**PEACHTREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

**CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

**Mission Statement**

The people of Peachtree Christian Church (PCC) believe, in accordance with our Christian principles, that it is in the best interest of the church and the children and youth of the church to adopt policies, procedures, screening tools, and training to assist us in protecting the physical, mental and emotional well-being of the children and youth who participate in PCC church-sponsored activities. Therefore, PCC shall establish and maintain procedures to:

1. increase all members’ awareness of the problem of child/youth abuse;
2. institute screening and selection of all persons supervising children/youth;
3. educate and train paid staff and volunteers and parents regarding procedures to reduce the risk of child/youth abuse;
4. seek to protect all paid staff and volunteers who work with children/youth from false accusations;
5. report any suspected incidents of abuse; and
6. provide compassionate support to victims of child/youth abuse and to those accused of abuse.

**Screening and Selection Procedures**

These procedures apply to all church staff and volunteers working with children/youth. (Hereafter referred to as “the workers”).

1. All workers must complete a worker profile related to the appropriate department.
2. All workers must have a background check. Youth volunteers who anticipate driving vehicles occupied by teenagers must also have a DMV records check.
3. All workers must receive child/youth protection training or acknowledge receipt of and compliance with our published “Child and Youth Protection Policy.”
4. To be eligible for a volunteer position involving children/youth, a person is required to be a member or active participant of PCC for a minimum of 3 months.

**Guidelines for Supervision**

1. Two-Adult Rule – At least two adults should be present during any church

activity that involves children and/or youth. Exceptions may need to be made and will be made at the discretion of someone in Leadership (ie. Senior Minister, Family Life Director, Children’s Director).

If necessary, one adult per room and a supervisor who checks on each

program room on a regular basis, will be acceptable. All activities with a single adult present must take place in a room with windows facing the hallway.

1. Exceptions to the “two-adult rule” may need to be made in emergency

 situations and where not reasonably feasible, such as counseling, mentoring,

 childcare needed by one child only. If possible, such exceptions should be

 handled by

1. obtaining parental permission,
2. using an “open door” policy, and /or
3. notifying appropriate church leaders.
4. Random visits – Frequent unannounced visits by supervisor and/or other

authorized individuals shall be made.

1. Release Procedures – children (birth – Kindergarten) will only be released to

the properly identified and preauthorized adult. The departure of older children is left to the discretion of the parent or other authorized adult.

1. For Off-site Activities and Overnight Trips

 a) Written parental permission forms and emergency release information

 are required.

1. Transportation to off-site venues must be coordinated and approved by the Family Life Director.
2. No adult may share a bed with any child, other than his/her own child.
3. Adequate supervision will be provided for all field trips and overnights.

At least two adults must attend any such event. The gender of the adult supervisors will be reflective of the gender of the children attending the event.

**Training**

All church staff and volunteers working with children and youth will be required to participate in training designed to inform them of the Child and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures under which the church operates.

Training will include information on appropriate and inappropriate touching, how to spot child abuse, and the Church’s procedure for reporting the suspected or actual abuse of a child in its care. At the conclusion of the training, each paid worker will complete and sign a form stating that he/she has been made aware of the Church’s procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.

Parents of children and youth at PCC will be informed of the Child and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures under which the church operates with emphasis on the safety and well-being of their children/youth.

**Procedures for Reporting Alleged Abuse**

If an adult suspects abuse, or a child/youth reports abuse by any member of church staff, volunteer or employed, or by any person present at a church sponsored meeting/activity, the following procedures shall apply:

1) The adult in charge shall document the incident on the appropriate form.

2) Notify the Senior Minister and Family Life Director. If the Senior Minister is the accused party, notify the Chair of the Executive Committee.

If reasonable cause is established, the Minister/Chair of the Executive Committee shall notify:

1) Georgia Department of Family and Children’s Services or other entity as required by law.

If an adult suspects abuse, or a child/youth reports abuse occurring away from a church sponsored function, the following procedures shall apply:

1) The adult in charge shall document the incident on the appropriate form.

2) Notify the Senior Minister.

3) If “reasonable cause” is established, the Senior Minister shall notify the Georgia Department of Family and Children’s Services.

If parent or guardian has suspicion of or signs of abuse to a minor, the following procedures shall apply:

* 1. The parent shall report the concerning behavior to the Family Life Director
	2. Family Life Director will investigate and document concerns
	3. If “reasonable cause” is established, the Family Life director shall notify the Senior Minister
	4. The Senior Minister along with the Family Life Director shall notify the Georgia Department of Family and Children’s Services.

**Response to Abuse**

If allegations of abuse are made, our response will be guided by Christian principles of love and compassion for all parties involved. All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated.