

Child Safety at Good Shepherd

In order to insure a safe environment for children, the leadership of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church has developed a child safety policy and procedures to protect children from abuse.

Our Policy

It is the policy of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA to provide a safe and secure environment for all children entrusted to our care. We do this so all members and visitors can grow in their relationship with God and one another.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The policy and procedures are for the protection of our children, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

All current and future workers compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising children, will be held to the highest standards to insure a safe and secure environment.

Requirements for Staff (Paid and Volunteer)

Waiting Period:

Before working with children and youth, a volunteer must have been active in the life of the congregation for a period of 90 days.

Background Check Requirements:

- All paid staff 14 years of age or older responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with a child must obtain Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Background Check, and an FBI Federal Criminal History Report prior to working with children.
- Volunteers 18 years of age or older that are responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with a child must obtain Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance and Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Background Check prior to working with children.
 - o Volunteers who have not been residents of Pennsylvania for the previous 10 years or longer must obtain an FBI Federal Criminal History Report prior to working with children.

Background check documents must be presented to a child safety administrator in their original form as received from the issuing authority. New background checks are required every 36 months in order to continue working with children.

Child Safety Education:

Paid staff and volunteers subject to background check requirements will be required to attend a child safety orientation. Volunteers are encouraged to complete the online course, "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania" or equivalent course.

Safety Practices to Protect Children

The following practices are to be used in order to insure safety:

- It is recommended that two staff members (paid or volunteer) at least 18 years of age be present for all classes, gatherings, and events where staff is responsible for the care of children and youth.
- Only staff members (paid or volunteer) with child safety clearance may be alone with children and youth at any time where a single staff member is responsible for the care of children and youth.
- The "buddy" system should always be used to pair children together. This will insure no child or youth is alone in any situation.
- Notify a safety administrator of any suspected violation of our child safety policies and procedures.

Procedures to Report Suspected Abuse

All paid staff and volunteers are required to report suspected child abuse or allegations of child abuse immediately as follows:

1. Contact ChildLine at 800-932-0313
2. Notify a Child Safety Administrator that an alleged incident has occurred.
3. Submit a signed incident report to the pastor that includes the date, time, location, and details of the incident.

In order to protect the child and the accused from unnecessary rumors, it is of utmost importance to maintain strict confidentiality of the alleged incident.

Child Safety Administrators

The following persons have been designated as Safety Administrators and are responsible for administering child safety policies and procedures:

- Pastor Peter Kuritz
- Wilma Gardner
- Daren Bernecker