

Writing a Protection
Policy that Works for
Children, Youth, &
Vulnerable Adults

Why should you have a policy?

- It safeguards our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- It safeguards our volunteers and staff.
- It safeguards our resources for mission and ministry.



Why should you have a policy?

- Scriptural support
- Doctrine support
- Estimated cost per victim, non fatal: over \$800,000 (2015 USD).
- Estimated cost per victim, fatal: over \$16,000,000 (2015 USD).





Who are the victims?

- girls and boys
- all ethnicities
- all ages



Who are the victims?

- usually known by the victim
- male and female, all ages
- various social, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds



Types of offenders

- non offender
- situational offender
- preferential offender/predator

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What your policy provides

- new ways of thinking
- risk-reducing behaviors and practices
- appropriate procedures
- specific rules for your congregation



What IS it?

- policy that governs behaviors and practices of staff and volunteers
- policy that creates new ways of thinking



What IS it? continued

a policy to reduce the risk of abuse by:

- reducing isolation
- increasing accountability
- reducing imbalances of power and authority
- eliminating specific activities that enhance the potential for abuse
- policy that creates new ways of thinking



basic format

- general statement
- attachments that include:
 - basic procedures
 - other issues
 - response plan
 - forms, including applications and covenant



What are the basic procedures?

for staff and volunteers

- two unrelated, non cohabitating adults
- no leaders under 18 years old
- 5 years older rule
- six month rule
- first aid/CPR training
- participation covenant



Considerations for your physical plant

- windows in all classroom doors
- appropriate equipment and supervision
- open-door counseling



Considerations for your digital spaces

- transparency
- appropriate equipment and supervision
- passwords and waiting rooms



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- passwords and waiting rooms



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When will your policy be in effect?

- upon entry to property
- upon sign-in



Thinking through some spaces:

- restrooms
- playgrounds
- hallways
- arrivals and dismissals



Thinking through some spaces:

- babysitting
- photography
- driving
- retreats and mission trips



Thinking through some spaces:

- nursery school ministries
- outside groups and ecumenical events
- cyber safety
- immigration issues
- elder issues
- building issues
- bullying



Why should you have a policy?

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What your policy provides:

- advanced preparation
- clear lines of authority
- clear reporting procedures



What is a response plan?

- preparation to respond to an incident or accusation
- created before any incidents or accusations
- regardless of who the individuals involved might be



Choosing a coordinator:

- receives all information
- acts on all information
- makes all contacts
- the only spokesperson



Coordinator works with a team

- chair of property committee
- chair of Christian Education
- chair of youth
- HR chair
- anyone else in relevant ministry areas



Follow two tenets

- confidentiality
- transparency



What if the pastor is accused

- follow procedures from your governing body



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getting your policy approved



Form your committee, consider various recommendations, write policy, and present proposal to the property committee

getting your policy approved



Property committee considers, discusses, and approves the policy (with appropriate editing) AND THEN presents it to the church council.

getting your policy approved



Church council shares the information with the congregation, allowing for discussion time. THEN the church council approves the policy.

getting your policy approved



Consider having a lawyer review your
policy.

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What to expect

- possible conflicts
- acknowledge
- empathize
- don't allow them to derail



