



Safety Policy

Jesus said “Let the children come to me.” (Matthew 19:14). The body of Christ is dedicated to teaching and nurturing our children in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children is vital to their healthy development. To that end, we have created this Safety Policy designed to protect the children and youth of King’s Grant Presbyterian Church. The primary purpose of this Policy is to provide clear guidance and instructions to all the leaders, teachers, and volunteers concerning the operation of the ministries impacting our children. Our goal is to insure that any risk of harm to our children is as minimal as we can make it. While these guidelines must be tempered by the knowledge, judgment, and discretion contained within this particular body of Christ, they are designed to be applicable to all persons who work with our youth and children.

Be aware that the document that follows represents minimum requirements. Individual programs may impose additional guidelines as appropriate to their ministry setting.

For the purposes of this Policy, the following terms shall mean:

ADULT	Age 18 (High School Graduate) or equivalent
KGPC	King’s Grant Presbyterian Church
VOLUNTEER/LEADER/YOUTH WORKER	Used interchangeably for all persons working with youth/children
CHILD/CHILDREN	Infancy-5 th grade unless otherwise indicated
STUDENT/YOUTH	6 th -12 th grade unless otherwise indicated
CFFD	Christian Faith Formation Director
SHALL/IS TO BE/ARE TO BE	Signifies that a practice is mandatory
SHOULD	Signifies that a practice is strongly recommended
IS APPROPRIATE	Signifies that a practice is commended as suitable
MAY	Signifies that a practice is permissible but not required



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PART I: Volunteer Procedures

A. Volunteer Screening / Training Procedures

Adults who work with children and youth are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. As such, and mindful of the fact that their safety and well being is our utmost priority, we therefore recognize the need to be worthy of the high standard of trust placed upon us. Hence, all adults desiring to work with children and youth should be members or regular attendees of Kings Grant Presbyterian Church.

Exception: Workers hired by Kings Grant Presbyterian Church need not be members or regular attendees of KGPC.

1. Volunteers shall complete volunteer application (Appendix A).
2. Volunteers shall undergo a Background Check
 - a. Every background check shall include the following steps:
 1. Criminal record check
 2. Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry
 3. Driving Record Check for any volunteers transporting children and youth
 - b. Background checks shall be processed by the CFFD within thirty days of of the adult's request for participation.
 - c. Background check information will remain confidential, unless there is reason for disqualification from volunteering.
 - d. If there is a reason for disqualification, the following may occur: The information disclosed in the background checks shall be reviewed by the CFFD and the Pastor or Clerk of Session who have the authority to disqualify an individual from working with children and youth.
 - e. The disclosure of any offense delineated in the Code of Virginia Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry shall automatically disqualify that individual from working with children and youth.
 - f. The cost of the background checks shall be paid for by KGPC.
 - g. Background checks shall be renewed every two years.
3. Volunteers are responsible for reading and signing the Protection Policy Acknowledgement
4. Volunteers shall receive training as appropriate.
5. Volunteers shall not post pictures or names of children on any form of social media without written permission from the child's parent.
6. All volunteers who anticipate providing automobile transportation to children and youth shall
 - a. Undergo a driving record check (as referred to in 2.a)
 - b. Receive and sign Transportation Policy (Appendix B) and abide by its provisions.



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Part II: Security, Supervision

A. Policies for Programs of KGPC

1. Supervision
 - a. Two deep leadership shall be provided during all programming provided by KGPC.
 - b. During non-program times, parents are responsible for the supervision of their children.
2. Drop-off Policy:
 - a. Children should be welcome to enter our classrooms when adequate (see guidelines in Part II B) supervision is available. Generally, supervision of two adults should be provided ten minutes before a program starts.
3. Registration Policy (infancy-5th grade):
 - a. Parents shall complete a registration form for any child who attends any of the Kings Grant Presbyterian children or youth programs. Online registration is available through the KGPC website, program director, and/or the church office.
 - b. Registration forms shall be sent to the leader of the appropriate group by the CFFD and forms are to be kept on site, during the program, for the duration of the program.



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B. Classroom Supervision Guidelines for all children and youth ministries

Insuring adequate supervision of children and youth shall promote a safer environment for all youth activities. Because the appropriate adult/child ratio may vary depending on the activity, the Grow Ministry, Care Ministry, and Worship and Music Ministry should determine the necessary adult/child ratio for each activity falling under their umbrella. The following principles should be adhered to:

1. Except in rare circumstances approved ahead of time by the relevant Ministry, all activities shall have more than one leader.
2. In determining the appropriate adult/child ratio, the relevant Ministry should also consider the appropriate male/female ratio
3. Special Exceptions:
 - a. The Confirmation class mentor program is specifically exempted from the guideline that an activity should utilize more than one youth worker. The special nature of this one-to-one mentoring program provides a unique opportunity for the spiritual growth of the youth participants. Nonetheless, parental approval will be required for all youth desirous of participating in this program.
 - b. When child care is made available at the church for parents who are attending on-site activities a single youth worker may be assisted by a member or regular attendee of KGPC who is between the ages of 12 and 18.



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C. Architectural Precautions

1. Interior windows, or when necessary, open doors provide easy viewing by parents and supervisors.
2. All doors, with the exception of rest rooms, shall have windows. Sight lines through the windows should remain unobstructed at all times.
3. Interior room doors should never be locked on the inside while occupied.
4. Rooms with adjoining toilets shall be used for preschoolers whenever possible, preventing the need for children to leave the room.
5. Evacuation plans shall be displayed inside the doorway of the classroom.
6. All closets shall be locked and remain locked unless in use.



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D. Off Campus/Overnight Policies

1. Consent and approval:
 - a. Parents shall be notified in advance of any off campus activities.
 - b. Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child or youth participating in off-campus activities and are part of the registration for these events.
2. Adult Supervision Guidelines:
 1. Two-deep leadership shall be adhered to for these types of excursions.
 2. All overnight activities must have a ratio of one adult for every five children or youths.
 3. All leaders should not be from the same family.
 4. No children/youths of the opposite gender shall be together without adult supervision.
 5. All overnight events shall have a set curfew.
 6. Separate sleeping quarters should be designated for males and females.
 7. Leaders shall exemplify responsible and appropriate behavior at all times.
 8. Hotels: it is expected that at least 2 leaders should be in rooms on the same floor and adjacent to or within 100 feet of youths' accommodations.
 9. Covenant: Children, youth and adults should covenant with each other concerning expectations for proper behavior during overnight activities. This covenant should be in writing, should be signed by the youth, their parents and the youth workers, and should specifically set forth such expectations.

E. Transportation

- a. When transporting children involved in a church sponsored activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license, current automobile insurance, and have completed the KGPC Transportation Policy (Appendix B). CFFD retains discretion for drivers.
- b. The number of persons per vehicle shall not exceed the number of seat belts. Drivers and all passengers shall fasten their seat belts.



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F. Proper Displays of Affection

Parents and their children place a sacred trust in the youth workers of KGPC. In acknowledgement of that trust, youth workers must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior directly with the youth or among themselves.

1. Youth workers shall not touch, interact with, or otherwise communicate with children and youth in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating.
2. Common expressions of affections (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayers), or physical care taking (e.g. changing diapers) are appropriate in this community of caring Christians.
3. Care shall be taken that expressions of affection and affirmation are not excessive or imposed upon a child or youth.

G. Discipline Policy

1. All interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child's dignity and fragile life. Gentleness, respect, and understanding shall guide all actions and words. Discipline shall be carried out through instruction, training, and correction. Remind, redirect, and finally remove when necessary. Physical punishment will not be used.
 - i. Teachers or leaders may bring disruptive children to the CFFD, who may then contact the parent



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H. Special Concerns

1. Leaders are not prepared nor encouraged to provide long-term counseling or formal therapy to children or youth. Leaders should refer children or youth who they suspect have a serious need for counseling to the CFFD and Pastor.
2. Youth Contacts: Informal contact between leaders and children or youth should only occur in public places with the approval of parents.
3. Driving: When a leader is driving children or youth home, the leader should never be alone with a youth, except with parent/guardian permission.



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PART II: SECURITY, SUPERVISION

I. Communication

1. Policy transparency
 - a. This policy shall be posted on the KGPC website.
 - b. This policy shall be referenced to parents in the registration forms for Children/Student Ministry.
2. Parent Communication
 - a. Scheduled activities should be publicized in advance by means of newsletters, the Sunday bulletin, the website, and/or direct emails or texts.
 - b. All scheduled activities should be adhered to as advertised except in the event of an emergency.
 - c. For any overnight activity away from the premises of KGPC, leaders should provide parents some means whereby participants in the activity may be reached in the event of an emergency.



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PART III: RESPONSE AND REPORTING POLICIES

A. Response to Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse or Neglect

1. Mandated Reporting

- a. Mandated reporters are defined as individuals, 18 years and older, who are associated with (either as a volunteer or employee) a public or private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children. In connection with this Safety Policy this includes paid staff and volunteers of KGPC.
- b. Mandated reporters are required to report to Virginia Beach Department of Social Services any suspicion of abuse as soon as possible. This should occur no later than 24 hours after having a suspicion of a reportable offense.
- c. The City of Virginia Beach Department of Social Services number is **(757)-385-3311**. The Virginia Department of Social Services toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline is **1-800-552-7096**.
- d. Mandatory reporters are not required to make a report if they have actual knowledge that the same matter has already been reported to Child Protective Services (CPS).
- e. By Virginia law, a mandatory reporter who fails to report suspicions of abuse shall be subject to fines and/or criminal charges.

2. KGPC Response to a Report

- a. All reports of possible sexual misconduct or serious incidents shall be taken seriously and shall be handled with sensitivity for people's privacy and confidentiality.
- b. With the guidance of an attorney retained by KGPC, KGPC should cooperate with law enforcement officials and Social Services
- c. Neither the alleged victim or the alleged offender should be blamed.
- d. Support and prayer shall be provided for both the alleged victim and the alleged offender.
- e. The insurance agent and carrier for KGPC should be notified.

3. Receiving the Initial Report

- a. If abuse is observed by, disclosed to, or suspected, youth workers shall be supportive and shall not attempt to minimize or discount the allegations or be judgmental.
- b. Youth workers shall ask basic questions to clarify facts but do not try to verify or independently investigate the incident.
- c. The pertinent details shall be recorded by the youth worker using Appendix C.



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- d. The parents of the child, the Pastor, the Clerk of Session and/or the CFFD shall be contacted and provided with the information obtained. Do not discuss allegations with anyone else except those needing to know in order to help respond.
- e. In the event that the Pastor, Clerk of Session or CFFD is the subject of the accusation, the report shall be made to the non-accused party.

3. Church Response Leaders

- a. Outside legal counsel who are versed in sexual incident litigation shall be engaged and retained immediately
- b. A response committee, ("the Committee") shall be convened
- c. The "Committee" shall be comprised of:
 - 1. The Pastor,
 - 2. The Clerk of Session
 - 3. The CFFD
 - 4. Outside legal counsel
- d. Should the Pastor, Clerk of Session or CFFD be the subject of the accusation, they shall not participate in the investigation process

4. The Committee Response

- a. The Committee shall respond quickly to the incident.
- b. The Committee shall evaluate the report with the person who filed the initial report.
- c. With guidance from counsel to the Church, the Committee shall cooperate with law enforcement.
- d. The accused shall have no further contact, verbal or otherwise, with the alleged victim until the existing issue is resolved.
- e. The accused shall be suspended from work with children or youth until the issue is resolved.
- f. The Committee shall inform the Church's insurance agent and insurance carrier, Church Mutual Insurance Company.
- g. The Committee should inform the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia of the current investigation.
- h. The Committee shall designate one of its members as a spokesperson for the media, or appoint another member of the church suited for such purpose. Only the designated spokesperson should offer any comment to the media, and all media inquiries shall be directed to that person.



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Appendix A: Volunteer Application & Information

Volunteer Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail

Address: _____

What is the best way to contact you? _____

Tell us about your family

Married Single Prefer not to specify

Do you have children? If so, tell us about them.

Tell us about your church experience

How long have you been attending KGPC? _____

What other churches have you attended before? _____

Name of Reference we could contact: _____

Phone or E-mail of Reference: _____

Have you ever volunteered with children/youth before? If so, what age group and in what capacity? _____

Tell us about your work, talents, and other interests

What is your "day job?" _____

What experience do you have working with children/youth? _____

Briefly describe any gifts, talents, or interests you have, especially those that you think may be helpful in serving with KGPC:

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out this form and help us get to know you better.

Please take some time to make yourself familiar with volunteer responsibilities in the Faith Formation Volunteer handbook (also found on the website) or training manual related to your position. We look forward to working with you and expect your commitment to the following:

Be a committed follower of Christ and the teachings of the Bible.

Keep yourself spiritually fed through Bible study, community group study, and worship services.

Pray regularly for the other volunteers, staff, and children with whom we work.

Submit a background check authorization form and complete KGPC volunteer training

Sign and agree to the KGPC Protection Policy



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Keep us updated in any changes related to your ability to fulfill your job and participate in training

Signature: _____ Date:

Office use only:

Interview Date: _____

Date Background check completed: _____

CFFD signature: _____ Date:



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Appendix B: Transportation Policy

The mission of King's Grant Presbyterian Church (KGPC) includes the instruction to go into the world bringing the message of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:20). Sometimes "to go into the world" requires the Church to provide transportation for its members through the use of privately owned automobiles. To protect both our members and our Church, the Session of KGPC adopts this policy and attendant guidelines for transportation for all KGPC-sponsored events, which originate and/or terminate at the Church. While these guidelines aspire to promote and maximize safety for all, it is recognized that there may occur emergency circumstances which may require exceptions to be made to this policy which cannot be delineated in advance.

General Guidelines Applying to all KGPC-Sponsored Events:

In order to drive others in a privately owned vehicle, all drivers certify and agree that they understand and will comply with these guidelines:

1. All drivers shall be properly and currently licensed to operate a motor vehicle by the Commonwealth of Virginia or other state.
2. The privately owned vehicle operated by the driver shall be in sound mechanical condition and currently possess a valid state inspection sticker. If the privately owned vehicle is licensed outside the Commonwealth of Virginia in a state that does not require annual or other regular safety inspections, the driver warrants that the vehicle is in a mechanically safe condition.
3. All drivers shall carry at least the minimum amount of automobile liability insurance required by the Commonwealth of Virginia.
4. No driver shall operate a privately owned vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or any drug which impairs the driver's ability to drive safely.
5. No driver shall carry more passengers than there are seat belts in the privately owned vehicle.
6. Drivers shall obey all traffic laws and regulations.

II. General Guidelines Applying to All KGPC-sponsored Children/Youth Events

The following guidelines shall apply, in addition to those in Section I, to all KGPC-sponsored children/youth events where children under the age of eighteen (18) years are provided transportation:

1. Every driver who operates a privately owned vehicle for the purpose of transporting children to and/or from a KGPC-sponsored children/youth event shall sign an Acknowledgement or Responsibility Form as set forth in Section III, *infra*.
2. Each child and his/her parent or legal guardian shall complete a Parental Permission Form annually as set forth in Section IV, *infra*, granting permission for their child to be driven by a responsible adult to any KGPC-sponsored children/youth event.
3. All drivers shall be at least 21 years of age.



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4. For any trip that is anticipated to last longer than four (4) hours driving time, a second adult at least 21 years of age shall accompany the driver to provide driving relief as may become necessary.

III. Guidelines for Youth Drivers

The transportation for All KGPC sponsored children/youth events, originating and terminating at the church, requires a licensed driver who is 21 years of age or older.

Exceptions to this policy include youth with a valid drivers license who need to arrive late or depart early from an event. Providing arrangements have been made between the parent/guardian and supervising adults before the group departs, youth may drive himself/herself and their siblings to and from the event.



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Appendix B, III: Transportation Policy Acknowledgement Form/Driver

III. Acknowledgement of Responsibility Form

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the King's Grant Presbyterian Church Transportation Policy, and I agree to abide by its Guidelines. I further agree that I am in compliance with these Guidelines and shall only provide transportation for children to KGPC-Sponsored events while I remain in compliance.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Make/model of vehicle:

License Plate state/number:

Number of seat belts in vehicle:

Appendix B, IV: Transportation Policy Parental Permission Form

IV. Parental Permission Form

I, _____, am the parent or legal guardian of _____, and hereby give my permission for my child/children to be provided transportation to all KGPC-sponsored children/youth events. I understand that transportation shall be provided in privately owned vehicles, and that the Guidelines delineated in the King's Grant Presbyterian Church Transportation Policy shall apply.

Signature:

_____ Date: _____



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Appendix C: Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect

This form is to be completed in the instance of a suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Remember, it is not your responsibility to get all the facts of to substantiate any allegations or suspicions.

This report shall be kept confidential.

Reporter's Name: _____

Ministry Area: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Suspected Victim's

Name: _____

Suspected Abuser's Name: _____

Suspected Abuser's Relationship to Suspected

Victim: _____

When was the report made to

you? _____

Please describe what you observed/heard to the best of your recollection. Please try to remember in as much detail as possible. Use another sheet of paper to supplement this report if necessary.

For Office Use Only

Report taken by: _____ Date: _____

This report should be given to the CFFD. If the CFFD is unavailable, give it to the Pastor.