

Youth & Child Protection Policy

Grantham Church Brethren in Christ

Purpose: Our primary purpose in developing this policy is the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to our care by their parents or guardians and our God. Secondly, we desire to have a policy in place, which will assure parents that we have made every effort to provide a safe environment for their children and which will offer a measure of protection to our people and our church from the threat of unsubstantiated accusations.

With this purpose in mind, the following procedures have been established for all programs involving children from birth through the twelfth grade.

I. Registration of those involved in Children and Youth Ministries

A. Volunteers

1. Registration: Each volunteer must be approved by the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry. All workers sixth grade and up, must satisfactorily complete a:
 - Volunteer Registration Form
 - Pennsylvania Criminal Record Checks from the State Police
 - Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance from the Department of Public Welfare

All expenses for background checks will be covered by Grantham Church and must be renewed every 3 years, following state law requirements. These completed forms will be considered strictly confidential and will be screened by the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry and will be kept on file by the Office Manager. The Church Board will be granted access to these as needed.

If any circumstances change in the volunteer's history that would affect the volunteer's clearance/ability to work with children, the volunteer must notify the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry or the Executive Pastor.

3. Appeals Process

If a person is not approved for work in the area of Children's or Youth Ministries, they are encouraged to talk to the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministries. After talking to the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry, the person may appeal to the Executive Pastor if they feel the situation should be considered further. Successful completion of the background check is required before permission to work in the Children's or Youth Ministries will be granted.

B. Participants

1. Registration Form: A registration form, completed by the parents or guardians, must be on file for each child (birth through 12th grade) participating in any church ministry. These forms must be completed annually.

2. Permission Form: Parents or guardians must complete permission forms for their children or teens to participate in any church activities off Grantham Church property. One form covers all events/activities for that ministry year, but the form must be completed annually.

II. Classroom Procedures

A. Staffing

1. Hallway: At least one hallway supervisor will be monitoring the children's hallway (D-wing) at all times during children's programs.
 2. Nursery – Preschool Classrooms (birth – 4 years)
 - Each room must be staffed with at least two volunteers 18 years of age or older
 - If only two volunteers are staffing a room, they must be unrelated and of separate households.
 - To clarify, if three volunteers are staffing a room, two of them may be related and of the same household, but the third must be unrelated and of a separate household.
 - Anytime a volunteer needs to leave a classroom for any reason, the hallway supervisor will be called to assist in the classroom.
 3. Elementary Classrooms (K – Grade 5)
 - Each room must be staffed with at least two volunteers 18 years of age or older
 - If only two volunteers are staffing a room, they must be unrelated and of separate households.
 - To clarify, if three volunteers are staffing a room, two of them may be related and of the same household, but the third must be unrelated and of a separate household.
 - Anytime a volunteer needs to leave a classroom for any reason, the hallway supervisor will be called to assist in the classroom.
 4. Youth Classrooms (6th – 12th Grade)
 - Each room must be staffed with at least two volunteers 18 years of age or older
- B. Check-In/Check-Out Procedure
1. Nursery (birth – 2 years)
 - Babies brought to the nursery must be checked in by the parent or guardian, providing any special instructions and care items needed.
 - At check-in, identification “tags” will be provided and must be produced by the person picking up the child to verify his/her right to take the child.
 2. Preschool—Elementary (Age 2 – Grade 5)
 - Children must be checked in by a parent or guardian
 - At check-in, identification “tags” will be provided and must be produced by the person picking up the child to verify his/her right to take the child.
 - Preschool children will be given nametags which will also identify any allergies they may have.
 3. Youth
 - At special youth events or trips, a formal check-in will assure that all needed forms are filled out, signed, and on file
 - At regular weekly programs, attendance will be taken, but no formal check in procedures will be in place. Because of this informality, several rules apply:
 - Teens at the church during a scheduled youth program are expected to be in the youth meeting area participating in the program. Teens at the church, but not participating in the youth program are the responsibility of the parent or guardian and must be in an area where the parent or guardian can directly supervise them.
 - If a teen will arrive more than 10 minutes late to a program or leave early from a program, the parent/guardian must communicate this to the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry via e-mail, text, phone call, written note, or face-to-face directly to another youth volunteer at the meeting.

- Two or more adults will stay with teens until all teens are picked up or leave the church property.

C. Restroom Procedures

1. Children must be accompanied from the room to the restroom by a volunteer, preferably the same sex as the child.
2. Volunteers will make sure restrooms are unoccupied by non-participants before allowing children in the restroom.
3. Volunteers will prop the door open and wait outside the restroom.
4. If a child, kindergarten or younger, needs assistance, a volunteer of the same sex may enter the restroom to assist the child. The volunteer will leave the restroom door propped open, and will also leave the stall door open while assisting.
5. If a child, kindergarten or younger, needs assistance and the volunteer with them is of the opposite sex, the volunteer will call the Hallway Supervisor for assistance in determining the appropriate way to proceed.

III. Un-staffed use of facility

Any use of the Grantham Church facility, must be done in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this policy. To clarify:

- Small groups using the building may use only the rooms they have reserved. Children and teens must be supervised at all times by at least two unrelated volunteers or paid babysitters, who must be 18 years of age or older.
- Family gatherings or celebrations may use only the rooms they have reserved. Children and teens must be supervised at all times by at least two adults 18 years of age or older. In either case, supervisors cannot be from the same household.
- Any non-Grantham Church group may use only the rooms they have reserved. Children and teens must be supervised at all times by at least two unrelated volunteers or paid babysitters, of whom at least one must be an adult.
- Any individual or couple at the church before or after ministry events/programs at the church, must maintain visible contact with their children/teen at all times. **Staff and volunteers are not responsible for children or teens at the church outside of scheduled ministry program/events.**

*If you have any questions regarding behavior and discipline of teens and children, please refer to the Youth and Children's Discipline Policy of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church.

**If you have any questions pertaining to standards of behavior for volunteers and staff ministering to children and teenagers, please refer to the Youth and Children's Staff and Volunteer Behavior Standards.

Reporting Procedures:

Any volunteer who knows about, sees, or suspects child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional) is required to contact the Department of Public Welfare. An oral report to the Childline & Abuse Registry at 1-800-932-0313 must be made immediately. Written documentation will follow this call within 48 hours. In addition, they must contact the Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry and let them know of the situation and contact made. Any uncertainty regarding whether to file a report shall be resolved in favor of making the report.

The Pastor of Children & Youth Ministry shall not directly solicit information from the child or alleged perpetrator. If the person about whom the report has been made is a volunteer approved to work in Children or Youth Ministry, the approval shall be immediately suspended until the Department of Public Welfare's investigation is completed.