

# Refton Brethren In Christ Church



## Safe Church Policy

Last Revised: June, 2016

## **Refton Brethren in Christ Church**

### **Safe Church Policy**

Our goal is to provide a safe, secure and loving ministry environment for our children and youth. These policies are in place in order to assure our children's safety as thoroughly as we can and to provide peace of mind to our parents. They are also in place to protect our workers. These policies should be followed during regular ministry hours as well as special events.

#### **Two Adult Rule**

The goal would be no fewer than two adults present at all times in each classroom during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children and youth.

#### **The Rule of Three**

Because it is not always possible for the church to provide two adults for each ministry room, we have the "rule of three." At least three individuals (at least one being an adult) should be present in every activity and in each classroom or area involving children and youth. There is a roaming staff member in these circumstances. The age and capacity of children/youth should be considered when using the rule of three. To avoid one-on-one, classes should be combined.

#### **Clear View Policy**

All activities are to be in open and clearly visible spaces. The windows in each door should be unobstructed and clearly visible from the hallway.

#### **One-on-One Policy**

- 1. Children and Youth:** If it is necessary to meet one-on-one with a child/youth, a clear view policy should be applied. Also, a second adult worker should be notified prior to meeting with the child/youth.
- 2. Children:** Consent from the child's parent should be obtained and your Christian Education Chairperson should be notified for one-on-one interactions where no other adult is present.

#### **Proper Displays of Affection**

Physical contact with children/youth should be minimal and only in the presence of other adults. Appropriate touching should be limited to handshakes, "high fives," brief hugs, or a brief touch on the shoulder. Inappropriate touch would include extending hugging or tickling, kissing, touching a child/youth in any area covered by a bathing suit, and giving full contact, body-to-body hugs. If a room is darkened for proper showing of videos, etc., workers may not have children sit on their laps. Neither should a child sit on a worker's lap when other workers are not present.

#### **Supervision of Children**

During any of Refton Children's Ministry Program (i.e., Sunday morning and weekly programs), children are under our care. At no time should children be left alone without the supervision of an adult.

## **Ministry Involvement Standard**

All Refton Brethren in Christ Church volunteers need to be regular attendees of Refton Brethren in Christ Church and approved with background checks with necessary clearances before becoming involved in the Children's Ministry and/or Student Ministry.

## **Four Year Rule**

In recruiting and hiring workers (18 years and older) and paid staff to work with children and youth in any position of authority, workers must be at least four (4) years older than the age of the persons they are serving. One exception to this rule would be a college student with a paid or unpaid internship.

## **Youth assisting in Children's Ministry**

Youth workers under age eighteen (18) should be at least five (5) years older than the children they are working with. **In the infant nursery, approved child workers need to be at least 16 years old. In the toddler nursery/preschool, approved child workers need to be at least 11 years old. All need to be supervised by qualified adults.**

## **Application Process**

New volunteers need to complete the in-class or DVD training and complete the Refton Brethren in Christ Church Volunteer application and give it to the Chairperson of the Christian Education Commission or the Director of Student Ministry. After the application has been reviewed, the applicant will be asked to review this handbook and sign a Statement of Agreement Form. All application information is confidential and securely filed.

## **Statement of Restriction**

Individuals who have been adjudicated by a court or child protective services findings as sexual offenders, and/or have admitted to past sexual abuse of children, and are willing to abide by the guidelines set forth in this policy, are welcomed to attend worship services and adult activities. Such individuals are hereafter referred to as "known sexual offenders" or "offenders."

The minimum guidelines by which any known offender may participate in the life of the congregation are set forth below and shall be incorporated into a covenant specific for the individual offender which is to be signed by the offender prior to participation.

Depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the Christian Education Commission/Church Board, additional restrictions may be incorporated into an individual covenant. If an individual is on probation or parole, specific provisions related to contact with children, participation in counseling, and others, will be incorporated into the covenant. The individual covenant may also permit participation in additional church activities (other than those involving children) if circumstances warrant.

### **Minimum guidelines under which a known sexual offender participate:**

1. Offenders are expected to comply fully with all restrictions and requirements placed upon them as a result of any legal actions and provide the designated pastoral staff member or Christian Education Commission with copies of any judgments, conditions of parole, or other documents in which restrictions on or requirements as a result of convictions or judgments are stated.
2. Offenders are expected to participate in a professional counseling program, specifically addressing their abusive behaviors. Offenders will provide the name of the agency and mental health professional to the designated pastoral staff member/Christian Education Chairperson at the time of request for participation. The offender may be asked to periodically sign a limited disclosure authorization for the therapist to verify to the designated pastoral staff member/Christian Education Commission Chairperson that the individual is in treatment.
3. The Christian Education Commission Chairperson will assign supervisors to any offender participating in the life of the congregation. They will be adults who are not related to the offender. They will be offered training that will include information on such topics as sexual offender dynamics, the long-term impact of sexual abuse on victims, and any conditions related to participation under the specific covenant established. If the offender is on probation or parole, the training may need to be approved by the officer of the court handling the case.

#### **Possible Actions within a Covenant:**

- i. A supervisor may need to accompany the offender at all times when on church property – per potential agreement under a covenant.
  - ii. At no time should the offender deliberately place him or herself in or remain in any location in or around the church facilities which would cause undue stress to others - per potential agreement under a covenant.
  - iii. Other actions could be agreed upon by individuals designated by the Christian Education Commission Chairperson.
4. The Christian Education Commission will endeavor to identify a small group of “covenant partners” for offenders. This small group will provide spiritual, emotional and practical support and meet with the offender on a regular basis. The supervisors and “covenant partners” will not be same individuals.
5. The offender may participate in worship in the sanctuary and attend adult classes or activities. The Christian Education Commission may designate a specific service and time for attendance. Any other activities the offender is permitted to participate in will be detailed in the covenant.
6. At least twice each calendar year and as otherwise requested, the offender shall meet with and report to the designated pastoral staff member/Christian Education Commission representative regarding status of adherence to these guidelines.

If the offender should decide to relocate membership (or substantially attend) another congregation, the designated pastoral staff member will seek to inform the leadership of that congregation of the conditions of these guidelines.

## **Background Checks**

Any adult who volunteers in Refton Brethren in Christ Church Children's Ministry and Student Ministry will be required to have a background check. If there is a fee, this will be covered by the church. All information needed for the check is in the Application Packet. The check includes the PA Child Abuse History Clearance and the FBI waiver (conditional if you have not been a PA resident for ten [10] years). Background check information is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office and is kept confidential. The background check will be done every five [5] years. In the case that a record is found, the Refton BIC Sr. Pastor and Christian Education Commission Chairperson will deem the individual's appropriateness to serve.

## **Off-Property and Special Ministry Events**

Any off-Property or special ministry events not occurring during the normal meeting time of your ministry must be pre-approved by the Christian Education Chairperson or the Director of Student Ministry well in advance of the event. This allows for adequate time to inform parents of the activity, as well as provide time of sufficient supervision of the event. All off-property events and overnight activities must have the written approval of the parent/guardian through a permission slip (See Appendix). This form should be carried by the chaperone. **If seatbelts are provided, they must be worn. For overnight events, separate sleeping quarters are required for each gender. At no time should a chaperone be alone with a child, utilizing the clear view policy. All children must be in appropriate car seats based on PA car seat guidelines. Children under twelve [12] should not ride in the front passenger seat.**

## **Adult/Child Ratio – On-Site Church Events**

In addition to the Two Adult Rule, the following are minimum ratio guidelines of children to adults:

- Infants: 1 adult for every 4 children (Birth to 12 months)
- Toddlers: 1 adult for every 5 children
- Preschool: 1 adult for every 10 children
- Elementary: 1 adult for every 15 children

## **Adult/Child Ratio – Off-Site Church Events**

- Elementary: 1 adult for every 8 children

## **Adult/Youth Ratios**

In addition to the Two Adult Rule, the following are minimum ratio guidelines of youth to adults:

### **On-Site Church Events**

- 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grades: 1 adult for every 15 youth

### **Off-Site Church Events (Day Trips and Overnight Trips)**

- 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grades: 1 adult for every 7 youth



## **Safety Procedures**

### **Child Registration**

The parent/guardian of the child, including visiting families, must have filled out a registration form prior to the child's participation. Child registration forms will be updated annually. Approved adults will be given an ID bracelet for all children through the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Child Dismissal**

On Sundays children from nursery to 5<sup>th</sup> grade must remain in their classroom until picked up by a parent or person. On Wednesday nights, children in preschool to grade 5 must remain in their classrooms until picked up by an authorized adult. Children must be signed in by an authorized adult and signed out by an authorized adult. Even though a child may say they are to meet their parent, they are not to be released on their own.

### **Parental Supervision**

When children/youth are in the church or on the church property, but not signed in to a Refton Church activity or program, they are the **responsibility** of their parent/guardian.

### **General Security**

**During Children's Ministry Programs** and Student Ministry times, children are not allowed to wander around the church property (inside or outside). If you see a child who is not in class, please contact the **Leader/Teacher of the appropriate Children's Ministry Program**. We will take the child to his appropriate class or to the sanctuary to sit with their parents.

If you see an unauthorized adult wandering around the children's ministry areas, please notify an usher or the sexton. For security purposes, unauthorized people are not permitted to wander around the children's classrooms.

### **Bathroom procedures**

Please encourage parents to take the children to the restroom prior to coming to class. If children are older, ask them to use the bathroom before they come to class each week. For your safety and the safety of each child please use the following guidelines.

1. If just one or more children need to use the rest room, an adult volunteer should escort the child(ren). Before the child(ren) enters the rest room, the volunteer should enter the restroom to make sure that it is safe. The volunteer should then remain outside the door and wait for the child before escorting him/her back to the classroom. The volunteer should prop the door open with one foot and call the child's name if he/she is taking longer than seems necessary.
2. Never be alone with one child in an unsupervised restroom and never go into a stall with a child and shut the door.
3. If preschool children need assistance, an adult may enter the restroom/stall only if a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, another adult should at least be informed of the situation and notified when going in with a child and when coming out. The adult must stand in the open stall doorway.
4. Diapers are only to be changed in the designated areas in the nursery and in the presence of other volunteers. For the protection of our youth, only adult volunteers should change diapers.

## **Snacks**

We may have children and youth with food allergies. Parents of children who have allergies are welcome to provide a snack for their child. Classroom rosters provide information regarding allergies.

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

There are four kinds of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. If you suspect any child or youth involved in a program of Refton church has been abused, the following steps are to be followed:

1. Report the suspected abuse immediately to the Christian Education Chairperson, Director of Student Ministry, or the Senior Pastor of Refton BIC.
2. Do Not interview the child/youth regarding the suspected abuse. A trained professional will conduct this. Do not discuss the suspected abuse with other workers, parents, etc. All information regarding the child/youth should be kept confidential with the Christian Education Chairperson, Director of Student ministries and the proper authorities.
3. You will be asked to complete a Suspected Child Abuse Report. Confidentiality will be maintained where possible. This report is to be completed within 24 hours and given to the Christian Education Chairperson or the Director of Student Ministry.
4. After the suspected child abuse case has been reported, proper steps will be taken by the church leadership to report the suspected abuse to the designated agency and the child's parents.

## **Media Release**

Parents who do not wish to have their children/youth photographed or videotaped for church viewing need to inform the Christian Education Chairperson or Director of Student Ministry. Photographs or videos may not be placed on the internet or distributed publicly without authorization from the parents through the use of the Media Release registration form. Consent from your Children's Ministry Director should also be obtained. Parents with students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades should sign the Refton Student Ministry Medical and Photography release form if they would like to allow photograph permission.

## **No Weapons Policy**

**No weapons of any kind are allowed on church property.** All weapons should be confiscated and given to your Christian Education Chairperson or Director of Student ministry. We acknowledge the Google definition of a weapon which says, "A thing designed or used for inflicting bodily harm or physical damage."

## **First Aid**

First Aid kits are located outside the church office, downstairs above the water fountain by Room 10, and between the gym bathrooms.

## **Nursery Guidelines and Infant Care**

If use of the nursery rooms is needed, please contact the Nursery Director or church office. All children's ministry areas will be locked at all times when not in use.

## Special Situations

There are times in church life when babysitting may be needed for a limited number of children (such as during adult classes or small groups). While it would be ideal to have two adults present, this is not always possible. In this situation, **previously stated policies of The Rule of Three or One-on-One** should be applied. In the case of church sanctioned small groups in the home, babysitters have been obtained by the leader and may not have background checks. In these childcare situations, parents should be sure they are comfortable with the childcare arrangements before leaving their children.

## Shepherding Plan for Children's Ministries

The purpose of a shepherding plan is not to manage behavior but to shepherd children's hearts towards Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus used the analogy of shepherding sheep we who work with children are lovingly guiding them toward Christ. The motivation for good behavior is the grace of God and what God has done for us. A shepherding plan does correct behavior but does it in a way that privately asks probing questions, getting to the child's heart. It also gives the truth of Scripture to instruct the heart and direct behavior. Our ultimate purpose is not managing behavior, but to see our children come to know Jesus and to become like Him in their actions and decisions.

### Why do we need a Shepherding Plan?

- Children need it. Children like consistency of rules and boundaries (like sheep) and do not like to guess at what is expected of them. With different teachers from week to week or month to month, children will know what is expected of them, regardless of who is volunteering. When a consistent plan is in place, there is likely to be less behavior problems and more active learning.
- Teachers also like consistency. Teachers like to know what is expected in the classroom and what the prior teacher did before. If all teachers have the same "language" in communicating with children, we will be more efficient and productive in teaching them about Jesus and His Word. The Shepherding plan will also equip teachers with Scriptures to guide their students towards right choices.
- Parents also like knowing what is happening in their children's classroom. Communication is very important to parents. There will be a consistent plan between classrooms which is nice for families of multiple children and for students moving up to the next class.

### Guiding Disrespectful Behavior

When one sheep goes astray, the shepherd goes after him out of love. To reach our children, we need to lovingly guide them when they also go astray. If a child is being unkind or showing disrespect, privately pull them aside to talk to them. Below are two strategies **that may be used** to deal with the behavior and the heart.

1. Three Warnings and a Time Out (for all ages)
  - If a child does not follow the rule of being kind or showing respect (to God, teachers, parents, others, or self) they will be given a warning. The warning should be given in a calm voice and the teacher should get down to the child's level and look the child in the



eye. For example, "Sally, blocks are for building, not throwing. We need to be kind (or show respect) by playing nicely. That's a one." If Sally would continue with the same behavior then the teacher would repeat what she said before followed by "That a two." If the child repeats the behavior for the third time, the child is told, "That's a three. Please sit in the time-out chair." The child would sit in the chair for one minute times their age. (i.e., 3 minutes if the child is 3, 4 minutes if the child is 4, etc.)

- After the time out, use the opportunity to talk to the child about their behavior. Let the child know that you care about them and want to understand them. Pray with them.

## 2. Student/Teacher Conference

- Dialogue, not monologue. Use God's Word to guide your conversation. Help the child look up Scripture in their Bible. Let the child know that you care about them and want to understand them. Pray with the child.

### **Getting Student's Attention: Give Me Five (Pre-School/Elementary)**

- Use to get students' attention. Teacher raises hand and says, "Give me five." Students raise their hand and quietly look at the teacher. Teacher waits until all children are quiet and still. While waiting, the teacher can praise students who are ready, which motivates the other students to listen.
- This can be used throughout the lesson whenever the teacher needs to get the class's attention. Never try to teach a lesson while students are talking.
- At the beginning of every lesson, start with, "Give me five."
- For smaller groups or during a lesson, tell students, "When you hear my voice, it is time to listen carefully."

# Policy and Procedure Handbook

## Statement of Agreement

I have read and agree to follow Refton Brethren in Christ Church policies and procedures described in the handbook.

I have watched the training video or attended the training April 3, 2016.

As a volunteer, parent, or staff member of Refton Brethren in Christ Church I agree to abide by the policy and procedures. I cede authority to the Church Board of Refton Brethren in Christ Church to amend this policy whenever necessary. I pledge to conduct the ministry in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date



# Refton Brethren in Christ Church

## Volunteer Application

Confidential

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Ministry Background/Testimony

How long have you attended Refton Brethren in Christ Church? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you regularly attend Sunday Worship service (at least 3 times a month) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any other churches you have attended regularly in the past 2 years \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a brief personal testimony to the changes Jesus Christ made in your life:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Children's and Student Ministry

What age groups or ministries are you interested in working with?

Nursery \_\_\_\_

Sunday School \_\_\_\_

Preschool \_\_\_\_

Youth \_\_\_\_

Wednesday Night Kids Club \_\_\_\_

Vacation Bible School \_\_\_\_

My experience with children/youth:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any talents, special interest, or skills \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Check

Do you have any traits or tendencies that could pose a threat to children/youth? Yes / No

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to any criminal offense? Yes / No

Have you ever participated in, or been accused, convicted or pled guilty or not contest to abuse or any sexual misconduct? Yes / No

If you answered yes to any question, please explain.

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I hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct. I agree to fill out the information on the "Permission to Obtain a Background Check" form so the church can obtain a background check.

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Signature of Applicant

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Date

### Children's Ministry Registration Form

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Instructions or information about child (i.e. special needs/medication): \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) authorized to pick up child (other than parent): \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Emergency contact if parent or guardian cannot be reached:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my permission to the staff of Refton Brethren in Christ Church to seek medical attention for my child, if necessary, while participating in church functions. I understand that all necessary precautions will be taken for my child's safety. I will not hold the church, its staff, or those supervising liable.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Media Release Form:**

I hereby grant Refton Brethren in Christ Church the right to photograph and/or video my child and to use any such photographic or electronic reproductions for publication processes, whether electronic, print, digital or electronic publishing via the internet.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





### Permission Slip for Activities away from Church

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, as a Parent or Guardian, Give Permission for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Child's first and last name)

#### **To Attend the Activity At:**

**Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

Mode of Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Children will leave from: \_\_\_\_\_

Children will return: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult in Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child has permission to travel with the adult in charge of the activity: Yes / No

My Child has permission to participate in the activity: Yes / No

In the event of serious illness or injury to my child, I expressly consent to the administration of emergency medical care, if in the opinion of attending medical personnel, such action is advisable.

Further, I authorize the adult in charge to act on my behalf as guardian of my child while participating in the above described activity.

I have read this Permission Slip and understand its terms. I sign it voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact (other than yourself): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_



**Refton Brethren in Christ Church**

**Accident and Injury Report**

*Confidential*

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child Injured: \_\_\_\_\_ Age/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

A. Describe the accident:

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B. Who witnessed the accident? (Please include phone numbers)

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C. Describe the injury and action taken.

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D. How and when was the parent notified?

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E. Was a doctor notified? Who? \_\_\_\_\_

F. Was he/she taken to the hospital? Where? By what means of transportation?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Reporter of Accident's Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CEC Chairperson Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Refton Brethren in Christ Church

### Suspected Child Abuse Report

*Note: This is not a state report form*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday (If known): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (If known): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's name (If known): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (If known): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Nature of suspected abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect):
2. Indications of suspected abuse (including facts, physical signs and course of events where necessary):
3. Action taken (including date and time):
4. Other Relevant information: