



PROVIDENCE CITY CHURCH

All Campuses

Child Protection Policy



Child Protection Policy

Providence City Church (hereafter called PCC) is committed to maintaining a safe environment in which participants¹ are protected from sexual/physical abuse² and neglect. Our goals are to protect participants in church programs and activities, to educate those working with participants concerning abuse issues, and to protect staff members and volunteer servant leaders, as well as the church as a whole from potential allegations of abuse and neglect.

Implementation includes:

- Selection of staff, teachers, caregivers and others involved in activities with participants
- Orientation and training of these individuals
- Supervision of these individuals
- Responding to incidents or allegations of abuse or neglect as stated in PCC's Child Protection Policy
- Monitoring the policy and procedures to ensure compliance

We recognize that participants are entrusted to the care of responsible persons in church programs and activities, both on and off campus, and also in programs and activities operated by others on church property. We want participants to be able to participate in these programs and activities without intimidation, coercion, or abuse of any type. This general policy is applicable to all persons whether staff members, volunteer servant leaders, church partners, visitors or guests.

¹ Refer to "participants" on Definitions page

² Refer to "Abuse" on Definitions page



Procedures for the screening of staff members & volunteer servant leaders

1. All paid staff members and volunteer servant leaders (including but not limited to those who volunteer on overnight events/trips) of PCC shall complete the *Child Protection Policy training* and an authorization for *Criminal Background Check*.
2. All volunteer servant leaders who work with participants, even in a limited capacity, are required to be active partners³ of PCC.
3. The confidential information related to this policy, including but not limited to the child protection policy training, the criminal background check results, and the results of any investigation or inquiries made pursuant of those forms on encrypted cloud servers as provided. The confidentiality of all such inquiries and reports will be respected to the fullest extent possible.
4. If information is found in the course of reviewing the various screening forms or background checks that would preclude a volunteer servant leader from working with participants, the applicant will be notified by a staff member.
5. Those who have been the subject of a criminal investigation of sexual/physical abuse, where the case was substantiated, or those who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse can be forgiven for their sinful behavior however, such behavior disqualifies a person from serving as a volunteer servant leader in any of our ministries.

**Other persons and organizations that provide services to participants on/off campus must complete a criminal background check. A staff member must be present when an independent contractor provides such services to participants. If it is requested that an independent contractor work with participants without a staff member present, then that contractor must also be interviewed by the respective ministry head and approved as an appropriate spiritual influence in accordance to the same expectations as a staff member and the contractor must agree to abide by this Child Protection Policy.

³ Refer to "partner" on Definitions page



Definitions

Participant: one who engages in a program and, for the purposes of this policy, is considered part of a vulnerable population such as: one under the age 18 and/or one living with special needs.

Abuse: For purposes of this policy, “abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse - injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a participant.
- Emotional abuse - mental or emotional injury to a participant that results in an observable and material impairment in the participant’s growth, development, or psychological functioning.
- Sexual abuse - any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a participant and an adult or between two participants. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other participants.
- Neglect - the failure to provide for a participant’s basic needs or the failure to protect a participant from harm.

Church Partner: One who is currently a partner of Providence City Church and has agreed to requirements of partnership as laid out by the staff/elders.



Code of Conduct with Participants

The following policies are intended to assist staff members and volunteer servant leaders in making decisions about interactions with Participants. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact a staff member/elder.

PCC provides our Participants with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for Participants that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from any PCC event/ministry. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with Participants or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. We will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Code of Conduct with Participants outlines specific expectations of the staff members and volunteer servant leaders as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

- Participants will be treated with respect at all times.
- Participants will be treated fairly, consistent with PCC's beliefs and doctrine, regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, or religion.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by this organization.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will avoid affection with Participants that cannot be observed by others.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by [this policy](#).
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not stare at or comment on Participants' bodies.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not date or become romantically involved with Participants.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Participants.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on any property designated as Providence City Church (i.e. Blanchard campus, Hayes Campus).
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not have secrets with Participants and will only give gifts with prior permission.
- If a participant indicates suicide/self harm is being considered, staff members and/or volunteer servant leaders shall not leave participant alone and immediately contact parent/guardian.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will comply with [our policies](#) regarding interactions with Participants outside of our programs



Code of Conduct with Participants (cont.)

- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with Participants.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders are prohibited from working one-on-one with Participants in a private setting. Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will use common areas when working with individual Participants.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will not abuse Participants in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - *Physical abuse*: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
 - *Verbal abuse*: degrading, threatening, cursing
 - *Sexual abuse*: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
 - *Mental abuse*: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
 - *Neglect*: withholding food, water, shelter

PCC will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one Participant by another Participant. In addition, we will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:
 - a. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
 - b. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
 - c. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
 - d. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, videos or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
 - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
 - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
 - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.



Code of Conduct with Participants (cont.)

- Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
- Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.
- Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all Participants, staff members and volunteer servant leaders.
- All staff members must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. Staff members should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. Staff members will:
 - Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
 - Know and follow these policies and procedures that protect Participants against abuse.
 - Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
 - Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders will report concerns or complaints about other staff members, volunteer servant leaders, adults, or Participants to pastoral staff/elders.
- PCC will cooperate fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any staff member or volunteer servant leader shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by this organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.
- Staff members and volunteer servant leaders may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of Participant abuse, indecency with a Participant, or injury to a Participant.



Policy prohibiting the abuse or mistreatment of Participants

PCC has **zero tolerance** for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of Participants in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse by a staff member or volunteer servant leader will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer servant leader service and cooperation with law enforcement.

Policy prohibiting the abuse or mistreatment of one participant by another participant

PCC has **zero tolerance** for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among Participants within the organization. We are committed to providing all Participants with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one Participant by another Participant. Conduct by Participants that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

In addition, we will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, PCC will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.



General Policies

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to Participants, when staff members and volunteer servant leaders know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, the rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

A. Physical Contact

Our physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting Participants, staff members and volunteer servant leaders. PCC encourages appropriate physical contact with Participants and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff members or volunteer servant leaders towards Participants in our programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer servant leader service.

These policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions include but are not limited to:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<p>Contact initiated by the Participant such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Side hugs ● Pats on the shoulder or back ● Handshakes ● High-fives and hand slapping ● Pats on the head if culturally appropriate ● Touching hands, shoulders, and arms ● Arms around shoulders ● Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full-frontal hugs ● Kisses ● Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one ● Lap sitting ● Piggyback rides, wrestling ● Tickling ● Allowing a Participant to cling to a staff member's or volunteer servant leader's leg ● Allowing Participants, older than kindergarten, to sit on a staff member or volunteer servant leader's lap ● Any type of massage given by or to a Participant outside of accepted and documented medical treatment ● Any form of affection that is unwanted by the Participant or the staff member or volunteer servant leader ● Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that is outside authorized and documented personal care assistance



B. Verbal Interactions

Staff members and volunteer servant leaders are prohibited from speaking to Participants in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Staff members and volunteer servant leaders must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with Participants. Staff members and volunteer servant leaders are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with Participants.

These policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive reinforcement ● Appropriate jokes ● Encouragement ● Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name-calling ● Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving Participants in the personal problems or issues of staff members and volunteer servant leaders ● Secrets ● Cursing ● Off-color or sexual jokes ● Shaming ● Belittling ● Derogatory remarks ● Harsh Language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate Participants ● Derogatory remarks about the Participant or his/her family.

C. One-on-One Interactions

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a Participant. PCC aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the Church Staff or Elders.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, staff members and volunteer servant leaders should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions

- When meeting one-on-one with a Participant, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Meetings shall take place during regular business hours or at times agreed upon by Participant's parent/guardian.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other staff members and volunteer servant leaders that you are alone with a Participant and ask them to randomly drop in.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

D. Off-Site Contact

Research shows many cases of abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. Allowing contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff members, volunteer servant leaders, Participants, and our organization at increased risk. This document offers various options for managing the risk of abuse and false accusations arising from contact outside our regularly scheduled programming.

Examples of contact outside of regularly scheduled program activities:

- Babysitting arrangements
- Tutoring
- Private lessons/coaching
- Mentorship
- Social interactions between staff members' or volunteer servant leaders' children and children served by the organization:
 - Playdates and birthday parties
 - Sleepovers
 - Overnight trips and vacations
 - Rides to/from the church or extracurricular activities and events
 - Attending public events in a shared community (like graduation, sports events, religious ceremonies)
- Continued contact with Participant after a Participant's participation in a program has ended

Appropriate Outside Contact	Inappropriate Outside Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking groups of participants on a field trip or ministry sponsored trip ● Attending athletic or arts activities with groups of participants. ● Attending functions at a participant's home, with parents/guardians present ● Meeting with more than one participant for a meal in a public place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking one participant on an outing without the parents'/guardians' and administration's written permission. ● Visiting one participant in the participant's home without a parent/guardian present ● Entertaining one participant in the home of staff or volunteer servant leaders ● A lone participant spending the night with staff or volunteer servant leaders.



Additional Policies

- Whenever practical, the “two-leader” (hereafter to mean two leaders present together) rule applies to all events, classes, off-site activities, and vehicles used to transport participants to and from activities that are not conducted on the property of PCC. In those situations, where two leaders are not present in each vehicle, in no case shall only one participant be present in the same vehicle (to prevent a one leader/one participant situation). Also, that solo driver must try to establish a caravan with at least one other driver with the understanding that the two or more vehicles are always within eyesight of each other. (This is intended to prevent a solo leader from getting lost or placed in a high-risk situation during transit to or from an activity). Where children/students sit in vehicles is up to the discretion of the driver but they will be encouraged to sit with the same gender and leaders will keep a watchful eye on all passengers at all times.
- Whenever possible, at least one leader should be 18 years or older; students may serve in kids classrooms or at kids activities after he/she has completed 6th grade and is an active participant in a youth program and can provide references as to his/her participation. In cases where an adult leader cannot be present, two students may serve in kids classrooms/kids activities provided at least one student is 16 years old or older.
- No minor will be left unsupervised on church grounds during church sponsored activities.
- At no point should a staff member or volunteer servant leader find themselves alone in a restroom stall or behind locked doors with participant. Always ask for a safety team member, staff, or another volunteer servant leader to assist with restroom visits to ensure two sets of eyes are on the classroom as well as the restroom. Only assist children who are unable to go to the restroom by themselves.
- Molesters routinely groom participants by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the participant to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the participant to keep secrets from parents/guardians. For this reason, staff and volunteer servant leaders should only give gifts to groups of participants. If someone wishes to give a gift to an individual participant, they must notify the parent/guardian of the participant that the gift was given. Extrinsic reinforcement (e.g., treasure boxes) that are made available to a group of students are permitted and do not require approval of administration nor notice to the parents.
- PCC staff, elders, or their designees shall make random visits to all scheduled classroom situations. The parent or guardian is responsible for ensuring that the participant is not left alone in an unsupervised area. PLEASE NOTE: The drop off and pick up arrangements for the participants involved in the various ministries are described on the pages of this manual.



Additional Policies (cont.)

- No medication or ointments should be given to participant without the express written permission by parent/guardian (this includes diaper rash ointment, baby powder, etc.). The only exception is an epi-pen to be administered when a participant's life is in imminent danger from an allergic reaction.
- When serving in a classroom, please DO NOT bring any weapons (including but not limited to handguns, knives, etc.) even if you are a concealed carry permit holder. Safety Team members are allowed to carry a concealed weapon ONLY IF he/she has a concealed carry permit.
- All necessary measure should be taken to disinfect all nursery/toddler/preschool toys or other items after each service. Diapers should be disposed of in diaper genies or plastic trash bags and taken to the dumpster after each volunteer servant leader shift.
- Only female volunteer servant leaders over the age of 16 may change diapers and only do so following the "two leader" rule.
- Personal use of cell phones, texting, and social networking is generally discouraged while volunteer servant leaders are serving except in the case of emergency.
- If a staff member or volunteer servant leader is found to be in violation of these policies and procedures, the matter will be reviewed by the staff, elders, or their designees, for appropriate action.



Additional Policies (cont.)

- Transportation
 - Anyone driving to and from a PCC sponsored activity or driving the PCC church van for any reason must be 21 years or older and submit to a motor vehicle check
 - When transporting children/students, drivers agree to follow all transportation laws including but not limited to car seat requirements, use of seatbelts, airbag weight/age regulations, posted speed limits, refraining from cell phone use while vehicle is in motion.

- Overnight Activities
 - Two adult (male and female) leaders/parents for every 15 kids/students should be present at all times during any co-ed activity.
 - There should be at least two gender appropriate adults present in any room where children/youth are spending the night; at no point will male and female participants sleep in the same areas. Leaders will sleep next to exits of sleeping areas.
 - Children/students may not leave the sleeping areas unless accompanied by a leader
 - All activities should begin and end at PCC or an agreed upon location.