

# CHILDREN/YOUTH WORKER TRAINING

KirkWood Presbyterian Church

# DID YOU KNOW?

It is estimated that at least two out of every ten girls and one out of every ten boys are sexually abused by the end of their 13th year.

Most children who are sexually abused are abused by a family member or close friend. "Stranger Danger," by comparison, is quite rare.

# DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM?

No, but...

The Church has been among the last institutions to respond to the Child Sexual Abuse crisis. Why?

- We are Trusting
- We are Welcoming
- We are Forgiving

# DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM?

You may be asking if something happened at KirkWood to trigger the need for this training and the extra processes we have instituted, and the answer is no. But because it hasn't happened doesn't mean it can't happen, and we want to make sure it doesn't ever happen.

There's an old saying that goes "Trust but verify". We want to continue to be the welcoming and friendly church we always have been, but we will do so with the level of caution we believe is necessary to protect our kids.

# DO YOU HAVE EXAMPLES?

One church discovered that many of their preschool children had been sexually molested by volunteers who always agreed to help with childcare during church, committee meetings, and pot-luck suppers.

Another congregation learned from the television news that their beloved youth minister had been arrested for child exploitation involving youth outside of the church.

Other congregations have found that they were respondents in lawsuits brought on behalf of children abused by a staff person in the childcare facility housed in their church. About one percent of all congregations have been sued because of child abuse in the church.

# DO YOU HAVE EXAMPLES?

I'm sure we could all cite examples where a church member, visitor, or official was accused of sexual abuse. Certainly, the scandals that have rocked the Catholic Church over the past few decades come immediately to mind.

Another example that occurred more recently and closer to home: a minister of a small protestant church in Norfolk was arrested for possessing child pornography. Fortunately, it doesn't appear that his actions went beyond fantasy. But here's the point: there is absolutely no one in any capacity that can be blindly trusted.

# WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

People who abuse children cannot be easily characterized.

They come from all socio-economic levels, all races and nationalities, and both genders, though there are some differences based on the type of abuse.

The proportion of abusers who are psychotic or crazy is no greater than in the general population.

The proportion of abusers who are homosexual is no greater than that in the general population.

# WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

If you think you can recognize a sexual predator or those who exercise other types of abuse, think again. They are good at what they do, and they are good at hiding it.

Sometimes, we tend to stereotype those we consider the most likely abusers, but statistics show that those who may be homosexual or with emotional instability have about the same likelihood of abusing as the general population.



# TYPES OF ABUSE

**Physical Abuse** involves a person (older and larger) deliberately and intentionally causing bodily harm to a child.

**Sexual Abuse** generally is considered to be sexual contact between an adult and a child in which the purpose is the sexual gratification of the adult.

**Emotional Abuse** or psychological maltreatment is generally considered to be a pattern of behavior that results in emotional disturbance in a child.

**Ritualistic Abuse** is a term that has been used to refer to the intentional physical, sexual, or psychological abuse of a child when such abuse is repeated and/or stylized.

**Neglect** is the failure of parents or other caregivers to provide for the basic needs of a child.

# TYPES OF ABUSE

While the principal focus of this training is sexual abuse prevention, as volunteers, we need to be alert for signs of these other kinds of abuse.

# HOW TO KNOW WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED?

No checklist of behavior problems should be used to determine whether a child has been abused. Many different problem behaviors may result from abuse and checklists are easily misinterpreted.

It is important, therefore, not to jump to conclusions when a child's behavior changes. When a child's behavior changes dramatically, it is best to stay alert, to ask the parents about changes in the child's environment, and to watch for indications of what the problem might be.

It is also important to make certain that the child knows that they can talk with you about whatever their concerns are.

# HOW TO KNOW WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED?

The problem with abuse, short of physical signs, is that's it's not easily recognized, but that doesn't mean we should choose to ignore what our senses and intuition are telling us. We must also be deliberate and not jump to conclusions.

The most important recommendation is to let a child know that they have someone they can talk to about any concerns they have.

# IF A CHILD REPORTS ABUSE?

Know the church policy on handling reports of abuse and of sexual misconduct.

Remain calm.

Listen, and don't ask questions. Asking questions may communicate that you don't believe what the child is saying. Further, asking questions can forever affect the child's believability to those who must investigate.

Reassure the child in a meaningful way. It is all right to say, "I'm really sorry." However, these comments should not editorialize on the incident being reported.

Let the child know that you will help them. "I am glad that you told me about this. I would like to help you so that this doesn't happen anymore. To do that, I will need to report this to Child Protective Services, because they know better than I do how to help you. I will do as much as I can to help you."

Write down word for word (or as close as possible) everything the child told you.

Follow the church's policy on reporting.

# IF A CHILD REPORTS ABUSE?

So, what do you do if a child or teen tells you've they been abused? The most important thing is to **remain calm** so the child will feel reassured that you're there to help.

Telling them you're sorry is fine, but first and foremost, listen to what they have to say without interrupting, particularly with questions that may, in the child's mind, cast doubt on what he or she is telling you. After the fact, write down what they've told you.

At an appropriate time, tell them you must notify the authorities who will know the best way to help them and keep them safe. Follow the church's policy on reporting which is the next slide.

# KIRKWOOD POLICY ON REPORTING ABUSE

Anyone who observes questionable or inappropriate behavior affecting children/youth shall report it *immediately* to local law enforcement officials and/or Social Services in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The behavior should also be reported *as soon as possible* to a member of the KirkWood Presbyterian Church of Yorktown (KPCY) Sexual Misconduct Risk Reduction and Response Team.

Notification of other activities will be made by the KPCY Sexual Misconduct Risk Reduction and Response Team which consists of the Pastor and three Ruling Elders as approved by Session. Current members are:

- Pastor: Chris Shearer
- Administration Chair: Tammie Organski
- Christian Education Chair: Christine Pregler
- Congregational Care Chair: Lew Goodman

# KIRKWOOD POLICY ON REPORTING ABUSE

Here's the KirkWood policy on reporting. First and foremost, is to report it to Social Services or law enforcement. After that, report it to Pastor Shearer or one of the Elders who make up the KirkWood's Sexual Misconduct Risk Reduction and Response Team. If you cannot reach one of these folks, contact an elder you know and trust, preferably one currently on Session.

Hopefully, there will never come a time when you must use this, but it is important you are properly prepared.



# WHAT ARE VIRGINIA LAWS CONCERNING REPORTING?

Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect; however, Section 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia requires that designated professionals who have contact with children immediately report their suspicions. It is not necessary to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred.

**Reports can be made by calling your local social services department or the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.**

Reports can be made anonymously. If you choose to provide your name, it will not be released to the family who was reported, except by Court order.

Persons reporting in good faith are immune from civil and criminal liability pursuant to Section 63.2-1512 of the Code.

# KIRKWOOD POLICY ON STAFF/VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH

Children/youth workers must be **active church members or regular attendees of KirkWood for a minimum six months** before working with children/youth, unless members of paid staff. Waiting period may be reduced for—

- Those transferring their membership and having a verifiable long history in another church
- Those having children/youth enrolled in a program/activity where they would like to assist, and who are always teamed with an approved worker.

Adult workers must be a **minimum of 21 years old**; youth assistants, preferably 16 years old.

Youth ministry employees and youth leader volunteers must complete a **confidential application**, undergo a **background check**, and read and sign the document, “Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policies and Procedures” .

# KIRKWOOD POLICY ON STAFF/VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH

Requirements for staff and volunteers working with children and youth are outlined in KirkWood's sexual misconduct policy document.

# WHY ARE AN APPLICATION AND REFERENCES NECESSARY AND HOW WILL THEY BE USED?

First and foremost, we must protect our children: Children cannot grow in faith and know God's love and grace when they are victims of child abuse.

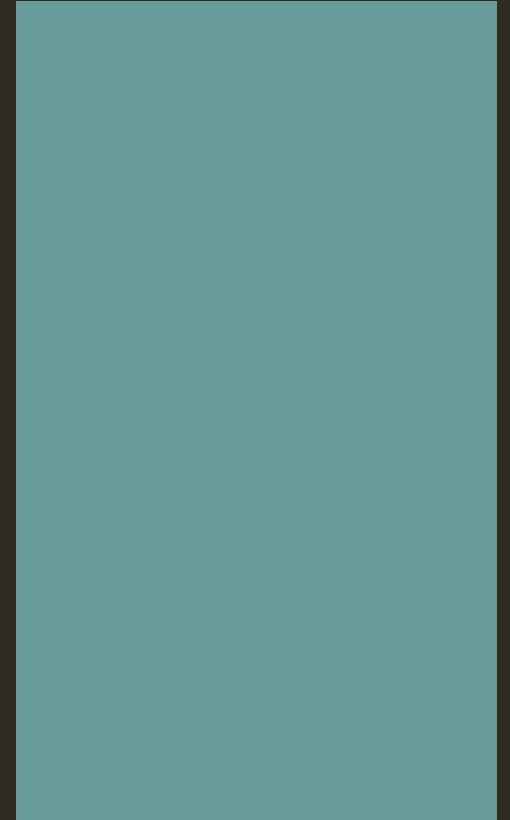
We must protect the KirkWood family: Charges of abuse within the church can be devastating to our congregation legally, financially and emotionally.

# WHY ARE AN APPLICATION AND REFERENCES NECESSARY AND HOW WILL THEY BE USED?

As stated in the beginning, we are asking you to submit to preparing an application and a background check. We do this, first and foremost, to protect our most important resource - our children. But secondly, and practically, we must protect the church. As we've seen from the suits brought against the Catholic Church, the financial and emotional tolls can be devastating.

# “DO’S AND DON’TS” SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

These next slides offer guidelines for what to do and what not to do with working with children. The word “guidelines” is used here, because frankly, we don’t always have the number of volunteers, or for that matter, the number of children to make these firm requirements. But they are good recommendations.



# TWO-ADULT POLICY

Do have at least 2 adults (or 1 adult and 1 youth assistant) to supervise all KirkWood-sponsored programs, when at all possible, whether on or off church grounds. In classrooms where only one adult is available the adult should be visible from the doorway at all times and classroom door should remain open.

Don't be alone with a child if there is any way to avoid it.

# ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION (IN AN EMERGENCY)

Do provide an environment that provides visibility at all times.

Don't go to an isolated place.



# RESTROOM USE FOR CHILDREN UNDER AGE 9

Do, when possible, send children to the restroom in pairs using the “same gender buddy system”.

Don't send children alone or send a boy and girl together because each would be alone in the restroom.

# CHILDREN'S PERSONAL INFORMATION & PHOTOS

Do use only group photos without personal information.

Don't publish individual photos or a child's personal information without parental permission.

One of the things we sometimes want to do is publicize our programs, and that's fine, but the use of single photos with or without personal information is not, particularly on social media like Facebook. In fact, even in group photos, it's always good to get permission before publicly posting anything, protected or not.

# APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

Do respect a child's right to say they do not want to be touched. Appropriate physical contact includes: a pat on the back, hand on the shoulder, hug from the side, high five, hand shakes, and holding hands while praying in a group.

Don't allow children to touch one another inappropriately. Don't engage in any physical contact with a child if they express a desire not to be touched.

Physical contact under certain circumstances is OK as described here, but never touch a child if they say no.

# REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Do follow the reporting procedures in this training if you have any concerns about possible abuse of a child in your care.

Don't discuss your concerns with others or keep your concerns to yourself.

# DISCIPLINARY AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Do use age-appropriate discipline (i.e., time-out for young children, reassignment to another group, refocusing an older child's attention).

Don't isolate/demean the child or convey disrespect.

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADULT AND CHILD

Do listen to each child and provide age-appropriate feedback.

Don't share inappropriate details of your personal life.

# FAVORITISM

Do provide small gifts or tokens to the entire class for special occasions.

Don't give gifts to individual children.

Remember, for those working with children and youth, it's important to establish healthy relationships, but it's equally as important to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries.

# CONVEYING OF YOUTH TO AND FROM CHURCH OR SPECIAL EVENTS

Do have parents bring their children to and from events at church and to special event sites if possible. Obtain permission slips from parents for events outside KirKWood.

Don't transport youth in your personal vehicle except when other options are not feasible. If you must use your vehicle or other volunteer vehicles, observe the 2-adult rule.



# OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Do have at least two unrelated adult chaperones of each gender.

Don't allow boys and girls to sleep in the same area.

As mentioned earlier, some of these policies can't be practically accomplished 100% of the time, but we should strive to meet their intent when at all possible. ***Permission slips, however, are a must for overnight events and anything off-site.***

For overnight events, a minimum of two adults of each gender is preferred, and ***always, always, always have separate sleeping areas for boys and girls.***

# THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!



It takes someone special to devote their time and talents to help guide our kids.



Keep them safe!



To complete the training, please fill out this short quiz at <https://forms.gle/Fp4opPXaogLgjSajZ>.