

# **Child Abuse Prevention Guidelines For The Church**

**Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley**

**Allentown, PA**

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## **Introduction**

Child sexual abuse is a subject not many want to talk about, dwell on, or believe can happen to them or their church. However, child sexual abuse does occur and is happening in ever increasing numbers in homes and churches across the United States. Statistics show that one in every three girls and one in every five boys will be sexually abused before they reach the age of eighteen.

Because of the seriousness of this subject, Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley (MCCLV) desires to make its places of ministry safe for all children, youth and church workers. By being proactive and taking precautionary measures that screen and train workers with children and youth, and providing guidelines and procedures that offer assistance to parents and church workers, MCCLV can hopefully prevent such violations from ever occurring in our church community.

We encourage everyone in the church to be informed about child abuse. Therefore, everyone who participates in a Training Session will be required to read and sign that they have read and agree to abide by this policy and procedures. If these participants feel they could volunteer in the future to work with kids at MCCLV, they will be given the opportunity to fill out a Child/Youth Volunteer/Employee Application Form.

Anyone who is doing work with our children or youth will be required:

- To attend a Training Session
- To fill out a Child/Youth Volunteer/Employee Application Form
- To consent to a background check (PA Child line)
- To have references contacted

## Child Abuse Prevention Guideline Overview

- I. Recruiting, Selecting, and Training Volunteers and Employees
  - A. Qualifications for every person (paid and unpaid) who works with children and/or youth:
    1. It is preferred, that Volunteers/Employees accept MCCLV’s Mission statement, “The Mission of MCCLV is to call all people to a holy life in Christ, changing lives and transforming the world.”
    2. It is required for a Child/Youth Volunteer/Employee to be a member in good standing or a regular attendee of MCCLV for a minimum of six months. In the case of guest ministries and new employee hires, exceptions might be made (with due diligence to background screening and references from previous churches).
    3. Have no known history of abusive behavior. And sign MCCLV’s Employee/Volunteer Covenant (Code of Conduct).
  - B. Procedures:
    1. Child/Youth Volunteers/Employees must complete a confidential application form, which will be maintained in a confidential file and include:
      - a. Personal information: Name, address, etc.
      - b. Ministry information, if applicable: Areas of interest, gifts, talents, etc.
      - c. Expectations when working with children and/or youth.
      - d. A place for signature to state that applicant has read the CAP Guidelines and agrees to observe the safeguards.
      - e. Church history and youth work information, if applicable: a five-year church, volunteer and ministry history for staff and volunteer, leaders and supervisors.
    2. Child/Youth Volunteers/Employees must agree to a confidential background check of public records, a reference check and as well as an interview.
  - C. Education: Child/Youth Volunteers/Employees will be required to receive education on the Child Abuse Prevention Guidelines of MCCLV.
- II. Procedures
  - A. Avoid Isolation:
    1. Volunteers/Employees are to observe the two-adult rule. This requires that Volunteer/Employees should not be in an isolated setting with children or youth without another adult present. **Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.**

2. Events: When away from the church on an outing, Volunteers/Employees are to work together as a team and not be isolated with a child or adolescent.
3. If it is necessary for a Volunteer/Employee to meet individually with a child or youth, it should be done so in a public setting, or where they are clearly visible by others.
4. Volunteers/Employees must not spend time alone with a child.

B. Children's Bathroom Procedures

1. Parents should be asked to take their children to the bathroom before any activity so that the child won't have to leave the room.
2. If the child shows obvious signs of needing to go, the parent will be requested to take the child to the bathroom.
3. For additional procedures, refer to specific bathroom guidelines for each child age group: [nursery](#), [ages 2-5](#), [1st - 6th grade](#), & [Junior and Senior High](#)

C. Release Guidelines: Creating and following guidelines for releasing children after activities reduce the opportunities for both abuse and abduction. **Two** adults should remain with all children when dropped off until they are picked up. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.

1. Nursery: No child will be released from the nursery except into the care of the person who signed them in. Exception would be: unless noted at the time the child is signed in that another (named) person will be picking the child up.
2. Children (Ages 2 through 17)
  1. On an annual basis, each parent/guardian should sign a Parental Consent and Release Form, designating who should be allowed to pick up their children. First-time participants will sign at the time they enroll.
  2. Parents/Guardians or other appointees, should promptly pick up their children after class is over.
  3. Junior and Senior High Classes: These youth may be released after the class is over. If the parents wish the students to remain in the classroom until picked up by parent/guardian, that should be made known to the Volunteers/Employees.

D. Reporting Procedures

1. Reporting Obligations: Volunteers/Employees are to immediately report any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate, or any incident reported by a child or adolescent according to the following protocol:
2. Line of Reporting
  1. Volunteers/Employees shall report alleged abuse to the Children and Youth Ministry Leader, the Board of Director's Vice-Moderator or the Senior Pastor.

2. Under the supervision of the Senior Pastor, the Reporter shall report the abuse directly to Child-Line and/or the police department. The Reporter may remain anonymous to the outside authorities, the victim and alleged perpetrator if they wish.

E. Response Plan

1. When an allegation of abuse by a Volunteer/Employee/MCCLV Attendee is brought to the attention of pastoral staff, a Crisis Task Force will be convened. The Task Force may consist of the Vice Moderator, Children & Youth Ministry Leader, Property & Risk Management Ministry Leader, and/or other Ministry Leaders at the discretion of the Senior Pastor. This Task Force will meet with the victim and family to discuss the allegation and inform them of MCCLV's CAP Guidelines.
2. The Task Force will meet with the individual who is the alleged abuser to discuss the allegation and inform them that they may not participate in Children/Youth activities until the investigation into the allegation is complete. Until the investigation is completed by the appropriate authorities, the alleged abuser will be limited to attending MCCLV's worship service. Alleged abuser will arrive at worship no more than five minutes before the start time and will exit the building no more than 5 minutes after worship ends. Alleged abuser will be prohibited from attending MCCLV events outside of Sunday worship. A Task Force member will be assigned to insure that agreed upon conditions are followed when alleged abuser is on the premises. Alleged abuser will initial and sign a written statement to confirm an understanding of the conditions.
3. The Task Force will document all of its activities.
4. In the event an allegation is made against a Volunteer/Employee, the pastoral staff will also make note of the allegation and its outcome on the Volunteer/Employee confidential application form.

III. Training and Education

- A. Once each year all Volunteers/Employees who work with children are to receive training to educate them on the guidelines and procedures for reducing the risk of abuse. The Policies and Procedures Committee will review together the guidelines and procedures for reducing the risk of abuse.
- B. All church Volunteers/Employees/Leaders/Parents will have a copy of these guidelines in print/electronic form.

Copies of the guidelines, in short brochure form as well as full guidelines, will be available for any church attendee through the church office or the church web site.

## Definitions of Child Sexual Abuse

The precise legal definition of child sexual abuse or molestation varies from state to state, but in general includes any form of sexual conduct or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. In a more common sense, child sexual abuse is:

“Any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, in a church, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent or an other child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.” (National Resource Center on Sexual Abuse; 1992).

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child’s vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for their actions.

Child sexual abuse is a criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos or pictures
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

Child sexual abuse occurs in all demographic, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups. Strangers account for less than 20 percent of the abusers. Estimates indicate that when a known assailant commits the abuse, half of the time it is a father or stepfather, and the rest of the time it is a trusted adult who misuses his or her authority over children.

## Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) defines as follows five types of abuse, all of which must result from an act or failure to act by a perpetrator:

1. **Non-accidental Serious Physical Injury:** A recent\* injury that causes the child severe pain or significantly impairs the child's physical functioning, either temporarily or permanently.
2. **Serious Physical Neglect:** Prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide the essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which results in the child sustaining a condition that endangers the child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.
3. **Sexual Abuse or Exploitation:** Rape, sexual assault, statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, indecent assault, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, promoting prostitution, pornography, or other form of sexual exploitation of children.
4. **Serious Mental Injury:** A psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, that renders the child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that his or her life or safety is threatened, or seriously interferes with the child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.
5. **Imminent Risk:** A recent\* act or failure to act that creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury or sexual abuse/exploitation of the child that occurs during an incident or series of incidents.

\*Within two years of the date of the report.

## Possible Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

Most cases of child sexual abuse go undetected. There may be no apparent physical signs, or there may be physical signs that are detected only through a medical examination. However, there are some signals that a worker may observe that will indicate whether sexual abuse is occurring.

High indicators of abuse which may warrant a report are:

1. A child reports being abused.
2. A child has unusual and repeated bruises, welts, or burns. A child gives varied or different reasons for the same injury.
3. A child has explicit sexual knowledge above age expectations. This includes extensive knowledge of sexual acts, slang/technical terms and/or demonstrated sexual behavior in conversation or play.

The following should raise your concern for the possibility of abuse and could suggest the need to explore further. Should you have any concerns, bring them to the attention of the Children and Youth Ministry Leader. **The presence of several of these could warrant you making a report.**

<b>Child's Appearance</b>	<b>Child's Behavior</b>	<b>Caretaker's Behavior</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>● Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing</li> <li>● Pain, bleeding or swollen genitalia</li> <li>● Semen around mouth, genitalia or on clothing</li> <li>● Venereal disease, especially in preteens.</li> <li>● Pregnancy</li> <li>● Lacerations around mouth</li> <li>● Warts around genital area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Suddenly withdrawn; engages in fantasy or infantile behavior</li> <li>● Poor peer relationships</li> <li>● Unwilling to participate in physical activities</li> <li>● Engages in delinquent acts or runs away</li> <li>● States he/she has been sexually assaulted by parent/caregiver</li> <li>● Fear of rest rooms, a particular place, or being left alone</li> <li>● Unusual sexual knowledge</li> <li>● Does not want to go home from church</li> <li>● Becomes self-abusive: pulling hair out, banging head, cutting themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extremely protective or jealous of child</li> <li>● Experiencing marital difficulties</li> <li>● Misuses alcohol/drugs</li> <li>● Frequently absent from home</li> <li>● Experienced sexual abuse as a child</li> </ul>



## **Description of the Selection Process for Volunteers/Employees with Children and Youth**

Because we care deeply for the children and youth of MCCLV, we take steps to protect their physical and emotional safety.

Any persons who are known to have committed previous acts of sexual misconduct, or where serious allegations have been made, will be strictly prohibited from serving with Children/Youth.

### Description of Screening Procedure

1. It is preferred, that Volunteers/Employees accept MCCLV's Mission statement, "The Mission of MCCLV is to call all people to a holy life in Christ, changing lives and transforming the world.
2. It is required for a Child/Youth Volunteer/Employee to be a member in good standing or a regular attendee of MCCLV for a minimum of six months. In the case of guest ministries and new employee hires, exceptions might be made (with due diligence to background screening and references from previous churches).
3. All Volunteers/Employees who are serving MCCLV's Children/Youth are required to fill out a Children/Youth Volunteer/Employee application form, which includes a background check.
4. All references will be checked and a written record of results will be confidentially maintained with application.
5. Confidential, personal interviews of all Children/Youth Volunteers/Employees will be conducted and documented. MCCLV also reserves the right to interview anyone who will be even in occasional contact with Children/Youth.
6. All Children/Youth Volunteers/Employees will be required to attend an annual training session(s) to equip them to carry out these guidelines.
7. All Volunteers/Employees who are serving MCCLV's Children/Youth are required sign MCCLV's Lay Leader Code of Conduct.

## **Nursery Guidelines**

1. There should be at least **two** Volunteers/Employees in the room before, during and after each church event until the last child is picked up.
2. No one other than nursery Volunteers/Employees, parent(s) or guardian(s) and their children should be allowed in the nursery area during church events.
3. Volunteers/Employees should not accept any child whose parent or guardian or designated adult will not remain within the physical confines of the church. This is to ensure the Volunteers/Employees can immediately contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) or designated adult in the event of an emergency.
4. Diaper changes must be done **in** the nursery room, unless by parent(s) or guardian(s) or designated adult.
5. Volunteers/Employees should have first time users of child services complete a Parental Consent and Release Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren). Parents are to be given our Child Abuse Protection Brochure.
6. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.

## Ages 2-5 Children's Ministry Guidelines

1. There should be at least **two** Volunteers/Employees in the room before, during and after each church event until the last child is picked up.
2. No one other than Volunteers/Employees, parent(s) or guardian(s) should be allowed in the classrooms (unless previously agreed to, e.g. guest speakers or extra/alternate helpers).
3. Bathroom Guidelines:
  - a. Parents should be asked to take their children to the bathroom before Sunday school so that the child won't have to leave the supervised room.
  - b. If the child shows obvious signs of needing to go, the parent, guardian or designated adult will be requested to take the child to the bathroom.
4. Volunteers/Employees should not accept any child whose parent or guardian or designated adult will not remain within the physical confines of the church. This is to ensure the Volunteers/Employees can immediately contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) or designated adult in the event of an emergency.
5. In case of discipline problems, no spanking, swearing, demeaning language or yelling may be used. When behavior is not acceptable, an **in-room** time-out period should be used (one minute per age of the child is acceptable, unless otherwise directed by the parents). If the behavioral problem persists, the Volunteer/Employee will find the parent or bring the child to the parent or guardian or designated adult.
6. Volunteers/Employees should have first time users of child services complete a Parental Consent and Release Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren). Parents are to be given our Child Abuse Protection Brochure.
7. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.

## **First Grade through Sixth Grade Children's Ministry Guidelines**

1. Two Volunteers/Employees should be in the classroom before, during, and after each class period until the last child is picked up.
2. No one other than child Volunteers/Employees, parent(s) or guardian(s) or designated adult should be allowed in the classrooms (unless previously agreed to, e.g. guest speakers or extra/alternate helpers).
3. Bathroom Guidelines:
  - a. Parents, guardians, designated adult should be asked to take their children to the bathroom before Sunday school so that the child won't have to leave the supervised room.
  - b. Children should be allowed to go to the bathroom only upon their request or if the child shows obvious signs of needing to go.
  - c. It is assumed in this age group that the child will not need help toileting. If they do, this should be discussed with the child Volunteers/Employees in advance to formulate an action plan.
  - d. A Volunteer/Employee should be available in the hallway to make sure the child goes into the bathroom (and does not wander). The Volunteer/Employee should check the security of the bathroom and will remain in the hallway and make sure that the child returns to their class in a timely manner.
  - e. The child should wash their hands after toileting.
4. In case of discipline problems, no spanking, swearing, demeaning language or yelling may be used. When behavior is not acceptable, an in-room time-out period should be used. If behavioral problem persists, the Volunteer/Employee should find the parent or bring the child to the parent, guardian or designated adult.
5. Volunteers/Employees should have first time users of child services complete a Parental Consent and Release Form, which among other things will identify the people who are authorized to pick up their child(ren). Parents are to be given our Child Abuse Protection Brochure.
6. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.

## **Junior and Senior High Children's Ministry Guidelines**

1. Two Volunteers/Employees should be in the classroom before, during, and after each class period.
2. No one other than child Volunteer/Employee, parent(s) or guardian(s) or designated adult should be allowed in the classrooms (unless previously agreed to, e.g. guest speakers or extra/alternate helpers).
3. Youth should remain in the Sunday school room during class and not leave the room unless there is an emergency (e.g. feeling sick) or parent/guardian/designated adult comes to pick up.
4. Youth should be allowed to go to the bathroom only upon their request or if the youth shows obvious signs of needing to go. A Volunteer/Employee will remain in the hallway and make sure that they return to their class in a timely manner.
5. When it is necessary to discipline a youth, no hitting, swearing, demeaning language or yelling may be used. When behavior is not appropriate an in-room cooling-off period off should be used. If behavioral problem persists, the Volunteer/Employee should notify the parent or guardian or designated adult.
6. Volunteers/Employees should have first time users of youth services complete a Parental Consent and Release Form, which among other things, will have space to designate if it is all right to release youth after class on their own. Parents are to be given our Child Abuse Protection Brochure.
7. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.

## **Volunteer/Employees Worker Guidelines**

1. No transportation should be provided to participants in MCCLV's Children's/Youth Ministry by Volunteers/Employees. Transportation to and from church of children/youth is at the sole discretion of the parent/guardian.
2. At least two Volunteers/Employees (adult leaders) must be present at all Children's/Youth Ministry activities.
3. Volunteers/Employees should not leave students alone at the church waiting for transportation. If only one child/youth remains, two leaders should remain.
4. Volunteers/Employees must not interact with a child/youth in any sexual manner (e.g. physical, verbal, visual).
5. Volunteers/Employees must not engage in a romantic relationship with any youth.
6. Volunteers/Employees will not conduct one-on-one meetings with youth (same or opposite sex).
7. Two adult Volunteers/Employees must attend any meeting or gathering with youth.
8. Volunteers/Employees should have parental permission for each youth's involvement in church sponsored programs or activities. For youth who come on a regular basis, this can be done yearly. If this is not received from a first-time youth, they should bring a permission slip with them the next time they come.
9. MCCLV prohibits overnight Children's/Youth Ministry activities until a written policy is established.
10. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.

## **Activities That May Lead to Allegations**

There are many situations that could lead to an allegation of child abuse. Please take time to study the Definitions and Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse and Child abuse and neglect earlier in this packet. It is important to recognize that there are “gray areas” that may lead to allegations. Volunteers/Employees with children and youth may not realize when their actions could be interpreted as inappropriate (e.g. touching, tickling or hugging). Mutual supervision is important to this process. That is why each Volunteer/Employee is encouraged to carefully, but clearly, bring this to the attention of the person who is acting inappropriately. If questionable behavior continues to occur, or if sexual abuse occurs you must report it to the Senior Pastor or Designee as detailed below. If this is implemented with care and sensitivity, actual instances of abuse or molestation can be avoided.

### **Response Plan: Steps to Take if Child/Youth Sexual Abuse is Suspected**

The primary responsibility of someone reporting suspected child abuse is to ensure the safety of the child/youth while attending MCCLV or church sponsored activities. Discrete and confidential reporting of suspected child abuse is critical to abuse prevention. Please understand that reporting abuse reflects caring and is not an act of disloyalty. If you witness or hear about an abusive situation involving a child/youth and do not report it, the safety of MCCLV’s children may be compromised. Anyone may report child abuse. As long as the report is based on a good faith suspicion that abuse is occurring, the reporter will be immune from any civil and criminal proceedings that could result. MCCLV Employees are considered legally mandated to report. Volunteers are encouraged to report, but would not be held legally responsible if they do not. When the person hearing the allegation or witnessing abuse tells the Pastor, Vice Moderator or Children and Youth Ministry Leader of the abuse, they (the MCCLV Employee) will be legally mandated to report this information if the witness does not. The MCCLV Employee must make this report immediately by phone and in writing within forty-eight hours. It is considered an obligation of all MCCLV Volunteers/Employees to follow these guidelines.

The following steps should be taken upon receiving allegations or observing child abuse:

Anyone who becomes aware of suspected child abuse by an MCCLV Employee/Volunteer/Attendee is to report it directly to the Vice Moderator, Senior Pastor, or Children and Youth Ministry Leader and communicate their intention to file a report or not. This is so the suspected perpetrator of abuse can be removed from their proximity to children/youth at MCCLV during the investigation.

The Senior Pastor, Vice Moderator or Children and Youth Ministry Leader will not in any way hinder the filing of the report. For the protection of all involved, it is strongly recommended that the notification to authorities be made in the presence of the Vice Moderator, Pastor, or Children and Youth Ministry Leader. As mandated reporters, the MCCLV Employee can learn the final legal status of the report and what services have been or will be provided to

the child and family as a result of the initial report. The Volunteer would not be able to receive such information. The reporting party can still remain anonymous to the authorities.

If the Volunteer/Employee suspects abuse or hears an allegation of abuse occurring in the home of one of the children or youth, the Volunteer/Employee is encouraged to file a report as detailed below and report it to the Vice Moderator or Pastor or Children and Youth Ministry Leader. In this case no one else in the church need be notified, unless the alleged perpetrator is a Volunteer/Employee. It is alright to make a report on a reasonable suspicion. You do not need actual evidence to call. Give the information you have, and the authorities will determine if the suspicion warrants an investigation. You may call Child-Line just to ask if the information you have warrants a report.

The report is to be filed as soon as possible with **Child-Line 1-800-932-0313**. This toll-free number is staffed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week by Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare. This is the number to call for child abuse in the state of Pennsylvania, regardless of the county the child lives. If the alleged perpetrator is not related to the victim, Child-Line will direct the reporting party to call the police department where the alleged crime took place.

Before calling, complete the Child Abuse Report Form ~~on file~~ with the Vice Moderator, Pastor, or Children and Youth Ministry Leader.

Be prepared to verbally answer as many of the following types of questions as possible:

\*Why do you suspect abuse has occurred?

\*Name of child.

\*Address, phone, school – as much information as you have so that the child can be reached in the next 24 hours.

Who is alleged perpetrator of abuse?

How did you find out

Who else knows about the abuse?

Parents names and address(es), any siblings in the home?

\* **Most important information. The rest is helpful but not necessary to make a report.**

**You can choose to remain anonymous when calling Child-Line or the Police.**

Child-Line will then do a perpetrator search to find out if they have previous information of this child being abused or the perpetrator being accused. Then Child-Line contacts the County Department of Children and Youth for the County that child lives, and the police if necessary.

If you choose to identify yourself, this gives a County Department of Children and Youth Investigator and/or Police the option to call you to clarify any information you give. They will keep your name and information confidential from the child, their family, and the alleged perpetrator. The Investigator is obligated to see the child within 24 hours of receiving the report.

## **Intervention Plan**

If charges of child abuse by an MCCLV Employee/Volunteer/Attendee are reported to the Pastor or Vice Moderator the following actions will be taken:

The Reporter will call Childline or appropriate authorities.

The Pastor will convene a Crisis Task Force which may consist of the Pastor, Vice Moderator, Children's & Youth Ministry Leader and Property & Risk Management Ministry Leader.

This Task Force will outline the necessary steps in response to the filed report. It will not attempt an in-depth investigation. That will be left to the appropriate government authorities.

It is recommended that this task force:

1. Document all efforts at handling the incident (e.g. who was contacted and when, using specific times and dates) while maintaining strict confidentiality.
2. Notify MCCLV's liability insurance carrier.
3. Take the advice of the police or ChildLine (for the specific situation) as to whether to notify the parents or guardians.
4. Confront the accused after the safety of the child or youth is secured. The Task Force will meet with the individual who is the alleged abuser to discuss the allegation and inform them that they may not participate in Children/Youth activities until the investigation into the allegation is complete. Until the investigation is completed by the authorities (County Dept. of Children Youth and Family Services and/or the police), alleged abuser will be limited to attending MCCLV's worship service. Alleged abuser will arrive at worship no more than five minutes before start time and will exit the building immediately after worship ends. Alleged abuser will be prohibited from attending MCCLV events outside of Sunday worship. A Task Force member will be assigned to insure that agreed upon conditions are followed when alleged abuser is on the premises.
5. Discretely remove the alleged offender from their MCCLV position(s) while the investigation is being conducted.
6. Designate a specific spokesperson for the church if media become involved.

**If the allegations become legally unsubstantiated:**

1. U accused person will need to provide official evidence, if they can obtain this, that they were innocent. This information would be placed in the accused's file along with their

application. Once the investigation has begun by civil authorities, the details and information is kept confidential from the public, including MCCLV. In the majority of cases, the allegations become unsubstantiated from a legal standpoint. If this occurs, **but** the accuser remains steadfast in their allegation, the Volunteer/Employee will be prohibited from working with children/youth at MCCLV. The Task Force will determine any further parameters for inclusion at MCCLV functions.

2. If the accuser recants the allegation, then every effort will be made to exonerate, reconcile and restore the accused person.
3. The Task Force will respond with concern, care and love for the accuser(s), for the congregation, and for the accused and their family.
4. The accused will be notified in writing that a copy of the filed documentation and investigation's findings will be retained for legal purposes by the church. The documentation will be confidential and only appropriate church staff will have access to the file.

If the allegations and investigations **substantiate** abuse or it is discovered that an attendee has been convicted as an offender:

1. The victim(s) and their family/families will be given utmost consideration and pastoral care.
2. The offender will be permanently removed from susceptible environments and offices in the MCCLV ministry. Offender will be limited to attending MCCLV's Sunday worship service. Offender will arrive at worship no more than five minutes before start time and leave within five minutes after worship. Offender will be prohibited from attending MCCLV events outside of Sunday worship.
3. The above limitations will be reviewed with the offender by the Crisis Task Force. The offender will be required to sign an agreement with the aforementioned limitations to acknowledge understanding of the behavioral expectations placed upon him by MCCLV.
4. If the offender violates any part of the signed agreement, they will be required to refrain from attending all future MCCLV Worship services.
5. Continued pastoral care will be offered to the offender and family during rehabilitation.
6. The Board of Directors will weigh the risks and make a determination regarding church membership status of the offender as per MCCLV's Bylaws.

## **Ministry and Support**

To the victim who has been abused by a Church Employee/Volunteer/Attendee:

1. The Crisis Task Force will designate a person from MCCLV who will serve as an advocate and a support to the victim(s) and their family/families.
2. Sensitivity, care and love will be extended to the victim(s) and their family/families.
3. A list of qualified counselors will be provided.
4. In case of multiple victims, opportunities will be offered for these persons to meet together for support, prayer, healing and encouragement.

To the offender and their family:

1. The Crisis Task Force will designate a person from MCCLV who will serve as an advocate and support to the offender and their family.
2. A list of qualified counselors will be provided.
3. Sensitivity, care and love will be extended to the accused and their family.

## Acknowledgments

These Child ~~Sexual~~ Abuse Prevention Guidelines for Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley were compiled by Lisa Pawlowski, a Licensed Social Worker, and Children's Ministry Leader Deb Ramsdell, Reconciliation Team Leader Emma Marrero, Risk Management Ministry Leader D.J. Landis and MCCLV Pastor Elizabeth Goudy, who would like to acknowledge the following:

- Church Law and Tax Report provided a written curriculum and DVD with suggestions on how churches create such guidelines.

Although much prayer, research and thought has gone into the preparation of these guidelines, we expect that this document will change and evolve with time and experience. There will be an ongoing review of the effectiveness of these guidelines including assessment of how they impact our ability to minister.

These guidelines were revised by Reconciliation Team Leader Emma Marrero, Board Member Maureen Gillmeyer and MCCLV Pastor Elizabeth Goudy in November, 2008.

These guidelines were revised by Board Members Sue Carpenter, Barb Colvin, Jim Harbst, Diana Latorre, Emma Marrero, Ron Smith and Pastor Elizabeth Goudy in July and August, 2013.

These guidelines were revised by the Policy and Procedures Committee members Sadi Delaney, Elaine Ely, Ashley Richards and BOD Vice Moderator, Emma Marrero in September 2014.

**Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley  
Volunteer/Employee Application Form**

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the ongoing supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application. It will be used to help MCCLV provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

**Personal Information:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ministry:**

Please indicate which youth or children ministry in which you desire to serve

\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the date you would be available to begin \_\_\_\_\_

What is the minimum length of commitment you can make? \_\_\_\_\_

List any gifts, training, education, or interests which will help you in your ministry to children or youth \_\_\_\_\_

References: Please list all churches you have regularly attended in the last five years.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Dates</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

List all previous church **and** non-church work involving children and youth.

<u>Church or Agency</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Dates</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**List 3 references unrelated to you who were able to observe your work with children (either church or non-church work):**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Relationship to You</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Expectations:**

The following expectations reflect our commitment to provide protective care to all children, youth, volunteers, and staff who participate in church-sponsored activities.

1. It is preferred that all volunteers and staff accept MCCLV’s Mission statement, “the Mission of MCCLV is to call all people to a holy life in Christ, changing lives and transforming the world,” sign MCCLV’s Lay Leader Code of Conduct, be a member in good standing or attendee of MCCLV for at least six months.
2. Anyone who has perpetrated and/or been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of a child or children will not be permitted to serve as volunteers in any church-sponsored activity or program for children or youth.  
Have you ever **perpetrated** any of these crimes?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Have you ever been **accused of** or **been convicted** of any of these crimes?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. Volunteers/Employees are to observe the “two adult” rule. This requires that adults make every reasonable effort to avoid being in an isolated setting with children or youth without another Volunteer/Employees. Partners, married couples or persons in relationship do not meet the criteria for the two adult-rule.
4. Volunteers/Employees are to immediately report to the Children and Youth Ministry Leader, Vice Moderator or Senior Pastor any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate or any incident reported by a child or youth.
5. When an allegation of abuse is brought to the attention of the Children and Youth Ministry Leader, Vice Moderator or Pastor, it will be reported to outside authorities (ChildLine and/or the Police). The Volunteer/Employee/Attendee accused will be informed that he/she may not minister to children or youth at MCCLV during the investigation.

Do you have any questions about these guidelines? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

As a church Volunteer/Employee, do you agree to observe all church guidelines regarding working with youth or children? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any personal history of abuse (sexual abuse or abuse any kind) **that you feel would prevent you** from complying with these guidelines working with children or reporting child abuse? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Have you used any illegal drugs (marijuana, heroin, etc.) in the past 5 years? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to fill out a consent form for a criminal and child abuse background check? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to attend an annual Training Session to become familiar with MCCLV’s Child Abuse Prevention Guidelines? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

For your interview process, do you have a preference for who would conduct the interview?

Yes: \_\_\_ A Male \_\_\_ A Female or No preference \_\_\_

I understand if anything other than traffic-related incidences show up on my background check, a follow-up interview with the Pastor and Children/Youth Ministry Leader is required.

I certify that the information contained in this application is correct, complete, and accurate. I give my permission for any references checked to give Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley any information they may have regarding my suitability and fitness for children's or youth work. I have read the above guidelines and agree to observe the safeguards listed.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley  
Volunteer/Employee**

**Authorization For Release of Background Information**

In connection with my application for volunteer service with METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY, I authorize METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY, their agent, to solicit background information relative to my criminal record history. I understand that METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY may conduct inquiries into my background that may include criminal records, personal references and other public record reports pertaining to me.

**I authorize without any reservation, any person, agency, or other entity contacted by METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY their agent for purposes of obtaining background report information, to furnish the above mentioned information.**

I release METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY or their agent and employees and all persons, agencies and entities providing information or reports about me from any and all liability arising out of furnishing any such information or reports.

**Requested by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

City of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

AKA/ Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note: if your address is a rural route, or post office box, we must have City & County mail was delivered to.**

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Co. \_\_\_\_\_  
St. \_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ How long at this address? (Months/Years) \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Co. \_\_\_\_\_  
St. \_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
How long at this address? (Months/Years) \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Co. \_\_\_\_\_  
St. \_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
How long at this address? (Months/Years) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

**Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley  
Reference Contact Form**

Person making contact \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: Church \_\_\_\_\_ Person Contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Contact: Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Letter \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Conversation \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversation (the reference's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work):

Reference: Church \_\_\_\_\_ Person Contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Contact: Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Letter \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Conversation \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversation (the reference's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work):

Reference: Church \_\_\_\_\_ Person Contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Contact: Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Letter \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Conversation \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Conversation (the reference's remarks concerning the applicant's fitness and suitability for youth or children's work):



## **Volunteer/Employee Covenant**

### **Statement of Excellence**

MCCLV Volunteers/Employees will be known across the Lehigh Valley as positive, generous and loving. The Lehigh Valley will recognize MCCLV Volunteers/Employees as people who always seek to build others up in Christ's love. As a Volunteer/Employee at Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley, I will strive to be exemplary in conduct by remaining rooted in the ever-embracing love of God. In acting from this center I will fulfill responsibilities with integrity. By so ministering according to the spirit of New Testament teachings, I will show the life of Christ in this world. I will do my best to be excellent as a Volunteer/Employee.

### **Expectations of Behavior**

As a Ministry Leader at MCCLV:

- \*I will lead a Christ-centered ministry.
- \*I will be honest in relationships and service.
- \*I will practice principals of direct communication and direct dealing in all relationships.
- \*I will honor the sanctity of all covenanted relationships.
- \*I will only have consensual relationships with those of legal age and those outside of my sphere of supervision.
- \*I will not discriminate or harass on the basis of actual or perceived gender identity, age, race, nationality, physical or mental ability, HIV/AIDS status, sexual orientation, relationship status or religious preference.
- \*I will be exemplary in public conduct and sobriety.
- \*I will work to provide a safe physical, spiritual, and emotional environment.
- \*I will respect the ministry and the leadership of the pastor, the local church, the Region, and the Fellowship.
- \*I will support the health and growth of all local churches and the full body of the UFMCC.

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Volunteer/Employee Signature

Date