

# What We Will Cover

- **Definition of Child Abuse and Signs of Abuse**
- **Why do We Need a Policy**
- **Our Policy**
- **Parts of the Policy**
  - Screening
  - Training
  - Supervision of Children
  - Reporting
- **Safety in the Virtual World**

# What is Child Abuse – PA Laws

**Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly:**

- **Causing bodily injury.**
- **Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury.**
- **Causing sexual abuse or exploitation.**
- **Causing serious physical neglect.**
- **Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury or sexual abuse or exploitation.**

Types of abuse- bodily injury, mental, sexual, neglect.

# Signs of Abuse

## General Rule:

- if you notice a sudden change in a child's behavior and that behavioral change is sustained over time, it's worth looking into.

These next slides are designed to help you understand what to notice to identify various types of abuse.

Signs are not always crystal clear; and some children show no outward signs of physical or sexual abuse.

## Signs of Physical Abuse

- Burns, bruises or cuts in unusual areas (soles of feet, palms of hands, back, abdomen, face, neck, back of arms or legs).
- Multiple burns, bruises or cuts in various stages of healing.
- Glove-shaped burns on hands or sock-shaped burns on feet (due to bathing in scalding water).

Look for possible signs of physical abuse – are their bruises or burn marks, do the marks seem to have a pattern.

## Signs of Physical Abuse

- **Adult-sized bite marks.**
- **Unexplained fractures.**
- **Conflicting or changing stories about how injury occurred.**
- **Delayed or inappropriate treatment of an injury.**

Are there unusual bite marks, is the child telling stories about their injuries that appear to be conflicting or changing, are injuries being treated promptly?

## Signs of Sexual Abuse

- **Reluctance to be left alone with a particular person.**
- **Wearing lots of clothes especially to bed.**
- **Fear of touch.**
- **Drawings showing genitals.**
- **Animal abuse.**
- **Age-inappropriate sexual play with self, others, pets or toys.**
- **Physical indicators, if present, are usually temporary but may include difficulty walking, torn, stained or bloody underwear, and genital pain or itching.**

There may be signs of sexual mistreatment.

## Why do we need a policy?

**More than 600,000 children are abused in the U.S each year.** An estimated 618,000 children (unique incidents) were victims of abuse and neglect in 2020, the most recent year for which there is national data.

Girls had a victimization rate of 8.9, higher than boys at 7.9. American-Indian or Alaska Native children have the highest rate of victimization at 15.5 while African-American children have the second highest-rate at 13.2.

**Most child victims are abused by a parent.** In 2020, a reported 483,285 perpetrators abused or neglected a child. In substantiated child abuse cases, 77% of children were victimized by a parent.

7

So far we've learned that our safe sanctuary policy is required by our denomination, required by the state. But as the previous slides clearly remind us,, there are serious issues in our society.

These statistics show that more than half a million children are victims of abuse and neglect every year with more of them being for girls.

Statistics are according to the National Childrens' Alliance website.

## Why do we need a policy?

Abuse, including neglect and exploitation, is experienced by about 1 in 10 people aged 60 and older who live at home.

From 2002 to 2016, more than 643,000 older adults were treated in the emergency department for nonfatal assaults and over 19,000 homicides occurred.

Some groups have higher rates of abuse than others.

8

[https://www.cdc.gov/elder-abuse/about/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/fastfact.html](https://www.cdc.gov/elder-abuse/about/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/fastfact.html)

Not only children but also our elders are often the victims of abuse.

We need a policy to spell out what we should be doing and clear steps for action and reporting when we suspect something is not as it should be.

We pray that we never need to implement the steps laid out in our Safe Sanctuaries policies, but when an incident occurs or a situation of abuse/neglect concerns us, the policy gives us clear direction and steps to follow which minimize anxiety and guide us to take the necessary legal action and provide appropriate pastoral care.



# Our Policy

Glossbrenner's safe sanctuary policy is available on the church website  
<https://glossbrenner.net/safe-sanctuaries/>.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) has a Safe Sanctuary subcommittee that is responsible for keeping our policy updated, offering training, reminding volunteers to update their clearances every 5 years, and managing clearance records.

Safe Sanctuary clearance records are maintained in secure, confidential, off-site, online repository  
<https://glossbrenner.clearcheck.me/>.

9

<https://glossbrenner.net/safe-sanctuaries>

Within our church the SPRC is responsible for keeping our policy updated and also maintaining the storage and confidentiality of the required clearance records.

Volunteers may access and update their own info or the committee can do that for them. We currently have 3 church members with access to these records.

All written records pertaining to employment and volunteer service are kept in a secure location with access restricted on a need-to-know basis, to the Pastor, SPRC chair and/or Ministry Lead. All files (clearances, reference checks, training attendance, letters of recommendations from prior church, etc.) shall be maintained for thirty (30) years after ministry ends with the individuals. Files can be digitized and kept in a permanent online secure environment.

## Our Policy

Applies to ALL ADULTS responsible for the welfare of children AND any having direct contact with children .

Allows for volunteers who have not lived in PA for the last 10 years (requires additional FBI clearance).

10

So who does the policy apply to?

If you are a children/youth Sunday School teacher or assistant, you need clearance.  
If you are assisting with VBS, particularly if there are limited adults present, you need clearance.

## Our Policy

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Screening and selection  
of staff and volunteers

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Training

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Supervision of children

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Reporting

There are 4 key parts of our policy.

# Screening Standards

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- Written Application, including references
- Background Checks
  - Pa child abuse clearance (every 5 years)
  - Pa criminal record check (every 5 years)
  - FBI clearance (all employees and any volunteer not living in PA for the previous 10 years)
- Relationship to church – should have been actively involved with the church for at least six months

Screening refers to getting clearances and reviewing backgrounds of people who wish to work with children as employees or volunteers. The same rules apply to both

All background checks (PA criminal record background, Child Line check, and FBI clearance) required by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania currently in force and as enacted and amended from time to time which can be found here <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Clearances/Pages/default.aspx> will be conducted for all employees and volunteers. The current law is that a minimum of every 60 months (5 years) clearances from the date the of the first clearance are required to be resubmitted. In the case of FBI clearances, an affidavit can be submitted if the person has been a resident of PA for at least 10 years. This can be found under Disclosure Statements at the above link.

(Every five years both will be conducted for all employees and volunteers.)

C&Y Director to review and approve all applicants.

# Screening Links

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- <https://www.epaumc.org/safe-sanctuaries/safe-sanctuaries-selection-screening/>
- Background Checks
  - <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances.html>
  - <https://epatch.pa.gov/home>
  - FBI clearance <https://uenroll.identogo.com/> Employees enter 1KG756

# Training

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- Required by Pa law
- New employees/volunteers need orientation training to cover
  - The need for Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures
  - Supervision requirements, along with appropriate discipline practices
  - Reporting procedures and the role of the mandated reporter
  - PA state definitions of child abuse and legal reporting requirements, and recognizing signs of child abuse
  - Signing a covenant to abide by the policy
- Ongoing employees/volunteers need an annual review, which may include a self-paced review.

See <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Pages/Trainings.aspx>

Those working as ministry leads are to be fully trained and fully cleared before working with any children or youth.

Assistants who are not ever placed in charge of the ministry can be in process for training but need to have all clearances before working with children and youth.

Training must occur within the first month of working with children and youth for any assistant.

# Supervision of Children

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- “Two Adult” Rule. There will be at least 2 unrelated adults in each activity. If this is not possible, there will be a roving person who moves amid the rooms during the program period with at least one (1) certified individual in each room.
- Additional adults may be required depending on the nature of the activity (i.e., off-site trips).
- All activities must occur in open view. Classroom windows may not be covered.
- No child will be left unsupervised.
- Registration materials must be collected for all activities

Supervision procedures are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse or exploitation of children, as well as to protect staff and volunteers from unfounded accusations.

No physical discipline shall be administered at any time. Physical intervention to protect a child from harming self or others does not constitute discipline and may be necessary. Such incidents shall be reported to the pastor and the parents/guardian, shall be documented in writing, and kept on file with clearance check information in the church office.

# Supervision of Children

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- Age difference between the adult and the children needs to be at least 5 years. Individuals 18 to 24 may supervise younger children if they are at least 5 YEARS OLDER than the children they are supervising.
- Volunteer helpers ages 14-17 may only work under a trained and certified adult.  
“Putting children in charge of children invites disaster.”  
Joy Melton. “Safe Sanctuaries.” Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1998. page 32



## Supervision of Children (Off-site)

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- Church events held at an EPA camp will abide by EPA conference standards, including the 2-to-1 rule, meaning that 1 adult may be with 2 children, or 2 adults may be with 1 child, but 1 adult may never be with just 1 child.
- Transportation involves written consent from parent or guardians. Vehicles transporting minors shall strive to adhere to the 2-to-1 rule.
- Recommended ratios for off-site trips are 1 to 8 for children up through and including age 11 and 1 to 10 for ages 12 through 17 years of age.

# Supervision of Children - Parents

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- It is the responsibility of the parent to supervise their child/children when they are not in an organized activity.
- Children grades 5 and younger should be escorted to and from an activity.
- Parents must notify the program or activity director if a different person is to pick up the child/children from an activity.
- *Program and Activity Directors – do not release a child to anyone not designated to pick up that child.*

# Reporting

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- Suspected Child Abuse MUST be reported to the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Hotline (24 hour/7 days a week service) call 800-932-0313
- Reporting of an allegation is required by law whenever there is “reasonable cause to suspect”. Reasonable cause includes:
  - *Any staff or volunteer who has personally witnessed an incident of abuse.*
  - *An allegation of an incident of abuse is made to an employee or volunteer.*
  - *A child/youth/vulnerable adult discloses abuse to an employee or volunteer.*

This number is posted in all Sunday school classrooms.

# Reporting

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- Reporting be immediate (at least within 48 hours). The Witness is considered the Mandatory Reporter by law and must contact the Abuse Hotline DIRECTLY.
- When abuse is reported, the suspected person(s) should immediately be removed from contact with children and youth.
- Complete the “Report of Suspected Abuse Incident”.

# Reporting

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- If the accused is clergy, the witness is considered the Mandatory Reporter and must immediately report the abuse DIRECTLY to the Abuse Hotline.
- Then the witness must contact the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Committee who will in turn notify the District Superintendent and the Bishop.
- After the above appropriate reporting the witness is to keep the allegation confidential.

# Reporting

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- DO NOT DELAY
- A mandated reporter who fails or delays reporting could be charged with a misdemeanor or a felony, depending on whether the non-reporting is willful and how serious the abuse is.



Compliance with the policy is a matter of record at each Annual Charge Conference.



Welcome to the Virtual World – yes, even in church

Cyber Safety includes all social media and includes texting and email.

Safety issues can happen when inappropriate expectations and boundaries are created. A balance is needed in how and what topics can be discussed and shared electronically with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Each local church needs to consider how cyber safety is part of their safe sanctuaries policy.

# Safety in the Virtual World

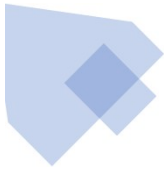
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Cyber safety is something that can be overlooked easily. Parents and Volunteers need to be aware.

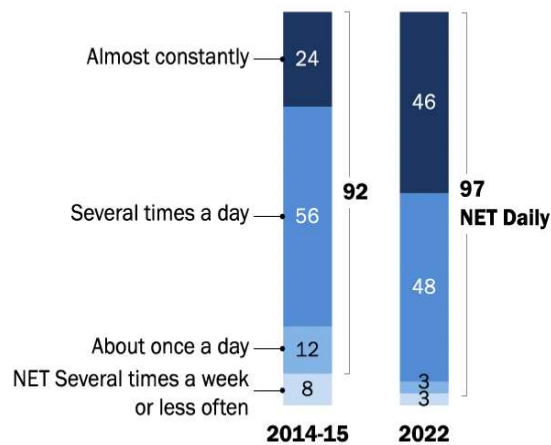
For better or worse, social media has become an intrinsic part of adolescence. A majority of teens use YouTube (95%), TikTok (67%), Instagram (62%) and Snapchat (59%), according to a Pew Research Center survey of American teenagers ages 13 to 17. According to a Pew Research study, up to 46% of teenagers (13-17) use the internet almost constantly.





## Nearly half of teens now say they use the internet 'almost constantly'

% of U.S. teens who say they use the internet ...



Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Figures may not add up to the NET values due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Kids and teens in America are spending more time than ever using screens and social media, with the number of hours spent online having risen sharply during the pandemic.

Black and Hispanic teenagers use the internet more than their white peers, with 55-56% saying they are online almost constantly, compared with 37% of white teenagers, the survey found.

The researchers say this trend is consistent with previous research.

Older and urban teenagers of all races and backgrounds are also more likely to be online.

## What can parents do?

- **Recognize developing brains may be especially vulnerable to specific social media features.**
- **Monitor and discuss your child's social media use.**
- **Model healthy social media use.**
- **Watch for problematic social media use.**
- **Teach social media literacy.**

It is important for parents to be aware of what their children are doing with their phones and social media.

# Social Media Problems

- **Sexting**
- **Child Pornography**
- **Obscenity Laws**

"Sexting" involves the sending of nude or sexually suggestive images electronically, whether through text messaging, social media, chat boards, or email. Sexting has become especially common among teenagers—many of whom are minors—and can easily be used to bully or harass.

In 2012, Pennsylvania enacted a law prohibiting the sexting of "sexually explicit images" by minors younger than 18. Sexually explicit images include those involving nudity or depicting a minor's genitals, pubic area, breast, or buttocks in a sexual manner.

Minors whose actions fall under the teen sexting law face misdemeanor penalties, rather than the harsher felony penalties under the child pornography laws.

## Child Pornography

- Photographs, records, or films a child engaging in a prohibited "sexual act".
- Causes or permits a child to participate in the above.
- Sells or transmits images of the above.

There are three situations when the PA child pornography laws apply, in each case the person is knowingly allowing for these conditions to happen

It is also a crime for a person to intentionally view or knowingly possess child pornography.

# Best Practices for the Church

#1 - Always use the two-adult rule so that there is NEVER one-on-one contact.

#2 – Our selection, screening and training policies apply even in the virtual space.

#3 – For Zoom calls use the church account instead of personal accounts so that there is accountability for meetings.

Here are three of the top five best practices to apply our safe sanctuaries policy to the virtual world.

Online discussions should be considered no different than a face-to-face meeting.

Think about zoom calls – if they happen one on one, another adult should at least know about it.

In addition, online meetings need to begin with two adults, not from the same family, and then allowing youth to join.

USE the Waiting Room feature on ZOOM to allow participants to enter after 2 or more are waiting.

# Best Practices for the Church

#4 – Electronic communication about meetings should include parents and include date/time and links to access the meetings.

#5 – If your current release forms do not give you permission for picture/video sharing either get them updated or do not share pictures/videos of virtual meetings.

With children under sixth grade, syllabus and activities should be shared with parents or caretakers prior to online meetings so everyone is transparent as to what is occurring.

For children sixth through twelfth grade, leaders should provide parents and caretakers with the same outlines of meetings and topics that are typical for your youth group with more transparency being utilized than less.

This includes tagging your youth in the virtual environment – if you don't have permission, do not post and tag them.

## Other Ideas

- Consider getting permission from parents/guardians to apprehend the child or teenager's cellphones, if necessary.
- Be on the lookout for suspicious cellphone activity.

The important issue is that if the abuse is divulged electronically, it is considered the same as if you saw it or was told about it. Therefore, as a mandated reporter you need to follow the policies already discussed.

### Other Thoughts:

- Have church staff and volunteers with access to church computers sign an agreement to follow a Technology Use Policy.
- Consider a formal Non-Disclosure agreement (NDA) for personnel handling clearances (there is a sample on the conference website).

Contact  
Info for  
Lancaster  
County

Lancaster County Children &  
Youth Agency  
150 N. Queen St  
Suite 111  
Lancaster, PA 17603  
**Phone** 717-299-7925

**Any information  
regarding the abuse or  
neglect of a child should  
be reported to the state  
CHILDLINE office at 1-  
800-932-0313**