

# Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church

## *Child Protection Policy Statement*

Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church and its members are committed to the safety, welfare and protection of all children and youth participating in the activities and programs of the Church. During each baptism of an infant, child or adult, the congregation pledges to uphold that person in the household of God. To these ends, the Session hereby adopts reasonable policies and procedures in order to minimize the possibility that any child or youth (meaning all those 17 years of age and younger) will be subjected to physical or emotional abuse or neglect by Church staff, paid childcare workers, teachers or volunteers while engaged in church programs or activities. The policies and procedures adopted seek to balance the security and welfare of the children and the legitimate expectations of privacy of staff and volunteers.

### **Standards of Conduct**

- Paid or volunteer adults shall not touch or interact with children or youth in any way that is sexually stimulating, emotionally demeaning, or exploitative. Common expressions of affection and affirmation (hugs and pats on the back) or physical care (diaper changes or first aid) are appropriate in this or any community of caring Christians. Staff and volunteers must be careful that physical expressions of affection are not excessive or imposed upon another individual.
- Paid and volunteer adults and youth working with children and youth are also tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of those in their care and to be aware a signs indicating neglect of the child's well-being.
- Those people working with children or youth should work in pairs. Whenever possible, two adults should be present with the children at all activities. The Session recommends that staff and volunteers transport children and youth in groups rather than alone. In ordinary circumstances, an unaccompanied adult should not drive a single child in a church sponsored activity without the permission of the child's parent or guardian.
- All volunteers for ongoing assignments shall have completed an approved Volunteer Application form (See Implementation segment below for details)

### **Implementation**

To implement this Child Protection Policy (CPP)

- A CPP statement must be provided to and signed by all employees and volunteers participating in any church program or activity involving children and/or youth.
- In general, volunteer applications will be accepted only after six months of active involvement as members of Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church.
- Exceptions to this volunteer application policy may be made at the discretion of the Session or a body authorized by the Session to cover short-term involvement in children's activities such as service projects, VBS, Sunday morning childcare, etc. In these cases, a new member will be paired with a vetted member or staff person.
- Applications will be submitted through the committee chair responsible for the particular program in which the volunteer wishes to participate. The completed application will be forwarded to the CPP Review Team composed of the Pastor, Clerk of Session, and the Christian Education Committee Elders.
- The Pastor, Director of Christian Education (DCE), Music Director, childcare workers and other staff who are subject to other church policies and/or Philadelphia Presbytery hiring criteria, will be made aware of the CPP.

### **Administration**

The CPP Review Team of Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church is responsible for the oversight and security of the program. The CPP review Team will hold in confidence all documentation associated with the CPP, volunteer applications, and all documentation concerning potential allegations of physical or emotional abuse or neglect. All documentation will be kept in locked storage in the Pastor's office and applications will be kept on file for a 5-year period past the active service of the volunteer.

The CPP Review Team is responsible for review and subsequent approval or disapproval of each volunteer application. If the Review Team disapproves an application, that decision will be reviewed by the Pastor and Clerk of Session to determine if any additional actions are necessary beyond the notification to the applicant and the committee. Upon completion of each application review, the CPP Review Team will first notify the applicant of its decision and subsequently notify the committee. Reference checks, police background checks and child abuse checks shall be made when deemed necessary.

## **Member Awareness**

- Initially, a copy of the CPP and the volunteer application will be made available to the congregation on the Glading Presbyterian Church web site, and a copy of the CPP will be provided annually in the church newsletter.
- The congregation will be informed and reminded of this policy annually.
- The CPP statement and application will be provided to all participants in each New Members' Class.
- All volunteers (as defined in the implementation section) will be required to complete the application form as well as providing a signed Child Protection statement for the TPC files.
- All volunteers will be requested to review their CPP statements on an annual basis.
- A review of the intentions of the CPP will be a part of annual teacher training sessions staffed by the Pastor and/or the Christian Education Committee.

## **Procedures for Handling Misconduct Allegations**

The issues of sexual and/or emotional abuse or neglect involving a minor, whether perceived or actual, need to be dealt with immediately, effectively, and with great discretion. ***Pennsylvania law requires that allegations of abuse or neglect of children be reported immediately to proper authorities. In Philadelphia County that report is made to Children and Youth Division of Philadelphia County at 215-683-6100 (24-Hour Hotline).*** It is the responsibility of the Pastor to see that such report has been made. It is suggested that in every case of alleged abuse or neglect of a child the Clerk of Session contact and involve Glading's liability carrier, verify that Child Protective Services has been notified, and that the proper written documentation of the allegations and proceedings is maintained.

The intended procedure is to report any allegation of abuse or neglect to the Pastor, or the Clerk of Session. If the alleged offender is the Pastor, the report shall be made to the Clerk of Session. In the specific case of the complaint being made against any ordained minister or inquirer/candidate for the ministry, the Clerk of Session shall notify the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk of Philadelphia Presbytery. The Clerk shall request guidance on the procedure to be followed in processing the allegation and obtaining a Moderator for the Session when it is the Pastor who is accused. The Clerk shall also notify the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk if allegations have been raised against a member or non-ordained staff person.

Clerk of Session and/or the Pastor will be responsible for maintaining contact with the police, the victim's family and for determining further actions in consultation with the Session.

Adopted by the Session at its stated meeting on December 12, 2005



**Church Activity**

What church or churches have you regularly attended in the past 5 years?

Church name	Pastor's name/ phone number	Years attended
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**References** (other than family members)

Name/ Relationship	Address	Phone
1 <hr/>		
2 <hr/>		

**Applicant verification and release:**

I recognize that the Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, PA is relying upon the accuracy of the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all the information that I have provided is completely true and correct.

I authorize the Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church to contact any person or entity listed in this application and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications. I further authorize Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church to conduct a criminal background investigation and /or child abuse investigation if the check is deemed necessary.

I voluntarily release Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church and any such organization or entity listed herein by me from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications.

I have carefully read and understand the Glading Memorial Presbyterian Church Child Protection Policy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_