

Safe Child Policy



Definitions

Adult: over age 18
Youth: 6th - 12th grade
Elementary Child: Kindergarten - 5th grade
Preschool Child: age 5 and under
Staff: paid employees
Volunteer: all unpaid participants

Rationale

Supplee Presbyterian Church has developed this policy to fulfill our commitment to God and to families to provide a place where children can be nurtured and cared for in a setting that complies with legal and insurance requirements. Although some aspects may not be convenient, this policy is important and all members of the church are asked to support it.

“We believe that all children are a gift from God to their parents, families, and the church. Through the ministry of the church, we are called to welcome them into the family of Christ as Jesus welcomed the little children. We will seek to provide a safe and caring environment where they can flourish and grow in wisdom, health, and faith, helping them to discover their God given gifts and use those gifts to serve Christ.”



The goal of our Safe Child Policy is to protect children and youth who participate in Supplee Presbyterian Church activities from physical, sexual, or emotional harm and to provide a safe, nurturing, Christian environment.

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“Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.”
Matthew 18:5

Six-Month Rule

All volunteers working with children and/or youth must be members of Supplee Presbyterian Church for at least six months or have regular attendance for one year at Supplee Presbyterian Church or at Supplee Presbyterian Church youth functions. Persons not meeting these requirements may serve as volunteers when paired with those who do meet these requirements.

Two Adult Rule

Every class and activity for children and/or youth must be staffed with two adults. In an emergency (adult becomes ill, etc.) every effort will be made to secure a substitute. If it is necessary for one adult to work alone with a group, the door to the room will remain open so there is visual access at all times.

Bathroom Breaks

Children escorted to the bathroom by an adult will take along a buddy, thus avoiding one-on-one situations. Exception: Nursery and Preschool rooms that have adjoining bathrooms; however, the adult in charge will leave the doors open.

Touch

Common expressions of affection (e.g. hugs, pats on the back) or physical caretaking (e.g. diaper changing, helping small children in the restroom) are appropriate among caring Christians. Corporal punishment or verbal abuse is never permitted.

Overnight Events

A minimum of one adult of each gender is required on overnights, regardless of the number of youth participating, and there will be a minimum of one adult for every eight youth.

Allergies

Supplee Presbyterian Church desires to work in cooperation with parents to provide an environment where all children can thrive. With this in mind, parents are invited to attend all programs and activities with preschool and elementary children sharing particular needs and concerns with teachers and staff. Parents of children with allergies are encouraged to provide a snack and/or beverage for their child. They should share special concerns or instructions with the teacher or staff. The parent is responsible for all medications for their child. A beeper will be provided to be used in case of emergency if the parent does not remain in the room with their child.

Background Checks - Staff and Volunteers on Overnight Events

Criminal background checks will be conducted on:

- full-time and part-time staff of the church who work with children and/or youth
- adults participating in overnight events (with children and youth e.g. retreats, lock-ins, ski trips, mission projects).

Criminal Record Checks and *Child Abuse Clearances* will be paid for by Supplee Presbyterian Church, and kept confidential by the Church Business Administrator.

Transportation

Supplee Presbyterian Church recommends two adults be present. If this is not feasible, one staff member or adult with background check may provide transportation with specific approval from a parent for that particular situation.

Training

All volunteers of Supplee Presbyterian Church working with children and/or youth are required to attend training conducted by the church staff. Training in this policy will be conducted annually for new volunteers.

Awareness

At least once a year, an article explaining aspects of the *Safe Child Policy* will be included in the *Supplement* newsletter to increase congregational awareness.

Reporting Procedures

Teachers and volunteers working with children and/or youth are mandatory reporters. If anyone suspects or witnesses an abusive incident, immediate reporting to the Pastor or Director of Christian Education is required. Doing so fulfills your reporting requirements. Immediate action will be taken. The alleged violator's responsibilities will be suspended until such time as the incident is investigated and properly resolved.

Signature Form

All staff, overnight volunteers, Sunday morning teachers, aides, Nursery helpers, and anyone who works with children and/or youth on a regular or one-time basis will read the *Safe Child Policy* and sign a form indicating their commitment to supporting the policy. The Church Business Administrator will maintain a file of all signed forms.