

Child and Youth Safety Policy Summary Sheet

Screening:

- All workers (including church staff, paid childcare providers, and volunteers) with children (ages 0-18) must complete an application and agree to abide by PAM child safety policies.
- All regular adult workers (3 or more times in a 3 month period) must submit information for a criminal background check.
- In most cases, volunteers should be part of the PAM community for at least 6 months and/or provide references from a previous church. Paid childcare providers must provide references.
- Workers must be at least 12 years old and younger teens should not be responsible for a group of children without a supervising adult in the area.

In Private Homes or Rented Locations:

- No worker should be alone with a child behind closed doors. If a private one on one conversation is necessary, it should take place in an open area or in a room in sight of a window and another adult should be in the area and aware of the conversation.
- Whenever possible, there should be 2 workers in a room with children, especially if the door is closed and there is no window.
- As much as possible, all children's activities should take place in easily observable areas, with windows uncovered or doors open.

Physical Contact:

- If at all possible, children should take care of themselves in the bathroom and workers should stand outside the open door. If a child does need assistance in the bathroom, only adult female workers may assist them. If a worker does have to help a child in the bathroom, the parents should be informed.
- Workers should take care to touch children appropriately and avoid any appearance of impropriety or possibility of misunderstanding.
- Any injuries and/or treatment given should be reported to the parents

Reporting:

- Any case of suspected child abuse (regardless of where it may have occurred) **must** be reported immediately to the Church Planting Pastor, who will make appropriate report to Virginia Child Protective Services and notify the oversight commission. This is both a **moral and legal** obligation. If necessary and appropriate, he will also make his own investigation of the matter.
- Any questionable or suspicious circumstances involving children or workers should be reported to the Church Planting Pastor. He will investigate the matter and notify the Oversight Commission of any investigation, finding, and recommended actions.
- If there are questionable or suspicious circumstances regarding the Church Planting Pastor, they should be reported directly to the clerk of the oversight commission, David Dickson.

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General Youth Guidelines:

- Any one-on-one meetings with a student should happen in a public place.
- A worker should never be in a house alone with one student.
- Except in unusual circumstances, there should be two adults present for any small group meeting in a house.

Driving Students:

- Ordinarily, workers should obtain parental permission and notify parents before driving a student in a car.
- When driving students, make every effort to have three people in the car as much as possible, and make a particular effort to notify parents of any unplanned stops or time in the car alone with a student.
- Be sure to follow safe driving practices (i.e. cell phone usage) to keep students safe and set a good example.

Physical Affection:

- Workers should make sure that all physical affection between workers and students is appropriate and wanted.
- Workers can feel free to give high-fives, pats on the back, or put an arm around the shoulder.
- Workers can joyfully receive hugs from a student, but should make sure they are brief and open.
- Inappropriate displays of affection include kissing, touching sensitive areas, massages, and physical affection in isolated areas of a building or outside.

Verbal Interaction and Self-Disclosure:

- Appropriate verbal interaction should involve positive reinforcement, appropriate jokes, and praise and encouragement as often as possible.
- Inappropriate verbal interaction includes name calling, sexually oriented conversations with opposite sex teens, compliments related to physique or body development, and crude or sexualized jokes.
- Appropriate self-disclosure with students should have a clear purpose of discipling students and pointing them to Christ, and should be limited in scope to what is necessary for those purposes.
- Workers should not promise confidentiality to students, as they may need to disclose information about abuse or illegal or destructive behavior to others for the sake of helping a student.
- Workers should be cautious about words or actions that give the impression of favoritism or that might lead students to misunderstand the nature of the relationship.