardian permission is granted beforehand. This rule applies to all volunteers, staff, and pastors.
7. Youth aged 14 – 17 may volunteer or be hired as a staff person to work with children under the age of 11. Approved youth workers may assist the two adult caregivers in childcare as aides but may not be solely responsible and may not be left in a room alone with children.
8. Each child in the nursery is to be signed-in by a parent/guardian. Nursery employees and volunteers shall request that the parent leave a cell phone number so he/she may be reached, if needed. Employees and volunteers shall not release a child to a non-parent/guardian unless authorized by the parent/guardian.
  - a. Only the assigned caregivers and staff are allowed to stay in the nursery. Parents/guardians may enter the room to sign-in/out their child but must exit the room promptly. All others must remain outside the room.
9. No employee or volunteer may leave the SPC premises or off-site SPC activity until the employee or volunteer has properly turned over the child(ren) and/or youth in the worker's care to that of the child(ren)'s/youth's parent/guardian.
10. Employees and volunteers shall use the appropriate consent forms for Sunday School, Youth Group, children's ministry events, and any SPC sanctioned activity that occurs away from the SPC premises. Each child participant must obtain written permission from a parent/guardian to participate in these ministries of the church. Consent forms must be kept on file and include appropriate emergency contact and medical/allergy information for each child/youth.
11. Emergency service phone numbers shall be posted conspicuously in all rooms regularly occupied by children/youth.
12. First Aid kits will be kept accessible and up to date in the Sunday School area and Youth Center. First Aid kits will be available during church-sponsored activities.
  - a. Injury/Accident Reports: For any injury (scratches and bumps too!) to a child under age 18 an accident report should be completed with one copy given to the parent and one copy to one of the pastors. If neither



of the pastors is present on church premises, the accident report should be left in the appropriate staff person's labeled mailbox in the copy/work room. Incident reports can be found in the church office and are attached at the end of this policy.

### 13. Social Media:

- a. Adults who minister to children and youth are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile. Adults should not submit "friend requests" to minors or youth who are not related to them, as youth may not be comfortable declining such requests due to the disparity of power. If an adult chooses to accept "friend requests" from minors or youth associated with SPC, they must first receive permission from the parent/guardian of the minor/youth.
- b. No adult leaders, youth workers, or staff will use now or in the future, any photographs, film footage, or tape recordings, which may include a child or youth's image or voice for the purpose of ministry, art, advertising, education, or promotion of the church or children/youth ministry programs without first gaining signed permission from a parent/guardian.

## **Training**

The Education Committee will provide ongoing training opportunities, as available, to volunteers and employees who are working with children and youth. In addition, information will be posted in the Sunday School area and Youth Center regarding how to spot child abuse; and safety plans to address what steps to take in the event of a fire, tornado, intruder, or a bomb threat.

## **Driving**

All volunteers/employees who drive children or youth in private vehicles must have and provide verification of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance as required by Ohio law. They must also pass the driver's portion of the background check with no major traffic violations and follow the two adult rule with children and rule of three with youth. Copies of driver's licenses and proof of insurance will be kept in the same locked cabinet as background checks.

## **Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect Concerns**

The following procedures will be followed in the event of an incident or allegation of abuse:

- A. Report: When an employee or volunteer becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects, that a child or youth in SPC care has been abused or neglected, they shall report such concern immediately to Licking County Job and Family Services, Children Services Division or to local law enforcement, as

appropriate. (See attached brochure from Licking County Job & Family Services for more information on reporting.)

- B. Notify the appropriate staff: The person reporting will immediately notify the Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Clerk that such report has been made. If the alleged incident involves a pastor, a report shall be made to the Chair of the Personnel Committee and Clerk of Session, who will report the incident to the General Presbyter. Procedures for handling alleged individual pastors are governed by abuse policies approved by the Presbytery of the Scioto Valley.
- C. Notify parents/guardians: When appropriate, the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Clerk of Session, and/or Chair of the Personnel Committee (whichever person/people is/are most appropriate based on the situation) will notify the parents/guardians of the suspected victim of the incident as soon as possible. *If the parent/guardian is the accused, the law enforcement or other appropriate party will notify them.*
- D. Document all actions: The Pastor, or his/her designee, and any appropriate staff person, will document all steps taken while handling the reported incident. If the incident involves the Pastor, the Associate Pastor, and the Clerk of Session and/or Chair of the Personnel Committee will document all steps taken.
- E. Minister to all concerned: The church will minister, as possible, to individuals who in good faith make reports of actual or reasonably suspected cases of abuse, to those who are accused, and those who are abused. All reports will be taken seriously, but not judged prematurely.
- F. Law enforcement to investigate: Only the appropriate child protective services worker and/or law enforcement authorities will carry out in-depth investigation.
- G. Report to insurer: The Pastor, Clerk of Session, or Chair of the Personnel Committee will make the appropriate report to the liability insurer for the church, if the suspected perpetrator is a volunteer or employee of SPC.
- H. Treatment of accused: Any volunteer or employee of SPC accused must be treated with dignity and support. That person will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities until the investigation is completed and allegations are cleared.
- I. Statements to the media: The Pastor or his/her designee will be the SOLE spokesperson for the church insofar as media inquiries are concerned. In the event the Pastor is the accused, the Associate Pastor shall be the spokesperson. If neither the Pastor nor the Associate Pastor is in a position

to serve as spokesperson, the Personnel Committee shall appoint a spokesperson on behalf of the church.

- J. Confidentiality: All reporting will be handled discreetly and tactfully, and any allegations of misconduct will remain confidential except for required reporting. To the extent possible, confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded.

**Not an Employment Contract: This Policy is not an employment contract and does not alter the “at-will” employment or volunteer relationship between SPC and its volunteers/employees.**

**I have read the above policy and agree to abide by its provisions. In addition, if I am charged with a felony/misdemeanor or cited with a major traffic violation, I will notify SPC as soon as possible following the charge or citation.**

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Signature

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Date

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Print name



**SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
42 E. CHURCH STREET  
NEWARK, OHIO**

Created: April 2008 | Revised: January 2010

**Employee Accident and Incident Report Form**

This form must be used for the recording of all accidents, injuries and dangerous occurrences whether or not they need to be reported under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (R.I.D.D.O.R.) 1995.

The form should be completed as soon as possible after the occurrence. Whenever possible, the description of the accident should be completed by the injured person. All details should then be checked by a church official.

If there were any witnesses to the accident they should complete witness statements as soon as possible after the occurrence. Provision for these statements is provided on the back of this form.

**This section to be completed by the injured person or person involved in the incident**

Full name of person injured: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Full description of the accident circumstances, including a description of any apparatus or equipment involved and any injuries received and first aid given:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by injured person: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of church official**

I/we confirm that as far as I am/we are aware the above details including the description of the accident are true and complete.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Any apparatus or equipment involved must be retained for inspection.**

**Statement by Witness #1:**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement by Witness #2:**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**42 E. CHURCH STREET**  
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Created: May 2008

**Church Accident and Incident Report Form**

This form must be used for the recording of all accidents, injuries and dangerous occurrences whether or not they need to be reported under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (R.I.D.D.O.R.) 1995.

The form should be completed as soon as possible after the occurrence. Whenever possible, the description of the accident should be completed by the injured person. All details should then be checked by a church official.

If there were any witnesses to the accident they should complete witness statements as soon as possible after the occurrence. Provision for these statements is provided overleaf.

**This section to be completed by the injured person or person involved in the incident**

Full name of person injured: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Full description of the accident circumstances, including a description of any apparatus or equipment involved and any injuries received and first aid given:

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Signed by injured person: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of church official**

I/we confirm that as far as I am/we are aware the above details including the description of the accident are true and complete.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Any apparatus or equipment involved must be retained for inspection.**



**Statement by Witness #1:**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement by Witness #2:**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*What shall we give the children?*

*The open sky, the brown earth, the leafy tree, the  
golden sand, the blue water, the stars in their  
courses and the awareness of these.*

*Birdsong, butterflies, clouds and rainbows.*

*Sunlight, moonlight, firelight.*

*A large hand reaching down for a small hand,  
impromptu praise, an unexpected kiss,  
a straight answer.*

*The glisten of enthusiasm and a sense of wonder.*

*Long days to be merry in and nights without fear.*

*The memory of a good home.*

**Licking County** ★  
**Job & Family Services**  
*Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.*

Licking County Job & Family Services  
740-670-8888 | 74 S. 2nd Street | Newark, Ohio 43055  
LickingCountyJFS.com

REV. 07/21

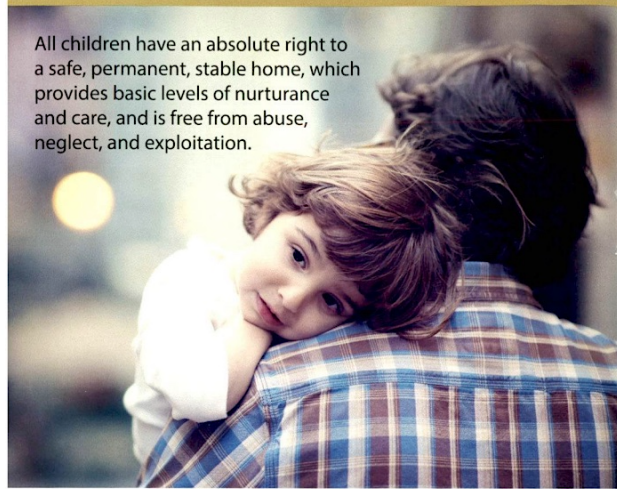


**Children Services**

**Guide**  
Making a referral and what to expect

*Every child deserves  
a great childhood*

**Licking County** ★  
**Job & Family Services**  
*Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.*



All children have an absolute right to a safe, permanent, stable home, which provides basic levels of nurturance and care, and is free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

*Children Services is a  
division of Licking County Job & Family Services.  
Providing quality services to encourage and  
strengthen individuals and families to be safe  
and self-sufficient.*

John D. Fisher	Director	740-670-8855
Kim Wilhelm	Administrator	740-670-8795
Kathleen Spahr	Community Outreach & Training	740-670-8831

**TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE IN LICKING COUNTY  
CALL 740-670-8888, 8 AM to 5 PM**

After 5 PM, weekends, and holidays, please call the  
Licking County Sheriff's Office at 740-670-5500

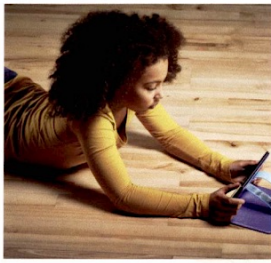
**How do I know what happened  
after I report?**

Ohio laws regarding confidentiality generally prohibit Children Services from sharing information to each reporter. However, if you are a mandated reporter who made the report of abuse or neglect, you will be informed of the following:

- ★ Whether Children Services has initiated an investigation.
- ★ Whether Children Services is continuing to investigate.
- ★ Whether Children Services is otherwise involved with the child who is the subject of the report.
- ★ The general status of the health and safety of the child who is the subject of the report.
- ★ Whether the report has resulted in the filing of a complaint in juvenile court or of criminal charges in another court.







If it appears as though the problems cannot be resolved within the first 45 days of the case, the social worker can ask the family if they would be willing to work with agency social workers on a voluntary basis. If the family is agreeable, the case is transferred to an ongoing or prevention services social worker who will work with the family for up to several months. The family

and the agency will enter into an agreement called a case plan which outlines the problems the social worker and the family have identified and a plan to address these issues.

Another option for families in crisis is the agency's home and community-based programming. If the social worker believes that immediate and intensive services need to be provided to enable the family to remain together, the family can voluntarily work with a home-based therapist or parent mentor. These social workers will meet with the family frequently, on a short-term basis to resolve the crisis with the goal of keeping the family together.

If at any time Children Services believes that the child is at imminent risk of harm, the social worker can enact a safety plan which is a voluntary agreement between the parties to protect the child. If it is believed that a safety plan is not sufficient to protect the child, the social worker can contact law enforcement for assistance or request a court order from a judge to protect the child.

If a child is unable to safely remain in their home, a social worker partners with the family to return the child to the family as soon as there is no longer risk to the child. These families also participate in developing a case plan to address the concerns in the home which precipitated placement with the goal of reunifying the child and the family. The purpose of agency involvement is to make a permanent plan for the child with a parent. If a parent cannot or will not address the concerns in the home, the agency's plan would be to make a permanent plan with a relative, kinship caregiver, or adoptive family.

4

## What is abuse and neglect?

**Physical Abuse:** The non-accidental injury of a child.

**Sexual Abuse:** Any act of a sexual nature upon or with a child.

**Emotional Abuse:** Chronic attitude or acts which interfere with the psychological and social development of a child.

**Neglect:** The failure to act on behalf of a child, to not provide for the child's basic needs such as supervision, housing, clothing, medical attention, nutrition, and support.

## Who should I report?

Any child under eighteen years of age or a developmentally disabled or physically impaired child under twenty-one years of age who has experienced or is at risk of abuse or neglect.

## Who must report child abuse and neglect?

- ★ Attorneys
- ★ Audiologists
- ★ Animal Control Officers/Agents
- ★ Child Care and Camp Personnel
- ★ Children Services Personnel
- ★ Clergy
- ★ Coroners
- ★ Day Care Personnel
- ★ Dentists
- ★ Employees of Board of Developmental Disabilities
- ★ Foster Parents
- ★ Health care professionals
- ★ Peace Officer
- ★ Podiatrists
- ★ Psychiatrists, Therapists, Professional counselors
- ★ School Authorities, Employees and Teachers
- ★ Social Workers
- ★ Speech Pathologists

For a comprehensive list, please refer to ORC 2151.421

1



## How do I make the report?

If you believe that a child has been abused or neglected, you may call either Licking County Children Services or Licking County Law Enforcement. Any report shall contain:

- ★ The names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or the person or persons having custody of the child, if known.
- ★ The child's age, the nature and extent of the child's known or suspected injuries, abuse, or neglect or of the known or suspected threat of injury, abuse, or neglect.
- ★ Any other information that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the known or suspected injury, abuse or neglect or of the known or suspected threat of injury, abuse, or neglect.

## When should I report?

Report as soon as you are aware of the abuse or neglect. The sooner you report, the sooner the child can be protected and the family can begin to receive the help they need.

2

## What happens when the report is made?

A social work screener will gather as much information as possible about the child and the family from the reporter, as well as research previous or current agency involvement.

The report is considered an emergency when it is determined that there is imminent risk to the child's safety, and a social worker will attempt to make contact with the child within an hour.

For all other reports, Children Services will attempt a face to face or telephone call within 24 hours to ensure that the child is safe. Face to face contact with the child and their caregiver is made according to State mandates, and no later than four business days.

The investigation will include face to face interviews with all adults residing in the home of the alleged child victim, the alleged perpetrator, and each child residing in the home. Children Services can take photographs of "areas of trauma" on the child's body, can take photographs of the child's environment with the caretaker's consent, and can secure a medical and/or psychological examination/evaluation of the child with the consent of the child, parent, guardian, or custodian; or with a court order.

When the allegations of abuse or neglect could constitute a criminal charge, social workers and law enforcement team the investigation. The team interviews all involved parties together and follows the case through prosecution.

The investigation phase is completed by an intake social worker within 45 days following receipt of the referral. Cases are either closed at that time or transferred for continuing services within the agency or with community service providers.

In nearly all of the cases referred to Children Services, the child and his/her family remain together. If there are determined to be issues of risk within the family, the child and the parents are referred to local services in the community. Children Services works hand in hand with all of the helping agencies in Licking County to provide families with necessary and appropriate treatment.



3