

Introduction

Pathway Wesleyan Church is dedicated to providing a safe environment for the children and families we serve. We have therefore developed the following policy to prevent the possibility of abuse from occurring.

Why do we have these policies and procedures?

This manual is written to help us provide a safe and secure environment for the children who attend and participate in the ministry programs of Pathway Wesleyan Church. We recognize that we have a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a safe environment for the children and youth participating in programs under the authority of our church. It is our objective to lead children into a dynamic personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Providing a safe and secure church environment will help us achieve this ministry goal and, at the same time, maintain the integrity of our church body.

Each children's worker is required to read this manual, and familiarize themselves with Pathway Wesleyan Church's policies and procedures regarding the protection of children in our care. By doing this, misunderstandings can be prevented, and our ministry experiences can be maximized.

How can someone become a children's worker at Pathway Wesleyan Church?

To become an approved children's worker, an applicant must (see below for further details):

- 1) Complete a confidential Pathway Wesleyan Church Worker Application Form (Workers under 18 must complete the application form and have it signed by a parent or legal guardian).
- 2) Be interviewed and approved by the pastor and/or children's director.
- 3) Submit three (3) character references.
- 4) Grant church leadership permission to pursue a criminal reference check on them.
- 5) Carefully and completely read this manual.

Recruitment and Supervision Guidelines

As Christians who serve children, our purpose at Pathway Wesleyan Church is to provide a safe and loving environment in which we can reach, teach, and challenge girls and boys concerning the things of Christ. We accomplish this by equipping and supporting competent children's workers in under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

Recruitment of Children's Workers

The recruitment of children's workers is done by church leadership. This includes either the pastor or the children's director.

Note: Recruitment of children's workers is not a responsibility or privilege granted to other teachers or nursery workers.

Note: At no time will a person who has been guilty of child abuse be involved in ministry with children and youth. Volunteers with a criminal record of sexual abuse or molestation are permanently prohibited from working with children and youth –no exceptions.

Recruitment and Screening

All names of prospective children's workers will be affirmed and approved by the pastoral staff and children's director before they are approached regarding a ministry assignment. Potential children's workers must either be members or adherents who regularly attend Pathway Wesleyan Church for at least six (6) months.

Children's Worker Application

A Pathway Wesleyan Church Worker Application form must be completed by all applicants interested in ministering to children at Pathway Wesleyan Church.

Interview and Reference Checks

An interview with the pastoral staff and children's director must take place. This interview provides the pastoral staff and children's director the opportunity to review with an applicant the important items from the Children's Worker Application form. It also allows both the pastoral staff and children's director an opportunity to ask follow-up questions and to

enhance their knowledge of the applicant.

Note: The pastor reserves the right and authority to deny anyone the privilege of working with children or youth (at their discretion). Protecting the children and youth of the church is a duty of the pastor. Any suspicion, cause for concern, or discomfort about using any person will be thoughtfully reviewed by the pastor and their decision will be binding and final. The pastor does not have to give any explanation for the decision.

Character References

Applicants must provide the names of three personal reference (with at least one (1) inside the church and one (1) outside the church.) These references may or may not be contacted by church administration. The personal reference comments will form part of the children's worker's file.

Criminal Records Check

A criminal records check will be required for all applicants. This will be done through contact with the Bangor City Police by church leadership after an applicant has granted permission for this to take place. A children's ministry position will not be granted until this important reference is obtained.

Written Compliance with the Protection Policy

All ministry workers will receive the appropriate training from the Policy to Protect Manual and affirm their acceptance of the policy with their acknowledgement and signature of the Church Worker Application form.

Staffing and Supervision Guidelines

It is our desire to provide a loving and safe learning environment for our children. Therefore, children's workers are expected to conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect, and honesty to those children in their care.

Pathway Wesleyan Church upholds the following guidelines regarding staffing and

supervision:

“Two Leader”/“Buddy” system

When possible, there will be a minimum of two (2) leaders in any room with children, except in the event of an emergency situation. This “buddy” system works best, and should be used during all church programs. This system is especially important when children’s workers are:

- a) assisting young children with “toilet time”
- b) driving children to/from activities in cars and church vehicles
- c) chaperoning overnight activities, field trips, or camp outs
- d) meeting with children in their homes
- e) meeting with children in secluded or private church rooms

“Open Door” system

In situations where only one worker is available (i.e. classroom or bathroom), an open door policy will be strictly enforced. In this situation, the door (i.e. classroom or bathroom) will remain *at least* partially open therefore allow others to look in occasionally to monitor the teaching process.

Minimum Age Expectations

Each activity or classroom will have at least one children’s worker who is eighteen (18) years of age or older. Those who are 13 years old and above are welcome to be involved in the children’s ministry at Pathway Wesleyan Church provided they have followed the appropriate procedures listed above for approval.

Staffing

Proper ratios will be maintained in a classroom, which are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| for infants | 1 adult to 3 children |
| for 3-5 year olds (Juniors) | 1 adult to 5 children |
| for Grades 1-4 (Seniors) | 1 adult to 8 children |
| for Grades 5 and up (Tweens) | 1 adult to 10 children |

Supervisory Staff

Periodically, the children's director or pastoral staff will make unannounced (and uninterrupted) visits to the classroom or activity in an attempt to observe and ensure the class or activity is properly staffed and supervised.

Families Members in Children Ministry Together.

While family ministry teams often work well together and are encouraged at Pathway Wesleyan Church, each class or activity should be staffed by at least one other worker not related to the worker's family.

Child Information Forms

Registration Forms

Children who regularly attend Pathway Wesleyan Church will be registered. Forms are available to record a child's name, address, phone number, birth date, grade level, and parent's name in the children's ministry filing cabinet.

Pertinent medical information will be completed by a parent or guardian for each person participating in our children's ministries. A copy will be taken on events and can be helpful to medical professionals in emergency situations when a child's parent cannot be reached.

Permission Forms

An official Waiver and Medical Release form will be completed by a parent or guardian for each person attending any Pathway Wesleyan Church children's ministry special event (i.e. parties, field trips, camp out, etc.) This will assure that a parent is aware of our event and approves of their child's attendance and participation.

Note: Medical professionals do not require a parent's permission to help a child in a life-threatening situation. However, in situations which are less than life-threatening, a hospital will usually not treat a child until they contact a parent or legal guardian to discuss the child's medical needs. Therefore, the most important information needed for special events is the location and phone number of parents or guardians when we are caring for their children.

Receiving and Releasing Children

Children will attend the class at their age and grade level as outlined below.

Children's ministry is presently organized in the following way:

| | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Nursery | (birth to 2 years old) |
| Junior Class | (Ages 3-5) |
| Senior Class | (G1-G4) |
| Tweens | (G5-G8) |

Nursery

Infants will be dropped off in the nursery only if a nursery worker is present. If only one nursery worker is present, the door must be left at least partially open. All security precautions will be taken for infants admitted to the nursery. At the close of the service, an infant will be released to a parent or legal guardian only.

Note: It is advised that nursery workers encourage parents to not enter into the nursery area (during the service) once they have dropped off their child. This better enables the nursery workers to maintain order and provide the level of security that parents would expect. Pick-up and drop-off will be encouraged at the entrance of the nursery area. In cases where a parent must be notified or reminded about pick-up (i.e. after an extended period of time following church service), an adult "runner" delegated by the nursery worker will perform this task.

Ages 2+

Children must never be dropped off in a classroom without a teacher being present. If only one teacher is present, the door must be left at least partially open. Children aged 3-5 will not be released until a parent or guardian picks the child up. In cases where a parent must be notified or reminded about pick-up (i.e. after an extended period of time following church service), an adult "runner" delegated by the children's worker will perform this task.

Note: In some instances, parents or guardians may drop off their child and leave the church property. Children workers should be aware of this circumstance and have a contact number of a parent or guardian easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

Recognizing Abuse

Child abuse is not only a criminal act, it is also behavior that violates human conscience and dignity as well as causing emotional, physical, and spiritual trauma to victims. In addition, it has destructive consequences for abusers. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship. It has devastating effects on the credibility of the church's ministry and the name of Christ. It is essential, therefore, that we take all appropriate steps to prevent incidents of abuse from occurring.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) defines child abuse as any "threat to health or welfare by physical, mental, or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection by the person responsible for the child."

Abuse can take on several forms such as when...

- a) a child has suffered physical harm either inflicted by a person having charge of the child or caused by that person's failure to adequately care, provide for, supervise and protect the child.
- b) a child has been sexually exploited by a person having charge of the child, or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child.
- c) a child requires medical treatment to cure, prevent, and/or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the person having charge of the child does not (i) provide the treatment or (ii) refuses to provide the treatment or (iii) is unavailable to consent to treatment or (iv) is unable to consent to treatment.
- d) a child has suffered emotional hardship demonstrated by: severe anxiety, or severe depression, or severe withdrawal, or severe self-destructive, or aggressive behavior and the person having charge of the child does not provide services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm.
- e) a child suffers from a mental, emotional or developmental condition that, if not remedied could seriously impair the child's development and the person having charge of the child (i) does not provide treatment to remedy or alleviate the condition, (ii) refuses to do so or (iii) is unavailable to consent to treatment or is (iv) unable to consent to treatment.

Signs of Physical Abuse may include:

- (a) welts, bite marks, unexplained bruises, scars, burns, fractures or head injuries.
- (b) running away from home or an unwillingness to go home.
- (c) repetitive injuries or unattended injuries.

Signs of Sexual Abuse may include:

- (a) unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual behavior.
- (b) promiscuity, juvenile prostitution, pregnancy or STD.
- (c) difficulty walking or sitting or claims that “it hurts” when going to bathroom.
- (d) change in behavior patterns, extreme aggressiveness or extreme withdrawal.
- (e) inappropriate sexual drawings.

Signs of Emotional Abuse may include:

- (a) seclusion (at home or around the church).
- (b) passivity or aggressive acting out.
- (c) low self-esteem.
- (d) depressed talk or suggestion of suicide.

Signs of Neglect may include:

- (a) hunger.
- (b) improper dress for weather.
- (c) “unkeptness” and “unwashedness.”
- (d) chronic untreated illnesses.

Reporting Abuse

Once it has been established that there are reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse, a children’s worker will:

- 1) immediately report the suspected abuse situation to the pastoral staff and children’s director.
- 2) write down the suspected abuse situation to the best of their ability noting the: (i) context in which disclosure/observation of abuse was made (where, when, doing what, with whom), (ii)

description of the abuse/neglect, (iii) any potential abuse of others, and (iv) evidence of whether alcohol or drug abuse is involved.

Note: when reporting this important information, it is essential that children's workers are careful to report the child's own words (not their own interpretations or extrapolations) of the suspected abuse situation. It is not the children's workers responsibility or privilege to initiate a forensic study.)

Note: If the pastoral staff or children's director are unavailable and you have reasonable grounds that a child is in immanent danger, contact the Child Protection Services (CPS) Hotline at:

1-800-452-1999 or 561-4220 (in the Bangor area).

Note: abuse is expected to be reported even if it occurred in the past.

3) not discuss any details of the allegation with anyone except the appropriate authorities associated with the investigation. During an investigation of an abuse allegation of a children's ministry worker, another ministry worker will immediately assume the responsibility of the alleged abuser's duties pending the outcome of the investigation.

Preventing Abuse

Pathway Wesleyan Church is dedicated to provide the highest standard of care to those entrusted to us. In demonstrating that commitment, the following guidelines and procedures will be adhered to.

Diaper Changing in the Nursery

Diaper changing will always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed. Gloves are mandatory when changing diapers. Careful attention will be made to ensure that surfaces have been cleaned prior to and following diaper changes. Parents may wish to change their children in the nursery or in the washroom.

Proper Washroom Procedures

We strongly recommend that parents take their child to the washroom prior to each class, service, or event. This recommendation should be communicated to parents at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year to newcomers.

If “washroom time” cannot be avoided, it is recommended that children workers escort a group of children to the washroom at a scheduled washroom break.

If just one child must go to the washroom, the worker will escort the child to the washroom ideally using the “two leader” system addressed above. In situations where only one children’s worker is available, the worker will prop the outside door of the bathroom open. The worker will remain outside the bathroom stall and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The worker will call the child’s name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.

Note: A children’s worker must never (a) be alone with a child in a washroom with the door closed or (b) go into a washroom stall alone with a child and shut the door. If children need assistance in the washroom, a worker may enter the washroom stall to assist, however the worker must leave the cubicle door open, and another worker must be aware.

Note: Children will never be sent to the washroom unsupervised. They will always be accompanied by a children’s worker.

Transportation Guidelines

You may be the only vehicle which will enable a child to come to a church function. In order to keep this opportunity safe for both the driver and child we have established the following policies:

- a) Parents need to be aware of who is transporting their child. Any change to the designated driver will be communicated to the parent prior to an event.
- b) If children will be returning later than their usual scheduled time back, the driver (or event leader) will call the church to inform parents. A contact person stationed at home may be designated to call parents in the event of a foreseeable late return to church.
- c) Children are precious cargo, so drivers will exercise great caution when transporting children to and from church events. Traffic laws must be followed and control of the passengers must be maintained. Drivers will not be alone with their passengers but will follow the “buddy system” and have another adult (preferably an approved church worker) in the vehicle with them. When

several vehicles are transporting children, drivers will remain within a reasonable range of each other.

Special Events and Overnight Policies

Children's workers are encouraged to plan special activities and to involve their kids in field trips and service projects. The following precautions will be taken for these activities.

a) off-campus/overnight activities will be pre-approved by the church leadership. Parents will be notified at least two (2) weeks prior to the outing. A description of the activities that will take place during the special events will be made available to parents. Pertinent information communicated to the parents will include:

- i) specific activity event i.e. movie/video selection
- ii) food being served
- iii) transportation arrangements
- iv) who is supervising

b) Proper written consent by completion of the Waiver & Medical Release Form- Field Trip form or Waiver & Medical Release Form- Overnight Events is required for each child participating in any special event. These forms can be located in the Children's Ministry filing cabinet at the church.

c) If possible, all trips and outing will be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult leaders.

d) When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid drivers license and current automobile insurance. The number of person per car will not exceed the number of seat belts.

e) all overnight activities will have a minimum ratio of two (2) leaders for every ten (10) children. Each leader will have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.

f) perusal of the church insurance policy is needed to be sure that liability coverage includes the off premise activity.

Touch/Displays of affection

Appropriate Touch

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways, but only when agreed upon by the child. Examples of appropriate touch include:

- a) bending down to a child's eye level and speaking kindly; listening to him or her carefully.
- b) taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity.
- c) putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs comforting or quieting.
- d) taking both of the child's hands as you say: "You did a great job."
- e) patting a child's head, hand, shoulder, or back to affirm him or her.
- f) holding a child by the shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior.
- g) gently holding a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying.
- i) holding a child who is crying.

Note: Harder areas of the body are usually considered the safe zones for touching.

Inappropriate touch

As a children's worker, you **MUST AVOID**:

- a) kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you.
- b) extended hugging and tickling.
- c) touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously).
- d) forcing a child to be held onto or to have them sit in your lap.
- e) being alone with a child.
- f) opposite sex piggyback rides.
- g) seductiveness or suggestive contact.
- h) physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of care providers.
- i) any touching used to express power or control over a child.

Discipline Issues

Appropriate Discipline

Minor problems that commonly occur in classrooms can be dealt with in three steps (when children are old enough to understand.)

a) REMIND the child of the rule being broken and attempt to stop the cause of a problem (i.e. informing a child they are talking out of turn).

B) REMOVE an appropriate privilege (i.e. moving child who is talking during the Bible lesson to a seat away from friends or; having a child sit in a “time out” seat for 3-5 minutes during free time or; keeping a small prize from a child who is not following instructions).

C) REFER the child to the children’s director for additional help. The director may (a) apply further appropriate discipline, (b) discuss a child’s behavior with parents, (c) insist that a parent attend the class for awhile.

A child who displays repeated discipline problems (i.e. biting or hitting), or a very serious problem (i.e. vandalism or bringing a weapon into church property) may be suspended by the children’s director from all children’s activities for a set period of time. Readmission to Pathway Wesleyan Church’s children ministry would require a conference with the parties involved and require the parents to attend their child’s activities for a set period of time.

Inappropriate Discipline

Discipline for a child’s poor behavior does NOT include: abuse, depriving a child of sleep or food, placing a child alone without supervision, or subjecting a child to ridicule, threats, corporal punishment, or excessive physical exercise.