

Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren

Child/Youth Protection Policy

Purpose Statement:

Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth of Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection of Workers:

All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

- a. Six Month Rule
No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until s/he has been involved with Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with the children.
- b. Written Application
All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied to us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions that are child and/or abuse related. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren.
- c. Personal Interview
Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.
- d. Reference checks
Applications will be asked to provide references, which may be contacted before working with children. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren.

Two Adult Rule:

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times where children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Open Door Policy:

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers:

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for helpers who themselves are under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities that are within the church. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.
- This does not include teen Sunday School.

Check-in Procedure:

A guardian must accompany any child under the age of 14 into the church.

Discipline Policy:

It is the policy of the Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren not to administer corporal punishment, even if the parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of the children. Workers shall consult the Pastor if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines:

When the unisex bathroom is available, it will be used for the children. Children five years of age and younger should be escorted to the bathroom by an adult. The adult worker shall make sure the bathroom is empty and then wait outside the door. If assistance is needed with the bathroom the door will be left open along with the stall door as s/he assists the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that the

bathroom is empty, then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the room.

For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each activity.

Accidental Injuries to Children:

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following procedure should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the Pastor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of the injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training:

Brook Park Community Church of the Brethren will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare volunteers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers will be required to attend these training events.